



# GENDER ACTION LEARNING SYSTEM

MONITORING AND EVALUATION GUIDE

This GALs Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) guide was produced by Oxfam Novib, on behalf of the Empower@Scale consortium, as part of the collaboration with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

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# ACRONYMS

<b>ACRONYMS</b>	<b>DEFINITION</b>
<b>CEDAW</b>	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
<b>GALS</b>	Gender Action Learning System
<b>IFAD</b>	International Fund for Agricultural Development
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-governmental organizations
<b>PGR</b>	Participatory Gender Review
<b>SMART</b>	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and time-bound
<b>VC</b>	Value chain

# INTRODUCTION

Standing monitoring and evaluation learning methods often fail to have tangible benefits for the participants being monitored and in many cases also for the people collecting the information. Trying to minimize time on something that does not benefit them, information often becomes inaccurate. GALS complements established methodologies with a community-led approach to monitoring, evaluation and learning. The added value of this is that it empowers participants, who monitor and evaluate themselves for their own information needs.

This also increases the reliability of the information and usefulness for organizational decision making.

Monitoring and tracking progress are built into the GALS approach. GALS M&E is distinctive in that it allows different stakeholders to come together and share their viewpoints in an empowering learning process, rather than simply checking boxes for donors.

GALS Monitoring<sup>1</sup> and Evaluation<sup>2</sup> combines:

- Individual tracking of empowerment process/progress towards visions and action commitments in notebook diaries at each level: communities, private sector, organization staff.
- Participatory quantitative monitoring and aggregation by groups and associations for collective planning.
- Participatory review by the stakeholders to decide what to do with the information.
- Qualitative and multimedia methods by stakeholders, NGOs and/or external agencies for deepening understanding of processes.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Monitoring is the systematic process of collecting, analysing and using information to track a program's progress toward reaching its objectives and to guide management decisions. It usually focuses on processes, such as when and where activities occur, who delivers them and how many people or entities they reach. Monitoring is conducted after a program has begun and continues throughout the program implementation period. Monitoring is sometimes referred to as process, performance or formative evaluation (Adapted from Gage and Dunn 2009, Frankel and Gage 2007, and PATH Monitoring and Evaluation Initiative, page 2).

<sup>2</sup> Evaluation is the systematic assessment of an activity, project, program, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area or institution's performance. It focuses on expected and achieved accomplishments, examining the results chain (inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts), processes, contextual factors and causality, in order to understand achievements or the lack of achievements. Evaluation aims at determining the relevance, impact, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of interventions and the contributions of the intervention to the results achieved (Adapted from Gage and Dunn 2009, Frankel and Gage 2007, and PATH Monitoring and Evaluation Initiative, page 2).

<sup>3</sup> Mayoux, L. (2017). Gender action learning for sustainability at scale, IFAD, p. 10, available at: [https://gamechangenetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/GALS-Process-for-RWEE-Naryn-Pilot\\_-\\_ConsolidatedReport\\_Feb2017\\_ed.pdf](https://gamechangenetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/GALS-Process-for-RWEE-Naryn-Pilot_-_ConsolidatedReport_Feb2017_ed.pdf)

# GALS MONITORING AND EVALUATION

In GALS, monitoring is an ongoing activity starting immediately after people draw their first diagrams in their diaries in a notebook, often after the change catalyst workshop. Monitoring can be done at the individual, household, group and organizational levels with both quantified as well as qualitative data. The Participatory Gender Review<sup>4</sup> brings these together periodically, and is a key moment for the implementing organization to extract information for organizational decision making and reporting.<sup>5</sup>

Monitoring progress towards the vision is necessary to maintain momentum among community household members and to keep activities on track. Frequent monitoring is particularly important at the beginning of the process to motivate community members. Special attention needs to be paid to ensuring that gender-related changes remain on the agenda, particularly with regards to decision-making processes in the household and in groups, workload distribution and using or sharing the benefits generated by livelihood activities. Community members need to hold regular meetings to review and reflect on progress. Openness is critical to understanding and analyzing why things have gone well or poorly so that individuals, households and groups can keep improving. Meetings may also be held with other community members undergoing the same process, together with facilitators and peer supporters. This helps individuals, households and groups to learn from one another and boosts each other's morale.

An effective, rigorous, but not onerous, monitoring and reporting system enables individuals, households, groups and the implementing or funding agencies to identify the changes that are being experienced and the pace of those changes. The reporting may be based on indicators that community members have identified, which provide useful

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<sup>4</sup> Mayoux, L. and Oxfam Novib (2014), The GALS Phase 1 manual: Rocky Road to Diamond Dreams, page 103-141. Available at: <https://empoweratscale.org/resource-centre/gals-phase-1-manual/>

<sup>5</sup> Reemer, T. and Makanza, M. (2014), Gender Action Learning System - Practical guide for transforming gender and power relations in value chains, Oxfam Novib, p. 53. Available at: <https://empoweratscale.org/resource-centre/gals-phase-1-2-guide-value-chains/>

insights into “what matters” at the community level. Other indicators may be based on data gathered during community profiling and the situational analysis.

