

# Gender mainstreaming in value chain development: Experience with Gender Action Learning System in Uganda

LINDA MAYOUX

*There is an emerging consensus that promoting gender justice in value chain development is not only a rights issue for women, but makes ‘business sense’ for households, enterprises, and ultimately the national economy. This article discusses experiences using a community-led methodology, Gender Action Learning System (GALS), with producers and traders of coffee, maize, fruits (avocados, pineapples, and passion fruit), and beans in Kasese District, Western Uganda. This community-led value chain development methodology has brought about profound changes for significant numbers of people in a relatively short period of time, on sensitive and potentially conflictual issues such as gender-based violence and land ownership as well as decision-making, division of labour, and women’s access to health and education. These changes have taken place with the full support of many men who have become enthusiastic promoters of gender equality as part of their own vision of happiness and social justice. Addressing gender inequalities at all levels of the chain forms a ‘win-win strategy’ which has increased incomes and contributed to upgrading whole value chains and developing the local economy.*

**Keywords:** Gender Action Learning System, Uganda, value chain development, gender inequality

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THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979 and by 2010 had been ratified by 186 out of 193 countries. CEDAW states that, like men, women have the right to freedom from violence and freedom of movement; equal rights in decision-making and to own property; the right to freedom of thought and association; to work, rest and leisure; and to an adequate standard of health and education. Most national governments have gender policies, strategies, and legislation based on some variant of CEDAW.

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*Linda Mayoux (l.mayoux@ntlworld.com) is an independent consultant. She is very grateful to the members of the Bukonzo Joint GALS team, particularly Teddy, Annette, Polonia, Asasio, and David who spent time to check all the quantitative information in this article. She would also like to thank fellow GALS consultants, Paineto Baluku and Janet Biira, and WEMAN Programme Officer Thies Reemer for filling in information from earlier reports and their comments on the first draft of this paper. Responsibility for the analysis, and any errors, lie entirely with the author.*

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Gender inequalities and discrimination mean that women are marginalized or excluded from the more profitable chains

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Gender analysis remains weak in most 'mainstream' livelihood, market, and value chain analyses

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Most development agencies have an official commitment to gender equality and gender mainstreaming across their other interventions as part of their mandate. Many have position papers on gender and the key importance of women's empowerment in economic growth and/or poverty reduction.

There is an extensive body of research by World Bank, IFPRI, and others, which shows that gender inequalities are a key constraint on economic growth and food security, and a key cause of poverty, not only for women themselves, but also for their families and communities (Farnworth and Ragasa, 2008; Mayoux and Mackie, 2009). Women's importance in supplying national and international markets with both traditional and high-value products such as textiles, coffee, and cocoa has increased significantly over the past few decades. However, gender inequalities and discrimination at all levels mean that women are marginalized or excluded from the more profitable agricultural and manufacturing chains and/or the profitable parts of these chains. Women-owned businesses face many more constraints than those of men, and receive fewer financial and non-financial services (see Farnworth and Ragasa, 2008; Mayoux and Mackie, 2009; and the many studies of women's enterprise commissioned for ILO's WEDGE programme, which can be found on [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org)). Gender inequalities in control of productive assets, such as land, mean that even where women do the majority of the work in cultivation they are generally invisible as 'helpers' of 'male farmers'. Women rarely control household income, particularly from crops marketed by men, even where production is dependent on women's unpaid role in cultivation and care work.

Despite the importance of women in most value chains and official commitments to gender mainstreaming, 'gender' continues to be widely seen as a sideline 'women's issue' in most value chain development – an additional 'problem' on top of all the other competing objectives and priorities in economic development interventions (environment, HIV/AIDS, etc.). Gender analysis remains weak in most 'mainstream' livelihood, market, and value chain analyses, and largely ignored in manuals and capacity building (Farnworth and Ragasa, 2008; Solidaridad, 2009). As a result, women are not only often excluded from value chain development (VCD) interventions, but gender inequalities may actually increase, exacerbating the unacceptably high gender disparities on all human development and rights indicators.

This is the case even in interventions which claim to be 'ethical', such as cooperative development, fairtrade, and organic farming (see, for example, Farnworth and Ragasa, 2008; Solidaridad, 2009). Women are assumed to automatically benefit from interventions

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targeting 'household heads' – assumed in turn to be any man present. Requirements for traceability in supply chains generally involve documenting assets in men's names, which further consolidates their rights, and may even undermine food security for the household. The change to organic cultivation often increases women's labour more than that of men without increasing women's control of income or assets. Women's incomes may even decrease as they, already overworked, spend less time on their own economic activities because they are unable to reduce the time spent on food crops (Bolwig and Odeke, 2007). In households involved in fairtrade, men often take over areas of decision-making in production and household expenditure that formerly were a woman's domain (Solidaridad, 2009). Women traders may be displaced as markets are developed in large urban centres and for export – as for example in markets for fruits such as mangoes and green leafy vegetables in Uganda (Farnworth and Ragasa, 2008). Government regulations in Côte d'Ivoire on cooperativization in the cocoa industry have made participation by women's groups very difficult, further marginalizing women coffee producers (Solidaridad, 2009).

