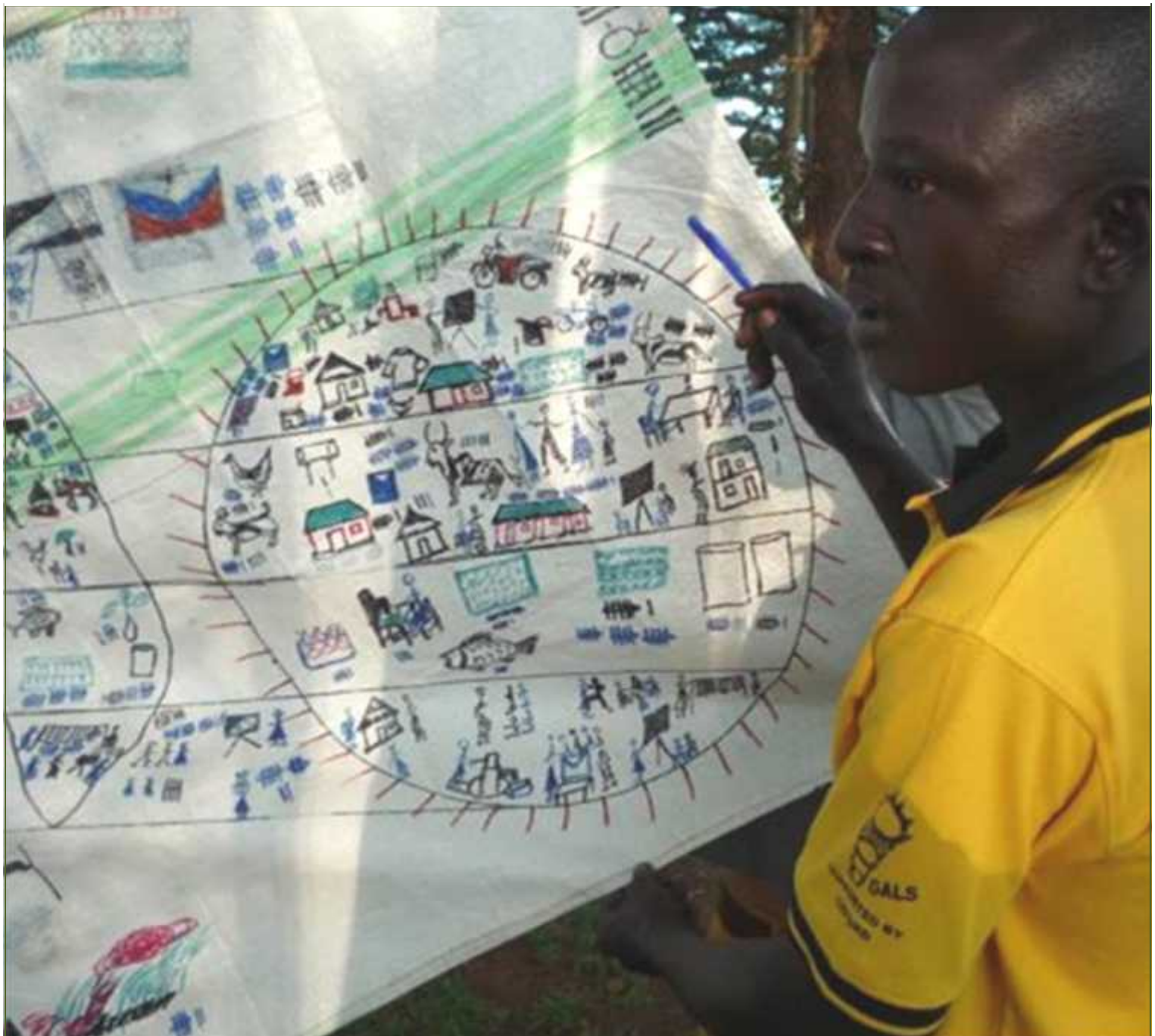


# Case study

## Gender Action Learning System in Ghana, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Uganda

Gender, targeting and social inclusion



**Case studies** illustrate the kinds of interventions (from IFAD and other development agencies) that have used household methodologies effectively, highlighting the way each methodology has worked in a particular context.

