

A Global Strategy and Action Plan for Gender-Responsive Participatory Research in International Agricultural Research

Workshop on 'Repositioning Participatory Research and Gender Analysis in Times of Change'
Cali, Colombia, June 16–18, 2010

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and Gender Analysis in Times of Change’
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AGROVOC descriptors in English:

1. Agricultural research.
2. Farmer participation.
3. Community involvement.
4. Gender analysis.
5. Role of women.
6. Research institutions.
7. Capacity building.
8. Empowerment.
9. Partnerships.
10. CGIAR.

Local descriptors in English:

1. Participatory research.
2. Community participation.

AGROVOC descriptors in Spanish:

1. Investigación agraria.
2. Participación de agricultores.
3. Participación de la comunidad.
4. Análisis de género.
5. Papel de la mujer.
6. Instituciones de investigación.
7. Creación de capacidad.
8. Autonomización.
9. Coparticipación.
10. GCIAT.

Local descriptors in Spanish:

1. Investigación participativa.
2. Participación comunitaria.

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A Global Strategy to Institutionalize Gender-Responsive Participatory Research in International Agricultural Research¹

Part 1: The Strategy

Introduction

The present document brings together the ideas of some 40 experts involved in gender and participatory research who took part in the workshop ‘Repositioning Participatory Research and Gender Analysis in Times of Change’ in Cali, Colombia (June 16–18, 2010). The participants came from the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), national agricultural research systems (NARS), NGOs, academia, regional agricultural research organizations and the UN. They therefore comprised a broad range of stakeholders from around the world. The full process is elaborated in the ‘Workshop Report’ (Alvarez *et al.*, 2010a).

One of the main objectives of the workshop was to develop this strategy for the use of gender-responsive participatory approaches in international agricultural research. Development of the elements of this strategy took place in plenary and small working groups, building on the draft ‘Demand Analysis for Gender-Responsive Participatory Research’ (Staiger *et al.*, 2010), as well as on the experience of the participants. Individual feedback on ‘working drafts,’ was incorporated during the course of the workshop. During the post-workshop drafting stages, the strategy was distributed to all participants for feedback that was then incorporated in the final document.

The workshop participants firmly believe that gender-responsive participatory research offers some of the most powerful and useful approaches for achieving sustainable development, including alleviating poverty, improving well-being, achieving sustainable levels of natural-resource use, and protecting the environments in which we all live.

There are huge strides to be made by the multiple organizations that play a part in agricultural R&D, many of which will require support from other actors within the R&D system, through effective partnership.

Workshop findings and rationale

State of the art

So far, the CGIAR Centers can boast only a limited number of practitioners doing research that is participatory and gender-responsive. There is a lack of systematic information that can be understood and used by the diversity of potential practitioners.

¹ “A narrow definition of agriculture includes cultivation of crops and animal husbandry as well as forestry, fisheries, and the development of land and water resources” (FAO, 2006). Thus, ‘agriculture’ includes natural-resources management.

Academic outputs seem to predominate from participatory research and gender analysis work, which do not equate with development outcomes. Thus, results are not reaching end-users.

A 2009 World Bank report, makes it clear that farmers *are knowledgeable* about their farming systems, and men and women have different perceptions and knowledge about different aspects of their biophysical and socio-economic situations. Researchers need to learn from this indigenous knowledge, and farmers *may* need to be encouraged to tap into their own knowledge. Local innovation by farmers and communities seeking solutions to their own problems are common but are seldom taken into account by researchers, as the (farmers') solutions tend not to be grounded or theoretically supported by empirical studies (World Bank *et al.*, 2009, p 257–314).

Despite the great strides in gender-responsive and participatory research, there are many places in the world where women and other minority groups (youth, elderly, indigenous peoples, etc.) remain excluded from decisions that impact their lives and livelihoods.² Gender-responsive participatory research produces impacts on verifiable processes that include the formation of human and social capital, which help sustain rural development and innovation. It is especially beneficial to women, the poorest and marginalized groups—all of whom have so often been overlooked by conventional research.

