

International Learning Alliance 2019 – Equity plenary discussion

During the fourth International Learning Alliance workshop in Tanzania, members from SAIRLA research projects and National Learning Alliances were invited to share their lessons and experiences and present key findings and tools. This is a summary of the plenary that followed the presentations given under the theme of **equity**.

Question 1: What is your main observation regarding equity in relation to SAI in Sub-Saharan Africa?

What is equity in SAI?

- There is lack of clarity in terms of what we mean by equity- so in terms of groups using the term there might be differences e.g. Gender? Youth? Wealthy groups? Household types?
- If you want to understand equity issues, you have to go deeper to explore complexities below the men-women comparison
- The link to SAI was implicit in the presentations, there is a long way to go to make this link explicit between equity and SAI
- Equity in relation to SAI in general is related to being able to access to key resources like land and labour. Equitable access to resources is key.
- Access to land and ownership is critical for SAI. Associated services such as extension are important for SAI. Gender and cultural norms are important for SAI
- There is significant increase in efforts to address gender in equity (there is increased consciousness about addressing inequalities)

Cultural perspectives and norms are important in considering equity

- We cannot run away from cultural things. It plays a big role in the gender equity
- We don't have clear understanding on the existing social culture system
- People want to retain their culture, though culture is not static

Gender gaps

- The gender gap was not very big – access to inputs (men have a tendency of setting more benefits than women and women using ore fertilizers than other inputs (quick results)
- Gender gap persists despite progress in SAI
- Gender gap still exists as men are still owning the land and youth are not able to access the land
- The gender gap in youth is declining e.g. in Malawi and subsidies
- What is called gender gaps were more of economic indicators

Equity findings / how to achieve equity in SAI

- Some SAI technologies don't benefit women eg those that are labour intensive/need capital investment
- A lot of lessons but how to move from micro to macro experience (scale-up)
- No push, dedication to by the Government to provide subsidy to solve equity issues
- Poor opportunities for the youth
- Budget allocation is critical and need deeper analysis on the implications for youth, women and marginalized groups (refer Tanzania NLA)
- There is a number of good policies that support equity in SAI but what is lacking is policy linkage between policy and resource allocation to enable their implementation
- There is a long path toward achieving equity. Policy makers are fairly aware of the needs to address the gaps, some ad hoc budget is needed/not sufficient?
- Women are catching-up in some respects with respect to SAI, especially where they are facilitated (e.g. targeted subsidies), but in other respect SAI increases the workload for women

Question 2: What is your main observation on how to engage policy and investment processes on equity?

Challenges / recommendations

- It is difficult to interest/entice policymakers unless something is really catchy then they are not interested
- Need long term engagement for the policy makers to understand the contribution of research to policy and planning
- The big dilemma is to balance between the interest of the policy/investment in equity issues and context specific interest of people on the ground
- Different levels of policy need to be engaged-no stakeholder can promote SAI alone
- There is need for SAIRLA to engage on policy continuum of different scales
- A combination of approaches is needed to engage decision makers – taking into account seniority, personality, context and timing
- Collect evidence from grassroots and provide into policy makers for decision making
- The need to have quantifiable data/evidence for policy influence/decision making
- Need to provide clear evidence/feedback to decision makers on how well their policies and action are doing on the ground
- If subsidy is given, reduce the gender gap, it could be very interesting, hence policy makers and investment processes should consider equity. Generally there is little engagement
- The issues are not new but what to do about (gender differences in access to land, labour, implements, extension services) beyond donor projects?
- There was only one presentation operating in a clear policy process –but the timing of the intervention on equity and SAI not clear in wider policy timetable
- Continued engagement with policy makers to bridge the gap between policy and resources
- Providing evidence on gaps to guide decision makers. Providing recommendations (not the classic way research is used to do) but need to get more closer to the decision/policy makers
- Need to go beyond the understanding of equity issues. Perhaps need for guides/toolkits or even better institutionalization/ mainstreaming. What sort of recommendations do we need?