

# IMAGINING THE FUTURE



OXFAM

The GALS  
methodology  
for livelihoods  
improvement and  
gender justice



The Gender Action Learning System (GALS) is a community-led methodology that uses visual diagrams to empower women and men imagine the futures they want by taking action against societal norms that drive gender inequality.



Picture: Ezale Swab with his wife, Yumbe district



## THE JOURNEY: EQUIPPING COMMUNITIES FOR BETTER FUTURES

OXFAM supports partners and communities in Uganda to use GALS to empower households and communities, among other stakeholders, address power imbalances that hinder development.

The GALS tools enable household members negotiate their needs and interests and find innovative, gender-equitable solutions.

**60,000 +**  
**WOMEN AND MEN**  
**HAVE USED THE**  
**GALS METHODOLOGY**  
**IN UGANDA.**

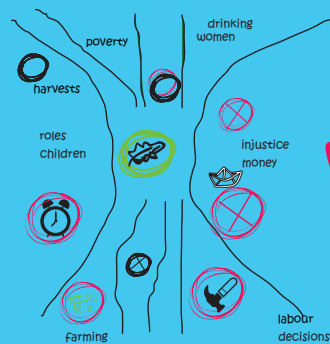


**60% OF**  
**GALS USERS ARE**  
**WOMEN**

Cover picture: Joyce Ogaru, Nebbi district, explaining her vision journey

# VISIONING: USING GALS FOR OUR FUTURES

"Households are like trees- they need to be properly balanced if they are to bear rich fruit. If the roots are not equally strong on both sides, then the tree will fall over in the first storm. If the fruits on one side are heavier than on the other then the tree will fall over and there will be no harvest next year" Rocky Road to Diamond Dreams -GALS manual



## STEP 2 START WHERE YOU ARE

2. Gender balance tree tool is used for individual and group analysis of gender roles and responsibilities in households and communities

## STEP 3 CHART THE JOURNEY



3. Identify obstacles to your dream and generate ideas to remove them by focusing on existing opportunities

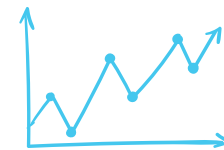
## STEP 1 DRAW YOUR DREAM FUTURE



1. Draw your dream.  
"Women and men dreams are equal". Everybody's dream is important.

## STEP 4 REFLECTION

4. Individual and group reflection indicators of progress and success and milestones achieved



"In the future if I achieve all my visions I will put on eyeglass and laugh." -Joyce Ogaru, Nebbi district



Peer to peer sharing is encouraged to increase usage of the GALS methodology in turn scaling up community benefits as more people adopt it.

GALS was developed with IFAD grant support to Oxfam. It was first piloted by Oxfam in western Uganda in the Rwenzori region of Kasese, and in northern Uganda-West Nile, Acholi and Karamoja. Oxfam is working with 5 partner organisations to strengthen its use with plans to roll it out to other parts of the country.

- Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM, Uganda)
- Eastern and Southern Africa Small Scale Farmers' Forum Uganda (ESAFF, Uganda)
- Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO)
- Community organisation for Rural Enterprise Activity Management (CREAM)
- Community Empowerment For Rural Development (CEFORD)



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## DESTINY MAKERS: BUILDING DREAMS TOGETHER

Through the GALS methodology, individually and collectively, people are emerging as winners and creators of a new destiny. They are in charge of their lives, are power sharers, human rights “valuers” and resource maximisers. Individuals, families and communities are benefitting. No one is left behind.



“We grow cassava, beans, soya beans, sunflower, but we do this together and make money. We reserve some and take some to the main store in Poroporo. We have eucalyptus, and other trees, a quarter of an acre. In our family backyard we plan to plant more trees.”

Picture: Aleti Kubura, Yumbe district, explains the family’s vision map

## A FAMILY MATTER PROGRESS IN A POLYGAMOUS FAMILY

Chandiru Kalsum, Aleti Kubura and Oleru Leila

// We always had fighting; we could not even respect our husband but once the husband was with me alone, or with the other co-wife, we would make it look like we were happy so the other wives didn’t feel good. Food was also a problem at home, children would not go to school and whatever belongings I had in the household were for my own children, and I did not know how to manage the things I had. I was given goats through NAADS, but when outsiders would ask for assistance, I would just donate anyhow and yet I could not share together with my co-wives. I was helping outsiders and the gossiping was terrible”, says Chandiru.

