

## **Gender mainstreaming in value chain development: Experience with Gender Action Learning System in Uganda**

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### **Abstract**

There is an emerging consensus that promoting gender justice in value chain development is not only a rights issue for women, but makes ‘business sense’ for households, or enterprises, or ultimately the national economy. This article discusses experience using a community-led methodology: Gender Action Learning System (GALS) with producers and traders in coffee, maize, fruits (avocados, pineapples and passion fruit) and beans in Kasese District Western Uganda. This has brought about profound changes for significant numbers of people in a relatively short period of time on sensitive and potentially conflictual issues like gender-based violence and land ownership as well as decision-making, division of labour and women’s access to health and education. These changes have taken place with the full support of many men who have become enthusiastic promoters of gender equality as part of their own vision of happiness and social justice. Addressing gender inequalities at all levels of the chain forms a ‘win-win strategy’ which has increased incomes and made a contribution to upgrading whole value chains and development of the local economy.

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## Introduction

In 1979 the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women was adopted by the UN General Assembly and by 2010 had been ratified by 186 out of 193 countries. CEDAW states that, like men, women have a human right to freedom from violence and freedom of movement, equal rights in decision-making, equal rights to own property, freedom of thought and association, right to work, rest and leisure and right to an adequate standard of living for health and education. Most national governments have gender policies, strategies and legislation based on some variant of CEDAW. Most development agencies have an official commitment to gender equality and gender mainstreaming across their other interventions as part of their mandate. Many have position papers on gender and the key importance of women's empowerment in economic growth and/or poverty reduction.

There is an extensive body of research by World Bank, IFPRI and others, which shows that gender inequalities are a key constraint on economic growth and food security and a key cause of poverty not only for women themselves, but also their families and communities<sup>2</sup>. Women's importance in supplying national and international markets with both traditional and high value products such as textiles, coffee and cocoa has increased significantly over the past few decades. However, gender inequalities and discrimination at all levels mean that women are marginalised or excluded from the more profitable agricultural and manufacturing chains and/or the profitable parts of these chains. Women-owned businesses face many more constraints than those of men, and receive fewer financial and nonfinancial services<sup>3</sup>. Gender inequalities in control over productive assets like land mean that even where they do the majority of the work in cultivation they are generally invisible as 'helpers' of 'male farmers'. They rarely control household income, particularly from crops marketed by men even where production is dependent on women's unpaid role in cultivation and care work.

However, despite the importance of women in most value chains and official commitments to gender mainstreaming, 'gender' continues to be widely seen as a sideline 'women's issue' in most value chain development - an additional 'problem' on top of all the other competing objectives and priorities in economic development interventions (environment, HIV/AIDS etc etc .....). Gender analysis remains weak in most 'mainstream' livelihood, market and value chain analyses, and largely ignored in manuals and capacity building.<sup>4</sup> As a result, not only are women often excluded from value chain development (VCD) interventions, but gender inequalities may actually increase, which further contributes to the unacceptably high gender disparities on all human development and rights indicators.

This is the case even in interventions which claim to be 'ethical' like cooperative development, Fair Trade and organic farming<sup>5</sup>. Women are assumed to automatically benefit from interventions targeting 'household heads' – assumed in turn to be any man present. Requirements for traceability in supply chains generally involve documentation of assets in men's names which further consolidates their rights, and may even undermine food security for the household. The change to organic cultivation often increases women's labour more than that of men without increasing women's control of income or assets. Women's incomes

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<sup>2</sup> See references in Farnworth, C. and C. Ragasa (2008) and Mayoux and Mackie 2009.

<sup>3</sup> See *ibid* and the many studies of women's enterprise commissioned for ILO's WEDGE programme which can be found on [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org)

<sup>4</sup> Farnworth and Ragasa 2008; Solidaridad 2009.

<sup>5</sup> See references in eg Farnworth and Ragasa 2008; Solidaridad 2009;.

may even reduce as women, already overworked, reduce time on their own economic activities because they are unable to reduce time spent on food crops (Bolwig, S. and M. Odeke 2007). In households involved in Fair Trade men often take over areas of decision-making in production and household expenditure that formerly were a women's domain (Solidaridad 2009). Women traders may be displaced as markets are developed in large urban centres and for export – as for example in markets for fruits like mangoes and green leafy vegetables in Uganda (Farnworth and Ragasa 2008). Government regulations on cooperativisation in the cocoa industry in Cote d'Ivoire has made participation by women's groups very difficult, which further marginalised the women coffee producers (Solidaridad 2009).