Externally generated indicators may also be necessary to meet corporate reporting requirements, often placing greater emphasis on quantitative aspects of change. The link between internal and external indicators is crucial to ensure that the project monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system captures relevant changes.<sup>6</sup>

GALS always aims to align tracking and documenting to the M&E framework or systems that are already in place. Guiding questions include:

1. What indicators does your organization need to monitor, e.g. advocacy, donor reporting and/or to increase the depth and pace of change? What indicators have been identified during the Change Catalyst workshop and the Participatory Gender Review as important by community members?
2. When and how often do you need to aggregate the information? How often do you go to the communities. How often do community members meet? Who goes to the communities or who organize the meeting?
3. How many people will be included and who? Will you reach everyone or will sampling be used? At community level? What about other stakeholders?
4. Who will aggregate and analyse? Usually this takes place at different levels so think about how it will be brought together.
5. How will information be aggregated and analysed? Who will do what? What opportunities are there in the communities, e.g. group meetings? Management meetings? Community fairs?
6. What will you do with the information? How should the information be documented, e.g. pictorial, multimedia or written? How will it be fed into the learning loop, advocacy or donor reporting?<sup>7</sup>

For a good monitoring and evaluation in GALS we need to collect quantitative and qualitative information. The project monitoring and evaluation (M&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.

## 1.1 QUANTITATIVE DATA

Quantification of diagrams is a key element of GALS. It is part of individual, households and group or community-level learning, to improve progress in relation to their visions. Using diagrams, it is often possible to collect relevant information in a visible way which makes the findings immediately accessible to everybody.

Quantification can be done directly on the original individual or joint diagram used to plan or analyse. The date of conception and the date of quantification need to be clearly added.

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<sup>6</sup> Bishop Sambrook, C. and Farnworth, C.R. (2014), How to do Household Methodologies, IFAD, p.7. Available at: [564875ac-af4b-4409-9271-0c90ff464b3b \(ifad.org\)](https://doi.org/10.1017/9781107004643.007)

<sup>7</sup> Adapted from Oxfam Novib, GALS monitoring and documentation guidelines (unpublished), Marriage no child’s play, June 2020, page 4-5.

The quantified data can be documented by monitoring staff in simple overviews or Excel sheets, complemented by qualitative notes. During the training workshops, Excel tracking sheets are created to facilitate data collection from the individual to the group level and organizational level. An example of these sheets can be found in Annex 1.

Three basic types of quantification need to be addressed:

- A. Measurement and indicators;
- B. Counting and voting;
- C. Aggregation.

### 1.1.1 MEASUREMENT AND INDICATORS

GALS focuses on information that people themselves need to collect for their own learning and advancement – they then have more incentive to really think things through, rather than give snap or socially accepted answers. It is possible to establish SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time bound) indicators through use of GALS tools such as diamonds and trees. However, keep in mind to:

- Be clear about what is being measured;
- Ensure that information given is reliable. Information given in groups can be crosschecked and verified by other participants.

While it is important to establish SMART local indicators to make sure that these are shaped to better reflect contextual issues and that they are meaningful to community members there are also indicators that have been observed coming back in any projects and can therefore reasonably be expected. For example:

- Income generation and access to income by women and men
- Division of labor among household members
- Property/assets ownership by women and men
- Participation of women in decision-making in the home, producer groups, community and value chain platforms
- Participation of women in accessing project and other services
- Number of children being sent to school and payment of fees
- Number of domestic conflicts

As a group usually the following indicators have been tracked and measured:

- The level of incomes and savings from the group activities. For building mutual trust it is essential to do this since it concerns group assets.
- The production for the group if they have a joint income generation project, including the level of effort by men and women. If farmers are bulking produce and selling together these can also be tracked and monitored.

In annex 1 examples of group level gender and cattle value chain development indicators and monitoring sheets from Zimbabwe are included.

The quality of the locally identified indicators will depend on the representativeness of the participants who have been purposely or randomly selected.

## 1.1.2 COUNTING AND VOTING

Because GALS aims to empower all participants to collect information for concrete action and use, the general rule is that all participants are counted. Counting itself can be done in a number of ways in a group meeting:

- Voting by showing of hands with numbers then marked on the diagram.
- An 'energizer' which asks people to group themselves by particular characteristics, encouraging them to move and change places as well as be counted.
- Voting by secret ballot, using symbols and diagrams, for more sensitive issues.