### Choosing change

As a member of the Poroporo cooperative, one of the three wives of Alaru Habibu, Aleti, learned about the GALS methodology and encouraged her co-wives and her husband, Alaru to start using it.

### Working together:

The family focused on the Gender Challenge Tree to rework tasks in the home.

“We share cooking timetables and eat together. Things like soap, the other one can give me when I don’t have. Together we can see how we can send children to school, we can all contribute money”, says Aleti.

“When we go for cultivation we move together, we dig together with our husband and what comes out of what we sell, we send children to school, even one is in secondary school.

Through GALS we were taught how you can make money, rear chickens. Even now we have achieved cattle through GALS, around fifty.

We have also accepted family planning.”

**UGX20,000**  
Saved weekly by  
Alaru Habibu’s  
family



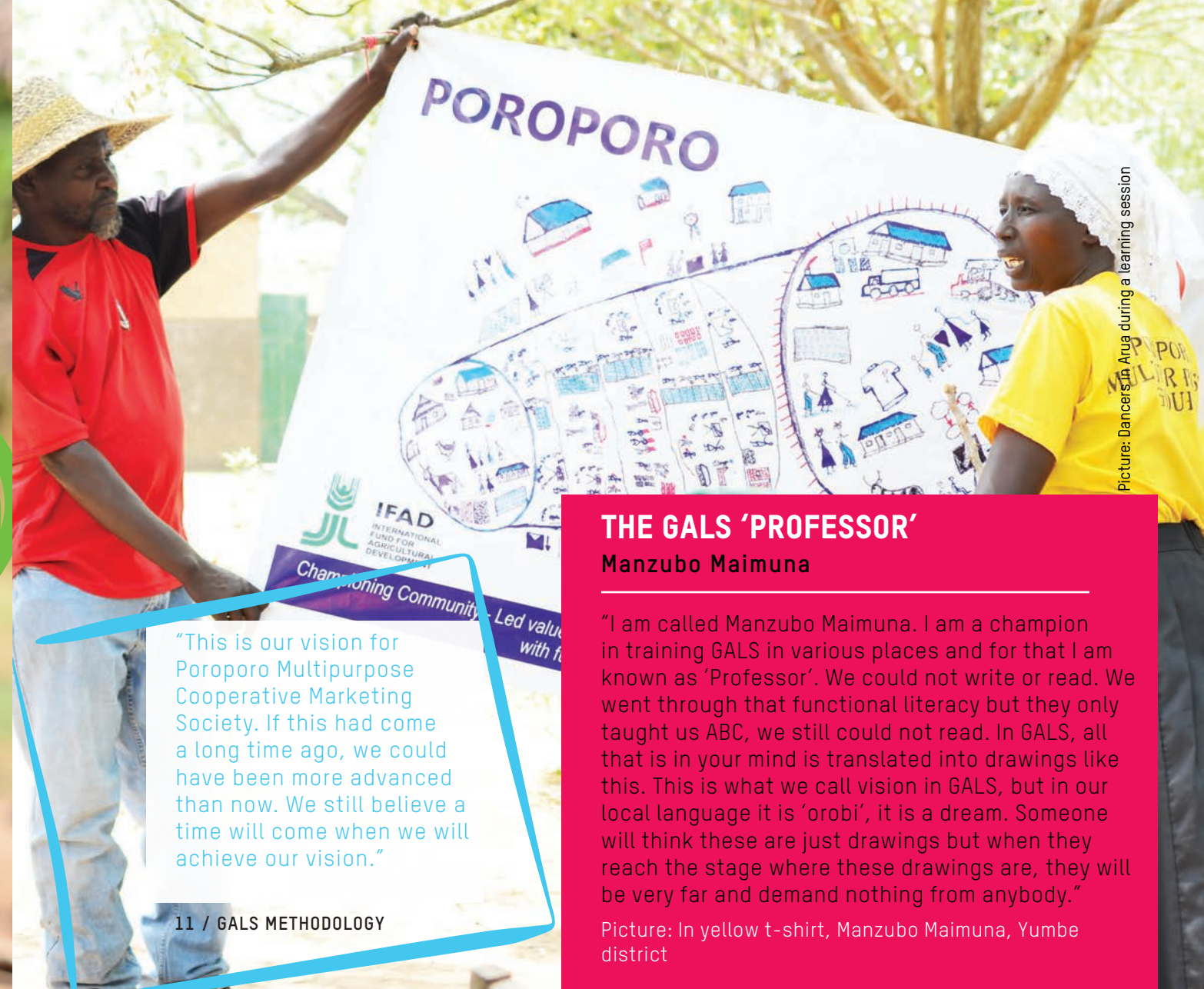


## WOMAN AND MACHINE ADDING VALUE

Mary Atayo

“I am a GALS champion telling others about GALS in my community”

Picture: Mary Atayo, Nebbi district shows off her portable grinding mill which has increased the family income through value addition.



Picture: Dancers in Arua during a learning session

