



# 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

September 2010



**Repositioning**  
PRGA in Times of Change  
June 16-18, 2010



Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical  
International Center for Tropical Agriculture  
Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research



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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.

I. Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical. II. Participatory Research and Gender Analysis.  
III. Ser.

AGRIS subject category: E50 Rural sociology / Sociología rural

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# A Global Strategy to Institutionalize Gender-Responsive Participatory Research in International Agricultural Research<sup>1</sup>

## 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.

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<sup>1</sup> "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.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> These factors severely restrict the extent to which gender-responsive

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<sup>2</sup> 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.

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