**Australian Government**

**Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research**

**Australian AID**

# Aik Saath ایک ساتھ
## 'Together'

## ACIAR GENDER
# INCLUSIVENESS
## Strategy – for Pakistan

AUGUST 2018

**VISION**

The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) looks to a world where poverty has been reduced and the livelihoods of many improved, through more productive and sustainable agriculture emerging from collaborative international research.

ACIAR

Corporate Plan 2017- 2021

# Message From Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan

Agriculture is vital to Pakistan's economy, employing 42.3 per cent of the workforce and accounting for 18.9 per cent of GDP. It is also vital for Pakistan's food security. Women play a key role in the sector, being over two thirds of the workforce in agricultural production – making a major contribution to the national economy, while feeding, clothing and educating their families. But women lack equal access to employment and commercial opportunities.

In line with our domestic and foreign policy commitments, the Australian Government prioritises gender equality and women's economic empowerment because every person deserves equal opportunity, and because women's contribution is essential to drive innovation, inclusive economic growth and sustainable development. Our economies cannot reach their full potential without women's full participation.

Pakistan's Vision 2025 makes important positive commitments to support women's participation in economic activity. These undertakings align with Pakistan's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals and under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, to which both of our countries are parties.

Against this background, I am delighted to launch the first gender inclusiveness strategy of the Australian Government's Agricultural Value Chain Collaborative Research (AVCCR) and Research for Development (R4D) programs in Pakistan.

The strategy represents a major change in our approach by embedding gender inclusion studies into biophysical research. In the past, such studies were done separately by specialists. Now they will be mainstreamed. This means assessing and addressing gender at all times and in all parts of our programs – on the farm, along the value chain, in project teams and in partner organisations.

The change will ensure gender equity remains an integral and vibrant element of our AVCCR and R4D programs, and ensure that their benefits reach Pakistan's rural women employees and entrepreneurs.

**Margaret Adamson**
Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan
June, 2018

# Foreword

Agriculture is central within Pakistan's economy and rural women play a crucial role in everything from food production to picking Pakistan's cotton crop. In spite of this, most rural families are unable to contribute fully to improving productivity and value chain performance. This undermines not only Pakistan's economy but also the current and future welfare of smallholder families. Limited understanding of the different needs of women and men smallholders, and how to meet these needs effectively remains a constraint to progress.

Accordingly, it is clear that ACIAR cannot credibly pursue our strategic objectives around food security and poverty reduction, sustainable production and climate change, human health and nutrition, inclusive market chains, or capacity building, unless we also promote gender equity vigorously, internally and externally. This document articulates that intent, and how we intend to achieve it.

This policy has been designed to complement the ACIAR Gender Equity Policy and Strategy 2017–2022, and gives us a pathway to deliver its high level gender objectives within our activities in Pakistan. The strategy focuses on mainstreaming gender in all aspects of the program. This means assessing and addressing gender roles at all times and in all places – on farm, along the value chain, as well as in project teams and partner organisations. Importantly, it includes a continuous learning cycle. This recognises the complexity of gender dynamics and the multiple factors that govern this in different families and communities.

This approach is consistent with the Government of Pakistan's Vision 2025. We look forward to working with our Pakistan partners to deliver research that is truly inclusive, and outcomes that lead to sustained benefits for all family members in the relevant agricultural value chains.

**Andrew Campbell**
Chief Executive
June, 2018

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# List of shortened forms

| ACIAR | Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| APS | Australian Public Service |
| APSC | Australian Public Service Commission |
| DFAT | Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade |
| G20 | Group of Twenty international forum |
| LES | Locally Engaged Staff (DFAT term) Country Office staff (ACIAR term) |
| MDG | Millennium Development Goal |
| SAGE | Science in Australia Gender Equity |
| SDG | Sustainable Development Goal |
| UN | United Nations |
| PARC | Pakistan Agriculture Research Council |
| NARC | National Agricultural Research Centre |
| AVCCR | Agriculture Value Chain Collaborative Research Program |
| WGEA | Workplace Gender Equity Agency |

# Glossary of key terms[1]

**Gender:** refers to the socially constructed roles and responsibilities of women and men.

**Gender equality,** or equality between women and men, refers to the equal enjoyment by men and women of all ages of rights, socially valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards. Equality does not mean that men and women are the same but that their enjoyment of rights, opportunities and life chances are not governed or limited by whether they were born male or female.

**Gender equity** refers to fair treatment for women and men according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities. In the development context, a gender equity goal often requires built-in measures to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages of women, such as empowering women to bring them up to an equal playing field with men. Gender equity and equality must be pursued in a complementary manner where gender equality is the ultimate goal.

**Gender inclusive** is where the needs of both women and men are considered and addressed.

**Gender mainstreaming** refers to the process whereby needs and interests of both women and men are taken into account systematically across all programmes, projects and organisational structures.

**Gender roles** are those behaviours, tasks and responsibilities that a society considers appropriate for men, women, boys and girls.

**Sex-disaggregated data** is data that provides a breakdown of men's and women's activities and perspectives by collecting separate data on men and women. Data can also be disaggregated by age, location, ethnic group, education, income and other demographic variables to help understand the differences between groups and to effectively target interventions and solutions.

**Women's empowerment** is a political and transformative process that analyses and challenges not only patriarchy, but also the mediating structures of class, race, ethnicity and economic structures that determined the nature of women's position and conditions.

*1 Adapted from the Pacific Gender & Climate Change Toolkit for Practitioners as cited in ACIAR Gender Guidelines for Project Proposals http://aciar.gov.au/files/aciar_gender_guidelines_for_research_proposals_2017.pdf*

# Summary

At the strategic level, improved food production, processing, marketing and distribution is vital to Pakistan's economy as well as for food security. At the grassroots, millions of Pakistani smallholder livelihoods depend on farming income. Aik Saath (Urdu for "Together") is the everyday name for a major program focused on improving value chains in crops and livestock for these smallholder families.

Through improving these value chains, the program's highest goal is to channel significant and equitable benefits to smallholder farming families, especially women. Past studies, as well as Government policies, confirm that this is unlikely unless women are **empowered** to optimise their involvement. Empowerment implies progress across several domains, such as access to information and resources and the ability to make decisions and take action.

Progress in empowerment is seen as a medium-term (and ambitious) **outcome** from this program. It relies on sustained, collaborative effort by communities and partners in value chains and development, both during and after this program. The work basically started with AVCCR - a Research for Development (R4D) program, designed to guide these ongoing efforts by addressing intertwined technical and social research questions. The program is named as Aik Saath – as now it includes all activities of ACIAR in Pakistan.

This research will contribute towards progress in women empowerment by evaluating patterns of gender inclusion and exclusion in every aspect of the value chains under study. This represents a major change which recognises that both men and women (and girls and boys) are, or have the potential to be, involved in every aspect of production, processing and marketing through a value chain.

Therefore, **Gender Inclusion** studies will underpin every aspect of the research program. Participatory R4D will help explain the existing roles for men and women through research tools that identify and analyse individual and collective interaction. This will identify when, and how, value chain opportunities are constrained by existing norms and values for gender roles.