There have been some notable recent innovations<sup>6</sup> :

- Women's entrepreneurship development in industries dominated by women promoted through interventions like ILO's Growth-oriented Women Entrepreneurs' project and MEDA's work with women entrepreneurs in Pakistan supported by USAID.
- Women's cooperatives in economic activities dominated by women. Some chains where women have benefited and improved their position on a large scale are *Café Femenino* and *Las Hermanas* coffee cooperatives in Latin America, shea nut production in Mali and cashew nut production in Mozambique.
- Household mentoring approaches which work with men and women within households to understand the benefits of addressing gender inequalities in work and decision-making for increasing household incomes like ACDI/VOCA's 'Farming is a Family Business' and IFAD's District Livelihoods Support Programme.
- Toolkits and resources for mainstreaming gender in value chain analysis produced by USAID, ILO and AgriProFocus.

This article discusses experience using Gender Action Learning System (GALS) which can be used on its own, or integrated with any of the above to increase inclusion, empowerment and sustainability.

## **Gender Action Learning System: overview of the process**

GALS is a flexible but structured community-led empowerment methodology which works with both women and men to help them gain more control over their lives. It is different from many other participatory and gender methodologies in that it starts with women and men as individuals rather than households or communities. It develops skills in life and livelihood planning as the basis for cooperation within households, community collective action and gender advocacy. After an initial 'catalysing intervention' of 1-2 years it becomes organisationally and financially sustainable through peer dissemination and integration into other interventions and decision-making processes.

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<sup>6</sup> Updated reports and resources on these initiatives can be found on the Gender in Value Chain AgriProFocus Learning Network: <http://genderinvaluechains.ning.com/>. For details of MEDA's work in Pakistan see <http://www.meda.org.pk/meda-donors/usaaid-pakistan/> and for ILO see [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org). For CICAP see Melendez, F. V. (2008). For examples of shea nuts and cashew see KIT, F. MaLi, et al. (2006). For an overview of IFAD's Household Approaches see Farnworth 2012.

GALS originated in a generic methodology: Participatory Action Learning System (PALS) developed from 2002 by the author for livelihood development and participatory impact assessment. From 2004 PALS tools were used for gender analysis and gender planning in India, Pakistan, Sudan and Kenya<sup>7</sup>. The systematisation of this experience as GALS to promote women's rights in CEDAW started in December 2007 funded under Oxfam Novib's Women's Employment Mainstreaming and Networking (WEMAN) programme. GALS was then adapted specifically for mainstreaming gender justice in value chain development from August 2009 as part of a joint IFAD and Oxfam Novib (ON) pilot project in Uganda, focusing on coffee, maize, fruits and beans.

This paper focuses on the experience of two organisations whose farmer members (called entrepreneurs) and staff have been at the forefront of development of the PALS livelihoods methodology since 2004/5 and lead partners in WEMAN since 2007, although most of the widespread changes discussed here date from the VCD project in August 2009.

**Bukonzo Joint Cooperative Microfinance (BJ)** is a successful member-managed cooperative with a well-established savings and credit programme, and profitable coffee marketing. As part of the IFAD/ON value chain project it focused on coffee and maize chains. In July 2012 BJ had 3237 members of whom 2399 were women and 838 men and all of whom were using GALS in some form. BJ has organisational regulations on gender balance in senior as well as other positions on the staff and the member-board, and also gives preferential conditions to women members in share dividends and savings and credit. Gender awareness is a key consideration in staff recruitment and under constant review by the member board, but there is no written gender policy or gender focal staff.

**Green Home Women's Development Association (GH)** is a local Community-Based Organisation (CBO) with neither an effective microfinance or marketing organisation. In the IFAD/ON project, GH focused on fruits and beans value chains. In 2009 GH had around 1,000 members of whom the majority were women. Gender issues were prominent in organisational documents and at one point there was a written gender policy in English. But most senior staff were men and member involvement in the board was minimal. By the time of writing in 2012 GH was in the process of trying to reinvent itself in the face of allegations of mismanagement and malpractice by some senior management and staff<sup>8</sup>. However, a core of 100 members were in the process of setting up a new organization 'New Home Network' (NHN) and expand membership using the GALS methodology.

