Example Gender Equality Statement Agriculture/ICT

In response to requests from PIs this document sets out a **FICTIONAL** example of a 'bad' gender equality statement followed by an example a good one. The 'bad' example is a fictional composite of the kind of missteps that we, and UKRI have observed in GE Statements. This fictional example illustrates two insights:

- Why delivering a technology aimed at a sector dominated by women won't necessarily promote gender equality; and
- How a project can inadvertently undermine women's status by introducing a new technology without adequate partnership working.

GenderEd's Toolkit and guidance explains key terms and provides some background to the GE Statement requirements and the Edinburgh Research Office provides many materials explaining the importance of concepts such as fair and equitable partnership working, ODA compliance and Theory of Change approaches.

1. Fictional Project Summary

Insect breading is currently a women's domain in agriculture. However, there is significant scope to increase the productivity and profitability of insect farming. Local climate and vegetation conditions are known to affect cricket health and viability, however systematic detailed research which could help breeders adjust their farming practices is lacking. To increase productivity and profitability of insect farming this project includes three phases of work. 1) Comparative study of climate and vegetation conditions in three LMIC countries including computer simulation to identify optimum conditions. 2) Creation of an affordable dynamic mobile phone app which farmers can use to predict yields and adjust their practices 3) Dissemination to a network of 300 agricultural institutes using online technologies (web resources).

2. 'Bad Gender Equality Statement'

Criterion 1: Ensuring equal and meaningful opportunities for people (researchers, participants and beneficiaries) of different genders to be involved throughout the project.

The Royal Dumbledor Institute is the only institute in Scotland that holds a Diamond Award for Athena Swan. This was awarded in 2014. The Athena SWAN Charter recognises and celebrates good employment practice for women working in science, engineering and technology in higher education and research. The Institute was granted the award in recognition of the additional efforts made, over and above standard University wide policies, to promote gender equality and address particular challenges for women within science. Our activities to promote gender equality include a Career Development Network hosting events

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such as our Work Life Balance Coffee and Cake Q and A for working parents on International Women's Day, our Positive Male Role Models event on International Men's Day show casing our best cutting edge international research, and featuring all female panels at the international research conferences we host.
The project team at the Royal Dumbledor Institute is composed predominantly of women with a male PI and co-I, and a female PDRA, female PhD Student and a female administrator. Our international research partners in 3 LMIC countries include 2 male Co-I's, one female PDRA who contributed to writing the proposal and will lead most of the conceptual work for fieldwork and the app and a female PhD student. We are proud that this level of female participation outstrips local averages for female participation in HE in the LMIC countries where we will be working. Managing the project, we will avoid all discrimination against female researchers by adopting a policy of gender neutrality at all times.

Criterion 2: Addressing the expected impact of the project (benefits and losses) on people of different genders

Insect farming is a female dominated agricultural sector in each of the three LMIC countries where we will be working. Female agricultural productivity is known to be significantly less efficient and productive due to women's low levels of engagement with agricultural training. Through focusing on improving the productivity and profitability in a predominantly female agricultural sector, our mobile phone app will improve the income of women. Providing cutting edge expertise on the impacts of local climate and vegetation conditions on insect yields, will enable female farmers to adjust their farming practices to increase yields, boosting their income and improving their quality of life.

Criterion 3 Addressing the impact on the relations between people of different genders

Thus, the project will contribute to increased equality between women and men in each of the three LMIC countries.

Criterion 4: Avoiding and developing strategies to mitigate and monitor risks and unintended consequences on gender equality

By ensuring a gender balance on the UK based team and maintaining a level of female participation that outstrips local averages in the local LMIC country our project mitigates the risk that women will be excluded from agricultural research. Our projects findings will directly impact an agricultural sector dominated by women. Our findings will therefore contribute to increased gender equality.

Criterion 5: Measuring relevant outcomes and outputs with data disaggregated by age and gender

To capture data on gender equality impacts we will collect the following data. 1) Our app will ask users to indicate their sex when they download it for the first time. 2) We will survey visitors to our webpage using our online resources to ask their sex and age.

What's wrong with this GE Statement?

When assessing the above fictional 'bad' gender equality statement its useful to start by pointing out that UKRI encourages applicants to discuss gender **throughout your proposal** rather than just in the Gender Equality statement, and to consider some of UKRI's most recent feedback to all UK Research offices:

> *"listing of the gender make-up of the network team and the institutional policies or awards of their organisation has received does not sufficiently meet the gender equality requirements."* – UKRI feedback to UK HE Research Offices March 2020.

