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INTEGRATING GENDER IN FUNDING, RESEARCH, AND TEACHING

THE ONLINE GLOBAL OPEN CONFERENCE ON ‘CULTIVATING EQUALITY: ADVANCING GENDER RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS’

WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH, Netherlands

The Gender-SMART project is a community composed of seven European Research Performing & Funding Organisations, operating in the broadly framed field of research in food, agricultural and life sciences, committed to advancing gender equality.

This fact sheet illustrates one of the twelve experience-based good practices collected by the project to encourage and steer change in Gender-SMART Partner Institutions.

Results are meaningful and scalable to reach out to a larger number of beneficiaries.

AREA



Integrating Gender
in Funding, Research,
and Teaching

CATEGORY



Research and
Education

PARTNER



WAGENINGEN
UNIVERSITY &
RESEARCH,
Netherlands



FOCAL PERSONS



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Main Description

The Online global open conference 'Cultivating Equality: Advancing gender research in agriculture and food systems', held on 12-15 Oct. 2021, was co-organized by WUR Gender-SMART and the CGIAR GENDER Platform.

The aim of the conference was to understand and advance positive synergies between sustainable agriculture, rural livelihoods, and food systems in their contribution to gender equality. It also intended to strengthen capacity, build and maintain wider collaboration and networks, and advance the scientific and social robustness within and beyond the field.

More than 1000 researchers of which over 300 presenters across all continents participated in 60 sessions of which 4 were plenaries and the other 56 were scheduled as 4 parallel sessions, serving various time zones between 9.30 and 20.00 CET. Researchers came from a wide range of engaged institutions from scientific ones to (inter) governmental agencies to (inter)national donors, NGOs and sectoral professional member associations. Most sessions were presenting and discussing new research findings, methodologies, approaches, and strategies to advance gender+ research in contributing to more gender+ equality in and through agriculture and food systems. Some sessions were devoted to capacity building. The conference exemplified and stressed the need to address many complexities involved, to build alliances across sectors and disciplines, to address biases and reflect on research practices, and advocate and engage for change.

The conference materials such as report, programme, abstracts, blogs, bulletins, session recordings, session materials, and conference report are all secured in an open access repository website under the responsibility of the CGIAR GENDER Platform. See in more detail in the [conference report](#) which includes a content review, organisational choices, statistics and evaluations and the Gender-SMART Brief Issue 1, with special focus on Europe. All conference materials are available open access at the repository conference website of the CGIAR GENDER Platform.



CGIAR GENDER Impact Platform

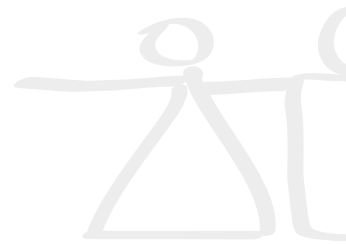
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Background

Wageningen University & Research is the name under which Wageningen University and the Wageningen Research Foundation formally collaborate. It has branches all over The Netherlands and abroad with about 6,500 staff and faculty members, and 10,000 students from over 100 countries. Most lecturers, researchers and other employees are based at Wageningen Campus.

Wageningen University can be traced back to the Dutch Agricultural College that in 1918 was upgraded to an institution for tertiary agricultural education with one faculty of agricultural sciences; its graduates became engineers or doctors after PhD graduation. It served Dutch and European agriculture as well as agriculture in first colonial and later tropical and non-western or developing countries. In the 1980s, it was officially named 'agricultural university', the only one of the Netherlands. In the 1990s, it was formally associated with Dutch agriculture-oriented research institutes of which most were formerly linked to the subsequent Ministries that included Agriculture & Fishery. Today Wageningen University and Wageningen Research are formally and financially still two institutions but they closely cooperate and share one Executive Board with staff departments such as one corporate HRM and one overall service department. At the decentral level there are five Sciences Groups, comparable with faculties at other universities. These five are: Social Sciences (SSG), Environmental Sciences (ESG), Plant Sciences (PSG), Animal Sciences (ASG), Agrotechnology and Food Sciences (AFSG). Each one is aligned with research institutes of Wageningen Research that are operating in the same domain. SSG also has a postgraduate education unit, especially oriented on developing countries. Wageningen University has chair groups which closely cooperate with the research institutes.