There have been some notable recent innovations:

- The development of women's entrepreneurship in industries dominated by women, which has been promoted through interventions such as ILO's Growth-oriented Women Entrepreneurs' project and MEDA's work with women entrepreneurs in Pakistan supported by USAID.
- The establishment of women's cooperatives in economic activities dominated by women. Some chains where women have benefited and improved their position on a large scale are Café Femenino and Las Hermanas coffee cooperatives in Latin America (Melendez, 2008), shea nut production in Mali, and cashew nut production in Mozambique (KIT et al., 2006).
- Household mentoring approaches that work with men and women to understand the benefits of addressing gender inequalities in work and decision-making in order to increase household incomes, such as ACDI/VOCA's 'Farming is a Family Business' and IFAD's District Livelihoods Support Programme (Farnworth, 2012).
- Toolkits and resources for mainstreaming gender in value chain analysis and market development produced by USAID, ILO, Agri-ProFocus, and the M4P Hub.

Updated reports and resources on these initiatives can be found on the Gender in Value Chain Agri-ProFocus Learning Network (see Website resources at the end of the article).

This article discusses experience using the Gender Action Learning System (GALS), which can be used on its own or integrated with any of the above to increase inclusion, empowerment, and sustainability.

### **Gender Action Learning System: overview of the process**

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GALS is a flexible  
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empowerment  
methodology

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GALS is a flexible but structured community-led empowerment methodology which works with both women and men to help them gain more control over their lives. It is different from many other participatory and gender methodologies in that it starts with women and men as individuals rather than households or communities. It develops skills in life and livelihood planning as the basis for cooperation within households, community collective action, and gender advocacy. After an initial 'catalysing intervention' of 1–2 years it becomes organizationally and financially sustainable through peer dissemination and integration into other interventions and decision-making processes.

GALS originated in a generic methodology: Participatory Action Learning System (PALS), developed from 2002 by the author for livelihood development and participatory impact assessment. From 2004, PALS tools were used for gender analysis and gender planning in India, Pakistan, Sudan, and Kenya. The resources and manuals for this earlier work can be found on the WEMAN Resources website. Funding for PALS as a livelihoods and participatory impact assessment methodology came from Hivos, Trickle-Up US, and Kabarole Research Centre (KRC) in Western Uganda in 2002, and DFID's Enterprise Development Information Assessment Information Service (EDIAIS) (Mayoux, 2006). Adaptation for gender planning was mostly funded by Southern NGOs: ANANDI in India, Learning for Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) in Sudan, and Aga Khan Foundation for work with Pakistan Microfinance Network. PALS tools were also used in gender training with ILO's GOWE project (Mayoux and Mackie, 2009).

The systematization of this experience as GALS to promote women's rights in CEDAW started in December 2007, funded under Oxfam Novib's Women's Employment Mainstreaming and Networking (WEMAN) programme. GALS was then adapted specifically for mainstreaming gender justice in value chain development from August 2009 as part of a joint IFAD and Oxfam Novib (ON) pilot project in Uganda, focusing on coffee, maize, fruits, and beans.

This paper focuses on the experience of two organizations whose farmer members (called entrepreneurs) and staff have been at the forefront of development of the PALS livelihoods methodology since 2004/05 and lead partners in WEMAN since 2007, although most of

the widespread changes discussed here date from the VCD project in August 2009.

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Bukonzo Joint  
Cooperative  
Microfinance  
is a successful  
member-managed  
cooperative

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**Bukonzo Joint Cooperative Microfinance (BJ)** is a successful member-managed cooperative with a well-established savings and credit programme, and profitable coffee marketing. As part of the IFAD/ON value chain project it focused on coffee and maize chains. In July 2012 BJ had 3,237 members: 2,399 women and 838 men, all of whom were using GALS in some form. BJ has organizational regulations on gender balance in senior as well as other positions on the staff and the member board. It also gives preferential conditions to women members in share dividends and savings and credit. Gender awareness is a key consideration in staff recruitment and is under constant review by the member board, but there is no written gender policy or gender-focused staff.

