Gender transformative approaches in a rural world

Tackling root causes of discrimination against rural women and girls

This Brief is designed to provide an understanding of what gender transformative approaches (GTAs) mean for food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture. It is divided into three sections. Section A briefly outlines the thinking behind gender transformation and how this is relevant to the rural sector. Section B places this thinking into context by describing a selection of EU-funded GTAs that have been tried in the rural sector. Section C offers guidance to help incorporate GTAs more effectively into programming.

This Brief complements Because women matter: Designing interventions in food, nutrition and agriculture that allow women to change their lives.

Core messages

1. Gender transformative approaches (GTAs) have emerged in development because of a recognition that conventional approaches have failed to address the underlying structural impediments to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. These structural impediments lie in discriminatory social norms, attitudes and behaviours that regard women and girls as inferior to men and boys. GTAs attempt to move beyond reaching and benefiting women and girls to challenging negative social norms that lie at the heart of gender injustice. The concept of gender transformation has become central to key development commitments and policies, such as Vision 2030 and the EU Gender Action Plan (2016-2020).

2. In the rural sector, women play an important role in agriculture and nutrition security. Despite this, they are often not empowered. This means they are unable to make choices about use and control of resources to increase income and improve household wellbeing. GTAs can help to reverse this disempowerment in a number of ways, some of which have been tested within EU programming. For example: encouraging key policy makers to adopt positive attitudes towards gender justice, and enforcing greater accountability; providing rural women with a platform to advocate for the type of change that benefits them; giving rural women the education, skills and knowledge to make choices about their lives; or bringing households and communities together to reflect critically on their status quo and collaborate on a positive future vision of change.

A women’s self-help group around water conservation in India. Working together gives women the confidence to manage scarce resources for agriculture. Photo: European Union
3. **GTAs improve the rights of women and girls, but they also represent effective development spending.** This is because by tackling the root causes of gender discrimination GTAs aim to empower women and girls, so they are better able to contribute to development outcomes.

4. **Central to GTAs is an understanding of the complexity of gender power relations and how these play out amongst different groups across society from the household to the national level.** This understanding will help EU staff integrate relevant GTAs into their actions and policy dialogue with partners and to assess how change happens in the course of implementation.

**A. GTAs: evolution in a rural context**

This section describes how the concept of gender transformation and accompanying GTAs have evolved in development practice, particularly in the context of the rural sector.

**A.1. Evolution of GTAs**

Gender transformative approaches have gained prominence in development practice over the last few decades. This is because of a growing recognition that traditional gender approaches have become overly technical and have failed to address the systemic causes of gender inequality. As with former traditional approaches, GTAs aim for, as their overall objective, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. However, they diverge from former approaches by moving beyond the symptoms of gender inequality (such as lack of access to resources and services) and attempting to bring about social change by challenging, through critical reflection, entrenched discriminatory social norms, attitudes and behaviours that cause gender inequalities. GTAs are based on an understanding of the complexity of gender relations and how these cut across and influence all levels of society and interact with other societal inequalities.

**Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is the overall objective of addressing gender issues**

**Gender equality** refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women, men, girls and boys. This does not mean that men and women will become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are male or female.

**Empowerment of women and girls** is a process whereby they gain power and control over their own lives. It involves awareness-raising, confidence building, expansion of choices, increase in access to and control over resources, and actions to transform the structures and institutions which perpetuate gender discrimination.

A speaker at a women’s literacy project in Togo. When women learn how to read and write, their lives can be transformed. Photo: European Union

**A.2. Core characteristics of GTAs**

**Gender transformation must be driven by those people who wish to transform their own lives.** Donors and other outsiders cannot control gender transformation, but they can create an enabling environment by integrating GTAs into their policy dialogues and programmes. They can do this in a way that attempts to shift gender discriminatory attitudes, thereby helping to empower women and girls. These outside efforts should always be regarded as experimental and innovative – in a spirit of learning by doing – rather than enshrined in blueprint frameworks. Their success will depend on the enabling environment for social change within a specific context at any given time. The willingness of lawmakers to oversee legal reform around land inheritance, or the economic and political stability of a country, or the ability of civil society organisations, social activists and the media to champion for gender justice, are some of the many factors that will influence the speed, depth and outcome of social change.