The CGIAR Systemwide Program for Participatory Research and Gender Analysis (SW-PRGA) was established in 1997 to promote two perspectives that were beginning to have an impact on R&D debates at the time. The first was participatory research, where scientists carried out research in farmers' fields engaging them in the process to various degrees. The second was gender analysis, a fledging field that was gaining recognition as evidence increased that men and women farmers have different knowledge, needs and responsibilities in farming. SW-PRGA developed activities along both tracks until experience, publications and reports from its many partners confirmed their interdependence. It is for this reason that the workshop, reported on here, was titled 'Repositioning participatory research and gender analysis in times of change.' During the workshop, the term 'gender-responsive participatory research' (GRPR) was adopted as a more appropriate term to reflect the challenges of the future.

In spite of the many lessons learned about the value of participatory research and gender analysis since the SW-PRGA began, both perspectives remain marginalized—and sometimes openly opposed and antagonized. To make matters more difficult, there are few linkages among the diverse stakeholder groups who develop, carry out and publish on them.³ These factors severely restrict the extent to which gender-responsive

² A recent example is land 'grabbing' for biofuels. REDD (reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation) also has the potential for similar 'heavy-handedness' by governments. Such exclusion needs to be addressed by research and development organizations alike, and GRPR is considered an effective means of doing so.

³ Many aspects of the status quo have remained unchanged since 2003 (see Saad, 2003).

participatory approaches can be integrated into the research process, limiting the extent to which positive impacts can be scaled up.

Learning together to increase equity and impact

GRPR recognizes that women as well as men small-holder farmers, play key roles in food production and nutrition improvement, have specialized knowledge regarding the management of natural resources in their specific environments, and are conscious of the value of biodiversity and a healthy environment.

GRPR allows men and women farmers to work together with researchers to design, develop and use sustainable socio-technical, organizational and livelihood strategies and practices that offer relevant and viable solutions to the constraints they face.

Where GRPR processes are fostered, farmers and researchers learn together and from each other. GRPR that implements rigorous, scientifically grounded methods, produces valid results as is reflected by articles published in refereed journals by practitioners.

Multiple options for diverse communities

GRPR has the potential to incorporate multiple options for heterogeneous rural communities because it fosters multi-stakeholder collaboration, bringing all elements of a community (or society) 'on board,' especially those 'traditionally' marginalized by either research or society at large. GRPR recognizes that a difference in access, interests and needs along gender, ethnic, age and socio-economic lines has an impact on technological innovation and uptake.

Accelerating changes in climate are increasing the vulnerability of rural communities, especially women, due to their roles as primary producers and natural-resource managers. Because of the heterogeneity evident in climate change to date and the fact that it will continue for decades to come, increased capacity will be required to respond and adapt to the ongoing changes. Response is best addressed at the community level through GRPR, which places research tools in the hands of those who need to innovate and *continue to adapt* to changing climate over the coming years.

Scientists, the system and GRPR

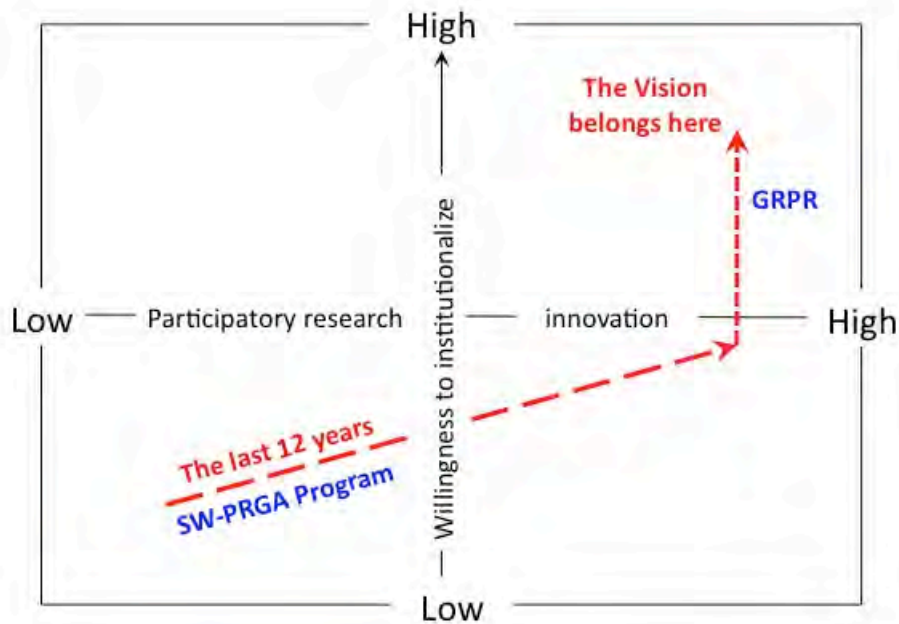
Participatory research and gender analysis can be hard concepts/approaches to 'sell' to (especially biophysical) scientists. They need to be not only convinced of the value of these approaches, but also to have the freedom to adopt them in their work. A major issue for scientists is acceptance by colleagues. There are also issues of power (fear of losing control of the research context) and of attitudes (especially negative ones toward gender work).