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Green Home  
Women's  
Development  
Association is a local  
community-based  
organization

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**Green Home Women's Development Association (GH)** is a local community-based organization (CBO) with neither an effective microfinance nor marketing organization. In the IFAD/ON project, GH focused on fruits and beans value chains. In 2009 GH had around 1,000 members of whom the majority were women. Gender issues were prominent in organizational documents and at one point there was a written gender policy in English. But most senior staff were men and member involvement in the board was minimal. By the time of writing in 2012 GH was in the process of trying to reinvent itself in the face of (as yet unproven) allegations of mismanagement and malpractice by some senior management and staff. A core of 100 members were in the process of setting up a new organization, New Home Network (NHN), and expanding membership using the GALS methodology.

The methodology, as it was developed and implemented in the organizations discussed here, is summarized in Box 1, and described in detail elsewhere (Mayoux et al., 2011). However, the precise way in which each stage is conducted and the timing of moving from one stage to the next depends on the characteristics of the particular value chain concerned, particularly the length of the chain, types of power relations involved, the amount of knowledge at different levels, and the purpose of the particular intervention.

The first stage of the process is scoping the chains along with the use of adapted value chain mapping tools to identify key stakeholders and key priority starting points based on a gender analysis of existing information. In BJ and GH, value chains were selected through existing meetings with entrepreneur members because of significance in terms of income (coffee, maize, and some fruits), numbers of farmers (coffee and beans), and/or potential for profitable upscaling (maize). BJ and the process consultants already had considerable experience with these chains through other work and their

GALS focuses on underlying gender inequalities in access to power and resources at all levels

**Box 1. Overview of the GALS value chain process**

**Gender justice vision**

A world where women and men are able to realize their full potential as economic, social, and political actors, free from all gender discrimination, for empowerment of themselves, their families, their communities, and global humankind.

**Approach to pro-poor value chain development**

Value chain upgrading to improve incomes for those most vulnerable within the value chain through improvements in quality and/or productivity and/or relations with others in the chain.

Livelihood diversification for those most vulnerable in the chain to improve negotiating power and, if necessary, to enable them to leave the chain.

Focus on underlying gender inequalities in access to power and resources at all levels which constitute discrimination and violation of women’s human rights as well as leading to inefficiencies in household livelihoods at all levels of the value chain.

**GALS stages and tools**

*Stage 1: Preliminary scoping and mapping* to select the value chains, and then for each chain to map the main chain activities, stakeholders, value distribution, governance, and gender inequalities in all these based on existing knowledge and secondary source material.

*Stage 2: Participatory action research* with vulnerable stakeholder groups and, where feasible, more powerful stakeholders, to identify poverty and gender issues at each level, identify immediate change strategies and strengthen collaboration and peer sharing.

Tool 1: Gender balance tree (individual/collective)

Tool 2: Market map (individual/collective)

Tool 3: Income challenge action tree (individual/collective)

Tool 4: Gender challenge action tree (individual/collective)

Tool 5: Individual livelihood and gender road journeys with monitoring calendar

Tool 6: Stakeholder collective road journeys

*Stage 3: Identification, planning, and negotiation of multi-stakeholder win-win strategies* through value chain multi-stakeholder events, resulting in a multi-stakeholder strategic plan towards a vision of common interests.

Tool 7: Multi-stakeholder win-win tree or diamond

Tool 8: Multi-stakeholder win-win road journey

*Stage 4: Sustainable action learning process* through peer upscaling and integration in other interventions. This includes monitoring change through integration of individual and group level learning into management information systems as the basis for policy advocacy and establishment of participatory planning in annual general meetings, value chain fairs, and local government.

clear mandate was to promote their members within these chains. The preliminary mapping was therefore done very quickly through informal meetings with a few key people before moving on to the more participatory and in-depth action learning in Stage 2.

Stage 2 is a longer process with different stakeholder groups who are then brought together to identify win-win strategies in Stage 3. The initial focus is on the most vulnerable stakeholders, particularly women. The aim from the very first session is for individuals to identify immediate strategies which can bring about tangible positive improvements in their lives and livelihoods, to start progress towards their vision. The individual-level tools are also designed to identify immediate steps to address inefficiencies and unnecessary unhappiness caused by gender inequality – for men as well as women. In BJ and GH those trained in initial workshops learned and applied the GALS methodology over a period of about six months for the chain/s in which they were most involved. They then used the same tools to develop strategies in other value chains where they saw potential for profitable livelihood diversification in production and/or trade. Stage 2 involved the range of local chain stakeholders from the beginning because members already knew these people as members of the same families and communities. In the case of coffee, Bukonzo Joint had already made contact with traders up the chain as they were setting up the marketing cooperative. Relationships were characterized by lack of trust and poor communication, and exclusion of women from more profitable activities and trading relationships. This meant that it was easier to bring stakeholders together and discuss common interests in removing misunderstandings and inefficiencies than might initially be the case in other more conflictual chains.