**GTAs can co-exist with more traditional gender approaches;** the one does not exclude the other. Section B describes some EU-funded actions that aim to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls through gender transformation, as well as more technical inputs such as skills enhancement and training.
A combination of GTAs is more likely to achieve lasting change than one approach. A programme that engages policy makers in a discussion around women’s employment rights, for example, is unlikely to benefit women unless community-level attitudes place a value on women’s productive role. Legal reform around land inheritance is unlikely to benefit women unless they are recognised as legitimate owners and heirs by their communities, and unless systems are in place to ensure their land rights are respected.

Figure 1 provides some examples of the different aspects of GTA.

A.3. Agenda 2030, the EU and GTAs

GTAs have been endorsed at the highest levels. In the run-up to the setting of Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, UN Women called for the new SDG framework to be transformative, by addressing the structural impediments to gender equality and the achievement of women’s rights. This led to the concept of gender transformation being embedded in the language of Agenda 2030.

In line with this discourse on gender transformation, the EU has also moved from promoting traditional, more technical gender approaches on their own towards promoting a combination of technical approaches and GTAs. Section B provides examples of EU-funded GTAs in the rural sector.

The EU Gender Action Plan (GAP II) places a focus on transforming the lives of women and girls.

Whilst retaining the overall goal of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, the EU’s GAP II is based on the belief that shifting norms and value-sets that limit girls and boys, women and men from fulfilling their potential, are mutually reinforcing processes. They challenge deeply rooted structural inequalities to benefit society as a whole.

The GAP II is therefore committed to promoting GTAs. It aims to do this by:

- bringing about an institutional culture shift within the EU towards gender transformative change;
- working with agents of change to shift negative social and cultural norms, including the media, women’s grassroots organisations, and the active involvement of men and boys;
- contributing to increased women’s participation in policy, governance and electoral processes at all levels.

In Burkina Faso, 91% of the population believe a woman requires her husband’s permission to leave her house.

A.4. Gender transformation in the rural sector

Women in low-income countries play an important role in agriculture as subsistence or commercial farmers, pastoralists, fishers, labourers or entrepreneurs. Their skills, knowledge and experience provide opportunities for securing and improving food and nutrition security for their households and communities. Their ability to fulfil their role as producers and providers of food and nutrition depends on their ability to make choices around resources and services, such as land, finance, technology, education, skills or knowledge.

In many rural societies, from the household to the national level, women and girls are not able to make the same choices around accessing assets and resources as men. At the heart of this disempowerment lie unequal gender power balances that are embedded in discriminatory attitudes, behaviours and norms and that bestow a higher status on men and boys than on women and girls. The extent to which this happens depends on a woman’s location, her marital and reproductive status, age, level of education or vocational training, religion, or ethnicity. It is also influenced by wider processes of rural transformation brought about by migration, urbanisation and climate change.

At the household level, many rural women are unable to make choices about land use, income use or expenditure. In some instances, as agriculture becomes commercialised and more profitable, men wrest control of production activities that are typically ‘female’ and reap the income benefits. Rural women generally work longer hours than men in order to fulfil their reproductive role as mothers, their economic role as producers, and their caring role as principal guardians of household health and food security. This leaves them with little time to relax, or to explore alternative paths to improved agricultural production, increased income, or healthier nutrition levels for their families.
Beyond the household, deeply entrenched customary traditions tend to favour men over women when it comes to land and property inheritance even when the statutory laws are non-discriminatory. A widow may find herself chased from her land, or ‘bought’ along with her children by the brother of her late husband. Societal pressure may restrict the mobility of rural women and girls, or cause girls to drop out of school before boys so that women end up with lower education and literacy levels than men. They may lack the confidence or the permission to participate in rural organisations, such as producer associations or farmer organisations, or to access markets, services, knowledge or training about improved agricultural practices, or setting up agribusinesses, or learning about healthy nutrition for their households. Rural women are more likely than men to be employed in the informal sector, in downstream segments of agro-food chains (processing, marketing or catering) on low wages, with minimal protection or job security and few opportunities to ascend to higher levels of employment.