The **case studies** are “living” documents and will be updated periodically based on new experiences and feedback. If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact the originators.

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# Gender Action Learning System in Ghana, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Uganda

## Section 1: Overview of the methodology

<b>Name of the methodology</b>	<b>Gender Action Learning System (GALS)</b>
<b>Countries of implementation</b>	In association with IFAD: Ghana, Lao PDR, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Uganda Elsewhere: Bangladesh, Sudan, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe
<b>Start/end date</b>	2008 - ongoing
<b>Lead organization sponsoring the development and implementation of the methodology</b>	<p>GALS has been developed under Oxfam Novib's (ON) Women's Empowerment Mainstreaming and Networking (WEMAN) Programme since 2008 with local partners and Linda Mayoux. The use of GALS in value chain development (VCD) was piloted by ON and partners in Uganda through a small IFAD grant (2009-2011). It was rolled out by ON with local partners in Nigeria, Rwanda and Uganda with the support of a large IFAD grant (2011-2014) and in other countries with co-funding from other donors.</p> <p>GALS has also been implemented directly in IFAD-supported projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rehabilitation and Community-based Poverty Reduction Project (RCPRP) in Sierra Leone</li> <li>▪ Kirehe Community-based Watershed Management Project (KWAMP) in Rwanda</li> <li>▪ Rural Finance Institution Building Programme, Nigeria</li> <li>▪ Rural Enterprises Programme in Ghana</li> <li>▪ Pro-poor Value Chain Development in the Maputo and Limpopo Corridors Project in Mozambique</li> </ul>
<b>Purpose of the methodology</b>	<p>The purpose of the GALS methodology is to give women and men more control over their lives and to catalyse and support a sustainable movement for gender justice. GALS promotes equality in rights and opportunities by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ empowering the most vulnerable women and men to develop, negotiate, implement and monitor their own plans for increasing productivity/quality and incomes, reducing livelihood risks and increasing gender equality within households</li> <li>▪ bringing about significant changes in property rights, gender-based violence and participation in economic decision-making</li> <li>▪ in the context of VCD, engaging with and gaining commitment of more powerful private-sector actors at the local and national levels to develop win-win strategies for VCD that address gender issues and promote inclusion of the most vulnerable.</li> </ul>

<b>Contribution of the methodology to wider organizational/project goals</b>	<p>The methodology aims at generating pro-poor wealth by addressing unequal gender and social relations, which are key constraints to achieving development goals.</p> <p>GALS can be used in many different thematic areas of work: rural finance, VCD, smallholder agriculture, rural enterprise development, community development, etc. Consequently, GALS links directly with specific project objectives. The GALS process also facilitates project implementation by enhancing ownership of project activities by the target group, and the participatory design and monitoring of project interventions.</p>
<b>Target group</b>	<p>The poverty diamond tool for poverty ranking and profiling is used with the community to develop targeting criteria. The target group consists of extremely poor and food-insecure women and men, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ smallholder farmers</li><li>▪ youth, particularly unemployed youth</li><li>▪ micro (small) entrepreneurs</li><li>▪ people with disabilities</li><li>▪ different community-based groups, depending on the nature of the project; for example, producers' organizations, local business associations, inland valley swamp associations and village-level savings and credit groups.</li></ul>