The core of the upscaling process in Stages 2 and 3 is voluntary peer training within families and existing support networks – those receiving training have a personal interest in helping. This includes integration into group meetings and any supply chain training by traders. In both BJ and GH, outreach targets through peer training were consistently exceeded. Many members had trained other members in their households and communities so, although outreach to organization members has been tracked, total outreach is much greater, but not known. The main role for organization staff is support for emerging collective actions on gender issues such as land ownership and gender-based violence, and assigning value to the process through aggregation and dissemination of monitoring information for advocacy. This involves making links as soon as possible with local leaders, local government, and other powerful chain actors in order to promote communication and speed up the development of win-win strategies between stakeholders.

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GALS is self-monitoring from individual level up to organization level as an ongoing learning and reflection process. (A description of the GALS information system can be found in Mayoux, 2012a, b and forthcoming.) Capacity-building and planning workshops are structured to produce reliable quantitative as well as qualitative information for all participants on context, strategies, and changes. Baseline information is collected on the individual diagrams for later aggregation and analysis. Further information on issues where respondents are likely to know and verify information is collected retrospectively. The information is then tracked over time in ways most useful for the empowerment process at individual and group levels. Information from a number of sources is combined in this paper:

- Quantitative and qualitative impact information in Bukonzo Joint on women's land ownership, division of labour, and coffee quality, collected since 2009 and now regularly collected for over 3,500 members and reported back at board meetings as part of their routine planning process.
- Quantified diagram outputs and qualitative information on gender relations and strategies from a series of 10 stakeholder capacity-building and planning workshops in 2009–2010.
- A participatory survey in BJ in February 2010 as part of the peer capacity-building collected information on literacy levels and changes in landholding for 204 men and 296 women.
- Participatory pictorial surveys of changes in income, livelihood diversification, and peer training conducted for 476 participants in the four multi-stakeholder meetings in September 2010.
- Interviews conducted by BJ in 2011 for 2,717 households as part of the organic and fairtrade certification processes.
- Qualitative information on the above from the author's own field notes and reports to Oxfam Novib and IFAD (Reemer and Oxfam Novib, 2011).
- Qualitative information from an eight-day qualitative external study of BJ for Oxfam Novib and GIZ in October 2011 (Farnworth and Akamandisa, 2011). (As is often the case with short studies of this type, the authors missed some important aspects of implementation in Bukonzo Joint. It also conflates the potential of the GALS methodology per se with the ways in which practical implementation was constrained by lack of capital and external funding for the complementary microfinance and coffee marketing. As discussed in more detail elsewhere (Mayoux, forthcoming) these errors make some of the conclusions and recommendations unreliable.)
- Qualitative and quantitative research using GALS tools with GH as well as BJ members in July 2012.



Undoubtedly, much of the information is incomplete and many unanswered questions remain. In what follows, the author analyses the available information in the light of her contextual understanding and in-depth qualitative questioning alongside her long-term support role. The A4 diaries and quantified workshop outputs provide the basis for more rigorous qualitative and quantitative research to be conducted by the organization or external agencies if and when funds are available for such a study.

### Changing gender inequalities makes business sense

Participatory analysis with men as well as women using GALS tools at the initial stakeholder workshops in 2009 identified a clear gender division of tasks, roles, and power. Use of the gender balance tree to analyse work input and expenditures highlighted the conclusion that women did the majority of cultivation work in all crops. In crops such as beans women did all the work apart from preparing land. In coffee-producing households women did about 70 per cent of the main cultivation work and processing tasks such as hulling, alongside cultivation of food crops and unpaid household work.

In about 70 per cent of households, men had migrated to town in search of work. Men were typically only involved in very occasional heavy tasks, coming back to harvest and market the coffee beans when they wanted cash. They 'took' any coffee beans from the trees, drying them on the ground or stored in a sack around the house, sold the them to local buyers (near bars), and used the money for their own purposes (often alcohol or women in town). Seventy per cent of 495 men, followed up through individual research at the time of capacity-building, openly admitted to taking all the money from coffee production, and even stealing their wives' money, wasting much of this on drink and other women. Polygamy (59 per cent of men interviewed in 2009) increased the level of dependency on increasingly fragmented plots of land, and also reduced men's income and labour input into any one household. There was a high level of marital instability, domestic violence (40 per cent of 887 men interviewed), male alcoholism (58 per cent), and drug addiction. In some households, men's expenditure on alcohol in one month was equal to the costs of the school fees for a term.

