

C:AVA

Cassava: Adding Value for Africa



GENDER AND DIVERSITY AUDIT - GHANA

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Executive summary

Cassava: Adding Value to Africa (C:AVA) is a four year project aimed at creating sustainable and equitable high quality cassava flour (HQCF) value chains and thereby improving the livelihoods and incomes of smallholder households and partners in micro, small and medium scale enterprises. The project is committed to mainstreaming gender issues and social inclusion throughout its activities, emphasising equitable distribution of benefits, participation, and the empowerment of women and disadvantaged groups.

As part of this commitment to equitable project activities, the Gender and Diversity Audit was conducted with C:AVA partners to inform all project objectives. The objective of the Gender and Diversity Audit was to identify how partners think and how they do things regarding gender and diversity. This is to help ensure that the impacts of the project are equitable, that opportunities are promoted for different groups and that adjustments are made to encourage participation at all points along the value chain.

Organisational management

The staff self-assessment of their organisations revealed that staff were generally positive about their organisations and felt that they performed well in most activities, especially their reporting. Incentives were the area that required the most improvement for all partners. Other findings were:

- NGOs particularly needed to improve their organisational policies, learning and external policy influence
- Public extension also needed to improve its organisational policies, external policy influence and financial management
- The research institution needed to improve its communication and governance systems
- All service providers required improvement in their monitoring systems.

There were some differences between organisations in their areas of strength and weakness, which highlight possibilities for shared learning that the country team could facilitate. Constraints to improving organisational performance and meeting C:AVA objectives were lack of mobility, particularly for female staff, lack of funding and unsupportive government policies.

Recommendations for organisation management are to promote shared learning between partners through increased interaction and mentoring opportunities, and increasing both monetary and non-monetary support for staff. Capacity building should also be conducted in advocacy, sourcing funds and communication in order to overcome organisational constraints. C:AVA will also need to strengthen monitoring systems to ensure that data is collected in a comprehensive manner that continually inform project progression.

Providing equal opportunities and promoting equality

Partners had a good understanding of equal opportunities and there was evidence of equitable organisational cultures. However, organisations lacked policies that support equality and had difficulty recognising subtle types of discrimination. Generally, there was low representation of female staff in some partner organisations, which staff reported was due to: women excluding themselves from the agricultural sector because it is perceived to be a masculine sector, male-bias in recruitment procedures and female stereotyping. Cassava processing enterprises had very few women working in permanent positions, management positions or operating

machinery. Partners were generally resistant to using affirmative action to rectify inequalities as it was felt to conflict with a merit-based approach to employment.

Recommendations include improving organisations' understanding of equality and their ability to identify more nuanced forms of discrimination, and for organisations to establish and observe equal opportunities policies and target employment for underrepresented groups, particularly women. This will help to improve services for all existing and potential beneficiaries. Monitoring staff and client characteristics should be undertaken, particularly in larger organisations, to identify progress over time. In operations, organisations should also develop comprehensive monitoring arrangements of their programmes including quick assessment tools and qualitative methods. Service providers also are encouraged to broaden their criteria for participation in their activities to expand the reach of services to people experiencing poverty.

Awareness and responsiveness to practical gender needs

Partners had a good understanding of the concept of gender and practical gender needs; however, it was easier for staff and management to apply the concept in field activities than within their organisations. There were a number of areas that female staff felt that their practical needs were not being addressed in the workplace, such as long working days, inadequate employment benefits and travel requirements. Some staff also felt that their organisations did not always comply with gender-sensitive behaviour. However, some organisations did exemplify good practice, such as providing options for flexible working (albeit informally), partnering female and male colleagues to travel together and situating female staff to work in areas close to home.

Operationally, service providers have instituted a number of programmes that addressed the practical needs of women in agriculture, including the provision of credit and health-related support as well as formation of women's processing groups. Partners were aware of the different approaches needed for men and women and often worked with male and female groups separately to provide women more opportunities to participate. The research institution and some partners were developing and using gender-friendly technologies; however, it is questionable if service providers have the capacity or resources to distribute new technology as part of C:AVA. Women in farmer associations reported they were limited in supplying cassava processing enterprises with cassava due to lack of equipment, capital, labour and time.

Overall, organisations need to improve their application of gender and equality concepts, and capacity building is required. Organisations also need to offer more favourable conditions of work for women that address practical gender needs, such as childcare, flexible working, gender-friendly transportation and training women to drive motorbikes. The country team will need to support relationships between cassava processing enterprises and farmers and assist cassava processing enterprises in meeting farmer needs. This is particularly important for women who may experience exclusion from benefits with a change to wet cake supply, as their roles are more limited in this product than compared with chips. In partners' field operations, practical gender needs should be considered in all field operations, acknowledging women's multiple roles, needs and time limitations. Gender-friendly technology should also be promoted to reduce time burdens and increase women's productivity for C:AVA.

Impact on women's strategic needs and women's empowerment

There was a general understanding of women's empowerment and strategic gender needs among partners. However, there was some resistance to the concept and lack of concrete approaches. Nevertheless, partners felt that their activities were having an impact on women's empowerment, particularly in regards to poverty reduction, social status and women's leadership and entrepreneurship. However, it was more common for organisations to work within the status quo, such as by employing women in stereotypically female areas such as horticulture, home economics, processing etc. Positively, there was evidence of good representation of women at decision making levels where women can participate more strategically. In field operations, in contrast, partners working with communities only through community leaders may have the consequence of reinforcing inequality by excluding some individuals and/or groups.

Recommendations include developing a gender strategy by establishing an approach to gender and mainstreaming it, which can be developed with assistance from other C:AVA partner organisations or women's organisations. An increase women's representation in management and leadership positions, particularly in male-dominated sectors, and in the C:AVA project as a whole are also recommended. The C:AVA country team should reflect on its processes for selecting service providers and undertake capacity building in gender issues for a greater impact. In field activities, technology ownership should be encouraged among women by providing them with sufficient credit. Men should be encouraged to participate in socially driven projects to promote sharing responsibility. Women should be exposed to new skills (such as entrepreneurial, literacy and value addition skills) to reduce structural barriers women experience in rural areas. Partners need to develop gender indicators to measure the impact of activities on women and changes in women's employment and to appropriately use the information gathered. Female role models should be encouraged and good practice communicated to the public.

Awareness and responsiveness to key diversity issues

Partners had a low awareness of diversity as a social concept but a high appreciation for the insight it provides. Some partners were addressing key diversity issues, but there was a perception that it could run contrary to a merit-based approach. In field activities, service providers were participating in activities that address diversity issues, especially with regards to youth with the aim to reduce urban migration, but staff feel this can be improved as other diversity issues may be overlooked. Finally, monitoring and evaluation was not undertaken in a systematic way with regards to diversity.

Recommendations include improving the understanding and application of a diversity perspective in organisations and field activities. Partners should a) investigate how their organisations and programmes are currently reaching out to different groups and address issues that arise from these, b) develop an organisational approach and policies where diversity issues are defined and can be addressed and measured, c) develop a list of organisations and contacts from different diverse groups to draw upon expertise when required, and d) ensure staff are equipped with conflict resolution skills. In field operations, they should address issues of non-indigenes, various faith groups, disabled people and youth. Research institutions should also investigate technologies or modifications to existing technology that work well for groups such as the disabled, or blind, and use them to facilitate income generating activities.

Enabling participation

There was a good understanding of participation and recognition of its importance among partners, but it was not mainstreamed in all organisations. Internally, organisational participation was mainly conducted through staff meetings and exposure and networking with external organisations. The majority of staff felt that the opinions and views of women and diverse groups were sought out; however, there could be more strategic attention to gender and diversity. In field work, staff used a range of methods and approaches to enhance participation in their field activities and felt it was much easier to think about participation in the field. Service providers incorporated methods that increased women's participation in their activities, such as working with women's groups and setting targets for women's participation. However, women face a number of barriers to participation such as illiteracy, lack of control over resources, gender stereotypes, and lack of trust of development workers. Staff require capacity building in different participatory approaches that include attention to issues of access, control and power, and barriers that prevent people from participating.

Recommendations include developing an organisational participatory approach and increasing staff understanding of participatory methods in complex social circumstances. Cassava processing enterprises should help support a vibrant supplier group that will provide opportunities for participation of women, men and the socially excluded. Current approaches should be adjusted to address issues of access and inequality. Barriers to participation for women should be addressed, such as childcare responsibilities. Participatory evaluations should be conducted on a regular basis and community monitoring committees should be developed in all work areas.

Innovation

Innovation was largely understood as the production and introduction of new technologies, which was an essential part of most partners' work, but innovation as a concept should be extended to include processes of shared learning between organisations. Partners were using innovative methods in their day to day work and in addressing practical and strategic gender needs. Knowledge sharing and innovation also occurred between C:AVA partnerships, but there was some tension between partners and outside donors, and internally in organisations between academic research departments and extension services. Other barriers to innovation include lack of incentives, lack of ownership and rigid management structure. NGOs were particularly innovative in field activities, which is most likely due to their independence from Government and a more flexible structure they operate.

Recommendations are for partners to improve their understanding of 'innovation systems', where innovation is more a process of information sharing and building, than about new inventions. Staff should be encouraged to innovate through skill building, confidence building and incentives. Effective partnerships should be created and maintained, particularly between research, field operations and C:AVA partners. Staff should be given greater ownership of budgets and projects.

Strategy

The Gender and Diversity Strategy of the C:AVA Project includes the following activities:

1. Gender Learning Network: shared learning with Gender Specialist
2. Awareness, leadership and partnership: learning for country team and partners on gender and diversity, with establishment of Gender Champions and Subject Champions

3. Strategy development and prioritisation of recommendations for partners
4. Field learning network: Skill-set development in field-based strategies
5. Organisational learning network: web-based capacity building for organisations
6. Monitoring partner improvement



1. Introduction

Cassava: Adding Value to Africa (C:AVA) is a four year project aimed at creating sustainable and equitable high quality cassava flour (HQCF) value chains and thereby improving the livelihoods and incomes of smallholder households and micro, small and medium scale enterprises.

The project is committed to mainstreaming gender issues and social inclusion throughout its activities, emphasising equitable distribution of benefits, participation, and the empowerment of women and disadvantaged groups. While this is an important end in itself, it is also a means to ensure project efficiency, sustainability and viability (World Bank 2006).

As part of this commitment to equitable project activities, the Gender and Diversity Audit was conducted with C:AVA partners to inform all project objectives. A Gender and Diversity Audit is a type of social audit that is used to analyse organisational culture, technical capacity, policies and practices in order for partners to develop more sensitive practices and structures.

Objective

The objective of the Gender and Diversity Audit is to identify how partners think and how they do things regarding gender and diversity. This is to help ensure that the impacts of the project are equitable, that opportunities are promoted for different groups and that adjustments are made to encourage participation at all points along the value chain. The idea is not to impose ideas but rather explore opportunities for C:AVA partners to meet project goals.

Purpose

The purpose of the gender and diversity audit is to:

- identify good practice and areas for improvement in gender and diversity
- identify the training and capacity strengthening needs of partners to address gender and diversity issues in their work
- provide accessible and understandable results
- provide a baseline for monitoring and evaluation
- be participatory and encourage ownership
- inform overall activities in the C:AVA project

C:AVA partners

The gender and diversity audit was conducted with local service providers (government and non-government), cassava processing enterprises, and learning institutions). Due to the considerable diversity among the partners, the Gender and Diversity Audit was conducted in a flexible manner.

This report attempts to discuss general performance of partners and identify issues that can be addressed through C:AVA. However, each partner had very different mandates and structures, which posed some difficulties in terms of writing an overall report on findings in their organisational mandates and structure, which poses some difficulty in reporting on the general findings. Therefore there are some exceptions to the findings in which qualifiers, such as 'some', 'few' or 'many' partners, are used to flag this issue.

In this report, C:AVA partners will be referred to as 'partners', which includes NGOs, public sector extension support, private sector cassava processing enterprises and learning institutions. The term 'service providers' refers to NGOs and public sector extension support.

The main service provider organisations are: those connected with the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA), including the Volta and Brong Ahafo MOFA Directorates; NGOs and civil society organisations, such as Christian Rural Action Network (CRAN), Christ Apostolic Agency for Relief and Development (CAARD), Progressive Youth and Community Development (PROYCOD), Social Development and Improvement Agency (SODIA), and one learning institution, which is also the C:AVA implementing agency, the Food Research Institute (FRI).

Approach

The analytical approach to the C:AVA gender and diversity audit will include equal attention to structures (rules, policies, leadership) and power relationships (discourses, language, symbols) in performance areas. This will help to identify both explicit and implicit opportunities and constraints to achieving equality. Importantly, the audit approach is non-judgemental. As was the case in the gender audit of DfID Rwanda (2008), a partnership approach will help encourage debate, discussion and shared learning. This contrasts to other audits that establish an ideal type to measure performance against. As such, a broad understanding of the concepts is utilised to be responsive to the context of each partner.

The analytical framework utilised for the gender aspects have been informed by literature on gender analysis frameworks, particularly Moser (1987, 1989 and 1993) and Kabeer (2001). These frameworks emphasise practical and strategic gender needs and women's empowerment in overcoming poverty, which are helpful to identify gender priorities and their impact. These frameworks are also reflected in the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Gender Strategy and C:AVA project objective one.

The approach to diversity was to examine areas of social difference (including age; class; ethnicity; religion; disability; national origin; language) and how partners responded to issues and needs that arise due to these differences.

Participation and innovation are included within the overall approach to bring additional context to Gender and Diversity Audit. Participation is widely accepted as being an intrinsic part of development processes and business innovation. Participation in socio-economic and political life is also a crucial tool for achieving greater equality, overcoming poverty and gender equality (Sen, 2001; Chambers, 2007). Participation is therefore is a key element of partner's performance.

Innovation is included as part of the audit in order to gauge partner performance in responding to a rapidly changing environment. New constraints and opportunities are continually arising and require new methods for understanding and addressing differences. In this context, innovation is examined through a gender and diversity lens to identify the extent to which partners create an equitable environment for new ideas to be realised. Analysis will include an 'innovation systems' approach that will examine the extent to which innovation is stimulated through communication (Hall et al., 2004). This will highlight innovative work of partners in gender and diversity, and how it is used, transferred and built-on by partners.

Performance

The approach of the Gender and Diversity Audit is to measure partner performance in six gender and diversity areas, as described below. The performance areas reflect overall project objectives, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Gender Strategy, and have been informed by a review of academic and grey literature on gender and social audits.

