



Summary

Sheep, goats and poultry provide key benefits to women and other small livestock keepers in Senegal, as a source of income, food security and social status. Delivery of quality veterinary services ensures that animals are healthy and productive, and contribute to the nutrition and livelihoods of livestock keepers and their households. Research undertaken in Kaffrine, Senegal, shows that access to vaccines for small ruminants and poultry is limited by multiple constraints, including insufficient knowledge at the community level and discriminatory social and gender norms. Women livestock keepers often have a limited say in decisions about vaccinating animals and may lack the knowledge or the means to vaccinate their animals. It was also noted that there are few women livestock technical agents and auxiliaries.

Addressing these constraints, new gender-responsive training modules were developed and implemented with relevant stakeholders, as part of a research project in Kaffrine. The trainings aimed to improve the knowledge of stakeholders on the role of social and gender norms in influencing access and control of livestock keepers to veterinary services, and guide them in how to provide more inclusive and effective veterinary services that leave no one behind.

Key Messages

1. Delivery of/access to vaccines against animal diseases suffers not just from vaccine shortage and cold chain issues, but also failure to include women in decision-making regarding animal health.
2. Gender integration requires a deep understanding of gender dynamics and the involvement of both men and women.
3. The vaccine distribution system is weak at the bottom, as livestock auxiliaries lack motivations and resources and their roles are poorly defined.
4. Training in communication skills and sensitization on gender and social dynamics can energize animal health providers and improve their working relationships with communities.

Why was our research needed?

Kaffrine is one of the five largest regions in Senegal, with a population of approximately 600,000 inhabitants. It is an important site for livestock corridors as well as sedentary livestock populations. Livestock and agriculture are the main forms of livelihoods – with small ruminants (sheep and goats) and poultry being socially and economically valuable to women and small producers.

Healthy animals are sources of income, assets, prestige, and food security. The high frequency and incidence of animal diseases threatens the livelihoods of livestock keepers and their families. The major health threats to small ruminants and poultry derive from, respectively, *Pestes des Petits Ruminants* (PPR) and Newcastle Disease (ND), both of which are preventable with vaccines. The government of Senegal is committed to the eradication of these two diseases and conducts yearly vaccination campaigns for this purpose.

Research was undertaken to better understand the constraints affecting both the distribution of vaccines along the value chain and livestock keepers' access to vaccines at community level. Focus was on the constraints due to social factors, including gender norms, as these are less well-known. The approach undertaken was one that recognizes the existence of multiple intersecting factors that constrain individuals' access to resources and knowledge. These dimensions are, among others, gender, age, remote location, level of education, and poverty. This approach is called GITA (see box).

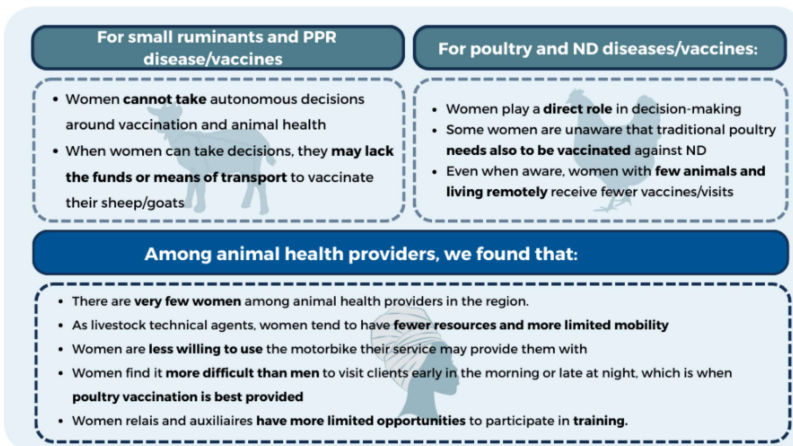
Gender and Intersectionality Transformative Approach (GITA) recognizes that socially prescribed roles and norms that define how men and women behave (GENDER) are interconnected with other social identities, such as age, marital status, social class, ethnicity (INTERSECTIONALITY). The approach highlights how this influences unequal power distribution among different groups of women and men and points to ways that inspire change (TRANSFORMATIVE).