At the national level, legal and policy frameworks may be ‘gender blind’ in that they ignore discriminatory land and property inheritance practices, or employment conditions for women. An unwillingness amongst policy and law makers to bring about social change represents a critical barrier to gender transformation.

GTAs in the rural sector aim to empower women and girls by breaking down these deep-rooted gender power imbalances. This is done by viewing agriculture not only as a technical activity involving technical inputs for improvements, but as a complex array of social relations that govern production. Rural GTAs draw on analyses of these complex social relations in order to try and shift negative attitudes and behaviour. Their aim is to improve the quality of life for rural women and girls by boosting their confidence and ability to take decisions around, for example, land use, income use, on- and off-farm labour, agricultural production practices, technology use, marketing and food consumption.

“Women are amongst the most involved in, and served by, cooperative organisations, but amongst the least likely to hold high-ranking and decision-making roles.”

B. Rural GTAs: learning by doing

This section describes a selection of GTAs that the EU has supported, some of which are combined with more traditional approaches to promoting gender equality.

B.1. Changing attitudes in formal institutions

A key component of the GAP II is fostering partnerships and building national capacity for gender equality. Donors can strengthen understanding and change attitudes of key decision makers by pushing, through political dialogue or through negotiations for budget support, for gender equality to be reflected in laws and policies that affect the rural sector. They can demonstrate, through evidence, the advantages of reforming family law around land and property inheritance so that the rights of rural women are respected. Or they can push for extension and rural advisory services that overcome barriers to access for female farmers. Donors can also facilitate multi-stakeholder participation in reform processes and help enforce accountability by spreading awareness amongst the public about reforms.
Supporting legal and policy reform for women’s tenure rights in Malawi

Under customary law, women’s land rights in Malawi are guaranteed. Despite this, they lack decision-making power over how the land is used. Increasing population density, rising demand for land, and land fragmentation mean that women are now less able to claim or defend their land from unlawful grabbing. In 2018, the government passed the Community Land Bill which defines the process and procedures for recognition of rights in customary estates. In conjunction with the passing of this law, the EU is funding an action that works with the government to foster legal and social recognition of land rights. This action began by identifying customary estates for delimitation, accompanied by guidelines stipulating how the barriers that women face in accessing land are taken into account. Meanwhile, the action is promoting women’s land rights at all levels, including training for local officials, and awareness raising to the wider public through a variety of channels such as radio programmes in local languages and T-shirt logos. The action also plans to facilitate the establishment of women’s forums which will highlight women’s land rights.

B.2. Supporting research into gender power relations

Donors can support implementation of social and political analysis into the complexities and interconnectedness of power dynamics. This would cover informal social and cultural norms in communities as well as formal written rules in sectoral policies. Research such as this can shed light on transformative practices that already exist in communities, or existing legislation that would benefit from reform.

Making sense of power relations in forest–food systems

The Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) has produced a manual for incorporating gender and equity more fully into forest management and research. The inspiration for this manual was a realisation that gender analysis in forests is too often static, stereotypical and superficial. The manual moves from over-simplifying ‘gender’ as a synonym for an undefined group of women and instead focuses on how power is interconnected across gender, age, ethnicity, marital status and other factors. It lists a series of indicators of power that can often be overlooked, for example:

- reluctance to attend, or exclusion from public meetings or failure to speak up in interactions with dominant others;
- social norms around displaying respect ‘up’ and disdain/paternalism ‘down’ in social interactions;
- inequity in access to newly available opportunities, such as training or distribution of benefits;
- extra-local links with powerful actors, networks and resources.