Performance areas:

- Providing equal opportunities and promoting equality
- Awareness and responsiveness to practical gender needs
- Impact on strategic gender needs and women's empowerment
- Awareness and responsiveness to key diversity issues
- Enabling participation
- Innovation

The performance areas are interrelated and mutually dependent; therefore, references are therefore added to related chapters to signpost some of the areas that overlap.

Each performance area or chapter is split into an 'Organisation' and 'Operations' section. The design highlights the dual roles of partners in operational activities (services it provides or goods it produces) and as an organisation (employer). Findings from cassava processing enterprise organisations will be presented in the organisational section, as they are not engaging in service delivery at the field level.

Methods

Based on the lessons learned from previous social audits (Underwood, 2000), the methodology for the C:AVA gender and diversity audit attempts to triangulate evidence and include both internal and external evaluation. This will ensure that the data obtained is reliable, and reflects both tangible and intangible gender and diversity aspects. However, because the gender and diversity audit is conducted with a wide range of partners with various structures and levels of participation in the C:AVA project, the methodological tools were used flexibly but the audit team put in an effort to make the results as comparable as possible.

A key point of clarity in conducting the audit is to clearly establish the level at which the audit was conducted in partner organisations. This is because some of the stakeholders have only a few staff dedicated to the C:AVA project; they are large bodies and have alternative demands to C:AVA. To overcome this, the scope was limited in the organisational sphere to a sample of staff that are most relevant to C:AVA. This is to ensure that the audit is reflective of the resources, remit and responsibilities of all those involved.

The methodological tools, their scope and the staff interacted with are tabulated below:

Methodological tools	Who	Description
Document review	Service providers, cassava processing enterprises, country lead	All available strategies, policies, learning material, reports and evaluations relevant to gender and diversity.

One-to-one interviews	Service providers, Cassava processing enterprises, country lead	Interview with C:AVA managers and/or strategic, operational and human resource management staff.
Focus groups	Service providers	Approximately two discussion groups with C:AVA staff, separated by sex where numbers were large enough (over 2 women).
Self-assessment questionnaire	Service providers, cassava processing enterprises	Self- assessment questionnaire distributed to a sample of staff and management.. The sample consisted of those who participated in the interviews and discussion groups, and anyone else showing interest in completing the questionnaire. Questions rating performance on a scale of one to five.

Structure of Report

This report presents an analysis of gender and diversity issues with C:AVA partners in two regions in Ghana: Volta and Brong Ahafo regions. It includes service providers (government and non government), private sector cassava processing enterprises and learning institutions. Each section considers the current understanding of performance areas among staff and management, identifies trends in the organisational and operational spheres and summarises recommendations for C:AVA partners. The analysis draws on the issues raised in the Gender and Diversity Scoping Study.

Where relevant, the chapters are split into organisational and operational sections to distinguish between the two spheres. The report starts with a short chapter on the findings from the organisational analysis conducted with staff, which identified strengths and areas for improvement for C:AVA partners. This is followed by six chapters, which are based on the six performance areas. An analysis of the capacity strengthening needs is provided, followed by recommendations for C:AVA partners.



2. Organisational analysis

An organisational analysis identifies how organisations meet their set objectives. Various elements that make up an organisation, such as governance, planning, incentives or reporting, are examined to determine overall organisational performance. The organisation's strengths and areas for improvement are made explicit so appropriate actions can be taken. This chapter examines service providers' organisational management performance based on the views of staff and management. The box below indicates key findings.

Key findings

- Staff were positive about their organisations and felt that they performed well in most activities, particularly reporting for all service providers. This will be important for C:AVA to draw on as the project progresses.
- Incentives were the area that required the most improvement for all service providers. For NGOs, they also needed to improve policy/policy influence and learning; public extension needed to improve policy/policy influence, financial management; the research institution needed to improve communication and governance.
- There were a few opportunities for shared learning, such as in organisational learning and communication.
- The major constraints for service providers were lack of funding and unsupportive government policies, which could hinder meeting C:AVA objectives in the future. Subsequently, service providers felt that they needed to strengthen their capacity in advocacy, sourcing funds and communication, in order to attract more funding and be more influential.
- Lack of mobility was one of the most pertinent constraints that service providers face, especially female staff in carrying out C:AVA objectives in the future. Partners

Organisational performance

In order to access views on organisational performance, service provider staff were asked what they thought was done well in their organisations and what needed improvement. There were given a list of ten organisational aspects as asked to pick their top three of what was being done well and what needed improvement. Overall, there was a general trend among staff that their organisations performed well in most activities and there were few areas that needing improvement. There were also differences between organisations' strengths and areas for improvement, most prominently between NGOs, a research institution and public extension organisations.

What is being done well

An exercise was conducted with staff to identify the areas of their organisations that were done well and that needed improvement. There were differences between NGOs, public extension organisations and a research institution in what was being done well in. The table below reveals that all service providers felt that their reporting processes were done well in their organisations, revealing that organisations have some effective systems in place. Other strengths reported by NGOs were management and monitoring, whereas public extension and learning institutions selected learning, and planning and advisory roles respectively.

Table 1 What was being done well in service provider organisations

NGOs	Public extension	Research Institutions
Reporting: regular reporting system, way to identify achievements and problems, ensures transparency, can lead to addressing issues, way to share information effectively	Reporting: monthly, quarterly, mid-year and annual reports are prepared and collated at the district and regional levels that form basis for national level reporting.	Reporting: part of key outputs, how staff are assessed, reports are influential, communicated effectively.
Management: supportive, establishes direction through planning, good internal communication with management, no bureaucracy, shared responsibility	Learning: regular training, staff meetings allow for shared learning, also conducts training for clients.	Learning: options for further study, library access, internet access, regular seminars, networking.
Monitoring systems: regular meetings, participatory approaches, management oversight.	Planning: central to conducting their activities, developed on a weekly, monthly and annual basis, helps staff to identify priorities and targets, inter-sectoral planning also takes place.	Advisory roles: provide advices through summary reports and training programmes, advise Government ministries, such as for the development of the National Strategy on Rice Production.

The table below further explores staff and management perceptions of organisational performance, based on a self-assessment questionnaire distributed to a sample of individual staff members. Overall, the findings were positive. The ability of the organisation as a whole to meet priorities, goals and objectives were rated highly, where 73 per cent felt it was 'good'. The level of human and physical resources was rated slightly lower but still positive, where the majority felt it was 'good' but 40 per cent of staff felt it was 'satisfactory'. Transparency and honesty showed similar results (42 per cent of staff felt it was 'satisfactory' and 33 felt it was 'good') however a significant portion felt it was also 'excellent' (21 per cent).

Table 2: Areas doing well, % of staff ratings of organisational areas

	Ability to meet priorities, goals and objectives	Human & physical resources	Transparency & honesty
Very poor	2	0	0
Poor	2	3	5
Satisfactory	16	40	41
Good	73	52	33
Excellent	8	5	21
Total individuals	62	60	61

Note: The figures may not add to 100 per cent due to rounding.

What needs to be improved

There were also differences in what areas needed improvement in NGOs, public extension organisations and research institutions. Overall, incentives were the area most often cited by staff as an area for improvement, as almost all staff felt that they were not fairly remunerated for their work. Staff felt that they wanted greater remuneration and benefits in general support, allowances, mobility, insurance and safety. It is interesting that most of the requests staff made were items that should be provided by organisations as they are necessary for staff to conduct their work.

NGOs felt that their policy and policy influence needed improvement, along with learning. Public extension services felt they needed to improve their policy influence and policy structure, followed by financial management. Finally, the research institution felt that their communication skills and governance structure required improvement. Interestingly, most of the cited areas for improvement are in the systems and structures category.

Table 3 Things to be improved by partner type

NGOs	Public extension	Research Institutions
Incentives: Recognition, encouragement for extra work and overtime, leading to high staff turnover, little negotiation or bargaining power, lack of staff rights.	Incentives: greater remuneration and benefits (e.g. allowances, mobility, insurance and safety), logistics such as tapes and computers.	Incentives: for motivation
Policies/policy influence: lack of continuity due to changing government policy.	Policy/policy influence: difficult to manage change in policy, need for women friendly logistics policies (e.g. motorbikes are difficult to use for women), lack of staff participation in policy.	Communication: management, other staff and public lack knowledge on what other departments are working on, internal and external communication need improvement, such as a greater number of seminars and incentives for staff to participate.
Learning: lack of training for staff, need for updating skills.	Financial management: lack of funds and stretched resources.	Governance: staff views are not always communicated to governing body, governing body is not linked with organisation adequately.

The self-assessment questionnaire revealed three other aspects that need to be improved in organisations. Firstly, it reiterates the problem staff have with lack of incentives and motivations and conditions of work, where 32 per cent of staff rated it 'poor'. Ratings of the working environment for staff were worse, where 58 per cent of staff rated it 'poor', and 59 per cent felt that funds and resources were satisfactory.

Table 4: Areas for improvement, % of staff ratings for organisational areas

	Funds & resources	Motivation, incentives, work conditions for staff	Safe & positive work environment and staff
Very poor	2	3	0
Poor	20	32	58
Satisfactory	59	52	31
Good	20	10	5
Excellent	0	3	6
Total individuals	61	63	59

Note: The figures may not add to 100 per cent due to rounding.

Another area that requires improved for C:AVA programme in Ghana is monitoring systems. While it is evident that C:AVA can draw upon existing systems to monitor project impact, there needs to be improvements. For most service providers, the primary purpose of monitoring was to identify if staff were doing their work and clients were contributing to activities, such as through loan repayments.

“Yes we monitor because they may not pay or group leaders may mismanage funds. We give a simple format to report with” (female programme manager, NGO).

There were differences between service providers for example. One NGO had more detailed baseline to post-project evaluation processes, but felt it could be improved upon. Monitoring in public extension organisations seemed to be completed regularly, through monthly field visits.

However, in organisations where there monitoring did take place there was little evidence of activities and information being linked between monitoring and evaluation and staff extension workers. There was also a lack of monitoring plans, where a strategy is clearly identified with an explanation of what is to be monitoring, and by what indicators, how often, who by etc.

There were some barriers that staff experienced in conducting comprehensive monitoring and evaluation. For example, staff felt that changing priorities and policies affected their long-term ability to monitor of impact. Another barrier was the lack of staff skills in monitoring and evaluation at the field level and having dedicated staff to conduct these activities.

Opportunities for shared learning

Based on the strengths and weakness of partners there are some opportunities for shared learning. These are as follows:

- The research institution could provide advisory support to other providers who felt it needed improvement in their organisations.
- One NGO felt they had excellent communication systems, which could be drawn upon by other service providers.
- Learning methods were utilised well in research institutions and public extension services, which could be shared with NGOs.

Key barriers to improving performance

Financial resources: service providers and cassava processing enterprises stated that lack of financial resources was a severe constraint on their work and will affect achieving C:AVA objectives. Specific areas requiring capacity, such as staff development, mobility, equipment, ICT and incentives, all require greater financial resources. The reasons given for financial difficulty included: a decrease in funding from Government due to declining interest in agriculture and overly bureaucratic funding applications. These experiences have had negative consequences for partners, not only in terms of limiting their activities, but in some cases it has demoralised staff, who feel that their achievements go unrecognised. As a result, service providers felt that they are likely to become more reliant on external funding, in which they would need capacity strengthening in writing research proposals, searching for opportunities, marketing their organisation and in maintaining their independence from donors in their overall agenda.

Lack of continuity of government policy: the lack of continuity in federal policy on cassava, and agriculture more generally, was another significant constraint for partners. Partners feel there has been a move away from agriculture, and that strong advocacy was needed to encourage Government to support the cassava industry.

Mobility: mobility was one of the most pertinent issues that partners face and can affect the delivery of C:AVA objectives and for the organisation as a whole. Staff felt that there were not enough vehicles or motorbikes to conduct necessary field visits, they were not being paid transportation costs, and often had to use their own transportation. In addition, the majority of service providers did not have insurance for field staff and in some cases they did not have adequate protective gear, leading to feelings of insecurity in the field. Staff reported that they worked late hours and would often travel home in the dark, which may be a deterrent, especially for women, in participating in agricultural extension work.

Recommendations

Shared learning should be promoted between partners based on their strengths and weaknesses. In particular, public extension services could provide support to others in communication methods, NGOs on policy influence and learning institutions on learning.

- Increase support for staff through incentives, positive feedback and greater independence.
- As a priority, partners should undertake capacity building in advocacy skills, sourcing funds and communication skills to attract more funding.
- There is a need to develop monitoring and evaluation systems to determine what has been achieved, what the gaps are and the extent of impact of interventions on the various groups.
- Processes should also be put in place to disseminate information from the monitoring and evaluation team throughout organisations.
- The country team will particularly need to support service providers in monitoring and evaluation as a priority.
- C:AVA should play a role as a group to advocate to the government.

3. Providing equality of opportunities and promoting equality

Providing equality of opportunities and promoting equality relates to the ways that organisations enable opportunities, access and participation in their organisations. This impacts on livelihoods of staff and their clients and creates benefits to organisations such as meeting legal requirements and donor expectations; using labour more efficiently and contributing to community and personal development. Unfortunately, however, disparities exist in all societies in terms of access to income and resources, ownership, employment, safety and security, mobility, decision-making, discrimination and violence. These disparities often form along lines of social difference, particularly gender, age and tribe in Ghana. This chapter will examine these issues in the context of the capacity of C:AVA partners' capacity to provide and promote equality of opportunities for their staff (organisation) and clients (operations).

Key findings

- Overall, partner staff and management had a very good understanding of equal opportunities in the workplace and field activities. For example, one NGO had developed and implemented a comprehensive equal opportunities policy and another two NGOs were taking affirmative action to increase the number of women in their organisations.
- The majority of service provider staff felt that there were equal opportunities in their organisations and that they were treated fairly. However, for most organisations this was not reflected in organisational policy. The organisational culture was supportive and partners were open to improving their practices.
- Management and operational staff generally need to take a more critical look at their organisations to examine formal and informal work practices to identify more subtle types of discrimination.
- There was low representation of female staff within partner organisations, which was due to a number of factors including: women self-excluding due to the perceived masculine nature of the agricultural sector, male-bias in recruitment procedures, female stereotyping and gender inequality.
- Some partners, particularly public extension organisations and NGOs, had difficulty retaining women in their workforce. This could be due to a lack of attention to practical and strategic gender needs.
- Cassava processing enterprises had very few women working in permanent positions or operating machinery, but managers were open to changing their practices through the insight gained with the Gender and Diversity Audit activities.
- Partners felt that equal opportunities were provided to their clients as there were no eligibility criteria for activities that would constrain participation. Most partners also had provisions to encourage women to participate such as targets and female extension staff, who clients were more comfortable interacting with.
- There was a considerable degree of variance among partners on the quality of monitoring and evaluation they were conducting. Generally, there was a lack of monitoring for equality issues and linking findings to programme change.