In all cases it is necessary to have:

- Basic data collection: be clear about who is present and participating, and keep a register of participants with background information.
- Differentiation between responses from different social groups: this can be done through the way the workshop is structured and participants divided into social groups or through color-coding on cards and drawings.
- Participation: take note of who has participated or not participated equally, the potential implications for outcomes, and how this influences the ways in which information is obtained and decisions reached.

See the facilitation tips <sup>8</sup> for ways of encouraging more equitable participation representative of groups from different backgrounds.<sup>9</sup>

Voting on changes is a particular feature of the diamond diagram and during the PGR with its specific deepening and analysing tools.

## 1.1.3 AGGREGATION OF THE DATA COLLECTED

Aggregation of data from different diagrams can be done in a multilane highway or achievement journey (see chapter 2 simple monitoring and PGR for more information). Where aggregation at the meeting is of the achievement journeys of participants present at the workshop only, the process is relatively straightforward. Participants can be asked to monitor themselves using their notebooks with their drawings to do a self-assessment and to see the changes achieved. Tracked information on individual level is brought together to the group meetings and put into a quantified aggregate multilane highway. For very large events, there are ways of delegating the facilitation to get figures for all participants present. For example, in small meetings (approximately 20-30 people) the facilitator can help with quantification and aggregation, but for large meetings, especially in the community, the facilitator's role can be delegated to a few champions to collect the information to be reported in the small meetings with the organizations' staff.

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<sup>8</sup> See for example Mayoux L. (2015), Fun with a serious purpose – GALS facilitation methodology. Available at: <https://empoweratscale.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/GALS-facilitation-guide.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Adapted from Mayoux L. (2013), Equal and Together - Gender Action Learning System for Gender Justice in Development, pp.47-50. Available at: [https://gamechangenetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/EqualandTogether\\_GALSOverview\\_2013May.pdf](https://gamechangenetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/EqualandTogether_GALSOverview_2013May.pdf)

Quantified information can sometimes be aggregated at organisational level after the Review for more rigorous analysis as part of the Participatory Gender Review process.

## 1.2. QUALITATIVE DATA

Complementing the participatory quantitative monitoring, there should be qualitative research by community members, core staff or the consultant. Building skills in using video cameras and interviewing can be done as part of the Participatory Gender Review process. This research has three aims:

- 1) Showcase most successful champions;
- 2) Check quality of pyramid peer sharing;
- 3) Learn from exit cases.

### 1.2.1 BEST CASE MODELS TO SHOW WHAT IS POSSIBLE

The most successful champions can be showcased for dissemination and promotion of the methodology, training for scaling up and mutual learning among community members (including other champions). These members should be purposely selected as part of a system of social incentives to inspire champions to continue and succeed. Testimonies will be cross validated by neighbours or family members who agree on the authenticity of the changes that are being testified.

Interactive theatre can be used to start a discussion on impact assessment. It draws on the 'Most Significant Changes' methodology which invites people to give answers to open-ended questions about what they see as the most significant changes which have happened since the start of an intervention and can also help the participants to open up to sensitive issues. This approach is useful for revealing things which people might not think of in designing a questionnaire, or pre-determined indicators. These can then be compared with findings from the diagrams used by the same people.

Monitoring staff can also interview people during house visits or conduct a PGR with selected representatives of beneficiaries to strengthen the capacity of community members while deepening everyone's understanding of the current situation

### 1.2.2 QUALITY CHECK ON PYRAMID PEER SHARING TO IMPROVE METHODOLOGY

A random sample of 20 - 30 women and men should be chosen from the list of names given on the Social Leadership Maps, and followed up to investigate impact. If it is found that the information from the qualitative investigation for the random sample confirms that on the maps there is good impact, then one can reasonably conclude that much of the information in the other maps is accurate. This will help to assess the accuracy and identify any adjustments to the methodology needed for more effective impact and scaling up.

### 1.2.3 EXIT CASES

If the methodology is to significantly upscale through pyramid peer sharing, then it is important that this is as effective as possible and also the energies of the champions is carefully targeted where it is most likely to be successful. For this reason as many exit cases as possible should be followed up by the champions themselves, programme staff or the consultant.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Mayoux, L. and ON (2014), Rocky Road to Diamond Dreams - The GALS Phase 1 manual, p. 99.  
Available at: <https://empoweratscale.org/resource-centre/gals-phase-1-manual/>

# SIMPLE MONITORING AND PARTICIPATORY GENDER REVIEW

Both simple monitoring and the PGR always starts at the individual level with champions using their notebooks with their drawings to do a self-assessment and to see the changes achieved. Tracked information on individual level is brought together to the group meetings and put into a group version of the diagrams or a quantified aggregate multilane highway, including discussion of gender and other differences and further discussion of opportunities and challenges.