Scientists, like everyone else, can benefit from incentives to adopt GRPR approaches (e.g. funding and/or recognition, avenues to publish). The work environment, especially system governance (rules and norms that regulate how things work), needs to provide an enabling environment for GRPR. Where governance *constrains* GRPR, committed practitioners are forced to invest time and energy in devising 'work arounds.'

GRPR works best in a trans-disciplinary environment where social and biophysical scientists work together. Scientists who are GRPR practitioners need to be able to combine the formal scientific knowledge with indigenous knowledge. Furthermore, when working with local social/civil-society organizations they need to be open to advocacy roles or activities that in the past have been seen as outside of the realm of science.

The Vision

The vision for the future of GRPR is to see timely and rigorous gender-responsive participatory research that is vigilant to changing conditions in the social, biophysical, economic and other spheres, institutionalized in an inclusive multi-stakeholder international agricultural research system (CGIAR, NARS, NGOs, community-based organizations and academia).



The Mission

To foster the use of gender-responsive participatory research (GRPR) to empower women and men, young and old, resource-poor farmers to achieve food security and enhance their livelihoods through initiatives that enable access to and shared control of appropriate technology innovation, information, credit and markets.

The GRPR initiative will make women’s and men’s experiences and concerns an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies,

programs and projects in all political, economic and societal spheres. GRPR will be included in all stages of the research cycle to increase the efficiency and efficacy of poverty alleviation. The initiative will encourage scientists, managers and farmers to consider gender-differentiated needs, skills and knowledge in their research practices.

Pathways for success: Strategic options for institutionalization

Building recognition and capacity

Organizational change: Adoption and institutionalization of GRPR will require a focus on organizational change within the agricultural research community. Organizations can begin with some sort of self-assessment (reflection or critique) of their preparedness for GRPR—e.g. enabling environment, political will, ‘champions,’ partnerships and other human resources. In most cases, organizational changes that support and encourage attitudes and behavior conducive to gender-responsive research and participation will be needed—e.g. policy framework, strategy, budget, other resources (including human).⁴ It is important that organizations conduct research on the process of change itself. Those that have already done such work should find ways to make the methods used and results more accessible to others.

As an aid to those organizations on the road or just beginning a process of institutionalization, GRPR experts should describe what an enabling environment looks like—in terms of organizational policy, organizational culture, resources, etc. Similarly, organizations and ‘champions’ are going to need to know how to encourage ‘political will’ both within their own organizations and among their R&D partners.

Champions: Once individuals (men and women who are knowledgeable about gender) have been identified as GRPR ‘champions’ (even self-appointed), they need to position themselves to serve their colleagues by supporting GRPR activities, with coaching, mentoring, awareness-raising seminars and training. This will be particularly important in the period before their organizational environment is fully enabling.

Advocacy: If GRPR is to be institutionalized, awareness-raising, hands-on capacity building and evidence-based advocacy will be important stepping-stones.⁵ The issue of

⁴ A training manual on gender and organizational change is already available (Groverman and Gurung, 2001), as are other frameworks and tools developed to support a variety of organizations, from SROs and larger NARS (e.g. ECABREN) to end-users’ organizational settings (e.g. farmers’ associations, local agricultural research committees, community-based groups). Organizational analysis (with a view to organizational change) also includes elements of organizational culture and socio-political context.