## THE GALS 'PROFESSOR' Manzubo Maimuna

“This is our vision for Poroporo Multipurpose Cooperative Marketing Society. If this had come a long time ago, we could have been more advanced than now. We still believe a time will come when we will achieve our vision.”

“I am called Manzubo Maimuna. I am a champion in training GALS in various places and for that I am known as ‘Professor’. We could not write or read. We went through that functional literacy but they only taught us ABC, we still could not read. In GALS, all that is in your mind is translated into drawings like this. This is what we call vision in GALS, but in our local language it is ‘orobi’, it is a dream. Someone will think these are just drawings but when they reach the stage where these drawings are, they will be very far and demand nothing from anybody.”

Picture: In yellow t-shirt, Manzubo Maimuna, Yumbe district



## A VISION FOR LIGHT BRINGING SOLAR HOME

Mary Avuru

"With the Vision Road Journey, I've learnt how to keep money well which has helped me pay school fees for the children. I also got a vision to light up my home with solar. I used to take my phone for charging in the center, but now I charge from home."

Picture: Mary Avuru, Arua district, a single mother of eight children and the cashier of her local women's savings group, Injimile.



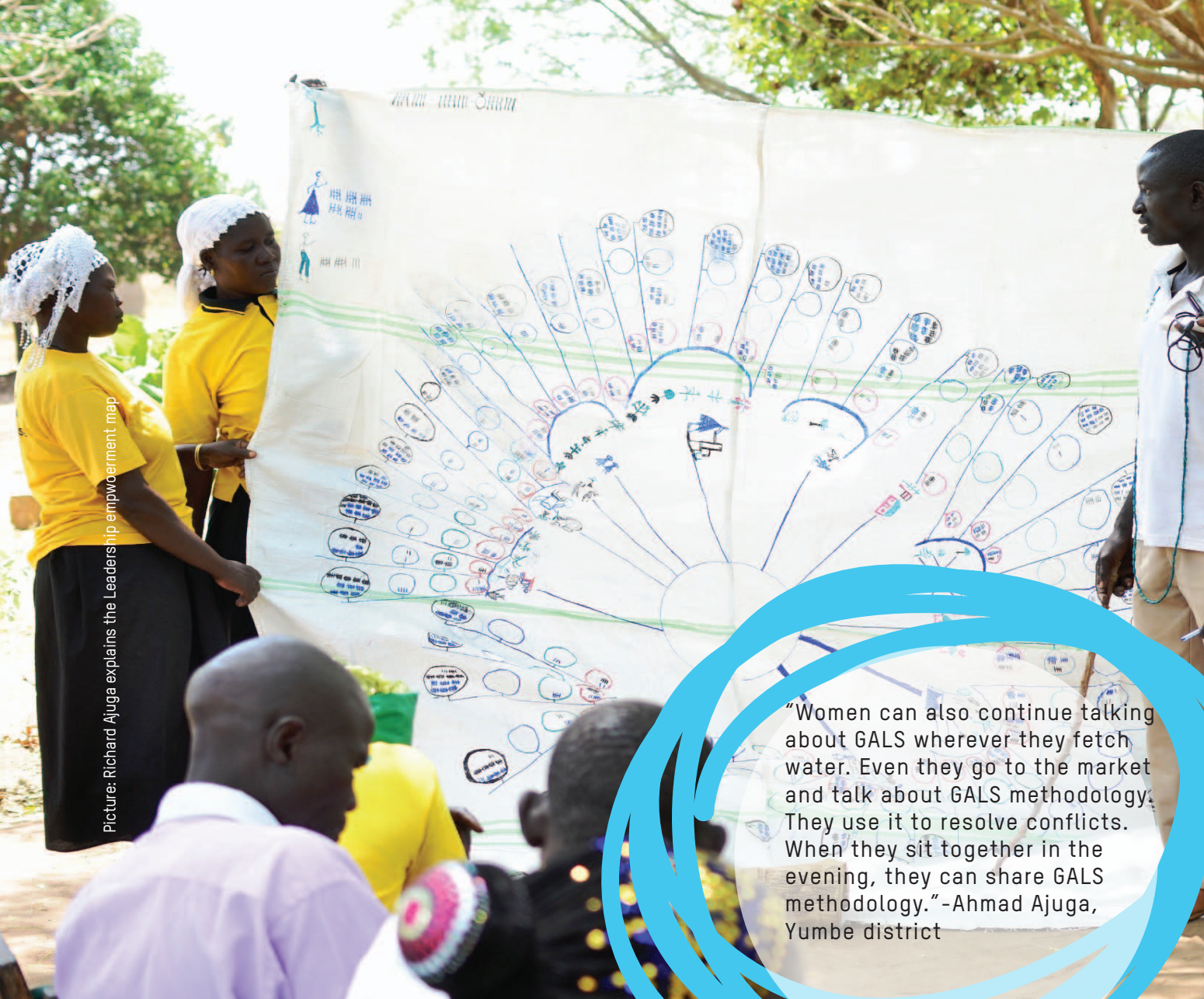
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## WEALTH CREATION