The first criticism of this fictional 'bad' gender equality statement is therefore that it includes a lot of material listing the host institution's gender equality policies and awards. GCRF or other ODA projects need to go beyond this **to directly discuss gender aspects of their project**.

Considering how a research project might impact on gender equality is often a new consideration for HE Researchers. It has however, long been a standard practice in the development sector where practitioners have learned through experience how technology projects can positively and negatively affect gender equality. As a result, practitioners in the International Development sector often undertake 'gender sensitive situational analysis' (explained in the section below) when designing project proposals.

International Development partitioners have also built up expertise on some of the most common risks to gender equality that can result from, for example, the introduction of technologies in different settings. Common (negative) gender impacts that development practitioners often see in agricultural technology projects are explained in the section below. GenderED has also provided theme specific briefings providing an over view of some of this existing knowledge on our GCRF resource page and a thorough overview of gender issues related to technology and development here.

2.1 Key Existing Knowledge on Gender, Agriculture and ICT

An important, consistent finding in existing research on gender agriculture and development is that when crops become more profitable on account of technological innovations or shifts in markets, they are often taken over by men (Carr and Hartl 2010, Soniia 2015). In addition, research on the roll out of ICT in some African countries has shown that far from leading to women's empowerment, ICT s can sometimes result in more harassment and surveillance of women (Porter et al 2020). As a result, we cannot assume that increasing the profitability of insect farming will lead to women's empowerment. Instead we must consider how gender is relevant in each individual project, using gender sensitive situational analysis.

Working Out the Relevance of Gender: Gender Sensitive Situational Analysis

The most basic models of gender sensitive situational analysis involve gathering information the relevance of gender in three domains:
Explaining the three broad domains of gender's relevance that researchers should consider. These are:

- **Access to decision making;**
- **access to and control over resources; and**
- **divisions of labour.**

GenderEd's Toolkit and guidance on developing your gender equality statement explains these three domains and provides a 4-step process to help you fill out your gender equality statement. Recommended methods to gather this information include **literature review, consultation with local communities and gender equality organisations/women's civil society, or collaboration with an academic or NGO based gender expert**. The toolkit also provides detailed prompts for the kind of *actions* you can take to respond to gender issues you identify.

Quickly working through these three domains in relation to this (fictional) project yields the following insights[1].

Decision making	Participation in decision making in the three LMIC countries, in this project, is structured around patriarchal gender hierarchies that exclude women. This is true at community level, **in HE / agricultural research, in agricultural planning at family and community level, and in local and national government.**
Access to and control over resources	**Access to education** in the three LMIC countries included in this project is affected by patriarchal gender hierarchies. Girls are less likely to complete high school, and their participation in it and FE/HE, is **hampered by domestic and caring responsibilitie**s that their male counter parts are not burdened by. Women and girls' access to education is also affected in all three LMIC countries by **safety concerns and widespread harassment of and violence towards women and girls and lack of independent access to transport.** **Access to and control over agricultural land, agricultural knowledge and agricultural equipment** in the three LMIC countries included in this project is affected by patriarchal gender hierarchies. For example, though the details vary between the three LMIC countries, **cultural taboos limit women's access to livestock that can be used to transport agricultural equipment and water.** In all three LMIC countries women have less access to ICT and mobile phones. **Women's access to ICT is often controlled by male relatives**. In all three LMIC countries involved in this project **access to banking facilities** can be a problem for women. In **one** of the LMIC countries involved in this project women cannot normally control how money they earn is spent and **are expected to give it to their male relatives**. In **two countries women control their own earnings.**
In Divisions of labour	Divisions of labour in each of the three LMIC countries are strongly affected by gender hierarchies. **Women have greater responsibility for unpaid domestic work** (caring, cooking cleaning) and full responsibility for subsistence farming. This limits their time for cash crop farming. In one of the three LMIC countries men are responsible for **marketing and selling of any agricultural produce** – in the other two women can control marketing and selling of their own produce.

Reviewing these three domains we can see that many factors affect women's participation in agriculture. Women's participation in decision making, their time and their access to

[1] These examples are fictional, illustrative, composites. They are not based on specific countries nor an actual project. However, these examples drawn on widely known issues that are well-documented in existing literature from academic and NGO sources. A list of such sources is provided at the end.

agricultural education and resources (such as livestock, water and land) are all constrained. Tackling *these constraints* could increase the profitability of their crops. **The women currently farming insects will already know what could help them in this endeavour. They will also already have knowledge on locally relevant factors affecting their yield, efficiency and profitability**.

To avoid negative impacts on gender equality, PIs in this project need to take measures to ensure that the knowledge their project generates is shared with the women already farming it, and that their new knowledge **does not inadvertently undermine women's status as the owners of insect production**.

