



Case study: An innovative approach to value chain development

Partner: Bukonzo Joint Cooperative

Country: Uganda

Posted on: January 2012



I. Summary of the Case

Under Women's Empowerment Mainstreaming and Networking (WEMAN) a pilot project "Gender Justice in Pro-Poor Value Chain Development" started in Uganda with local partners: Green Home Organization for Women's Development and Bukonzo Joint Cooperative Micro Finance Ltd. The pilot was co-funded by IFAD for the period 2009 - 2011.

As a consequence of the positive outcomes of adapting the innovative participatory Gender Action Learning System (GALS), IFAD has decided to support up-scaling of the methodology in Rwanda, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and in other locations in Uganda from 2011-2014.

WEMAN applies three interlinked strategies:

1. Community-led Gender Action Learning System (GALS);
2. Gender mainstreaming and innovation in economic interventions and institutions;
3. Global learning network and advocacy movement .

The use of the Gender Action learning system (GALS) in the framework of value chain development is quite recent.

II. Why Oxfam Novib funded this project

Oxfam Novib has developed this project together with Bukonzo Joint Cooperative, both to increase the impact of the value chains on the ground and to develop the Gender Action Learning System as a complementary methodology that can be used to work on gender justice and pro-poor targeting in Value Chain Development projects.

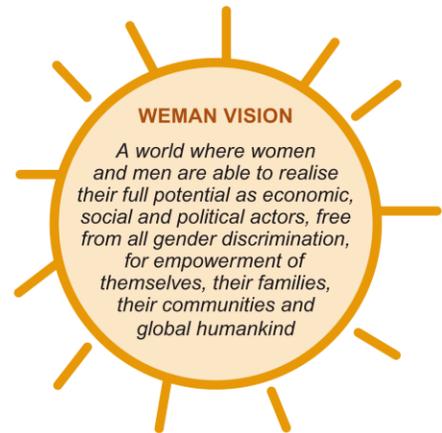
III. Full description of the Case

Context

Value chain development has been increasingly promoted in recent years as a methodology for combining economic growth and poverty reduction. The move from small livelihood projects to value chain development has considerable potential to challenge and change gender discrimination in markets and households which prevent not only women, but also men, from improving their livelihoods.

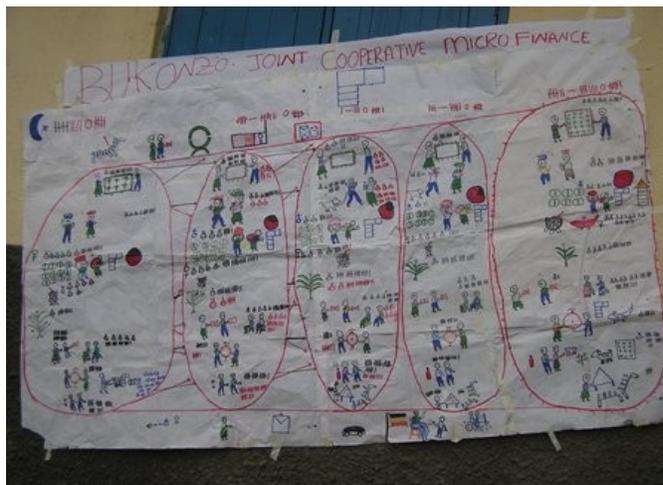
However most current approaches to value chain development are led by NGOs or private sector stakeholders rather than community-led, which makes it difficult to reach very poor women and men. This creates the impression that gender issues are an external concern, rather than a concern coming from women and men in communities themselves. It also creates the impression that poor people need to wait for NGO studies and interventions before acting to improve their situation.

Ignoring gender issues and relations in the household and between chain actors can highly influence the efficiency of the value chain, the flow of quality goods and thus prices for smallholders. Without addressing the gendered norms of men's behaviour, household poverty is hard to address.



Methodology

GALS is an innovative community-led empowerment methodology and is still being further developed. It



uses a set of visual diagramming tools for life planning, which can be used by non-literate women and men. It increases agency and expands choices through encouraging reflection and strengthening planning skills and encourages reflection and action on gender justice.