The organisation of such a conference was included in the WUR GEP to strengthen and build out WUR / Gender-SMART liaisons with the main international players in the field of gender+ integration in agriculture and food systems to facilitate better access to and exchange with existing expertise. It also opted to exemplify the global community of practice to the WUR and other Gender-SMART partners to learn from.



As collaborator, CGIAR GENDER Platform was invited to extend the institutional cooperation, especially since the GENDER Platform had a tradition of internal annual gender conferences - but on the global South only. Through the combined efforts the conference extended from the Global South to include Europe, USA, Canada and Australia into a world-wide perspective.

Specifics of the measure

Practical preparations started in March 2021. Considering the Covid-19 situation, it was decided to have it online, covering all time zones and orchestrated from Wageningen with an on-site conference hub including coordination, studio, communication officers, conference platform management, and a technical team. A coordinator from each collaborating institution and several committees with specific tasks had two-weekly meetings to coordinate overall organization and planning, selection of submitted proposals for contributions, communications, and poster awarding. Support in online platform management and technical support staff was hired to facilitate the preparations and the conference itself technically (see more details in the [conference report](#)).

Various decisions were taken to ensure equity or equality as much as possible:

- ✓ To optimize equitable participation access to the conference
- ✓ To cater for all independent from connectivity quality
- ✓ Open call widely spread to maximize access to presenters
- ✓ The principle of inclusivity indicated was upheld for the selection of committee members submitted proposals for the final conference programme, winners for poster awarding, and panellists, keynote speakers and moderators
- ✓ The principle of inclusivity indicated was upheld for the selection imaginary and language in communication materials and on the conference platform.

This principle of inclusivity mainly covered:

- ✓ Regional inclusivity, especially beyond privileged positions of white men and women
- ✓ Inclusivity of multiple career stages and ages, especially beyond seasoned scholars
- ✓ Multiple disciplinary background
- ✓ Multiple organizational background, especially beyond WUR and CGIAR.

For more details, see the [conference report](#).

Lessons learned

The conference was very well received, and we were proudly surprised about the great amount of individual presentation and session proposal that were admitted. Contributions for plenaries and welcoming words of highly esteemed managers and researchers were warmly agreed to and well delivered. The open access repository website of all conference materials including session recordings has required extra time but is considered very valuable to use in educational settings and to build on in future research.

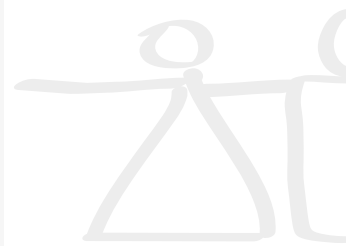
Also, the organizing committee learned several lessons from the experience of organizing this conference. These include organisational issues like clarity in roles and responsibilities, regular meetings, and shared online working space. It also included clarity towards proposal submissions.

New was to anticipate on working through a virtual online platform and persisting on conditions to reflect inclusiveness and participatory sharing in its operational functioning, and at the same time guarantee optimum support for audiences with diverse connectivity and experience with online meetings. The practicalities can be read in the conference report. Here we entered difficulties to keep up our principle of

equal access, representation, and participation, but also co-learned with the technical support how to arrange for the best. During the conference, being on-site with the production team at a technical hub, even for a fully virtual event, appeared to be very helpful; maybe even essential.

Engaging the audience did work out less than expected; this might need more input from communication specialist in advance and during the conference. This was the same for conference asset management and post-conference exposure which was not thoroughly anticipated.

For more details, see the [conference report](#).



Main referencing resources

[Gender-SMART Brief Issue 1](#): the global online Conference 'Cultivating Equality. Advancing Gender Research in Agriculture and Food Systems,' 12-15 Oct. 2021.

CGIAR GENDER Platform and Wageningen University & Research as EU Gender-SMART partner. (2021). [Conference Report. 'Cultivating Equality. Advancing Gender Research in Agriculture and Food Systems,' 12-15 Oct 2021](#) Nairobi, Kenya: CGIAR GENDER Platform

[Repository conference website](#) Cultivating Equality 2021 conference, including conference report, conference programme, book of session descriptions and abstracts, session recordings, session materials and poster pitches, blogs, bulletins, and announcements