

Gender integration strategy: Approaches for research and development in a refugee context and other settings in Africa

Introduction

About this gender integration and transformation approach

The purpose of this brief is twofold: to frame the purpose of gender integration for use in displaced and disenfranchised communities in Africa; and to specify how a theory of gender integration and transformation can be applied to specific program objectives, including the design and development of projects; design and use of data collection protocols; development and delivery of training materials; and communication and outreach.

To that end, it is important to understand some key terms: *gender*, *intersectionality*, and the *dynamics of social change*. Each of these concepts help to define applied gender integration and transformation in a targeted manner that improves the impact and outreach of research and development projects. The strategy was originally developed for application in the *Resource Recovery and Reuse (RRR) in Refugee Settlements in Africa* project. Its application was extended to other projects in a refugee context and beyond, as described later.



Gray water-irrigated home garden in Kakuma host community, Kenya (photo: World Agroforestry [ICRAF]).



Gender integration emerged out of a set of emancipatory social movements that seek ultimately the equal treatment of all persons (Mason et al. 2017; Midoun et al. 2016; Pampel 2011; Nussbaum 1999; Smith 1987). The feminist and social justice movements seek far ranging social transformation that fundamentally reorganizes social conventions across the globe (Woodward 2009; Beumer et al. 2018). As important as these ideas and movements are, they speak to a scale and sweep of social change that is not easily applicable to projects that are time limited and specific in aim. For purposes of this discussion, we will consider how broad concepts and ideals can be translated into inclusive innovation specifically in humanitarian and development contexts.

Inclusion is the goal

When inclusion becomes the guiding principle of gender integration, the emphasis of our thinking shifts from a position of critique to one in which three critical concepts are targeted: *outreach*, *understanding*, and *discovering* points of mutual collaboration. *Outreach* is the act of organizing institutional and personal resources with the aim of making project benefits available to all persons taking into consideration where they are located geographically, educationally, emotionally and culturally. This means that integration must be a part of each segment of project development and implementation. *Understanding* speaks to the responsibility of inclusive projects to reach beyond simple categories, refugee, for example, to understand the human context in which individuals and communities are living. Central to this aspect is shifting the role of project beneficiaries from quasi-consumers to that of community-based collaborators. The project then shifts from being a delivery system for external knowledge to a learning community in which everyone has input. Finally,

discovering points of mutual collaboration ensures that gender integration avoids becoming a zero-sum process in which some individuals benefit while others are excluded. Communities last a lifetime and thus development projects that advocate for gender-inclusive practices function best when they are viewed as a catalyst for ideas and relationships that will endure and expand long after the specific project ends.

All of these ideas are particularly important in projects that have training and outreach as their primary outputs. The first step in the training process is to let a community know that best practices and innovations exist that they could use constructively. Real success emerges when individuals are better able to provide for themselves, and that, in turn, only works when the knowledge provided by any project can be adapted and used by the broadest possible number of people in the greatest variety of personal circumstances. Thus, gender integration is a tool for more comprehensive collaboration and inclusion of the widest diversity of persons on terms that are comfortable for them.

Disenfranchised and displaced persons, host communities and the international response

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN Refugee Agency, estimated that there were 89.3 million forcibly displaced people worldwide at the end of 2021. This included 25.7 million refugees, of which 6.9 million were hosted in the African continent (UNHCR 2022). The conflict in South Sudan has led to millions fleeing into Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda. Other key groups of refugees include the Rohingya ethnic minority fleeing Myanmar and the continuing exodus from Syria, as well as those fleeing the war in Ukraine.



Refugee settlement in Rhino, Uganda (photo: ICRAF).

Refugee and host community settings are only one of the challenging areas in which there is concern about gender inclusion. Any development project which attempts to improve the lives and livelihoods of economically and socially marginalized groups faces the same concerns that emerge in refugee conditions. Very poor people and communities tend to be less attractive to private sector for-profit companies and services. Maintaining innovations in the face of community desire to ensure basic survival is far more difficult than introducing new projects and concepts. For this reason, inclusion analysis that expands innovations and improvements into the fabric of communities stands a better chance of success over the long run. In this analysis, lessons learned from the refugee/host context are cited as an example with the understanding that this represents one arena where inclusion practices can support project success.