⁵ We say ‘still,’ because the generation of evidence of the effectiveness and efficacy of participatory research and gender analysis underpinned much of the impact-assessment work of the SW-PRGA Program from 2003 to 2008. The SW-PRGA Program amassed case-study evidence of the efficacy and efficiency of gender-analysis and participatory research approaches through impact assessment of projects that used such approaches. These case studies are available via the Program website (http://www.prgaprogram.org/index.php/prga-publications/cat_view/3-prga-publications/29-impact-assessment).

GRPR institutionalization needs to be raised at all levels of decision-making. Sensitization and hands-on training in GRPR need to be conducted and accountability mechanisms and incentives for GRPR put in place. The effectiveness of evidence-based advocacy has been questioned, so care should be taken when allocating resources to these kinds of efforts.⁶

Capacity-building: As a process, capacity-building will contribute to a critical mass of GRPR practitioners. Raising the visibility and availability of existing methods and tools, and best practices, and updating them for ease of use by different stakeholder groups would be a valuable contribution.

Communication: The means of communicating research findings and ‘success stories’ need to be diversified so that different stakeholder audiences receive the information in ways that are appropriate to the situation they are in and the use they will give it. Channels for *collecting* information in formats that facilitate its sharing among communities and individuals (e.g. briefs, video, radio, posters, outputs of group participatory exercises) need to be enhanced and/or developed. One suitable dissemination channel for methods, tools, evidence and plans of action is the Internet. In addition to acting as clearing houses or portals, websites can become interactive, with space for sharing of knowledge and experiences. Listservs can be created and other tools considered for reaching out to a wider audience (e.g. blogs, Twitter).

Networking: Networks bring together diverse stakeholders from various (and numerous) organizations, bridging boundaries between the different types of organizations. Networks foster collaboration, sharing, mutual encouragement and alliances beyond (existing) research teams. They can help identify other stakeholders and donors, providing links for the creation of gender-relevant interdisciplinary groups for research or just support. They also help strengthen linkages among CGIAR centers, NGOs, NARS, universities and development organizations for information-sharing and other activities. SW-PRGA convened several ‘community of practice’ types of networks, which should be built upon to take GRPR forward.

Building partnerships

The workshop participants made it clear that ‘partnership’ is key to any form of participatory research. In its most basic form, the researcher partners with one or more end-users (usually farmers) to engage in research. GRPR for agriculture functions best in the context of multi-stakeholder partnerships that include not only researchers (from different disciplines) and farmers, but also NGOs, extension agencies and farmer organizations. A feature of the SW-PRGA was partnership and much groundbreaking work in participatory research, impact assessment, gender and capacity-building was done in partnership (Walker *et al.*, 2007).

A major premise of partnership work within participatory research is that *everyone* involved is a partner, and there should be explicit multi-directional learning within a

⁶ <http://www.prgaprogram.org/IAWFTP/papers/Raitzer.pdf>.

partnership. Multi-stakeholder partnerships should be built at early stages of the research process. At that time, priority areas for GRPR should be identified on the basis of demand from communities and/or stakeholders. The research design(s) developed to carry out GRPR and communicate research results should be equally accessible to (and usable by) both end-users and researchers. Interventions designed within the R&D context should empower the end-users in particular.

During the ‘Repositioning Participatory Research and Gender Analysis Workshop’ a number of ideas were put forth regarding the construction of equitable and vibrant partnerships:

- Potential partners need to identify exactly what they can contribute—i.e. what is the added value of having them (as a specific organization or group) in the partnership?
- Agricultural research organizations need to look beyond the types of partners they are used to working with, to see where new synergies can be built with the broader GRPR stakeholder community.
- By nature, multi-stakeholder partnerships will integrate research, development and advocacy, either because one or more partners already integrate these three aspects, or as a result of synergy and teamwork.
- The terms of partnerships should be negotiated, with explicit opportunities for all to discuss and agree upon roles, responsibilities, resources and the use of outputs. Basic agreements should be registered and shared among all.
- Special institutional arrangements need to be developed for culturally sensitive situations—e.g. where women are expected to conform to some cultural code of conduct (e.g. dress, veil, not speaking in the presence of men).
- Partnerships can (and should) be used as a means of internal reflection and learning—a mutual honest ongoing challenging of assumptions.