> **Bringing Gender Inclusiveness to the fore in Aik Saath is crucial to achieving our program goal.**

In some cases, gender <u>exclusion</u> is likely to limit smallholder families' flexibility to adopt new pathways to economic wellbeing. If some participants want to address these constraints, then the research teams can help them identify and test options.

Importantly, gender <u>inclusion</u>, if unbalanced, may have the potential to cause harm. (Such as: excessive workloads for women taking on new roles without relief from existing duties; or adverse reactions to changes in the status quo)

Embedding Gender Inclusion studies into biophysical research is a major change – in the past, such studies would have been undertaken separately by "gender specialists". This strategy is designed to facilitate this change, by adopting **Gender Mainstreaming.** This means assessing and addressing gender roles at all times and in all places – on farm, along the value chain, as well as in project teams and partner organisations. It also means equipping all team members with the necessary skills and awareness.

Gender considerations are to be mainstreamed throughout Aik Saath through a cycle of learning. This will ensure that, in the following priority areas, gender inclusive thinking is….

| (1) …mainstreamed into each stage of the **project life cycle**, and linked to Aik Saath project objectives | (2) …mainstreamed in all project activities for each team and **individual's** role and tasks | (3) …mainstreamed into the activities, processes and systems of implementing **partners** |
|---|---|---|
| (4) … enabled through a **coordinated program** of strategic oversight, review, capacity support, lesson learning, monitoring, external partner liaison and engagement with internal and external specialists | | |

**Figure 1  How Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Inclusion support progress in Womens Empowerment**
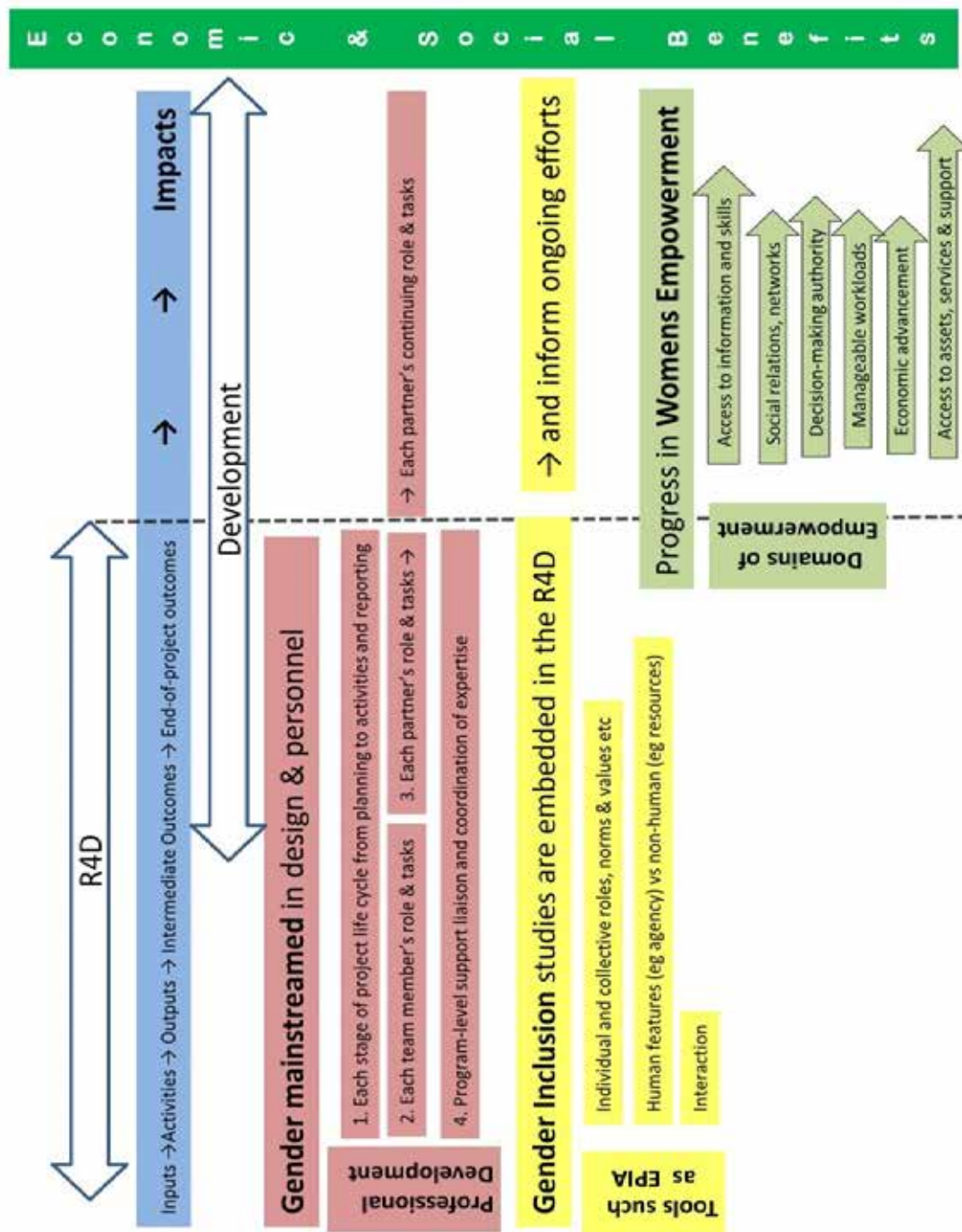
# Introduction

This document presents the gender inclusiveness strategy for ACIAR projects/programs in Pakistan. Initially it was meant to cater the need and requirement of the Agricultural Value Chain Collaborative Research (AVCCR) Research for Development (R4D) program in Pakistan. However as AVCCR transformed into an all-inclusive and broader ACIAR (and DFAT) engagement so the guidelines implementation and scope has also been extended.

Studies of gender inclusiveness will be a key element of the research program. The results, if successfully implemented and sustained, will result in more female value chain participants being **empowered** (that is, they will have improved engagement in value chain activities, access to information and resources, decision-making power, and benefit significantly from value chain innovations). This addresses the important criteria of Australian Aid policy, ACIAR strategic priority, as well as Pakistan's development objectives.



However, this is a complex challenge, given the diversity of the projects and of the many roles along each value chain, from farmers to traders and from labourers to processors. Many different public and private sector organisations are involved, undertaking the R4D, or providing finance, or other partnering roles. The geographic and cultural diversity across multiple project sites adds further complexity.

## PROGRAM GOAL

*Rural poor, Particularly Women, living in the Punjab and Sindh significantly and equitably benefit from improvements in strategic value chains*

The strategy's approach to this complexity is by **mainstreaming** gender in all aspects of the program. This means assessing and addressing gender roles at all times and in all places – on farm, along the value chain, as well as in project teams and partner organisations. Importantly, it includes a continuous learning cycle. The rationale, context, objectives, approaches and activities for this strategy are outlined below.

