Gender-SMART BRIEF n° 1

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

October 12–15, 2021

Cultivating Equality
Advancing Gender Research
in Agriculture and Food Systems

- Conference statement, purpose, questions and objectives
- Conference highlights as relevant to European contexts
- Presenters, participants and media statistics
- Key lessons learnt
- Links to conference programme, session descriptions and abstracts and full report
- Links to conference session recordings, materials, bulletins and blogs

Co-organized by CGIAR GENDER Platform and Wageningen University and Research as Gender-SMART partner, EU-Horizon 2020, GA no 824546, Work Package 6 'Gender[(+)] integration in funding, research and teaching.'

Co-coordinated by Margreet van der Burg (WUR) and Marlène Elias (CGIAR) in cooperation with lots of others in many ways (see Conference report, p. 37-38)

A final repository website with all materials has been created by CGIAR GENDER Platform!

Conference
statement, purpose, questions, and objectives

Conference statement:

Gender[+] research and gender[+] integration in agriculture-related research are key to positive transformations in agriculture and food systems and societies worldwide.

Conference purpose:

- Exchange on innovative, conceptually sound, and influential gender[+] research
- Capacity building in integrating and deepening gender research in this area
- Debating pressing issues relevant to advancing this research field
- Widening and strengthening the networks of researchers dedicated to this work

Specifically, the conference sought *to enhance the quality and influence of gender[+] research in relation to food systems, agriculture and rural development* by fostering the exchange of knowledge, strengthening capacities, and solidifying partnerships among CGIAR, universities, research institutes, and other gender research partners.

Conference main questions:

1. How do gender concepts, theories and frameworks fare in their application and how can current practice better inform gender theory and concepts?
2. What lenses can gender research provide to understand the complex nature of today's rural livelihoods, including interconnections between resource-based and non-agricultural livelihoods?
3. What new, well-informed narratives and discourses help us overcome myths around gender in agriculture and food systems?
4. How can research contribute to systemic change towards gender equality?
5. What new methodological and other innovations can contribute to cultivating equality in agri-food systems?

Conference objectives:

0. Advancements and innovations in gender-focussed and gender-integrated research - theory, concepts, frameworks, and methodologies -- in relation to food systems, agriculture and rural development, and in linking this research to social change, empowerment, and gender equality.
0. Enhanced knowledge and capacities, particularly among early-career gender researchers and researchers working to integrate gender, to conduct and integrate conceptually robust, cutting-edge, and impactful gender research, and to communicate effectively about their science.
0. Strengthened social capital and foundation to build partnerships and networks among researchers and institutes, such as universities, CGIAR, NARS, and others conducting, using and funding research on gender in food systems, agriculture and rural development.

Highlights relevant in a European context

Of the 60 sessions these are highlights concerning European context and overall new concepts and methodologies. **All available recordings and resources of all sessions** can be found at the CGIAR GENDER Platform **final repository website.**

See also Conference content review by the co-coordinators, Conference report, pp. 18-29.

Wageningen University Rector Magnificus Arthur Mol, CGIAR Managing Director Claudia Sadoff and Director CGIAR GENDER Platform Nicoline de Haan stressed the importance of the conference in their opening words: Welcoming words and full session recording

CIRAD, France, held a presentation about their new Community of Practice to integrate gender+ integration in research, show some research projects they worked on and suggest a grid-model to position and identify further progress.
Session recording

CIHEAM Bari, Italy, organized a session to highlight the importance of integration gender+ in projects, their dimensions and methodologies. Examples are presented for value chains in agriculture and food systems, water resources management and immigration into the Mediterranean region.
Session recording

Ways to use moving iconography in research and its outreach got attention from a global panel. Documentary, video registration, community camera research and scripted plays were discussed for their specific options as well as the considerations and pitfalls of the research directors.
Session recording

