

Quantification on the Multilane Highway in New Home, Uganda

Top at the initial training

Bottom in the community



# PART 2: COMMUNITY ACTION LEARNING

# COMMUNITY ACTION LEARNING

The Community Action Learning process consists of 3 levels:

- **individual** level progress and tracking on the diagrams and Multilane Highway in champion and staff Notebook Diaries as a personal learning process to achieve their vision.
- **group** meetings for sharing and comparing progress and experience in order to brainstorm and give support on strategies to accelerate progress. This includes some quantification of individual achievements and challenges on group diagrams as the basis for collective support and action.
- **organisational** reflection and learning based on aggregation of the group outputs and quantitative and qualitative analysis for follow-up support.

Over time the aim is to build up a community-led participatory information system linked to local level advocacy, like the system developed in Bukonzo Joint where indicators on changes in land ownership, division of labour and coffee quality are tracked by members and staff for the total 3,500+ membership.

Advising on design of the Community Action Learning process and ultimate system is a key task of the senior GALS consultant, based on outcomes from the CCW and the existing MandE activities and skills of the rest of the team - all in the context of the longer term sustainability plan.

This Community Action Learning can be done just through using the 3 tools presented in the initial workshops linked together on the MLH framework.

With particular focus also on the fun dimensions of developing songs and theatre. The schedule for group meetings should be adapted and agreed at the end of Session 6 of the CCW, based on expressed needs of the participants. A suggested schedule for 2 weekly 2 hour meetings over 3 months for consolidation of the tools and changes is given in Box 4 below. But this can be adapted to the time availability and priorities of participants. **It is THEIR process (champions and those they bring in), owned by THEM to support THEIR progress.** If the process is to be sustainable and dynamic in the longer term, it is crucial at this stage that participant needs are at the centre of the design and not organisational or donor needs.

If the length of time until the Gender Justice Review is more than 3 months, then the initial Road Journey in the CCW should reflect that time frame. The schedule should be changed and adapted as time goes on if new priorities arise. Meetings 1-3 and/or Meeting 4 can be repeated. Alternatively some meetings could also look at other cultural issues etc. Or introduce some new tools in advance of the Review - for example Challenge Action Trees on specific issues arising.



Top: Women in LEAP Sudan participate in planning their next Road Journey

Bottom: Champion group tracking on the Multilane Highway, DUHAMIC, Rwanda



## Individual reflexive learning

Immediately after the Change Catalyst Workshop - after the first session, or after they get home from the residential workshop - the champions start to:

- work towards their **personal visions**
- implement **gender changes** in their lives to progress towards their vision
- share what they have learned with others through **pyramid peer sharing** as part of their **leadership development**

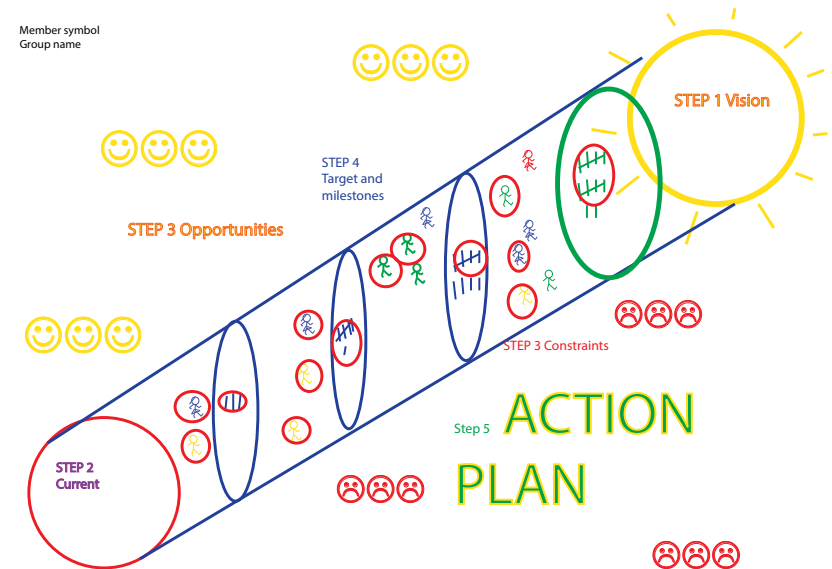
SOME CHANGES NEED TO HAPPEN IMMEDIATELY eg changes in division of labour and decision making.

It is important that these individual changes and successes drive the whole process - the most effective champions who will be able to persuade others are not people who just 'go out and preach the word', but people who are successful and happy in their own lives, families and friend networks because they now have a vision and plan, and have better relationships in their families and respect from their friends. Then people will come to learn how to be like them, and will listen to what they say.