This document provides a reference point for the projects to establish individual and shared goals, both for research about inclusiveness and for any professional development needed to enable this. It exists to help project teams plan for gender inclusiveness in all areas of their research. It is based on a review of literature on gender in development and agricultural value chains, outlined in Annex 1[1]. Appendix 2 summarises how this strategy was developed.[2]

## THE AIK SAATH PROGRAM

AVCCR is a research-for-development (R4D) program in Pakistan that focuses on enhancing selected agricultural value chains for the ultimate benefit of the rural poor, particularly women. The Urdu phrase **Aik Saath**, meaning "Together" has been selected as the everyday name for the program. This signifies the many linkages and partnerships within the program, including between the women, men and youth in smallholder communities. Aik Saath also continues a long partnership between Australia and Pakistan.

Aik Saath is aligned to the substantial investment made over ten years through the Australian funded Agriculture Sector Linkages Program (ASLP) which ended in 2015. Aik Saath is a new program, but, in jointly designing the program, the Australian and Pakistani governments drew lessons from ASLP. One lesson was that each component must more clearly address gender equality and women's empowerment.

The program was launched in December 2015 and is scheduled to run to September 2020. Aik Saath is jointly funded by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), with ACIAR also providing technical management. This gender strategy contributes to Aik Saath's overall Goal:

**Rural poor, <span style="color:red">particularly women</span>, living in the Punjab and Sindh,
significantly and equitably benefit from improvements in strategic value chains.**

This goal is to be achieved through three end-of program outcomes:

## Outcomes of the program

1. Research Institutions are collaborating to implement multi, interdisciplinary and gender inclusive research on value chains.
2. Some smallholder families (and especially women members) have adopted improved value chain practices
3. Private businesses have adopted improved value chain practices

Aik Saath currently has four projects working on different commodities:

- Horticulture
- Pulses
- Dairy/Beef
- Small Ruminants

The projects are at different stages of development (commenced/doing preliminary work/being planned as at May 2018). Each is designed, implemented and reviewed in a collaborative process between the project team, ACIAR and partner organisations based in Pakistan The program has been given an everyday name: Aik Saath – this Urdu phrase, meaning "Together". This signifies the many linkages and partnerships within the program, including between the women, men and youth in smallholder communities. Now as AVCCR has transformed in ACIAR –DFAT partnership, the Aik Saath umbrella covers all ACIAR engagements along with a long partnership between Australia and Pakistan.

# Rationale: Why focus on Empowerment?

## THE FINANCIAL BENEFITS OF ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

There is a strong business case for improving opportunities for women to participate in the economy. UN Women has a useful summary[3] of factors which limit women's participation in developing countries generally. These, in turn, limit their ability to start businesses capable of driving economic growth.

"Smart Economics" is used to describe the economic efficiency of investing in women's development[4]. This principle is well established and the literature is discussed further in the review paper, including sections on education and nutrition.

# N Kabeer and L Natali, 'Gender Equality and Economic Growth: Is there a Win-Win?', IDS Working Paper (2013), p. 417.
(Quoted in DFAT 2016 Gender equality and women's empowerment strategy)

> *"Experience over recent decades demonstrates that gender equality, economic growth and development are mutually reinforcing and significantly correlated. The relationship runs in two directions"#*

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE IN PAKISTAN

Pakistan's people and its economy depend hugely on its rural industries. Agriculture contributes 21.4% to Pakistan's GDP, and 60% to its export earnings.  Two thirds of people live in rural areas, while agriculture and related enterprises employ 45% of Pakistan's overall labour force[5].

"Women in Pakistan make up 39 percent of the labor force in agriculture compared to 10 percent in non-agriculture employment. Approximately 75 percent of total female employment depends upon agriculture and 84 percent of the women employed in the country are in the rural areas (GoP 2013). But despite their participation, women are far less likely to own income-generating assets such as land, agricultural equipment, and large livestock or have a say in the household's production and other decisions[6]."

In Pakistan, empowering women is a significant challenge. Pakistan was ranked second last in the Global Gender Gap Index for the third year in a row in 2017[7]. Compared to men, women have lower wages and health status and lower rates of labour force participation, literacy, political participation, and household headship. In rural areas, the gender gap is even wider[8]. However, from this low base there is enormous potential for improvement.

## ALIGNMENT WITH GOVERNMENT POLICY

Despite this potential for improvement and despite decades of recognition of the value of strengthening the roles and decision-making capacity of rural women, progress has been slow. The Governments of Pakistan and Australia have both made strong commitments to do better, through a range of policy initiatives. ACIAR and DFAT, as the co-funders of Aik Saath, identified the need for a Gender Strategy to help put these policies into action.

**Our gender strategy is aligned with the following policy frameworks and documents:**

- **Australian High Commission Islamabad Gender Strategy 2018-2021**

- **DFAT 2016 Gender equality and women's empowerment strategy[11]:** *"Gender equality is about equal opportunities, rights and responsibilities for women and men, girls and boys. It does not mean that women and men are the same." "Gender equality serves the national interests of Australia and its partner countries."*

- **ACIAR's Gender Equity Policy and Strategy 2017-2021[12]:** *"Developing an understanding of gender and power relations is integral to the production of relevant, robust research. ACIAR will work with commissioned organisations and partners to influence and effect change in order to ensure that research is undertaken in a manner that advances gender equity and empowers women"*

# What is Empowerment?

**Women empowerment** is a widely-used term in the International Development field and is also applicable to high income Western societies. It is a relative term, incorporating a wide range of factors, which are defined differently by various authorities, with some examples below. Therefore, great care is required in applying this terminology across different cultures.

Importantly, in cultures where gender equity is not the norm, women empowerment can be viewed as threatening the status quo, provoking resistance. Also, well-intentioned interventions can carry the risk of unintended negative outcomes. (Such as when women are empowered to adopt new income-producing duties, but obtain no relief from their other workloads.)



The following description is designed for a broader western culture social work context, although is relevant for our gender inclusiveness strategy:

*"**Empowerment**: the capacity of individuals, groups and/or communities to take control of their circumstances, exercise*

*power and achieve their own goals, and the process by which, individually and collectively, they are able to help themselves and others to maximize the quality of their lives[13]."*

Drawing on the work of various agencies, DFAT[14] defines women's economic empowerment as comprising four interlinking domains:

1. Agency (decision making or leadership role);
2. Institutional environment, norms, recognition and status;
3. Social relations accountability, networks, influence; and
4. Economic advancement.

A recent study by IFPRI[15] (International Food Policy Research Institute) defines empowerment as:

*"**access and control over resources** such as income, assets, and time; and as **ability to influence decisions** such as those relating to production, household expenditure allocations, children's marriages, daughter's education, contraceptive use, and personal freedom of movement. In essence, we define women's empowerment in terms of **access** and **agency.**"*

(IFPRI also provides a more nuanced discussion of women's economic empowerment in the context of the Pakistani agricultural sector[16].)

IFPRI is also managing collaboration between several major agencies on the **Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index** (WEAI) "an innovative tool that measures women's empowerment in agriculture. This measurement tool helps in diagnosis areas of disempowerment and design of development programs to address those areas[17]". The domains of womens empowerment under WEAI are:

1. Decisions about agricultural production
2. Access to and decision-making power about productive resources
3. Control of use of income
4. Leadership in the community
5. Time allocation

Aik Saath is collaborating closely with the DFAT-funded Market Development Facility (MDF). Womens Economic Empowerment (WEE) is central to the goals of MDF. The five pillars MDF use for WEE are:

1. Economic advancement
2. Decision-making authority and influence in different spheres, including household finances and trade relations
3. Manageable workloads for women
4. Access to opportunities and life chances such as skills development or job openings
5. Access to assets, services and needed supports to advance economically.