Currently three manuals for field testing and local adaptation have been developed; *Tree of diamond dreams*, *Steering life rocky road* and *Growing the diamond forest*. The methodology is applied at three levels: *Individual life and livelihood planning*; *Collective action and gender advocacy for change* and *Institutional awareness-raising and changing power relationships*.

Achievements/results

The process of the GALS methodology contributed to concrete positive changes in women's secure access to land, division of labour between women and men and increased quality of produce and more equal sharing of benefits. Also the process contributed to increasing incomes. Peer learning structures and skills were developed, and peer learning has continued and increased after the funding agreement between ON and the local partners in Uganda. Win-win strategies have been documented between women and men in households and between value chain stakeholders at various levels.

GALS has proved to be effective for the empowerment of the most vulnerable women and men in agricultural value chains. It helps to develop, implement and monitor their own plans for increasing productivity/quality and incomes, reducing risks and increasing gender equality within households.

It brings about significant immediate changes in attitudes and behaviour at different levels through individual and collective activities. This includes sensitive areas of gender inequality like property rights, gender-based violence, household and child caring tasks and participation in economic decision-making. It engages with and gains commitment of more powerful private sector actors at local and national level to

develop win-win strategies which reinforce the positive changes among the vulnerable groups, as well as address gender issues in their own households.

IV. Lessons Learned

- The private sector needs to be engaged also at international levels in order for processes such as these to become sustainable and have an impact on global value chains.
- The pilot did not include a baseline. The scaling up phase will start with a participatory baseline of and with the target population/final beneficiaries using both qualitative and quantitative findings.
- For the sake of triangulation it would be good to develop an independent verification procedure alongside the GALS M&E system.
- For the replication of GALS, key decision makers, including traditional leadership, need to be identified and worked with to legitimise the work being done on transforming gender relations.
- Where possible, cultural norms that foster equity should be built upon during the introduction and implementation of GALS.
- Further attention could be given to multi-generational and polygamous households, the concept of violence between wives and from parents to children.



V. Read on or watch...

www.wemanglobal.org, <http://www.oxfamnovib.nl/womens-empowerment-.html>

See the video: “*Gender Action Learning in the coffee value chain*” in Western Uganda:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ZWgm6ZYMUU> (part 1);

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HcyGLZ8e1M0> (part 2)

Basic GALS methodology: “*Mapping the roads to change*”: women’s empowerment in western Uganda using

GALS: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dGtFnUAYK0k> (part 1);

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=whoZ2GuBnrQ> (part 2)

VI. Colophon

Partner description: Bukonzo Joint was founded in 1999 to serve the poor, isolated farming communities in Bukonzo county. The organization is owned by its shareholders in the Rwenzori Mountains region of western Uganda, where they raise high-quality, organically grown, hand-picked coffee. Bukonzo Joint operations include marketing its farmers’ organic coffee and other agricultural products, finance, such as providing agriculture and small business loans to members, and member training and skills development. Bukonzo Joint is owned by its members who purchase shares and therefore have a stake in its profits as well as the risks it faces. Since 2007, Bukonzo Joint is a partner in the Global WEMAN programme for innovation with the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) and providing capacity development services for other partners. In recent years Rabo Bank, the Netherlands, Trickle Up, USA, and USAID have been supporting Bukonzo Joint.

Project details: “Gender Justice in Pro-Poor Value Chain Development”, P789, July 2009 - June 2011, IFAD grant under WEMAN

ON’s bureau/field office dealing with the project: Special Projects Unit and Eastern Africa Team

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Source: Mayoux, L., Baluku, P., Reemer, T., 2011. 'Balanced Trees Grow Richer Beans': Community-led Action Learning for Gender Justice in Uganda Coffee Value Chains. Draft article, Oxfam Novib.

Publication approved by: Thies Reemer

Aim of the case: experience sharing and learning

This case was used for the public year report 2011