



Two kittens. Photo courtesy of D. Ceplis.

The Gender Equality Mainstreaming (GEM) Digest provides a compilation of information and articles gathered on an ongoing basis on gender equality mainstreaming within agriculture, scientific research, rural development, climate change, organizational development and international development. Information is shared with members, colleagues, scientific societies and diverse organizations.

The views and opinions presented are not necessarily representative of the editor.

If you have information to share, please send it to [dinah.ceplis@gmail.com](mailto:dinah.ceplis@gmail.com) to compile and re-distribute once a month.

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Contents

Opportunities and Coming Events

1. Gender Equality Week ..... 2
2. International Day of the Girl Child– October 11 ..... 2
3. [LEARNING SESSION ] Practical Applications to PSEAH ..... 2
4. International Day of Rural Women – October 15 ..... 3
5. World Food Day – October 16 ..... 3
6. Discover the Rural Ontario Institute's NEW Community Wellbeing Dashboard ..... 3
7. 2024 SMO Conference: Pathways to Gender Equality ..... 4
8. Pulse Ingredient Workshop..... 4
9. Manitoba Farm Women’s Conference..... 4
10. Become a Certified Diverse Business..... 4

This Month’s News

1. Tanzania’s Maasai Women Adopt Climate-Smart Solutions To Tame Drought ..... 5
2. Right to Learn Afghanistan..... 5
3. Yes, there's a youth bulge, but the global south is also getting older ..... 5
4. Why cooking causes 4M premature deaths a year..... 5
5. Canada records its lowest fertility rate for 2nd year: StatsCan ..... 6
6. USAID expands LGBTQ+ development approach as global hostilities rise ..... 6
7. LGBTQ+ activists protest World Bank's plan to resume lending to Uganda..... 6

Reports, Publications, Resources

1. Gender vulnerability assessment to inform gender-sensitive adaptation action: a case study in semi-arid areas of Mali 7
2. Coffee Crisis Forces Farmers To Leave Their Country..... 7

3.	2024 Gender Index.....	7
4.	The Gendered Energy Crisis: Prospects for an eco-feminist Just Energy Transition in South Africa.....	8
5.	Local Capacity Strengthening to Support Women in Agricultural Research.....	8
6.	Religious groups ‘spending billions to counter gender-equality education’ .....	8
7.	Choosing Our Future: Education for Climate Action.....	9
8.	Two Years at the Forefront: Exploring the needs and experiences of women-led, women’s rights and LGBTQIA+ led organizations two years into the Ukraine humanitarian response .....	9
9.	Women who Work in Canada’s Agriculture & Food Sector .....	9
10.	Small Scale Food Processor Training Initiative .....	10
11.	Women’s full-time employment in Canada, 2007 to 2021 .....	10
12.	A participatory framework for identifying 'best bet' climate-smart agriculture innovations .....	10
13.	Digital Agriculture Services in Kenya: The Farmer Perspective .....	11
14.	Transforming the Lives of Rural Women through Improved Livestock Management .....	11

[Go to Top.](#) ++++++

## Opportunities and Coming Events

### 1. Gender Equality Week

<https://x.com/i/flow/login>, <https://www.facebook.com/fit.fit.ca/>, <https://ca.linkedin.com/company/fit-fit>, and [https://www.instagram.com/fit\\_fit\\_ca/](https://www.instagram.com/fit_fit_ca/)

Unlocking Potential: Economic Power Through Gender Equality. **September 22 – 28, 2024.**

Each September, Gender Equality Week is among the important awareness campaigns FIT recognizes. It connects with our mandate of empowering girls and women in the Global South, while also raising key conversations worldwide around gender equality.

This year, by sharing a series of fresh infographics and expanding of our social media reach, we will be highlighting how FIT-funded innovation testing supports gender equality and aligns with the core action areas of Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy. There are eye-opening results and impact to share based on what Canadian SMOs and partners in Africa, Latin America, Asia, and the Middle East have collaborated on and achieved together. Stay tuned to our social spaces.