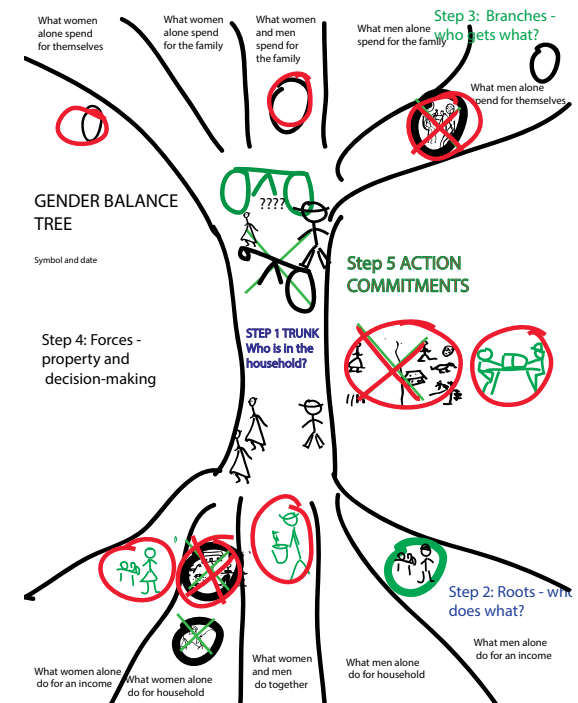
The Community Action Learning process reinforces progress towards the vision through:

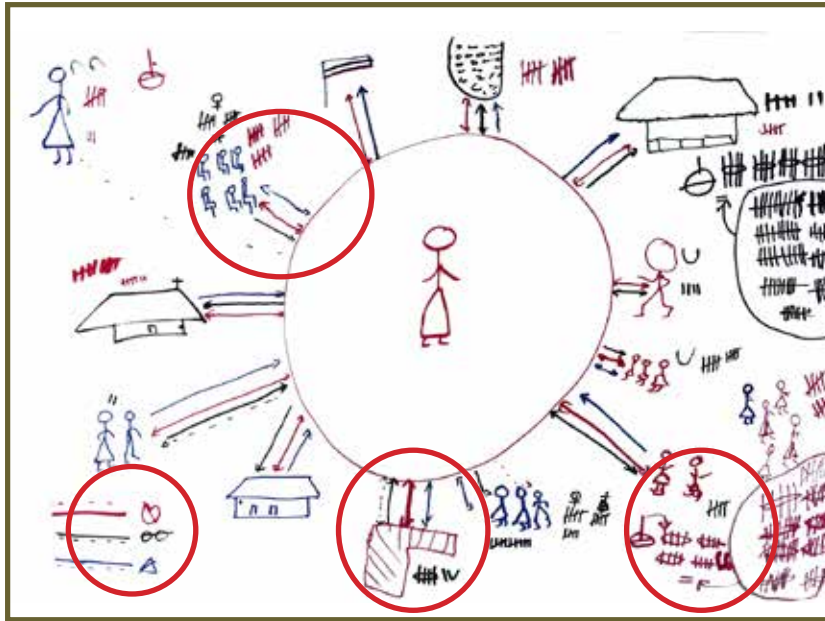
- **consolidating understanding of the tools** through practising and reviewing them in turn
- **tracking progress** on the original diagrams in the notebook diary as red rings around:
- actions and milestones achieved on the vision road of the multilane highway.
- ripened fruits and tubers on the roots, branches or trunk of the gender balance tree
- people reached on the empowerment leadership map
- ideally also achievements and actions transferred to tracking on all 3 lanes on the multilane highway in preparation for the GJR milestones.
- **sharing** of individual experiences, opportunities and challenges at group meetings and discussing ways to progress.
- **encouraging practice** of the tools and leadership development through pyramid peer sharing and discussing any challenges or adaptations that might be needed for the particular context

Through inputs from the GJR moments, the CAL starts to tackle longer term and more difficult gender changes eg changing land ownership documents THE EXCUSE OF SLOW CHANGE OFTEN MEANS NO CHANGE. The steps towards these longer term changes are then mapped and tracked eg how people will get the necessary documents for land and take them to the first offices.

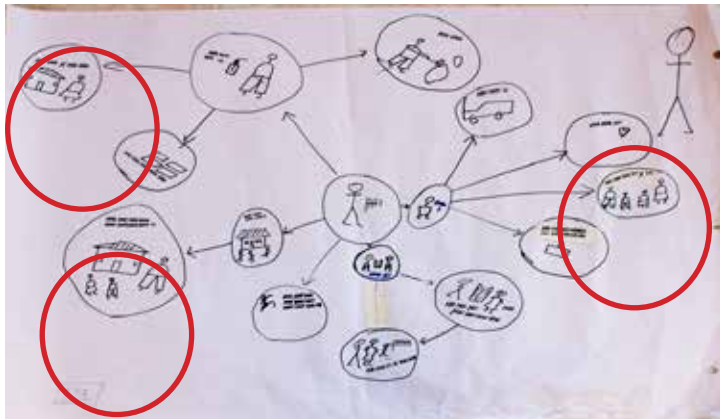


Vision Journey and Gender Balance Tree with achievement fruits ringed in red on diagrams in individual notebooks.