Group meetings should start to develop the skills and discipline of quantifying changes to track learning and progress.

Simple monitoring through quantification of key achievements on collective diagrams should be possible within a short period (even before the PGR, during the Community Action Learning System) at the more frequent local meetings, with the outcomes then fed back to the larger representation meetings.

The tools used to track achievements are essentially the same as the diagrams for the Change Catalyst Workshop. Monitoring can be done on group versions of the diagrams introduced during the Catalyst Workshop. For example: Vision Road Journey, Gender Balance Tree and Empowerment Leadership Map. Alternatively if the Multilane Highway has been well understood, that can be used as a shorter and more systematic method as it has the advantage of aggregating data from different diagrams.

When a Multilane Highway is used to retrospectively plot how people achieved the progress they have, what opportunities they have used and what challenges they have met and what the implications for future are, it is called an Achievement Journey.

Participatory Gender Reviews (PGR) are periodic moments, usually 3 months, 6 months, 9 months and 1 year where the GALS process is both consolidated and taken deeper and further. The Reviews build on gender changes that have occurred spontaneously through GALS and assess these in the light of the wider women's human rights framework of CEDAW.

The purpose of the Participatory Gender Review is:

- To review progresses and achievements;
- To diver deeper into gender issues (through the use of gender justice diamond and CEDAW diamonds and trees)
- Re-plan the way forward (adjust planning based on lessons learned)

To achieve this purpose, further to the Achievement Journey, new tools are introduced during the PGR with the purpose of diving deeper into gender issues, such as:

- Gender Justice Diamond: a generic diamond to help women and men reach consensus on ways forward. It can be done at household or organizational level.
- CEDAW Diamonds: More detailed versions of the diamonds to identify indicators and track progress on specific CEDAW rights.
- CEDAW Challenge Action Trees: To look in detail at the reasons why rights are not currently achieved and identify solutions and specific action commitments.

Participatory Gender Reviews can take different forms depending on purpose and budget. They can be residential workshops, one day workshops in different communities or more qualitative work to mainstream tools into existing activities. Once skills have been built and funding secured, the annual review can be a large Gender and Human rights event like a civil society fair<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Mayoux, L. and Oxfam Novib (2014), Rocky Road to Diamond Dreams - The GALS Phase 1 manual, pp. 89-143. Available at: <https://empoweratscale.org/resource-centre/gals-phase-1-manual/>

# ANNEXES

## ANNEX 1: MONITORING AND DOCUMENTATION EXCEL SHEETS FOR THE ORGANISATION

Meeting NO_			Title				Date		
Member name	M/F	Education	Changes planned	Changes achieved	Changes in process	People trained			Key challenges
						Men	Women	Youth	
Member 1									
Member 2									
Member 3									
Member 4									
Member 5									
Member 6									
Member 7									
Member 8									
Member 9									
Member 10									
Member 11									
Member 12									
Member 13									
Member 14									

Note: The information should be collected using collective versions of the tools during the meeting: vision journey, gender balance tree, social empowerment map or, if available, Multilane Highway. Make the process of collecting the information as participatory as possible, with lots of celebration of achievements.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Adapted from Mayoux, L. and Oxfam Novib (2014), Rocky Road to Diamond Dreams - The GALS Phase 1 manual, p. 98. Available at: <https://empoweratscale.org/resource-centre/gals-phase-1-manual/>

Example of group level Gender indicators and monitoring sheet

<i>Issues discussed at the Catalyst Workshop</i>	<i>Number of people who say this was a problem for them</i>	<i>Number of people who say that it is still a problem</i>	<i>Number of people who say things are changing</i>	<i>Number of people who say things have changed</i>	<i>Comments</i>
<i>Workload</i>					
<i>Domestic Violence</i>					
<i>Asset ownership and control</i>					
<i>Promiscuity/Unfaithfulness</i>					
<i>Decision making</i>					

Example of group level cattle Value Chain Development indicators and monitoring sheet<sup>13</sup>

	Men	Women	Comments
<b>Number of farmers selling their cattle through the auction system</b>			
<b>Number of buyers coming to the auction</b>			
<b>Number of farmers selling their cattle outside the auction system</b>			
<b>Other agricultural produce being sold at the auction e.g tomatoes</b>			

<sup>13</sup> Reemer, T. and Makanza, M. (2014), Gender Action Learning System - Practical guide for transforming gender and power relations in value chains, Oxfam Novib, p. 55-56. Available at: <https://empoweratscale.org/resource-centre/gals-phase-1-2-guide-value-chains/>

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