You can follow us on [X](#), [Facebook](#), [Linked In](#), and now [Instagram!](#)

[Go to Top.](#) ++++++

### 2. International Day of the Girl Child– October 11

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/girl-child-day>

The 2024 International Day of the Girl theme is ‘Girls’ vision for the future’. This year’s theme conveys both the need for urgent action and persistent hope, driven by the power of girls’ voices and vision for the future.

[Go to Top.](#) ++++++

### 3. [LEARNING SESSION ] Practical Applications to PSEAH

<https://www.fit-fit.ca/news/89/learning-session-practical-applications-to-pseah>

What are some sound approaches to take when developing your Prevention of Sexual Exploitation Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) policies and plans?

Join us on **Zoom, Tuesday, October 15 at 11am CT** for Practical Applications to PSEAH - Learnings from Testing Projects, a conversation with FIT innovators.

Discover how SMOs and local partners practically integrated approaches for the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment during short-term testing projects.

[Go to Top.](#) ++++++

## 4. International Day of Rural Women – October 15

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/rural-women-day>

Achieving gender equality and empowering women is not only the right thing to do but is a critical ingredient in the fight against extreme poverty, hunger and malnutrition.

Women account for a substantial proportion of the agricultural labor force, including informal work, and perform the bulk of unpaid care and domestic work within families and households in rural areas. They make significant contributions to agricultural production, food security and nutrition, land and natural resource management, and building climate resilience.

Even so, women and girls in rural areas suffer disproportionately from multi-dimensional poverty. They may be as productive and enterprising as their male counterparts but are less able to access land, credit, agricultural inputs, markets, and high-value agrifood chains and obtain lower prices for their crops.

[Go to Top.](#) ++++++

## 5. World Food Day – October 16

<https://www.fao.org/world-food-day/en>

The world's farmers produce enough food to feed more than the global population yet, hunger persists. Around 733 million people are facing hunger in the world due to repeated weather shocks, conflicts, economic downturns, inequality, and the pandemic. This impacts the poor and vulnerable most severely, many of whom are agricultural households, reflecting widening inequalities across and within countries.

Food is the third most basic human need after air and water – everyone should have the right to adequate food. Human rights such as the right to food, life and liberty, work and education are recognised by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and two legally binding international covenants.

[Go to Top.](#) ++++++

## 6. Discover the Rural Ontario Institute's NEW Community Wellbeing Dashboard

[https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcvdu2orTMjE9ZMMw4J\\_BECbN1IJZ8U6mwV#/registration](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcvdu2orTMjE9ZMMw4J_BECbN1IJZ8U6mwV#/registration)

**Launch on October 30.**

An invaluable FREE tool for rural communities to interpret and assess overall wellbeing of your community right at the local level. There are many systems for assessing quality of life and wellbeing. However, few are designed for our rural landscape. The community wellbeing tool narrows that gap by providing you with easy access to local community data using a comprehensive set of standardized indicators for assessing quality of life and wellbeing.

You can use this new tool to discover local information about:

- Age and population

- Income and employment
- Core housing need
- Access to healthcare
- Access to high speed internet
- Opportunities to participate in arts & culture activities
- Expected changes in climate
- Ecofootprint and sustainable resource consumption

[Go to Top.](#) ++++++

## 7. 2024 SMO Conference: Pathways to Gender Equality

<https://www.mccic.ca/get-involved/upcoming-events/event/151>

Spur Change, a program of the Inter-Council Network funded by Global Affairs Canada, is hosting a conference for small and medium organizations (SMOs) **November 6-8, 2024 in Ottawa, ON**. In the spirit of peer-knowledge sharing and promoting collaboration, this year’s conference is focused on exploring Pathways to Gender Equality.

