



A STEP BY STEP

GUIDE TO GALS INTEGRATION IN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

Gender Action Learning System (GALS)

2022

GENDER ACTION LEARNING SYSTEM (GALS)



WHAT IS THE GENDER ACTION LEARNING SYSTEM (GALS) METHODOLOGY?

Background

Rooted in community-based participatory methodologies, GALS methodology was first developed in 2007 by Linda Mayoux, with the support of several development partners such as IFAD, OXFAM Novib and HIVOS, among others. The goal of GALS is to address gender and social injustice in economic development efforts through an inclusive and participatory process which represents per se an empowerment strategy.

The methodology aims at empowering men and women to achieve a better and happier life. It uses simple mapping and diagram tools for visioning and planning to empower men, women and youth to make changes in their lives. GALS is a methodology to promote change. A GALS process usually lasts a period of two to three years, and is based on a set of principles, tools and stages. Additional key elements of GALS are also the peer replication structure and integration into the interventions of a specific project.

GALS principles

GALS is based on a set of principles which should inspire and guide its implementation and use. These principles should be present to and discussed with GALS champions and service providers in order for everyone to have a common understanding of:

1. **Gender justice.** The interests of women and men should be equally addressed when working towards gender justice. Women's human rights as established in the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women are non-negotiable, with men as partners in the pursuit of social justice. Equal rights are not a favour or a gift: everyone is born equal.

Women are agents of development, not victims.

2

2. **Inclusion.** GALS is a participatory methodology based on principles of inclusion, human rights, equity and respect for differences. GALS strives to include those living in poverty and who are marginalized.
3. **Leadership potential of all.** Education level, age, gender identity, economic status or any other parameter does not matter: everyone can be a leader. GALS cultivates the leadership potential of all participants, empowers everyone to participate and own the change process. Those in the most vulnerable positions should be particularly supported.
4. **Action orientation.** Every step of the GALS process is conducive to action for change. Individual action should lead to collective action as a family, a group or a community.
5. **Sustainability.** The GALS pyramidal peer-sharing system leads to self-upscaling of a GALS process, which helps to make it sustainable. Its integration in existing activities at community level has the goal of driving a movement for gender and social justice at many levels (community, project, country).
6. **Gender is fun.** A GALS process should be fun. Having fun is important to raise the necessary positive energy for change. Songs, acting, performances and drawing GALS tools are powerful ways to enjoy using this methodology, encourage presence at the meetings and develop the social capital of a group.

GALS process and tools

GALS is a change process that uses a set of tools made of visual diagrams that are introduced at various stages.

Change materializes thanks to the tools and the way in which the process is facilitated, abiding to the principles mentioned above and facilitating from the back. The latter means that a facilitator should never dominate the discussion and let GALS participants to be the protagonist of any session, for instance letting them to stand up and present what they wish to include in their GALS tools.

Both the tools and the process can be adapted in many ways for empowerment in rural development programmes. Using the power of symbols, the tools enable individuals and households to plan their lives and enterprises, and identify and negotiate their needs and interests for gender-equitable livelihoods.

For instance, the first phase – called “change catalyst” – uses basic tools such as the “Road Vision Journey” (see photo above) and the “Gender Balance Tree” (see photo to the left), among others. The diagrams invite each participant to analyse and plan for a better and happier life in a realistic way.

Phases of GALS Implementation

1 Phase 1: Catalyst Phase:

The catalyst phase lasts up to 6 months – and consists of: (i) A catalyst phase workshop (for 6 days), (ii) Community peer sharing (1 day), and (iii) Community Action Learning (On-going). Phase one focuses on visioning and catalyzing change by introducing the basic GALS change planning process: the ‘life road journey’ framework in which people develop a vision for change with SMART ‘milestones’, analyse opportunities and constraints, commit to actions and track progress over time. They analyse gender-based opportunities and constraints and reinforce gender principles in relation to this vision through analysing intrahousehold relationships, role plays and songs. The phase sets up the skills and networks for pyramid peer upscaling as the basis for sustainability of subsequent gender mainstreaming and movement-building in

Phases 2 and 3.