Women had no power over decision-making because of their economic and social dependence on men and their vulnerable situations. Typically women drew themselves kneeling down in front of their husbands to hand over all their money. Women had the main responsibility for their children and making sure that there was food for the family, including the husband when he was there. This limited their time and mobility to earn an income. When children (or other

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members of the extended family) were sick, women often had to take care and pay for hospital bills or medicines. Women took the main interest in education for their children and could not rely on their husbands to pay the school fees. Relations between co-wives were often very competitive because husbands typically favoured one wife over the other. One wife might work more hours but the husband would tell the other wife to pick the coffee and sell it to buy a nice dress and go to the hairdresser. This instability meant women were also keen to use any means they could to retain control of crops or cash for healthcare and education as well as food.

The market maps showed how the women's role varied between the different crops. In fruits and beans, women were involved in marketing, especially from their homes, along the road, and in village markets. In some households, the men took the fruit and/or beans to market or sold them to male middlemen, and shopkeepers (mostly male) came from neighbouring trading centres to buy fruits from the village. Shops for beans and groundnuts were often owned by women. In coffee, all traders were men except very small-scale women barter-traders, because women had insufficient capital. Their ability to move up the trading chain was seriously constrained by their lack of control over income from the coffee, and lack of savings and access to credit because they did not own land. They also had limited time to spend away from the household to seek out the best prices.

Participatory analysis using the increasing incomes challenge action tree concluded that gender inequalities were not only a problem for women, but a key cause of low productivity, low quality, and low prices at the farm level. In the case of coffee, unripe beans or beans which were not fully processed, or still wet, were frequently sold by both husband and wife even though they fetched a lower price, in order to prevent the other from taking it. Men took any coffee they could when they wanted money – including unripe and unprocessed coffee – before women were able to sell it. Men sold non-harvested coffee in advance, and even the coffee flowers before beans were formed, in order to get cash. Much of the cash was spent in bars conveniently located next to the trader shops. In some cases they did not even tell their wives and the trader simply came and took the coffee. Women, who did most of the work, had little power over decision-making or investment in production or efficient processing such as hulling. Much of the coffee was dried in the dust on the ground leading to mixing with impurities which further reduced the quality. Women said that because their benefits from the work or any investments were limited, their motivation to produce/pick/process good quality coffee was small.

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## Gender inequalities can be changed

The main aim of the GALS process is gender justice and women's human rights as stated in CEDAW, rather than improved quality or productivity of crops per se. As in other methodologies, such as the household approaches of IFAD and ACDI/VOCA, enabling women and men to analyse clearly the negative business consequences of gender inequalities for themselves was a key factor in enlisting broad stakeholder support for a gender justice process. The combination of gender analysis with value chain development promotes the involvement of men as well as women, and this can lead to very significant changes in dimensions of gender inequality which are often considered too 'culturally embedded' or personally sensitive or conflictual to address.

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Both women and men now typically draw themselves sitting on an equal level

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Significant reductions in gender-based violence and increases in women's participation in many areas of decision-making are reported in member diaries, workshop presentations, and testimonies as well as external studies (Farnworth and Akamandisa, 2011). Both women and men now typically draw themselves sitting on an equal level at a table making decisions instead of the earlier images of women kneeling in front of men and handing them all the money. There have been significant reductions in male alcoholism with men now having their own savings or contributing to those of women. Interactive theatre role plays, where couples explore the most significant changes to their relationship as a result of GALS, highlight a change from conflict and mistrust to love and affection.

There have been significant changes in division of labour. These changes have only been monitored for Bukonzo Joint, but anecdotal evidence suggests they have also occurred for members of Green Home. Of 887 men interviewed by BJ in 2009, 55 per cent thought men should not help their wives because of culture. By June 2012, out of 3,568 members and non-members using GALS (in the same 8 out of 13 parishes), 40 per cent (1,435) reported working together across the full range of productive and reproductive tasks, 29 per cent (1,041) reported sharing at least three tasks which had not happened before, and 30 per cent (1,092) were unchanged. These percentages are similar to those in 2011 for 2,717 households interviewed as part of the certification process, indicating a possible levelling off of impact once the receptive households have changed. It may also be that women overstate some changes, and men understate changes in work allocation (Farnworth and Akamandisa, 2011).

What is distinctive about GALS is its ability to bring about very tangible changes in more sensitive and/or conflictual areas such as land ownership. As noted above, the fact that women did not own land was identified early in the GALS VCD process as a cause of family

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## Land ownership is a complex issue

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disunity and hence poor quality coffee. In short-term low investment crops, such as beans, maize, and some fruits, land ownership was less of an issue because women could hire in land and thereby have more control over the proceeds. But in all households, because men owned or controlled the land and had paid a dowry of 12 goats to the woman's father, they considered themselves entitled to control any money in the household and decide how much work they want to put into what activities. Increasing women's ownership and control of land was therefore identified as a high priority, particularly by women.