[Go to Top.](#) ++++++

## 8. Pulse Ingredient Workshop

<https://web.cvent.com/event/dee72875-6bb9-44f6-91ba-337789787cdf/summary>

Join us for a one-day workshop dedicated to exploring the landscape of solutions for optimizing pulse ingredient flavour profiles. This event will bring together leading researchers and innovators from across Canada who are at the forefront of addressing flavour challenges.

Discover comprehensive approaches to enhance the flavour profile of your ingredients, ensuring they align with the expectations of the food industry and the consumer. Plus, network with industry peers to exchange ideas and create new connections and partnerships. **November 13, 2024. Winnipeg, Manitoba.**

[Go to Top.](#) ++++++

## 9. Manitoba Farm Women’s Conference

<https://www.mfwc.ca/>

An in-person conference being held in **Winnipeg, Manitoba** from **November 18 to 20, 2024**.

[Go to Top.](#) ++++++

## 10. Become a Certified Diverse Business

<https://cglcc.ca/programs/supplier-diversity/>

One out of every forty businesses in Canada is LGBTQ-owned, but these businesses continue to deal with discrimination and prejudice. There’s a need to connect them directly with supportive business leaders to help them sustain and grow their business.

At the same time, progressive corporations are recognizing the social and economic benefits of diversifying their supply chains. Some of these corporations now even have procurement staff with annual objectives for supplier diversity. By certifying LGBTQ+ businesses and connecting them to organizations looking to contribute to an inclusive Canadian economy, we’re helping create a more level playing field in the corporate supply world.

If you are a business that’s at least 51% LGBTQ-owned, operated and controlled, and you meet the rest of our qualifications, the Canadian Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (CGLCC) can certify your business and help you leverage your position as a diverse supplier.

We work with you to understand the LGBTQ market and connect you with our certified LGBTQ suppliers. Stay on the leading edge of diversity practices with us. We can assist you in setting up your supplier diversity program and to leverage the tools that exist to support your corporate goals.

[Go to Top.](#) ++++++

## **This Month's News**

### **1. Tanzania's Maasai Women Adopt Climate-Smart Solutions To Tame Drought**

<https://www.ipsnews.net/2024/09/tanzanias-maasai-women-adopt-climate-smart-solutions-to-tame-drought/>

For centuries, the Maasai have relied on cattle for their food—milk, meat, and even blood. Switching to farming was a big change from their old ways. The Maasai women's adoption of climate-smart agriculture is not just a response to immediate needs but a strategy for long-term resilience. Through initiatives supported by the Norwegian Church Aid—an international charity—these women are learning to diversify their income sources, reducing their dependence on livestock and embracing sustainable horticulture practices.

The path to fully accepting these new practices is slow, and the women of Mvomero know their success is just the start. They face many challenges ahead, including the risk of drought and strong cultural norms that shape gender roles in Maasai society.

[Go to Top.](#) ++++++

### **2. Right to Learn Afghanistan**

<https://righttolearn.ca/rebrand/>

On September 1, 2024, Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan changed our legal name to Right to Learn Afghanistan.

With over 25 years of experience advancing education in Afghanistan, our new name more vividly reflects our longstanding mission to make the right to learn a reality for Afghan women and girls.

As our organization makes lasting advances in upholding the fundamental right to a quality education, our new name opens more doors and invites everyone — on the basis of our common humanity — to join us in upholding women's rights.

This change ultimately strengthens our efforts to achieve our vision of an equitable world where all women and girls are empowered with the freedom and opportunity to learn.

[Go to Top.](#) ++++++

### **3. Yes, there's a youth bulge, but the global south is also getting older**

<https://www.devex.com/news/yes-there-s-a-youth-bulge-but-the-global-south-is-also-getting-older-107327>

While development practitioners have given the so-called youth bulge much attention in recent years, particularly in Africa, less notice has been paid to the impact of improved global life expectancy. The World Health Organization says that expectancy increased by more than six years between 2000 and 2019 from 66.8 years to 73.4.

Moreover, gender-based disparities in education, large informal economies, and a lack of pension coverage also contribute to aging inequities in LMICs, according to an AARP International report published last year.