The manual cites interesting research into interconnected gender dynamics around community forestry in Nepal. Women from Tamang communities have fairly egalitarian norms and interactive participation in decision-making structures; nevertheless, they rely on men to act as intermediaries between themselves and forest officials. These women saw themselves as being confined to local spaces, without the experience or the technical language required to engage with forestry officials and other actors beyond this local sphere.
B.3. Supporting collective action for change

Rural organisations provide opportunities for gender transformation. These may be village-level organisations, credit groups, cooperatives, producer associations, enterprises, trade unions, national, regional or international farmers’ organisations, networks or movements. Through these, rural women can pool their resources, gain knowledge, expand their social networks, lobby for better employment conditions, increase their confidence and self-esteem, and most importantly, improve their visibility and gain a louder voice.

Donors can support gender transformative change through rural institutions in a number of ways. They can encourage governments to legalise informal women’s organisations in order to enable them to engage on a formal basis with other actors and also to receive funding. Or donors can help to link up women’s organisations with each other in order to exchange experiences and speak with a louder voice. Alternatively, they can support the establishment of new organisations to campaign for change, or to disseminate information about a specific issue, such as women’s land rights or employment law.

Empowering women’s groups in Ghana so female fishers can advocate for their rights

Unclear tenure security compounded by rising offshore oil and gas production in Ghana is increasing pressure and conflict in the fishing sector. The government is developing new legislation to ensure remaining resources are exploited in a sustainable and socially inclusive way. Gender discrimination in laws and customs means that women often have weaker tenure rights than men and are mostly consigned to the downstream processing and marketing sectors of the fisheries value chains. In 2015, a National Association of Fish Processors and Traders (NFPTA) was established to help women present a united front, but this has no decentralised branches at the community level, making the gathering and dissemination of information difficult. The EU has been funding an action that includes training women’s groups, such as NFPTA, Central and Western Region Fishmonger Improvement Association and Development Action Association, not only in sustainable fishing techniques, but also in advocacy for their tenure rights during the national consultation process.

Civil society strengthening in Mozambique to fight for the rights of women and girls. Photo: European Union

B.4. Strengthening women’s capacities and confidence

GTAs can promote rural women as leaders and role models to inspire change through training in public speaking, communication, assertiveness or active listening. This can involve motivating women in groups, so that women not only learn but also draw confidence from each other. Capacity strengthening can combine technical training with critical reflection. This is a powerful combination because technical and/or vocational training can transform women’s lives not only by transferring skills but also more implicitly by spreading the message to other women that they are able to learn. One project by WorldFish in Bangladesh combined training on fish and associated vegetable production with a gender module that encouraged deep reflection on gender and social norms, with the aim of triggering new behaviours.7

Giving Nicaraguan women the skills to lead

In 2015, the EU supported the Nicaraguan Association of Producers and Exporters of non-traditional produces (APEN) to advance gender equality in value chains such as milk, chia, pastry and coffee. The project helped to build the leadership skills of women working in these value chains. It also targeted the institutional culture of enterprises, cooperatives and service providers within the value chains, including APEN’s board members. As a result of this, enterprises and cooperatives such as Tropicana, Agroexport, milk cooperatives and CAC Trading, inserted a set of gender principles (which they called a ‘decalogue’) into their institutional policies. Within the cooperatives, the number of women sitting on directors’ boards increased from 6 to 20. APEN itself established a Gender Action Plan which aimed, amongst other things, to increase the number of women participating in the Network and adopting leadership positions. The Plan also included the establishment of networks with other partners to promote gender equality, resulting in four joint forums: Reflection of the Economic Empowerment of Women in Nicaragua; Poverty and Happiness in Nicaragua; Economic Empowerment Indexes of Rural Women; and Land and other Sources of Rural Women’s Empowerment.