One final issue needs to be acknowledged. In both the household and small business context, accumulation of resources and capital is one of the major barriers to achieving economic and social stability. Marginalized people and communities, women, refugees, ethnic and religious minorities to name a few, use most of their resources to support day-to-day existence. For this reason, the reuse of wastes provides an opportunity for enhancing well-being at much lower and more achievable cost. Gray water produced by households from washing can be used to water small container gardens by women who may not have the time, access to land or rights to controlled water sources that would be used by conventional farms. Another example would be the use of charcoal dust and repurposed organic waste to produce briquettes for cooking and heating, reducing the need for collecting or purchasing other fuels. In both examples, the simple technologies and reuse of already available wastes increase the chances of busy, under-resourced women to participate. Thus, gender inclusion is one of the many benefits of supporting simple, small-scale reuse technologies.

Key terms to guide inclusive program design and implementation

Gender

A good way to understand gender is that it is a social dynamic that is defined by a given community. How many sexes there are, how those categories interact with one another, and what privileges and responsibilities each have vary substantially across cultures. In addition, in many places, questions of identity and individual behavior can quickly become controversial. For many, gender equals sex, which in turn is understood to be self-evident. The idea that biological sex is much more complicated than just two binary categories or that roles and privileges can change over time is deeply controversial for many people. Shifts in these kinds of understandings are a matter for generations not years.

The question, then, for endeavors that target gender inclusivity is: must one address any given community's ideas about identity and social roles in order to reach the widest number of potential beneficiaries? Put another way, what degree of transformation in this area of deeply felt social relations needs to be addressed in the course of short-term applied projects that focus on issues such as addressing food insecurity or energy poverty alleviation?

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a technical term, first articulated by legal scholar Kimberle Crenshaw (Crenshaw 1989) that describes the reality that whatever our understanding of sex and gender may be, each person has many other attributes of identity. Age, religion, marital status, first language, race, level of education, nationality and relative wealth are just a few of the relevant examples of other ways in which individuals define themselves and are defined by others. Inclusive projects that isolate one factor, gender, for example, without taking other factors into account, can quickly feel either superficial or discriminatory. On the other hand, acknowledging that both advantage and disadvantage accumulate in different ways and to different degrees, helps ground gender integration strategies in a commitment to full inclusion rather than simply changing who is winning and who is losing in a zero-sum social process.

In the development context, intersectionality becomes all the more important because of the diversity of intersecting, and cross-cultural, multi-institutional identities and expectations that are inherent in projects that seek to address the differences between the privileged and those who are participating in development innovations (Wong et al. 2019). Gender Transformative Approaches (GTAs) target structural change as opposed to simply addressing perceived gaps between homogenous groups of men and women, for example. The benefit of GTA goals lies in the ways in which a diversity of identities can be included both in project conception and interaction with community members. A challenge with GTAs, however, lies in the requirement that the complex interlocking identity and categories of social affiliation requires in-depth, nuanced understanding of both the development professional's social and institutional positionality and that of each community member involved in a given development opportunity. In reality, research on the social/cultural circumstances of individuals and community groups, as well as the self-understanding of the professionals involved, is rarely fully funded. The question then arises, can GTA work be done in the absence of a full and complete understanding of the social/cultural context in which the development innovation is set to occur? This question is particularly important in contexts such as refugee camps and settlements, where the fluidity of the communities and the urgency of food insecurity or energy poverty needs may not allow for a full-scale analysis as GTA would ideally advocate. To answer this question, one has to consider the ways in which social change can occur.