However, land ownership is a complex issue with differences between clan land (about 80 per cent land) which is governed, but not owned, by male family elders, and land registered to individuals through customary or formal legal arrangements or purchase (see detailed discussion in Farnworth and Akamandisa, 2011). There are also differences in a woman's entitlement to her husband's property depending on religion and type of marriage, with the highest status and entitlement for the minority of women having a church or civil marriage, where in theory women have an equal right to all their husband's property from the day of marriage. In other cases, women have customary access to land for cultivation through their relations with men, who subdivide their plots between wives. On divorce, in theory, women can go back to cultivate land belonging to their parents, though some remain on their husband's property, particularly if many children are involved. There is increasingly intense pressure on land, with rapid population growth creating a trend to formally register plots from clan land as government leases (encouraged by the government). But there is continuing resistance from many clan elders to the fragmentation of clan land as it is supposed to be a safety net for future spouses and generations. They insist that their children should buy their own land rather than taking family land. Local leaders and traders made frequent reference to cultural norms and also to fears that if women could get land from their husbands in their own right, this would lead them into serial marriages with men just to get more land.

This already complex set of rights is further complicated by the fact that each of the land arrangements is interpreted in different ways by local land officials, and actual implementation is very varied and subject to various forms of corruption. Although regulations state that there must be at least two women on local land boards, many of the male land officials were of the (incorrect) opinion that it was illegal for women's names to go on any land agreements, despite the fact they were supposed to have had gender training. Local land boards have no records of women owning land before the start of GALS in 2009, and land officers said that before the lobbying by BJ they had

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not thought of this. Women owned land in only two households out of 419 interviewed by BJ at the beginning of the GALS process in 2009. A number of women had purchased land with loans from GH or BJ, but the land had been registered in the man's name.

As a result of the GALS process, combined with other interlinked strategies by BJ, there have been significant increases in women's land ownership in the area. Firstly, use of the GALS challenge action trees, for individual and collective analysis of the potential benefits of joint ownership of land by men as well as women, started the change in attitudes and behaviour at the household level for a significant number of lead households. Secondly, sustained lobbying of the local authorities and clan elders by staff and members of Bukonzo Joint through the thematic meetings convinced members of the local land board that change was desirable – and even led to dismissal of members of the board judged to be ineffective. Thirdly, in 2011 as part of the fairtrade certification process, BJ decided to encourage the inclusion of women's names on certification documents – not a legally binding document but as a form of awareness-raising to boost the more formal registration process. The passing of the long-awaited Domestic Relations Act in late 2011 may have also boosted the process with some people, though at the time of writing there was very little publicity for the Act in this area, the land official still had no copies, and there had still not been any training for land officials in what the Act means.

By July 2012 out of a total of 3,057 members monitored by BJ, 102 had fully signed joint or individual women's land agreements; and 1,362 had applications in process which had been signed at the local level or by family elders. This covered all members and some non-members reached by GALS in 8 out of 12 parishes covered by BJ. At the time of writing the other four were due to report. So a total of 1,464 or 48 per cent of households had some form of document on women's or joint ownership of land. Joint ownership was further encouraged as part of a certification process in which out of 2,717 households visited, 2,068 had signed joint certification documents and 66 women had individual ownership – a total of 76 per cent. The process was also dynamic with members seeking new solutions where they encountered resistance. For example, in Kanyatsi parish, members discovered that many of them had problems obtaining a land lease. If they applied individually it was difficult to deal with the local government and they had to pay UGS180,000 (US\$70) for any area of land, because of costs related to documents, forms, processing time, etc. They decided to apply for the land lease as a group (10 people) and negotiated with the local government. In the end they paid only UGS67,000 (\$26) each. In Green Home there were also significant changes, and impact trees used in June 2012 indicated

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Many men are at the forefront of working with other men to change behaviours

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that in one group, six out of 24 members had signed land agreements following GALS, one had already signed at an earlier sensitization meeting, and the others were on family land.

Surprisingly these changes have received increasing support from men. The GALS diagrams and testimonies of men provide evidence of why they have changed and men assert that they are much happier now. Many men are also at the forefront of working with other men to change, having set up men's groups to address issues of alcoholism. Male elders and members of the local land boards are now promoting joint registration on land agreements.

### Win-win strategies

A key part of the GALS value chain strategy is to work with more powerful stakeholders and traders up the chain. Gender justice in VCD requires strategies beyond the household level to deal with discrimination within markets, value chains, and support institutions. This discrimination was most evident in the coffee value chain where both women producers and traders were discriminated against in the market, and larger coffee traders from Kasese town or Kampala would not deal with women. Even if women had good quality coffee, they depended on the male village traders for the marketing to Kasese traders, who gave them lower prices for the reasons outlined above. Because the land belonged to their husbands, women were not eligible to join cooperatives (apart from BJ) or receive bank credit and were not targeted in technical training. They had also been excluded from certification processes in the area.