The methodology as it was developed and implemented in the organisations discussed here is summarised in Box 1, and described in detail elsewhere (Mayoux, Baluku, Biira, & Reemer, 2011). However the precise way in which each stage is conducted and timing of moving from

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<sup>7</sup> The resources and Manuals for this earlier work can be found on the [wemanresources](#) website. Funding for PALS as a livelihoods and participatory impact assessment methodology came from Hivos, Trickle-Up US and Kabarole Research Centre (KRC) in Western Uganda in 2002 and DFID's Enterprise Development Information Assessment Information Service (EDIAIS). Adaptation for gender planning was mostly funded by Southern NGOs: ANANDI in India, Learning for Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) in Sudan and Aga Khan Foundation for work with Pakistan Microfinance Network. PALS tools were also used in gender training with ILO's GOWE project (Mayoux and Mackie 2009).

<sup>8</sup> The facts of the case are somewhat unclear – and fear of reprisals or violence means it is unlikely to come to court. But what is not in dispute by any of the parties involved is that member savings had 'disappeared' (for a second time) and the savings passbooks taken away with no apparent attempt to return them after 18 months despite repeated requests by members and the other staff and board members.

one stage to the next depends on the characteristics of the particular value chain concerned, particularly the length of the chain, types of power relations involved, the amount of knowledge at different levels and the purpose of the particular intervention.

### **Box 1: Overview of the GALS Value Chain Process**

#### **Gender Justice Vision**

A world where women and men are able to realise their full potential as economic, social and political actors, free from all gender discrimination, for empowerment of themselves, their families, their communities and global humankind.

#### **Approach to pro-poor value chain development**

- Value chain upgrading to improve incomes for those most vulnerable within the value chain through improvements in quality and/or productivity and/or relations with others in the chain.
- Livelihood diversification for those most vulnerable in the chain to improve negotiating power and, if necessary, to enable them to leave the chain.
- Focus on underlying gender inequalities in access to power and resources at all levels which constitute discrimination and violation of women's human rights as well as leading to inefficiencies in household livelihoods at all levels of the value chain.

#### **GALS Stages and Tools**

**Stage 1: Preliminary scoping and mapping** to select the value chains, and then for each chain to map the main chain activities, stakeholders, value distribution, governance and gender inequalities in all these based on existing knowledge and secondary source material.

**Stage 2: Participatory action research** with vulnerable stakeholder groups, and where feasible more powerful stakeholders, to identify poverty and gender issues at each level, identify immediate change strategies and strengthen collaboration and peer sharing.

Tool 1: Gender balance tree (individual/collective)

Tool 2: Market map (individual/collective)

Tool 3: Income challenge action tree (individual/collective)

Tool 4: Gender challenge action tree (individual/collective)

Tool 5: Individual livelihood and gender road journeys with monitoring calendar

Tool 6: Stakeholder collective road journeys

**Stage 3: Identification, planning and negotiation of multi-stakeholder win-win strategies** through value chain multi-stakeholder events, resulting in a multi-stakeholder strategic plan towards a vision of common interests.

Tool 7: Multi-stakeholder win-win tree or diamond

Tool 8: Multi-stakeholder win-win road journey

**Stage 4: Sustainable action learning process** through peer upscaling and integration in other interventions. This includes monitoring change through integration of individual and group level learning into management information systems as the basis for policy advocacy and establishment of participatory planning in Annual General Meetings, value chain fairs and local government.

The first stage of the process is scoping the chains and use of adapted of value chain mapping tools to identify key stakeholders and key priority starting points based on a gender analysis of existing information. In BJ and GH value chains were selected through existing meetings with entrepreneur members because of significance in terms of income (coffee, maize and some fruits), numbers of farmers (coffee and beans) and/or potential for profitable upscaling (maize). BJ and the process consultants already had considerable experience with these chains through other work and their clear mandate was to promote their members within these chains. The preliminary mapping was therefore done very quickly through informal meetings with a few key people before moving on to the more participatory and in-depth action learning in Stage 2.

Stage 2 is a longer process with different stakeholder groups who are then brought together to identify win-win strategies in Stage 3. The initial focus is on the most vulnerable stakeholders, particularly women. The aim from the very first session is for individuals to identify immediate strategies which can bring about tangible positive improvements in their lives and livelihoods to start to progress towards their visions. The individual-level tools are also designed to identify immediate steps to address inefficiencies and unnecessary unhappiness caused by gender inequality - for men as well as women. In BJ and GH those trained in initial workshops learned and applied the GALS methodology over a period of about 6 months for the chain/s in which they were most involved. They then used the same tools to develop strategies in other value chains where they saw potential for profitable livelihood diversification in production and/or trade. Stage 2 involved the range of local chain stakeholders from the beginning because members already knew these people as members of the same families and communities. In the case of coffee Bukonzo Joint had already made contact with traders up the chain as they were setting up the marketing cooperative. Relationships were characterised by lack of trust and communication, and exclusion of women from more profitable activities and trading relationships. This meant that it was easier to bring stakeholders together and discuss common interests in removing misunderstandings and inefficiencies than might be the case initially in other more conflictual chains.

