

Underlying narrative

Households are like trees - they need to be properly balanced if they are to bear rich fruit. If the roots are not equally strong on both sides, then the tree will fall over in the first storm. If the fruits on one side are heavier than on the other, then the tree will also fall over and there will be no harvest next year.

Inequalities between women and men in households are a key cause of imbalances and inefficiencies in the household tree which make them fail. Often women and men do not work equally, leading to inefficient division of labour inputs to the tree. Women and men may not benefit equally in the fruits and unproductive expenditures may cause the tree to fall over. The household trunk is often made to bend one way or the other because of inequalities in ownership and because decisions are not shared. This means everyone goes their own way without caring about the other and the whole tree becomes weak.

It is important that the forces acting on each side of the trunk are equal to help it to grow straight and help the flow of goodness from roots to branches. Instead of the tree being blown this way and that by power inequalities - and maybe even uprooted altogether. Even if fertiliser is given to the roots, if this is done on one side only eg training or inputs only for the men or if the forces acting on the tree are not made equal eg asset ownership, then the tree will just grow faster on one side and may fall over even faster.

The gender balance tree aims to address these imbalances so everyone contributes equally and everyone benefits. Then the household tree can grow straight and strong with strong roots and big fruits, and is sustainable.



Aims of the Gender Balance Tree

The gender balance tree is a powerful way of getting information often collected by other gender tools like access/control profile and time schedules into one tool. Everyone goes away with their own individual analysis of their own reality, not a stereotyped view. In terms of challenging 'culture', it is often the progressive exceptions rather than assumed averages that can show the most constructive ways forward. The tool produces credible quantification of the serious imbalances by participants themselves, rather than vague estimates of what people already know that can convince community leaders to act. Importantly the tool does not stop at analysis but also focuses on identifying immediate and longer term action commitments participants can make to improve the gender balance and increase household wellbeing through more efficient division of labour, more productive expenditure, more equal distribution of ownership and decision-making.

At this catalyst stage the aim is awareness-raising and identification of 5 change strategies that can be monitored. The tool is designed for households with one or more members of both sexes (spouses, parents, children - eg even where sons and daughters are not working for an income they are often unequally involved in housework). For this purpose and for the majority of participants, it has to be kept simple and focused on change in relations between women and men. For suggestions on how to adapt it for polygamous households and single-headed households see the Facilitation Notes below.

Aims for Participants:

- identify who contributes most work to the household: women or men
- identify who spends most for the household: women or men
- identify who benefits most from household income: women or men
- identify inequalities in ownership and decision-making
- decide whether the household tree is balanced
- decide priority areas for improving the gender balance of the tree so it can stand up straight and bear richer fruit equally for women and men
- see which households 'break the gender norms' as a basis for change

Aims for Organisations:

- start to investigate different household structures, including incidence of polygamy and female headed households for input to the social empowerment map.
- clarify and quantify broad gender inequalities in work contribution, control over income and expenditure to avoid reliance on gender stereotypes.
- get an overview of the types of strategies which women and men see as ways forward to balance the tree.
- see which households 'break the gender norms' as a basis for change
- start to think about the types of services which might be needed to complement individual actions and group sharing.