Dynamics of social change

The term social change refers to the reality that shifts in ideas, forms of expression, self-understanding and a host of other individual characteristics always takes place in a social context. As important as individual development and expression may be, social change is a function of communities, groups, states, nations and transnational entities. For this reason, measuring social change in any methodologically viable way is an area of study unto itself, rather than the product of specific project interventions. Most importantly, social dynamics are best understood over time as GTA theorists would be the first to say. If an alteration in behavior or self-conception is still in evidence five or 10 years after it emerges or is introduced, real social change may have occurred. As such, while projects strive to initiate social change, proof that such alterations have stuck happens years, if not decades, later.

The GTA approach in agriculture and energy poverty alleviation (Spreng 2014; Wong et al. 2019) offers an alternative approach to altering the dynamics of social change. Rather than beginning from the question of community norms, identities, and abstract self-understandings, it is possible instead to focus on capacity building with technical innovations that have been used in other similar contexts adapted to suit the physical and agronomic conditions of the targeted communities. This approach lends itself to work in humanitarian settings in particular because the on-the-ground conditions of both refugees and host community members are determined to a substantial degree by the support offered by UNHCR, transnational nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and the governments of the hosting countries. Although there may be a diversity of actors, refugee camps or settlements and the surrounding host communities are organized in relatively consistent ways. The United Nations, NGOs and governments organize basic housing, food, water and related services to individuals who have fled with little more than they can carry. Host communities adapt to an influx of refugees and through their governments negotiate co-existence with their new neighbors.

This standard humanitarian infrastructure can be reductive, leading to undifferentiated labels such as “refugee” or “host community member” that would seem to be exactly the homogenizing social conditions Crenshaw (1989) was concerned about. At the same time, the physical context which impacts agriculture and natural resource use provides a framework for engaging with community members in a manner that both builds their capacity and brings to light the social conditions in which they operate and understand themselves. Put another way, starting with simple, effective training activities is a means by which to understand the

nature of the social/cultural conditions in which individuals and communities are functioning. This is particularly important in the refugee/host community context where gender, ethnic, national and a host of other identities may have permanently changed through the process of displacement in ways that even the parties involved are consistently reconsidering and reformulating.

Reflection and capacity building as forms of gender transformation

In humanitarian contexts, professionals and community members face two deep challenges: a short-term, urgent need to save lives, and a need to serve communities that may last far longer than originally intended. If refugees could return home within a few months or a year with any consistency, the social organization of their communities would be a relatively low priority. Gender equity would be confined to ensuring that all recipients receive the services they require. It is in the second situation, where refugees may stay decades, that the social and cultural structures that govern community functioning become complicated and critical for both displaced persons and professionals of all kinds who seek to provide services and support.

GTA calls for all parties involved to reflect upon their intersectional social positions and how those assumptions may guide program creation and delivery. The act of reflection allows for a reasoned consideration of the adoption and integration of a given set of innovations or practices including the ability to observe unexpected responses. From the professional viewpoint, the iterative nature of gender transformative work allows for ongoing self-correcting feedback as projects are tweaked to suit the needs of recipients and the nature of those individuals and communities becomes clearer.



After receiving training from local trainers, this woman living in Rhino camp refugee settlement, Uganda, carbonizes crop residues in a pit and uses the char to produce fuel briquettes to meet her cooking needs (photo: ICRAF).

From the community perspective, either among those formally designated as displaced or those who are citizens of the host country, an iterative capacity building approach addresses in some small way the substantial power differential between professionals and those who have lost substantial portions of their livelihoods and possessions. In the case of host communities, land granted to house refugees may undermine traditional grazing habits or absorb scarce resources such as firewood or water. Training of trainer (ToT) approaches, project design that takes into account the family responsibilities of communities that skew disproportionately young, and flexible and simple training goals that allow for alteration by individual participants, all support a non-directive but meaningful project outcome. By focusing on training and modification, the intersectional needs of participants can be accommodated without requiring that the professionals involved develop a full and complete understanding of local conditions. Perhaps, even more crucially, the transformative mechanism of such capacity building projects comes from the participants rather than from professionals who may or may not have the time and resources to develop community specific adjustments.