The core of the upscaling process in Stages 2 and 3 is voluntary peer training within families and existing support networks – people those receiving training have a personal interest in helping. This includes integration into group meetings and any supply chain training by traders. In both BJ and GH outreach targets through peer training were consistently exceeded. Many members had trained other members in their households and communities so although outreach to organisation members has been tracked, total outreach is much greater, but not known. The main role for organisation staff is to support for emerging collective actions on gender issues like land ownership and gender-based violence, and assigning value to the process through aggregation and dissemination of monitoring information for advocacy. This involves making links as soon as possible with local leaders, local government and other powerful chain actors in order to promote communication and speed up the development of ‘win-win strategies’ between stakeholders.

GALS is self-monitoring at individual level up to organisation-level as an ongoing learning and reflection process<sup>9</sup>. Capacity-building and planning workshops are structured to produce reliable quantitative as well as qualitative information for all participants on context, strategies and changes. Baseline information is collected on the individual diagrams for later

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<sup>9</sup> A description of the GALS information system can be found in Mayoux 2012 and 2012 forthcoming.

aggregation and analysis. Further information on issues where respondents are likely to know and verify information is collected retrospectively. The information is then tracked over time in ways most useful for the empowerment process at individual and group levels.

Information from a number of sources is combined in this paper:

- Quantitative and qualitative impact information in Bukonzo Joint on women's land ownership, division of labour and coffee quality collected since 2009 and which is now regularly collected for over 3,500 members and reported back through Board meetings as part of their routine planning process.
- Quantified diagram outputs and qualitative information on gender relations and strategies from a series of 10 stakeholder capacity-building and planning workshops 2009-2010.
- A participatory survey in BJ in February 2010 as part of the peer capacity-building collected information on literacy levels and changes in landholding for 204 men and 296 women.
- Participatory pictorial surveys of changes in income, livelihood diversification and peer training conducted for 476 participants in the four multistakeholder meetings in September 2010.
- Interviews conducted by BJ in 2011 for 2717 households as part of the organic and Fair Trade certification processes
- Qualitative information from a short 8-day qualitative external study of BJ for Oxfam Novib and GIZ in October 2011 (Farnworth and Akamandisa (2011)).
- Qualitative and quantitative research using GALS tools with GH as well as BJ members in July 2012.

Undoubtedly much of the information is incomplete and many unanswered questions remain. In what follows the author analyses this available information in the light of her contextual understanding and in-depth qualitative questioning alongside her long-term support role. The A4 diaries and quantified workshop outputs provide the basis for more rigorous qualitative and quantitative research by the organisation or external agencies if and when funds are available for such a study.

## **Changing gender inequalities makes business sense**

Participatory analysis with men as well as women using GALS tools at the initial stakeholder workshops in 2009 identified a clear gender division of tasks, roles and power. Use of the Gender Balance Tree to analyse work input and expenditures highlighted the conclusion that women did the majority of cultivation work in all crops. In crops like beans women did all the work apart from preparing land. In coffee producing households women did about 70% of the main cultivation work and processing tasks like hulling alongside cultivation of foodcrops and unpaid household work.

In about 70% households men migrated to town in search of work. Men were typically only involved in very occasional heavy tasks, coming back to harvest and market the coffee beans when they wanted cash. They “took” any coffee from the trees, drying on the ground or stored in a sack around the house around the house, sold it to local buyers (near bars) and use for their own purposes (often alcohol or women in town). 70% of 495 men followed up through individual research at the time of capacity-building openly admitted to taking all the money from coffee, and even stealing their wife’s money, wasting much of this on drink and

other women. Polygamy (59% men interviewed in 2009) increased the level of dependency on increasingly fragmented plots of land and also reduced men's income and labour input into any one household. There was a high level of marital instability, domestic violence (40% of 887 men interviewed), male alcoholism (58%) and drug addiction. In some households men's expenditure on alcohol in one month was equal to the costs of the school fees for a term.

Women had no power over decision-making because of their economic and social dependence on men and vulnerability. Typically women drew themselves kneeling down in front of their husbands to hand over all their money. Women had the main responsibility for their children and making sure that there was food for the family, including the husband when he was there. This limited their time and mobility to earn an income. When children (or other members of the extended family) were sick, women often had to take care and pay for hospital bills or medicines. Women were the main ones interested in education for their children and could not count on the husbands to pay the school fees. Relations between co-wives were often very competitive because typically husbands favoured one wife over the other. One wife might work more hours but the husband would tell the other wife to pick the coffee and sell it to buy a nice dress and go to hairdresser. This instability meant women were also keen to use any means they could to retain control of crops or cash for healthcare and education as well as food.