Building accountability

Gender analysis should inform sound policy-making and future research. The collection and use of gender-disaggregated data is a pre-requisite for gender analysis. In the medium term, the processes of evaluation and advocacy form a loop, with new GRPR results and evaluations providing evidence for advocacy directed at policy-making and future research. Workshop participants set out a number of guidelines for building accountability into GRPR processes.

For GRPR to be accountable requires the involvement of all stakeholders (CGIAR, NARS, NARES, CBOs, NGOs, academia, private sector, etc.) in the process. GRPR processes should ensure representation of women farmers in advisory bodies given the urgency of redressing the imbalance between women and men and to achieve gender equity.

Project monitoring and evaluation must include gender-related qualitative and quantitative indicators. Evaluation mechanisms need to be established that ensure

transparency and accountability. Monitoring and evaluation of GRPR processes should be participatory, involving the researchers, end-users and other project stakeholders. Although much work has been done assessing the impact of participatory and gender-responsive research—using both quantitative and qualitative approaches—practitioners should not shy away from developing new methods and tools if necessary.

Part 2: The Action Plan

The work plan that follows compiles the contributions of the workshop participants who took on the task of grounding the strategic options described in Part 1. The work plan is intended to guide and support the efforts of organizations that either already, or intend to, use GRPR approaches in their work. Given the scope (global) of this action plan and the plethora of organizations and individuals that might become involved, an attempt was made to identify at least the 'Lead organization' for as many actions as possible.

Mechanisms for the implementation of the strategy and work plan still need to be put into place. In the meantime, the CIAT-PRGA program has taken the lead for those actions that entailed pulling the final reports from the workshop together, sharing them on the workshop website, presenting them to the workshop funder and the Interim Committee for the GRPR Strategy for the International Agricultural Research System (nominated at the workshop). During the consultation phase, participants were asked to complete the action plan with any contributions that they or their organizations could make. It is envisioned that the Interim Committee will take the leadership needed to bring this effort to the next level.

	Action	Lead 'organization'	Collaborating organizations	Timeframe or deadline
Short term [S]				
S1	Take the Strategy and work plan resulting from the 'Repositioning' Workshop to high levels in the international agricultural research system	Interim Committee for the GRPR (nominated at workshop end)	Workshop participants from CGIAR centers upon request	a.s.a.p.
GRPR Network(s) [N]				
N1	Establish listserv of all workshop participants and other interested parties (GRPR practitioners)	CIAT-PRGA	Workshop participants — <i>to raise awareness of the listserv among colleagues</i>	Initial establishment: August 2010
N2	Constitute a network of GRPR 'champions' across the 15 CGIAR Mega-Programs	Existing GRPR 'champions' in the MPs	Workshop participants	Following MP timeline
N3	Rebuild community-of-practice networks	CIAT-PRGA	Workshop participants and others interested in groups	Re-establishment 'drive': end 2010
N4	Develop guidelines/TORs for GRPR 'champions' (in MPs and elsewhere). Determine GRPR champions' needs to enhance their work (e.g. priority list of possible actions)	Existing GRPR 'champions'	Workshop participants with their colleagues	End 2010
N5	Review function and <i>modus operandi</i> of former SW-PRGA COP networks	CIAT-PRGA	Former network members	End 2010
N6	Develop simple, easy-to-follow guidelines to assist and support GRPR experts at their organizations	To be determined (TBD)		