Richard Otule

"The first thing I did after the Vision Road Journey and wealth creation training, I identified an opportunity with Send a Cow project and got a heifer. Now my wife and I have a dairy and a bricks making project."

Picture: Richard Otule, Arua district, and his first heifer from Send a Cow, an Oxfam partner



Picture: Richard Ajuga explains the Leadership empowerment map

“Women can also continue talking about GALS wherever they fetch water. Even they go to the market and talk about GALS methodology. They use it to resolve conflicts. When they sit together in the evening, they can share GALS methodology.” -Ahmad Ajuga, Yumbe district



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## EVERYBODY IS A LEADER

### Expanding the Gender Justice Movement

GALS enables participants realize everybody is a leader and can contribute to progress. Left, Ajuga Ahmad shows how the Leadership Empowerment Map guides their cooperative to spread GALS methodology among peers, family and community.

The map guides participants on who to reach, how and where to reach them through a peer sharing approach.

Members of the cooperatives reach learning centres, savings groups, government, schools, churches, opinion leaders, people at water wells, and farmers groups.



Sharing GALS with communities through drama and music in Yumbe district



## “OUR LIFE HAS CHANGED I EVEN WROTE A POEM”

Joseph and Victoria Wadribo



“Every time our group savings meeting ended, I always walked away from the GALS session but my wife stayed. At the end of the year when the group shared its savings I drank all my savings but my wife bought two goats and pair of trousers for me.

I realized Victoria loved me and that the GALS drawings were helping. I joined GALS. We both came up with vision road journeys and another one for our home. Now we began sharing duties like weeding and harvesting and planning better. Our life has changed and I even wrote a poem about it.”

Picture: Joseph and Victoria Wadribo are members of Panyar Savings Group, Arua district

The Gender Balance Tree is a tool that allows participants both individually and collectively to analyse gender roles and responsibilities in their households and communities. Participants reflect and identify related power and rewards as well as the forces that influence this status.



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## GOBIRI LIKI JAZZ BAND PROMOTING GALS

Ezale Swaib

Picture: Ezale Swaibu, Yumbe distro, second from right with his band

### START WITH A VISION

1

"My vision road journey was drawn 4 years ago. Madam Paula of CEFORD helped me draw up my vision. Though I am blind, when someone takes my hand and shows me where things are, I will always mark it and it will remain in my brain."