The market maps showed how women's role varied between the different crops. In fruits and beans women were involved in marketing, especially from their homes, along the road and in village markets. In some households the men took the fruit and/or beans to market or sell them to male middlemen and shopkeepers (mostly male) from neighboring trading centres also came to buy fruits from the village. Shops for beans and groundnuts were often owned by women. In coffee all traders were men except very smallscale women barter traders, because women had insufficient capital. Their ability to move up the trading chain was seriously constrained by their lack of control over income from the coffee, and lack of savings and access to credit because they did not own land. They also had limited time to spend away from the household to seek out the best prices.

Participatory analysis using the Increasing Incomes Challenge Action Tree concluded that gender inequalities were not only a problem for women, but a key cause of low productivity, low quality and prices at the farm level. In the case of coffee, unripe beans or beans which were not fully processed/still wet were frequently sold by both husband and wife even though they fetched a lower price in order to prevent each other from taking it. Men took any coffee they could when they wanted money – including unripe and unprocessed coffee before women were able to sell it. Men even sold non-harvested coffee, and even the coffee flowers before beans were formed, in advance to get cash. Much of the cash was spent in bars conveniently located next to the trader shops. In some cases they did not even tell their wives and the trader simply came and took the coffee. Women, who did most of the work, had little power over decision-making or investment in production or efficient processing like hulling. Much of the coffee was dried in the dust on the ground leading to mixing with impurities which further reduced the quality. Women said that because their benefits from the work or any investments were limited, their motivation to produce/pick/process good quality was small.



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## Gender inequalities can be changed

The main aim of the GALS process is gender justice and women's human rights as stated in CEDAW, rather than improved quality or productivity of crops per se. As in other methodologies like the household approaches of IFAD and ACDI/VOCA, enabling women and men to analyse clearly the negative business consequences of gender inequalities for themselves was a key factor in enlisting broad stakeholder support for a gender justice process. The combination of gender analysis with value chain development promotes the involvement of men as well as women, and this can lead to very significant changes in dimensions of gender inequality which are often considered too 'culturally embedded' or personally sensitive or conflictual to address.

Significant reductions in gender-based violence and increases in women's participation in many areas of decision-making are reported in member diaries, workshop presentations and testimonies as well as external studies (Farnworth and Akamandisa 2011). Both women and men now typically draw themselves sitting on an equal level at a table making decisions instead of the earlier images of women kneeling in front of men and handing them all the money. There have been significant reductions in male alcoholism with men now having their own savings or contributing to those of women. Interactive theatre role plays where couples explore the most significant changes from GALS highlight a change from conflict and mistrust between couples to a relationship of love and affection.

There have been significant changes in division of labour. These changes have only been monitored for Bukonzo Joint, but anecdotal evidence suggests they have also occurred for members of Green Home. In 2009 of 887 men interviewed by BJ, 55% thought men should not help their wives because of culture. By June 2012, out of 3568 members and non-members using GALS<sup>10</sup> 40% (1435) reported working together across the full range of productive and reproductive tasks, 29% (1041) reported sharing at least 3 tasks which had not happened before and 30% (1092) were unchanged. These percentages are similar to those in 2011 for 2717 households interviewed as part of the certification process, indicating a possible leveling off of impact once the receptive households have changed. It may also be that women overstate some of the changes, and men understate changes in work allocation (Farnworth and Akamandisa 2011).

What is distinctive about GALS is its ability to bring about very tangible changes in more sensitive and/or conflictual areas like land ownership. As noted above, the fact that women did not own land was identified early in the GALS VCD process as a cause of family disunity and hence poor quality coffee. In short-term low investment crops like beans, maize and some fruits land ownership was less of an issue because women could hire in land and thereby have more control over the proceeds. But in all households because men owned or controlled the land and had paid dowry of 12 goats to the woman's father they considered themselves entitled to control any money in the household and decide how much work they want to put into what activities. Increasing women's ownership and control of land was therefore identified as a high priority, particularly by women.

