

Practical tips for communicating research findings in a gender-responsive way

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Communicating research findings in a gender-responsive way is made up of four facets, which must be adequately planned and budgeted for at the earliest stages of the research process: understanding your audience; showcasing relevant gender findings; sharing these findings with differentiated stakeholders through gender-sensitive channels and monitoring and evaluating all these efforts for continuous improvement. This requires a good understanding of the topics that capture the interest of these stakeholders, their preferred ways of accessing your findings, capacity to interpret the information you produce, and the intended use of this information.

Knowledge is power. Ensuring that your research and action partners, but also the local women, men and marginalized groups who are your target beneficiaries are able to equitably access your findings can support their empowerment and is an essential part of the research-for-development process. To achieve this:

Understand your audience

1 Identify groups who will be using your findings

from the very start of the research process. Consult both women and men from these groups (e.g. farmers' associations, self-help groups, producer companies, community forestry groups) to hone in on stakeholder information needs and perceptions. Your audience may also be differentiated along the lines of age, ethnicity or other important social aspects, which would influence their interests and ability to assimilate the information produced.

2 Share your findings with different types of actors

including those that are sympathetic to gender issues and work in gender-sensitive ways or whose mandates are supporting women or other targeted social interest groups. These may be particular individuals as well as organizations such as NGOs and local women's groups that can take up, but also further share your results.

Showcase gender-relevant findings

3 Unpack, analyse and represent your data

according to gender of study participants and to other relevant variables of analysis like age or ethnicity. For instance, in tables and graphics, depict trends for women and men separately within or in addition to overall trends. Remember that finding that no differences exist between men and women with respect to a variable under study is a valid result that advances the state of knowledge and that merits highlighting.

4 When citing participants, indicate

whether they are women or men and provide relevant information about their background. Make sure that both women's and men's experiences—with attention to other socially relevant variables such as age or socio-economic status—are represented.

5 Be gender-aware in visuals

such as photographs, drawings, animations, videos, you use to illustrate your findings. Your images and interviews should include both women and men, when relevant, from the groups of interest to your study.

Use gender-responsive knowledge-sharing channels

6 Consider where your target audience obtains its information

and use those channels for outreach. For example, at local level, male farmers often gain information from a farmers' association whereas women farmers may obtain it primarily from self-help groups or community gatherings for religious or other purposes. Such an understanding can be fostered via prior experience and consultations with both women and men stakeholders from your target audience.

7 Explore whether the men and women in your target audience

have access to and use information technologies such as radio, television, cellular phones or Internet, and choose technological channels best suited to local conditions. If appropriate and feasible, consider introducing new technologies, in gender-equitable ways, to improve local women's and men's access to information.

8 Organize result-sharing activities at times and in places

accessible to women and men, and include childcare services if needed.

9 Use appropriate language that is matched to the level

of technical understanding of your target audience. In particular, rural women, and to a lesser extent rural men, may lack formal education and require information to be communicated in easily accessible, non-technical language. Moreover, ethnic minorities-and particularly women from these communities-may not speak the national language and may require information to be translated into a local language. Different styles of language are also required for communicating efficiently across cultural contexts and with different groups of actors, such as with academics and researchers versus practitioners, government officials and the general public.

10 Adopt diverse and mixed methods of communication

to reach both women and men stakeholders. Visual materials, such as illustrated pamphlets, photographs and videos, and verbal methods of transmitting information, such as through radio or group discussions that may piggyback on other local gatherings, can be useful in areas where a proportion of men and particularly women are likely to be illiterate. Develop digital and print materials for technical audiences (e.g. interactive databases, spreadsheets, brochures) or non-scientific audiences (blog posts, press releases, media interviews, videos) with interest in the area of research. Storytelling or other traditional media (e.g. music, poetry, theatre) can be an effective approach, especially with illiterate audiences whose oral culture uses stories for assimilating and memorizing new information.

11 Leverage your findings and communication products

through seminars, workshops, events and conferences to increase the integration of gender issues in the agenda. Organize interactions between diverse stakeholders, such as researchers, policy makers, extension workers, and representatives of women's groups and other community organizations, to improve the process of listening to and learning from male and female farmers. Adopt gender-sensitive facilitation techniques, managing group dynamics to encourage balanced participation in discussions. When forming panels, include both women and men of diverse backgrounds as speakers.

Monitor your outreach strategy

12 Whatever your communication activities

may be, they should be monitored and evaluated for effectiveness in reaching differentiated members of your target audience to strive for continuous improvement and fine-tuning of your communication strategy.

Further resources

FAO - Dimitra. 2011. [Communicating gender for rural development](#). Dimitra Project, Brussels, Belgium.

Gascoigne, T. and Metcalfe, J. 2012. [Planning communication into science-deliver impact from your research](#). Econnect communication Pty Ltd, Brisbane, Australia.

Hermanowicz E. 2015. [Research through theatre: using participatory methods to spark discussion and empower local communities](#). Bioversity International (blog post and video).