
**Because gender
matters :
strengthening
social and
gender analysis
in ENRM in the
Middle East and
North Africa;
project
evaluation**

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ACRONYMS

CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CRP	Centre Research Program
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
ENRM	Environment and Natural Resource Management
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NARS	National Agricultural Research Systems
ICARDA	International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
SAGA	Social and Gender Analysis
SAS	Social Analysis Systems
SWOT	Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

INTRODUCTION

Research on gender in agriculture, environment and natural resource management is at an embryonic stage in the Middle East and North Africa. It is not an exaggeration to say that the topic has received less attention in MENA than in any other major region of the world. In recent years, there have been a few overviews included in large works undertaken by international organizations such as FAO and the World Bank.¹ However, there continues to be a dearth of systematic baseline information about the different tasks carried out by men and women, about their access to resources, their participation in decision-making, and the impact of local customs and norms on their capacity to participate in economic activities, etc.

In face of significant male outmigration from many rural areas often to work in neighbouring countries and in the Gulf states, over the past two decades many women have taken on agricultural roles that they did not perform in the past. More recently, the impact of climate change with greater desertification and loss of water resources, is leading to new vulnerabilities. These require that both women and men have knowledge of improved land use and management practices to sustain their livelihoods. Additionally, policymakers must have detailed knowledge of how natural resource systems are managed on the ground. Who does what? Who has access to what? Who benefits from what? What kind of training or support is needed? In addressing these basic questions, the project, “**Because Gender Matters: Strengthening Social and Gender Analysis in ENRM in the Middle East and North Africa**” has made a significant contribution.

Because Gender Matters was developed jointly by ICARDA and IDRC’s Cairo office. Both agencies recognized the dearth of detailed information about gender and ENRM in the MENA region and resolved to address the lacunae. They realized that the problem was not simply one of gathering data, but more importantly of contributing to the development of a cadre of trained human resources who would be able to carry out social and gender analysis (SAGA) in the future. Thus the emphasis from the beginning, was on working with a few experienced researchers (though not necessarily social scientists) and a larger team of young people, many engaged in Masters’ level training. The project itself was carried out over a four year period but there was more than a year of preparatory work and the final product of the project, an edited volume, is currently in production.²

¹ E.g. **Gender in Agriculture Source Book** (2008).

² In addition, the project had a six month extension from March 31, 2013 to September 30, 2013 to cover the production of the book based on project findings.

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY FOR THE EVALUATION

The primary tasks of the evaluation were the following:

- i. assessment of the implementation of the project's objectives in the MENA region;
- ii. analysis of the constraints and opportunities encountered by the different parties of the project (ICARDA and IDRC);
- iii. exploration of the potential to initiate future gender projects in the region; and
- iv. assessment of key results in terms of capacity building, methodologies, approaches and research outputs in light of available budget and timeframe as well as the professional capacity of ICARDA.

There were also a series of specific tasks and questions under the headings: Research outputs; Capacity development; Partnerships; Dissemination; and Lessons learned. These are highlighted and discussed below under each of the five categories.

Data for the evaluation were collected in July/August 2013 through an analysis of all project documentation, several interviews with the two project leaders, and a web-based questionnaire (Survey Monkey) sent to the four teams. Responses were received from all four team leaders and from three team members (two from Algeria and one from Morocco). A summary of the responses is given in Annex 1.

PREPARATORY WORK

IDRC approached ICARDA in 2008 with the suggestion that they develop a multi-country proposal on gender and ENRM. An important first step, undertaken jointly by ICARDA and IDRC, was to commission an overview paper that analyzed the status of gender research on environment and natural resource management in the MENA region.³ The paper was based on personal interviews with topic and regional experts, mostly at IDRC and ICARDA, reviewed some literature of the topic, and analyzed 36 IDRC and/or ICARDA projects broadly drawn from the ENRM sector, to assess whether gender and social analysis was integrated into their work. The review found that most of the projects did not include gender analysis and that the understanding of "gender" (as opposed to women) was weak. Moreover, although a gender component was often included in at least one project objective, it was frequently not addressed in the analysis.

At the level of research, the paper concluded that

- gendered research on agriculture and ENRM needs to be better documented and at larger scale to inform policy development;
- research needs to explore power relationships, decision-making processes and social institutions; and

³ Fajber, Liz. Integrating gender analysis in environment and natural resource management in the Middle East and North Africa: a review of challenges and strategies. Submitted to ICARDA and IDRC, May 18, 2008.

- research is needed to better understand the implications of changing social roles, responsibilities and decision-making in agriculture and NRM in face of globalization and environmental change

In general, lack of social science research capacity was identified as a key challenge. Additionally there was

- Lack of integration of social and natural sciences
- Limited technical capacities
- Lack of recognition of value-added of SAGA
- Lack of regional resources on SAGA
- Limitations of existing education and training programs
- Weak systems of accountability
- Gender-blind policies

The overview stressed the need for capacity building in SAGA and noted that this should go beyond short term training and/ or lectures. It should include “learning by doing,” ongoing mentoring, peer review and exchange, development of local cases and resources in local languages, institutional support to implement SAGA and long term investment in committed scientists.

The review paper was a good starting point for the project. It was presented and discussed at an Expert Consultation workshop held in Aleppo in April 2008. This workshop aimed to identify weaknesses, challenges and strengths to integrate SAGA into ENRM in the MENA region and to stimulate peer networking and collective action among key actors in the region.⁴ Participants identified capacity-building as a major challenge and stressed that for capacity-building to take root, it should be embedded in a solid research program.

THE PROJECT

VISION

ICARDA’s vision for the project developed progressively. Recognizing that there is a lack of SAGA capacity in the region, preliminary expectations were not unrealistically high. The ICARDA project leaders recognized that research capacity-building would need to be a critical component of the project. They also wanted to have multi -disciplinary teams that included biophysical scientists and a good component of younger people, including students.

GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

In January 2009, the formal project proposal was submitted to IDRC and funding for a three year project began in March 2009. The overall goal of the project was to build capacity and generate innovative practices and methods that demonstrate the value-added of social and gender analysis (SA/GA) methods in action- oriented and transformative research. The specific

⁴ Hillary Feldstein, Malika Abdelali-Martini and Liz Fajber. Strengthening Regional Approaches to SAGA in ENRM in MENA: Expert Consultation Workshop (9-10 April 2008). Summary Report. May 2008.

objectives were to:

1. Identify and conduct three applied research projects on gender and social analysis to generate new knowledge on key challenges of gender, poverty and ENRM;
2. Strengthen capacities of researchers to implement action-oriented research on SA/GA in ENRM through technical support to deepen current research approaches, methodologies and analysis; through improved peer learning and networking among researchers in the region, and through peer exchange, joint analysis and capacity building activities;
3. Identify key issues of organizational support for integrating SA/GA in ENRM research through structured discussions of challenges, successes and strategies with researchers and other stakeholders; and
4. Disseminate key results, lessons, and methods of the program to different user groups through communication strategies and production of media and materials.

PARTNER/PROJECT SELECTION

ICARDA issued a call for proposals in the region and assembled a Technical Advisory Group to assist in the selection of proposals to be funded within the project. Eleven were submitted and eventually four were chosen. This was one more than the original three that had been stipulated in the project proposal but the fourth proposal was added because the research team demonstrated a real desire and need for capacity building in SAGA and ENRM. Criteria for project choice were fluid. Projects had to integrate gender and ENRM but they also had to show potential for capacity-building and there was a desire to include projects from different countries and institutions. Projects also had to have the potential to demonstrate the added value and effectiveness of implementing SAGA research in the ENRM context. There was also concern with the potential for the teams to develop new skills and capacity during the research. Ultimately, one highly skilled team based in the region was not chosen because there was a desire to support weaker proposals and institutions. With the exception of the Algerian team, the other three teams were based at institutions that are not traditional partners of ICARDA.

The four chosen projects were based in Algeria, Morocco (2) and Lebanon. Two of the project leaders were female (Morocco and Lebanon) and two were male (Morocco and Algeria.) Each of the teams included five to six researchers. ICARDA did not have to make special efforts to bring in male researchers. Both men and women applied to participate in the project because they understood the relevance of gender research (although they did not necessarily have a nuanced understanding at the beginning of the project). Many of them recognized that learning gender methodologies would give their work added value and that donors would look more favourably on future proposals.

The Algerian project was based at a government research institution, the two Moroccan projects were based at higher education institutions and the Lebanese project was based at an NGO. This diversity ensured that in later project meetings there would be a good representation of researchers working in different sectors (and with the inclusion of two educational institutions,

a good supply of students who could be involved in training and capacity building). The selected projects were:

<i>Project title</i>	<i>Project leader and team members</i>	<i>Participating institutions</i>
1. Gender analysis of the effects of declining water resources, resulting from climate change, on rural communities and their coping mechanisms in Boudinar, Province of Driouech, Morocco.	Abdellatif Khattabi; Ecole Nationale Forestière d'Ingénieurs (ENFI), Sale, Morocco. 0661210854; Ab_khattabi@yahoo.com Manar Matah; ENFI; Hakima El-Fattahi; Naima Fawzi Team supported by Soumaya Ibrahim	ENFI; Boudinar Community leadership
2. Factors preventing women rural cooperatives from accessing new external and internal markets: a gender analysis perspective.	Lina Abou Habib; The Collective for Research and Training on Development Action (CRTD.A), Beirut, Lebanon. +961 1 611079; labouhabib@crt-da.org.lb Reem Zaben, Omar Traboulsi, Mahbouba Aoun, CRTD.A; members of other institutions to be nominated	CRTD.A, Lebanese University, Ministry of Agriculture
3. Options for enhancing the utilization of local knowledge on livestock production, livelihood improvement and gender relationships.	Mohamed Kanoun, INRA-Algeria. +21772189198; a_kanoun@yahoo.fr Amel Kanoun; INRA-Algeria; Md Larbi Cherfaoui, Hakim Ouzzane, INRA Algeria; Abdelmajid Benmebarek, ENA, Algiers, Malika; Nora-Kadira Hamidat; and Malika Abdelali-Martini, ICARDA. Team supported by Malika Abdelali-Martini	INRAA, ENA, ICARDA
4. Gendered-valuation of local knowledge for enhancing the utilization and conservation of aromatic and medicinal plants in the atlas mountains of Morocco. The case of Douar Maâmar.	Zahid Fatima; l'Ecole Nationale d'Agriculture de Meknès (ENA), Morocco. 066130-59-78; fzahid@hotmail.com Karima Maâni, Sara Chajâe, ENA Students; supported by Maria Fernandez	ENA INRA, Morocco

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The two Moroccan projects were provided with technical assistance by consultants who were part of the Technical Advisory Group. The Algerian project was provided with technical assistance from an ICARDA scientist. In each case, the technical advisors worked with the team throughout the project, providing advice and input at all stages and making personal visits, including visits to the field. They also undertook some gender capacity building in Boudinar, Morocco and Algeria. The Lebanese team chose not to have continuous technical assistance. When interviewed, the other three team leaders all expressed gratitude for this assistance and said that it had been helpful.

RESEARCH OUTPUTS

A. WHAT RESULTS HAS THE SAGA PROJECT PRODUCED?

The project set out to produce results that addressed the access/ use of natural resources; gendered access to technologies and markets; gendered determinants of vulnerability and adaptation to climate change; women's occupational health issues; rural women's cooperatives; and the extent to which rural women and rural women's organizations have been or can be empowered. Since there is very little documented evidence of the different roles of men and women in ENRM in the region and this project makes a substantial contribution from that perspective.