However land ownership is a complex issue with differences between clan land (about 80% land) which is governed, but not owned, by male family elders, and land registered to

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<sup>10</sup> In the same 8 out of 13 parishes.

individual through customary or formal legal arrangements or purchase<sup>11</sup>. There are also differences in a woman's entitlement to her husband's property depending on religion and type of marriage, with the highest status and entitlement for the minority of women having a church or civil marriage where women in theory have an equal right to all their husband's property from the day of marriage. In other cases women have customary access to land for cultivation through their relations with men, who subdivide their plots between wives. On divorce, in theory, women can go back to cultivate land on their parents' house though some remain on their husband's property, particularly if many children are involved. There is increasingly intense pressure on land with rapid population growth leading to a trend to formally register plots from the clan land as government leases (encouraged by the government). But there is continuing resistance from many clan elders to fragmentation of clan land as it is supposed to be a safety net for future spouses and generations and they insist that their children buy their own land rather than taking family land. Local leaders and traders made frequent reference to cultural norms and also fears that if women can get land from their husbands in their own right, this would lead them into serial marriages with men just to get more land.

This already complex set of rights is further complicated by the fact that each of the land arrangements are interpreted in different ways by local land officials and actual implementation is very varied and subject to various forms of corruption. Although regulations state that there must be at least 2 women on local land boards, many of the male land officials were of the (incorrect) opinion that it was illegal for women's names to go on any land agreements, despite the fact they were supposed to have had gender training. Local landboards have no records of women owning land before the start of GALS in 2009, and land officers said that before the lobbying by BJ they had not thought of this. Women owned land in only 2 households out of 419 interviewed by BJ at the beginning of the GALS process in 2009. A number of women had purchased land with loans from GH or BJ, but the land had been registered in the man's name.

As a result of the GALS process combined with other interlinked strategies by BJ, there have been significant increases in women's land ownership in the area. Firstly use of the GALS Challenge Action Trees for individual and collective analysis of the potential benefits of joint ownership of land by men as well as women started the change in attitudes and behaviour at household level for a significant number of lead households. Secondly, sustained lobbying of the local authorities and clan elders by staff and members of Bukonzo Joint through the thematic meetings convinced members of the local land board that change was desirable – and even led to dismissal of members of the board judged to be ineffective. Thirdly in 2011 as part of the Fair Trade certification process BJ decided to encourage including women's names on certification documents – not a legally binding document but as a form of awareness-raising to boost the more formal registration process. The passing of the long-awaited Domestic Relations Act in late 2011 may have also boosted the process with some people, though at the time of writing there was very little publicity for the Act in this area, the land official still had no copies and there had still not been any training for land officials in what it means.

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<sup>11</sup> See detailed discussion in Farnworth and Akamandisa 2011.

By July 2012 out of a total 3,057 members monitored by BJ<sup>12</sup>, 102 had fully signed joint or individual women's land agreements, 1,362 had applications in process which had been signed at local level or by family elders. So a total of 1464 or 48% households had some form of document on women's or joint ownership of land. Joint ownership was further encouraged as part of a certification process in which out of 2,717 households visited, 2,068 had signed joint certification documents and 66 women had individual ownership – a total of 76%. The process was also dynamic with members seeking new solutions where they encounter resistance. For example, in Kanyatsi parish members discovered that many of them had problems obtaining a land lease. If they applied alone it was difficult to deal with the local government and they had to pay UGS 180,000 for any size of land, because of costs related to documents, forms, processing time etc. They decided to apply for the land lease as a group (10 people) and negotiated with the local government. In the end they paid only UGS 67,000 each. In Green Home there were also significant changes and impact trees used in June 2012 indicated that in one group 6 out of 24 members had signed land agreements following GALS, one had already signed at an earlier sensitization meeting and the others were on family land.

Surprisingly these changes have received increasing support from men. The GALS diagrams and testimonies of men analyse why they have changed and men assert that they are much happier now. Many men are also at the forefront of working with other men to change, having set up men's groups to address issues of alcoholism. Male elders and also members of the local land boards are now promoting joint registration on land agreements.

## Win-win strategies

A key part of the GALS value chain strategy is to work with more powerful stakeholders and traders up the chain. Gender justice in VCD requires strategies beyond the household level to deal with discrimination within markets, value chains and support institutions. This discrimination was most evident in the coffee value chain where both women producers and traders were discriminated against in the market and larger coffee traders from Kasese Town or Kamapal did not deal with women. Even if women had good quality coffee, they depended on the male village traders for the marketing to Kasese traders who gave them lower prices for the reasons outlined above. Because the land belonged to their husbands, women were not eligible to join cooperatives (apart from BJ) or receive bank credit and were not targeted in technical training. They had also been excluded from certification processes in the area.