	Action	Lead 'organization'	Collaborating organizations	Timeframe or deadline
<i>Publish Workshop papers (part of the evidence for GRPR initiative) [P]</i>				
P	Publish disciplinary review and overview papers commissioned for the Repositioning Workshop			
P1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree on scope and outlet (choice of journal) 	Authors/Interim Committee		15 September
P2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft & submit concept note to journal 	CIAT-PRGA and authors		15–30 September
P3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redraft papers 	Authors		15 October
P4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer review papers 'internally' 	Interim Committee		15 November
P5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review/editing & submission of papers 	Authors–CIAT-PRGA		31 January 2011
<i>Building blocks for GRPR [B]</i>				
B1	Ensure that GRPR is included in CGIAR's MP documents (including budget)	GRPR practitioners on MP writing teams		a.s.a.p. (but ongoing)
B2	Develop a conceptual framework on how research, development and advocacy relate to each other (a specific request from workshop)	TBD by Interim Committee		
B3	Determine enabling scenarios (features of an enabling environment) and tentative guidelines (including policy framework) for engaging in GRPR	TBD by Interim Committee (those with experience)		
B4	Raise awareness of existing tools and methods, and make them more easily available, e.g. by developing GRPR toolkit	TBD by Interim Committee		

	Action	Lead 'organization'	Collaborating organizations	Timeframe or deadline
B5	Investigate 'innovative' formats for communicating evidence of the efficacy of GRPR	TBD		
B6	Begin research on the process of change	TBD		
B7	Set the 'groundwork' to establish GRPR as 'sound and multi-disciplinary research'	TBD		
Funding GRPR [F]				
F1	Develop fundraising strategy for support to and institutionalization of GRPR	Interim Committee	Participants; other stakeholders; donors	September 2010
Medium term [M]				
M1	Promote scaling up of gender-responsive programs	Research managers; GRPR practitioners in (mega) programs	Organization-specific	2011
M2	Revise programs that are gender neutral or might result in disadvantageous interventions for women	Organizations and research managers	Organization-specific	2011
M3	Document GRPR success stories for use in advocacy	TBD	Organizations & partners	2011

Organization-specific				
<i>Focus on organizational change for GRPR</i>				
O1	Revitalizing and building partnerships to support the GRPR institutionalization process	<i>Individual organizations will determine resources and timeframes</i>		
O2	Reflect on own context—enabling environment, political will for long-term commitment, champions in place. Does it value women champions? (E.g. conduct organizational analysis)			
O3	Strengthen enabling conditions for GRPR, including any policy changes needed to support it			
O4	Develop a policy framework, a strategic plan and a budget (including experts) for gender and participation			
O5	Create ‘political will’ for GRPR			
O6	Position GRPR champions as providers of sound gender resources (research results, information, guidelines, frameworks, budgeting, etc.)			
O7	Link GRPR champions into COP networks			
O8	Raise awareness of GRPR within organization			
O9	Build organizational capacity in GRPR—managers, researchers in general and GRPR specialists			
O10	Determine gender implications of all (existing & new) projects			
O11	Build gender-sensitivity (if not gender-responsiveness) into the ‘fabric’ of all R&D programs and projects (including milestones and M&E)*			
O12	Define indicators to measure the degree to which project development, implementation and evaluation are participatory, transparent			

Moving into GRPR				
G1	Prepare 'position statement' on where the organization sees its strengths and contributions in GRPR partnerships	Interim Committee as well as each organization		
G2	Reinforce/build R&D partnerships and define roles for engaging in research, development, delivery and advocacy			

*** Gender strategy in agricultural R&D programs: A suggested guide**

1. *Gender relevance:* What are the gender-differentiated contributions (existing/potential) that the program can make to poor people's livelihoods?
2. *Gender targeting:* What are the gender-sensitive outputs and outcomes targeted by the program in question?
3. *Gender research approach:* What gender-responsive research approaches/methods can be used to achieve these outputs and outcomes?
4. *Gender research capacity-strengthening:* What are the capacity-strengthening needs of and opportunities for the partner organizations to effectively carry out these gender research approaches/methods?

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Annex: List of contributors to this strategy and work plan

The principal group of contributors comprises the participants at the international workshop on 'Repositioning Participatory Research and Gender Analysis in Times of Change,' held at CIAT Headquarters, Cali, Colombia, June 16–18, 2010.

Other people were asked to contribute during the review process.

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