B. WHAT IS THE QUALITY OF THE RESEARCH CARRIED OUT?

The main outcome of the research is a book entitled **Gender Research in Natural Resource Management: Building Capacities in the Middle East and North Africa**.⁵ The manuscript is currently in press with Earthscan Publishers as part of the series, Earthscan Studies in Natural Resource Management.

Based on the papers included in the book manuscript, the overall quality of the research is good. The quality of the individual papers varies. Some are analytical while others are primarily descriptive. Given the paucity of data about gender and ENRM in the MENA region, descriptive data also fills an important gap. The four projects served the dual purpose of generating new knowledge about gender and ENRM in the region and also contributing to capacity building specifically in gender research and more broadly in social sciences research methodologies.

ALGERIA

Project: The Local Knowledge and traditions in traditional systems: Case of livestock projection in pastoral areas in Djelfa, Algeria

⁵ <http://www.routledge mentalhealth.com/books/details/9780415728522/>

The research in Algeria focused on changing ways of life and production systems in the Algerian steppe regions, which has come about partly due to climate change and the deterioration of natural resources. This has effected traditional income generating activities and led to the loss of local knowledge. The project examined the production of *qashabiya*, an animal-fibre-based warm robe traditionally worn by men and produced by women. Changes in animal production systems, including modernization and factory production of fibre, have led to a scarcity of raw materials. However, even under the traditional system, women have had to depend on male relatives to sell their *qashabiyas* in local markets. Although they add value to *qashabiya* production they are denied direct access to markets and autonomy to manage their own production systems.

Another facet of the research examined the negative health impacts of *qashabiya* production on women. The researchers found that women are affected by a wide range of ailments associated with their age, raw material processing activities, type of equipment used, weaving and other socio-economic activities. Participation in *qashabiya* production potentially is placing women and children at risk of serious illness especially under current working conditions. Moreover, as their work is done in the mainly at home, they are not covered by the national insurance plan.

Researchers used a variety of methodologies, including qualitative participatory tools such as focus group discussions, force field analysis, and timelines. They also carried out a household survey that included 250 households in the region. The team produced four papers that are included in the project book:

1. Gender and natural resources degradation: the gender aspects of the production of *qashabiya*
2. Gender relations and marketing of traditionally made garments (*qashabiya*) in Djelfa province, Algeria
3. Gender and the risk of know-how loss in agro-pastoral communities: the case of *qashabiya* in Djelfa, Algeria
4. Occupational health issues and women's ailments related to the production of the prestigious women-made traditional garment (*qashabiya*)

Overall, the research presents detailed data about an area of economic activity that is partly dominated by women (e.g. production but for the most part not sales, although women sometimes sell the robes from home at low prices). *Qashabiya* production has been an important source of income for women but now, as a result of climate change and increased desertification (which makes it more difficult to raise livestock), coupled with a move towards factory-based production, women are being squeezed out of a traditional source of employment, and increasingly using synthetic fiber. The research results are well analysed and point to important further areas of research.

LEBANON

Project: Strengthening the access of rural women cooperatives in Lebanon to internal and external markets: Researching options for action to address marketing constraints and opportunities confronting rural women.

The research explored the link between the natural resource management knowledge of rural women's cooperatives and sustainable access to markets. The findings confirmed observations drawn from daily practice that material capital investment can be useful only when there is day to day engagement with rural women. Women need to be supported in the development of technical and inter-personal skills, understanding and improvement of intra-household gender relations and the ability to understand and subsequently address obstacles that block market access. There are some top-down large and costly aid programmes which have diverted the attention and capacities of rural women from looking at and addressing marketing issues through their diversified efforts.

The study shows the feasibility of establishing rural cooperatives run by women. Rural women's cooperatives that were doing well (i.e. had access to markets) tended to have knowledge of and commitment to principles of cooperatives. For example, the notion of being not for profit, the requirements of a start-up period of low return on investment of time and energy, as well as limitations on women's mobility need to be factored into future interventions. Monitoring and support during the start-up period also needs to be part of action plans for future cooperatives.

The team produced two papers for the book:

1. Factors of market access success for traditional food industry in Lebanon: some themes pertinent to rural women cooperatives
2. Access of Rural Women Cooperatives to Markets in Lebanon: barriers, enablers and options for action

Research methodologies included timeline, SWOT analysis, causal dynamics tool, social domain approach and Socratic wheel. Data was collected during four two-day workshops and in a series of interviews. Overall, the project results are mostly descriptive but they provide a valuable insight into an important form of women's organizations. They do not, however, examine gendered power relations or gender-based constraints that may impede rural women's cooperatives from reaching their full potential.

MOROCCO (MAÂMAR)

Project: The potential of aromatic and medicinal plants for improving livelihoods in mountainous communities: Gender and sustainable resource management.

The research examined a large development project that did not sufficiently integrate gender into its design and studies how this may have limited the success of the project. The development project aimed to implement sustainable utilization of herbal and medicinal plants for community income generation. Although the project supported women's groups, it did not fully integrate gender into the implementation of its major initiative. This proved to be an important oversight because the researchers found that women are key actors in the collection and use of herbal and medicinal plants, and play major roles in the utilization and maintenance of knowledge for herbal and medicinal plants. The research found that because of prevailing social customs women were not fully integrated into modern organizations (cooperatives, associations, groups) set up to market and utilize herbal and medicinal plants.

The team produced two chapters:

1. Exclusion of women from local development initiative doomed to failure: the case of the Middle Atlas community of Maâmar in Morocco.
2. SAS for Gender Research and Social Capital Enhancement

SAS (Social Analysis Systems) tools were used for the research with the intention of enhancing not only the quality of findings but also to reinforce social capital in Maâmar. The team used timelines, force field and social analysis of collaboration tools. The latter allowed for analysis of conflict, legitimacy, interests and power relations within the community. They found that women in the community had less social capital than men and were involved in more marginal groups and organizations. However, using the analytical tools provided by the researchers helped them to improve their level of social capital (although less so than was the case for men who used the tools). The exercise allowed them to better understand the organizational elements within the female space of Maâmar and their own perceptions of the groups of which they were members.