Facilitation Overview

Participant preparation	<p>Bring your notebook diary with your final Vision Journey on pages 2 and 3. And a pencil, and black and green coloured pen if this is not provided by the facilitators. Come early and work on the Vision Journey song from the previous day.</p> <p>Bring your pens</p>
Facilitator preparation	<p>Familiarise yourself with the tool and draw your own Gender Balance Tree</p> <p>Download one of the Gender Balance songs from the website and play this as participants arrive.</p> <p>Prepare an introductory explanation</p> <p>Put up a blank flipchart at the front of the room for interactive presentation of the tool</p> <p>Make sure the seating arrangements are appropriate for people to sit comfortably in groups while doing individual drawings. And that there are passageways for people to come up and contribute from the front.</p> <p>Seat yourself to the side, not at the front. You do not hold the pen at any time.</p>
Materials/ prepared inputs	<p>Per participant: notebook diary and a pencil and black and green coloured pens. With some sharpeners and rubbers.</p> <p>Per group: 1 flipchart put in different corners of the venue and different coloured markers</p>
Timing 3 hours with health break	<p>Pairwise recap on achievements from homework from the previous session and facilitator introduction (20 minutes)</p> <p>Interactive presentation of the steps - facilitator does not hold the pen - and drawing individual trees (40 minutes)</p> <p>Group discussion in 2-4 single sex groups to produce quantified trees (30 minutes)</p> <p>Design and presentations of GBT songs to be presented at the end (40 minutes)</p> <p>Plenary sharing filling in and quantification of the action commitments, current situation, opportunities and challenges on the collective GBT (30 minutes)</p> <p>Facilitator recap and homework (10 minutes)</p>
Outputs	<p>Individual gender balance tree in notebook diary with 5 clear action commitments as gree fruits.</p> <p>Quantified group GBT showing the action fruits.</p> <p>Gender Balance Tree song.</p>
Homework for participants	<p>Refinement of your own individual gender balance tree based on the plenary discussion.</p> <p>Act on the immediate change strategies identified and reflect on what works, what does not work, what advice can you share with others, what advice do they need?</p> <p>Share the methodology and what you have learned with at least two people in your household, community or group.</p> <p>Practise the GBT song.</p> <p>Bring your diary and pens (maybe buy a couple more colours?) to the next meeting.</p>
Homework for facilitator	<p>Analyse the information from the collective GBT and put onto excel sheet for sharing with your colleagues.</p> <p>Add to your notes in the margin for future adaptation</p> <p>Consider any issues and changes you want to make in the next exercise: Empowerment Leadership Map.</p>

Gender Balance Tree

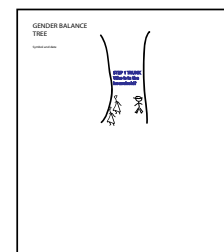
Participant Diaries:

Basic Steps

Draw this on the next double page of the notebook diary. Use the book on its side with roots on one page and branches on the other. Start in pencil first and then add colour. Remember to put a date.

Step 1: Trunk: who is in the household?

Draw two lines in the middle of the paper for the trunk. Then put symbols for each household member on either side inside the trunk. Working women (including co-wives living in the same family) should go on the left side of the trunk in one colour (eg green), working men on the other in another colour (eg blue), with dependents in the middle to the side of their respective sex in the respective colour.



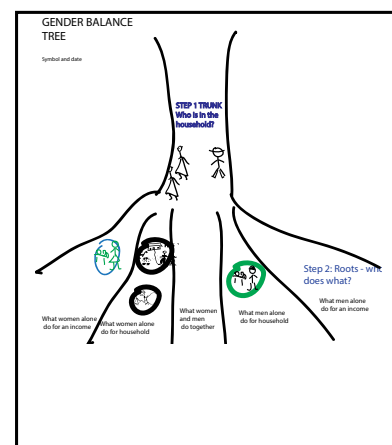
Step 2: Roots: who contributes what work?

a) Draw two roots for women and two roots for men on the respective side of the trunk in their respective colour. The central root is for joint activities but the line is in the colour for women/men.

b) On the outside root on each side put the activities which people of that sex performs alone for themselves. Ring those which take most time in black as something you may want to change. Ring those which earn most income with a blue ring, thickness indicating relative amount of income and something which you probably want to keep.

c) On the inside roots put the activities which people of that sex perform alone for the family ie housework following the same size and ring convention.

d) In the central root put those activities which both women and men do, putting the symbol on the side of the sex who does most. Again using the same size and ring convention.