Practical training on how to use a camera

Current entrepreneurship and innovation models were built on to include a gender perspective towards economical vital, social fair, ecologically sound and digitally smart transitions as required in the EU and beyond.
Session recording

the position of the women include well

The Covid-19 pandemic was addressed in various sessions: for instance, its negative gender impacts and lessons learned to apply for building resilience to shocks caused by natural disaster, conflict and climate change. See:

o   Gender, food, and COVID-19: Stories of harm and hope
o   Women fish processors and traders in Africa
o   Agricultural policy measures for recovery and resilience during and after pandemics

Gender Transformative Approaches were elaborated on in several sessions. It was said to attune wording and methodology to regional contexts such as the European one:

o   Gender Transformative Approaches: Methods and findings
o   Deconstructing masculinities for gender transformative research

High-tech research domains on breeding, animal vaccination, spatial information were discussed for how these can contribute to positive gender impact and advance equality.

o [Leveraging space satellite technology to benefit women in agriculture](#)
o [Gender Issues into agricultural technology design / breeding investments](#)
o [Gender-intentional breeding approaches](#)
o [Feminist agroecology and seed security](#)
o [Livestock Vaccine Value Chain Framework for Women Livestock Owners](#)

Challenges of interdisciplinary collaboration and gender training in agriculture-related research were discussed by renown panels:

o [Conformation and critique of Gender Training for Agricultural Research Teams](#)
o [Potential of Gender Research and Researchers to Agricultural R&D](#)
o [Challenges of Interdisciplinary projects](#)

Gender-sensitive approaches to technology generation were presented in:

o [Agricultural modernization and gender relations](#)
o [Adoption & impacts of technologies /innovations](#)

Gender norms, normative climate and changes were looked at for their influences on masculinities and femininities, innovation capacities, mobility and income. See:

o [What is a local normative climate?](#)
o [Gender norms and normative change](#)
o [Deconstructing masculinities for gender transformative research](#)

New projects and their approaches were extensively presented and discussed. One was the European Women Entrepreneur Platform which presented the findings of the survey held among COPA Women Farmers:
[Session recording](#)

European contexts, especially in Germany and Ireland, were also addressed in:
[Exposing gender in farming 2.0](#)

Much more on gender[(+)] in climate change, value chains, well-being, resilience, UN Food Summit, biodiversity, new approaches and methodologies etc.: CGIAR GENDER Platform [final repository website](#)

Presenter, pre-registrants, and media statistics

Nearly 1300 people (1277: 350 men and 927 women) from 103 countries registered for the conference; and 591 from 80 countries attended the conference in real time. Participants came from several types of organizations, including academia and research institutes, NGOs, government, international and intergovernmental organizations, and the private sector.

Key statistics:

- Registration opened on 1 July, 2021, and the number of registrations grew steadily until the conference opening (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Growth in the number of conference registrations prior to the conference (n=713)

- Figure 2 shows the proportion of researchers from different sectors who registered for the conference. It shows agood balance from academia and research institutes in comparison to others in relevant institutions in the field.
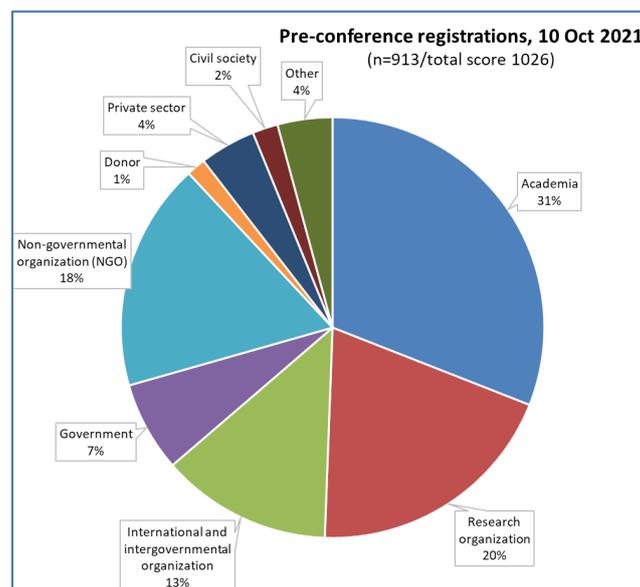

Figure 2: Pre-registered participants per type of affiliation, 10 October 2021
N.B. The number of responses (1026) exceeds the number of respondents because some respondents selected more than one response.