MOROCCO (BOUDINAR)

Project: Building capacity on social and gender analysis with respect to water resources management in the Rural Commune of Boudinar.

The research examined the extent to which women's and men's differential access to social and physical goods or resources is deepened by climate change. The researchers concluded that gender inequality can limit the effectiveness of climate change adaptation strategies or any developmental efforts. The overall aim of this study was to understand how men and women in farm households in Boudinar perceive and experience climatic shifts.

The team produced two papers:

1. Gender Inequality in the context of climate change: the case of the Boudinar commune in Morocco
2. The effects of changes in climate and water resources on gender inequality in Boudinar community in Morocco: the case study approach

The research gave detailed descriptions of the gender roles of both men and women in agriculture and ENRM. It also generated important information about men's and women's access to resources and their resiliency in face of climate change. There is also some analysis of the changing roles of women in agriculture in the absence of male family members who have migrated to seek work elsewhere. Methodologies included a quantitative survey of 100 participants; focus group discussions with 150 participants; and 34 case studies. The team also used village social maps, village resource maps, timelines, seasonal calendars, daily activity clocks and farming systems analysis to collect and analyse data.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Lack of capacity in social sciences research in general and in gender analysis in particular continues to be a shortcoming in the MENA region. The 2008 Expert Consultation workshop in

Aleppo identified several factors to consider in SAGA capacity building. They urged that approaches should be iterative, strongly grounded in field practice, supported by mentors and long-term. As will be discussed below, the **Gender Matters** project implemented most of these suggestions in its capacity-building strategy.

A. WHAT IS THE LEVEL OF SOUNDNESS OF THE RESEARCH?

All the research was carried out in a professional and committed manner. Three of the four project teams had on-going support from an experienced gender researcher (either an ICARDA scientist or a member of the Technical Advisory Group) and they all utilized a variety of methodologies and approaches. Each team was able to produce one or more contributions for the book that is being published as a final project activity and each team also published separate papers and made presentations at scientific meetings.

Overall, the project was carefully conceptualized and carried out according to a plan that was finalized in discussions with the four teams. The plan was sufficiently flexible to allow for periodic changes in response to new ideas or conditions that arose. The careful planning and provision of back-up support, paid strong dividends in the end because it led to four good studies, each with their own areas of focus but sharing important conceptual and methodological approaches and perspectives. The resulting book will make a strong contribution to what is known about gender and ENRM in the region and also provides a ground map for building capacity in research on gender and ENRM.

B. HOW EFFECTIVELY HAS THE PROJECT BUILT THE CAPACITY OF NARS PARTNERS IN UNDERSTANDING GENDER RESEARCH?

The capacity building component was structured to ensure that learning was continuous throughout the life of the project. The capacity-building workshops were a critical element in that they built on each other and over the four years of the project and participants received a good grounding in research methodologies, data analysis and paper writing. A total of 176 participants attended the various training workshops. Some of the senior scientists had training in bio-physical and natural sciences and although they may have had experience in doing research and writing for scientific publications, they had little previous exposure to social research. From this perspective, although frequent workshops were an expensive and time-consuming option, they served an important function both for training and in building a sense of coherence among the four research teams.

WORKSHOP 1. SETTAT TRAINING COURSE: APPLIED SOCIAL ANALYSIS SYSTEMS AND DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH TOPICS. MOROCCO, 5-8 NOVEMBER 2009

The first workshop included two members of each team and because of the location, three extra participants from Morocco. The training course on applying social analysis systems to the problems of natural resource management and environment in agricultural systems and rural conditions was given by Dr. Jacques Chevalier of Carleton University and Michelle Bourassa of Université du Québec en Outaouais. While the workshop seems to have provided excellent

training in a wide range of qualitative social sciences research methods, it did not include a specific focus on gender research methods. This may have been because IDRC had organized the workshop as part of a larger effort to build general capacity in social science methods. Although the lack of focus on gender research was regrettable, the workshop provided participants with a good basic understanding of various tools that they used in their later research.

Immediately after the social methods training, the research teams participated in a two day research planning workshop. Detailed discussions, comments and suggestions on research plans were provided by ICARDA scientists, IDRC program staff and two visiting researchers from Université d'Paris X and University of California, Davis. The teams worked further on their research questions and hypotheses and the methods they hoped to use. Ultimately, the research proposals became much clearer and better focused.

WORKSHOP 2. GENDER ANALYSIS METHODS AND RESEARCH IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHOP. ALEPPO, SYRIA 2-6 MAY 2010

This workshop provided further intensive focus on the research questions and the field methods that the teams planned to use. Participants presented their proposals to their peers and received useful feedback. During the workshop they undertook a mini research exercise that helped them to grasp the importance of clarifying the main research question in order to formulate sub-questions. They also learned the usefulness of taking a systems perspective and developed an understanding of the need to register and organize information using similar criteria and formats.

Teams spent considerable time discussing research methods that they would use in their fieldwork. However by the end of the workshop the facilitator noted that the ICARDA would have to provide a gender orientation for the use of the social analysis tools that had been chosen.

WORKSHOP 3. SOCIAL AND GENDER ANALYSIS FOR ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT. BEIRUT, LEBANON, 28-30 SEPTEMBER 2010

The objectives of the third workshop were to review progress in research; assess the state of application of methods; provide support and backstopping; share experiences and research insights; and develop consensus on next steps, report presentation and structure, communications strategies, needed organizational support and dissemination strategies. The workshop gave more attention to gender. A presentation by a member of the Technical Advisory Group on Day 1 gave a detailed description of gender analysis.

Each team presented their proposal and had it critiqued by workshop participants. The comments were constructive with specific suggestions for improvement and it was a good learning experience. This approach also helps to break down the stereotypes about who is an "expert" since it validates the opinions and expertise of everyone.