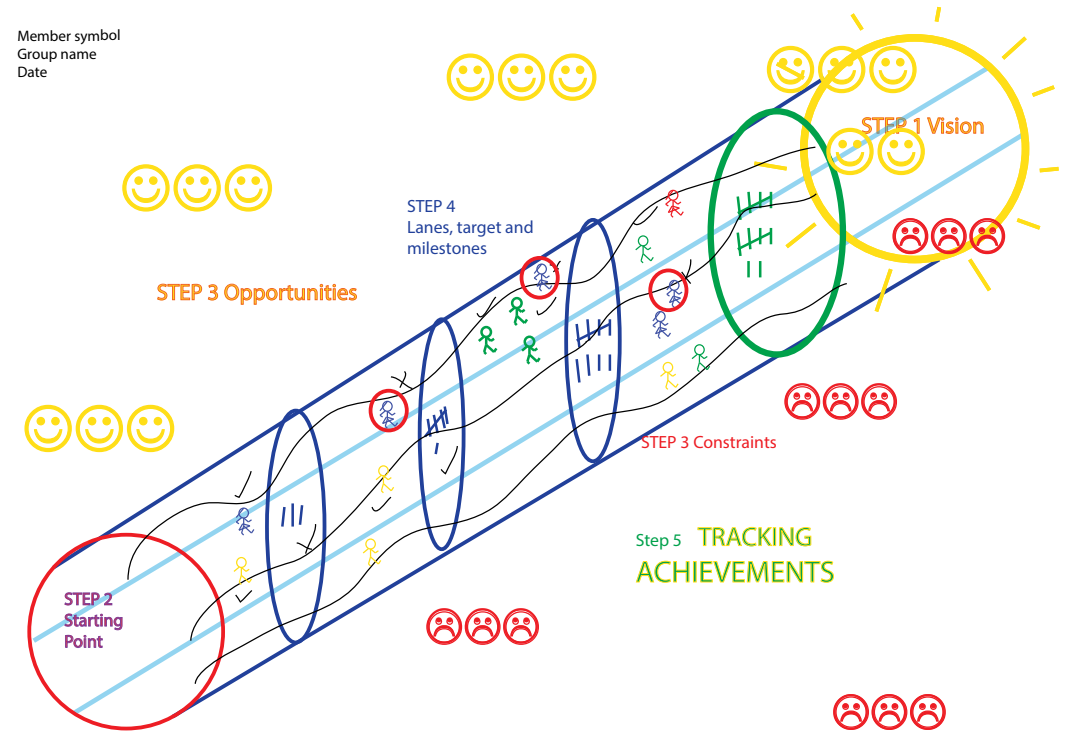




Individual leadership tracking first tier on empowerment leadership map - ringing achievements in red



Individual leadership tracking third tier on empowerment leadership spider map - ringing achievements in red



Achievements at each level transferred to individual Multilane Highway

## Group meetings

The 'cement' of the individual-level action learning process are the series of group meetings. These meetings are ideally integrated into existing activities eg savings and credit meetings. Or new GALS groups may need to be formed from the peer sharing networks of the original GALS champions. Champions and those they bring into the process through the pyramid peer sharing meet regularly to discuss progress and exchange experiences and ideas of ways forward.

Group meetings are not the place for new people to learn the tools - that should be done through the peer sharing process. Although slower to begin with, that has been found to be more effective in the long run. Once new people start coming to meetings to learn the tools, then those who already know them start to get bored and drop away. Then the momentum of the whole process slows because the focus becomes merely sharing of the tools, not use of the tools to reach the original visions and to plan collective action.

In order to continually involve the new people coming into the process and maintain continuity and depth of discussion it is likely that there will need to be a combination of:

- **frequent small local meetings** where all those involved locally can attend. These meetings should be small enough (maximum 20 people) to be facilitated by the champions and enable full participation, free discussion and make sure new people get the support they need outside the meeting. But people coming to the meetings should already have learned the tools and have the tools already in their notebooks through the pyramid peer sharing.

linked by:

- **periodic larger meetings** where group representatives attend and then feed back. These are facilitated by the champions to develop their GALS facilitation skills, but supported by one of the core team members. It is advisable that these representatives and also lead facilitators are rotated between participants in the smaller groups so that leadership and knowledge is continually shared rather than becoming concentrated in a few people. One way of rotating representation while maintaining the depth of discussion and advanced skills learning at the representative meetings would be to require representatives to have trained a minimum of 5 other people. Representation at this level then becomes the basis for consideration for other trainings in the GJR and later as a certified GALS community trainer.

GALS meetings should be events which people want to attend and invest time and energy in. It is important for participants to decide what they want to do, rather than organisations imposing too rigid a structure as long - as the basic objectives of learning and sharing for change are met. ALL meetings must:

- clearly and constantly demonstrate the self-interest benefits of planning and sharing in terms of helping people progress towards their visions.

- be fun - people are giving up their spare time. People attend social events because they want to go, as part of the social fabric and to meet friends.
- conclude with some set of action commitments to move forward.

The CAL process must move as quickly as possible towards a structure which can be self-sustaining in the longer term as the basis for subsequent GALS Phases. It is best to start as one means to continue - minimising costs and reinforcing the culture of 'participation means responsibility' and 'no free lunch'. As far as possible the group meetings should be self-financing right from the beginning. Subsidies for inputs like diaries, pens, and even food and transport should be kept to an absolute minimum - if people can afford a bottle of beer, they can afford to pay for their own notebooks and materials and bring their own food in order to participate in a process which will benefit them. But organisations may have to supply some materials like flipcharts and pens because the organisation is also benefitting.