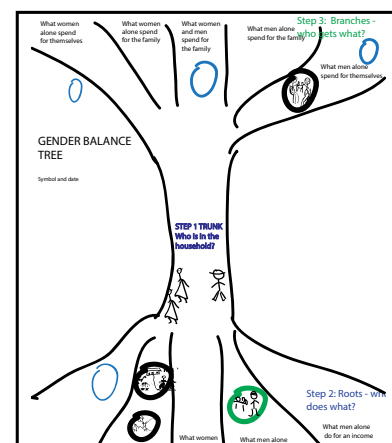
Step 3: Branches who gets what fruit?

a) Draw four branches corresponding to each root, women, men and central trunk for joint household expenses.

b) On the outside branch on each side, draw symbols for personal expenditure that each sex makes for themselves alone. Ring the largest personal expenditures in black with thickest line for largest expenses as probably things you want to change.

c) Household expenditure which only one person pays for should be on the inside branch on each side. Ring the largest expenditures in black, with thickest line for largest expenses as possibly things you want to change.

d) Put similarly ringed symbols for joint expenditures in the middle top branch - putting the symbol to the side of the sex who contributes the most. Ring the largest expenditures in blue as probably things you want to keep.



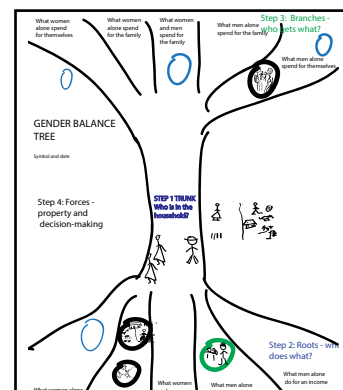
Gender Balance Tree

Basic Steps continued

Step 4: What is pushing the tree?

On their respective side of the trunk put symbols for:

- the property which women and men own - eg who owns the land? who owns the livestock? who owns the house?
- the types of decisions which women and men make - which decisions are made by women only, which by men only, which are made jointly? Or is one person overall decision-maker or do they always sit down together?

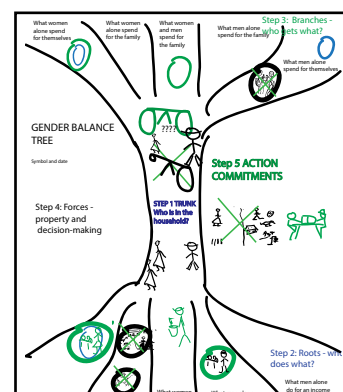


Step 5: Action: what do we want to change?

Does the tree balance? Are women doing most of the work with men owning most of the property, income and getting most expenditure? Put a symbol representing the degree of gender balance at the top of the trunk.

Ring in blue the things you like that help the tree to balance. These do not need to change.

How do you think you can make the tree balance better? eg which tasks should be done jointly, which expenditures could be cut, what property should be shared? Of the income earning activities can you increase income or decrease time? Identify 5 action commitments - things you want more of or less of to make the tree balance - tuber fruits on the roots, mango fruits on the branches or cocoa fruits on the stem. Mark these in green or cross the original symbol with a black cross and draw a new green symbol in the appropriate place - as unripe fruits which you want to change and turn red.

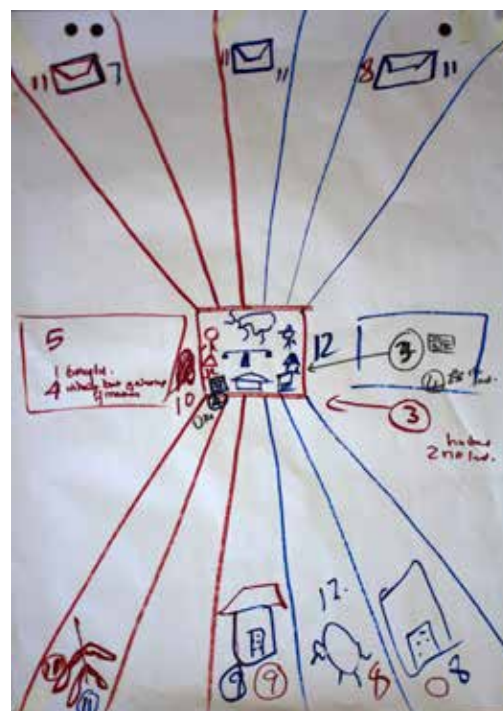


Plenary Quantification

At this Catalyst stage it is simpler to recap on the tool itself and have an interactive drawing and feedback of the women's and men's fruits onto a collective GBT of quantified action commitments.

The quantification is extremely important here and is done by simple hands up. But it can focus only on key changes like land ownership. (See example right) It is more important to quantify some key commitments for women and for men and leave enough time for discussion.