Given the large number of corporate entities to be involved as partners in Aik Saath, we will adhere to the "Women's Empowerment Principles" - a set of principles for business offering guidance on how to empower women in the workplace, marketplace and community[18]:

Principle 1: Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality
Principle 2: Treat all women and men fairly at work: respect, support human rights, non-discrimination
Principle 3: Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers
Principle 4: Promote education, training and professional development for women
Principle 5: Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women
Principle 6: Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy
Principle 7: Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality

# What is Gender Inclusion?

Gender Inclusion is the first step towards enabling women to seek greater participation. It means recognising and evaluating the contribution made and constraints suffered by women as well as men. It begins with ensuring that data is disaggregated and analysed on gender lines. This helps to evaluate the role of women and men in the context of the R4D project. It acts as a prompt to determine what roles women and men are undertaking in the smallholder or value chain enterprise. While disaggregating data is a start, gender inclusion is not only about the separate roles that women and men may have, but also about interactions.

> *"Gender relations are inextricably intertwined with ALL aspects of a project and work where men and women interact.*
>
> *This means that it is unlikely that project objectives can be fully achieved if gender issues are NOT addressed."*
> *Iles, 2017*

Our gender inclusion research is based on a model that explains human social phenomena as on-going emergent patterns of interaction between people[19]. The model includes a tool "emergent processes of interaction analysis (EPIA)" which can be used to explore and understand gender dynamics in various scenarios. This provides a much richer understanding of the situation, to enable interventions that address constraints and identify opportunities to be designed.

## GENDER DYNAMICS AS EMERGENT PATTERNS OF INTERACTION (EPIA)

Our understanding of **gender dynamics** is that they arise in the daily **interactions** between people, creating gender-based patterns of relationship. These are caused by (and perpetuate) prevailing **norms and values** that govern how people think and behave as they interact with one another.

The patterns of relationship give rise to certain **power dynamics** that determine the extent to which individuals can exercise agency (such as the ability to make their own decisions, choose goals and act upon them). Different power dynamics gives rise to patterns of **inclusion or exclusion** and **equality or inequality**.

With patterns of exclusion there is an unequal **power balance** between individuals. For example, women or youth might be less able to negotiate to meet their needs and to make decisions over key areas of their lives compared to men - such as deciding how to use resources or income from sale of products. We say they are excluded from decision-making *on an equal basis* with men. This is caused by certain norms and values that govern what individuals can say and not say, who has decision-making rights and who does not, whose needs, opinions, perspectives and wants are given more value. Therefore, the pattern of gender-based relationship is said to be one of inequality.

Conversely, where gender norms and values enable both women and men, girls and boys, to participate equally, they are said to exercise agency over the factors and decisions affecting their lives. Such patterns of interaction have more balanced power dynamics, giving rise to relationships of gender inclusiveness and equality.

Figure 3[20] illustrates key features of social interaction. These occur at individual and collective levels, and include human and non-human features. Our exploration of gender dynamics throughout the program draws on this model using a practical tool: emergent patterns of interaction analysis (EPIA). This tool is designed to be used with other research frameworks, methods and tools.

Gender-based patterns of relationship and interactions affect all human social phenomena, such as organisations, households and throughout agricultural value chains. These patterns of relationship can change over time. Changes in norms and values lie at the heart of transforming gender dynamics from, for example, patterns of exclusion and inequality to inclusion and equality for women ad girls.

> **We recognise that mainstreaming gender across the program must involve everyone and be integrated into all aspects of our work.**
>
> **Unless gender inclusiveness approaches are adopted across all R4D activities, we will not achieve our program goal.**

# Gender Mainstreaming drives this strategy

The ECOSOC (United Nations Economic and Social Council) defines **gender mainstreaming** as:

> *"...the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality"[21].*

## GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN AIK SAATH

Gender Mainstreaming underpins the Aik Saath strategy for building gender inclusion into the research program. Whereas gender inclusion is being applied as a research approach to knowing where, how and why women and girls are included or excluded, **gender mainstreaming** is about embedding gender perspectives into our project planning and activities, teams and partnerships. Our strategy recommends that **every** team member should be equipped to make gender inclusiveness a personal responsibility.

Our gender mainstreaming strategy supports teams to identify gaps in skills and knowledge and develop strategies to address these through capacity building as well as contracting specialist know-how as required. This recognises that delegating all "gender issues" to a particular "expert" is ineffective and unacceptable, whereas routinely considering gender perspectives will enable a richer analysis.

As with many other research disciplines, a tiered approach could be adopted as follows:

1. **All team members** should have the awareness and knowledge to (a) recognise the limits of their own expertise and (b) be competent and empowered to consult with specialist advisors

2. **Specialists** within each team are enabled to provide oversight and guidance that contributes to improving the expertise of non-specialist team members

3. **Further consultation** and training is available from other team and external specialists as required (eg regarding particular technical nuances)

> *Delegating all "gender issues" to a particular "expert" is ineffective and unacceptable.*
>
> *Our strategy recommends that every team member should be equipped to make gender inclusiveness a personal goal and responsibility.*

This approach depends on all team members recognising that gender dynamics need to be understood in each situation. Mainstreaming gender recognises that every aspect of the research has a gender perspective that could influence the outcome of the project. Therefore it is essential that all team members develop an understanding of this broader approach to gender inclusive R4D.

We recognize the need to develop awareness and skills to understand how gender dynamics of power and inclusion/exclusion arise in smallholder households, stakeholders across the value chain and in our work together.

*This includes understanding and challenging our own actions and interactions that perpetuate gender inequality and how we can contribute to transformation.* After all, projects are created and managed by people through their interactions with one another and the way these interactions can be affected by their own norms, values and unrecognised biases.

## FACILITATING CHANGE IN GENDER DYNAMICS

Simply "telling" people (such as smallholders) why they should change is rarely, if ever, effective. Fostering change requires a non-threatening approach that respects the potential of people to adapt and learn in sympathy with their cultural context. Given the diversity of culture, crops, markets and people across the Aik Saath value chains, various methods should be tested. Our strategy supports all Aik Saath team members to adopt a mindset and process of **adaptive learning,** within two broad approaches.

**The first approach** involves generating and disseminating **evidence** of the benefits of gender-sensitive interventions in smallholder farming systems, generated through rigorous research and testing.

However, there may still be strong resistance to changes, for example women taking on new decision-making roles. Understanding the gender and social aspects of R4D helps to explain any such resistance to change. Personal or community norms and values can outweigh the awareness of potential benefits of change and improving gender equality, no matter how strong the evidence and rational argument.

Our second approach addresses this issue.

**The second approach** organises activities that enable stakeholders to **experience for themselves situations demonstrating new gender dynamics** based on more equitable norms and values.

This gives people (such as targeted smallholders) the opportunity to *explore* a different approach or perspective on a familiar situation, such as women's leadership in farming enterprises and value chain development. This may be done, for example, through exploring case studies, simulations, analysis of projects and visiting research projects and value chain enterprises who have integrated gender inclusivity into their work.