Organisation

Understanding and application of equal opportunities

Generally, partners, both staff and management, had a very good understanding of equal opportunities in the workplace and field activities. Staff understood equal opportunities as being most relevant in recruitment, promotion and treatment of staff within their organisations. In field activities, partners felt that equal opportunities was most pertinent in terms of accessing services. Partners also felt that gender was a significant feature in inequality, as women were often discriminated against though there were barely explicit policy guidelines on reaching out to women.

The majority of partners (eight out of nine) did not have equal opportunities policies or strategies in place that stated their understanding and approach. However, one NGO had done this, and stated that:

“Men and women should access and control resources equally, have equal participation in decision making, have equality under the law and autonomy to make life choices free from violence” (male NGO Director).

In this example, the organisation had collected a large amount of gender-related data displayed on their office walls to be a constant reminder to staff that gender is a core issue to the organisation.

There was a general agreement among partners that providing equal opportunities in practice meant non-discrimination. Most partners wanted to distance themselves from affirmative action policies, as they felt that this would threaten a competence-based recruitment model. However, two NGOs were taking affirmative action to increase the number of women in their organisation and field activities that had been successful in reaching out to a greater number of female clients.

Organisational culture

The majority of service provider staff felt that there were equal opportunities in their organisations and they were treated fairly. In fact, approximately 97 per cent of staff and management felt that their organisation was very supportive of women and minority groups. Even when women (or men) were a very small minority in their organisation, staff still felt that they were treated equally and worked well together.

Table 5: Do you think your organisation is fair and provides equal opportunities for women and disadvantaged groups?

	Female %	Male %	Total %
Strongly disagree	4	0	2
Disagree	4	0	2
Agree	65	56	60
Strongly agree	26	44	37

Total count: 23 females, 29 males.

Numbers may not add to 100 per cent due to rounding

There were no reports of discrimination based along gender or tribal lines within the organisations; however, some staff felt that favouritism existed, as Table 6 below illustrates.

Table 6: Does preferential treatment, favouritism etc. take place in your organisation on the basis of someone’s personal characteristics?

	Female %	Male %	Total %
Often	0	5	3
Sometimes	33	21	25

One Occasion	0	5	3
Never	67	68	68

Total count: 21 females, 38 males.

Numbers may not add to 100 per cent due to rounding

The organisational culture of partners generally seemed supportive of equal opportunities in their organisations, and they were very open to change and improving their practices. A respondent remarked:

“Women feel equal. If you have the qualifications you could be a manager, whoever you are” (female extension agent).

Because so few partners had equality policies in place, it is noted that the opportunities that are provided are due to the informal culture of the organisation. However, management and operational staff of partner organisations generally did not take a more critical look at their organisations to examine formal and informal work practices which would identify more subtle types of discrimination. For example, the lack of women-friendly transportation methods or holding meetings after office hours when most women have domestic responsibilities. Culture is dynamic and can shift and change quickly; therefore, it is important for policies to be established to provide the foundation of equal opportunities. All partners may therefore want to consider developing equal opportunities policies to formalise the responsibilities of staff and management, and to establish procedures and consequences for inappropriate actions.

Low representation of women

Despite the opinion of partners that they provided equal opportunities in their workplace, the majority of organisations had a low representation of women in their workforce. This is true for the learning institution, public extension organisations and even to some extent, NGOs, although they are performing slightly better. While the representation of women among staff was different for each C:AVA partner; the number of women staff generally could be improved (refer to the table below).

Table 7 Percentage of female staff in partner organisations

Institution type	% of females among core staff
Learning/research institution	29
Public extension service 1	16
Public extension service 2	16
NGO 1	10
NGO 2	50
NGO 3	40
NGO 4	50
NGO 5	17
Cassava processing enterprise 1	27 (Factory and executive staff); 100 (causal workers)
Cassava processing enterprise 2	10 (Factory and executive staff); 90% (causal workers)
Cassava processing enterprise 3	71 (Factory and executive staff); 100 (causal workers)

Note: Some of these figures are based on estimates

The low representation of women in partner organisations was said to be due to a number of factors, which include: women self-excluding due to the perceived masculine nature of the agricultural sector, male-bias in recruitment procedures and female stereotyping.

The majority of partners felt that women were self-excluding from agriculture and factory work because it was considered 'male' in Ghanaian society. This was particularly true among young women graduates. Female extension workers felt that young women needed to be courageous in order to work in agriculture because of this.

"I sometimes wish more women will apply but they do not" (male NGO Director.)

"It is about courage. Women are not going to school in agriculture because there is a perception that the work is for men" (female extension agent).

The lack of women recruited to organisations however could be due to the lack of strategic attention to recruiting female staff. To improve women's representation in the workforce, there is a need for targeted recruitment of women, such as posting job advertisements in areas frequented by women or adding the statement 'women are encouraged to apply' on job adverts. Secondly, the job advertisements should include how the organisation will address the needs of female employees, such as by providing posts that are close to the home or that they will receive drivers training. Other partners who have been successful at recruiting women could also share their methods with other partners, as exemplified by one NGO that stated:

"Yes, we provide equal opportunities. Sometimes in our advertisements we specify women" (male extension agent).

Female stereotypes may also be contributing to the low number of females in the workforce for some partners. A common perception among cassava processing enterprises, although this was successfully challenged during the discussions, was that the lack of physical ability and technical expertise of women to use machinery prevented them from gaining employment. Women, I therefore, mostly worked in peeling, washing and roasting cassava on a casual basis. Generally partners were not able to see these issues arising from gender stereotypes. .

Another barrier for women working in agriculture extension, which is common in the labour market, is the perception that women will work less or be less likely to put in extra effort because of their roles in family care. For example, an NGO director stated the following:

"Their [women's] commitment is not there... sometimes we have to meet at 7pm [and they cannot meet at that time]" (male NGO director).

Some staff related the low representation of women in the agriculture sector to discriminatory practices in the admission procedures of schools for women.

"Pick the female – give them a chance. Properly" (female extension agent).

Retention of female staff

Public extension services and NGOs reported that they had difficulty retaining women. They did not feel that this was due to discrimination, but that women were deterred due to the strenuous nature of field work. However, management had not had discussions with women who left their positions. As such, these ideas are largely based on assumptions of staff, which could perpetuate stereotypical views of women in the labour market. Exit interviews with gender-sensitive questions can identify precisely why women are leaving their positions. Some statements made include the following:

“We have been trying to sustain women but I don’t know how and we don’t know why they are leaving” (male extension agent).

“Occasionally you will see a 25 year old female but suddenly you won’t see her anymore” (female extension agent).

Equal opportunities in terms of recruitment, retention and promotion can be enhanced among partners by identifying and addressing women’s practical needs, such as providing crèche facilities or flexible working, which is discussed in the next chapter.

Terms of employment

Women often experience unequal terms of employment compared with men because of their low status in the labour market. Management and staff felt that this was not evident in their organisations as they felt that the salary and conditions of work were equal for men, women and other groups.

“There are equal opportunities for men and women in terms of salaries. However, between casuals and permanent staff there are differences in facilities” (female extension agent).

However, there were differences in employment terms among cassava processing enterprises. Women’s employment was typically casual, paid by piece rate and characterised by a lack of benefits (although there were some female staff employed as secretaries in factories). Underlying this situation are stereotypes of women’s ability of factory work and capability of operating mechanised equipment. These barriers also keep the benefits from participation in the labour market low for women. However, cassava processing enterprises were positive about making changes to their employment practices and hiring more women in the future. This is affirmed in the statement:

“There are not many opportunities on the ground level for women outside of peeling, but we hope to change that with policy” (male CEO cassava processing enterprise).

NGOs and public extension stated that there were no differences in salaries between staff that would reveal inequality and discrimination. Staff also felt that the expectations of male and female staff were the same, but women’s practical needs were sometimes overlooked, as the next chapter will explain in more detail.

Operations

Equal requirements for participation

Partners felt that they provided equal opportunities for their clients in their programmes as there were no stringent eligibility requirements or differences in contributions for clients. For example, one NGO's microcredit scheme required all members to make equal payments for their savings, regardless of their financial status, which helped to foster a sense of equality between members. The learning institution involved in agricultural training ensured that men and women performed the same activities, such as driving tractors which was seen as a male activity.

However, it is important in the C:AVA project that further steps are taken to ensure that poorest persons are included in outreach activities to have more of an impact on poverty. This may be, for example, having reasonable and appropriate fees/cost for services for poorer clients.

Client monitoring and evaluation

Systematic and comprehensive monitoring and evaluation systems are important for identifying the extent of equal representation and issues around access and impact for different groups. C:AVA service providers had monitoring and evaluation systems in place, including needs assessments for various groups, ongoing project monitoring and impact assessments. However, some improvement is necessary to address gender and diversity in a more systematic way.

Some service providers included gender as a key criterion in their monitoring systems, usually by a numeric target for women's participation. Some partners were also disaggregating households into male and female while collecting baseline and ongoing project data. However, these activities were not consistently performed among partners. As the table below shows, forty per cent of staff and management felt they monitored the impact of their programmes on different groups 'seldom' to 'never'. Moreover, partners that did monitor gender and other personal characteristics did not use it to inform future activities with regards to gender and diversity.

Table 8: Is an analysis or monitoring undertaken on the impact of the programme concerning different groups?

	Female %	Male %	Total %
Never	10	3	6
Seldom	30	28	29
Usually	40	38	39
Always	20	31	27

Total count: 20 females, 32 males

Numbers may not add to 100 per cent due to rounding

"Age, marital status and educational background listed under household registration are not targeted. There are gaps in data collection" (female extension officer).

This situation results in little information being available to monitor or evaluate impact for different groups of clients, which is crucial to the C:AVA mandate. There are a range of indicators that can be included in surveys and questionnaires that would supply this information, such as gender, marital status age, tribe, disability, or country

of origin etc. This will require that partners to revise their field tools and documents. This information can then be applied against department and position to determine how diversity is addressed internally, and in field activities, against the type of farming, farmer wealth or village location.

In addition, management suggested the need to develop a tool for a quick appraisal of sample sections of the population against pre-existing data, which can be used to inform future planning and group mobilisation activities. This will help organisations identify the needs of their clients, raise issues in a timelier manner during the programme and improve understanding of the impact of activities. Moreover, capturing these results and communicating them to external organisations will help build the reputation of C:AVA partners.

Recommendations

Organisational

- Improve understanding of inequality, stereotypes, and hidden types of discrimination and favouritism in formal and informal practices.
- Design ways to implement equal opportunities in recruitment, retention and promotion and workplace culture.
- Develop explicit written policies on equal opportunities and equality for more formalised practice, addressing equality in salaries, conditions of work and expectations of staff.
- Target women in recruitment and consider utilising affirmative action measures.
- Conduct exit interviews with gender-sensitive questions.
- Offer promotion and permanent employment opportunities for women.
- Monitor recruitment, retention and promotion by gender and other diversity factors.

Operations

- Service providers may want to consider undertaking qualitative studies to examine the extent of women's participation in activities.
- Establish more comprehensive monitoring system with clear targets for the provision of equal opportunities and criteria for data collection (sex-disaggregating data).
- Develop a tool for quick appraisal on different groups and programme areas.
- Conduct sex disaggregated monitoring and evaluation at every stage of the project cycle, ensuring that information is disseminated and used to inform all planning and activities.
- Country team should assist service providers in adapting equality indicators in their monitoring and evaluation systems.

4. Awareness and responsiveness to practical gender needs

Practical gender needs are what women and men perceive to be immediate necessities for their livelihoods, such as water, food, employment or healthcare. These needs correspond to different responsibilities and priorities of women and men based on their traditional gender roles. Due to inequalities in access, authority, and resources, however, women often experience difficulty in fulfilling their needs. Subsequently, discussion around practical gender needs usually focuses on women, as is done in this chapter. Addressing practical gender needs is an important area for partners as it can improve the livelihoods of the people the work with and work for. This section reviews the findings on partners' awareness and responsiveness to practical gender needs in the workplace and in field activities.

Key findings

- Partners had a good understanding gender and practical gender needs though desiring more technical knowledge on gender and development. Understanding of the concept was evident in partners' operational work, but to a lesser extent within organisations themselves. This could be contributing to problems in recruiting and retaining women. However, there were examples of good practice, such as some partners providing flexible working schedules for women and not assigning them to remote areas of jurisdiction.
- The most significant barriers for female staff in the workplace were long working hours, lack of employment benefits, inflexible working and travel requirements.
- Partners felt they had positive organisational cultures, especially smaller organisations. However, some staff felt that their organisations did not always comply with gender-sensitive behaviour. Operationally, service providers have instituted a number of programmes that address the practical needs of women in a holistic way. These programmes tend to focus on women's traditional gender roles in agriculture. The rationale for programmes was the notion of women's contribution to family welfare.
- Partners were aware of the different approaches needed for male and female clients in service delivery in terms of time availability and customs.
- Some partners have experience in developing gender-friendly technologies, such as cassava fryers that minimised heat and smoke, which improves the conditions of work for women and their health.

Organisation

Understanding of gender and practical gender needs

Overall, NGOs and public agriculture extension organisations had a good understanding of gender. Staff's description of gender included description of the different roles, responsibilities and needs of men and women; the differences between sex and gender, and how gender roles can shift and change. Staff also understood the main gender issues in agriculture and the inequality women face. Addressing gender was seen as important to family welfare needs, which can reinforce both positive and negative gender roles, as well as being important in their own right. Despite the good knowledge of gender among partners, there is room for improvement in conceptual understanding and identifying practical gender needs, particularly among management. There is however a need for understanding of

gender terms/concepts, identification of subtle gender discrimination and strategic gender planning and development.

“Gender is about the roles of men and women, for example, women play more of a domestic role” (male extension agent).

“We often hear the terms but we do not understand them and do not know the differences” (male extension agent).

However, the understanding of practical gender needs was less evident in partners’ internal operations. Staff discussions on gender focused on its relevance in field programmes, but they were less inclined to discuss issues in their own workplace. This could be due to the sensitivity of the issue or a lack of gender consciousness within organisations, as gender was something that related to development work. Most respondents also hadn’t had gender training. The next sections raise some the issues of practical gender needs for female staff that are currently not be addressed.