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Rather than seeking to displace traders, the GALS process aims to harness their contributions

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Rather than seeking to displace traders (male or female), the GALS process aims to harness their skills, energies, and resources to develop the markets and chains. From this process it is expected that the traders will themselves gain, and thus be motivated to continue. But through increased demand and competition, coupled with removal of discrimination, benefits will go disproportionately to those most vulnerable in the chain – in this case women producers. As noted above, in all four value chains, local traders, trade associations, and traders from Kasese town were involved in the GALS process very early on.

Men and women traders have voluntarily given up their time to attend the GALS trainings. It quickly became clear from the initial capacity-building workshops with traders that gender inequalities were fundamental to inefficiencies affecting the quality of supply not only in their supplier households, but also in their own households and businesses. In the case of coffee traders, access to capital to buy coffee and time to negotiate with buyers up the chain are necessary to get the best prices and are the main determinants of income. Small

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traders buy coffee with credit from traders higher up the chain. Much of the reason why they sold bad quality coffee and could not earn so much was because they did not have sufficient savings to invest and buy quality coffee in bulk. In order to bulk up the coffee they mixed in impurities, which further added to the bad reputation and low market price of coffee from this area on global markets. The other issue was poor measuring scales, which meant small traders were often cheated. But they also agreed that decreasing their own expenditure on alcohol (in some cases 10 bottles a day costing UGS2,000 each (\$0.78)) would go a long way to boosting the necessary savings to get them out of the cycle of debt to middlemen higher up the chain, and to invest in more reliable weighing equipment and better storage. Between initial workshops in September 2009 and follow-up workshops in December that year, significant changes had occurred in the households of all 14 traders attending the workshop. Some examples are given in Box 2, but these are not unique. All the traders agreed that they would like more gender training, and also business training for their wives so that they could do business together and save to improve their income.

Working with multiple stakeholders has not only benefited participants in the process, but has also led to improvements in the local economy. Before the GALS value chain process, the quality of coffee and other products in the Bukonzo area was extremely low and could only command low prices on the market, and productivity was also

**Box 2. Some examples of changes in gender relations in coffee trader households**

Trader A has three wives, four gardens, and two commercial premises. Before the GALS workshop he bought and did everything without consulting any of his wives. After the workshop he called a meeting with his wives and other clan members, and they made a family agreement that from that time on they would all be sharing. He signed an agreement for one plot of land for each of two wives, and started to purchase a plot for the third wife. He said he used to treat his wives like children, like people who can't think. Now it is much better for him. He feels he has much more freedom. Before he had responsibility for everything and his wives would complain. Now they have their own responsibilities and trust. If there is no money, they understand. He also thinks it is a mistake not to put a wife's name on the land agreements because if he dies then not only his wife, but also his children will suffer because his brothers will take the land.

Trader B did not allow his wife to pick or handle coffee before the September workshop, only cassava, beans, and other food crops. He controlled all the money and spent part of it himself in town. After the workshop he discussed with his wife how to work together. They both take the coffee to the store and his wife now knows exactly how much they have. Ninety per cent of the income is now with her, he no longer spends so much in town, and they have been able to buy a goat (but in his name).



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low. As a result of combined work to reduce the gender-based inefficiencies in decision-making, work allocation, and expenditures at the household level through GALS and the related promotion of technical improvements and Fairtrade linkages, Bukonzo Joint coffee is now ranked third in Uganda for unwashed coffee (druga). Kampala traders are now coming direct to farmers, and prices for farmers have significantly increased relative to world coffee prices. In 2012 BJ was looking to diversify its marketing strategy to include maize and possibly other value chains alongside its successful strategy for exporting Fairtrade and certified organic coffee, having succeeded in combining funding from a range of sources to purchase and install all the coffee-processing equipment planned in the organizational road journey at the beginning of the GALS project. Members of NHN were joining with Bukonzo Joint's Fairtrade marketing in coffee and maize.

Using the same diagram and drawing tools provides a universal language for communication between stakeholders and increases stakeholder participation, as well as cutting through verbose and lengthy definitions and concepts at higher levels. The participatory methodology also develops the analytical, participatory, listening, and communication skills of institutions and policy-makers, to increase the effectiveness of their pro-poor interventions, as well as the personal reflections of staff and planning. The GALS process has led to a mushrooming of information sharing and informal forms of collaboration, and a strengthening of member associations, some of which have been established as a result of the GALS process itself. This is particularly noticeable in the reorganization of GH members as New Home Network, which brings together both producers and traders in beans and fruits. Not only have they developed their own individual plans, but organizational plans too.