In the words of a female cooperative member: “At a personal level, [the training] lifted my spirit, taught me to value myself because I always waited for others to value me, to love myself; to understand, listen, and to know how to negotiate with both my partner and my colleagues in the cooperative. Now I am President of my cooperative.”

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B.5. Promoting behaviour change that values women’s roles

A range of behaviour change methodologies has emerged that brings women and men together in a reflective dialogue around harmful social norms. The engagement of men is key to this process. Men must understand the barriers that women face to increasing and improving agricultural productivity, such as their multiple roles and time burden, their insecure land tenure, or their lower levels of education and lack of access to knowledge about new agricultural techniques and technology. Above all, men must be encouraged to respect women’s multiple roles, many of which are under-valued and unpaid.

By moving towards a collective understanding of the impact of gender inequalities, these reflective sessions can encourage communities and households to challenge together the deep-rooted causes of discrimination, and trigger positive behaviour change. Inclusion of community leaders and service providers, such as teachers, local government officials, extension workers, veterinarians or community health workers, can speed up this process.

Behaviour change methodologies at the household level typically encourage household members to progress through three steps: articulation of a shared vision; analysis of the barriers and opportunities that will influence their vision; and planning to achieve the vision. This collective household reflection leads to a jointness in planning whereby household members support each other and share resources rather than work in conflict. Household-level GTAs also tend to include support from service providers and community leaders who can help family members turn their dream into reality. Households who have responded well to these approaches and planned together can then become role models for the wider community who see the physical benefits of a better relationship between man and wife.

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is a leading development agency that supports behaviour change at the household level. One well-known household methodology is called the Gender Action Learning System (GALS), which employs a range of participatory tools and games, mostly visual. Evidence from GALS innovation has shown positive behaviour changes in men, with better sharing out of household chores and more joint decision making, leading to improved gender relations. There has also been improved access to financial resources and household financial management through joint financial planning, increased household savings and more efficient spending.

Taking control: community conversations in Ethiopia can improve food security

As part of the EU’s resilience programme in Ethiopia (RESET), the NGO CARE and its partners are using a community-oriented approach called Social Analysis and Action. Through this, communities explore and challenge together the social norms, beliefs and practices that lead to gender inequality, and collectively agree on necessary steps to catalyse social change. Amongst the norms identified were: early marriage; division of labour; power relations and decision making; and men’s and women’s involvement in household nutrition and access to resources. Community groups have imposed penalties on negative behaviour, for example if an individual spends too much money on a wedding ceremony, the other members of the group will boycott the ceremony. Savings accrued from decreased spending on ceremonies have led to increased investment in income generation activities and progression towards food security.
C. The way ahead: improving GTAs in the rural sector

This section provides some guidance to help EU staff and partners promote rural GTAs.

C.1. Institutional culture shift

GTAs represent experimental approaches to triggering social change, rather than technical instruments that can be ‘learnt’ through manuals and toolkits. As such, those who promote GTAs, such as donors and their partners, need to adopt an institutional culture that is ready to depart from a sole reliance on conventional and technical gender practices and instead combine these with more radical attempts to trigger social change. This is why the EU GAP II carries a horizontal pillar calling for an institutional culture shift towards gender transformative change within the EU, as well as better collaboration with implementing partners and governments to achieve this.

An essential first step in this institutional culture shift is to invest in capacity development for EU staff, governments and implementing partners so they understand and accept the concept of gender transformation in everyday practices. This can be done in a number of ways:

- build partnerships with stakeholders to enhance national capacity for gender equality (such as gender analysis), for example through national research and statistics institutions, academia and civil society organisations;
- train EU staff, especially Gender Focal Points, in implementation of GTAs so they are ready to pass the message on to partners and governments;
- incentivise senior EU staff in delegations and at headquarters to demonstrate a commitment to GTAs and to urge implementing partners and governments to show the same commitment;
- integrate GTA modules in regular seminars and trainings at all levels;
- disseminate material promoting GTAs widely within EU institutions;
- select relevant implementing partners (such as civil society organisations) who have long-standing relationships within communities and are well placed to promote social change.