Costs can also be minimised in most contexts through:

- **integrating meetings into existing activities** eg savings and credit meetings (as in Bukonzo joint). Or new support groups may need to be formed by champions together with those they are training (as in Gumutindo).
- **location of meetings** should be convenient in terms of the type of other activities in which people are already involved and should minimise travel costs. Some negotiation may be needed with eg churches, local government or schools to find a free or at least cheap venue - making it clear that the work will be for the benefit of the community and not a donor handout.
- **timing and length of meetings** should be convenient in terms of the type of other activities in which people are already involved and people should provide their own refreshments.
- **keeping a strict track of flipcharts and markers** - participants, including leaders should not use these for their own diagrams. They should only be used for group outputs and tracking.

This may be difficult if the organisation does not have the culture of such discipline in other trainings - in that case gender should not be required to cover its costs if other trainings do not. But if subsidy continues for more than a few months then the process will not be sustainable in the longer term. Resources will be wasted that could be put to much more productive use. Any subsidies should be reserved for those few people who are too poor, encounter too much resistance in the family and/or live very far away - as a special case for ongoing organisational support agreed with other participants. And a similar discipline should be introduced for other trainings.

The basis of sustainability is the enthusiasm and commitment of participants. Identifying ways of maintaining this as the methodology upscales is a key focus for discussions with both champions and the organisation at the GJR moments.

## Group monitoring

Group meetings should start to develop the skills and discipline of quantifying changes because this is very important for the learning and progress of participants within the process. The main monitoring priorities at this stage are that:

- changes are tracked as fruits on the relevant diagram in the individual notebook diaries for participants' own learning
- information on what works and what does not work is shared in the groups a learning process
- pyramid peer sharing is continually expanding as part of participant leadership development

Simple monitoring through quantification of key achievements on collective diagrams should be possible within quite a short period at the more frequent local meetings, with the outcomes then fed back to the larger representation meetings.

The tools are essentially the same as the diagrams for the CCW. Monitoring can be done either on group versions of the 3 diagrams: Vision Journey, Gender Balance Tree, Empowerment Leadership Map (see example for GBT on this page). Alternatively if the MLH has been well understood, then that can be used as a shorter and more systematic method. Other tools like the Diamonds can be used after they have been introduced in the GJR (see below). The way in which quantification can be progressively improved as numbers of participants grow will need to be decided as things develop - based on the recommendations and capacities of participants and which diagrams they and the supporting staff are more comfortable with.

But participants will be different. They are now members of a group who meet regularly and so can monitor change more systematically - bearing in mind that new members will join, so later diagrams should have more participants. The facilitation process for each tool is essentially the same so that people get used to certain participatory norms. A suggested process for a group of 20 people:

**Step 1:** Pairwise discussion separating women and men and single and married people to mark on cards the 3-5 key changes they wanted to see. It needs 4 colours of cards: women are given cards of one colour, and men cards of another colour and different colours for single and married so differences will be clear.

**Step 2:** The 3-5 changes from each pair are then shared in the group and put on the diagram in the relevant place - only placing new cards for new issues, but putting similar cards on top of each other.

**Step 3:** When all the cards have been placed then people vote on the changes they themselves have actually experienced - using one colour pen for women and one colour pen for men.

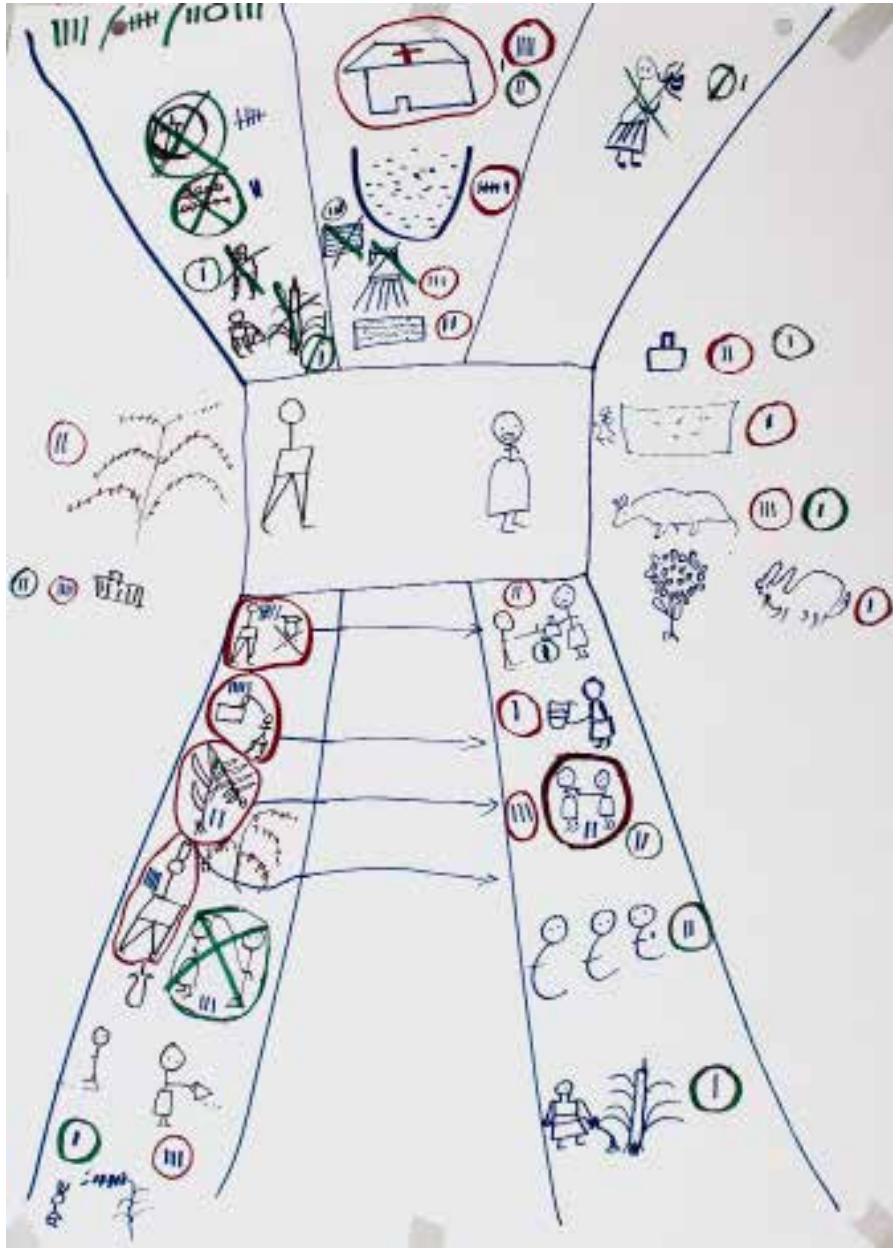
**Step 4:** Put the group symbol, date and total number of women and men at the top of each diagram.