Rather than seeking to displace traders (male or female), the GALS process aims to harness their skills, energies and resources to develop the markets and chains. From this process it is expected that the traders will themselves gain, and thus be motivated to continue. But through increased demand and competition coupled with removal of discrimination, benefits will go disproportionately to those most vulnerable in the chain ie in this case women producers. As noted above, in all four value chains local traders, trade associations and traders from Kasese town were involved in the GALS process very early on.

Men and women traders have voluntarily given up their time to attend the GALS trainings. It quickly became clear from the initial capacity-building workshops with traders that gender

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<sup>12</sup> This covered all members and some non-members reach by GALS in 8 out of 12 parishes covered by BJ. At the time of writing the other 4 were due to report.

inequalities were fundamental to gender inefficiencies not only in their supplier households through affecting the quality of supply, but also in their own households and businesses. In the case of coffee traders' access to capital to buy coffee and time to negotiate with buyers up the chain are necessary to get the best prices are the main determinants of income. Small traders buy coffee with credit from traders higher up the chain. Much of the reason why they sold bad quality coffee and could not earn so much was because they did not have sufficient savings to invest and buy quality coffee in bulk. In order to bulk up the coffee they then mixed in impurities which further added to the bad reputation and low market price of coffee from this area on global markets. The other issue was poor measuring scales which meant they are often cheated. But they also agreed that decreasing their own expenditure on alcohol (in some cases 10 bottles a day costing UGX 2000 each) would go a long way to boosting the necessary savings to get them out of the chain of debt to middlemen higher up the chain and invest in more reliable weighing equipment and better storage. Between initial workshops in September 2009 and follow-up workshops in December 2009 significant changes had occurred in the households of all 14 traders attending the workshop. Some examples are given in Box 2, but these are not unique. All the traders agreed that they would like more gender training, and also training in business for their wives so that they can all do business together and save to improve their income.

#### **Some examples of changes in gender relations in coffee trader households**

Trader A has 3 wives and 4 gardens and 2 commercial premises. Before the GALS workshop he bought and did everything without consulting any of his wives. After the workshop he called a meeting with his wives and also other clan members and they made a family agreement that from that time on they would all be sharing. He signed an agreement for one plot of land for each of two wives, and had started to purchase a plot for the third wife. He said he used to treat his wives like children, like people who can't think. Now it is much better for him. He feels he has much more freedom. Before he had responsibility for everything and his wives would complain. Now they have their own responsibilities and trust. If there is no money, they understand. He also thinks it is a mistake not to put a wife's name on the land agreements because if he dies then not only his wife, but also his children will suffer because his brothers will take the land.

Trader B did not allow his wife to pick or handle coffee before the September workshop, only cassava, beans and other food crops. He controlled all the money and spent part of it himself in town. After the workshop he discussed with his wife to work together. They both take the coffee to the store and his wife now knows exactly how much they have. 90% of the income is now with her, he does not spend so much in town and they have been able to buy a goat (but in his name).

Working with multiple stakeholders has benefitted not only participants in the process, but also led to improvements in the local economy. Before the GALS value chain process the quality of coffee and other products in the Bukonzo area were extremely low and could only command low prices on the market and productivity was also low. As the result of combined work to reduce the gender-based inefficiencies in decision-making, work allocation and expenditures at household level through GALS and the related promotion of technical improvements and Fair Trade linkages, Bukonzo Joint coffee is now ranked third in Uganda for unwashed coffee (druga). Kampala traders are now coming direct to farmers and prices to farmers have significantly increased relative to the world coffee prices. In 2012 BJ was

looking to diversify its marketing strategy to include maize and possibly other value chains alongside its successful strategy for export of Fair Trade and organic certified coffee – having succeeded in combining funding from a range of sources to purchase and instal all the coffee processing equipment planned in the organisational Road Journey at the beginning of the GALS project. Members of NHN were joining with Bukonzo Joint's Fair Trade marketing in coffee and maize.

Using the same diagram tools and drawing provides a universal language for communication between stakeholders and increasing stakeholder participation, as well as cutting through verbose and lengthy definitions and concepts at higher levels. The participatory methodology also develops the analytical, participatory, listening and communication skills of institutions and policy-makers to increase the effectiveness of their pro-poor interventions – as well as staff's own personal reflection and planning. The GALS process has led to a mushrooming of information sharing and informal forms of collaboration and a strengthening of member associations, some of which have been established as a result of the GALS process itself. This is particularly noticeable in the reorganization of GH members as New Home Network which brings together both producers and traders in beans and fruits. They have developed not only their own individual plans, but also organizational plans.