- Registration and attendance figures per country (resp. Figures 3 and 4) show a wide spread of participants around the globe.
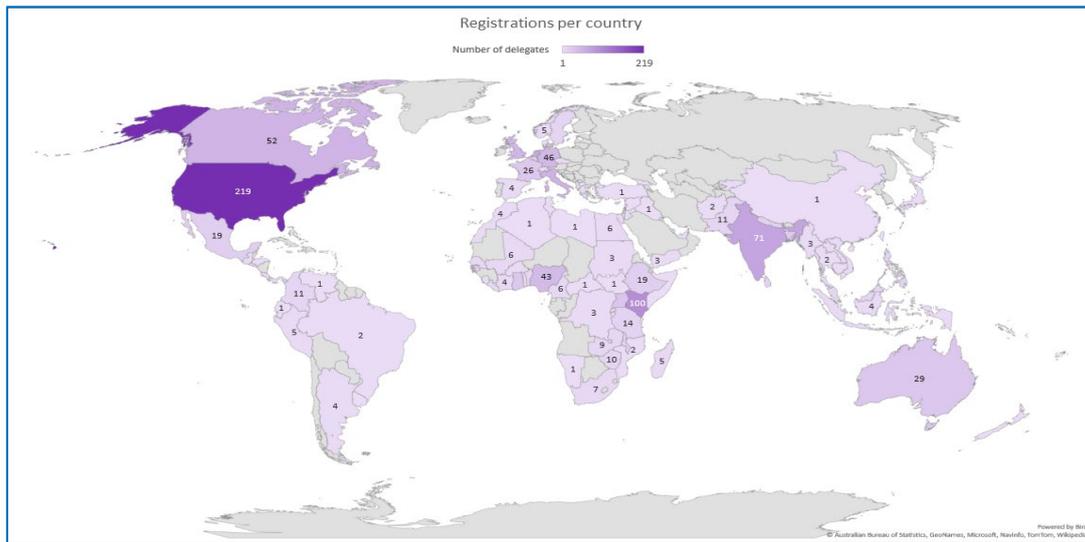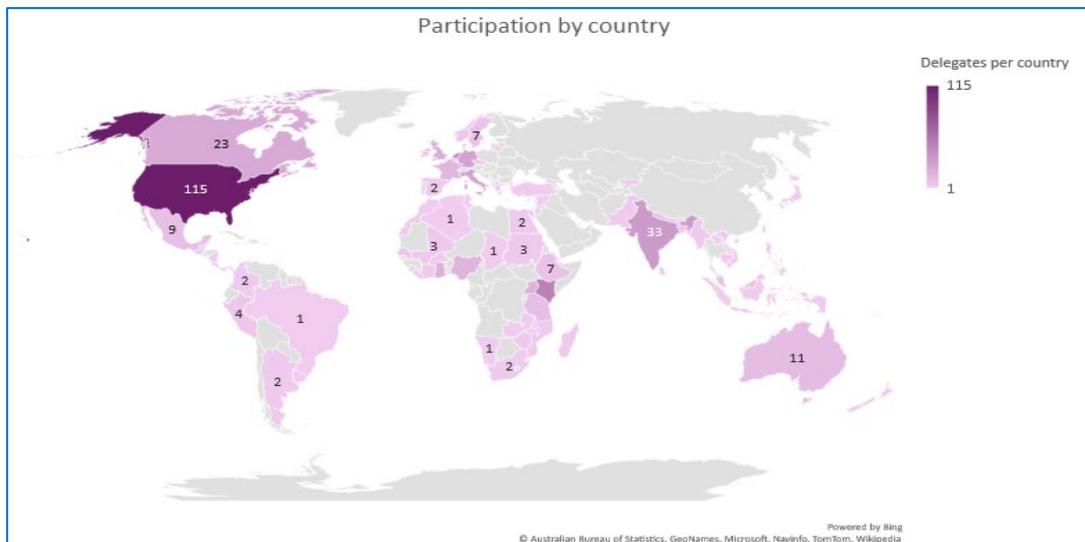
Figure 3: Registrations per country