More detailed quantification from the GBT can be done on a Multilane Highway and it is suggested that information from the tracked GBTs are transferred in this way at the Review stage when the MLH becomes the key tool for monitoring.

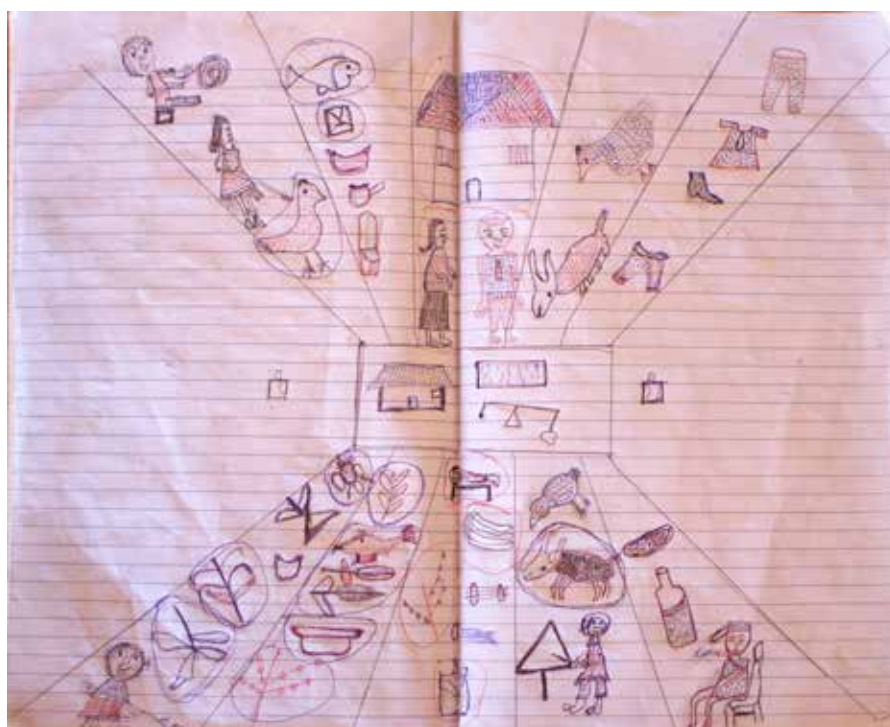




Gender Balance Tree: Facilitation Details

<p>Pairwise Discussion</p> <p>20 minutes.</p> <p>Vision Journey song 10 minutes</p>	<p>Play the music for the gender balance song from another process ready for people to arrive. As soon as people start to arrive the facilitator asks them to pair up with other participants - preferably people they have not yet talked to much so they make new friends - to recap on the homework from the vision journey in the previous session and their pictorial manual;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • did they work with others on a vision journey song? can they share this and practise? • what future opportunities did they add to their vision journey?; • who did they share the tool and journey with, and what was the response? <p>When everyone has arrived or the start time is reached, the facilitator asks for feedback from the pairwise discussion, focusing on the actions and peer sharing and/or the song.</p>
<p>Individual GBTs</p> <p>See Participants Diaries Steps 1-5</p> <p>30 - 40 minutes.</p>	<p>The facilitator then explains the purpose of the Gender Balance Tree using the narrative above.</p> <p>Ask (or give an energiser for) people to form single sex groups according to marital status: Married in nuclear family; Married in polygamous family; Single (divorced, never married, widowed)</p> <p>Then following the Participant Diary Steps above go through the instructions above step by step interactively, inviting people to give examples on the flipchart at the front as people draw in individual notebook diaries. Go slowly. Make sure everyone is engaged all the time - either through taking their own analysis further or helping others. But stress they can keep things confidential if they like. You should never hold the pen.</p>
<p>Bringing It Together:</p> <p>Plenary sharing and and quantification of action commitments 30 - 40 minutes</p>	<p>The plenary quantification is done on the collective GBT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - changes are marked as symbols on the appropriate root or branch giving gender disaggregation by positioning - by each symbols put a colour coded ring fruit for numbers of people who already have a particular fruit (blue) people who don't want it (black) and people who want it (green).ie each symbol may have more than one ring. - inside each ring put the numbers of women and numbers of men either colourcoding the marks, or as symbol or writing for M/F.
<p>Gender Balance song 1 hour</p> <p>30 minutes preparation</p> <p>5 min per group performance</p> <p>5-10 minutes discussion on best song</p>	<p>Still in their groups, participants are asked to design a song which summarises the tree and its steps and the things on their group tree. Putting the steps on flipcharts and acting them out. Use as an example one of the videos on the website.</p> <p>These songs are then performed as a fun activity linking to the plenary feedback on the collective GBT. And people decide which ones they want to like, or how they would adapt it.</p>
<p>Facilitator Wrap Up and homework</p> <p>10 minutes</p>	<p>The facilitator gives a brief wrap up of the action conclusions - good facilitation from the back means that there should be little for the facilitator to add. The aim is to inspire people to change in future, not to make either men or women just feel guilty about past behaviour.</p> <p>Explain the Homework as above.</p> <p>Repeat either the Vision Journey or GBT song as people go out.</p>