This more sophisticated approach to facilitating change requires firstly that teams themselves build awareness and understanding through gender mainstreaming. Secondly, research must incorporate high level social science skills and knowledge that is capable of analysing the social, cultural and religious norms underpinning gender dynamics. This requires teams to accept that "fostering and demonstrating improved inclusiveness through the Aik Saath program is a major challenge", requiring dedication and willingness to consider new approaches and learnings.

While hugely challenging, applying a gendered approach to technical problem solving has great potential for sustained economic impacts[22].

## PROJECT-LEVEL GENDER MAINSTREAMING PLANS

Our strategy entails each project team developing its own gender mainstreaming plan, covering the same priorities as the program strategy:

> Priority 1: All stages of the project cycle;
> Priority 2: Team management and professional development of team members; and
> Priority 3: Working with and enabling partner organisations.

The project plans include an analysis of:

- the **current status** of each of these priorities in terms of gender inclusion;

- identifying the **gender gaps for each priority**;

- **designing activities** to address these gaps; and

- explaining how the process will be **managed and monitored**.

Comparing the "desired situation of gender inclusion" with the "current situation of gender inclusion" enables us to answer the questions: "is our research inclusive enough?" and "how can we improve the gender inclusiveness of our research?"

The gender mainstreaming process will be more effective and efficient if it is coordinated and supported across the whole program. This will be done through the Aik Saath "umbrella" project and Priority 4.

> **Our gender mainstreaming strategy is an on-going learning process (see following section). Regular reviews of progress, drawing on lessons to update will improve the gender inclusivity of our research**

## AIK SAATH GENDER MAINSTREAMING PRIORITIES

Aik Saath's gender inclusion strategy consists of four strategic priorities covering various dimensions of the program These priorities are closely interlinked, with each feeding into the others.

**Figure 3 Gender Mainstreaming Priorities**
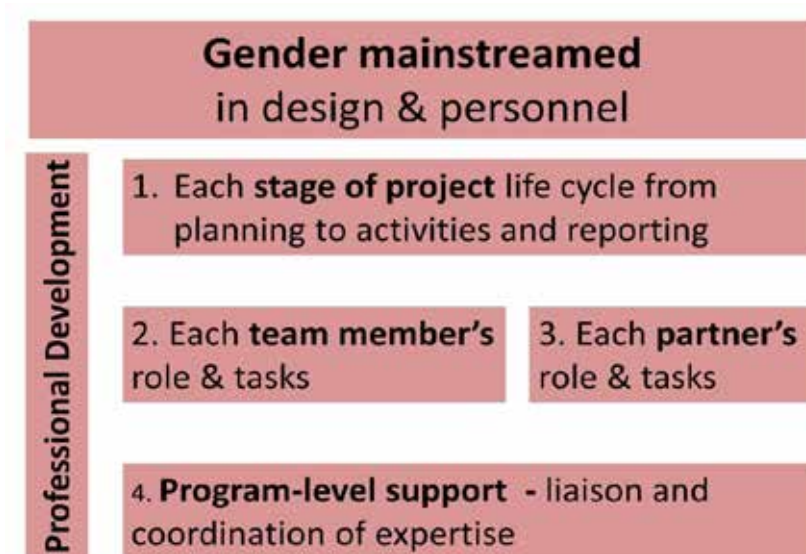
## AIK SAATH GENDER MAINSTREAMING OBJECTIVES

Aik Saath's gender mainstreaming objectives for each priority are listed in Figure 3. These objectives are linked to Aik Saath's overall program goal and program outcomes.

**Figure 4: Summary of Aik Saath's gender outcomes and gender strategy**

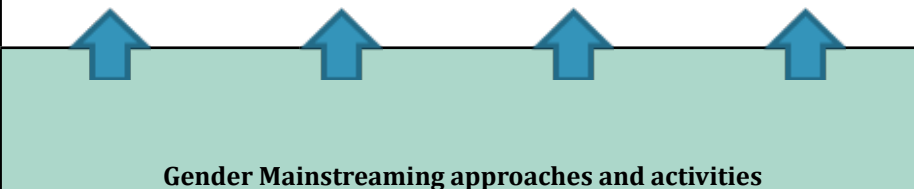| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Aik Saath goal** | Rural poor, particularly women, living in the Punjab and Sindh significantly and equitably benefit from improvements in strategic value chains. | | |
| Aik Saath gender mainstreaming **End of Program Outcomes**** | Research Institutions are collaborating to implement multi- , inter-disciplinary gender inclusive research on value chains.<br><br>Smallholder families (and especially women members) have adopted improved value chain practices. | | |
| Aik Saath gender mainstreaming **Intermediate Outcomes** ## | Greater participation of women in collaborative research<br><br>Smallholder families (especially women) are confident and capable in technical knowledge, partnerships and new approaches<br><br>Smallholder families (especially women) are benefitting from the adoption of value chain initiatives (both financially and non-financially). | | |
| **Objectives** for the four priorities of Aik Saath's gender strategy. | **Priority 1: Applied throughout the project life cycle**<br><br>Gender is mainstreamed into each stage of the project cycle, and linked to Aik Saath project objectives. | **Priority 2: Core responsibility of ALL team members**<br><br>Each team has mainstreamed gender in all their activities as a team and for individuals' role and tasks | **Priority 3: Core responsibility of implementing partners**<br><br>Gender is mainstreamed into the activities, processes and systems of implementing partners, and they are held accountable for gender inclusivity. |
| | **Priority 4: Coordination of gender mainstreaming across Aik Saath**<br><br>Gender mainstreaming of each project is enabled through a coordinated program of strategic oversight, review, capacity support, lesson learning, monitoring, external partner liaison and engagement with internal and external specialists. | | |
| **Activities** | **Gender Mainstreaming approaches and activities** | | |

** These are two of the End of Program Outcomes. (The third Outcome  is " Private businesses have adopted improved value chain practices" )

## These are three of the nine Intermediate Program Outcomes

# Adaptive Learning underpins Implementation

The stated Goal of Aik Saath (above) is highly ambitious, considering the slow rate of progress in improving gender inclusiveness from past efforts in Pakistan and many other countries. Clearly, there is a need to research new approaches, as reflected in the four priorities of Aik Saath's gender strategy. The following sections explain the context, objective, approach, and activities for the four priorities.

Fundamental to this implementation is recognising that Aik Saath is a research program, albeit aiming to drive future development impacts. Therefore, the proposed activities are designed according to the scientific method, as cycles of research and learning – the basis for improving our understanding and knowledge. Various models and terminology are used to describe this concept, eg

In the biophysical sciences we may aspire to "solve" problems or "answer" research questions, as in this diagram. However, in the context of gender in development we are dealing with "a problem
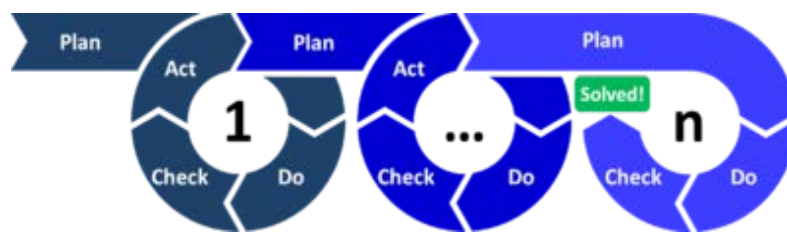


whose social complexity means that it has no determinable stopping point"[23]. In addition, our strategy requires all team members and implementing partners to take responsibility for mainstreaming gender considerations into everything they do. Yet, aside from a few people with gender expertise, building the necessary awareness and knowledge to do this is a major challenge.