Transformation as an iterative process

Inclusive and enduring social change can seem to parallel technology transfer from one party who holds knowledge and information to a community where both are in short supply. Even the term gender transformation can feel like an agenda generated by one group on the grounds of social science analysis, to be absorbed by a disadvantaged group in need of attitudinal alteration. Unlike civil rights movements, gender transformation by humanitarian and development experts can feel like the powerful imposing social change on those seeking protection from violence and hunger. If, instead, transformation is understood as a collaborative and iterative process whereby skills such as small-scale gardening or alternative fuel production are equitably shared with community members for their own use and adaptation, the social change agenda, which everyone should have access to as their talents and interests apply, can slowly and in locally appropriate ways seep into the larger process of self-understanding that is an unavoidable part of the displacement context. Over time, perhaps years or decades, reductions in food insecurity or energy poverty via the skills and efforts of previously less valued community members can shift the social standing of those individuals.

Application of the strategy in the RRR in refugee context in Africa

Refugees and host communities

Refugee settlements and camps exist by definition in remote areas under the supervision of UNHCR and host country governments. In this context, as mentioned previously, it is difficult to engage in comprehensive assessments of either host communities or refugees themselves beyond the basic information collected by busy humanitarian relief staff or local government partners. The humanitarian community

has, over the past several years, begun to address the reality that displacement is no longer a temporary condition but can often exist for decades. As that understanding of displaced persons shifts and the ongoing concern for host community impacts adjusts in response to that reality, the need to better understand the social and cultural preferences and conventions of both groups increases. Project design needs to include the assumption that at any point, cultural barriers or opportunities may emerge and require adjustments. Flexibility is key to inclusive program delivery.

The RRR in refugee context approach to gender integration and transformation is important because the issue of gender and culture was included from the initial conception of the project. Considering how to remove barriers to full participation in the project by all willing individuals has informed each phase of the planning. The project's impact pathway can best be described based on a progression from adaptive research to knowledge sharing/capacity building and upscaling (Figure 1). The impact pathway follows the work packages; from the initial stakeholder consultations to understanding the local context, to design of interventions and promotion to the upscaling partners for integration into their programs. The project was designed to integrate intersectional gender at each stage of the impact pathway. Moreover, progressing through this pathway enables integration of lessons learned along each stage to inform research and project design.

This point is worth emphasizing, gender integration is not a process of replacing men with women in specific roles. Rather, it is a design that requires, from the outset, that men, women, youth, children, older folks, indeed everyone, can be exposed to the important ideas. Even if certain groups of individuals can do more, younger people may adopt intensive gardening projects more frequently than the elderly. For example, it is critical to the inclusion and integration agenda that as many individuals as possible be at least exposed to the project innovations as possible. In addition, a comprehensive inclusion agenda understands the importance of grassroots innovations which can improve best practices, and which may be articulated by the wider community. Projects which focus on key household and cultural issues, such as food insecurity and energy poverty, occupy a cultural space that extends beyond the practical question of fuel types or cooking practices. The approval and improvement of RRR concepts from the community as a whole ensure that the project will be potentially more successful. The inclusion agenda assumes that social cohesion and consensus around practical innovations ensures longevity and perseverance of project activities. Hence, the emphasis on communication and outreach to the maximum number of people is linked to the integration component.

The *RRR in Refugee Settlements in Africa* project¹ is being implemented in six refugee settlements and their surrounding host communities in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda. The aim of the project is to increase the resilience of these communities through the implementation of RRR² solutions. This builds

¹ <https://rrr-refugee.iwmi.org/>

² <https://www.iwmi.cgiar.org/publications/resource-recovery-reuse/>

on previous research and innovations by project partners in developing, testing and verifying technologies and livelihood models for gender-responsive RRR solutions to capture energy, water and nutrients, and building resilient food and energy systems for refugee settlements and host communities. The target is to reach 3,600 and 200,000 people directly and indirectly, respectively (Njenga et al. 2020). The project is a collaboration between the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), the merged World Agroforestry and Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR-ICRAF), the Alliance of Bioversity International and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), Ethiopia, Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Wollo University, Ethiopia, Penn State University, USA, and UNHCR and UN-Habitat.