Gender Balance Tree: Some issues from experience



woman doing all the
work with the children
while the man just sits
and relaxes



men sitting
drinking



woman doing all the cultivation while the man goes with other women



men own all the
property
women own none.

The Gender Balance Tree has proved very effective in highlighting the high frequency of gender imbalance whereby in many households women do most of the work but men control and spend most of the income. For women, the burden of unpaid household work and lack of control over income from their income-earning activities prevents them from increasing their economic efficiency and/or using income for productive investment and/or their own or household wellbeing. For both men and women gendered norms of behaviour and peer pressure (e.g. male alcoholism) may often prevent them from using income productively. It has been a surprise for many men to realise just how much work their wives do, and how much money they themselves waste which could be used productively and/or to help their family. This is disastrous for the women and children left behind with very little income. It leads to a lot of discord and unhappiness and also violence in families, mainly but not only perpetrated by men on women and children.

It may be possible to more than double family income simply through addressing inefficiencies in division of labour and expenditure caused by gender inequalities. In a significant number of cases in all GALS processes so far, this realisation has brought about changes in the men's behaviour – more sharing of work and decision-making in households and some changes in property rights - making both men and their families happier.

The tree also serves to look at incidence of different household structures: polygamous households, female-headed households and division of labour and expenditure here. The GBT in the CCW does not look in detail at issues like differences between women in polygamous households or household members of the same sex. But for this group it can be adapted as a work/expenditure tree with roots and branches for each adult. Just if there are more women then the tree will always fall over on that side - and crush them??? Intrahousehold relations are discussed in more detail in the empowerment leadership map and more detailed intrahousehold analysis of livelihoods is done in Phase 2. Where there are only members of one sex, the GBT can be replaced by a business or livelihoods tree (see Phase 2 manuals) to see which work can be made more efficient and which expenditures can be cut. And also in the plenary to compare the situation of people in these households to that in mixed-sex households - women are not necessarily worse off without a man, and men may do 'women's work'.



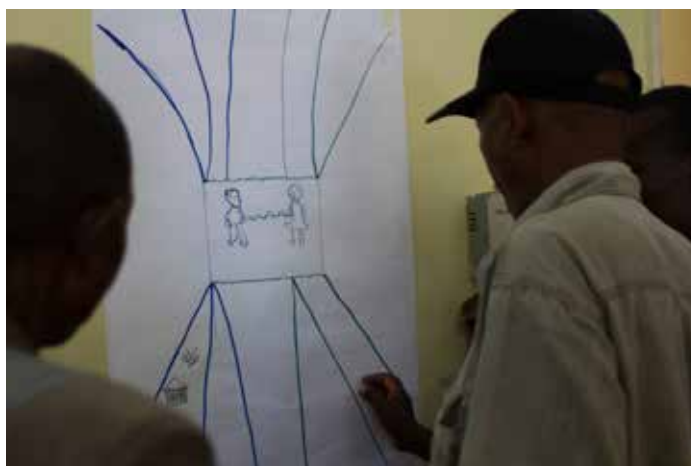
Gender Balance Tree: Facilitation Checklist

By this Session it should be possible to start to be a bit more directive in introducing/ highlighting gender issues than during Sessions 1 and 2. But this should still be with a light and sensitive touch - building on what is coming up from the process. Acknowledging also some of the peer pressures on men and the fact that some women also discriminate against men (e.g. excluding men from the kitchen even if they offer to help) and may waste money on beauty and clothes. If the aim is real change then men and women must feel inspired and encouraged to bring about progressive changes in their lives for the future, not feel defensive about behaviour in the past.