Our approach is to embrace the research and learning cycle and present the activities as an ongoing learning and professional development process, using the following approach:



# Activities and Learning Cycle for each Priority

## PRIORITY 1: APPLIED THROUGHOUT THE PROJECT LIFE CYCLE

**Context**

Priority 1 of Aik Saath's gender strategy involves mainstreaming gender into all stages of the project life cycle, for all projects. This includes selection of value chains, project and research design including gender outcomes and impact pathway, implementation of research and development activities, monitoring, and evaluation.

**Objective**

Gender is mainstreamed into each stage of the project cycle, and linked to Aik Saath program objectives.

**Approach**

Consistent with the AVCCR Design Document, Aik Saath will focus throughout the project cycle on improving the economic opportunities for small-scale enterprises, especially those involving women. Projects will consider three key areas that underpin women's economic engagement:

> **Inclusion**: All Aik Saath value chains will be purposefully selected based on their potential to increase women's engagement, whether in production, value adding or labour; this needs to be combined with a focus on low-income households approach given that exclusion is not only along the lines of gender.

> **Access**: Complementing the Technical Research within the target value chains will be Social Research. This will identify the constraints on women's access & opportunities, related to :
> - the cultural restrictions on women's and girls' mobility;
> - cultural and political lack of prioritisation of women's and girls' education and skill development;
> - the resulting difficulties that women face in accessing information and claiming their rights.

> **Agency**: Social Research will also identify ways in which women can assume greater decision making or leadership roles within a value chain.

Our strategy involves deciding on which gender intervention strategies to adopt and making this explicit.
*These decisions must account for the risk of resistance and potentially harmful backlash when social norms are challenged.*
*Another potential form of harm is entrenching women's dominance in areas that are disempowering or of low economic value.*

For example, different strategies include:
- interventions aimed at "mitigating resistance by building on tradition" (builds on what women already do), compared to
- interventions that "create space for women" (gender transformative because they break into male-dominated value chains)[24].

Our strategy also involves assessing the extent to which project research and interventions are gender blind, gender aware, gender neutral, gender specific and gender transformative. We will promote interventions that are gender specific or gender transformative, because these have a better chance of achieving impact.

**Activities**

1. *ASSESS*: Of the value chains and interventions that beneficially advantage the poor, Aik Saath will further prioritise those investments that beneficially impact on/empower women.

2. *PLAN*: Create a specific gender outcome for each project that is aligned with and reinforces each projects' overall goal and objectives.

3. *DO*: Guided by social science expertise, undertake participatory research with women, men and young people in target villages. Build understanding of gender dynamics including the respective roles and role diversity and to understand gender-specific needs. Ascertain scope, desire, opportunities and barriers for women to expand their economic roles.

4. Undertake research on women, men and young people along each Aik Saath Agricultural Value Chain (AVC) through to consumers. Pre-requisite is a detailed analysis of the operations of each AVC. This may involve collaboration with the Market Development Facility (MDF).

5. Use these studies to design research and development activities in a way that enables the active participation of women and girls, as well as men and boys during project implementation. Test potential interventions against guidelines for ensuring "do no harm"[25],[26], and for sustainability and scalability. These studies are likely to be multi- and transdisciplinary – to be managed accordingly.

6. Apply adaptive research expertise to ensure flexibility and learning are factored in to methodology.

7. *REVIEW*: Apply evaluation expertise to determine how proposed interventions will be assessed through gender-sensitive indicators in project MERL plans. Monitor and improve implementation through regular review and assessment of interventions.

8. *ASSESS/ADJUST*: To include: results to date, lessons learned and insights from continuing learning; captured and communicated as case studies.

## PRIORITY 2: CORE RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL TEAM MEMBERS

**Context**

As part of developing this program strategy, each project team participated in the October 2017 workshop and developed gender inclusiveness project plans. (Ref Appendix 2) These addressed the question of *how* they can strengthen the integration of gender inclusion in their project work, and *who* should do this.

Since gender dynamics are present in interactions between people all the time in all areas of the project, gender inclusiveness is clearly everybody's business. This led to our strategy that **does not** see the role of the gender specialist as "dealing with all the gender matters in the project. In response Team Change and Continuing Professional Development (TCCPD) plans were developed by teams to assist members to embrace this responsibility, supported by specialists and other avenues for learning.

**Objectives**

Each team has mainstreamed gender in all their activities as a team and for individuals' role and tasks.

**Approach**

In all areas of the project, all of the time, there are interactions between people (in smallholder households, Aik Saath teams, partner organisations, stakeholders in the value chain). All people have a gender and so gender dynamics are present in all these interactions. It is therefore impossible for the gender specialists to achieve gender inclusion on their own because they cannot be engaged in all interactions with all stakeholders.

Therefore, in all areas of the project, all the time, team members are actively involved in facilitating change in gender dynamics from patterns of *exclusion and inequality* (for women and girls but also boys as disempowered youth), to patterns of *inclusion and equality*. This starts with all team members

**modelling and demonstrating gender mainstreaming in their own teams and role in Aik Saath,** as an example and learning for other stakeholders in the program.

Capacity development needs are assessed at several levels including the team, individual's job roles/ tasks, and individual skills and knowledge development, by using the EPIA tool. The most basic need for all team members is an awareness and knowledge of gender dynamics and power relations. This will provide the confidence and competence to apply gender inclusive approaches, starting with their own team partners. Each team will have different dynamics and have different needs in terms of skills and research.

Importantly, all team members must also recognise when expert help is needed and have productive conversations with gender specialists. Such help may be through feedback, guidance and advice; training and coaching; liaising with other gender specialists in other teams and beyond Aik Saath. Gender specialists will also be actively involved in the overall interdisciplinary approach of each project .

Ongoing professional development will deepen understanding of the many facets of gender inclusiveness in R4D. As well as input from gender specialists, this could include face-to-face training courses, lesson-learning workshops, on-line courses, on-the-job coaching, self-directed learning, and team learning events (for example, one team members reads about a new topic in gender inclusion in value chains and shares their response with the rest of the team in a one-hour seminar, through presentation and debate).

**Activities**

1. *ASSESS*: Each Aik Saath project will appoint a source of gender expertise (appropriate to the region and the AVC involved) to provide advice and leadership regarding all gender issues.

2. Establish an effective role for the team-gender specialist that enables him/her to provide support for all elements of the project and all team members.