Project phases and gender integration

Project proposal development and launch

Gender inclusion analysis must be included and

budgeted for in the inception phase of the project. A designated gender expert is optimal from the point of project design. From the beginning, as the project activities are being formulated, key gender-related questions were included. The work done by the gender researcher in the *RRR in Refugee Settlements in Africa* project and other projects was possible because there was a budget for travel in the project proposal.

Under ideal circumstances, a pragmatic intervention intended to improve food security, or address energy poverty, would begin with a comprehensive understanding of the full social context in which household members operate. In the case of refugees, this baseline understanding would also need to account for the changes that displacement has wrought. For example, in the refugee context, one can know from UNHCR data that people officially registered in refugee camps are women and children. Those missing are men and older people. The absence of older community members is understandable, given the physical rigors of flight.

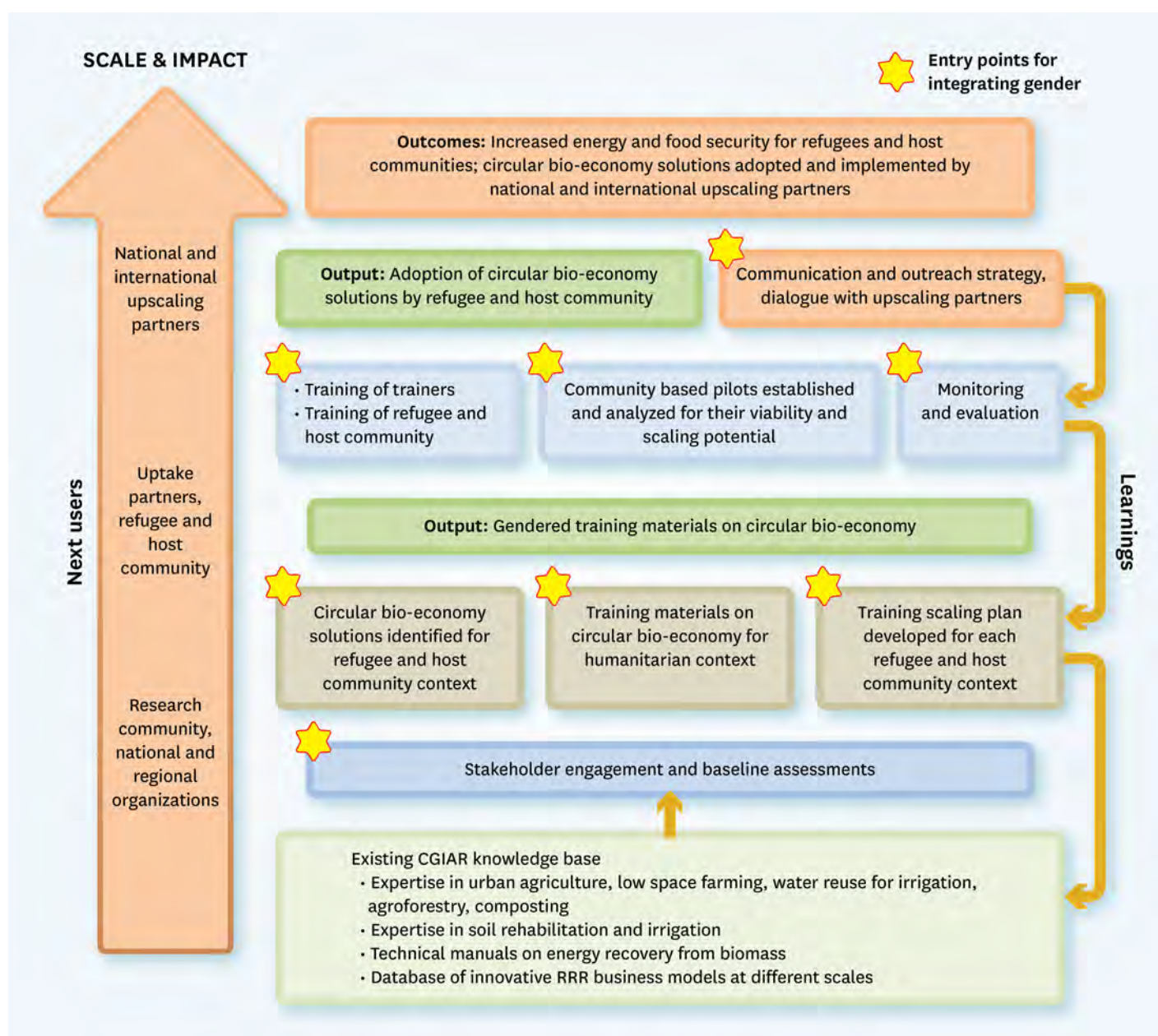


Figure 1. The RRR in Refugee Settlements in Africa project impact pathway.



Project partners meeting at ICRAF agroforestry community learning center at Rhino camp refugee settlement in Uganda (photo: IWMI).

Useful questions for determining the gendered context

- a. What were the social roles and obligations among currently disenfranchised persons in their home locations in relation to the areas of interest (food security, farming, energy poverty alleviation, and health and sanitation practices)?
- b. Are there social practices which forbid participation in designated activities of interest? For example, are water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) activities impacted by gender-specific rules on cleanliness? Who sources firewood?
- c. Since household use is a critical area, are there social practices that determine who can live with whom? Who can engage in cooking activities? Who can farm? In communities where displacement has occurred, are any of these practices altered by the migration of some community members to cities or even other countries?
- d. What happens when the designated individuals are not around to do previously expected jobs? In rural Kenya, for example, who can harvest wood from the forest versus who can harvest from on-farm trees is determined by sex and age. What happens when the “right” persons are missing from a household?