**NOTE It is important that documentation does not dominate over the fun empowerment objectives. These are essential parts of longer term sustainability of the changes and process.** Quantification should not dominate meetings, but serve as the basis for reinforcing individual progress and tracking and discussion on strategies to accelerate progress. It is important to leave plenty of time for relaxed discussion and fun with songs and dances. The rigour and reliability of documentation can be progressively tightened up through the GJR and Phases 2 and 3 as peoples' confidence and skills develop through practice.

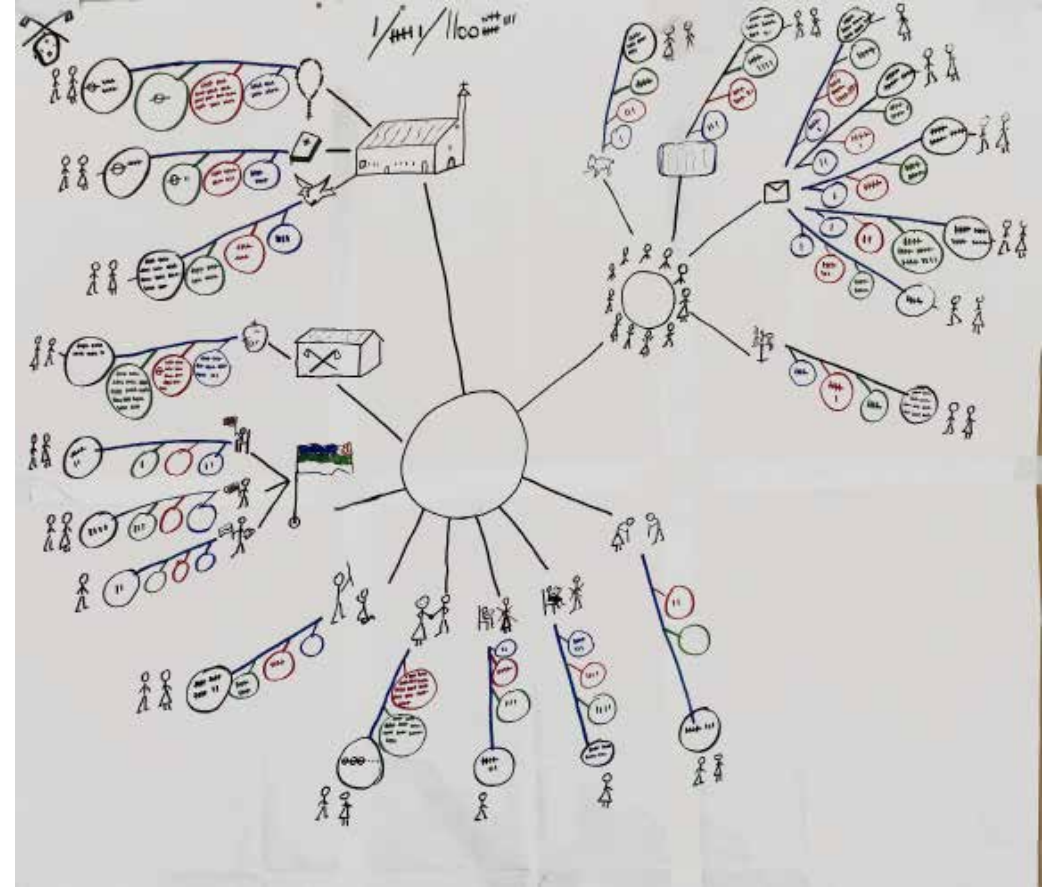


Quantified achievements on gender balance in the current milestone circle for Kisinga Women's Group, New Home, Uganda