Figure 4: Participation per country

▪ Live attendance during the different session slots is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Attendance statistics per timeslot of parallel sessions

Day	Session timeslot	# Unique viewers
Tuesday, 12 October	9:30 - 11:00	159
Tuesday, 12 October	11:30 - 13:00	114
Tuesday, 12 October	16:00 - 17:30	181
Tuesday, 12 October	18:30 - 20:00	122
Wednesday, 13 October	9:30 - 11:00	104
Wednesday, 13 October	11:30 - 13:00	125
Wednesday, 13 October	16:00 - 17:30	125
Wednesday, 13 October	18:30 - 20:00	80
Thursday, 14 October	9:30 - 11:00	105
Thursday, 14 October	11:30 - 13:00	80
Thursday, 14 October	16:00 - 17:30	100
Thursday, 14 October	18:30 - 20:00	74
Friday, 15 October	9:30 - 11:00	91
Friday, 15 October	11:30 - 13:00	62

▪ The plenaries, held from 14:00-15:30, had on average around 100 participants.

- As of 16 December, 2021, the conference website had been viewed almost 40.000 times (Figure 5), whereas website pages of the CGIAR GENDER Platform referring to the conference have been viewed 2630 times (2517 unique views).
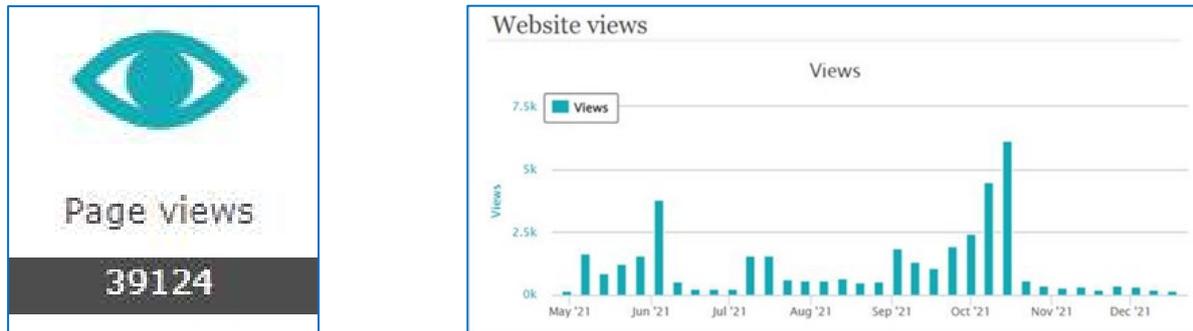

Figure 5. Amount of conference website views, May-December 2021

- Webpages of the CGIAR GENDER Platform referring to the conference were viewed 2,630 times.

Key lessons learnt

Organizing committee roles and logistics

- Have clear roles for members of the organizing committee, to share responsibilities and support engagement.
- Have a dedicated and regular meeting time for the main organizing committee.
- A shared (Teams or other) site is useful as platform to share and work on documents.

Call for contributions

- Clearly define the different kinds of proposals you invite and how these fit the main themes and perspectives when preparing the call.
- Define and indicate whether a person can propose a maximum number of submissions.

