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Cross-CRP Analysis of Gender and Youth in the 2017-2022 CGIAR Research Program Portfolio (CRP2)



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CONTEXT

In its call for the 2017-22 CGIAR Research Program (CRP2) proposals and system-level platforms, the CGIAR Consortium specified that proposals should:

1. Synthesize the gender analysis (with major papers or reports referenced) that was done before the proposal's research priorities and questions were set, and how that informed the priority setting;
2. Provide an overview of how gender will be operationalized in the research agenda, and how progress towards gender-responsive outcomes will be monitored and ultimately evaluated; describe proposed activities on youth separately from gender-related work;
3. Ensure target beneficiary population numbers are disaggregated by sex; and,
4. Identify the budgets for gender-related and youth-related activities.

Subsequently, as part of its assessment of the CRP2 portfolio submitted in March 2016, the Independent Science and Partnership Council (ISPC) commissioned two external reviews of gender and youth strategy in the 12 CRP and three platform proposals. This brief pro-

vides a summary of those external reviews. The reviews assessed the significance of research to the [CGIAR Strategy and Results Framework's](#) (SRF) gender-related Intermediate Development Outcomes (IDOs) and sub-IDOs, and how gender and youth issues were considered in each proposal's theory of change, impact pathway, work plan, and monitoring and evaluation approaches at the CRP, platform, and portfolio levels.

FINDINGS

As indicated above, the ISPC criteria for review of gender and youth strategies at the individual CRP, platform, and portfolio levels were:

- Evidence that gender and youth issues have been considered within the proposed research framework and have been used in shaping research priorities, and that 'appropriate' research hypotheses are being posed; and
- Evidence that CRPs (platforms) have demonstrated a commitment to inclusive impact, creating opportunities for women, youth, and marginalized groups in general i.e., equitable access to resources, information, and power in agriculture.

Findings on Gender

It is evident from the proposals that there is wide heterogeneity in the quality of research on gender being conducted. Despite this heterogeneity, it is also apparent that each CRP has at least considered gender issues in its proposal. Hence, it can be argued that ‘gender’ has been institutionalized.

All CRP2 proposals reference the [GENNOVATE](#) initiative that addressed the question of “how gender norms and agency influence men, women, and youth to adopt innovation in agriculture and natural resource management (NRM)” as well as learning gained from other CRPs. This level of evident cooperation is impressive. However, not all proposals summarize lessons from previous efforts. The collaborative platform developed by the CRP Policies, Institutions, and Markets (PIM) is referenced by only three CRPs; most CRPs refer to the older Gender Network.

Typically, CRP gender strategies focus on gender-differentiated surveys and data compilation; consider gendered preferences in developing improved crop varieties; or develop innovations that address women farmers’ adoption constraints, including gendered knowledge. Gender strategies focus on women, and men are the gender against which analysis is done or are viewed as the gender that exploits women’s labor and takes control of benefits. Few CRPs take gender and social relations into account.

While some reference to the broader context is made – for instance, consideration of the increased role of women as farmers because of increased ‘out migration’ from rural areas, there is little innovation and evolution of thought beyond what has been done before. That being said, there are a few exceptions where researchers are pushing the frontier on opportunities from changes in the agri-food systems. There is also acknowledgement of the need for an enabling environment for change to occur, and changing gender norms that disadvantage women is part of this.

In terms of budgetary allocation, the largest proportion of gender budget is allocated to what is referred to as genetics or integrated gender research.

Findings on Youth

In contrast to CRP gender strategies, youth research is not at an advanced stage in any of the CRP2 proposals; only two of the CRPs consider youth as a research agenda. The majority of CRPs’ youth strategies focus on identifying employment opportunities along the value chain, access to land and tenure rights, etc. It is not evident that the CGIAR has a comparative advantage in identifying skillsets needed along value chains or in developing curricula (an approach many proposals mention). CRPs lack partnership strategies such as linkages with agribusinesses or business schools. Considering that the CGIAR has limited capacity to provide leadership in the type of development that will reinforce business activities in input supply, procurement, storage, marketing, logistics, and food product development, which will in turn make available employment opportunities, this lack of partnerships is of particular concern.

There is a general lack of reflection on the data collected on youth aspirations in agriculture and structural transformation of economies. For instance, while the typical objective is to increase the interest of youth in agriculture, findings from GENNOVATE research across Ethiopia, Malawi, Mexico, Nepal, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe suggest that the aspirations of young men and women in rural areas are found outside agricultural or natural resource management (NRM) activities.

To summarize, while some CRPs have a relatively advanced approach to youth, it does not appear that youth issues have influenced CRP research priorities at large. There is a substantial upsurge of interest in the wider development community and perhaps even national governments to focus on young people, but a convincing case hasn’t been made that it is reasonable or achievable for CRPs to contribute to this issue.