- e. What happens when people do the work that needs to be done even if it violates norms from their home community? Is there backlash against gender non-conforming behavior? A man who collects wood or a woman who manages money?
- f. Who has time on their hands? Who is too busy? Can interventions be introduced so that they do not unduly burden busy people?
- g. What happens when a task changes from a burden to a profitable business? In some other locations in East Africa, we have seen tasks that become mechanized, such as briquette making, and then become work done by men while women attend to household activities. Does this happen or could it happen in the communities where we are working?
- h. What impact could any given innovation have on school attendance? Are there differences among groups that alter the impact of school attendance options?
- i. Displacement and migration are factors that impact both those who are legally designated as such and those who are not. What impact have the movements of people over the last several years had on cultural expectations? In light of climate change, displacement must be considered an ongoing norm rather than an exception. How do gender roles change as people move?
- j. Two critical areas impact the viability of interventions and the participation of various groups: transportation or lack thereof for people and goods, and food preservation/safety.
- k. Finally, what are the missing aspects of specific locations and conditions? Many innovations fail because of unintended consequences. How does a project account for new information and insights?

Baseline and impact assessment surveys

Most projects begin with baseline surveys which lay the groundwork for later assessment criteria. It is, therefore, critical that the baseline surveys be inclusive and culturally sensitive. Inclusion needs to be considered both in terms of content and methods of data collection.

A content issue might, for example, ensure that family cooks are interviewed and asked in detail about cooking fuels, food preservation or home gardening practices they personally engage in rather than asking the head of the household who may not carry out those tasks and unable to comment on them. Such questions need to be carefully phrased to avoid terms that may be unfamiliar such as gender or equity. Instead, one can focus on who does which tasks and what makes that person best at that job?