C.2. The importance of gender analyses for GTAs

In order to integrate GTAs into EU programming cycles, there needs to be a gender analysis at the national and/or programme level that examines the complexity of gender power relations. This analysis should take into account not only gender, but also how gender overlaps with other aspects such as age, ethnicity, marital status, level of education and/or technical training, migration status or religion.

Terms of reference for this type of gender analysis must ensure that the components of power and their interconnectedness with other factors are included. This will avoid an analysis that regards women’s and men’s roles as fixed and unchangeable. These types of gender analyses require on-the-ground qualitative research methodologies designed to understand gendered patterns of behaviour at all levels. This takes time, as well as human and physical resources, which need to be built into country- and programme-level planning and budgeting. There are many frameworks and methodologies to help implement gender analyses in a way that embraces gender power relations. The following suggests key areas of enquiry that would be covered:

1. Policies and laws relating to women’s rights
2. Cultural norms, values and practices that influence gender relations
3. Gendered division of labour and time use
4. Community and household decision-making behaviour
5. Access to public spaces and services
6. Access to and control over resources
7. Participation in public decision making
8. Levels of confidence and aspirations amongst men and women.

Embedding GTAs into the mindset of the EU and its partners: learning by doing

As well as a series of briefs, seminars and webinars on gender transformation in the rural sector, the EU is also funding a programme to take GTAs to scale with the three Rome-based UN agencies: the World Food Programme (WFP), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The objective of this new action is to embed GTAs in policy dialogue and institutional culture of all agencies involved, and to learn from and scale up different GTA innovations in programming.

Female fruit sellers in Bolivia. Giving small producers business skills can help them compete in markets.

Photo: European Union
Two tools for assessing social change

SIGI
The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) measures how discriminatory laws, social norms and practices affect the lives of women and girls in 180 countries around the world. The purpose of the SIGI is to provide policy makers with the facts and analysis they need to understand and act on positive and negative influences on gender equality so that women and men have the same opportunities. As such, it is a highly relevant measurement to inform gender analyses for regional or country-level programmes. SIGI has been recognised as an official indicator for SDG 5.

WEAI
The Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI), developed by a consortium of agencies, includes a project-level WEAI (PRO-WEAI). The PRO-WEAI is composed of 12 indicators of women’s empowerment in agriculture which are organised around three domains of power. These indicators are: autonomy in income; self-efficacy; attitudes about domestic violence; input in productive decisions; ownership of land and other assets; access to and decisions on credit; control over use of income; work balance; visiting important locations; group membership; membership in influential groups; and respect amongst household members.

C.3. Embedding GTAs into programme design

A gender analysis that examines gender power relations will indicate where and how an EU-funded programme can contribute towards gender transformation. For example, if a country-level analysis indicates multiple barriers to training for women, such as time, mobility and decision-making constraints, the programme design team may decide to include a behaviour change component in order to trigger critical reflection around the negative attitudes that lie at the root of these barriers. The experimental nature of GTAs means that the EU and its partners must be ready to adapt and alter course as learning emerges, and this central focus on learning can help to inform future innovation of GTAs in similar contexts.

One major challenge for programme design teams lies in how to integrate GTAs into the conventional development planning tool – the logical framework. It is difficult to capture the qualitative aspects of transformation within the static framework of a goal, one or two objectives, and some results. The programme design team must remain focused and practical with regards to the type and extent of GTAs that can be implemented within the programme. Household methodologies, for example, are discrete activities that can be comfortably articulated into an action and can begin to shift household practices quickly once participants understand the benefits of change.

How transformative is your programme?

Does the programme reflect an understanding of how changing gender norms will influence and be influenced by the action?

Does the programme design move beyond merely quoting percentages of female beneficiaries?