At this stage, men and women begin also begin to realize that families, friendships and communities are important sources of support.

2 Phase 2: Advanced Tools and Leadership Strengthening:

Phase 2 focuses on building core skills and leadership strengthening. It introduces tools for leadership, livelihoods, health, climate change, rural finance, incomes and examines areas for collaboration to increase incomes. At this stage, the core GALS monitoring tool for the whole process (Multilane Vision Journey) is introduced. During phase 2 more advanced GALS tools are introduced which then catalyze the GALS champions to discuss how they can become leaders of change in their communities through pyramid peer sharing. They teach a circle of people they want to help or change and these people then identify yet other people.

The gender messages and methodology thus spread to many people. The more this can happen on a manageable voluntary basis, the more organisation resources can be focused on strengthening peer training skills and structures, and addressing other needs which come up. Peer sharing requires skill and full understanding of the tools and how they can be communicated.

3 Phase 3: Annual Review And Sustainability Plan:

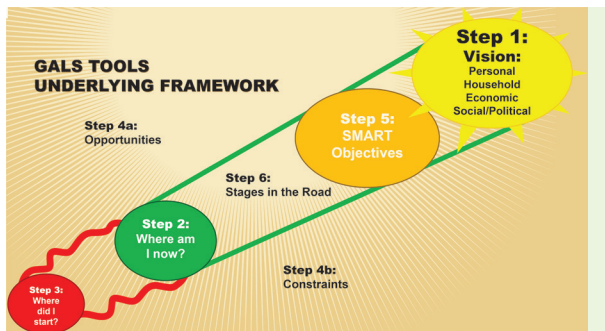
After 1 year of implementation, the trainers as well as the trained men and women convene for a 5-day review and sustainability planning workshop to develop a sustainability plan for further deepening gender and livelihood changes, strengthening leadership and scaling up for the following year. Phase 3, with the aid of the achievement journey, assesses progress of the trained men and women from where they were in the past to where they are at present. The CEDAW diamonds Challenge Action Tree is then

used to think through the gender challenges and how these would be addressed through mutual support.

Phase 3 thus focuses on deeper understanding of gender issues, sharing experience and ideas on how to deepen and accelerate change; and address more difficult constraints.

Tools [for more details about the GALS tools, follow this link [https://www.oxfamnovib.nl/redactie/Downloads/English/SPEF/140701_RRDD_manual_July_small\(1\).pdf](https://www.oxfamnovib.nl/redactie/Downloads/English/SPEF/140701_RRDD_manual_July_small(1).pdf)]

- **Vision Road Journey (VRJ):** VRJ is a planning tool that enables individuals and groups set clear visions that are climate change responsive, set targets and identify opportunities to support adaptation to climate change and identify the climatic challenges that would affect their enterprises.

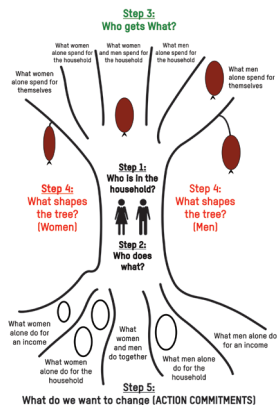


- **Challenge Action Tree (CAT):** CAT has been used to assess the challenges and constraints in production and climate change adaptation. Like unreliable rainfall, soil erosion, low yield, rampant pests and diseases outbreak etc. It also assesses what caused or contributed to these problems/occurrences and identify possible actions to mitigate these situations. These are tree

planting, planting short time crops, drought resistant varieties like millet, sorghum, early and late planting (depending on the crop), use of farm yard manure, diversity of varieties, crop rotation/intercropping etc. Upon adaptation of these practices or actions developed climate change effects are minimized and strategically addressed