3. *PLAN*: Carry out a team assessment and create a Team Change and Continuing Professional Development (TCCPD) plan. This includes ensuring clarity on the gender inclusion responsibilities for each team member and promoting team dynamics that enable improved gender inclusion in the team

4. *DO*: Undertake activities to **model and demonstrate gender mainstreaming in their own teams** and role in Aik Saath, as an example and learning for other stakeholders in the program

5. Skills and knowledge development to build the understand of team members on where and how gender considerations are integrated into his/her role in the project, where his/her responsibilities for gender mainstreaming lie, and how he/she may contribute to the gender mainstreaming process.

6. Knowledge development in the rationale for gender focus in R4D, including government policy, UN Sustainable Development Goals, and ways to consider gender issues e.g. equality of opportunity, empowerment, mainstreaming, male perspective, family perspective, enterprise perspective.

7. Learning event to familiarise teams with the DFAT 2015 Gender equality and women's economic empowerment in agriculture, operational guidelines, and the DFAT 2016 gender equality and women's economic empowerment strategy.

8. Skills and knowledge development in the practical application of "gender as patterns of interaction and EPIA" in their work with partners, smallholder farmers and other stakeholders. For example, how to better understand intra-household gender dynamics and power relations as patterns of interaction in smallholder households.

9. Knowledge development in the principles and practice of women empowerment in agricultural value – Inclusion, Access & Agency; and the application to Pakistan village context; and application to project teams and partners, for example university gender equality approaches.

10. *REVIEW*: Much of this capacity-building will include individual review as part of the training process. At the team level, the implementation of the TCCPD plan will be formally monitored.

11. *ASSESS/ADJUST*: This includes assessing whether the team culture fosters a way of thinking and acting that promotes individual accountability for gender inclusion. It would also assess the range and level of skills related to gender inclusiveness and adjust professional development plans accordingly

## PRIORITY 3: ENABLING IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

**Context**

Partnerships are at the very core of Aik Saath –for implementation but also key to scaling out and sustaining project outcomes in order to deliver real impact. This creates an avenue for the research findings to be translated into development impacts.

Partners include: the GoP Economic Affairs Division, as signatory to the program; National and Provincial Departments of Agriculture and research institutes; as well as numerous universities. These are either directly undertaking the projects or linking across to parallel initiatives, including policy and extension work. Other implementation partners include farmer organisations, financial institutions and NGOs. The value chain focus of Aik Saath also necessitates links with a wide range of input suppliers, processors and trading businesses.

The level of awareness and commitment to gender inclusivity is likely to vary across these many organisations. This will raise challenges as project teams seek to encourage commitment to the approaches in this strategy. In most cases, **Priority 2 will be a necessary precursor to Priority 3.**

**Objective**

Gender is mainstreamed into the activities, processes and systems of implementing partners, and they are held accountable for gender inclusivity.

**Approach**

Our strategy entails understanding and strengthening the capacity of partner organisations and other stakeholders to integrate gender inclusion into project implementation, sustainability and scaling out. Our approach will be partner-led, participatory, and collaborative. This means identifying and prioritising those partners whose culture and leadership is more inclined towards gender inclusiveness issues. These initial learnings will help with scaling out to the large number of different partners involved in Aik Saath.

We will facilitate this through Organisation Assessments (OA) and creation of Organisation Development and Change (ODC) plans. We will use the EPIA tool together with a tool that guides the exploration of capacity development needs. The initial focus is the organisation (or team, or department, as appropriate) and most of the activities below are oriented at this level. The OA will identify where support and capacity-building is needed to ensure gender is considered when employing and supporting staff.

Capacity-building will be managed through the ODC plans and address corporate norms and values as well as individual job roles/tasks, and skills and knowledge. The Aik Saath team members and gender specialists have a vital *facilitating* role in supporting gender mainstreaming in partner organisations. **This is unlikely to be effective before Priority 2 has been effectively implemented to mainstream gender awareness and inclusive thinking in the teams.**

**Activities**

1. *ASSESS*: Identify and prioritise those partners whose culture and leadership is more inclined towards gender inclusiveness issues. Facilitate an OA with these organisations. This includes exploring systems, processes and procedures, and reviewing existing gender strategy/guidelines.

1. *PLAN*: Help create an ODC plan for gender mainstreaming for priority partner organisation. This will include gender equality principles at a **corporate** level and a program of continuing learning at **individual** level (training, review of papers etc – refer Priority 2 Activities).

2. *DO*: Support partners in implementing their ODC plans, for example by fostering links with gender specialists, training, coaching and learning networks.

3. Develop processes and improved ways of working between Aik Saath partner organisations and core teams with regards to gender inclusion.

4. *REVIEW*: Undertake regular joint, participatory, and partner-led monitoring of progress in gender mainstreaming (e.g. review meetings and workshops, team member surveys to assess progress in gender mainstreaming including gender attitudes and awareness within teams and their institutions).

5. *ASSESS/ADJUST*: Facilitate reflection and learning events between partner organisations to explore and share lessons on (i) strengthening gender inclusion in their organisations and staff; and(ii) fulfilling their project roles in terms of implementation, sustainability, and scale out.

6. Use this learning to refine plans and to apply to other organisations in future

## PRIORITY 4: COORDINATION OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING ACROSS AIK SAATH

**Context**

The purpose of the umbrella component is to coordinate and facilitate collaboration between the projects and beyond the program. The umbrella component provides oversight and support for the projects in across-program issues such as gender mainstreaming, monitoring and evaluation, and communications. It seeks synergies with other development partners and their relevant activities, including the Government of Pakistan. The umbrella component also manages a fund for short-term collaborative research studiesincluding with MDF and AusABBA. This adds flexibility allowing rapid response to issues that may not have been foreseen at the start of the program.

One challenge faced by the program is how to identify and make best use of gender expertise from within and outside the program.

**Objective**

Gender mainstreaming of each project is enabled through a coordinated program of strategic oversight, review, capacity support, lesson learning, monitoring, external partner liaison and engagement with internal and external specialists.

**Approach**

- facilitate team gender specialists to consult, co-learn and strengthen gender impacts;

- promote and enable reflection on lessons, exchange of ideas and expertise across the project teams;

- support team capacity development through coordinated training and mentoring;

- facilitate review and reporting of progress;

- create links with and make effective use of external gender expertise at project and program levels..

**Activities**

1. *ASSESS*: Review and summarise the diverse aspects of gender in development (Ref: Appendix 1)

2. *PLAN*: Develop links with sources of expertise covering these diverse aspects, using their advice to develop and refine a plan for gender inclusiveness in Aik Saath at program level

3. *DO*: Create a process to support the continuing professional development of teams in various formats, in conjunction with their Team Change and Continuing Professional Development (TCCPD) plans.

4. In consultation with projects, appoint sources of gender expertise/coordination to complement that provided at project level. This may include special training, evaluation or strategy skills and/ or interactions with networks that can provide value across the program.

5. Develop a mechanism whereby projects teams can share gender expertise with each other and

with other projects, including projects outside Aik Saath. Including communication across the program to maximise opportunities for collaboration between Aik Saath projects and other Pakistan programs in addressing gender issues.

