

GENARDIS Workshop (March 24-26, 2010)

Wedgewood B&B, Melville Johannesburg, SOUTH AFRICA

Workshop Report (March 31, 2010) - Kathleen Diga

“GenARDIS is for the deaf woman in Ethiopia who can now generate her own income through digital photography... GenARDIS is for the villagers in Tanzania who were tired of walking three hours to get to the market, who took it upon themselves to build and create their own market, using radios and mobile phones to win clients. It is for the lives of rural men and women that are changing thanks to access to technologies.” – Genardis blog (LisaC 29/03/2010)

The objective of the GENARDIS workshop was to share each of the grantee’s experience and discuss the way forward for future Genardis activities. The success of the Genardis project was in its power to enable emerging local researchers and organizations to take a small idea of change and touch a village by unleashing its curiosity and interest, sometimes driving further initiatives beyond one’s imagination. The seed funding allowed small research projects to gain some research experience and make contacts which they would otherwise not have. The Genardis program is a niche area of much-needed gender work in the rural grassroots research domain.

The workshop was hosted in a quaint little conference room space attached to a bed and breakfast but surrounded by a beautiful courtyard and garden. The APC once again accommodated for bilingual translation for the three days which the delegates gained great appreciation for. A majority of the delegates had attended the kick off September 2008 workshop in Dakar, Senegal which allowed for genuine collegiality among the delegates during this workshop. After Dakar, grantees went off to conduct their research and occasionally reporting on their progress via blogs: <http://genardis.apcwomen.org/>. This March workshop was to present their results after the one year of funding.

I attended for two of the three workshop days. Thurs 25 March was designated for the grantee presentations on their research work. There were 11 presentations overall and many of the presentations used the opportunity to describe their rural context and interventions within their local communities. Feedback was then given by the participants especially from Oumy Niaye from CTA (Netherlands).

Presentation Observations:

From the projects, I was able to derive the following observations: Several of the projects attempted to maximize this research opportunity. Some found further research synergies and resources (one example: Ethiopia and their private sector computer donation, and PGIS research linkage). Communities are most excited from interventions in their quiet villages which led to villager-initiated development ideas. Typically the researchers have been working with these certain communities and NGOs for a while and are close to the ground in terms of the needs. Projects that are typically invisible

or ineligible to large network funding now have some experience in the research cycle. I noted that some of the projects had trained hundreds of residents in the community within the year (ie Thierry from Cameroon mentioned 787 persons educated! Charite from Togo with 355 women trained). One issue which came up a few times was the difficulties of trying to gather women at the same time in one place. Due to gendered roles of family and farming responsibilities, meetings would be delayed or difficult to organize. At the workshop itself, there was also some informal information sharing which took place such as introduction to new technologies (ie. End Computing) and short one-on-one teaching of Powerpoint. The participants were also able to learn from each other's presentation techniques. Despite some well described projects, some of the research presentations were vague in their intervention and findings (particularly some of the Francophone presentations); I hope from reading the reports, I will be able to better understand the intervention and results. (may ask Ramata to review those ones for clarity).

More specific presentations

One researcher, Charite from Togo, was truly a rural woman who was able to use the intervention to not only get better prices for agricultural produce for women, her organization had information sessions on women's rights to land, and violence against women. The organization also facilitated misunderstanding between couples or deal with the resistance by men as a result of the new information given to women population.

I found the Tanzania project by Ruth to be the best presentation in displaying a research analysis of their intervention. With the one farming group in the village of Peko-Misegese, in Morogoro, TIAME ("lets us work together" in the local language), that they worked with, 98% had no mobile nor knew how to operate one. They did their agricultural marketing through a middleman (with non-negotiable selling prices), walked long distances or paid workers (usually men) to carry their produce. When returning home from market, the men had final say on the spending money. As a result of the project's education program, focus group discussions and mobile phone intervention, the farmers decided to form a co-op and build a more near-by market to sell their agriculture produce. They built the market stands themselves and used the phones to encourage buyers to come to their local market. As a result of the new market stand, the group of 20 sellers increased to 40 people, usually those joining from other neighboring regions. This research project helped to initiate enthusiasm for this new nearby market stand and has started to show its effects such as less walking time, and less dependence on the distant market to sell goods. I found that this project had success due to some factors: The researcher had been working with the organization since 2003, the group is a member of a strong marketing network in the region and one family kept the group active through coordination and leadership. Those sellers who had experience in contacting buyers (one had 20 buyer contacts, others only 1 buyer contact) were more aggressive in marketing and able to use the mobile phone to improve their trading. One identified constraint to the possible progress of this intervention is the village secretary's request for his own personal mobile phone and he has resisted the project as a result of the inability for the project to provide this individual with his own mobile phone.