- Empowerment Map:** This tool is used to identify what or who in the surroundings can support climate change adaptation and mitigation. It enables farmers understand the relationship, coexistence and benefits they have with the different components with the environment such that there is a productive and harmonious coexistence and sustenance. What surround the farmers include the forests, grass, land, rivers and water bodies, humans, animals etc. After assessing the relationship and benefits received, actions that maintain relationship which are beneficial are taken and prioritized and those that are poor (destroy the ecosystem) are improved on etc.
- Gender Balance Tree (GBT):** GBT is used here to assess who does what for him/herself, for the household and for the community in terms of climate change mitigation and adaptation. This is between males and females such that direction where the tree is leaning is determined (who contributes most). Upon determining this, actions to balance the GBT in line with climate change adaptation/mitigations are developed to achieve the goals/fruits that is harvested at the end that is climatic responsive farming and conservation.

THE GENDER BALANCE TREE



- **Multilane Highway:** Used by the ELC in particular to enable it plan for the individual members, groups and the community in line with climate change adaptation and mitigation for improved production and productivity. It works in the same way as VRJ but in multilane way. So, every individual farmer, group and the ELC is tasked to contribute to environmental conservation through reducing cases of bush burning, planting at least 30 trees, use of energy saving technologies like stoves, use of tractors to open land for production timely, mulching, use of greenhouse technology, rain water collection and conservation for farming etc.
- **Resource Identification Map:** This tool is primarily used to enable farmers identify the resources within the surrounding and how they relate or benefit from them. These include land, forest/tree, water bodies/rivers etc. actions to maintain good use and reap the benefits from these resources are developed and implemented at individual, group and ELC level for easy adaptations.
- **Multi-stakeholder win win Challenge Action Tree:** This tree enables identification of potential stakeholders involved in production and climate change like farmers, local government, religious leaders, business men, charcoal burners etc. dialogue is done & actions are developed to improve relations & promote environmental conservation & climate change adaptation.

HOW TO INTEGRATE THE GALS METHODOLOGY IN THE PROJECT CYCLE

8

The table below illustrates the key phases of a GALS process, together with their related timing and underpinning activities.

TABLE 1. OVERVIEW OF GALS PHASES PHASE 1: CHANGE CATALYST (1 TO 2 MONTHS)

Key goals and steps	A workshop of 5 to 10 days called “change catalyst workshop” (CCW) is organized to share and learn about the GALS principles and basic tools. It is designed to help visualize and plan for a better and happier life – and immediately start bringing about changes.
GALS tools	Introduction of basic tools: soulmate visioning; road vision journey; gender balance tree; social empowerment and leadership map; multilane highway.
GALS beneficiary activities	About 20-30 community members and some key project staff (no more than 20% of total participants) are trained by GALS facilitators. Project senior management (coordinators and heads of unit/component) should have a separate orientation workshop that would also include theoretical concepts and practical management considerations.
Project staff activities	Identify clearly which project staff/unit are accountable for GALS implementation. It is desirable to have at least 2-3 people involved to mitigate the risk of staff turnover. They should participate actively in the CCW and learn how to replicate it themselves.

Key outputs	Change catalyst phase launched, A pool of GALS champions formed at community level, Project management and staff are sensitized, trained and mobilized in the process
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PHASE 2: COMMUNITY ACTION LEARNING (UP TO 12 MONTHS)

Key goals and steps	A community action learning process starts after the CCW. Participants, with support of project staff or the implementing partner, meet to use the tools (fine-tuning them from the CCW), share and learn with peers. The peer-sharing mechanism is commonly called "pyramidal peer sharing". A ratio of one person trained can share with three to five peers.
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GALS beneficiary activities	Community members go back to their communities, use and share the basic tools with at least 5 people (family members, friends and peers) with the support of facilitators or project staff or a service provider. They are becoming "GALS champions". Each champion should plan on how to share the methodology, thus promoting upscaling through the pyramidal peer-sharing system.
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Project staff activities	Provide regular field monitoring and support to GALS beneficiaries by asking them to present their drawings in groups, explain achievements, and clearly track the number of people with whom they have shared the methodology. Collect data on elements of the participant's vision and link them to the objectives of project activities (e.g. desired assets such as livestock, desired expected income, etc.)
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Key outputs	Upscaling process launched through the peer-sharing system, Project staff progressively skilled to conduct, monitor and facilitate the community processes and a database of champions is developed
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PHASE 3: PARTICIPATORY GENDER REVIEW OR HAPPY FAMILY REVIEW (6 TO 12 MONTHS AFTER PHASE 1)