3

### ACT

"I started to take up courage and use my walking stick to move. I cultivated cassava, and also started keeping rabbits and goats. Through NAADS I was able to get two bulls. I now have 12 cattle in my vision. I also wanted to put a permanent house. With the cattle, I was able to come up with this building which is permanent now."



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### ACKNOWLEDGE WHERE YOU ARE

2

"I used to be a beggar, my wife left because I became blind. I was dragged around by my children begging. When I heard that GALS was being introduced, I went there hoping to beg, but I ended up listening to what GALS methodology was talking about."



### ENJOY THE DREAM

I lead the Gobiri Liki Jazz Band which performs at social events. I compose songs that teach about the GALS methodology and how to use it for peace to end Gender Based Violence. Now I feel very organized because my children are able to move, they go to school. If there is anything to do in the family, they join me and we work together. //

Ezale Swaib, third from left

## A LOVE CHOICE ACHIEVING OUR VISION

Geoffrey Olony and Mary Angom

Picture: Geoffrey Olony and Mary Angom, Nebbi district

When they learnt the GALS methodology, Geoffrey Olony and Mary Angom, Yumbe district decided to use family planning in order to ensure that they had the number of children they wanted to have and could provide for.

### What has changed

"We bought 6 acres of land where we plant rice, maize, cassava and simsim. We have sold some and sent our children to school in Pakwach. We also keep ducks and have 6 goats. Our communication is open. We started off with one hut but now we have four- one for us, one for the kids, one for storing produce and the other for visitors. We built an improved pit latrine. We have family budgeting and are able to buy iron sheets and we have laid down 15,000 bricks which I mix together with my wife. We now do work collectively. I now help out on washing clothes, weeding and harvesting. We've always used stream water for home but now we have tap water and my wife no longer has to walk long distances to fetch water or wash clothes from the stream. We no longer use paraffin to light the house we have solar and both of us also have phones to communicate", says Geoffrey.



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"In the group, we now have gender inclusion. We have women representatives of the different committees of the cooperative society. We hope to have a woman chairperson this December".

-Geoffrey Olony

## WHAT IS NAFA'S VISION?



Nyio Ayavo Farmers Association (NAFA) operates in two parishes in Nebbi District. The association's symbols are cassava and maize. "In NAFA's group vision we have drawn an aeroplane to tour other parts of the world, buy lorries, a tractor for farming and a TV at our education centres. In future all our children must graduate. We shall also buy iron sheets and start brick making businesses".

Picture: Rusticus Atayo, Nebbi district, a member of NAFA demonstrating the group vision

Before the group dream, comes the individual dream. Joyce Ogaru, a member of NAFA is clear about her vision:

"What I dreamt of was this: after three years, I need to educate my child so that he also graduates... get a cow ... get a vehicle for my goods... build a house with iron sheets...enlarge the size of my field. After educating my child he should be able to work in a factory."



Monika Bako at her fish stand. She is a member of Panyar Savings Group, Arua district, which was assisted by CREAM. Her symbol on the Vision Journey map is money.



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## INTEGRATING GALS INTO VILLAGE SAVINGS AND LOANS GROUPS

### THE CREAM EXPERIENCE

“CREAM is a Civil Society Organisation focused on improving livelihood and gender relations in the community, and is a partner of OXFAM implementing the GALS methodology. CREAM initially promoted saving boxes to enable village savings groups keep their money till the end of the year. However, savings would be misused.

When CREAM integrated the GALS methodology in the savings groups, the Gender Balance Tree tool placed the spotlight on gender equality. With the Vision Journey map, CREAM has witnessed change as families are planning jointly and tracking their progress. Many households for example, draw their vision and hang it in the living room. When visitors ask about the drawing, peer sharing occurs and more people gain interest in using GALS. The members in our farmer groups grew from 30 to 150 members in 3 years. The groups are saving with a goal rather than just waiting to share the money at the end of the year. The methodology was the trigger for this.”