Work environment and conditions of work

Staff and management at partner organisations explained the changes in the workforce in the past decade and how women’s employment had increased. They felt that women’s employment had helped to provide greater access to income, opportunities for skill acquisition and to form new relationships. All partners were providing opportunities for women’s employment in one way or another and meeting this practical need in their organisations.

However, there was evidence that the work environment and the conditions of work could be unfavourable to female staff. This is due to the different roles that men and women play, which give rise to different labour market needs. The table below illustrates that almost 50 per cent of the women consulted felt that the workplace is insufficiently meeting the needs of women and disadvantaged groups. Therefore, although partners were aware of the increasing number of women in their workforce, it didn’t correspond to the organisation making changes in the workplace to accommodate more women. This could, be contributing to the difficulty of recruiting and retaining women.

Table 9: Is the work environment and conditions of work adequate for the needs of women and disadvantaged groups?

	Female %	Male %	Total %
Not at all	0	5	3
Insufficient	50	33	39
Sufficient	36	44	41
Excellent	14	18	16

Total count: 22 females, 38 males

Numbers may not add to 100 per cent due to rounding

The key practical gender needs identified for female staff in the workplace and in delivering C:AVA objectives are discussed below.

Facilities: Working in male-dominated sector, it is important for women to have separate facilities (washing and toilet) for their comfort. The audit found that facilities were not provided for women at all cassava processing enterprises and they were asked to use the outdoors. This has since been rectified for one cassava processing enterprise. .

Manageable working hours: Female staff noted the importance of having manageable work days where they could leave work in the early evenings, greater flexibility and being stationed close to home. Two organisations in particular, an NGO and a public extension organisation, were addressing these needs; however, this was not the case for most organisations as the quotes below illustrate:

“It is difficult because staff are expected to work long hours and undertake lots of travelling which may hinder women’s employment” (Male NGO manager).

“They encourage young women at secondary school to go into agriculture. But the conditions of service are hard; the work is difficult, and sometimes there is no transportation. It is also very difficult while you are pregnant. Women should get posts closer to the office” (Female extension agent).

Greater benefits in working: Female staff working at cassava processing enterprises were mostly involved in casual, piece rate work. Women should be provided with greater social security, more learning and professional opportunities, comfortable working conditions and incentives.

Flexible working: Partners heed Ghanaian labour laws allow for a three-month paid maternity leave and nursing mothers the ability to leave work two hours earlier for three months following a pregnancy. Partners did not have explicit policies on flexible working but it was provided at most organisations on an informal basis, including cassava processing enterprises. Female staff therefore have some degree of flexibility to meet demands of the household and management seem to be supportive of this. In one instance a head of division changed the schedule of a female worker who had reported from maternity leave to a more itinerant one so she could manage post-natal issues more conveniently. In another instance, the meeting with the women workers outside Ho by the C:AVA team fell on a market day and management requested a finish time so female staff could go to the market to benefit from lower food prices. Other ways to offer more flexibility in employment are through job-shares and part-time work. However, it is recognised that the external environment is constraining these opportunities as Government regulations do not allow for this type of work in public extensions services.

“There is maternity leave where mothers will receive an allowance. They can do a half day while their children are very young. Working is flexible for women, they can leave earlier if they have family obligations but this is done on an informal basis and may not happen in all departments” (male learning institution director).

Travel for extension agents: Travel was a major issue for female agricultural extension agents and represented a key reason why some women had difficulty working in extension. Female staff and management reported the following problems which relate directly to the roles that women play in society:

Lack of security (harassment): *“There is a need for assistance for women in the field. Sometimes we feel threatened, such as spending the night in the field or going far with a male from the village” (Female extension agent).*

- Travelling on large and heavy motorbikes was difficult for women and many women have not been trained in driving motorbikes: not trained

“For fieldwork we do not have any women. Women are not used to carry out fieldwork because the use of motorbikes prevents women from doing fieldwork. They need vehicles” (male NGO extension agent).

- Cannot be far from home (cannot respond to emergency situations, husband disagrees, not culturally appropriate):

“Sometimes women go out for six weeks at a time. So if you have a family you have trouble” (female staff in learning institution).

Ignoring women’s needs in travel can have the effect of limiting women to administration work and in some cases it may be seen as discriminatory. However, it was evident that some service providers were not addressing women’s travel needs. Some male staff felt that the purpose of the job was to travel therefore there was no choice, and felt that special measures were not needed.

“There are no distinctions between male and female staff. Women are expected to travel just as men” (male deputy director in learning institution).

Other measures that could be taken to support women in agriculture extension, which some service providers were already doing, are to provide gender-friendly transportation, such as lightweight bikes, vehicles or training to drive motorcycles, and to provide greater security in the field by day-time visits, providing a mobile phone, or going with a partner. Some female extension workers also felt they should be compensated through a risk allowance.

Workplace culture

Overall staff reported a positive workplace culture in their organisations. There was a high degree of camaraderie and teamwork, especially among the smaller organisations. However, some staff, particularly female staff, felt that their colleagues were ‘never’ or ‘seldom’ complying with gender-sensitive behaviour (32 per cent of women and 12 per cent of men as the table shows below).

Table 10: Does the organisation and staff comply with gender-sensitive behaviour in and outside the office?

	Female %	Male %	Total %
Never	14	5	8
Seldom	18	8	12
Usually	32	41	38
Always	36	46	42

Total count: 22 females, 39 males

Numbers may not add to 100 per cent due to rounding

During consultations there were some issues raised of the behaviour of men in the workplace that was not conducive to the needs of women. For example, in one organisation a female worker was encouraged by management to quit her job to save her marriage from extramarital affairs so she could spend more time with her husband, revealing an attitude that women’s primary role is in managing the domestic sphere. While these situations are difficult and complex, it is important for partners to examine behaviour within the organisation for its gender sensitivity. Management should undergo training to understand and identify inappropriate be

haviour in the workplace and put policies in place to communicate to staff that gender insensitive behaviour is against the rules.

Operations

Programme focus on practical gender needs

Service providers have instituted a number of programmes that address the practical needs of women and men. However, these activities were largely based on the rationale that women should be focused on because of their contribution to family welfare, not because it is their right.

Nevertheless, most providers take a holistic approach by addressing a range of livelihood issues around education, healthcare and poverty to meet women's practical needs, within existing gender roles. This may constitute, for instance, women's microcredit programmes, post-harvest activities, and health-related programmes. Other types of programmes were: training for female entrepreneurs, learning in bread-making, storage, budgeting and record keeping. The learning institution was also developing smoke-free roaster so women are exposed to less smoke during cassava roasting. Therefore service providers are interested in and capable of addressing a range of socio-economic issues in rural communities that would help C:AVA meet its objectives.

"We help them to do what they are doing but better" (male manager, NGO).

In targeting women, most partners focus on the traditional activities of women revealing that their approach consists mainly of addressing practical gender needs. In fact, the concept of gender was largely understood in practical terms instead of more strategically, which emphasises challenging gender roles and reducing structural gender inequalities. A common split for most partners was between production activities for men and processing and marketing activities for women.

However, the focus on processing in women's programmes ignores the other roles women play in agriculture, such as planting, weeding and harvesting. In addition, because women generally have control over activities on their own plots exposing women to activities in agricultural production would also be beneficial. This was recognised by one NGO who was working with women's groups in all areas of agriculture, production, processing, marketing and management. This more holistic approach is closer to providing women with skills to have more control over their work and also recognise women's diverse activities. This must, however, be balanced with recognising the time pressures for women.

Gender targeting and including women

Most service providers were aware of the importance of gender composition of client groups, since women can often be excluded from agricultural services. C:AVA service providers have established targets for women and men's participation, ranging from one-third women, equal numbers or separate groups. These approaches have different impacts in terms of gender, which need to be considered when planning and implementing programmes. For example, a 'women only' group may provide women with the necessary space to participate and not to feel intimidated by men, but it also avoids linking with men for more strategic activities that challenge gender roles. A 'one third women' group could place women in marginalised positions, especially in terms of decision making within the group.

There were differences between partners, for example one NGO and public extension services established women only groups, whereas another NGO included men and women in the same group but had targets for each. The latter may be more difficult as men are likely to dominate activities. Surprisingly, not all service providers have established gender targets. Public extension organisations did have female participation targets but they were dropped for mixed groups due to lack of commitment from management. Furthermore, some of the reported targets that NGOs adopted were not firmly in place and varied according to programme and village.

Another important attribute to including women in activities is to have female extension agents to work with women. This was done by most of partner activities, which helps overcome culture barriers for female clients who may not be able to speak with men alone. This reinforces the need for increasing the number of female extension agents in the workforce to increase outreach to women in rural communities and meet C:AVA target of 70% female processors.

“At the operational level, [we are] confronted with situations where women in some of the operational areas (being Islamic) are not even supposed to greet people of the opposite sex. Having a desire to reach more women makes it therefore imperative to have more female staff” (male NGO manager).

Table 11 Service provider targets for women’s participation in extension services

Service provider	Women’s participation targets
Learning/research institution	None
Public extension service 1 & 2	None
NGO 1	70% of loans, 75% in training but varies by community
NGO 2	50%
NGO 3	Aim is 60%, but at least 50% depending on community
NGO 4	None
NGO 5	None
Cassava processing enterprise 1 & 2	None

However, it is notable that service providers were struggling with a number of barriers to women’s participation in extension, such as illiteracy, stereotypes of women as working only in the subsistence or processing spheres, lack of access and ownership of resources, lack of time and past negative experiences with development workers.

“Often women are fearful to take up leadership positions, also because of their illiteracy” (Female public extension agent).

“Male extension agents assume that women are the wives of male farmers” (Male NGO director).

Practical gender issues in service delivery

The Gender and Diversity Analysis report raised a number of gender issues along the cassava value chain which highlight a number of women's practical gender needs. The following table presents these issues and the ability of partners to address them through extension services in terms of the C:AVA project.

<p>Time constraints: Women can become over-burdened with additional activities.</p>	<p>Partners were acutely aware of the different approaches needed for men and women in service delivery in terms of time. They follow the schedules of men and women and choose to visit women after meal times or on non-market days when they are free. However, there were some complaints from staff that management did not have a 'farmer first' approach and sometimes requested extension agents to attend meeting despite having appointments arranged in villages.</p> <p><i>"Women are considered in fixing meeting times and places of meetings"</i> (male extension agent).</p>
<p>Access to finance: Rural men and women, but especially women, have low access to credit facilities.</p>	<p>Service providers (as a group) are likely to be able to provide credit to men and women if activities between service providers can be linked up effectively.</p>
<p>Physical capital: Women have difficulty in accessing and controlling labour saving, gender-friendly, technology.</p>	<p>The learning institution has experience in developing gender-friendly technologies, such as cassava fryers that minimised heat and smoke, a light-weight smoker with moveable trays, and a shea butter project in the north that redesigned technology to reduce drudgery.</p> <p>However, there was difficulty in identifying if there was the ability or motivation for service providers to increase technology in women's activities or to ensure technology remains in women's control. This area should be addressed if production is to be increased under C:AVA.</p>
<p>Human capital: Men have greater access to labour, technology, information, media and higher rates of literacy and time.</p>	<p>Using existing knowledge of female and male farmers is widely acknowledged by service providers.</p> <p>Farmer demonstrations occur regularly by public extension services and women are encouraged to participate.</p> <p>Learning and training occur at the group level for women in entrepreneurial skills, budgeting and record keeping, storage and preservation etc.</p>
<p>Social capital: Women are organised in communities.</p>	<p>Service providers are currently building on women's existing social capital and enriching it by working with and promoting women's groups.</p>

Women's employment at cassava processing enterprises

Women are employed by cassava processing enterprise organisations, mainly as peelers, which responds to women’s practical need for employment and income. However, Ghanaian cassava processing enterprises may change from the supply of cassava to the supply of wet paste. This will change the nature of women’s employment from working at the factory peeling and washing cassava, to doing most activities in the village and requiring cassava to be processed by grating machines. This has a number of consequences for women. First, it threatens their employment by cassava processing enterprises, women will subsequently need to be supported and have the capacity to make the transition to supplying wet paste. Second, the introduction of grating machines could threaten women’s ability to capture additional profit, as men often take over activities as they become mechanised. If cassava grating will need to be done at the village level, significant attention should be made to empowering women to manage and maintain grating machines to capture the additional profit. Women’s groups should be encouraged to acquire their own machinery. Machines would preferably be managed on a group basis where the profits are distributed evenly, and the machine should be available on a communal basis. Finally, cassava processing enterprises should arrange sustainable means of transportation of the wet paste, which is too difficult for women to transport themselves.

Technical capacity to address gender

Responses from the questionnaire revealed that in some cases gender considerations were not fully integrated into all field operations, such as in programme planning, design, implementation, technical capacity and monitoring and evaluation processes. As the table below illustrates, 26 per cent of respondents include gender ‘to some extent’. However, while a higher proportion (31 per cent) felt that gender was ‘completely’ included in their work, 70% per cent of respondents wanted capacity strengthening in applying a gender approach in their operations in order to meet C:AVA objectives.

Table 12: To what extent do you consider and include gender in your work?

	Female %	Male %	Total %
Never	5	0	2
To some extent	23	28	26
To a great extent	46	39	41
Completely	27	33	31

Total count: 22 female, 36 males

Numbers may not add to 100 per cent due to rounding

Most NGO staff had not had not received training or undertaken learning in gender, which is most likely due to funding constraints. However, there was some indicated that staff were taking their own initiative in learning more about gender from other sources. One NGO had drawn on donor experience to create their gender and equality strategy, and another NGO had partnered with the Ministry of Women and Children in order to address the needs of female clients more adequately. The C:AVA project should promote and facilitate further partnerships such as these.

he learning institution and public extension services had received some gender training but there was an issue of the quality of the training that was conducted. For example, a public extension organisation conducted training for management to become gender trainers for staff. However, speaking to one trainee revealed that the training was too short and lacked depth, so he did not feel capable of training others.

While training in gender is essential for service providers to understand and apply gender sensitivity to their activities, a shared learning platform can also help providers begin the learning process with others. The aim of this should be to improve overall competence of staff in addressing gender issues in participation, access, ownership and equal benefits. In the interim, providers may explore other learning sources such as the internet. This will help, for instance the community entry activities of service providers such as the exploration of the institution of queen mothers and other female oriented structures to help mobilise diverse women within the project framework in addition to the traditional avenues of chiefs and opinion leaders that are male oriented.