[Go to Top.](#) ++++++

### **4. Why cooking causes 4M premature deaths a year**

<https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2024/07/12/why-cooking-causes-4m-premature-deaths-a-year>

In much of the world families still cook using solid fuels (ie, wood or charcoal) instead of with cleaner methods (gas or electricity). The household smoke that they create leads to almost 4m premature deaths each year, making it the world's third-biggest cause of early mortality for women and children, after heart disease and strokes.

Poor countries are the most affected. Some countries have lowered mortality rates. Across Asia since 2010 some 840m people have gained access to cleaner ways of cooking. China, India and Indonesia have each more than halved the number of people relying on dirty fuels.

Progress in Africa, however, has been undermined by its rapid population growth. Between 2010 and 2022 the share of people in sub-Saharan Africa using cleaner cooking fuels increased from 8% to more than 15%, but the total number of people without access to these cleaner methods still rose by 220m.

[Go to Top.](#) ++++++

## 5. Canada records its lowest fertility rate for 2nd year: StatsCan

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/canada-lowest-ever-fertility-rate-1.7338374>

Canada recorded its lowest ever fertility rate for the second year in a row in 2023, according to Statistics Canada. The country recorded a rate of 1.26 children born per woman, according to the agency, with British Columbia having the nation's lowest fertility rate at one child per woman.

While the number of births stayed stable compared to 2022, at around 350,000, Statistics Canada says the lower fertility rate is due to the increase in the number of women of childbearing age living in the country in 2023.

"Canada has now joined the group of 'lowest-low' fertility countries, including South Korea, Spain, Italy and Japan, with 1.3 children per woman or less," the agency said in a Wednesday statement. "In comparison, the total fertility rate for the United States was 1.62 per woman in 2023."

[Go to Top.](#) ++++++

## 6. USAID expands LGBTQ+ development approach as global hostilities rise

<https://www.devex.com/news/usaid-expands-lgbtq-development-approach-as-global-hostilities-rise-108427>

USAID is prioritizing LGBTQ+ inclusion in sectors like agriculture and economic empowerment as challenges rise in Uganda and across Africa. USAID's Inclusive Development Policy, released in 2023, provides a framework that is helping the organization expand its focus beyond HIV and human rights and include more development sectors such as agriculture. It also emphasizes local leadership and partnerships, and crisis response.

[Go to Top.](#) ++++++

## 7. LGBTQ+ activists protest World Bank's plan to resume lending to Uganda

<https://www.devex.com/news/lgbtq-activists-protest-world-bank-s-plan-to-resume-lending-to-uganda-108409>

Activists said they are outraged that the World Bank is moving forward with plans to restart lending to Uganda without adequate measures to protect people from discrimination. Protesters, including Ugandans directly impacted by the law, called the decision "disastrous" and accused the World Bank of disregarding its own anti-discrimination policies.

[Go to Top.](#) ++++++

### 1. Gender vulnerability assessment to inform gender-sensitive adaptation action: a case study in semi-arid areas of Mali

<https://aicra.cgiar.org/publications/gender-vulnerability-assessment-inform-gender-sensitive-adaptation-action-case-study>

#### Abstract

Understanding the gender dimensions of vulnerability to climate change is crucial for designing effective gender-transformative climate actions. This is particularly crucial in the semi-arid regions of West Africa, a climate change “hotspot” where high dependence on climate-sensitive livelihoods and limited adaptive capacity make agriculture and livelihoods highly vulnerable. In this study we combined semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with a systematic literature review to analyze gendered household vulnerability to climate change in Cinzana, a semi-arid area of Mali, and identify entry points for gender-transformative adaptation actions. The Livelihood Vulnerability assessment indicated that female-headed households were more vulnerable than male-headed households. Differential socio-demographic profiles, livelihood strategies, social networks, water and food and agricultural production systems were key drivers of the gendered vulnerability patterns. A systematic review of drivers of gendered vulnerability in Mali illustrated how socio-cultural norms and roles assigned to women, and limited women access to and control over productive resources and adaptation technologies make women more vulnerable to climatic and non-climatic risks. We highlight the need of gender transformative approaches to address the structural gender inequality and reduce vulnerability of female-headed households. We outline three pathways for reducing female-headed households’ vulnerability to climate change, including the promotion of gender-smart extension and climate advisory services and empowering women.

