



# News from the Field

## The CGIAR Collaborative Platform for Gender Research



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January 2017 marked the beginning of a second phase of CGIAR research programmes, and with it the start of one of the four system-wide platforms, namely the **CGIAR Collaborative Platform for Gender Research**. The *Platform* builds on the foundation of the *CGIAR Gender and Agriculture Research Network* which started up in 2012 as a way to build the community of gender scientists from across international agricultural research institutes. The focus of the *Gender and Agriculture Research Network* was primarily on knowledge sharing, capacity building and support to gender scientists. Building on this, the mandate of the *Platform* is four-fold:

- 1) to increase the **visibility, profile** and **appreciation** of gender research both within CGIAR and beyond;
- 2) to build up the **quality** of CGIAR gender research, *eg* by supporting knowledge-sharing to promote joint approaches and methods, capacity development and fostering adherence to minimum standards for sex-disaggregated data collection and analysis;
- 3) to assess and support cross-CGIAR **gender research priorities** and identify **gaps**;
- 4) to foster and catalyse **strategic partnerships**.

Monthly webinars, quarterly newsletters, periodic blogs on engendering data and methods, annual campaigns on International Women's Day and the International Day for Rural Women, and an annual scientific conference and capacity building workshop, are amongst the key activities of the *Platform*. For details see our website.

The *Collaborative Platform for Gender Research* sits within the CGIAR Research Programme on Policies, Institutions and Markets (PIM), but serves all CGIAR research institutes and research programmes. However, in order to make sure that all agri-food system research programmes (Maize; Wheat; Rice; Fish; Livestock; Forest, trees and agroforestry; Roots, tubers and bananas) and all global integrated research programmes (Water, land and ecosystems; Climate change, agriculture and food security; Agriculture for nutrition and health; Policies, institutions, and markets) are reflected in the work of the *Gender Platform*, we have put in place an Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee has two representatives from the seven agri-food system research programmes, one from the four global integrated research programmes, an external advisor, and a PIM management unit representative. In this way, we ensure that the gender scientists from across the CGIAR system are providing

input and direction for the *Platform* despite funding for operations being channelled through PIM. Additional activities and cross-CGIAR gender research need to be supported through bilateral arrangements. Both system-wide participation and sufficient resources for cross-programme gender research are critical for the success of the *Platform*.

The role of the *Platform* is not to lead or direct gender research from across the system, but rather to draw out higher level questions that are relevant across domains, and support exploration of these. Each separate research programme has its own domain and the gender research specific to that domain is led from there. The *Platform* is interested in those themes that cut across research programme domains. We are in the process of co-creating a cross-system framework for gender and aqua/agricultural and natural resource management research that captures the breadth of innovative gender research underway.

Several gender communities of practice (CoPs) have arisen in recent years to support specific knowledge areas, including the *Gender and Breeding Initiative*, the gender and climate change network, and an emerging community of practice on gender and big data. What is exciting is that these CoPs involve both gender scientists and biophysical scientists. Both are breaking new ground together and creating new mind-sets that capture the language and perspectives of the social and biophysical sciences involved.

Part of what we aim to do is to aid in understanding the process of gender integration into biophysical research, something that all CGIAR research programmes are working to improve. For example, in an upcoming book on gender integration, *A different kettle of fish? Gender integration in livestock and fish research*, analysis of the process of gender integration is based on experience with the CGIAR Research Programme on Livestock and Fish. The book looks at three components of gender integration: sex disaggregation, gender concepts, and diversity and change. It unpacks these categories and explores trade-offs faced in doing gender-integrated research. The problem is raised of biophysical scientists collecting sex-disaggregated data only to be stuck not knowing what to do with it. We look at where gender scientists are required for analysis and interpretation of this sex disaggregated data and at other steps in the process where gender input is less critical.

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