## Section 2: Implementation arrangements

<b>Implementing partners</b>	<p>The implementing partners vary according to the context and nature of the project.</p> <p>Oxfam Novib works through national and local civil society organizations. In IFAD-supported projects, staff in the project management unit take the lead in overseeing the implementation of GALS activities, usually linking with the project line ministry such as agricultural extension, land and water development or community development. Service providers/non-governmental organizations with a commitment to participatory development, human rights and gender equality may be hired to support GALS implementation at the community level.</p> <p>In Sierra Leone, for example, GALS coordination committees comprising different stakeholders were established at the district level to coordinate, monitor and support the GALS community facilitators. There was also capacity-building in gender and participatory methods for staff from the various project components.</p>
<b>Selection of facilitators</b>	<p>Women and men from participating groups or communities that have used GALS to change their situation “emerge” as facilitators for others. Implementing organizations need to have the skill to recognize and support these change makers, with attention to both women and men. Community facilitators should have the following qualities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ability to listen to others</li> <li>▪ willing to share their own process of change</li> <li>▪ open to learning from others</li> <li>▪ good communicators</li> <li>▪ respectful of other people’s views</li> <li>▪ proactive</li> <li>▪ take responsibility for their actions.</li> </ul>
<b>Training of facilitators</b>	<p>The initial training of trainers – who are usually staff from implementing partners – is provided during a five- to ten-day practical workshop led by an international GALS practitioner to ensure quality and correct understanding of the methodology. This is best done “outside the classroom” with a pilot community since poor people usually grasp the use of the visual diagramming tools quickly. Staff also learn much more quickly, and those who have learned GALS from or with the community are usually more successful in their role of supporting the community facilitators. They learn that they can step aside and give space to community members to do the training rather than perpetuate top-down systems of knowledge transfer. The international practitioner undertakes periodic follow-up visits, especially during the early stages, to backstop the trainers and facilitators and provide additional training, and to support the adaptation of the GALS tools to local contexts, if necessary. Over time, the community facilitators build up their own network of peer facilitators, developed from among their group members.</p>

## Section 3: GALS at the group and household levels

<p><b>Stage 1: Preparatory work</b></p>	<p>GALS activities are introduced and adapted in stages as part of a community-led design process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Capacity-building and gender training</b> for staff and implementing partners to demonstrate that gender injustice is a key cause of poverty and important to the men and women in the communities where they work, thereby fostering their motivation and commitment to the process.</li> <li>▪ <b>Field testing and adaptation of materials</b> in order to establish community ownership from the outset and to develop a core group of men and women in the community who can then be part of the facilitation team for group members, neighbours and other communities.</li> <li>▪ <b>Revision and adaptation of the GALS “mother” manual</b> to produce locally adapted guidelines for the community facilitators</li> <li>▪ <b>GALS event</b> for learning and exchange, and scaling up from field testing.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stage 2: Gender action learning for individuals, households and groups</b></p>	<p>Community facilitators introduce group members to the GALS tools, such as vision journeys, circle maps, trees and diamonds for: i) envisioning and planning change; ii) analysing and changing gender relations and norms; and iii) monitoring change at the individual, household and collective levels. This process is done one step at a time. Participants then share these tools and the key gender principles with others, including family members. Participants share their experiences and are introduced to a new set of GALS tools, which they then share with their households and others. This process continues with various tools, taking individuals, households and groups through the following steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ creating a long-term vision and time-bound milestones, including a business and livelihood vision, family and gender vision, and personal development vision</li> <li>▪ analysing and learning from past achievements, constraints and opportunities; developing key action points</li> <li>▪ mapping opportunities and challenges; examining relationships, resources and power in the household and community; developing key action points</li> <li>▪ sharing strategies and identifying possible solutions and SMART<sup>1</sup> actions for individuals and groups</li> <li>▪ assessing impact of achievements and addressing remaining issues</li> <li>▪ aggregating activities at the household level to make a collective action strategy for the group.</li> <li>▪ Building on the behaviour change that community participants are able to make in their own lives, they train others on how to analyse the issues affecting them and to plan change. Thus, the change scales up through peer-to-peer training and sharing. The implementing partner catalyses this and continuously enforces human rights in the peer sharing process.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Indicators should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART).