[Go to Top.](#) ++++++

### 2. Coffee Crisis Forces Farmers To Leave Their Country

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ebVbCyLTG5w>

While international coffee companies are making huge profits, coffee farmers are struggling with bitter poverty. One of them is Olga Alvarado from Honduras. Like many of her compatriots, she therefore fled to the USA. After eight years she returned to run a small coffee farm from which she can make a living. Olgas Farm is part of a Fairtrade-certified cooperative.

[Go to Top.](#) ++++++

### 3. 2024 Gender Index

<https://equalmeasures2030.org/2024-sdg-gender-index/>

The 2024 SDG Gender Index is the most comprehensive global measure of gender equality. Developed by Equal Measures 2020 [EM2030], it provides a snapshot of where the world stands on the vision of gender equality embedded in the 2030 Agenda. It is a multidimensional index, benchmarking gender equality across 139 countries (covering 96% of the world’s women and girls) and 56 issues across 14 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Between 2019 and 2022, nearly 40% of countries – home to over 1.1. billion women and girls in 2022 – stagnated or declined on gender equality according, to the SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) gender index. Tracking 139 countries across 56 indicators, the index found that not a single nation is on track to meet the 2030 gender equality goals.

Surprisingly (or maybe not), Costa Rica outpaced the United States, which plummeted to 40th place after setbacks such as reduced female political participation and the rollback of Roe v. Wade. The U.S. now has the same gender equality score as China. Even equality powerhouses such as Canada and the Scandinavian countries showed little to no improvement.

If current trends continue, global gender equality won’t be achieved until the 22nd century.

## 4. The Gendered Energy Crisis: Prospects for an eco-feminist Just Energy Transition in South Africa

<https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/the-gendered-energy-crisis-prospects-for-an-eco-feminist-just-energy-transition-621615/>

This report is focused on identifying the ongoing challenges at Eskom, the South African power utility, thus shedding light on democratic processes and human rights considerations. It adopts a feminist lens in its analysis of the electricity crisis, exploring potential feminist approaches to restructuring the existing electricity grid infrastructure.

The report highlights financial and operational inefficiencies at the utility which have caused an ongoing energy crisis in South Africa's energy sector in recent years. Furthermore, policy uncertainty on realizing a feminist, just and socially inclusive energy transition continues to hamstring decisive action on the part of decision makers because of evident competing interests between the Mineral Resources and Energy and Environment Ministries. Finally, the report notes the sectors lack of gender-responsive planning and budgeting frameworks and the negative impacts of coal extraction on local livelihoods.

## 5. Local Capacity Strengthening to Support Women in Agricultural Research

<https://www.workwithusaid.gov/en/blog/local-capacity-strengthening-to-support-women-in-agricultural-research>

On the African continent, only 25 percent of African researchers are women, and only 7 percent of researchers in a leadership role are women. AWARD started with a mandate to enhance the leadership capacity of individual female researchers. But we found that after participating in training, these women would simply go back to the same systems and institutions where they faced the same problems they did before their training.

Over the years, our work has expanded to address this challenge. While we continue to work with individuals, we also now work at the institutional level, helping organizations be more conducive for women by using a gender equity approach. We support agricultural researchers to develop innovations that both help women and strengthen institutions, such as programs addressing flexible hours, child care, and mentorship. This is all because skills training is not the only thing women need: what women really need is the opportunity to participate and benefit as equal members of society.