In terms of data collection, it is important to accommodate existing social conventions. In many places, data should be collected from women by female enumerators and from men by male enumerators. This approach ensures that if there was a question that could inadvertently address a gendered social taboo, the chances of engaging in a social misstep would be reduced. In addition, having both sexes represented among the enumerators would allow individuals from

binary sex separated households still feel comfortable enough to participate.

In addition to these guidelines being observed in the RRR in refugee context work, it was also applied in response to increased environmental degradation and promotion of alternative energy sources in refugee hosting districts in Uganda. The project focuses on capacity development in action planning and programming in energy, environment, and climate change mitigation and adaptation, and enhancement of participation of women, girls and disadvantaged groups in a project conducted by Save the Children, CIFOR-ICRAF, Enabel, Joint Energy and Environment Projects (JEEP), and other partners with funding from the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF).³ In this project, the authors of the strategy supported the project team in the development of a key informant tool administered to represent local government, private sector, community-based organizations and civil society organizations. One limitation observed in this project is that 80% of employees in local government were men, which meant that, in addition to interviewing women, female enumerators also interviewed male officers. It is an example where some planned procedures may need to be adapted to the local context, and in the questionnaire, the gender of both enumerator and respondent is indicated.



Gray water-irrigated home garden in Kakuma host community, Kenya (photo: IWMI).

³ <https://worldagroforestry.org/project/response-increased-environmental-degradation-and-promotion-alternative-energy-sources>

Training and material development

The advantage of having a dedicated gender integration expert on a project is that as training materials and workshops are developed, the gender and inclusion component can be integrated from the beginning. Team meetings can include consistent attention to inclusion and unintended consequences which strengthened the connection between inclusion and technical content.

The trainings can occur at two levels. The first stage involves training where project partners engage in a co-learning process. The co-learning includes a gender integration training for project partners who may bring with them assumptions about gender roles from their own backgrounds and experiences. The emphasis on “learning together” rather than on a technology transfer mode of instruction is well adapted to inclusion discussions, because the assumption must be made that substantial community-initiated adjustments are the norm rather than the exception. The second stage then occurs where the community trainers use materials translated into selected local languages and are technically supported by the project team in training communities on the ground. The two-phase approach ensures that the technical experts think about the social context factors and the gender experts develop sufficient technical knowledge to be able to adapt technical practices to be inclusive.

Communication, outreach, stakeholder engagement and policy development

A communication strategy can be intended to reach both active and passive project participants. In many communities, radios are played in communal settings where family and community activities were taking place. The benefit of radio used in this way is that it increases familiarity with the project and its goals even among those who are too old, too young or too busy to participate. From a gender perspective, this process of building communal understanding and support is important should existing social norms need to be bent for the cause of inclusivity.

For the same reasons, translating radio and other outreach materials into local languages ensures that information reaches those who do not speak colonial languages and aids in developing comfortable familiarity. Regardless of media, outreach materials alone should be designed with varying levels of detail and complexity to appeal to a diversity of audiences.

Engaging with stakeholders with a shared goal is critical not only for sustainability but also for scaling. For instance, members of the projects described in this strategy engaged in local, national and global platforms. In these platforms, they learn more about the need for gender responsive evidence to support and monitor development, and to also share lessons for uptake and scaling by other stakeholders. “Implementation of innovations should not stop at the end of the project. Rather, other stakeholders should be able to pick it up from there and carry on,” remarks by Francis Ekiro, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), based at Kakuma and Kalobeyei refugee settlements in Kenya.

The procedures in this strategy were applied in the development of Kenya’s Bioenergy Strategy 2020-2027, in order to ensure that gender issues were considered especially when building the case on benefits and challenges facing firewood users, and identification of priority interventions to make this commonly used type of energy sustainable (MoE 2020).

Crosscutting theme: Gender integration training for project team members

For gender integration to succeed, team members in every role should be able to see the benefit of gender integration and this can be achieved through an inclusive project design, built on developing a consensus and a common understanding of terms and approaches. A gender integration session was organized for project partners during the project inception phase to ensure they all understand the concept, terms and approaches.