The project also provided capacity development using gender transformative approaches with key stakeholders at different levels (see figure below), to increase women's participation as both providers and users of vaccines. The project has been funded under the Livestock Vaccine Innovation Fund (LVIF), which supports the development of affordable livestock vaccines, targeting diseases that impact women and men livestock smallholders, and facilitating their access and use at scale. The set of participatory action research projects within LVIF aim to address the barriers faced by women in livestock vaccine systems and generate new evidence on how they can better benefit from, and participate in these systems.



Key findings from sector mapping research

Our analysis of the Vaccine Value Chain (VVC) identified several gender and social constraints, influencing access to and control over vaccine related services and information in different ways dependent on the livestock species and type of disease. The findings are summarized in the figure below:



Some of the identified constraints are more known and recognized than others. All government agencies, including veterinary providers, have the mandate to include gender awareness as part of their services. However, misunderstanding exists about what gender integration in the livestock sector is and how gender interventions work. Furthermore, livestock technical staff often lack financial, mate-

rial, and human resources to fulfill their functions and attend to the needs of all clients

Training activities

To address the constraints identified above, our project conducted training in selected communities in the department of Kaffrine, Malem Hodar and Kounghoul. A training of trainers (ToT) modality was followed whereby our Senegalese team of trainers trained 9 livestock technical agents, who then trained 53 auxiliaries, who in turn conducted sensitization sessions in 19 rural villages, reaching over 413 livestock keepers. Training modules focused on gender and GITA approach, communication, facilitation skills and entrepreneurship development in the local community. Training materials were developed to support active learning and included training manuals, four booklets with illustrated stories and visual posters with limited text, in local languages.



Impact of training

Four months after each training, the team went back to selected locations to conduct interviews and focus group discussions to gather information on what the training meant to participants and how it helped them in their work and their lives. Participants at all levels demonstrated a deep appreciation of the content of the training. Prior to the training, many of them had little knowledge on why gender issues in livestock health management are important and found that the training helped them to better recognize and understand the role of women in livestock health management and service delivery. Animal health providers found their work has become more meaningful thanks to the deeper trust relations with clients that the training promoted. Many participants realized the benefit of a more inclusive and effective livestock health management system.

"The training taught me the art of convincing, how to negotiate with the person until you see what you want. Even at home, I apply it to convince my husband sometimes" (Woman, FGD Sagna).

"We can do some things. Men used to do almost everything. For example, before, to inject an animal, we asked for help, but now we do it by ourselves without asking for help, and for the vaccinations we also do it with their help, and all this is thanks to the training." (Woman, FGD Boulel Hodor).

"Since I did the training, I let my wives choose whether or not to vaccinate their animals, and I tell them all the time you can make that decision even when I'm not around, without even my permission." (Relais, Sagna).

Overall, two main findings emerged from the research and the training activities. Firstly, training of technical staff that includes gender awareness and soft skills is well positioned to better meet the needs of women livestock keepers and to improve gender relations. Secondly, sensitization of community members supported by the use of accessible and visual educational tools such as booklets and posters can importantly contribute to change perceptions on gender and social norms and initiate transformative changes in power dynamics at the community and household levels.

Policy Recommendations

1. Update messaging on gender integration within government structures to include women and men

Gender integration is more than the inclusion of women and requires attention to multiple intersectional factors. Animal health providers should be made aware that gender equity is a goal that benefits all, men and women alike. Such revamping of gender integration messages is needed not only in livestock government programs but at all levels of public administrative structures.

2. Integrate more gender courses into the curriculum for animal health workers

Training on gender and soft skills (communication, entrepreneurship) should be fully integrated into the curriculum for livestock technical agents, and integrated in the refresher trainings of technical livestock personnel at all levels.

3. Provide greater incentives to relais and auxiliaries.

A regulatory framework that promotes upward accountability between the relais and their respective livestock technical agent (or private veterinarian) can help improve their working relationship. More women should be encouraged to become technical livestock agents and relais/auxiliaries, and greater resources should be provided to make this job attractive for them, including training and equipment.

About this brief

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Photo Credit

Image 1. Community sensitization (photo by Mouhamed Fall)

Image 2. Training materials (photo by Alioune Touré)

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