Recommendations

Organisation

- Increase staff skills in addressing gender in their work and organisation.
- Partners should critically examine their environment from a gender perspective to identify 'hidden' or 'subtle' barriers for staff in the workplace and overcome barriers that impede practical gender needs from being addressed.
- Management should ensure they work to a 'farmer first' approach and enable staff to attend to field activities as much as possible.
- Improve employment terms, such as access to benefits, formalised flexible working conditions, job-shares, childcare etc. Permanent contracts should be offered to casuals.
- Provide support and mentorship opportunities for women in employment.
- Provide a gender-friendly environment (e.g. separate toilets and wash facilities for men and women), and transportation (Mopeds, vehicles) and security in the field (day-time visits, mobile phone, going with a partner) to address women's practical and security needs. Conduct training in riding motorbikes.
- Critically examine and address organisational culture and staff communication for gender sensitivity and shared learning. This should be supported by policies that clearly state expectations for staff behaviour.

Operations (CAVA)

- Integrate gender considerations into all field operations, such as in programme design, planning, implementation, technical capacity and monitoring and evaluation.
- Use a holistic approach as much as possible in designing activities, and acknowledge the many roles women play in agricultural production and processing, in the home, the community and the economy as a whole.
- Identify the opportunity cost of women's time spent on C:AVA activities compared to other activities to ensure participation. (Ensure that C:AVA does not increase women's workload by introducing labour saving technology, which will also increase production.
- Cassava processing enterprises and service providers should support and train women in the transition to supplying wet paste. Significant attention should be made to empowering women to manage and maintain grating machines and presses to enable women have greater control over equipment and to capture the additional profit. Machines would preferably be managed on a group basis where the profits are distributed evenly, and the machine should be available on a communal basis

- Cassava processing enterprises should arrange sustainable means of transportation for the wet paste, which is too difficult for women to transport themselves.
- Cassava processing enterprises and research institutions should work together to promote gender-friendly technology, such as smoke and heat free stoves.
- NGOs and public service providers should promote networks of women's groups to provide more exposure to women.
- All partners should encourage women's participation and leadership in farmers' associations.
- The country team should build on existing partnerships and facilitate further partnerships between women's organisations and service providers. The team should also play a role in managing and mitigating the relationships between cassava processing enterprises and farmers to ensure a reciprocal relationship and guaranteed supply of cassava.



5. Impact on strategic gender needs and women's empowerment

Strategic gender needs and women's empowerment are concepts that focus on the systemic factors that discriminate against women. Strategic gender needs are long-term, usually non-material, and are often related to structural changes in society regarding women's status and equity. Empowerment is an expansion of this concept, and refers to the ability of women to make strategic life choices in a context where it has previously been hindered or denied. This section examines partners' impact in this area.

Key findings

- There was a general understanding of women's empowerment and strategic gender needs among partners. However, there were differences and inconsistencies between approaches, understanding and application of this within organisations. There was some resistance to women's empowerment and strategic needs by some partners.
- In general, women in most organisations were either working in fields that related to their gender or in areas that were stereotypically female, such as horticulture, home economics, processing etc.
- Some organisations evidenced good representation of women at different organisational levels, where there were at least one or two women in top management positions.
- However, partners felt that their activities were having an impact on women's empowerment, particularly in regards to poverty reduction, social status, challenging gender roles, access to resources and women's leadership.
- Areas that could be improved were addressing community power structures, improving control and ownership among women and increasing women's ability to make informed decisions.
- There have been cases where staff have been managing conflicts between men and women due to perceived changes in gender roles.

Organisation

Understanding of strategic gender needs and women's empowerment

There was a general understanding of women's empowerment and what might facilitate meeting strategic gender needs. NGOs and public extension organisations understood that structural barriers prevent equality, as the quote below demonstrates, and made reference to the importance of strategic activities, such as promoting women's leadership and women's education to overcome systematic inequality.

"You can only go to a certain extent as a woman, you can't go too far"
(female extension agent).

"Now we tell them that they can talk as men" (female extension agent)

"Our cultural background has led to women being oppressed. Their talents are suppressed" (male extension agent).

Staff and management could describe aspects of gender power relations, particularly with respect to control of income and resources. However, this was not addressed through their programmes, except for one NGO. This indicates that it is less about understanding the concepts than an unwillingness to engage in these areas. Partners could be uncomfortable in addressing what is seen to encroach on value systems and instead work within the organisational remit, such as providing credit, agricultural advice etc. Other barriers for service providers in taking a strategic gender approach may be an inability to transform understanding into action or the lack of funds to implement actions adequately.

Resistance to women's empowerment

The area of women's empowerment and strategic needs can be contentious because it challenges established structures of power and ways of doing things. There was less resistance to challenging gender roles and stereotypes compared with what was found in other countries within the C:AVA countries. However, some resistance to women's empowerment was evident, and it was explained as being due to:

- Changes in policy or lack of funding (decision made at a Federal or State level)
- Not wanting to disrupt cultural practices or cause conflict
- Focus should be on family and men should not be ignored

If service providers are to take active measures to contribute to women's empowerment through the C:AVA project, these perceptions will need to be addressed through open discussion and debate.

Need for a strategic approach to gender

There were differences between approaches and application of gender within organisations, such as focusing on women's traditional roles, the family or on women's empowerment. For the majority of service providers, targeting women was part of a larger strategy for poverty reduction, necessary for meeting donor requirements, or practical (for example, women are often targeted with microcredit because they are more likely to pay back), which does not necessarily incorporate an empowerment approach. There may be a need, therefore, to develop an organisational approach establishing a clear gender framework in which to base activities alongside existing agricultural or poverty reduction strategies. This is a critical capacity need as it will establish a consistent and clear organisational approach that will identify precisely what organisations are aiming to achieve with regards to gender. Furthermore, this approach should be 'mainstreamed' or applied throughout organisational and operational spheres to reduce the segregation of gender issues in one department or programme(s).

By moving from a 'women in agriculture' approach for example to a 'gender and development' approach, it will emphasise the relational quality of gender, and the roles, responsibilities, benefits and rights of men and women that could support change. This approach could also allow greater space for men in its programmes.

There are also other strategies, such as a combined scientific and social science approach by a learning institution:

"We have multidisciplinary teams that bring in a gender perspective to our work" (male learning institution deputy director)

Service providers should examine their assumptions of men and women's gender roles and other gender issues within their approach to activities, which is often not explicit. This could be done within the sociological concept of "thinking ourselves away" to leave out biases and consider the development issues involved. Many service providers assumed women's roles were located primarily in the domestic sphere and ignored women's productive contributions and individual agency, for example, such as in production activities, agricultural processing and marketing, food security, etc. At the same time there are also perceptions among extension staff (as indicated in the quote below) that male farmers do not contribute to the household and are 'lazy', which is also an unhelpful understanding of male roles.

"Women are more proactive in meeting the needs of children. Men do not care" (male extension agent).

Even on that premise, respondents should have been more proactive in addressing the issue. The concept of male gender roles should be explicitly addressed as it is core to redressing power relations and inequality.

Partners will also need to examine their language in their approaches, as there was some ambiguity in concepts such as 'active poor' or 'marginalised', which can have a number of different meanings and implications for who it will include and exclude from activities. For example, women's work is often considered non-productive (domestic chores, raising children, cooking etc), so it could imply that they are non-active. This re-emphasises the need for gender training for C:AVA partners.

Partners showed an interest in developing gender policy and expressed the need for capacity strengthening in this area. Other providers have developed policies and gender strategies; therefore, there are opportunities for shared learning.

"We do not have an organisational perspective on gender. We are trying to develop one and policies but don't know how" (male NGO manager).

But despite partner awareness and stated commitment to gender equality, it does need to be backed up by explicit policies such as a gender strategy, gender targeting, human resource and financial commitment as well as outcome measurement to inform planning and activities.

Furthermore, strategies should be designed with the short and long term in mind. One public extension organisation for example, discontinued its gender strategy due to lack of funding and political commitment. A gender and diversity perspective is not only relevant to C:AVA Project but for the general productivity of the agricultural sector. This is recognised by the Food and Agricultural Services Development Project (FASDEP) and was stated in the 1997 Gender and Agriculture Development Strategy of Ghana. However, inadequate political and financial commitment have impeded the implementation of some activities of the strategy and ensure its sustainability. Nonetheless, the gender strategy has made remarkable achievement in the collection and use of sex disaggregated data and a level a within MOFA.

Associates for Rural Development (ASRUD)

ASRUD has a three-pronged gender strategy mainstreamed throughout its organisations since early 2001. This includes gender mainstreaming, gender planning and empowerment in both organisational policy and operational activities. The strategy exemplifies the high-level approach of the organisation and in which

activities can be planned and budgeted against. Activities that have come under the empowerment stream for example, is the women's bakery:

"In one community we are installing machines for bread making. We are encouraging them to mill, which women didn't do before" (male extension staff).

ASRUD takes a number of measures to ensure that staff are aware of the gender strategy, such as posting the strategy on the bulletin board and taking time to discuss it with staff. It was clearly evident that from the executive director to the administration staff that the organisational stance on gender was well understood.

From this strategy ASRUD conducts training on a number of agricultural topics, such as increasing production, different varieties and so on. In training sessions participants are asked to form small groups in which women are made the leaders, and asked to present their groups findings. Interventions of the have resulted in a greater understanding of men and women in agriculture and development.

Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA)

In Ghana, public agricultural extension services are supplied by MOFA, who has a mandate to disseminate research and extension information on production, processing, post-harvest management and marketing to increase agricultural productivity, food security and incomes. The Ministry is implementing a Food and Agricultural Services Expansion Programme II which promotes value chains, strengthening of the private sector and diversification of farming practices. It has been successful in improving livelihoods particularly through increased processing and marketing. Generally, the group approach is used for social mobilisation and extension through the Women Farmers' Extension Unit, which promoted equality in access to extension and outreach towards women, though in the past the department has suffered setbacks.

MOFA has a dedicated department specifically focusing on the needs of women in agriculture, the Women in Agriculture (WIAD) Directorate. Under the influence of the Agricultural Extension Services Directorate and in an effort to address the setbacks, a Gender and Agricultural Development Strategy (1997) was developed with support from FAO. Consequently, gender disaggregated data collection was adopted within the Ministry. Gender training was facilitated for management, extension staff and WIAD and capacity was developed for staff to 'train the trainers'. The next training is to include Animal Husbandry and to focus on how to improve monitoring and evaluation. Additionally WIAD has proposed the institution of Gender Desk Officers at the district level and it prompts the Regional Director on issues on gender needing attention. Attempts are underway to get WIAD to do more gender mainstreaming for MOFA.

Unfortunately, in some regions the gender strategy has not been carried forward due to lack of commitment from directors. In addition, its emphasis on agricultural processing, food preparation and consumption has hindered gender mainstreaming issues into other areas. MOFA may therefore wish to consider (a) a statement in the Gender and Agricultural Development Strategy :

"The institutional capacity of MOFA will be strengthened to mainstream gender in all its activities" and (b) a statement in Food and Agricultural Services Development Project (FASDEP) II document that the shortfall in the implementation of FASDEP I

was due to inadequate gender mainstreaming.

A gender and diversity perspective is not beneficial to the C:AVA Project alone but for the general productivity of the agricultural sector. C:AVA will also need to emphasise the importance of addressing gender in its projects and consequently, it will also help MOFA meet requirements in its gender and agricultural development perspectives in the long run.

Women in decision-making

A key method of meeting strategic gender needs and promoting women's empowerment is to promote women's leadership. This can increase women's confidence and create more space for gender issues to be integrated. However, the degree to which C:AVA partners had women in leadership or management positions varied.

Examples of good practice include: one NGO evidenced good representation of women at different organisational levels, where there was at least one or two women in top management positions. Interestingly, one processing enterprise had instated a women representative for the cassava peelers, after the C:AVA situational analysis was conducted, for the CEO to consult with on a regular basis. Also, as a result of the intervention of the public extension directorate a woman had come to the organisation and bought a new tractor and accessories – depicting the degree to which success has been made in putting women in strategic positions.

On the other hand, as the table below illustrates, over 30 per cent of men and women felt that there was 'insufficient' or no representation of women and other groups at the managerial level. This was said to be due to negative stereotypes of women, and a fear for women candidates of being ridiculed. Staff suggested the education of women and their encouragement to take up leadership positions. Despite these results, most management and staff were enthusiastic about encouraging more women's leadership.

Table 13: Is there adequate representation of women and other groups among staff at the managerial level?

	Female %	Male %	Total %
Not at all	8	5	7
Insufficient	29	26	27
Sufficient	42	40	40
Excellent	21	29	26

Total count: 24 females, 38 males

Numbers may not add to 100 per cent due to rounding

Gender responsibility

Overall, three out of five NGOs had a person responsible for addressing gender issues in their organisations. Public extension services had a department dedicated to gender issues particularly women's issues, with a deputy director and director to lead the department. This allows for a more strategic placement of gender issues within the organisational context.

Segmented workforce

An area of opportunity is to encourage female staff to participate in sectors that are not traditionally associated with their gender. In general, women in most organisations were either working in fields that were stereotypically female (such as horticulture, home economics, processing etc). This is important for female staff to work in areas of their expertise and to counter the assumption that, because of they are a woman, they are able to understand and/or address gender issues. This may challenge long-held stereotypes of gender capabilities and contribute to more transformative change.

Partners can perhaps take special measures, such as targeted advertising, to encourage greater numbers of women into fields with low female representation. The aim is not to deflect from a merit-based approach but to use it in conjunction with measures to encourage gender equitability. Young women can be specifically targeted to work in conjunction with the Government of Ghana's initiatives to target funding at programmes encouraging youth into agriculture.

Cassava processing enterprises and women's empowerment

C:AVA cassava processing enterprises also have opportunities to contribute to women's empowerment but are currently not active in this area. Private sector businesses however were positive about the changes they could make to their business practices. However, one processing enterprise focused on female cassava producers for supply under the belief that it would enhance family welfare. While it is important not to use women primarily as a tool for development, but a means in itself, this can provide opportunities for women to improve their livelihoods. Some other examples of good practice in empowering women include:

- Hiring more women in management or leadership positions
- Providing education and training for women to move up in businesses
- Recruiting women into traditionally male-dominated areas of employment
- Providing positive feedback to workers to build self-confidence

Operations

Impact on women's empowerment

The Gender and Diversity Audit consultations found evidence of an impact on women's empowerment in partners' activities. As the table below aptly illustrates, the far majority of staff and management feel certain that they have contributed to making changes in women's lives.