"If the husband is not around, and you are not able to produce [food], and have no education, and no [way to pay] school fees, [this is why] women need to be heavily involved in economic issues" (Johnstone, Torodev)

Several project examples had both men and women participating in the training sessions and this was necessary for intervention acceptance by the households, even though the women would take on the intervention after training. Some gender changes included women in Uganda, who in the past did not leave the homestead or the farming area, were now attending district agricultural exhibitions and going out to sell their produce. Couples were also open to discussions on economic issues in the family, not just reliant on the male household member.

Revealing some project realities: One project based in the Democratic Republic of Congo mentioned that after the project conducted its intervention, civil conflict saw the destruction of the project and the migration of some of the trainees.

The North Nigerian project developed radio programs for women and a mobile phone was provided to a group in order to call the radio station to comment as well as to use for income generating or social purposes). Few of the women owned their own radio or mobile phone. Using their refreshment allowance from the group meetings, the women registered themselves as a cooperative society called the Agbada Association. This same group decided to call one radio show presenter to come to their village and give a farming demonstration described on the radio program. The women also started their own literacy program with the help of their church pastor (because they knew they couldn't use the phone unless they had some literacy skills). Within the targeted group, only two people knew how to read and write in Hausa language. For an extensive blog which was used for the duration of this GENARDIS project, go to: <http://womensmeetingplace.wordpress.com/>

"The project tries to help a woman free herself and take destiny into her own hands" (Aimee, DRC)

Genardis Publications

Genardis asked me to make a presentation on how to turn the research projects into publishable materials including into a possible genderIT.org article or an academic journal article (see Appendix A). During my session, I used the rationale for writing built much from discussion from the Acacia Research and Learning forum as well as Eve Gray's recent article on publishing from AJIC. Most of the time was then spent reviewing the research question and developing one clear statement of the most significant research finding or aspect from the projects. After about 30 minutes, I engaged with the participants in a role play to bring out those key statements from each grantee.

Jenny mentions that APC plans to put together a publication on the history of GENARDIS from the last three rounds of small grants. The remaining funding will also be used to help translate articles into

French or English for the special June 2010 issue of GenderIT.org. **ACTION: Assist partners to publish work in GenderIT.org**

Genardis hopes to fundraise for another round of small grants. Genardis is an example project for multi-donor partnerships and will be sharing such stories within their upcoming publication. I was asked by APC whether IDRC would provide another round of funding but I referred them back to the responsible PO for further discussion.

In conclusion, I remain uncertain of the transformational changes of gender equality on the beneficiaries from the Genardis work. The introduction of interventions has certainly brought more awareness and women users into the village societies, but I wonder aloud whether such interventions are enough to invoke transforming change in village life between the man and woman. Nevertheless, certain projects did bring crucial issues to the attention of women and men, such as domestic violence, land rights, literacy, and local markets some of which the women were able to absorb the information and take charge. Most of the grantees were able to show their own transformative changes within through their presentations which is a major accomplishment and a reason to continue this type of grassroots research work.

A blog on the Genardis workshop by Lisa Cyr (APC): <http://www.apc.org/en/blog/why-genardis>



I-r back row: Johnstone, Oumy, Ruth, Antoine, Carl, Jenny, Issac, Thierry, Fetien, Sember; I-r front row: Wilder, Charite, Aimee, Kathleen, Lisa

APPENDIX A:

GENARDIS Workshop (March 24-26, 2010)

Moving Project Reports to Research Publications: Morning 26 March 2010

Presenter: Kathleen Diga

Objective: Knowledge Sharing - Moving Project Reports to Research Publications. After watching the project presentations on Thurs 25 March, this morning session asks the question, "what next"? In other words, how can the researcher get his or her work or "raw material" to reach out beyond its current scope to the greater global networked society? One strategy is through transforming the current material into a research manuscript for print publication on journals or other targeted media.