Does the programme target different groups of women, rather than lumping all women into one ‘marginalised’ or ‘vulnerable’ group?

Has the programme identified ready advocates for gender transformation (who may come from the most unlikely quarters) and included them as active agents for change within the programme?

If behaviour change activities are written into the programme’s design, does the programme engage men in these activities as well as women?

There are several useful frameworks and tools that can be used in the rural sector to assess how transformative your programme is. Two of these are described here.

The Reach – Benefit – Empower framework. In this, a programme may reach women by including them in activities, or benefit women by increasing their wellbeing (such as food security, income or health), or empower women by strengthening their ability to make life choices and put these choices into action.

Assessing the gender responsiveness of agribusiness initiatives. The tool assesses a programme along a continuum from gender blind through to gender equitable to promoting gender equality and finally to gender transformative. It has been used to assess EU-funded initiatives in the agribusiness sector.
C.4. Assessing gender transformation

Social change and gender transformation are difficult to measure in concrete terms, and attribution is unrealistic. Even if one can assess, through longitudinal research studies, changes in attitudes, behaviour patterns and social norms, it is harder to assess how much impact an EU-funded investment has had on this change.

The EU and its partners can examine how their programming contributes towards gender transformative change alongside the diverse set of actors, trends and events that shape social environments. They can do this by examining the following:

- changes in **decision-making** processes that occur in key spaces at the community and household level;
- changes in **control** over assets such as income and land;
- changes in **collective** action;
- changes in levels of **knowledge**;
- changes in **informal norms and values** such as societal attitudes towards women’s mobility or women’s work;
- changes in **psychological wellbeing** such as women’s feeling of self-worth;
- changes in **aspirations** and life visions.

Even though the complexity and contextually specific nature of gender transformation cannot easily be distilled into indicators, an EU programme design team must nonetheless try to select the best indicators to capture the concept as indicators remain the only consistent way that the EU has to measure change. A wealth of material exists on measuring empowerment and gender transformative change.\(^{15}\) The following provides some general guidance.

- **Qualitative information** will be needed to assess intangible and interim changes. This can be collected through on-the-ground participatory methodologies such as: in-depth interviews; focus group discussions; action learning techniques; oral testimonies; and participant observation. These methodologies take time, can be costly and normally require training, so resources must be built into programme budgets to accommodate them, otherwise visible signs of progress in gender transformation will evaporate. For example, the EU has started to insert the WEAI (see Section C.2) into logical frameworks as an indicator to assess change at the impact level. When the WEAI is used in this way as a data collection tool, it is important that appropriate resources are built into the programme’s design to train the researchers, carry out the research and analyse the results.

- All stakeholders (and not just programmers) should be involved in the learning process of GTAs as part of a **participatory reflection** on how change has happened.

**Conclusions**

In order to contribute towards gender transformation we must go beyond traditional gender approaches and challenge gender power dynamics in a more radical and less technical way. To do this, there must be an institutional commitment to promoting the principles of social change and gender transformation in our policy dialogue with governments, partners and member states, and in our programmes. This commitment must be backed up with robust analysis of gender power relations and with mechanisms to measure the impact of our commitment. Past and existing investments in the agriculture, food and nutrition security sector, some of which have been described in this Brief, are beginning to reflect this commitment. Future EU-funded GTAs in the rural sector must be informed and strengthened by this experience.
Endnotes


8 There is a wealth of material on household methodologies and GALS. For example, on household methodologies in general see: https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714170/40253742/CSW+HHM+good+practice+FINAL.pdf/18f2a214-b13a-4db8-aff2-83e623e8f0ad; and for GALS see http://www.galsatscale.net/.

9 These can be found at: https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sectors/food-and-agriculture/food-and-nutrition-security_en.


13 To read more about this framework, see http://a4nh.cgiar.org/2016/11/29/reach-benefit-or-empower-clarifying-gender-strategies-of-development-projects/.