<b>Box 2.1</b>	<b>Suggested Local Meetings until the 3 month Gender Justice Review</b>
	<b>Note this assumes fortnightly meetings of about 2 hours. But can be adapted to weekly or monthly meetings - without losing the fun elements.</b>
<b>Meeting 1</b> <i>Vision Journey 1</i>	<p>Sharing visions in pairwise discussion</p> <p>Making sure everyone has understood the Vision Journey tool and review of steps</p> <p>Individual work to fill in changes on Vision Journey since starting GALS and transfer these to their individual MLH.</p> <p>Group discussion of progress on the Vision Journey since starting GALS with quick hands up on how many people feel they are progressing</p> <p>Group sharing opportunities and challenges and ideas on ways forward</p> <p>Sharing experience of pyramid peer sharing of Vision Journey</p> <p>Register of participants with key background information, whether they are happy with progress and numbers of women and men with whom they have shared the information</p> <p>Reviewing and refining the song for the Vision Journey</p> <p>Homework to make sure their diaries are clear. And to continue to share the Vision Journey and follow up on progress of those they have trained and extend the network.</p>
<b>Meeting 2</b> <i>Gender Balance Tree 1</i>	<p>Sharing the changes they put on the Gender Balance Tree in pairwise discussion</p> <p>Making sure everyone has understood the Gender Balance Tree Tool and review of steps and how this relates to the multilane highway middle lane</p> <p>Individual work to fill in changes on Gender Balance Tree since starting GALS and transfer these to the individual MLH</p> <p>Group discussion of progress on the Gender Balance Tree since starting GALS with quick hands up on how many people feel they are progressing</p> <p>Sharing opportunities and challenges and ideas on ways forward</p> <p>Sharing experience of pyramid peer sharing of Gender Balance Tree</p> <p>Register of changes on aggregated group GBT</p> <p>Reviewing and refining the song for the Gender Balance Tree</p> <p>Homework to make sure their diaries are clear. And to share the Gender Balance Tree and follow up on progress of those they have trained and extend the network.</p>
<b>Meeting 3</b> <i>Empowerment Leadership Map</i>	<p>Sharing the changes they put on the Empowerment Leadership Map in pairwise discussion</p> <p>Making sure everyone has understood the Social Empowerment Map Tool and review of steps and how this relates to the multilane highway</p> <p>Individual work to fill in changes on Empowerment Leadership Map since the CCW</p> <p>Group discussion of progress on the Empowerment Leadership Map since the CCW, sharing opportunities and challenges and ideas on ways forward</p> <p>Sharing experience of pyramid peer sharing of Empowerment Leadership Map and encouraging the pyramid sharing</p> <p>Register of changes on group ELM</p> <p>Reviewing and refining the song for the ELM</p> <p>Homework to make sure their diaries are clear. And to follow up on progress of those they have trained and extend the network.</p>
<b>Meeting 4</b> <i>Vision Journey 2:</i>	<p>Review of progress on visions since starting GALS with focus on reinforcing champion's tracking of own progress, opportunities and strategies to overcome challenges.</p> <p>Collective MLH with quantification of visions, initial situation and progress so far in the appropriate milestone circle, colour-coded by gender</p> <p>Discussion of progress for those learning through pyramid peer sharing</p> <p>Vision Journey song</p>
<b>Meeting 5</b> <i>Gender Balance Tree 2</i>	<p>Review of progress on gender balance since starting GALS with focus on reinforcing champion's tracking of own progress, opportunities and strategies to overcome challenges.</p> <p>Quantification of gender change visions, starting situation and current progress on the middle road of the vision circle of the MLH</p> <p>Discussion of progress for those learning through pyramid peer sharing</p> <p>Gender Balance song</p>
<b>Meeting 6</b> <i>Empowerment Leadership Map</i>	<p>Review of progress on pyramid peer sharing since starting GALS with focus on reinforcing champion's tracking of own progress, opportunities and strategies to overcome challenges.</p> <p>Quantification of peer sharing visions and current progress (starting point was zero) on the bottom lane of the MLH</p> <p>Discussion of progress for those learning through pyramid peer sharing</p> <p>Empowerment Leadership song</p>



Quantified red fruits on gender balance tree from group quantification in DUHAMIC, Rwanda



Quantified empowerment leadership spider map from BAIR, Rwanda



## Organisational Support for larger meetings and quantitative monitoring until the first GJR

During the Community Action Learning process meetings are led by the champions in order to reinforce ownership and facilitation skills, and based on their priorities. Smaller local meetings should be completely run by the champions without external interference.

Once the groups are solid enough and quantification of each tool has been established, then as numbers of participants grow it will be important to develop some sort of representational structure where group representatives bring the quantified diagrams for discussion and aggregation at meetings supported by a member of the core team who monitors and documents progress in order to feed back on progress to the organisation, funders and the lead expert to help guide the GJR process.