## 6. Religious groups ‘spending billions to counter gender-equality education’

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/article/2024/sep/11/religious-groups-christians-islamists-catholic-billions-counter-gender-equality-sex-education-lgbtq-equal-rights>

<https://www.alignplatform.org/resources/report-whose-hands-our-education-countering-backlash>

Extreme religious groups and political parties are targeting schools around the world as part of a coordinated and well-funded attack on gender equality, according to a new report.

Well-known conservative organisations aim to restrict girls’ access to education, change what is on the curriculum, and influence educational laws and policies, according to *Whose Hands on our Education*, a report by the global affairs thinktank ODI.



Tactics include removing sex education from schools, banning girls from learning, reinforcing patriarchal gender stereotypes in textbooks and rejecting gender-inclusive language in schools.

[Go to Top.](#) ++++++

## **7. Choosing Our Future: Education for Climate Action**

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/education/publication/education-for-climate-action>

Education is a key asset for climate action. Education reshapes behaviors, develops skills, and spurs innovation—everything we need to combat the greatest crisis facing humanity.

Better educated people are more resilient and adaptable, better equipped to create and work in green jobs, and critical to driving solutions.

Yet, education is massively overlooked in the climate agenda. Almost no climate finance goes to education. Channeling more climate funding to education could significantly boost climate change mitigation and adaptation.

At the same time, climate change is a huge threat to education. Millions of young people face lost days of learning because of climate related events. In low-income countries the situation is worse. Unless made up, this lost learning will negatively impact their future earnings and productivity. It will also lead to great inequality both within and across countries.

[Go to Top.](#) ++++++

## **8. Two Years at the Forefront: Exploring the needs and experiences of women-led, women’s rights and LGBTQIA+ led organizations two years into the Ukraine humanitarian response**

<https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/two-years-at-the-forefront-621600/>

Two years on from the escalation of the war in Ukraine, Oxfam spoke with a number of people leading the work of local and national women-led organisations (WLOs), women’s rights organisations (WROs), LGBTQIA+ led organizations, and other local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) addressing the needs of women, girls and gender minorities in Poland and Ukraine. We wanted to understand how the humanitarian crisis has impacted them, personally and as organizations, and their needs and priorities for the future.

At the beginning of the humanitarian crisis following the escalation of the war in Ukraine, local WLOs, WROs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations were some of the first on the ground responding to their communities’ needs, both within Ukraine and in neighboring countries, and two years on, they are still at the forefront of providing assistance.

The conversations that we had with these organisations highlighted that they are facing key challenges in continuing to sustain their vital role in responding to humanitarian needs; the need for greater investment in their voice and agency as decision-makers in the humanitarian response; and the need for flexible support to these organisations that allows them to carry out their important work across all stages of the response to the humanitarian crisis.

[Go to Top.](#) ++++++

## **9. Women who Work in Canada’s Agriculture & Food Sector**

<https://youtu.be/TliiOoZ-4ZU>

Agriculture and food industry is full of resilient and determined women who are transforming the market into a vibrant community. Sarah Wieler, the organizer of La Broquerie [Manitoba] farmers' market, is a trailblazing woman making waves in the market as a leader. Her dedication is committed to creating an inclusive community where local women can thrive and showcase their talents. The diverse culture Sarah has created exemplifies the power and impact of women in leadership.

## 10. Small Scale Food Processor Training Initiative

<https://venturecapital.ssfpa.net/>

<https://nvigorate.ca/pages/about-us>

Sea buckthorn berries are a tangy, citrusy, superfruit packed with vitamins and amino acids. After learning about their nutritional benefits, Betty Forbes’s family began growing the berries on their farm in the late 1990s. Today, Betty manages the farm and uses the harvest for her line of sea buckthorn-based products, which includes spreads, beverages, desserts, and more. Nvigate products can be found in stores across western Canada and the US or can be purchased online.