Virtual platform

- Define minimum specifications early on – e.g., joining without video on, hands-up function and quizzes for engagement, in-session break-out groups, flexibility in number of parallel sessions, networking capacities outside of sessions.
- Value user-friendliness and intuitiveness over aesthetics.
- Check platform imagery to make sure it is accessible and inclusive (i.e., moving beyond white men in suits and women in high heels).
- Consider sending calendar invites early on, at least to speakers in sessions, to ensure that people have reserved the time slots in their calendars.

Registration

- Make sure that registrants for the conference can also opt in (GDPR valid) to post-conference forms of communication from organizers for subscriber growth.
- Be careful with instilling a cap on session participation through pre-registration, as many people register but do not ultimately attend, leaving claimed spots unfilled.

Online networking and participation

- Don't expect online networking to happen on its own, even if the conference platform allows for it. Invest time in designing strategies to support networking.
- Consider strategies to incentivize people to participate in sessions other than their own (e.g., awarding those attending the most; other forms of acknowledgement/ incentives).
- Consider online translation options (French/Spanish at minimum) to facilitate participation from different regions.

Conference hub

- Being on the ground with the production team at a technical coordination hub, even for a fully virtual event, is very helpful; maybe even essential.
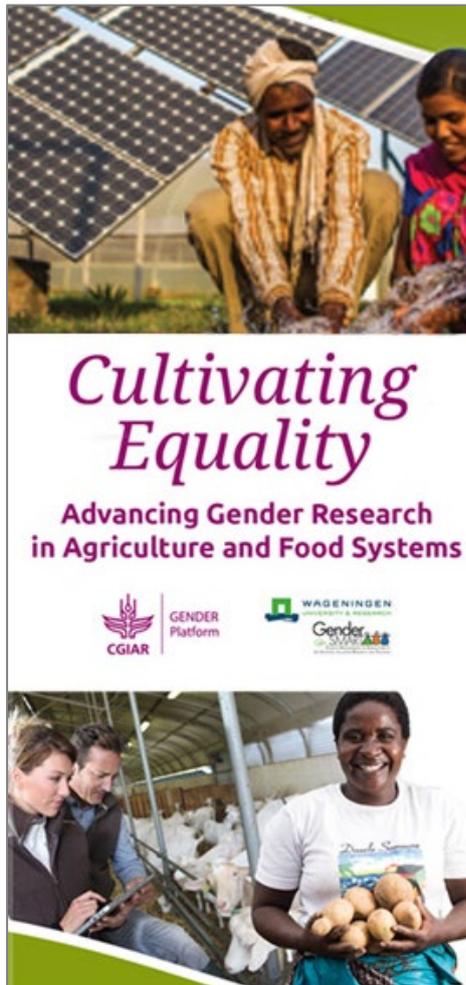
Communications

- Have a strong communications working group in place to leverage multiple networks, as early on as for the call for contributions.
- Guarantee and publicize keynote speakers early pre-event to generate excitement.
- Consider making short one-minute videos and social media cards for social media.
- Set up tight deadlines for blog post drafts; maximum 3 days after the session/event is best, to publish while the conference is still on or shortly afterwards.
- Check to ensure that statistics can be collected on everything externally provided for.

Conference asset management

- Decide and prepare for recording and sharing assets well in advance so people can give consent or not during registration.
- Consider whether or how key messages and discussions will be curated and shared post-conference, and include what capacities are needed to prepare this content.

Programmatic and processual choices to make and trade-offs to consider

1. In-person versus online. Holding the conference online allowed very broad registration. However, the same spontaneity, informal encounters, and social aspects of an in-person conference cannot be met virtually. Participants indicated in the evaluation that they were looking forward to meeting in an in-person setting again. Hybrid versions might the strengths of virtual and in-person formats, but can also make it doubly difficult to effectively participate online and/or manage.
2. Registration numbers. Despite a much higher amount of registrants due to the online format and an open and free registration, participants reached lower numbers although turnout rates for virtual events are often even lower. This should be kept in mind to manage expectations.
3. We took a very inclusive approach. This comprised:
   0. Inviting full session proposals in addition to individual contributions. This made the programme more interesting, and it unburdened the organizing committee since session organizers took care of all session related tasks. It also implied less programme flexibility and quality difference depending on how well these sessions were prepared.