A mid-term project evaluation done with Survey Monkey was presented. All the project teams had been contacted earlier and asked various questions. Some of the main findings were:

- Need to improve communication skills among projects and with ICARDA
- Use the SAGA tools more in practice and with support in the field
- Explore new tools and adapt to findings
- Develop manual for SAS tools
- Involve also people outside the project (from local communities and research institutes)
- Support with article writing skills
- Support comparison among project methods and experiences

WORKSHOP 4. GENDER ANALYSIS METHODS AND RESEARCH IMPLEMENTATION. RABAT, MOROCCO, 16-19 MAY 2011

The Rabat workshop focused on presentation of research results, provision of feedback and discussion of final reports and writing of papers for the project book. Participants presented data for each chapter that they intended to submit for the book and they received substantive and constructive feedback and suggestions from other researchers and from the ICARDA scientists and other members of the Technical Advisory Group.

Participants were also asked to comment on the capacities that they had developed during the life of the project. Some of the new skills and/or insights that were highlighted included:

- the necessity to adapt to cultural contexts
- the need for good communication skills
- research team management
- importance of English as a working language
- the comparative benefits of different qualitative research tools
- gender analysis
- networking

METHODOLOGIES

Capacity building in methodologies was a key part of the project. Research teams were introduced to a wide range of social sciences approaches, especially in the first training workshop. Ultimately they chose to focus on causal dynamics, timelines, force field, Socratic wheel and social domain. They also employed a wide selection of gendered methods, including: Order and Chaos, Problem Tree, Force Field, Timeline, Gaps and Conflicts, Causal Dynamics, Stakeholder Identification, Social Analysis CLIP (Collaboration, Conflict, Legitimacy, Interests, Power) Social Domain, V.I.P. (Values, Interests, Positions). A case study approach was adopted in two projects (Morocco, Boudinar and Lebanon).

One of the strong points of the project is the consistent attention that was given to creating capacity in qualitative methodologies and the efforts that were made throughout by the project directors and the technical advisors (consultants) to ensure that the teams fully understood and were able to use their chosen methodologies.

C. WHAT CONTEXTUAL ISSUES HAVE INFLUENCED THE CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT EFFORT OF THE PROJECT?

A possible constraint on capacity development was the fact that many of the researchers were already fully qualified scientists. Although three of the projects had student participants, the capacity building efforts were not focused specifically on students. As discussed above, training was provided during short workshops, and during fieldwork, and this may not have been sufficient either for bio-physical scientists without previous exposure to SAGA, or for students who are still learning basic research approaches.

Not all the team leaders were equally open to learning new approaches and to giving opportunities to their team members. However, by the end of the project all of the team leaders seem to have been supportive of the process although one team (Lebanon) did not precisely follow the writing guidelines that were provided by the project coordinator.

Probably the most significant contextual factor during the life of the project was the fact that ICARDA was forced to leave its Aleppo headquarters because of the Syrian war. This was very disruptive for the project leaders but for the most part the move to Jordan does not seem to have had a negative impact on the project, which went ahead more or less on schedule and still fully committed to all its objectives.

PARTNERSHIPS

A. WHAT PARTNERSHIPS WERE DEVELOPED IN COLLABORATING INSTITUTIONS AND LOCAL ACTORS IN THE REGION ON THIS SUBJECT

With the exception of INRA in Algeria, ICARDA had not worked before with any of the partner institutions in this project.⁶ ICARDA works in English while many of the research institutions in the region work primarily in Arabic and/or in French. Two of the collaborating institutions (in Algeria and in Maâmar, Morocco) had no capacity in English and both identified improvement of their English skills as a positive outcome of their participation in the project. This is an important point because future collaboration with ICARDA and through it, the vast international CGIAR network of which ICARDA is a member, can be an important source of access to new information, training opportunities and possibly even funds for small national institutions.

Among the project institutions themselves, there seems to have been a positive networking and peer to peer learning. The project's emphasis on peer critiques was an important factor in encouraging this. While one of the project leaders said that there has not been continuing communication with the other institutions after the project ended (and s/he expressed this as an unfortunate outcome) others said that they had remained in touch through email, telephone and Skype. One project leader mentioned that members of another team had become personal

⁶ Earlier collaboration with INRA was in biophysical sciences, not social sciences.

friends and another project leader identified a colleague on another team as having become an important “resource” for their institution.

Finally, it is fair to say that the project succeeded in establishing an embryonic network of researchers with some skills and knowledge of SAGA and ENRM in the region. This provides a good starting point for future work on the topic.

CHANGES WITHIN THE COLLABORATING INSTITUTIONS

Within each of the collaborating institutions, the project created a more open attitude towards research on gender. The project enabled structured discussions of challenges, successes and strategies with researchers and other stakeholders. One project leader commented: “Our institution and especially the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development is very interested in giving attention to gender in its future work.” Another said: “Our institution will capitalize on what has been accomplished and do further work on gender.” However a third noted, perhaps most realistically, “My institution recognizes the importance of this approach but it is necessary to convince the individual researchers.”

ICARDA itself has supported relatively little work on gender in the past. The success of this multi-country project, and the publications that have stemmed from it, should make it easier for gender research to be undertaken in the future.

DISSEMINATION

A. HOW SUCCESSFUL WAS THE PROJECT IN COMPILING AND DISSEMINATING RESULTS?

SCALING OUT – NATIONAL WORKSHOPS

Rather than host a final project workshop, it was decided that each team would hold a national scaling out workshop to share research outputs, methods and capacity-building processes with local audiences. The workshops drew students, extension workers, development agencies, researchers, educators and media. Their intention was to promote the approach and methods applied in the project and to raise the awareness of practitioners about the results of the project and their implications for development, education and policy. The teams in Morocco and Algeria held such meetings. The Lebanon team did not hold a national meeting.