<p><b>Stage 3: Gender mainstreaming in economic interventions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preliminary mapping of main activities, stakeholders, value distribution, governance and gender inequalities.</li> <li>▪ Participatory action research with different vulnerable stakeholder groups (and, where feasible, more powerful stakeholders) to identify the poverty and gender issues at each level, identify immediate short-term change strategies and strengthen collaboration and peer sharing.</li> <li>▪ Identification, planning and negotiation of multistakeholder win-win strategies.</li> <li>▪ Sustainable action learning process, including integration of learning into planning processes and policy advocacy.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Average length of the implementation cycle</b></p>	<p>Stage 1: one month                  Stage 2: six months                  Stage 3: one to three years.</p>

## Section 4: Monitoring and indicators

<p><b>Monitoring process</b></p>	<p>GALS fosters community participatory reviews and impact assessments on livelihood improvement, with a focus on poverty and gender issues. The GALS participants and groups develop a culture of ongoing monitoring. Changes are documented through the use of the visual tools, which also provide a baseline to assess change. Results are quantified through aggregation from household to group. Communities use the information to track peer learning; the peer facilitators and the people they train document the training process.</p> <p>The project monitoring and evaluation (M&amp;E) unit consolidates quantitative and qualitative outputs and outcomes across the project. Qualitative documentation can be linked to a project's communication and advocacy strategy.</p>
<p><b>Indicators</b></p>	<p>Indicators are developed by the participants through the use of certain GALS tools, including the poverty diamond, gender balance tree, income tree, challenge action tree and empowerment map. The indicators relate to three levels of monitoring: outputs, outcomes and impacts. Indicators capture changes in the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ income generation and access to income by women and men</li> <li>▪ division of labour among household members</li> <li>▪ property/assets ownership by women and men</li> <li>▪ participation of women in decision-making in the home, producer groups, community and value chain platforms</li> <li>▪ participation of women in accessing project and other services</li> <li>▪ number of children being sent to school and payment of fees</li> <li>▪ number of domestic conflicts.</li> </ul>

## Section 5: Results

<p><b>Number of beneficiaries reached/ planned to be reached</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Under the large IFAD grant with ON, over 34,000 people in Rwanda, Nigeria and Uganda (about 20,500 women and 13,500 men) use the GALS methodology to develop visions, plans and strategies for promoting gender equality and improving their livelihoods.</li> <li>▪ In Sierra Leone under RCPRP, it is expected that at least 4,500 rural households will have participated in GALS by the end of 2015.</li> <li>▪ In Rwanda under KWAMP, it is expected that 1,200 households will have participated in GALS by the end of the project in 2016.</li> <li>▪ The implementation of GALS is at a preliminary stage in the other IFAD-supported projects.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Main changes that can be attributed to the methodology</b></p>	<p>GALS brings about powerful, positive changes in gender and social norms and relations for both men and women, including youth, at the household and group levels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A direct relationship has been found between behaviour change at the household level and livelihoods improvement, including higher productivity, better access to services and markets and increased household assets (livestock, cattle, bicycles, motorcycles, farm equipment, radios and improvements on the house), increased investments in education for boys and girls, and a reduction in the number of food-insecure months. Increased incomes and savings are used to rent land for farming, to hire casual farm labour, to buy improved seeds and to boost small trade.</li> <li>▪ Some of the key areas of change that make this possible include reduced alcohol abuse, gambling and domestic violence, and men taking up domestic chores like fetching water and firewood, and cooking food. This reduces women's workload and enables them to spend more time on business or leisure. Within families, women can now openly discuss with men such issues as family planning, decisions about expenditures and new enterprises. Women also take up leadership positions and increasingly acquire, own and control property. Youth can be motivated by seeing a more positive future for themselves.</li> <li>▪ The common visions developed at the group and cooperative levels lead to collective businesses, stronger community organizations and better links with buyers and input suppliers.</li> </ul> <p>In addition, the communication, analytical and participatory skills of staff from the project and implementing partners have been strengthened, enabling them to better work with women and men from poor households.</p>



**Key success factors and strengths of the methodology**

The key elements responsible for the successes of the methodology are:

- **Facilitating dialogue and achieving positive change** in sensitive gender-related behaviours and norms that are often considered to be unchangeable. GALS enables a deeper level of analysis to demonstrate links between gender-based constraints and poverty reduction/wealth creation for both women and men.
- **The process of individual analysis**, which helps people realize the benefits that can be reaped by all if the negative impacts of gender inequalities are addressed.
- **Starting with an analysis of personal life dynamics**, which helps people realize that they are part of the solution to any challenge they may be facing.
- **The vision journey**, which motivates women and men to gather information, analyse it and then look for solutions, developing their own objectives and strategies. The SMART milestones and concrete actions commit people to change and track progress over time. Motivation is developed by seeing that some change can happen quickly, as well as in the longer term.
- **The use of pictorial tools**, which promotes collaboration between women and men who cannot read or write and those who can.
- **GALS facilitation, known as “facilitating from the back”**, which gives everyone the space to explore, contribute to and develop their own plans of change.
- **Planning and tracking income and expenditure flows** and the use of resources, which is important for the poorest households to cope better during the long hunger gap and other crises.
- **Improved constructive communication** at the household, group, enterprise and community levels in facilitating dialogue
- **The move from individual to collective actions**, which can become a strong voice to advocate for addressing local issues.
- **The pyramid outreach network** by community facilitators through peer sharing and learning in their communities and associations, which develops a community-level movement to change gender norms
- **Strengthening new leaders emerging from vulnerable participants**, rather than following existing power structures, which enables behaviour change and livelihoods improvement to scale up quickly.
- **Learning events within a country**, which foster peer learning and motivate community facilitators and GALS champions.
- **The development of an international network** of GALS practitioners and south-south events across Africa, which has been a powerful way for exchanging information and for peer learning among practitioners.

<p><b>Challenges</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To create impact, the mindset of extension staff needs to shift from “sensitization” and “teaching”, to facilitating a community-led empowerment process.</li> <li>▪ When engaging with private-sector stakeholders to negotiate win-win strategies, attention to addressing gender issues can slip off the agenda if not well facilitated.</li> <li>▪ Buy-in from project staff to mainstream the GALS methodology in existing work requires creativity to adapt to the priorities and pace of participating communities.</li> <li>▪ The need to develop comprehensive and continuous follow-up at the project level.</li> <li>▪ Inadequate resource allocation to GALS-related activities in project design and annual workplan and budgets.</li> </ul>
<p><b>The way forward: potential improvements</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve links between the GALS and the project M&amp;E system so as to better connect GALS contribution to project indicators, baseline, outputs and outcomes.</li> <li>▪ Improve monitoring and documentation to capture the richness of quantitative and qualitative information emerging from the GALS process.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sustainability</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ If well facilitated and structured, peer scaling up happens spontaneously, with little effort required from organizations beyond monitoring and ensuring attention is paid to human rights.</li> <li>▪ Groups often pay allowances to community facilitators, without external assistance, once the benefits to be gained from using GALS have been demonstrated.</li> <li>▪ The integration of GALS into project activities strengthens the culture of long-term planning and visioning in the areas of business and livelihoods development, family and gender, and personal development.</li> <li>▪ Uptake by local governments and businesses improves their planning and supply chains.</li> </ul>

## Section 6: Resources

<p><b>Budget</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ IFAD small grant with ON to develop GALS in the context of value chains: US\$364,000 (including ON cofinancing)</li> <li>▪ IFAD large grant with ON to develop international capacity in GALS and to roll out from Uganda to Rwanda and Nigeria: US\$2.3 million (Including ON cofinancing)</li> <li>▪ Capacity development and piloting GALS in Sierra Leone: US\$275,000. The Sierra Leone project noted that GALS start-up costs are higher in the initial stages of design and adaptation of the methodology but are reduced in subsequent stages when the community facilitators assist in the scaling-up process and GALS is integrated into regular training for other communities and staff.</li> <li>▪ In Rwanda, the cost of implementing GALS is estimated at US\$50,000 per year, covering the costs of training the GALS champions, materials, transport, staff contribution, and supervision and review meetings.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Resources</b></p>	<p>GALS manuals have been produced detailing the different stages and steps of the process and are available to download at:  <a href="http://www.wemanresources.info/2_GenderActionLearning/2_0_GenderActionLearning.html">http://www.wemanresources.info/2_GenderActionLearning/2_0_GenderActionLearning.html</a></p> <p>Community-level pictorial manuals have been developed In the participating countries for peer learning, adapting the GALS approach to the local context and language.</p>



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