The main aim of the larger meetings, as with the smaller ones is empowerment and enabling the champions and those with whom they share the methodology to reflect on and document what they need for their own empowerment. Then share this with other group members as part of collective learning - including some quantification on the group diagrams. Aggregation of group diagrams helps to maintain momentum and a sense of progress - and also promote discussion and a bit of competition on the relative progress of the various groups to celebrate those that are working well and identify ways in which slower processes can catch up. The main focus is:

- the degree to which people have been able to achieve their visions
- the gender changes which have taken place in division of labour, incomes, assets and decision-making
- leadership development and outreach through the pyramid peer sharing process and assess quality of the peer capacity-building and scaling up
- issues arising and any necessary changes to the tools and pyramid peer sharing

Staff should never start to dominate, or the participants will not have the confidence/motivation to continue on their own. It is very important therefore that staff are very comfortable with the facilitation process of GALS and are able to 'lead from the back'. They must also make sure the aggregation is fun and useful, and that the champions do not start to dominate each other. If staff role is explained as documentation and feedback, and to give advice on participant facilitation and leadership skills, rather than facilitation itself, then this helps to maintain the ownership by the champions. Staff may also give advice on how challenges may be overcome based on experience of other champions or other processes elsewhere and feeds back to information for aggregation at organisational level. But any advice should be solidly based on

### Box 2.2 : Participatory quantification from group meetings in quantitative database eg Excel

<b>Meetings 1-3</b>	<p>Register of women and men attending meetings with background information on gender, literacy, marital status and initial poverty indicator</p> <p>Photos of the group diagrams</p> <p>Notes on general progress from the quick hands up quantification and notes on the issues arising.</p>
<b>Meeting 4</b>	<b>Vision Journey/MLH top row: categorised vision targets and 3 month achievement</b>
<b>Meeting 5</b>	<b>Gender Balance Tree/MLH top row: categorised gender change commitment targets and 3 month achievement numbers of women and men for whom some change has occurred with figures on particular indicators eg land agreement, men cooking, joint decision making</b>
<b>Meeting 6</b>	<b>Empowerment Leadership Map/MLH top row: numbers of women and men reached through levels 1-3 of pyramid peer sharing and if possible</b>

discussions with participants, and also with input from the GJR process. Another key role of the organisation and staff is to respond to and support collective action needs arising from the process through eg making links with other stakeholders around land and property issues.

As far as possible this staff support should be integrated into existing meetings, visits and activities. Here also it is important that costs are minimised as far as possible from the start eg by location and timing of meetings to minimise food and travel costs for participants. Participants will have their own local diary notebooks and pens. Flipcharts and markers should be carefully monitored so they do not disappear. Flipchart diagrams should remain with and be kept safe by the groups, but photographed for the organisation.

BUT if the aggregation starts to detract from empowerment, then the quantification is best left until a bit later in the process eg after the Review meeting itself and facilitators have more skill. This information can then be aggregated at organisational level for more rigorous analysis as part of the Gender Justice Review process.

It may be possible even at this first stage to have video and photo documentation of the process. This is extremely useful later on to show how things were at the beginning and also to show the initial steps for the upscaling. And as input for the lead expert to help in design of the GJR.

## Monitoring and documentation for the organisation

Which information is recorded for use by the organisation will depend on the precise aims of the GALS process, and any indicators required as condition of funding etc. Also depending on any existing Management Information Systems and whether or not staff are trained in participatory monitoring, electronic databases etc. What is useful and workable in one context may not be the best in another. Developing a useful and manageable information system, combining quantitative monitoring with qualitative follow-up fed back to the champions to strengthen the process is done progressively at output from the GJR.

A possible monitoring form is shown below, keeping information to a minimum at this stage. An Excel file of this can be downloaded from the [wemanresources](http://wemanresources.org) website.

Meeting No _		Title				Date		
Member name	M/F	Education	Number of meetings attended	Changes achieved	Changes in process	People trained Men	Women	Key challenges
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								
<p>Note: The information should be collected using collective versions of the tools as the meeting: vision journey, gender balance tree and social empowerment map. Make the process of collecting the information as participatory as possible, with lots of celebration of achievements.</p> <p>Ideally this form should be downloaded from the <a href="http://wemanresources.org">wemanresources</a> website and filled in on a laptop by one of the catalyst team - delegating facilitation of the meeting itself to one of the champions. The person documenting should fill in as much qualitative information as possible for each member on their achievements.</p>								

## Qualitative research by members and/or core staff and/or the lead expert

Alongside, and complementing, the participatory quantitative monitoring there should be some qualitative research by members and/or core staff and/or the consultant. This qualitative research will also require skilled researchers, but these researchers could be champions themselves using video cameras and interviewing each other. Building these skills at different levels can be done as part of the GJR process.

The aim is to understand a number of levels:

### 1) Best cases models to show what is possible

showcased examples of the most successful champions which can be used in dissemination and promotion of the methodology, training for scaling up as well as mutual learning between members. These members should be purposely selected as part of a system of social incentives to inspire champions to continue and succeed.

### 2) Quality check on pyramid peer sharing to improve methodology

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

### 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 or programme staff/the consultant.

Women from Bukonzo Joint (top) and New Home (bottom), Uganda vote for equal land rights. So this issue is followed up by qualitative study to support advocacy.