PUBLICATION OF A BOOK

Unlike many multi-country and multi-institutional undertakings, this project had a publication plan from the very beginning. The Rabat workshop, in May 2011, spent considerable time discussing the book chapters that would be written by each team. The teams were given detailed guidelines on what information should be included, sub-sections with suggested

lengths, and on how to build their arguments. In Rabat they also worked on outlines for their papers. Importantly, the Technical Advisory Group members who had worked with each team were also present and were able to work one-on-one with the teams to plan papers that would be submitted for the book.

The book will be an important contribution to literature on gender and natural resource management/ agriculture in the region. Firstly it provides detailed information about the state of the natural resource base in several parts of the region, and the impact of climate change. Secondly, it provides analytical insight into the changing roles of both men and women in ENRM in face of both climate change and the impact of modernization. Thirdly, the book provides a reflective exploration of capacity-building and team-building. As such it will make an important contribution to the literature on SAGA and ENRM in MENA but also to the broader literature on individual, organizational and institutional capacity-building.

SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS AND PUBLICATIONS

All of the teams participated in seminars, workshops and scientific meetings at both the national and international levels. One team presented a poster at a national conference and five scientific publications were produced, aside from the articles produced for the book. One team leader integrated some of the research findings into a university course s/he teaches. Another team presented its findings at the 2011 Commission on the Status of Women Meetings in New York, which focused on the empowerment of rural women.

POPULAR MEDIA

All of the teams undertook at least some popular dissemination. One wrote web blogs on the findings. Another team contributed to national and international websites concerned with SAGA and ENRM. Several made radio and/or television presentations.

LESSONS LEARNED

A. REFLECT ON THE ORIGINAL PROJECT DESIGN AND ASSESS EX POST HOW REALISTIC IT WAS IN LIGHT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION AND WHAT LESSONS ARE LEARNED FROM THE PROJECT DESIGN AND ITS FINAL OUTCOMES?

Overall, the project design was excellent. It enabled the achievement of the project objectives and has led to solid research results. However, in retrospect, a few small improvements could have been made.

1. ROLE OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP

Aside from helping with the original selection of projects this group did not have a clearly defined role. Individual members of the group worked as private consultants to the project and their role seems to have been appreciated by the project research teams. However, this confluence of roles had some potential for conflict of interest. Moreover, a formal Technical Advisory Group should have terms of reference and specific tasks to ensure the overall scientific rigour of the project. This does not seem to have been the case. Similarly, since researchers from the Université de Paris and the University of California at Davis participated in an early meeting it may have been useful to involve them again later, possibly to provide comments on the final research.

2. CAPACITY BUILDING IN GENDER ANALYSIS

Capacity building in gender analysis although a critical part of the program, was rather ad hoc. For example, the first training was in social analysis methods without specific attention to gender issues. For a project that had the overall ambition to undertake gender research, this was odd. Since the social analysis training apparently was organized by IDRC as a separate capacity building effort in the region, one way of dealing with the anomaly might have been to add an additional day or two dedicated to gender research methods. Alternatively the Carleton team could have been asked to make room in the program for at least a few gender sessions. The second workshop also did not have an explicit focus on gender analysis methods. It seems that all the teams learned the importance of collecting sex-disaggregated data but not all of them used systematic gender analysis in their final research products. Arguably the capacity building effort on research methodologies should have focused more directly on gender analysis methods, in all the workshops. However, it is important to emphasize that not all gender capacity building was carried out in the workshops since the technical advisors to the various teams all carried out on the spot training when they visited projects.

3. COMMUNICATIONS

At the May 2011 workshop, the IDRC representative commented in his opening remarks that even when research is done on gender and ENRM, the findings seldom are shared beyond academic audiences. Both ICARDA and IDRC have communications divisions with experts located in the region. It would have been useful to involve communications specialists more systematically in all the work to ensure that there were regular press releases on findings, especially in the popular media, and to help research teams to hone their communications skills. This is particularly important because gender issues are not well understood in the region and there is work to be done at a popular level to educate people about the importance of taking the perspectives and experiences of both men and women into account. It seems to have been a lost opportunity that communications experts were not present in all the workshops and that research results dissemination at a popular level was not identified as an important outcome for the project. There would have been considerable value added for very little additional cost.

4. MID-TERM EVALUATION FOLLOW-UP

In early 2011 a Survey Monkey questionnaire was answered by several team members. They identified areas that needed more attention, including improved communication among projects and with ICARDA; development of a manual for the use of SAS tools; involvement of more people from local communities and research institutions. These areas do not seem to have been followed up. Several other comments made by the group were followed up. This included field support in use of SAGA tools; support with article writing skills; and comparison of project methods and experiences. In fairness, some of the requests from team members may have gone beyond the capacity of the project (e.g. development of a manual). Although some efforts were made to set up common wiki sites for communication among the participants they were not kept up (probably because ICARDA was forced to leave Aleppo during the time frame of the project and because of the shortage of human capacity on gender issues at ICARDA).

5. CLOSING WORKSHOP

Although the rationale for having national workshops to disseminate findings locally rather than a formal closing workshop, had merit, a closing workshop for team members would also have been useful. One team leader commented: I would have liked to have had a closing workshop to give us a chance to discuss the articles produced and to reinforce the relationships among the teams, giving us a chance to think about future work together.

6. TRANSFORMATIVE RESEARCH

It would be overly optimistic to say that this research has been truly transformative. However the research has had some modest transformative elements. It transformed the researchers in that by the end of the project they thought differently about gender and its importance as an organizing principle in the rural context. It also had an important impact on some of the rural women who participated in the research. For the first time they were asked to analyze and think critically about their own situation. It may not have changed the customs of local societies but it did give women the tools to better understand the constraints within their own lives.

B. HOW CAN GENDER RESEARCH BE STRENGTHENED IN THE MENA REGION?

Capacity in gender research is still at a fairly low level but there are a few gender and ENRM experts scattered throughout the countries of the MENA region. Based on the enthusiasm of the team members in this project, it seems evident that there is a cadre of young researchers (e.g. graduate students) who have an interest in gender or who would have an interest in gender if they had a better understanding of what it entails. There are several approaches that ICARDA, perhaps with the support of IDRC and other donor agencies, could explore.