10

Key goals and steps	Changes are assessed through a participatory gender review (PGR), also called Happy Family Review and a workshop for GALS champions is organized with specific tools used for this participatory review.
GALS tools	PGR tools: achievement road journey; gender justice diamond; poverty diamond.
GALS beneficiary activities	With support of GALS facilitators, participants of the CCW assess their progresses and achievements and update their goals.
Project staff activities	The PGR is often linked to a formal evaluation exercise conducted by the project to report on GALS relevance and effectiveness (also updating activity targets and feeding into the M&E system). The IFAD Empowerment Index or the Project-level Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index (Pro-WEAI) and its qualitative research protocols provide tools for the broader evaluation exercise that project staff can combine with the PGR.
Key outputs	<p>Self-assessment tools for beneficiaries and champions</p> <p>Quantitative and qualitative data in terms of economic, gender and social empowerment, Set of indicators that could be integrated in the M&E system or in a specific report. Project staff progressively skilled to monitor and facilitate assessments of the community processes.</p>

Integrating the GALS in the country strategies

- Spell out GALS in the Country's strategic document
- Identify an appropriate strategy
- Develop a theory of change with GALS outcomes, outputs, inputs and indicators
- Integrate GALS in project concepts / proposals

Integrating GALS during project design

- Analyze the gender and social norms in the project
- Embed GALS as part of the project's targeting and gender strategies
- Define the GALS contribution in the project theory of change
- Integrate the GALS in a component, with expected outcomes

Integrating the GALS during project Implementation

- Support to roll out GALS at the project start-up
- Kick-off GALS activities
- Roll-out

KEY PLAYERS AND THEIR ROLES IN THE GALS PROCESS

12

GALS intends to be an empowerment process driven by individuals and their community. Activities are focused on the community level, with its members at the driver's seat. The process is facilitated in a way that the change process can be immediate. Goals are developed by GALS participants: they should be actionable and achievable by them, and with their existing resources. The project (or implementing partner) should play a catalyst role – steering them toward opportunities that could facilitate the achievement of their vision, as well as ensuring the monitoring and support process by peers to sustain the process of change.

AT COMMUNITY LEVEL

Community members

They are selected as participants in the GALS change catalyst phase to become "GALS champions" and lead the process in their communities. A champion is a CCW participant who shows commitment not only in using the tools, but also in sharing them with others. An inclusive selection is strongly recommended, with a balance of female and male champions. Therefore, the roll-out and upscaling processes are driven by communities.

GALS facilitators

They facilitate the development of local champions through workshops and build their capacities as "agents of change". They ensure a common understanding and vision of the GALS process among stakeholders. Facilitators can be internationally recruited or locally recruited (consultants or service provider).

Project field staff	Field agents/workers of the project are involved as learners and catalysers only and do not figure prominently in the process. They can support once they have reached a practical command of tools and facilitation. They can facilitate the peer-sharing mechanism and the documenting/reporting of the process.
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Local leaders	Local leaders and authorities need to be informed about the process and intended goals (social inclusion, gender and social justice, empowerment) but should not be part of activities.
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AT PROJECT LEVEL