To ensure that gender integration is truly carried out throughout the project life cycle, gender is included as part of the agenda in all activities and progress is assessed during project meetings just like any other activity.

Applications outside of a refugee context

The gender responsive procedures in baseline survey tool development and data collection were also applied in building resilience through water and wastewater management that focuses on circular economy solutions to close water, energy and food loops in West Africa,⁴ a project conducted by the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) and partners.

The *Creating and capturing value: Supporting enterprises for urban liquid and solid wastes recycling for food, energy and clean environment* (CapVal) project is funded by the Dutch government Ghana WASH Window under the Sustainable Water Fund (GWW-FDW) program and implemented in partnership with Jekora Ventures Ltd, Trimark Aquaculture Centre, Training, Research and Networking for Development (TREND), CIFOR-ICRAF, Hivos People Unlimited, Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly, and Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly. The project, among others, aimed at developing and commercializing briquettes made from organic solid waste. In the *CapVal* project, the gender integration strategy was applied in guiding the process of integrating the perception of potential users, such as households, and small businesses, such as bead makers, in selecting the appropriate briquette variety among six options. In this process, users assessed the fuel consumption and emissions during real life use in cooking a traditional meal of rice and vegetables. Later, the prioritized briquette variety was used in bead processing, and in both cases, compared to the base firewood. Focus group discussions were held with women, as the main domestic cooks and bead processors, with questions that captured gender issues.

Reflection and learning

A critical part of team activities includes an ongoing process of reflection about the progress of the work and the adjustments necessary to achieve the stated outcomes. It also captures how innovations are being adapted and adopted. The reality is

⁴ http://www.iwmi.cgiar.org/Publications/Water_Issue_Briefs/PDF/water_issue_brief_17.pdf

that this work is profoundly difficult. The targeted populations can live in remote and agriculturally problematic locations or crowded urban settings. Disenfranchised communities and individuals experience substantial upheaval, change and loss as they struggle to accommodate significant shifts in conditions. In addition, Covid-19 has added pressure to already stretched international aid and development systems, leaving inadequate funding for outreach needed.

The inclusive leadership style contributes significantly to the success of inclusive projects. One clear recommendation is the need to dedicate more time to cross-cultural, cross-institutional team building, so that delicate social/cultural norms and practices among team members can be acknowledged and appreciated. In addition, positive and supportive attitudes among team members are critical to ensure that each member can contribute fully to work that demands creativity, endurance and compassion.

Lessons on systematic gender integration

- Successful development of a strategy and gender integration in research and development projects requires a dedicated gender expert as part of the project team,
- and the activity being recognized as a work package with a budget line.
- Training the project team on gender and the importance of gender integration throughout the project life cycle is critical as it enhances common understanding and approach.
- Development of survey tools and implementation require inclusion of targeted questions and involvement of female and male enumerators who interview people of the same gender,
- Development of training materials requires inputs from experts, including development and humanitarian practitioners working on the ground with knowledge on the subject matter and working as a team promotes co-learning. Considerations should be made on what is feasible based on local context, and communities needs and preferences, and availability without burdening any group of people.
- Use of gender responsive tools and procedures in product development and commercialization is critical in gathering target end users' perception to meet their needs and aspirations.



Project team in a discussion about fruit tree seedlings at the tree nursery managed by Lotus Kenya Action for Development Organization (LOKADO) and FAO at Kakuma, Kenya (photo: IWMI).



Gray water-irrigated home garden in Kakuma refugee camp, Kenya (*photo: Danish Refugee Council*).

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Project

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More information

Podcast on 'Why the energy and food nexus is critical in refugee context: Gender-inclusive approach is critical to solving the puzzle': <https://forestsnews.cifor.org/66077/why-the-energy-and-food-nexus-is-critical-in-refugee-context?fnl=en>

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IWMI
International Water
Management Institute



IWMI is a CGIAR Research Center

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