It is important always to remember to SMILE. No matter what is said - but make sure participatory norms are followed and discriminatory views do not dominate because of a few dominant individuals. At no point should there be a top-down imposition of the facilitator's views and reactions. Note who are the women and men who support changes, and ask them to speak. Let others speak also, but ask those supporting change to respond. The more participants supporting change gain confidence to speak and think through their views and practise defending their views against others, the stronger the change will be when you are not there. Only in the last instance should you speak - to clarify or question contradictions or just state that you have seen 'natural gender inequalities' challenged and changed elsewhere.

By the end of this session participants should have GBTs in their diaries with:

- ringed symbols on the roots as an analysis of whether women or men contribute more work and who earns more income - including an analysis of all the work women or men do for the household
- ringed symbols on the branches and analysis of how much women and men contribute to joint expenditure on children and school fees, and how much men spend on alcohol and other women who are not part of this immediate household compared to women's personal expenditure
- symbols to show who owns land, who makes most of the decisions and whether women or men pool their incomes or whether women give all their income to men or men keep all their own income
- an assessment of whether their tree is growing straight or falling over and in which direction reflected as a weighted balance scale in the trunk
- 3-5 green fruit action commitments for change - roots which need strengthening eg men helping with cultivation of food crops and housework, women increasing income from their own businesses, branches which need cutting eg men's expenditure on alcohol or women's dresses and changes in land ownership and decision-making.



Gender Balance Tree: Documentation Checklist

The gender balance tree is a key tool where fruits can be tracked and aggregated on group trees, and/or progress on fruits transferred to the middle lane of a group MLH as part of the CAL and GJR. Once skills are developed, or in the hands of an experienced researcher, the tool can be used as part of rigorous quantitative and qualitative research on gender dimensions of livelihoods as part of business planning and/or gender advocacy in GALS Phases 2 or 3.

Some qualitative notes can be made from the discussion and individual diagrams:

- **Trunk:** household structure, including incidence of polygamy and female headed households. How many households are monogamous/polygamous/single person? What does this imply for gender strategies eg possibilities to bring co-wives together? need for widows groups? youth groups?
- **Roots:** Which activities are normally done by women? Which activities are normally done by men? Are there any things/exceptions to stereotypes which may be surprising? What are the conclusions on gender balance of work contribution on the roots?
- **Branches:** Which expenditures are normally done by women? Which expenditures are normally done by men? Are there any things/exceptions to stereotypes which may be surprising? What are the conclusions on gender balance of share of expenditure income on the branches?
- **Forces on the trunk:** Do any women own land or other important assets? In which circumstances eg only widows? In how many households do women hand all the money to men? In how many households do women or men keep all their own money? In how many households is at least some income shared with joint decision-making?
- **Change commitments:** What are the main types of strategies which women and men see as ways forward to balance the tree? What are the main areas of disagreement between women and men, between people from different backgrounds etc which need to be taken into account in subsequent sessions?
- Specific lessons/challenges from youth/single sex and polygamous households

As noted for the Vision Journey, it is unlikely at this stage that participants will be a representative sample. And they may never meet again as a group. So any attempt at rigorous quantification at this stage would be pointless. It is important to focus on having fun and participant ownership rather than policing and box ticking. The main quantified output from the session are the symbols on the middle lane of the MLH as the basis for discussion on changes, and some idea of numbers of people. This also serves as a sort of participatory pressure on those who may initially be resistant to change. These symbols should be annotated, i.e. sticky labels with written clarification of the symbols should be placed next to each card group. And at the end of the CCW the annotated diagram should be photographed for the organisation records.