“Growing the market has taken so much educating, educating, educating - so many people don’t know what it is,” says Betty. “Now, it’s expanding here for sure, and chef’s have really caught on to what a unique ingredient it is.” Betty credits her time at the farmers market with giving her such a wide customer base - including some international clients. “The wonderful thing about a farmer’s market is that when people come, they bring their company. People want to see what your town offers - so we had people from all over the world see us there and learn about sea buckthorn berries!”

Betty is part of a recent cohort of the Venture Capital Ready program offered by SSFPA.

[Go to Top.](#) ++++++

## 11. Women’s full-time employment in Canada, 2007 to 2021

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2022058-eng.htm>

In 2021, 68% of women aged 20 to 54 were employed full time, up from 65% in 2007.

From 2007 to 2021, full-time employment increased among many groups of women, but not among immigrant women who arrived in Canada more than 10 years ago. Immigrant women with a bachelor's degree or higher were much less likely to be employed full time than their Canadian-born counterparts.

- Canadian-born (excluding Indigenous): 80%
- Indigenous: 79%
- Recent immigrants: 62%
- Long-term immigrants: 73%

For immigrant women with a bachelor’s degree or higher, full-time employment was more common when the degree was earned in Canada.

Marriage and motherhood are associated with lower full-time employment among immigrant women, but not among Indigenous women and non-Indigenous Canadian-born women.

[Go to Top.](#) ++++++

## 12. A participatory framework for identifying 'best bet' climate-smart agriculture innovations

<https://aicra.cgiar.org/publications/participatory-framework-prioritizing-climate-smart-agriculture-innovations-rice-based>

Recent research conducted under AICCRA in Mali uses a participatory framework to identify and prioritize context-specific, best-bet innovations and to assess the barriers, incentives, and roles of institutions for their widespread adoption in the context of Mali's rice-growing environments.

The framework used in this study can be applied to other contexts to identify and invest in locally relevant best-bet climate-smart agriculture innovation packages. Explore key findings from the case study in Mali.

### 13. Digital Agriculture Services in Kenya: The Farmer Perspective

<https://60decibels.com/insights/digital-agriculture-kenya/>

webinar recording <https://youtu.be/mVW9ukEsVi8>

Approximately 500 million small farms, each under two hectares, produce a third of the world’s food supply. These farms, often in remote areas, are highly vulnerable to frequent climate shocks. Digital agriculture solutions, such as mobile technologies, offer these farmers access to vital information and markets without the need for in-person interactions.

In low- and middle-income countries, nearly 1,400 digital agriculture solutions, used by around 50 million farmers, cover 10% of smallholder farming households. Despite this growth, current metrics focus on supply-side data, like app downloads, which don’t fully capture the impact on farmers.

44 percent of respondents were female.

To address the lack of demand-side data, we partnered with The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Busara Center for Behavioral Economics, to develop a farmer-centric methodology. This report summarizes insights from how 1,484 farmers reported experiencing digital agriculture tools during the 2023-24 season in Kenya.

### 14. Transforming the Lives of Rural Women through Improved Livestock Management

<https://60decibels.com/insights/project-mesha/>

Since 2018, 60Decibels has teamed up with Project Mesha to track the experience of rural women in Bihar, India, through improved livestock management. By training over 3,000 women as Pashu Sakhis (friends of the animal) this initiative empowers them to boost their families’ incomes and develop financial independence. The results? Three in four goat rearers report better earnings, and Pashu Sakhis have seen a huge jump in confidence and skills.

The insights emerging from the 60 Decibels studies have been instrumental in refining Project Mesha’s approach. For instance, recognizing the safety concerns reported by Pashu Sakhis in the data, the program implemented self-defense training for them. This boosted their confidence and helped them do their jobs better. Responding to some of the challenges reported by goat rearers, particularly irregular visits by Pashu Sakhis, the Project Mesha team invested significantly in community mobilization to strengthen dialogue and collaboration between goat rearers and Pashu Sakhis. This has emerged as a win-win situation for both – Pashu Sakhis have expanded their goat rearer client base thereby increasing their incomes and goat rearers are able to access more services from Pashu Sakhis.