- Patricia Avako, Project Officer, Community organisation for Rural Enterprise Activity Management (CREAM)



Mary Adule, Arua district, is the Chairperson of the Baniba Savings Group which has a membership of 120. The group rents out catering furniture and uniforms, bulks simsim, and saves money together.

## COLLECTIVE SUCCESS ACHIEVING THEIR VISION

Mary Adule



More than **50%**  
of the **120**  
members are  
women



**11** couples bought  
bodabodas  
(motorcycle taxis)



**13** couples paid  
school fees together



**21** couples  
have family  
meetings and  
90 couples  
now share a  
bed



**33** men help their  
wives in childcare

The entire group of **120**  
bought essential cooking  
utensils from savings.



By the second year **21** had  
bought **iron sheets** and a  
member had completed a  
permanent house

## EXPERIENCE FROM THE FIELD

Jean Christabel Asipkwe  
Executive Director  
CEFORD



“GALS can be adopted in different contexts. For as long as there is a vision the journey can be drawn. CEFORD uses GALS to do our strategic planning process”

Jean Christabel Asipkwe

CEFORD is one of OXFAM'S  
community partners  
implementing the GALS  
methodology

## YOU KNOW IT WORKS WHEN THE TEACHER IS USING IT

“For the last eight or nine years, our organization was running faster than the ball. We were leading the communities and it was a push and pull process. But after the introduction of this methodology, I saw the community leading this development. Communities were able now to move by themselves. CEFORD is now looked at as an opportunity, not as a donor.

In my own life my family was falling apart because of tension with the large extended family I am responsible for. When I saw the methodology I started to generate my own vision. The drawings soon interested my wife. She also wanted to generate one. Although my wife did not have a formal education, I realized she was a better planner than me. She came out with the issues of land, we needed to acquire land for the children for their future. I had never thought of that But when we started using GALS, things changed.

Today the extended family are financially independent and are focused on their future: The children are planting trees which they will sell to builders. I no longer buy food at home because the family grow the food they need. Even some of the older children want to move to nearer schools to dig more at home and use less transport money. This methodology has become part and parcel of me.”

-John Bosco Okaya, Project Officer



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Poem: Beauty of Gender Action Learning Systems (GALS)  
By Wadribo Joseph CREAM GALS Participant

*Oku amani mixed group Arivu Sub-County Arua  
In any graduation or Action Audits he recites this Poem to attract  
more people in GALS*

*GALS! GALS! GALS! Who are you, where do you come from?  
Where did you hide yourself all this long?  
It looks like you are coming to create change in us; our families  
and community.  
Yes. You have come to change our lives.  
Before you came I was drinking alcohol without plans  
I would fight everyday and night with my wife after drinking.  
Today I remember it as something of the past because of GALS.*

Joseph Wadribo was inspired to write a poem after the GALS approach changed his life dramatically.





Good practices and models of using GALS for pro-poor targeting and gender sensitive interventions are used in a number of IFAD-supported programmes implemented by national governments. Based on the lessons from IFAD grant projects by Oxfam, a number of countries have integrated the approach in programme design, and started implementing GALS in Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Uganda and Rwanda.

## WEMAN-GALS METHODOLOGY

Women's Empowerment Mainstreaming And Networking (WEMAN) is a community-led global process focusing on gender mainstreaming in economic development interventions such as: microfinance; value chain development; business development services; agricultural extension and other livelihood support.

WEMAN is helping communities achieve this through the integration of the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) in financial services, farmer training and group strengthening, business development services and market linkages.

The GALS community led empowerment model enables women and men, households and entire communities, engage in equitable development and support a sustainable movement for gender justice.

IFAD funding support to the implementation of the GALS methodology in communities stems from the growing global consensus that household methodologies enable more effective reach among poor households and improve intra-household gender relations by focusing on people: who they want to be and what they want to do.

GALS was initially developed with Linda Mayoux under Oxfam's WEMAN programme.

This publication highlights the tremendous success the GALS methodology has had over the years following its first pilot by Oxfam in western Uganda in the Rwenzori region of Kasese, and subsequent roll out to other regions in northern Uganda-West Nile, Acholi and Karamoja.



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Three generations  
equipped to use GALS

Picture: From right ,Teddy  
Aciro, Aciro's daughter, and  
Aciro's mother, Arua district





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