Table 14: Do you consider that your work has helped empower women or help them to make strategic life changes?

	Female %	Male %	Total %
Never	5	0	2
Insufficiently	14	9	11
Sufficiently	52	63	59
Completely	29	29	29

Total count: 21 females, 35 males

Numbers may not add to 100 per cent due to rounding

The identified impacts on addressing strategic gender needs and women's empowerment are detailed below.

Change in gender roles and working with men: the increased focus of women in agricultural extension activities in the last decade has led to a change in gender roles for both men and women, which may indicate that processes of empowerment are currently taking place and strategic gender needs are being met. There were a number of examples of men taking on some householder responsibilities, such as cooking and childcare, and women's household decision making power increasing with higher monetary household contributions. Some service providers encouraged men to adapt to new roles and assist and support their wives. This activity is very important as it can help disband stereotypes of men being 'lazy' and falls within the universal human rights. It helps women exercise a right to their personal development and increase their access to and control over resources

"One day we were in the field and a woman pointed with a big smile to her husband sweeping. So it's helping" (male extension agent, NGO).

Some service providers are currently opening up their programmes to men that were previously for women only, to help encourage shared responsibility. While this removes some of the pressure off women and allows more opportunity for the negotiation of responsibilities, service providers must ensure that women maintain some separate space for personal development. C:AVA will need to encourage other partners to use these strategies to ensure that the workload and responsibilities of women does not increase.

"Initially with the soya bean fortification project we wanted to work with women. But it was about food and nutrition so men and kids needed to be included. They also should know about food and nutrition" (female extension agent).

"Educate the men too, like the loan officer, if a loan is given to married women you should give training to both so they know what to expect. They push responsibility on to women" (female unit officer, NGO).

Improved livelihoods: Many partners felt that they had increased men and women's incomes through their work, which has improved livelihoods and contributed to a reduction of poverty. In discussion with female clients, it was found that the secured marketing of their produce contributed to the financial empowerment of the women, which means that the C:AVA project can be promising for women processors.

The value chain analysis and scoping study revealed that men working at the cassava processing enterprises do so primarily to meet family welfare needs, particularly the education of their children. On the contrary, the interactions during the gender audit revealed that some wives have used their capital from trading activities to sponsor their husbands in an outgrower scheme to supply a particular cassava processing enterprise. However, there were some examples of non-compliance on the part of the enterprise and subsequently, the women are not receiving any return. They have consequently suffered setbacks in their livelihoods. Partners in outgrower relationships should have a better understanding of the livelihood patterns of rural farmers and timely purchase cassava off the farmers and consequently discourage sale of cassava to third parties.

Women's leadership and improved social status: Importantly, partners felt that their past work has increased the confidence of women. This was done through discussing the value of their contributions to the household and the community,

which they had not previously thought was important. Women's confidence is d to increase further with the C:AVA initiative if it will specific target women.

"We had a programme where we explained about the value of women's work. It's about what they do during the day. They explain I'm not paid for it [the work]. She will realise that she does a lot of work. Then we move to financial aspects, budgeting and recording their expenses" (Female extension agent).

There were also examples of women occupying a higher social status in their communities through previous group work with partners. The leadership positions have helped to build women's confidence and self-esteem, and institutionalise their views into decision-making processes.

"There are women field workers and are women in organisations women, we are learning to take instructions from women. We are taking people forward" (male extension agent, NGO).

"In women's groups it's always women leaders. They can read and write in this area" (female extension agent).

However, in farmer groups with both men and women, women's leadership was compromised by a lack of women volunteering or women taking more administrative positions. Contributing to this is the pervasive stereotypes and social norms generally constraining women in rural communities, which at present, most partners are not addressing directly. This can threaten the sustainability of women-focused projects, particularly in terms of C:AVA, as it is not ensured women will benefit or remain in a position to benefit from activities:

"Women choose male leaders because of their lack of confidence. It was reported that women often ask themselves 'How will I do it so that people do not laugh at me?'" (female extension agent).

"There are generally positions of Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and Organiser but women prefer the last two" (male extension agent).

"At the community level it is difficult. They think women who are vocal or on top of issues are being disrespectful. It cuts across tribal boundaries. I can't say that men and women sit together. It takes a lot of arguing to bring men and women together on decisions" (female extension agent).

Areas to improve

As stated above, there were a number of positive impacts for women that partners have encouraged in their field activities. However there are also areas of improvement that partners should work on as the C:AVA programme develops.

Ownership and control: To increase opportunities for women's empowerment, women should be encouraged to purchase and manage technology through investment opportunities. This is a key area as it is where practical and strategic gender needs intersect. Ownership can address women's need to important inputs and technology to increase their productivity and income, but it can also provide more strategic access to resources that can provide the opportunity for longer term empowerment. Emphasis also has to be on outputs and control over income.

Increasing women's control over resources is not a focus of the majority of service providers but there were some examples, such as a women's borehole management project and training in women's entrepreneurship. However, as crop commercialisation and mechanisation processes continue it could threaten women's participation. Partners will need to establish how and when they can ensure women remain in a position to benefit.

Encourage choice: There were examples of NGOs working with women on managing their finances, such as explaining to women that they should spend their income on the household and not on social events. In general, this can be sound advice. However, it is important that women are given the power to choose where their finances are invested and used. It is the role of extension to ensure that both men and women are making more informed choices.

"When we are able to sell and make income from microcredit activities we will advocate to people in the community that they should spend well, for example, not spend on new outfits for funerals and social gatherings"
(male NGO manager)

As much as women should be given adequate room to make their own choices on the use of their incomes, the background to the counsel given them is against the convention on the rights of the child and its opening preamble encouraging adults to seek the best interest towards the welfare of children. Thus the counsel is towards investments in the education of children, which is key to breaking the poverty cycle, as against those on funerals and other social programmes.

Lack of skills in social relations and intra/inter household dynamics: Most of the partners have vast experience working with farmers' groups but their skills could be improved particularly in regards to power relationships and structures that prevent certain groups, particularly women, from achieving equality. Some key capacity skills required in conducting field work are:

- Gender and social difference, how it affects group dynamics and project outcomes
- Leadership skills and group management, as some partners reported that they lacked skills in keeping groups from dismantling. Partners often felt that groups would lose interest when they are not seeing benefits quickly.
- Conflict management (see below)
- Skills in intra-household and inter-household dynamics to understand roles in the household and cooperation/conflict and social organisation of community and how this impacts on livelihoods.

An understanding of these concepts and the management of their influence will positively affect gender equality and C:AVA outcomes. Most partners are aware of the increasing time and labour constraints faced by women in managing their productive and household activities and skewed use of women's income for family upkeep and welfare. The tendency of the former increasing with the involvement of women in C:AVA is high. C:AVA and partners should assist redress these and premises for redress include the rights and responsibilities of women and men towards child care; the rights of women to their own personal development and leisure; household labour saving, child development, health and wellness issues.

Working with men and managing conflicts: Importantly, some staff have been involved in managing changes in gender relations by working with men and women and helping them to re-negotiate their roles in the household and for men to change their attitudes towards women. To a large extent, partners have been using a non-confrontational approach that works within existing gender expectations. For example, women are told to continue ‘respecting’ their husbands despite new wealth or status, or telling men that the additional funds will help their activities. However, these issues can run contrary to notions of empowerment among women, as instances of women ‘disrespecting’ their husbands may be examples of women exerting confidence to ensure their interests are looked after. Or, by explaining to men that women are assisting you, may take emphasis on women performing activities for their own needs. Therefore, there may be more need for conflict management resources for staff to access.

“We tried to get the men to understand. We told them it’s not about respect. It’s not that your wives do not respect you” (male extension agent, NGO).

“It’s about understanding. You explain to the men that women are assisting you. You give reason to ensure the tradition of male dominance isn’t workable. You can also explain that women have the talent” (male extension agent, NGO).

“They [men] think women who are vocal or on top of issues are being disrespectful. It cuts across tribal boundaries. I can’t say that men and women sit together. It takes a lot of arguing to bring men and women together on decisions” (female programme manager, NGO).

It is envisaged that gender training for partners will equip their staff enhance their understanding of underlying concepts of gender and development and their operationalisation at the field level.

Monitoring and evaluating gender

As the chapter on equal opportunities discussed, it is important for partners to ensure that their monitoring and evaluation processes are comprehensive and that gender and diversity is mainstreamed, which is not currently being done by most partners. Partners will need to establish gender objectives with a set of gender indicators to measure progress. Gender indicators that are particularly relevant to C:AVA are:

- Number of women and men participating in the activity
- Number of women in leadership or decision making positions
- Percentage change in incomes of women and men
- Number of women and men receiving training
- Number of women and men receiving technological support
- Number of women and men having access to additional support through other programmes

It is also important for gender impacts to be drawn out in evaluation procedures. Most partners were able to identify the impacts of their programmes have had on men and women, but the methods to acquire this information was not conducted in a rigorous or systematic way. Partners may want to adopt gender indicators that are measured consistently over time, gathering evidence through one to one interviews with men and women or participatory evaluations.

Recommendations

Organisation

- Develop and implement a gender strategy that establishes an approach to gender, a framework of capacity building and action and mainstream it. This process should examine organisational assumptions, values and culture and firmly establish a budget for activities and monitoring and evaluation.
- Create partnerships with women's organisations to feed into organisational gender strategy and learning processes.
- Increase the number of females in management positions and male-dominated sectors, and provide training, mentorship and support for women to move up.
- C:AVA country team should in future, where possible, generally select service providers that are more gender competent and undertake capacity building in gender issues for a greater impact on strategic gender needs and women's empowerment for the present service providers.
- The C:AVA project as a whole should recruit more females in positions such as the country manager or desk officer positions.

Operations (CAVA)

- Promote ownership among women, such as supplying women or women's groups with credit to invest in equipment (e.g. VPU's) and manage gender-friendly technology.
- Train women in group facilitation and problem-solving for sustained women's leadership.
- Develop entry points for bringing men and women together in socially driven and household management activities and encourage shared responsibilities to ensure women's workload and time isn't further constrained by C:AVA activities.
- Expose women and men to agricultural roles they have not tried previously.
- Increase staff skills in understanding rural power structures and institutional analysis from a social relations perspective, focusing on managing conflicts, group management, intra and inter-household dynamics and understanding empowerment and social difference.
- Train women (and staff) in entrepreneurial skills, particularly in value addition.
- Introduce measures to increase women's control over their income and resources, such as through investment opportunities.
- Improve literacy amongst women.
- Develop a set of gender indicators that measure quality of participation and performance through the project lifecycle. Link with reporting and communication.
- Develop case studies based on success stories to work as role models. Within the beneficiary and neighbouring communities there may be women role models who will be willing to share their experiences and mentor project beneficiaries. Alongside, there may be male mentors who are averse to the traditional power relations that are detrimental to women's empowerment.



6. Awareness and responsiveness to key diversity issues

While gender is a principal area of social difference, it can interact with a number of other characteristics and increase vulnerability or social exclusion. Some of these characteristics are: age; class; ethnicity; religion; disability; national origin or language. Diversity is particularly important when looking at gender, as when it is combined with other personal characteristics such as age or marital status, an individual can experience a higher likelihood of exclusion. With these characteristics in mind, the extent to which partners are aware of and responsive to key diversity issues will be examined.

Key findings

- Generally there was low awareness of diversity as a social concept but a high appreciation for the insight it provides.
- Partners did not have any policies or strategies on diversity, but they were positive including it in their work.
- It was evident that some service providers had consciously applied a diversity approach to their staff recruitment.
- A diverse workforce may also give rise to a number of different staff needs; therefore it is essential that there are opportunities for staff to communicate their needs to management.
- In field activities, service providers are participating in activities that address some key diversity issues, especially with regards to youth, by addressing issues of youth migration from rural areas. But staff feel this can be improved.
- Other areas that need to be addressed are: the lack of suitable technology for disabled people; improving communication with different language groups, ensuring that religious organisations are as inclusive as possible and assistance to female extension agents who find difficulty working in some circumstances.
- Monitoring and evaluation was not undertaken in a systematic way with regards to diversity. Diversity indicators were not in place for most partners. This had led to a gap in knowledge about the participation of vulnerable groups in partner activities and how they will be included in C:AVA.

Organisation

Understanding of diversity

Overall there was low awareness of diversity as a social concept but a high appreciation for the insight the concept provides. Partners did not have any policies or strategies on diversity, but they felt they were addressing some diversity issues already and would like it to be enhanced in their work. However, staff had an easier time applying the concept to their field activities than to their workplace.

“We are all inclusive: the (villagers) go along with the programme and there is a mixture of tribes” (female extension agent).

Partners would benefit from a more nuanced understanding of diversity to critically analyse their effectiveness in reaching different groups. This may mean examining a

number of areas of social difference such as marital status, tribe, age, disability, language, national origin, etc. This will help assess who is contributing to decision making and identify groups that may be more prone to exclusion, such as when multiple characteristics interact (such as gender, age or tribe). By striving to improve services with different groups in mind, it will help to create more effective services and support for all.

Diverse workforce

A diverse workforce is increasingly being recognised as a valuable asset for organisations and businesses. Taking a diversity approach can help to build a workforce with a range of skills and experience that can ultimately improve activities or even competitiveness.

It was evident that some service providers had consciously applied a diversity approach to their staff recruitment. For example, one NGO took steps to ensure that people who spoke different languages were represented among extension agents in order for their organisation to be able to communicate with clients more effectively. Both cassava processing enterprises had some disabled people employed at their factories, which they felt helped improve the livelihoods of these individuals who are normally excluded from employment.

A diverse workforce may also give rise to a number of different staff needs; therefore it is essential that there are opportunities for staff to communicate their needs to management. It was found that in most cases management provided time during meetings for staff to raise these issues; however, it is unknown to what extent these needs are addressed.

The practices of some service providers did not reveal explicit attention to diversity with regards to their workforce, as they felt that hiring was strictly merit-based, which was similar to the reason why women were not targeted in recruitment. This reinforces the finding that partners feel that providing equal opportunities can run contrary to a merit-based approach.

Operations

Programmes targeting diverse groups

All service providers were participating in some activities that addressed diversity issues. The main diversity focus for service providers, both NGOs and public extension organisations, was on youth. This is meeting a key need, as youth are increasingly migrating to urban centres to avoid agricultural work, which they see as unprofitable and arduous labour (as identified in the Gender and Diversity Analysis report). In response, service providers facilitated young-farmer clubs and many have established targets for youth involvement in groups. One cassava processing enterprise provided land and technical counsel for a youth and agriculture programme at a senior secondary school with 170 acres of land to teach students about agriculture for a livelihood after school. Other examples of service providers meeting diversity needs and respecting differences are training provision for women in sign language, awards given to disabled farmers and encouraging their clients to speak in their native languages.