SUMMER INSTITUTES

One way of building capacity would be to sponsor a series of annual “Summer Institutes” in gender and agricultural development, over a period of three years. The Institutes could last two weeks each and be situated at universities or research institutes in different countries in the region. Lecturers could be drawn from experts based in the region, possibly with a few outsiders. Participation would be open to researchers based in the region, including graduate students.

E-LEARNING MODULES

A less costly option would be to organize e-learning modules in gender research on environment, natural resource management and agriculture. The modules could be stand alone or be combined with one or two intensive learning workshops. Since ICARDA is not an educational institution, both the Summer Institutes and the e-learning options could be developed in collaboration with a university, either in the region or outside.

GRADUATE TRAINING WITH TARGETTED FELLOWSHIPS

ICARDA could offer one or two fellowships annually to post graduate students from the region, allowing them to be based at its premises (in Jordan or possibly Lebanon) while they carry out gender research. Perhaps this could be combined with on-going initiatives within the CGIAR system to improve the quality and quantity of research on gender and agriculture.

PROVIDE SUPPORT TO NARS TO HIRE GENDER SPECIALISTS

ICARDA could seek support to hire gender specialists to be based at a few NARS in the region. Such specialists could undertake gender research and they also could promote gender mainstreaming within their institutions. They could form a network of gender specialists and meet on a regular basis to share research results and discuss mainstreaming strategies. It is unlikely that the agricultural research institutions in the region will move towards gender mainstreaming unless there is a person tasked with the responsibility.

C. WHAT CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY SHOULD BE CONSIDERED TO HAVE SIGNIFICANT AND LASTING IMPACT?

There is no single approach to building capacity in SAGA and ENRM. Most importantly, ICARDA must have a clear vision of what it hopes to achieve with its capacity-building strategy. This project has underscored the demonstrable need for further knowledge about the different roles of men and women in natural resource management and agriculture in the region, especially in the context of climate change and rapid modernization.

There are at least three different types of capacity-building in the area of research:

- Individual capacity-building in form of scholarships, fellowships or short term courses offered to students or other researchers;

- Organizational capacity building, providing research units in universities, government or NGOs with the necessary skills to attract funding, publish findings, influence policymakers, etc.; and
- Institutional capacity building which is longer term and involves influencing the regulatory context the incentive structure to encourage policy makers to undertake and use research (DFID 2010).⁷

For an institution like ICARDA, it would be useful to begin with a focus on individual and organizational capacity-building. The Summer Institute, the E-learning modules and targeted fellowships would all focus primarily on individual capacity building, while the employment of gender specialists in NARS is focussed on organizational capacity-building. It is important to begin with a critical mass of trained gender researchers and then to influence organizations and institutions. The three types of capacity-building are not entirely linear but realistically it will be difficult to influence agricultural research institutions in the region to integrate gender into their research programs if they do not have access to researchers who can carry out this work. Similarly, it will be difficult to persuade policymakers to give attention to the different needs of men and women in natural resource management in the absence of data that shows that these needs are not identical.

CONCLUSIONS

The **Because Gender Matters** project has met all of its objectives and the book will make a solid contribution to knowledge about gender and ENRM and agriculture in North Africa and Lebanon. Some of the strong points of the project included:

Multi-disciplinary research teams. All of the research teams included members with training in different disciplines. While this may have created difficulties at the outset, after the teams learned to work together it eventually led to research that had depth and richness.

Inclusion of students. Several Master's level students participated on different teams. They were able to gain exposure to a wide range of SAGA methods early in their career and will doubtless continue to use them in the future.

Wide selection of methodologies. The teams were introduced to numerous qualitative social sciences methods at the first workshop and throughout the course of the project they had opportunity to use many of these methods and to get further training as needed from the technical experts.

Building block approach. The project was carefully conceptualized and proceeded in a systematic manner, introducing participants to new skills as they became necessary, i.e. research methods, data analysis, report writing, etc.

⁷ http://bsuhh.org/fileadmin/user_upload/bsu-ge/Other_Reports/How_To_Note_Research_Capacity_Building.pdf (Accessed 13 August 2013).

Continuous mentoring. Three of the teams had continuous interaction with an outside technical expert who was always available to give advice and feedback and who made regular visits to the project sites.

Peer to peer learning. Teams presented their work in progress at the workshops and received constructive critiques from their peers. This was an excellent way of recognizing and validating the collective expertise of the group.

Learning by doing. Research teams were introduced to new ideas and concepts at workshops and then immediately applied them when they returned to their home bases.

Notwithstanding all of these strong points and the positive evaluation given by the research team members who responded to the Survey Monkey questionnaire, the project was relatively small, involving only four institutions in a region with a well-defined need for gender research. The central question then is “How can the work be scaled up to have a wider impact?”

Ideally, in addressing this question, ICARDA should follow the same systematic process that was piloted in the **Because Gender Matters** project. Some steps that could be considered include:

- Begin with a mapping of the gender research capacity in ENRM and agriculture that already exists in different countries in the region.
- Organize an expert consultation and needs assessment meeting with some key agricultural research institutions in the region
- Identify staff within these institutions who would be interested to work on gender issues
- Organize a two week Summer Institute to introduce these researchers to SAGA
- Organize a small grants research program (perhaps in collaboration with the CGIAR Drylands CRP)

DIRECTION OF CGIAR

The work done by ICARDA in the **Because Gender Matters** project is timely in the context of the current reorganization of the CGIAR system to work in multi-Centre teams on 15 Centre-wide research programs (CRPs). For the first time, the CGIAR system has a gender strategy and a clearly stated commitment both to build capacity to address the gender dimensions of agricultural research and development at the Consortium level, and to integrate gender into individual programs. All CRPs are required to consider gender in research and to monitor gender outcomes. Thus the work done by ICARDA fits well with the new directions being pursued system-wide.