6. stablish a pool of gender expertise available to Aik Saath for training, facilitating gender-focused interventions and providing strategic guidance at project and program level

7. *REVIEW*: Create indicators and a process to monitor progress in gender mainstreaming across Aik Saath (as part of the MERL planning at project and program level). Facilitate annual collective review, reflection and lesson learning activities in gender mainstreaming

8. Ongoing monitoring of initiatives in gender for development and communication with key sources of expertise, including within ACIAR, DFAT and GoP

9. *ASSESS/ADJUST*: Create a gender oversight group to monitor and support progress in gender mainstreaming across the program, that includes introducing new ideas, innovations and practices in gender inclusion in R4D in value chains.

# Appendix 1. Contents of "Review of Gender in Development" report

As a pre-cursor to the development of the Aik Saath Gender Inclusiveness Strategy, a broad, but shallow review of the gender in development literature was undertaken. This identified a diverse array of issues, with many possible approaches to addressing them and ongoing debates about how to select these and measure their impact.

Mapping exercises identified key topics within the broad overlapping perspectives of Policy, the Implementation environment and Practice, with a separate focus on the Rural Perspective.

The Review of Gender in Development outlines the diversity of the literature related to these topics, without attempting a detailed review. It provided a valuable basis for planning an approach to mainstreaming gender in Aik Saath and may be a useful resource for other non-specialists seeking to explore the wealth of information about gender in development.

**Contents**

1.  The Policy Perspective: WHAT is women empowerment and WHY such a strong focus in Aik Saath?
    *   Policy Overview
    *   Business case supporting policy
    *   Policy related to Education
    *   Policy related to Nutrition

2.  Policy into Practice: Some important factors affecting implementation
    *   M&E and Impact
    *   Mainstreaming
    *   Male perspective
    *   Some context for Pakistan
    *   What are the risks of focusing on women's empowerment?

3.  The Practice Perspective: HOW and WHEN to implement women's empowerment
    *   Practice Overview
    *   Value Chain and Enterprise Development
    *   Finance
    *   Networks
    *   Training

4.  The Rural Sector Perspective:
    a.  Policy related to the Rural Sector
    b.  Practice related to the Rural Sector
    *   Gender roles in the rural sector
    *   Information separation (extension issues)
    *   Commodity-specific approaches to gender in the rural sector

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# Appendix 2.  Summary of Pathway to the Aik Saath Gender Inclusiveness Strategy

*Enhancing approaches to Gender Inclusiveness in the Aik Saath Program through gap analysis and ongoing Professional Development:*

The teams took part in a four-step journey with Dr Karen Iles, an expert in building capacity and understanding change processes in complex international development situations. Karen firstly interviewed team members and reviewed their project plans. The second step was a formal Learning Needs Analysis. This informed the third step – a 3-day learning and planning workshop for all the teams, tailored to their needs as outlined below*. The fourth step was to build the learnings from this process into a Gender Inclusiveness Strategy for the Aik Saath Program (which will ensure ongoing review and sharing of ideas).

*The **objectives** of the workshop were: during and by the end of the workshop, participants will be able to -

> *"... the workshop [was adapted] to our needs - each team is in a very different place in terms of development and experience, to engage all groups and make it practical for groups. The examples and activities were very helpful. I know that my team members really found it valuable. We will be able to integrate lots of the work immediately into the project." (Workshop participant)*

1. Explain the concepts and features of gender inclusion and gender mainstreaming as a change process inextricably linked to the objectives and successful delivery of the project

2. Describe varied approaches, models, experiences, and innovations of gender mainstreaming ~ other projects and our own

3. Carry out an assessment of the current situation and desired situation of the three key elements of their projects in terms of gender: Project Design; Team Responsibility; and Enabling Partners

4. Identify the disparities or gaps between the "desired situation of gender inclusion" and "current situation of gender inclusion" for the three key elements

5. Create a gender mainstreaming plan for each project

6. Carry out an assessment of the core teams' current capacity to implement their project gender mainstreaming strategies

7. Create a "Team Change and Continuing Professional Development" (TCCPD) plan to strengthen the capacity of the core teams to implement their gender strategies

8. Develop an agreed process for operationalizing the teams' TCCPD plans, and coordinating gender mainstreaming in the Aik Saath program.

> *"EPIA (emergent patterns of interaction analysis) was most significant ... interesting and informative ... learnt about individual agency, collective, human, non-human ... good case study and memorable for future reflection ... we think as a whole and transformative." (Workshop participant)*

The **learning** part of the workshop focused on the fact that gender is inextricably linked to all human interaction. It is not a question of deciding to "include gender" in a project – gender relations and subsequent dynamics of power and inclusion/exclusion are already there!  Gender-based exclusion and inequality is caused by the interactions between people, underpinned by norms and values[27].
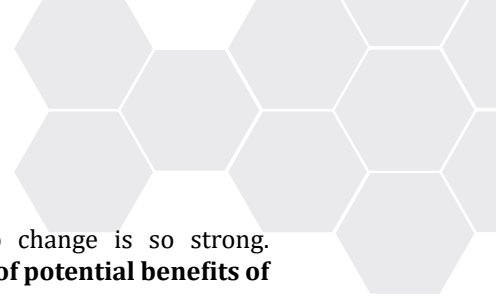
Understanding this "social" aspect helps to explain why resistance to change is so strong. **Personal or community <u>norms and values</u> can outweigh the awareness of potential benefits of change and improving gender equality, <u>no matter how strong the evidence</u>.**

Research suggests that that "offering and taking people through an experience" can be far more effective than just "telling" people why they should change. The former gives people the opportunity to see a different perspective on a familiar situation, such as how to strengthen women's leadership in value chain development. Exploring case studies, examples, simulations, and analysis of projects using a new model, are useful strategies for doing this. Visiting research projects and value chain enterprises who have integrated gender equality into their work is also effective. The more that such experiences challenge prevailing norms and values regarding the gender-roles of men and women, the more they may have an impact in terms of changing ways of thinking, acting and interacting.

The **planning** part of the workshop enabled teams to analyse various aspects of their projects (project design, enabling partners and measuring change) to identify gender inclusiveness gaps. Some gaps related to activities that were missing or underdeveloped. Other gaps related to the knowledge or expertise to undertake these activities effectively. This gap analysis formed the basis of gender mainstream planning for ongoing professional development in various aspects of gender-sensitive research.

Aik Saath team development may call for gender experts with facilitation and coaching skills to be embedded within teams, or for teams to call on consultants to review and guide particular activities.

> *"…our whole team really did find it extremely useful …
> it had a big impact on our understanding and strategy for making our project more gender inclusive and having greater impact"*
> *(Workshop participant)*

Some teams already have members with social science skills, but they recognised that taking a silo approach to gender inclusion in projects, or **leaving all the responsibility and actions for gender inclusion with the gender specialists alone, is ineffective.**

The purpose of Aik Saath's approach is to equip <u>every team member</u> to understand and apply gender inclusive approaches and recognise when expert help is needed.

As the gender mainstreaming plans evolve and teams reflect on experiences in the field, the projects will continue to collaborate on sharing insights, ideas and resources to maximise impact by maximising gender inclusiveness.

> *"The whole document is very worth while in itself and it will be really valu able to re-visit it in 3, 6, 12 months-time"*
> *(Workshop participant)*

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