THE MOST IMPORTANT POINT IS TO WRITE, WRITE, WRITE and WRITE SOME MORE.

This workshop is to build on earlier discussion on Wednesday, what is "the most fascinating aspect of your project learnings". As researchers, we try to convince people that what we are doing is making a difference in the world. What is that compelling story that needs to be told in the African context, what work did you do and what still needs to be done?

Rationale for Publication: As a researcher, you have already generated interest in this intriguing unique research field of Gender ICT and Agriculture. Many researchers would like to find out the results of your research. The publication becomes an effective tool to unleash a communication strategy which **engages with your community** (from research, government, to village) and make a difference. Particularly in gender research, it is important **to change behavior or mindsets about the inequalities** between men and women through your research. How are you going to get through to those people?

A researcher gains much credibility in being able to present a peer-reviewed publication which is scientific, empirical and references the primary research that they conducted in the field. It is thus important to produce a published document for the purpose of recognition for **your contribution to knowledge production, research debate and discussion** in the area of Gender, ICT and agricultural research. Lastly you can use your research publication to mobilize new contacts and future research funding (ie answer those new research questions and recommendations).

Methodology: Break out into small 4 groups of 2-3 to discuss (30 minutes): What was the most significant research finding from your GENARDIS work? What is your key core message? FOCUS on writing it in one simple core message on a piece of paper. Can you illustrate how your research will help your community or make impact at the human level?

Key Message Example: *“In my research in rural Uganda, the findings show that women are willing to make incremental sacrifices of food and groceries in order to pay for and have access to mobile phone services.”*

Impact Example: *“Given the research finding, this information has been shared with Uganda Communications Commission and research network group PICTURE Africa to consider in policy discussions about ICT tax decisions, interconnection rate costs, and income generation schemes.”*

Publication also means that the research is familiar with up-to-date literature in the field of ICT, gender, and agriculture and able to form an opinion in order to contribute to the debate. Thus reading and making reference to relevant research literature is imperative to a successful publication. Researchers must also be familiar with the specific structure of a research report. Take time to view the CD for literature which builds your research report case.

Where to Publish?

- PRIMARY: Working Paper, short conference papers, or Policy Brief for an institution
- PRIMARY: Academic Journal (list of journals)
- SECONDARY : Newspaper, online news (able to connect with APC writers to help write your story), AWID
- SECONDARY: New Media: Podcast, video, blog, news (this is secondary after a solid publication is produced to reference)

The importance is to set a realistic goal of developing a publication. This GENARDIS community is a strong support group who wants to see positive change and will help you reach your goal. It is important to utilize this group to share your ideas, draft reports, and receive feedback. The first major step is to convince a journal to send your manuscript out for review!!

Bonus: Special issue of GenderIT.org – Special arrangements are being made with the editors of GenderIT.org to choose selected research work for publication.

Resources: Communicating Research Results for influencing policy:

<http://acaciaforum.net/pg/pages/view/3053/>

www.GenderIT.org

CD with Gender and ICT literature

How to Write a Manuscript for Publication (this document has also been translated into Word Lingo)

APPENDIX B: **Participants Register**

GenARDIS 3 knowledge sharing and capacity building workshop for GenARDIS grantees to be hosted 24-27 March 2010, Johannesburg, South Africa

Name Participants	Country	Sign
Seember Nyager	Nigeria	
Thierry Camille Ndjiepe Fotso	Cameroon	
Amee Akpene Attikpo	Togo	
Aimee Byamungu	Democratic Republic of Congo	
Fetien Abay Abera	Ethiopia	
Karl Kubuga	Ghana	
Antonie Chikou	Benin	
Isaac Chanda	Zambia	
Johnstone Baguma	Uganda	
Ruth B Madulu	Tanzania	
Wildor Makonero	Democratic Republic of Congo	
Trainers/facilitators		
Oumy Khairy Ndiaye	Netherlands/Senegal	
Willie Currie	South Africa	
Kathleen Diga (IDRC)	South Africa/Canada	
Jennifer Radloff	South Africa	
Emilar Vushe	Zimbabwe	
Lisa Cyr	Canada	
Eunice Mwesigwa	South Africa	