### **Some remaining challenges and wider implications**

The experience with GALS reinforces the conclusions of other methodologies that changing gender inequalities and discrimination makes 'business sense' for households, enterprises, and ultimately the local and national economy. Some profound and easily monitored changes in gender inequality can take place relatively quickly, even in households where men have been violent, alcoholic, and adulterous. The explicit and very graphic nature of much of the pictorial information around issues of gender-based violence, alcohol, and prostitution makes it very difficult for people at any level to dismiss gender strategies as externally imposed or 'culturally inappropriate'. Men who are able to address negative dimensions of their 'masculine' role, such as violence and alcoholism, are happier and feel more valued by their families and community. Male as well

as female community leaders can become important promoters of change. Working first with those who are most vulnerable constitutes a powerful start for improving communications between chain actors and chain efficiency, and demonstrates the business case for gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment. Addressing the gender inequalities that cause inefficiencies in livelihoods at many levels of the chain can make a significant contribution to upgrading the whole value chain and developing the local economy.

A distinct advantage in GALS is that once learned, use of the tools in individual diaries and group meetings to analyse, plan, and track progress is cumulative and ongoing. In Stage 4, the methodology becomes organizationally and financially self-sustaining and self-upscaling at different levels – adapted as needed to different purposes and integrated as far as possible into other activities. The same processes and skills can also be integrated to mainstream gender and increase effectiveness in other interventions. In Bukonzo Joint all the costs of GALS capacity building are now covered by the increased profits from microfinance and/or coffee. In NHN there is very little external funding. The considerable skill and initiative which very poor people who cannot read and write demonstrate during this process, and the constructive strategies they propose, are often an eye-opener to other chain stakeholders. Organizational replication is also occurring between CBOs in the local area, generally without external funding, as a result of people's interest in the success cases.

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This is not to say that there are no challenges to be addressed. Firstly, there may be some levelling off of impact in any one community once the members most receptive or in need of change have been reached. A particular challenge is to address the needs of the large numbers of women whose husbands are in polygamous relationships, not only discouraging men from multiple relationships but helping existing polygamous families to reconcile differences and work together so that all wives benefit. Some work has been done on this, but it needs to be more widely upscaled through some readjustment of tools. This may also require some counselling adaptations and newer techniques, such as interactive theatre and participatory video, that may also be useful to regain people's interest (see WEMAN 'Making Gender FUN'). There is a need to further extend and deepen the GALS analysis over the full range of CEDAW rights. Now members and staff are confident with the basic tools, they can use the more advanced diagrams for much more detailed analysis and tracking, and advocacy research (see Mayoux, 2012a, b and forthcoming).

There are signs that commercial success has also led to increasing participation of men, leading in turn to changes in governance. There is a need to revisit BJ's original PALS poverty analysis now that many previously poor members have become better off, to ensure

that poorer people in the community are not being left out and to develop strategies for inclusion. There is anecdotal evidence that where men are elected to leadership positions in primary cooperatives, women are leaving. In addition, men are favouring men in allocation of loans, and are failing to observe the differential policy on shares whereby women currently get 60 per cent and men get 40 per cent. It is increasingly considered unfair that men should be penalized in this way, but the equalization could be made conditional on men producing a legal joint land agreement – that is, equality at home is required before equality in the organization. Similar requirements could also apply to any man standing for elected office within the organization. The earlier idea of a women's coffee cooperative as a specific niche brand could also be reconsidered as a way forward to assist single women – particularly the roasted coffee BJ is able to produce with its new processing equipment.

Some of these challenges are a consequence of constraints under which BJ and NHN are operating rather than GALS per se. Some of these challenges are now addressed in the revised versions of the methodology being used elsewhere (updated Manuals will be available by December 2012 on the WEMAN Resources website). Evidence from replications so far elsewhere in Uganda, Rwanda and Nigeria indicates that significant changes can occur in some people's lives from the first sessions. Peer training is also occurring at a significant rate. It is estimated that in new organizations where there is some sort of group activity through microfinance or cooperatives, adapting and implementing the methodology as it now stands would take about two years. This does, however, inevitably depend on the levels of organizational commitment to both gender justice and a community-led process, and their willingness to follow up on governance and advocacy issues, such as land, which emerge from the GALS process.

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Evidence from replications indicates that significant changes can occur in some people's lives from the first sessions

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## Websites

Gender in Value Chain Agri-ProFocus Learning Network:  
<http://genderinvaluechains.ning.com>

ILO: [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org)

M4P Hub: <http://m4phub.org>

MEDA's work in Pakistan: [www.meda.org.pk/meda-donors/usaids-pakistan](http://www.meda.org.pk/meda-donors/usaids-pakistan)

WEMAN Resources: [www.wemanresources.info](http://www.wemanresources.info)