However, a diversity approach could be applied more consistently by service providers in order to identify differences in needs and impacts on different groups.

The extent to which this was done by staff and management varied, particularly by gender and service provider type, as the table below illustrates. Generally, female staff and NGOs felt they included diversity more often in their work than men or public extension organisations and the research institute.

Table 15: To what extent do you consider and include diversity in your work?

	Female %	Male %	Total %
Not at all	14	6	9
To some extent	24	22	23
To a great extent	38	61	53
Completely	24	11	16

Total count: 21 female, 36 males

Numbers may not add to 100 per cent due to rounding

Integrated Development of a Cassava and HQCF Village at Nkyenkyne

In many areas of Ghana, cassava processing enterprises are becoming more involved with improving the livelihoods of the farmers they are working with. This has come from a sense of social responsibility that is being increasing among some private sector businesses in Ghana.. For example, Amasa Agro Processing Company,, a long established cassava processing business, has been sponsoring the village of Nkyenkyne in the Eastern region. The village is being supported through the establishment of contact farmer associations to cultivate 1200 acres. This will provide work for 120 people, most of who are migrants to the village. Young people are also being targeted and taught agronomic practices and provided with irrigation for the production of cassava. There are also plans to improve housing and recruit a medical doctor in the village though some mobile health services are occasionally provided. The CEO reported that he plans to hire a Local Gender Specialist to provide some assistance in integrating child development and for ensuring that benefits are distributed equally. C:AVA would benefit by brining processing enterprises together to learn from the social responsibility approach that is being promoted by Amasa.

Diversity issues that need to be addressed

Staff raised a number of issues that will need to be addressed in C:AVA activities to ensure equal distribution of benefits in communities. The issues that were identified are as follows:

- There was a lack of suitable cassava technology for disabled people.
- Religious organisations should continue to be inclusive to other religions
- Communication with different language groups was difficult and recruiting interpreters was problematic
- Female and male extension workers find it difficult working in Islamic communities where women were generally more secluded
- Monitoring of different groups included and excluded in activities
- Social mobilisation of diverse groups

“Religion plays a role in Muslim communities that we work in. Women aren’t supposed to greet others. But this may change because we want equal opportunities and we want to have group discussions with men and women” (female extension agent).

Monitoring and evaluation

As discussed in previous chapters, monitoring and evaluation systems were in place for service providers but improvements should be made to include diversity and gender indicators. Without this, some partner management felt that they had very little information on their clients and the impact on different groups as their programmes have focused more on the technical delivery of interventions such as cassava value chains, quality controls and marketing. Examples of diversity indicators are: age, nationality, tribe, language group etc. Not all of these indicators need to be used, but organisations should select indicators based on participatory community research. These indicators should be included in baseline surveys, monitoring and needs and impact assessments. Close attention should be paid to the characteristics of those included and not included in programme activities, with an analysis of encouraging and discouraging factors of participation.

Recommendations

Organisation

- Improve understanding of diversity and provide capacities in how issues can be addressed, and how activities could be extended or improved for different groups.
- Investigate how the organisation and programmes are currently reaching out to different groups and address issues that arise from this.
- Develop policies and organisational approaches in which diversity issues are defined and can be addressed.
- Develop a list of organisations and contacts from different diverse groups to draw upon expertise when required.
- Ensure staff are equipped with conflict resolution skills.

Operations (CAVA)

- Address issues of non-indigenes, various faith groups, disabled people and youth.
- The research institution should also investigate technologies or modifications to existing technology that work well for groups such as the disabled, or blind, and use them to facilitate income generating activities.
- Integrate diversity characteristics into the monitoring and evaluation system and revise documentation to include these.
- Include characteristic indicators for monitoring such as gender, age, tribe, disability, or country of origin etc, and cross tabulate against the type of farming, farmer wealth, or village location to gain insight into activities on the field.
- Develop guidelines for choice of interpreters and to consider the possibility of using interpreters from the community in which work is being carried out to improve communication. However, using an interpreter from a community may have the result of bias responses, in which case precaution should be used. Gender, age and marital status should also be taken into account.

7. Enabling participation

Participation in socio-economic and political life is widely seen as a crucial tool for achieving greater equality and overcoming poverty, and is an intrinsic part of development processes and business innovation (Sen, 2001; Chambers, 2007). Subsequently, the Gender and Diversity Audit includes an analysis of participation and how C:AVA partners enable participatory processes internally and with their clients. There are a range of processes and mechanisms for participation; therefore the purpose of this performance area is to identify what is currently being done to enable participation and how it can be improved with gender and diversity in mind, within organisations and in their field operations.

Key findings

- There was a high understanding of participation and its importance among partners, but there was some indication that participatory approaches were not mainstreamed throughout organisations or in field activities.
- Internal participation was mainly conducted through staff meetings, where staff could learn, problem-solve and discuss with other staff. Smaller organisations tended to be more participatory as opportunities for interaction area easier to facilitate.
- The majority of staff felt that the opinions and views of women and diverse groups were sought out in their organisations; however, there is room for improvement.
- Partners were effectively engaging with the external environment, which was contributing to innovation and learning.
- Staff used a range of methods and approaches to enhance participation among partners in their field activities; however, staff require capacity building in different participatory approaches to apply methods that correspond to complex situations.
- Partners face some constraints in promoting participation by using village power structures primarily to engage with communities. This may limit the scope of people who are exposed to activities, particularly vulnerable groups.
- Service providers incorporated methods that enhanced the participation of women in their activities, such as working with women's groups, and setting targets for women's participation. However, women face a number of barriers to participation that could be addressed, such as time constraints, literacy requirements etc.
- Service providers used various communication methods to transfer information to clients, but there were some problems with access for women.

Organisation

Understanding participation

All partners felt that participation was crucial to their organisations and external activities, whether their work involved business, extension services, rural development or education. The general understanding of participation was that it was a process to include the views, experiences and knowledge of staff and/or clients. This was conducted in a variety of ways, as this chapter will illuminate; however, a more nuanced understanding of participation could increase the quality of activities. A gender analysis of participatory approaches for instance, reveals that the general understanding of participation lacked attention to power relationships or complex social circumstances that influence the participation of different groups or that holding

meetings will necessarily ensure adequate participation. Moreover, participatory approaches were understood and applied only in particular contexts and not mainstreamed throughout organisations.

Means of participation within organisations

The majority of partners provided opportunities for staff to participate through weekly, fortnightly and/or monthly meetings. Cassava processing enterprises also held meetings with staff, and sometimes with farmers and end-users. Most staff and management felt that their meetings were effective for planning, learning and problem-solving as a group. One NGO also held Participatory Review Processes at meetings where all staff would review the strengths and weaknesses of projects and share learning. This reveals that CAVA partners have systems in place for staff to learn from each other's experiences.

"We have meetings on Mondays to review the previous week and plan the way forward. We look at how best to identify issues and create a work plan" (male director NGO)

Organisational culture played a role in determining the extent to which partners were participatory internally. Smaller organisations tended to be more informal and open and supportive of staff input. For example, one young female administrator could recite the organisational mission perfectly, showing a strong sense of involvement and commitment to organisational goals.

"Everyone has a role to play. Somebody should be able to stand in for another. So you know what you are doing as well as what other staff are doing and everyone participates. We have plans that are shared" (male NGO manager).

In contrast, larger organisations tended to have a more formal culture where structured meetings were usually the opportunity for staff to participate in the organisation's strategy and work. Staff reported that management did not always support them or listen to their ideas, which was impacting on staff motivation and innovation. This confirms that meetings do not always ensure good participation. Larger organisations also reported problems in communication between management and staff, which reinforced the poor participation. As these staff have the knowledge of what is working on the ground, it is crucial for management to listen and learn from the views of field staff.

"Sometimes the director hasn't listened to me. For example, I felt that the grass cutter project would take students away from school. I said this to the director but he didn't agree. Then in the long term the project ended because of this problem" (female programme manager NGO).

"Our communication with staff is not always good. They don't know the constraints we face financially. I don't think those messages are transferred down" (male research institution deputy director).

Gender, diversity and participation

'Who' is participating is a crucial question, as vulnerable groups can often be excluded unless awareness is made of and attention is paid to their active involvement. Participation is key for partners to respond to gender issues, as gaining a range of women's views can help adjust project objectives and plans to be more

gender friendly. The majority of partner organisations felt this was being done in their organisation, as the opinions and views of women and diverse groups were ‘usually’ or ‘always’ sought out (84 per cent). Men were slightly more positive, where 53 per cent said ‘always’ compared to 33 per cent for women. However, 16 per cent of staff felt that this seldom occurs, which was more prominent from public extension organisations, indicating that there is room for improvement in consulting with different groups internally for some organisations.

Table 16: Are the opinions and views of women and different groups actively sought out by your organisation?

	Female %	Male %	Total %
Never	0	0	0
Seldom	17	16	16
Usually	50	32	39
Always	33	53	45

Total count: 24 females, 38 males

Numbers may not add to 100 per cent due to rounding

However, in the context of strategic gender needs, women’s participation in decision making is less evident. Some male staff reported that women colleagues did not often participate in organisational activities even though they felt it was a comfortable environment. Male staff felt that women should be encouraged to contribute more strategically to the organisations. It is also important to consider different methods of participation for different groups. For example, management felt that meetings were an opportunity to hear staff views; however, this environment is intimidating as they are typically male dominated and hierarchical.

External partnerships

Partners were engaging with the external environment in many ways, which staff felt contributed to innovation and learning. Partners had a number of external partnerships with the national government, local government, civil society organisations and private companies. The table below demonstrates that 80 per cent of staff and management felt that these partnerships were ‘effective’ or ‘very effective’. However, there is an issue particularly for NGOs who felt they had little independence from donors.

Table 17: Does your organisation have effective partnerships with external organisations?

	Female %	Male %	Total %
Not at all	0	0	0
Ineffective	21	19	20
Effective	63	70	67
Very Effective	17	11	13

Total count: 24 females, 37 males

Numbers may not add to 100 per cent due to rounding

Operations

Current participatory methods in field activities

Staff clearly had the skills to apply participatory approaches in the field and utilise a range for methods. This is promising that C:AVA will be able to include women in its

activities, despite the lack of targeted approaches for women. A mix of consultative and collaborative approaches was used, depending on the organisation and programme. For example, agricultural extension used a number of different methods for assessment such as participatory needs assessments, participatory rural appraisal, client questionnaires, field demonstrations and farmer schools. One NGO held a participatory workshop with clients to discuss options on what agricultural activities to conduct as a group. Learning institutions conducted participatory research by consulting rural people about their technical needs, such as the smoke and heat free frying technology. These approaches were all respectful of local knowledge and structures. Indirectly, some activities of partners in result in some form of empowerment such as building capacities of women and putting them in leadership positions.

“We establish a baseline. We monitor through visits and discussions with beneficiaries. At the end of the project we monitor for outcomes and impact. In these we obtain information on men and women” (male manager NGO).

The main method for public extension services was the training and visit method, which combines regular visits to communities (particularly through village leaders and local facilitators) with informal evaluation methods to identify how technologies were being taken up, applied, and their impact. One service provider took a more farmer-led approach, where they facilitated the establishment of community monitoring committees to enable service users to judge their own performance. Another popular method was a group approach, which shifts focus from working with individual farmers to group work, which is cost effective, can reach a higher number of people, and contribute to social capital.

“We compare the situation before and after training. We collect data on how many men and women participate. If we go to a community we have a local group of people who will evaluate our work... We set up an implementation committee in every community made up of trained beneficiaries. If we are training a group of forty people we will ask one person from every five to form an implementation committee, half women and half men. Our evaluation contains points to address, staff feedback, challenges and how issues are tackled” (male NGO extension agent).

However, partners may want to still increase the range of tools they use for their activities. For example, the training and visit method may be best suited for more large-scale commercial farms than compared with smaller subsistence farm where the focus may need to be more on empowerment. , Other approaches such as the innovation of farmer systems approach involve a range of suppliers and users at the centre of analysis to define problems and develop solutions. Service providers may want to undertake learning in a range of participatory methods in order to apply tools that best fit a situation.

There was also an indication that some organisations were not incorporating participation systematically during planning, implementation and monitoring evaluation. Most participatory methods were utilised in the initial phases of activities, but not throughout the project. This trend was slightly pronounced among public extension organisations. As the table below demonstrates, 64 per cent of staff felt that consultation with different groups in their field activities, for instance, was ‘usually’ to ‘never’ conducted. This indicates that a more consistent approach to

participation is needed throughout programme activities, which continually feed into the direction of the activities.

Table 18: Do you actively seek out the views and opinions of different groups when planning and conducting your work?

	Female %	Male %	Total %
Never	0	0	0
Seldom	14	11	12
Usually	50	39	43
Always	36	50	41

Total count: 22 females, 36 males

Numbers may not add to 100 per cent due to rounding

Addressing power structures in initial community engagement

Partners need to examine their relationship with existing community power structures and understand its effect on participation, as the majority of service providers are using existing political structures to mobilise clients. While this has been a very effective way for gaining legitimacy in rural communities, it could have implications for different groups and even reinforces structures of inequality.

Currently, many service providers start the planning phase of their programmes by communicating through the village authority. Village authorities are typically an older male; however, they can also be female (the 'queen mother') if the male elder is not available. This contact is required in order to conduct work and gather people together in the village, and was seen by both staff and management as being important community relations. However, partners also recognised the consequences that this contact would have on equal participation in their activities for women and vulnerable groups, and in some cases they have changed their approach:

"Women are at the back. One chief only told the ethnic group from the north and not the women in the village about our programme. So I separated women from men" (female public extension agent).

"They decide who should join the groups and the choices are sometimes based on character of the person and wealth status" (male extension agent NGO).

Some NGOs have begun contact with female village representatives, but it largely depended on the village: *"We go through the traditional village authority but sometimes we will go through the Queen Mother"*, a male NGO director stated. Another good practice was a female public extension agent going to different houses to introduce herself and the organisations, which encouraged equal participation and the spread of information as it was direct to village members.

It is understandable that direct communication with village members is time consuming and costly, which renders going through village authorities more practical. However, this should not prevent extension agents from trying to emphasise equality in their work. They should also examine their own position in local hierarchies and how they may be viewed by people, as some may feel intimidated by extension agents because of their qualifications or associate them with the Government. Extension agents that work in their own villages of origin may be situated within local hierarchies and be more influenced by existing power structures, resulting in privileging some groups or families. Given this, service providers would benefit from

capacity strengthening in participatory methods and an opportunity to examine their own position in order to provide more inclusive services to rural people.

Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

Most service providers did not use participatory monitoring and evaluation methods, which essentially empower the clients to rate the effectiveness and impact of programme activities. However, one NGO was conducting pre and post participatory evaluations on their training programme. This process includes clients forming small groups, which are equal men and women, and provide feedback on the course and the impact of training. These have led to more relevant training being provided to farmers in a format that they prefer.

Recommendations

Organisation

- Improve understanding of participation and participatory methods, particularly with regards to the influence of power relationships and the complex social circumstances.
- Develop an organisational participatory approach and mainstream it throughout the organisation.
- Develop more creative ways to encourage individual and collective staff participation, such as interdepartmental or external field visits, role-playing, staff presentations and external partnerships to increase learning and enhancing performance.
- As discussed in previous chapters, partners should consider evaluating levels of staff and client participation, using variables such as sex, age, ethnicity, language and nationality. Establish targets but also examine the quality and impact of participation. Take measures to identify and address issues of exclusion.
- Cassava processing enterprises should help support a diverse supplier group to participate in the C:AVA that will provide opportunities for participation of women and men.

Operations (CAVA)

- Review and adjust current approaches to incorporate participation throughout planning, implementation and monitoring evaluation and improve access to services and programmes. For example:
 - Communicate with other community members after community authorities have been contacted and/or contact Queen Mothers and other women figure heads in communities.
 - Train local facilitators to act as a link between the organisation and communities to exchange information and ideas.
- Instate a range of communication gender- and diversity-friendly communication methods, such as radio programmes with female announcers, presentations in local languages and limiting, if not omitting, written materials.
- Address or support others in addressing systemic barriers to female participation, such as female illiteracy, control over resources, gender stereotypes and lack of trust towards development workers.
- Undertake capacity strengthening in participatory methods, group dynamics and conflict management to work more effectively with groups and encourage their participation.
- Undertake regular participatory evaluations with clients such as through community monitoring committees.

8. Innovation

Innovation simply means 'a new way of doing something', or for organisations, doing something new. Innovation provides different ways to achieve a goal often in terms of improving efficiency, productivity, quality etc. In terms of gender and diversity innovation is also important because gender and diversity relations are constantly shifting and being re-negotiated. New constraints and opportunities are continually arising and requiring new methods for understanding and addressing differences. In this context, innovation is examined to identify the extent to which partners facilitate processes for the creation and use of new ideas.

Key findings

- Innovation was largely understood as the production and introduction of new technologies, which was an essential part of most partners' work.
- Most organisations possess an organisational culture that supports innovation and has an openness to try new things. But the understanding of innovation could be extended to look at processes of shared learning between organisations.
- There were a number of ways that partners were being innovative in areas that addressed both practical and strategic gender needs. Most of these ideas were done in consultation with female clients.
- Staff meetings were the tool that was most often stated for knowledge sharing. However, the majority of staff reported that they needed to develop their skills to innovate, but felt this was not possible due to funding constraints.
- Knowledge sharing also occurs through partnership and external communication, which is critical for gaining new insight, influencing, and even gaining additional funding.
- Other barriers to innovation include inadequate incentives, lack of ownership and rigid management structures.
- In field activities, there was evidence of innovation, particularly among NGOs. NGOs may be more likely to be innovative in their field activities, which is most likely due to their independence from Government and more flexible structure.

Organisation

Understanding innovation

Innovation was largely understood as the production and introduction of new technologies, which was an essential part of most partners' jobs. Subsequently, most organisations strive to be innovative but in a structured way. There were some partners that had a more in-depth understanding of innovation and saw it in terms of internal processes and opportunities for learning and communication.

Partners felt that their organisations valued and promoted innovation in their workplace, particularly for a public extension organisation and two NGOs. Over 94 per cent of staff and management surveyed felt that the value and promotion of innovation in their workplace was 'sufficient' or more, which is extremely high, especially in comparison to results found in Nigeria.

Table 19: Is innovation (new ideas and ways of doing things) valued and promoted in your organisation?

	Female %	Male %	Total %
Never	5	3	3
Insufficient	5	3	3
Sufficient	46	44	45
Very sufficient	46	50	48

Total count: 22females, 36 males

Numbers may not add to 100 per cent due to rounding

Smaller partner organisations showed evidence of more dynamic innovative processes, due to a responsive and flexible structure. There was less evidence to support innovation among larger organisations, particularly public extension organisations, who were more constrained by rigid management structures and government policy:

“At our level, instructions are given mostly from above. For example, last year there was a demonstration on maize and we had to conduct it even though I didn’t feel maize was appropriate. You are not given the freedom to choose sometimes” (female public extension agent).

“An officer can try new ideas on the field but when it comes to policy implementation we don’t have a choice. When it comes to what technology we can choose they tell us the crop to use” (male public extension agent).

The research institute also experienced constraints in innovation, particularly with regards to implementing new research due to funding and bureaucratic constraints. Staff also felt that they should be provided with incentives to be more innovative.

“We would like to try new ways of doing things; we even have a new model on undertaking analysis. But there is no money and no equipment. The process is also very bureaucratic. We wouldn’t be able to get our ideas or proposals approved. It is because there are no resources to do this. I am hoping we can work with somebody in order to try new things” (male research institution scientist).

The inadequate communication between management and staff contributed to a lack of innovation among staff. Management, on the other hand, believes that it is also seeing to implementing policies which have been provided by their boards, as explicitly depicted at the research institution.

Innovation and gender

There were a number of ways that partners were being innovative in areas that addressed both practical and strategic gender needs. Most of these ideas were developed in consultation with female clients. Some examples of these are:

- Enhancement of stoves by reducing the amount of smoke and heat they emit, which was a major hindrance to women processing gari.
- Assistance and support for rural women entrepreneurs in terms of advice, capital and technical equipment - an area that extension agents felt could be expanded if their capacity in teaching entrepreneurial skills was increased.

This work should be enhanced, as innovative practices are core to addressing gender and diversity issues in the midst of social change and particularly changing

roles and responsibilities. It was evident that some of the programmes and structures of partner organisations were directed primarily towards traditional gender roles; however, organisations need to be aware and adapt to changing roles to deliver more effective services.

Learning

Key to enabling innovation in the workforce is staff development (skill and confidence building) and participatory processes (group discussions, individual consultations). Some organisations revealed good practice in sharing knowledge and ideas, which are key to innovation systems. Most NGOs were igniting innovation processes by providing staff with access to workshops, literature and internet. One NGO in particular, had given all staff the opportunity to undertake distance learning with a UK University through donor funding. Public extension organisations and some NGOs built review sessions into their monthly meetings. One NGO undertook a Participatory Review Process, where staff reviewed a project, gained feedback from colleagues and established lessons learned. Currently, some management staff members are undergoing post-graduate training in human resource management and accounting which will directly and indirectly contribute to capacity building in the organisation. One NGO has also created a number of internship positions for students.

However, there is still room for improvement. As the table below illustrates, 8 per cent of staff (13 per cent for women and 5 per cent for men) felt that learning and innovation in their workplace was ‘poor’, which is one of the lowest ratings that was given to organisational aspects. This trend was particularly pronounced for one public extension organisations and two NGOs.

Table 20: Staff rating of staff learning and innovation

	Female %	Male %	Total %
Poor	13	5	8
Satisfactory	29	36	33
Good	50	43	46
Excellent	8	15	13

Total count: 24 females, 39 males

Numbers may not add to 100 per cent due to rounding

Partners reported a number of ways that they promoted innovation in their organisations, such as creating a friendly and open environment, giving staff freedom to attend workshops and seminars and test their ideas. These methods all require management to be flexible and supportive of staff.

The majority of staff reported that they needed to develop their skills to innovate, but felt this was not possible due to funding constraints. For example, researching on the internet was done on the own time of staff and on their own funds. It may therefore be useful to make more learning resources available for staff since this is an area that staff would like to see improved and is crucial for innovation. In addition, regular consultation with communities and external partners could encourage new ideas.

Networks and partnerships

Knowledge sharing also occurs through partnership and external communication, which is critical for gaining new insight, influencing, and even gaining additional funding. NGOs, public service providers, learning institutions and cassava processing

enterprises all work in partnership for a range of reasons, such as advocacy, research or support.

Barriers to innovation

Partners showed high capacity in being innovative; however, there were a number of barriers that prevented staff and management from being more innovative. Some 'innovation barriers' for partners were lack of motivation from inadequate incentives (bonuses, training, and management support) and rigid management structures.

Operations

Innovation in field activities

Similarly to innovation within organisations, there was evidence of innovative practices in the field; however there is room for improvement. NGOs seem more likely to be innovative in their field activities, which is most likely due to their independence from Government and more flexible structure.

One example of an NGO being innovative was in the activities it held to encourage community participation in their training programme:

"We hold social activities. We hold an exhibition where beneficiaries can come and show their talents and their fashions. This motivates people to come to our training and opens up participation" (male extension agent, NGO).

Importantly, staff of another NGO also facilitated innovation processes by responding to their client's opinions and views.

"In one project we are setting up a women's bakery. One woman said 'Why don't we construct one large oven and one small oven, instead of two large ovens?' Staff were not convinced and asked why the small oven. The women answered that sometimes there will be small orders and we will need a small oven, which will take less cost than a large oven. So they made one small and one large oven and it was very successful" (male NGO director).

Recommendations

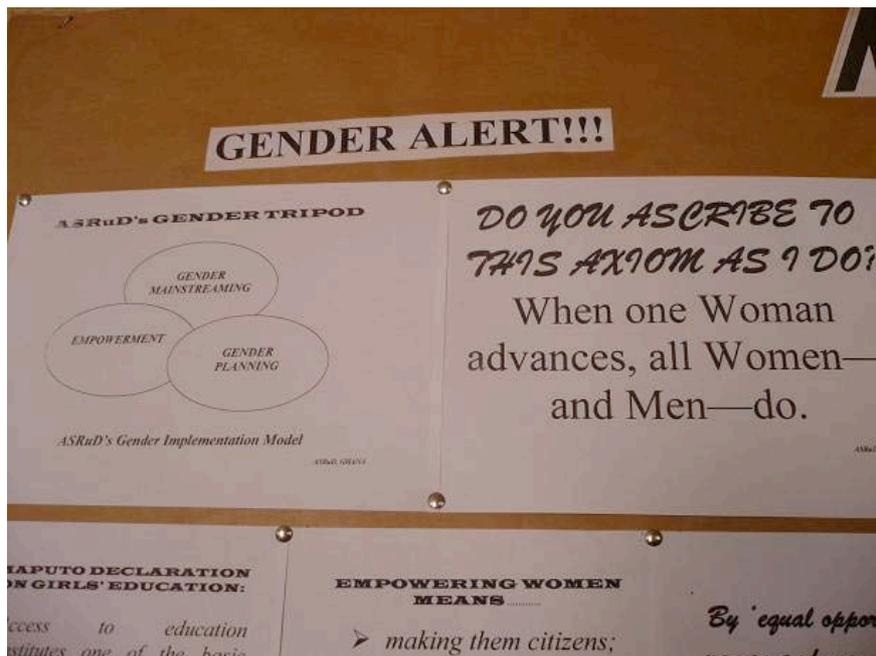
Organisation

- Improve understanding of 'innovation systems' as an approach to innovation, which focus less on production of new technologies and more on information sharing.
- Undertake a review of organisational structures to identify their conduciveness for innovation (e.g. bureaucracy, rigid rules etc).
- Encourage staff development through skill and confidence building and incentives using bonuses, training opportunities, bottom-up participatory approaches and management support.
- Facilitate more participatory processes between staff and with external partners for shared learning, new ideas and information dissemination.
- Sustain and create effective partnerships, particularly between research and field operations, which are critical for gaining new insight, influencing, and even gaining additional funding.

- Encourage ownership in the organisation, such as giving staff some control over budgets to try new methods.

Operations (C:AVA)

- Priorities for innovation should fall congruent with the priorities established in the previous chapters, such as developing new ways to present the organisation and communicate with the public, reaching to men and women, participatory research methods etc.
- C:AVA country team should facilitate platforms for shared learning on various activities for C:AVA.



Appendix: Capacity strengthening needs

The Gender and Diversity Audit raised a number of capacity strengthening needs. The partners consulted during the gender and diversity audit and the workshop felt that gender and diversity was relevant to their work but required capacity strengthening (60 per cent of staff interviewed). Some of the capacity strengthening needs that came out of discussions with staff and management with regards to gender and diversity are noted in the table below. There were some partners that exemplified good practice in the areas below which can be drawn upon in capacity strengthening exercises.

Table 21 Detailed list of gender and diversity capacity strengthening areas

Organisational	Operational
Gender mainstreaming, gender budgeting	Gender and diversity needs and impact analysis, empowerment, intra-household and family dynamics
Gender strategy and gender-friendly policies	Gender sensitive approach to group formation and group dynamics
Expanding women's representation vertically and horizontally in the organisation	Encouraging participation in all areas
Equitable recruitment, retention and promotion practices	Targeting hard to reach groups
Gender and diversity disaggregated monitoring internally	Gender and diversity disaggregated monitoring in activities
Gender specialist, resource material, staff training	Challenging gender roles, changing mindsets and building women's confidence
Challenging mindsets	Holistic provision and activities working with men

The Gender and Diversity Audit also identified a number of other capacity strengthening needs outside of gender and diversity, yet intrinsically linked and will impact on C:AVA successes. The following tables summarised self-defined capacity needs for partners. Please note some prompts may have been used.

Table 22 Detailed list of general capacity strengthening areas

Technical skills	Agricultural technology; storing and processing approaches; crop preservation, handling, storage and marketing.
Mobility and mobility maintenance	Vehicles, motorcycles and Mopeds.
Logistics	Enhanced equipment for processing e.g. graters and hydraulic presses; safety equipment for travel.
Communication	Internet; farmer communication systems.
Monitoring and evaluation	Course evaluation and formal feedback system.
Financial management	Accessing external funding; staff recruitment; information on existing markets.
Information Technology	Internet; digital camera; powerpoint training.
Policy development	Gender and diversity strategies, employment policies.
Learning and development	Peace building, group formation; group dynamics; learning materials; demonstrations; project management; opportunities to participate in workshops, exchange programmes and collaborations.
Advocacy and networking skills	Building partnerships; influencing government policy.

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