Including women farmers throughout the project from the very beginning so that it responds to their needs and **builds upon their existing knowledge, rather than undermining it**, will help to ensure that the project benefits them and promotes gender equality. A reconfigured project design that builds on the insights from this brief gender sensitive situational analysis and a good gender equality statement summarising associated measures, is provided below.

> *Example 'Good' GE Statement Summary*: '*Our project will combine cutting edge findings from agricultural science with women's farmers existing knowledge to design into a flexible breeding protocol that will disseminated through women's farming cooperatives using ICT, as appropriate.'*

3. Reconceptualized Gender Sensitive Fictional Project Summary

Insect breading is currently a women's domain in agriculture. The productivity and profitability of insect breeding is, however, presently low. The project comprises five Work Packages 1) Baseline assessment of the factors currently restricting the efficiency and profitability of women's insect farming, such as restricted access to resources. This will include consultation with women farmers and women's farming cooperatives. 2) Identification of optimum knowledge transfer methods in partnership with women farmers and women's farming co-operatives. 3) Comparative study of climate and vegetation conditions in three LMIC countries including computer simulation to identify optimum conditions. 3) Assessment of the interactions between local social resource constraints (e.g. women's lack of access to livestock, or education, or ICT) and climate and vegetation conditions including computer simulation. 4) Dissemination using methods agreed with women farmers, which may include interaction with local decision-making bodies at community level. 5) Evaluation of impacts using measures agreed with stakeholders.

Criterion 1: Ensuring equal and meaningful opportunities for people (researchers, participants and beneficiaries) of different genders to be involved throughout the project.

Insect production is currently a female dominated agricultural sector. Our project design takes account of this and includes female farmers throughout the research process both as **knowledge holders and knowledge recipients**. We have identified local gender equality focused agricultural organisations (an international NGO AWARD focused on women in agricultural research, and women's farming co-operatives on the three LMIC partner

countries) who we will collaborate with as partners to enable access to women farmers in our three LMIC countries.

Work package one of our research includes baseline consultation which aims to 1) gather local women farmers' views on the factors currently restricting the efficiency and profitability of their farming including time and resource constraints and climate and environmental factors; 2) identify the knowledge gaps articulated by female farmers and the project team; 3) to share a synthesis of the research aims of the project with the female farmers. Where required we will assign female researchers to undertake this research and will choose consultation methods (location, time of day) which enable women to participate despite the restrictions that their domestic and caring responsibilities may place upon them. These measures will help to ensure that women farmers needs are met; that they are included as equitable partners in the project and that their existing knowledge is not undermined.

LMIC staff included on our project include two male Co-I's, and one female Co-I (who has led on much of the conceptual development of the project, currently employed as a temporary post doc) and a female PhD student.

Criterion 2 Addressing the expected impact of the project (benefits and losses) on people of different genders;

Insect farming is a female dominated agricultural sector in each of the three LMIC countries where we will be working (Dickie et al 2019). Existing research has however shown that when an agricultural sector becomes more profitable it is often co-opted by men (Carr and Hartl 2010). Our project includes measures to mitigate this potential problem and to ensure that women benefit from our project.

Criterion 3 the impact on the relations between people of different genders;

Women farmers are included as knowledge holders in the initial stages of our project and our project will only generate solutions that are feasible for female farmers *in the context of the constraints they face.* By working with women's farming cooperatives to work out the best knowledge transfer methods, we will ensure that female farmers can access the knowledge generated through our project and the breeding programme we design. These measures mitigate against the risks that our project would provide expensive or high technology solutions that women cannot access. In addition, we will work with local women's civil society to work out the best ways to maximise local cultural acceptance of our project's activities, working where necessary with local decision-making bodies at community level as local women's civil society advise (e.g. women's faming co-operatives).

Criterion 4: Avoiding and developing strategies to mitigate and monitor risks and unintended consequences on gender equality

The above measures detailed in Criterion 2 and 3, to avoid co-optation of our technology and to ensure women are involved in decision making, will ensure we are aware of and mitigate against risks to gender equality.

Criterion 5: Measuring relevant outcomes and outputs with data disaggregated by age and gender

To capture data on gender equality impacts we will collect the following data. 1) We will record the sex and age of the farmers we work with 2) we will undertake an evaluation workshop with women's farming cooperatives to capture benefits to them of our project. This will have two stages. At the end of Work Package 1 we will collectively agree realistic and relevant measures of benefit with the women's farmers. Second, we will evaluate our progress against these criteria at the end of the project.

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