## **Some remaining challenges and wider implications**

The experience with GALS therefore reinforces the conclusions of other methodologies that changing gender inequalities and discrimination makes 'business sense' for households, enterprises, and ultimately the local and national economy. Some profound and easily monitored changes in gender inequality can take place relatively quickly even in households where men have been violent, alcoholic and committing frequent adultery. The explicit and very graphic nature of much of the pictorial information around issues of gender-based violence, alcohol and prostitution makes it very difficult for people at any level to dismiss gender strategies as externally-imposed or 'culturally inappropriate'. Men who are able to address negative dimensions of their 'masculine' role like violence and alcoholism are happier and feel more valued in their families and community. Male as well as female community leaders can become important promoters of change. Working first with those who are most vulnerable constitutes a powerful start for improving communications between chain actors and chain efficiency, and demonstrates the business case for gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment. Addressing the gender inequalities that cause inefficiencies in livelihoods at many levels of the chain can make a significant contribution to upgrading the whole value chain and development of the local economy.

A distinctive advantage in GALS is that once learned, use of the tools in individual diaries and group meetings to analyse, plan and track progress is cumulative and ongoing. In Stage 4 the methodology becomes organisationally and financially self-sustaining and self-upscaling at different levels - adapted as needed to different purposes, integrated as far as possible into other activities. The same processes and skills can also be integrated to mainstream gender and increase effectiveness in other interventions. In Bukonzo Joint all the costs of all GALS capacity building are now covered by the increased profits from micro-finance and/or coffee. In NHN there is very little external funding. The considerable skill and initiative which very poor people who cannot read and write demonstrate during this process, and the constructive strategies they propose, are often an eye-opener to other chain stakeholders. Organisational

replication is also occurring between CBOs in the local area, generally without external funding, as a result of peoples' interest in the success cases.

This is not to say there are no challenges to be addressed. Firstly there may be some leveling off of impact in any one community once the members most receptive or in need of change have been reached. A particular challenge is to address the needs of the large numbers of women in polygamous relationships, not only discouraging men from multiple relationships but helping existing polygamous families to reconcile differences and work out a way of working together where all the wives benefit. Some work has been done on this, but this needs to be more widely upscaled through some readjustment of tools. This may also require some counselling adaptations and newer techniques like interactive theatre and participatory video<sup>13</sup> may also be useful to regain peoples' interest<sup>14</sup>. There is a need to further extend and deepen the GALS analysis over the full range of CEDAW rights. Now members and staff are confident with the basic tools, they can use the more advanced diagrams for much more detailed analysis and tracking and advocacy research<sup>15</sup>.

There are also signs that commercial success has led to increasing participation of men, leading in turn to changes in governance. There is a need to revisit BJ's original PALS poverty analysis now that many previously poor members have become better off, to ensure that poorer people in the community are not being left out and develop strategies for inclusion. There is anecdotal evidence that where men are elected to leadership positions in primary cooperatives, women are leaving. And also that men are favouring men in allocation of loans, and failing to observe the differential policy on shares whereby currently women get 60% and men get 40%. It is increasingly considered unfair that men should be penalized in this way, but the equalization could be made conditional on men producing a legal joint land agreement ie equality at home is required before equality in the organisation. Similar requirements could also apply to any man standing for elected office within the organization. The earlier idea of a women's coffee cooperative as a specific niche brand could also be reconsidered as a way forward to assist single women – particularly the new roasted coffee BJ is able to produce with its new processing equipment.

Some of these challenges are a consequences of constraints under which BJ and NHN are operating rather than GALS *per se*. Some of these challenges are now addressed in the revised versions of the methodology being used elsewhere.<sup>16</sup> Evidence from replications so far elsewhere in Uganda, Rwanda and Nigeria indicate that significant changes can occur in some peoples' lives from the first sessions. Peer training is also occurring at a significant rate. It is estimated that in new organisations where there is some sort of group activity through microfinance or cooperatives, adapting and implementing the methodology as it now stands would take about two years. This does however inevitably depend on the levels of organisational commitment to both gender justice and a community-led process and their willingness to follow up on governance and advocacy issues on issues like land which emerge from the GALS process.

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<sup>13</sup> See video to be uploaded on [www.wemanresources.info](http://www.wemanresources.info)

<sup>14</sup> [http://www.wemanresources.info/5\\_MakingGenderFun/5\\_0\\_MakingGenderFun.html](http://www.wemanresources.info/5_MakingGenderFun/5_0_MakingGenderFun.html)

<sup>15</sup> See Mayoux 2012a,b and c forthcoming.

<sup>16</sup> Updated Manuals will be available by December 2012 on the WEMANresources website.

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