Senior management	At any stage of the project cycle, a good understanding of the GALS needs to be provided to the project senior management (coordination, head of units/components). This ensures a proper integration of GALS in the project's goals and supports the process with an adequate allocation of resources. Senior management should not participate in community workshops but it is recommended that they have an orientation workshop and visit during supervision/field missions or during learning-sharing events.
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Project staff/unit	A gender unit or a gender officer at the project level is ideal to coordinate the GALS roll-out. Alternatively, the coordinator of the component where GALS is included can help integrate GALS with other activities. In their absence, a Social Mobilization or Community Development Unit/officer of the project can be enlisted. Key representatives of this unit take part in the GALS process as learners first, then as facilitators and supervisors if required. This unit/officer ensures coordination within components, planning and M&E units.
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Project field staff	As mentioned above, field staff are participating as learners. At a later stage, they will be able to support the process by reporting on changes, challenges and lessons learned at project level.
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Service provider	Recruiting a specific service provider to roll out the GALS activities supports the project in terms of results and outreach. It is crucial to ensure that the vendor has relevant experience as well as an appropriate mindset and attitude. Selection criteria and the selection process are key to obtaining the expected results.
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AT COUNTRY LEVEL

Country office	Country offices play an important role when linking the project with relevant resources (technical assistance, IFAD headquarters, resource persons and partners in the country) and policy engagement (GALS as an IFAD innovation) for GTA in national fora and platforms. They also plays a key role in scaling up the GALS across the portfolio.
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Line ministries	As with project senior management, representatives of ministries should not participate in community workshops but are recommended to participate in orientation workshops, and visit during supervision/field missions or during learning-sharing events. At a later stage (GALS phase 2), project staff or GALS facilitators can engage in discussions with ministries to identify entry points for GALS integration within national strategies, fora and platforms.
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REGIONAL HUBS

IFAD hub	Gender and Youth officers at the relevant IFAD regional hub are to be informed about processes and invited to learning-sharing events; they can support learning across countries and projects.
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Empowerment learningcentres

IFAD has been supporting GALS scale-up in Africa in partnership with Oxfam Novib and Hivos. Empowerment learning centres provide resources for different development partners and IFAD project staff to learn and share experiences about GALS as well as provide access to regional networks. Empowerment Learning Centres are located in Kenya, Uganda and Nigeria. There are also regional hubs in Kenya and Nigeria that can be used as entry points for other countries in Eastern and Western Africa.

GLOBAL LEVEL**IFAD gender team**

As key holder of IFAD's agenda on GEWE, the gender team at headquarters initially took the lead on GALS piloting, integration and scaling up, creating a repository of resources and networks that are essential for effective implementation

Oxfam Novib

Oxfam Novib is a long-term partner (since 2007) of IFAD in piloting, developing and scaling up the GALS methodology. The partnership brings a wealth of knowledge, skills and networks.

Gamechange network

Facilitated by the author of the GALS methodology, Linda Mayoux, this global platform offers access to a community and online resources from around the world.

CONCLUSION

16

We started using started using GALS in a pilot in 2007 in Bukonzo Joint coffee cooperative and since then, GALS has been integrated in many programs and projects in Oxfam and partner organizations e.g., Value chains (coffee, honey, cassava), VSLA, FAL, Humanitarian peace building interventions, youth and women economic empowerment, Seeds program (SD=HS) etc. We have established 3 Empowerment Learning Centers (ELCs) with champions supporting the scale up of the GALS in different sectors

How helpful is GALS?

- GALS integration: enables men and women work together to increase their adaptive capacities to the effects of climate change.
- Reduced cases of GBV and care burden on women.
- Increase small holder farmers' knowledge on climate change problem hence making them better prepared i.e., identify the causes & develop strategies and solutions to adopt to the changes in climate.
- Set up achievable actions or targets in line with change adaptation and mitigation.
- Assess and map out potential allies and opportunities to respond to climate change problem.
- Helping farmers employ more climate-resilient agriculture production methods.
- Led to community climate activists- campaigning for forest restoration, use of energy-saving stoves, restoring lost plants hence ensuring consistency in the food supply even

during food scarcity periods.

- Mobilized community members to engage with policymakers to address climate change – local leaders have developed a bylaw against bush burning.

For more information about GALS, follow these links below

- <https://empoweratscale.org/>
- <https://gamechangenetwork.org/>
- https://www.oxfamnovib.nl/Redactie/Downloads/English/publications/150115_Practical%20guide%20GALS%20summary%20Phase%201-2%20lr.pdf



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