NEEDS OF THE REGION

One of the areas that could be explored more thoroughly in a follow-up project is the strengthening of rural women’s cooperatives. Most cooperatives need capacity-building in

entrepreneurship, management and value-added. Action research could be done to see what works and what strategies should be adopted by government to create capacity in women's cooperatives.

Other areas that need gender-sensitive research include adaptive strategies to climate change, water conflicts, new economic opportunities for rural women, indicators for natural resource management, changing roles of men and women in agriculture and livestock, etc.

APPENDIX 1

Table 1: Responses to Survey Questions

Question	Responses
1. Previous experience working on gender	Yes (4) No (3)
2. Did the project provide you with new skills or insights	New gender analysis tools including SWOT, value chains, time lines, problem trees New ideas, methodologies Improved analytical skills Electronic communication Improvement of English Changed attitude/ perception of gender roles in ENRM Developed an understanding of gender Developed a network with other researchers, with consultants and with ICARDA Learned how to work in groups New respect for multi-disciplinary approaches
3. Were project workshops/ meetings helpful?	Excellent for exchange and finding what the others were doing Provided opportunity to receive feedback from other teams on our work and for us to make adjustments accordingly Useful to receive feedback from other groups working on the same overall issue Participation of my students was very helpful for them Provided a space where women could talk freely and share their opinions and perspectives Provided opportunity for research questions and methods to be discussed and clarified. This made the field work much easier. Led to a horizontal exchange of knowledge and experiences among the

	<p>teams</p> <p>Offered possibility of multidisciplinary and multi-institutional reflection among the teams.</p> <p>Rich debates with good critiques from technical advisors</p> <p>Helped me to see the importance of gender in the context of ENRM</p>
<p>4. Has the project contributed to building gender research capacity in your institution</p>	<p>The research provided us with new knowledge which we used for developing policy dialogue and communication tools</p> <p>It allowed us to take concrete actions with the research participants.</p> <p>In our institution the project supported two M.A. theses and has led to a Ph.D. thesis currently underway.</p> <p>The project reinforced gender research capacity in our institution</p> <p>Yes, the project lasted three years and it gave the opportunity to learn a lot. It was especially useful for my graduate students who were exposed to many different methodologies. The frequent visits of ICARDA staff and consultants also contributed to building capacity and strengthening links.</p> <p>It reinforced research capacities in my institution but also at the community level, it enabled people to contribute to the elaboration of the Community Development Plan.</p> <p>My institution is now giving attention to gender and our project, thanks to the support given by the ICARDA team, has pushed forward methodological approaches on gender. We have been able to influence colleagues to also integrate gender into their work.</p> <p>The project contributed a lot by creating capacity in researchers who can now work on other gender work. They learned new methodologies, new approaches to field work, gender analysis, action research, etc.</p>
<p>5. Have you disseminated project results?</p>	<p>Hosted a sharing and validation meeting</p> <p>Wrote blogs on the findings</p> <p>Presented at 2011 CSW which focused on Rural Women's Empowerment.</p> <p>Contributed to the book edited by ICARDA</p> <p>Discussed the findings on radio</p> <p>Participated in various seminars, workshops and scientific meetings</p> <p>Participated in seminars on gender and natural resource management</p> <p>Gave radio and television interviews</p> <p>Gave television interviews both nationally and internationally</p> <p>Contributed to websites nationally and internationally</p> <p>Participation in seminars both nationally and internationally</p> <p>Two scientific publications</p> <p>Poster in a national conference</p> <p>Findings published on internet sites</p> <p>One scientific publication</p> <p>Results will be published as part of a collection on forests</p> <p>Have integrated the results into a course that I teach</p> <p>Have presented project findings at several workshops and symposia in my institution and elsewhere in the country</p> <p>Have spoken on national radio</p> <p>Will present findings at a national seminar, at a UNESCO workshop and at</p>

	<p>international meetings in Morocco, France and India</p> <p>Preparing one scientific publication</p>
<p>6. Do you expect that your institution will give more attention to research on gender in the future?</p>	<p>Our institution and especially the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development is very interested in giving attention to gender in its future work.</p> <p>Our institution will capitalize on what has been accomplished and do further work on gender</p> <p>The results are a good basis for further work.</p> <p>My institution recognizes the importance of this approach but it is necessary to convince the individual researchers</p> <p>Continue to be in touch with ICARDA and exchange information and discuss possible collaboration with Moroccan teams.</p>
<p>7. Have you had contact with the researchers in the other projects aside from meetings organized by ICARDA/IDRC?</p>	<p>No we have not.</p> <p>Yes, both email and telephone calls.</p> <p>Yes, telephone and skype. The members of one other team have become real friends. We have also had continued contact with our consultant</p> <p>Yes, especially with the head of one of the other teams. He has become a real resource for us.</p> <p>Yes but only with one other person</p> <p>Yes, very much with the members of one other team and also with the ICARDA and IDRC staff.</p>
<p>8. Did you find the support provided by the consultants useful?</p>	<p>It was sufficient.</p> <p>Yes, we were very happy with the interaction and the support</p> <p>Yes it was very important, especially at the level of methodology and scientific approach.</p> <p>It was especially useful for fieldwork</p> <p>Very useful</p> <p>Useful and sufficient</p> <p>It was useful in different ways and at all stages of the work</p>
<p>9. Do you plan to do further research on gender and natural resource management</p>	<p>One of the outcomes of this research was in coming up with new and emerging research questions which we are now beginning to develop into a new research idea</p> <p>Yes because it is a rich and essential area for research</p> <p>The project gave me methodological competence to continue to work in this area. We will continue to explore this topic further.</p> <p>I will continue to work on this topic because I now have the necessary competence and my institution wants to undertake similar work in all the communities, especially the most vulnerable.</p> <p>Yes my next project will definitely include gender and ENRM because it is a central issue in the field.</p> <p>Yes I would like to build on what has been done.</p> <p>Yes I am doing my doctoral thesis on this topic</p>