### Box 2.4 Qualitative research

<i>Best case models</i>	Case studies of 10 - 20 purposively selected women and men champions who have achieved most changes and/or taught most other people. Particularly people who started off very poor and disadvantaged. Video footage and photos.
<i>End of chain cases</i>	20 - 30 women and men chosen at random from level 3 of the pyramid peer sharing process to see how that was done, how effective it was and how it can be improved.
<i>Exit cases</i>	Follow up of as many exit cases as possible to find out the reasons - whether this can be reduced through improvements in the methodology, or better targeting of the peer sharing or other complementary support.





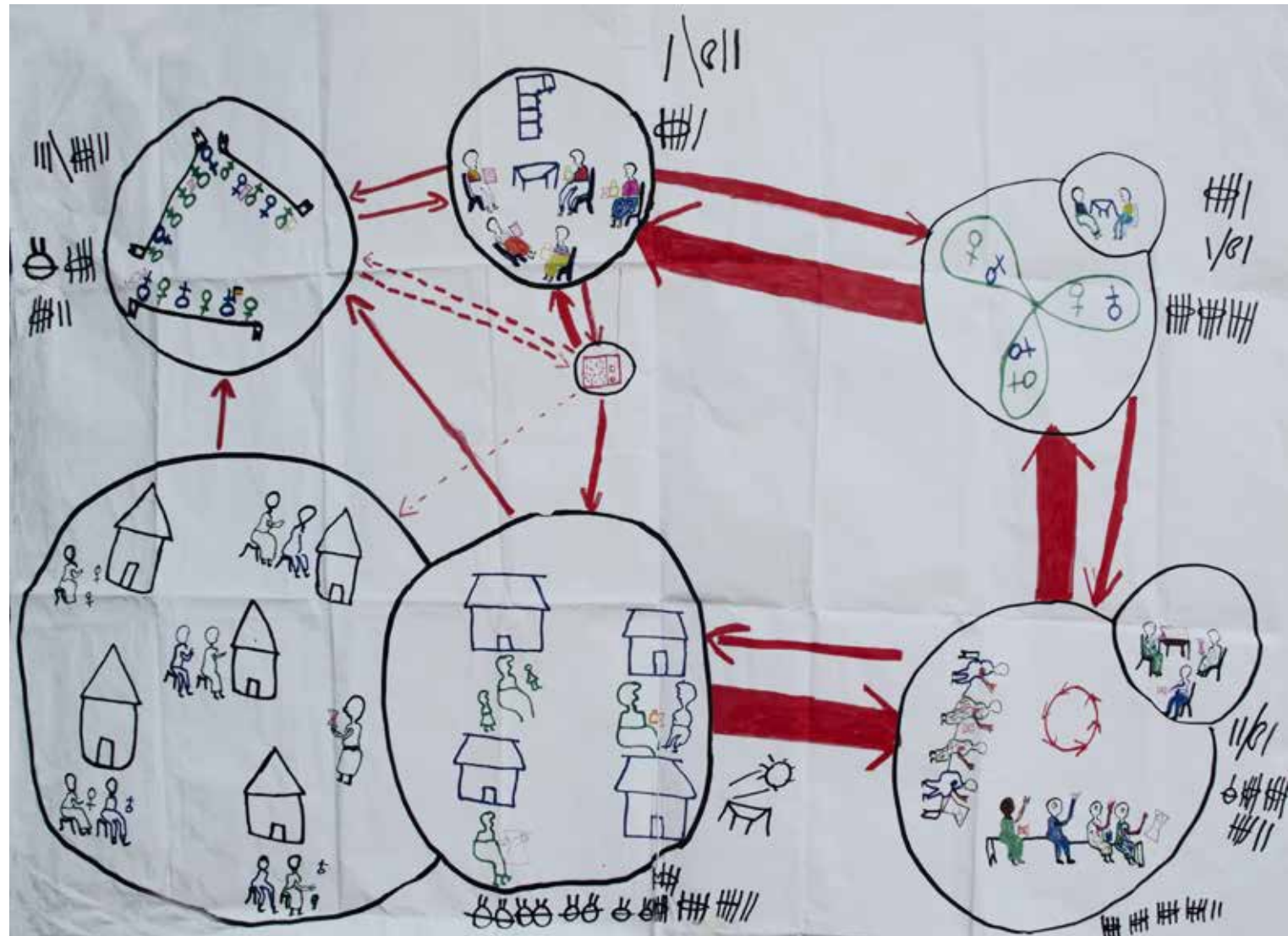
Advanced diagrams from the participatory monitoring system in Bukonzo Joint showing quantitative information collected and aggregated by members themselves on coffee quality, women's land ownership and division of labour for thousands of members.

Top left are 4 monthly stakeholder meetings for lobbying on issue like women's land rights attended by both members of the board and the community and publicised on the radio.

Top middle: Bukonzo Joint Board discuss information from the parishes, then feed it back down.

Top right: Information aggregated at parish level

Diagram of Bukonzo Joint participatory Management Information System showing information flows



Bottom left: Community members who are visited by group members

Bottom middle: savings and credit or other village level groups

Bottom right: Primary societies at ward level aggregate information from the community groups