o Maximizing the number of sessions to four parallel sessions in four time slots, over four days to accommodate more presenters and panellists. Yet, it likely led to fewer participants per session.

o Encouraging different career-stage researchers from various disciplines and regional and institutional backgrounds to present, meant that CVs and proposal quality were not the only criteria for acceptance of contributions.

o Having one very late session for presenters and participants in Asia, Europe and Africa to accommodate those in the Americas. This session was relatively not that well attended.

o Time zone-adjusted scheduling made it difficult to bring and compare regional perspectives across the globe in one session.

o Having a broad range of topics eligible for submissions to be more inclusive, rather than having more focused themes. This offered space for new and interesting discussions. It also made programming more difficult and time-consuming for the organizers.

read more>> Post conference evaluation, in: Conference report, pp 31-32.

Links to Conference Programme, Book of session descriptions and abstracts, and Full report

Conference links

- Conference Programme: https://hdl.handle.net/10568/115945
- Book of sessions descriptions and abstracts: https://hdl.handle.net/10568/115943
- Full conference report: https://cgspace.cgiar.org/handle/10568/116991
- Conference Website: https://event.wur.nl/cultivating-equality2021
- Conference Open Call for Contributions: https://mailchi.mp/53bc657d85f4/cultivating-equality-contributions?e=a799f1343c

Links to Session recordings and materials

Conference session and materials:

- Per session under heading **Conference session recordings and resources:** https://gender.cgiar.org/conferences/cultivating-equality-2021-conference

Links to Conference Bulletins and Blogs

Bulletin links:

▪ Daily highlights bulletins:
  https://hdl.handle.net/10568/116955; https://hdl.handle.net/10568/116957;
  https://hdl.handle.net/10568/116959; https://hdl.handle.net/10568/116960

Blog links:

All blogs are under Conference news: https://gender.cgiar.org/news-events/cultivating-equality-2021

▪ Join us in advancing gender equality in food systems transformation: Cultivating Equality
  2021 conference, by Vivian Atakos, 9 July 2021. https://gender.cgiar.org/news-events/join-us-
  advancing-gender-equality-food-systems-transformation-cultivating-equality-2021

▪ Almost here: Cultivating Equality 2021 plenary sessions announced, 1 Oct. 2021.
  https://gender.cgiar.org/news-events/almost-here-cultivating-equality-2021-plenary-sessions-announced

▪ Harvesting equality means sowing partnerships and cultivating in groups, by Jenni
  Metcalfe, 13 Oct. 2021. https://gender.cgiar.org/news-events/harvesting-equality-means-sowing-
  partnerships-and-cultivating-groups

▪ Gender equality, women's empowerment and food systems, by Joshua M. Maraka, 15
  Nov. 2021. https://gender.cgiar.org/news-events/gender-equality-womens-empowerment-and-food-
  systems

▪ The politics of knowledge: Reclaiming the gender narrative across agri-food systems, by
  Joana Rizza Bagano, 1 Dec. 2021. https://gender.cgiar.org/news-events/politics-knowledge-
  reclaiming-gender-narrative-across-agri-food-systems

▪ Five ways gender research can better support women: Messages from rural women, by
  Georgina Smith, 10 Dec. 2021. https://gender.cgiar.org/news-events/five-ways-gender-research-can-
  better-support-women-messages-rural-women

▪ Cultivating Equality: Future directions for gender research in agriculture and food
  systems, by Simrin Makhija, 13 Dec. 2021. https://gender.cgiar.org/news-events/cultivating-
  equality-future-directions-gender-research-agriculture-and-food-systems

More on gender⁺ integration in research in agricultural and food sciences by Gender-SMART

- WP6 deliverables; 6.2 and 6.3, or contact WP leader Margreet.vanderBurg@wur.nl

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