

STRENGTHENING A FEMINIST APPROACH IN EVALUATING THE PROJECT “Progresas/DRET”

Reflection on the use of participative methods and gender differentials analysis criteria with the participants involved in the evaluation of rural projects, in order to investigate changes in gender relations in the rural production environment and the empowerment of the women.

Canada



Organización Internacional para las Migraciones (OIM)
El Organismo de las Naciones Unidas para la Migración



Gobernación
del Cauca



Gobernación
de Nariño



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Our most sincere thanks also go to the individuals who participated in the workshops, discussions and interviews. In particular, the farmers and artisans, both male and female, who are the beneficiaries of the project, as well as to the staff of the institutions that we approached, for their valuable contributions and for discussing in an open and sincere manner the issues related to social gender relations within the Colombian context, and in the regions of Nariño and Cauca in particular in the context of the project. These contributions vastly enriched this report and the validation and delivery of the results.

We would like to give special recognition to the operational staff of IOM’s “Progresas/DRET” project, for allowing the Evaluation Team to work with independent criteria, which is a key requirement in any research process. We also thank them for the time and efficient support that they offered to the Consulting Team.



THE PROGRESA-DRET PROJECT

THE PARTICIPATORY REFLEXIVE PROCESS

Using participative methods and gender differential analysis criteria, we researched the changes that are taking place in the communities as a result of the project, particularly in women and girls' financial autonomy and empowerment.

Purpose of the Project

To improve the socio-economic conditions of small producers in three micro-regions of Cauca and Nariño by increasing income earnings and access to rural public goods.



Participating Institutions:



IOM, Ministry of Agriculture, Departmental Ministry of Education, Ministry of Gender Issues and Social Inclusion, Ministry of Environment, Mayors of the Mayo region, Rectors of Educational Institutions, Representative of coffee and fruit growers associations, Committee of Coffee Growers, Engineering Services Consultants, Handicrafts of Colombia, National Learning Service (SENA), Inga de Aponte Indigenous Corporation.





PROPOSED STEPS FOR PARTICIPATORY METHODS TO STRENGTHEN THE FEMINIST EVALUATION

The process included the following steps:

STEP 0

BUILDING THE EVALUATION TEAM



Agreements between the evaluation team of Global Affairs Canada and the national cultural brokers with knowledge on local issues and the region.

STEP 1

PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF GENERAL ASPECTS OF THE PROJECT

Analysis of summary reports on the project and how the project's gender approach was developed.



STEP 2

INITIAL FIELD VALIDATION WITH THE EXECUTING AGENCY TEAM

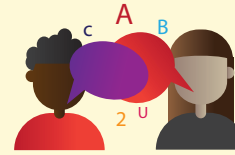


Meeting with the executing agency team at the project site where the evaluation process was to be conducted. Validation of information collected and the activities to be carried out.

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STEP 3

REFLEXIVE PROCESS WITH PROJECT PARTICIPANTS



Workshops with a representative group of project participants (target population) on how a gender approach was included in the project. In the case of mixed groups, sub-groups were divided into men and women to facilitate an exchange of ideas on gender themes.

STEP 4

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS PRESENTATION WITH THE EXECUTING AGENCY TEAM

Closing meeting with the executing agency team, to discuss initial observations coming from the project participant workshops. This included changes that have taken place in social gender relations as a result of the project, and the identification of factors and actors facilitating those changes.



STEP 5

VALIDATION AND RETURN OF FINDINGS TO PROJECT PARTICIPANTS AND THE EXECUTING AGENCY TEAM.



Participatory workshop with representatives of the project participants and a meeting with executing agency team in the field in order to validate and deliver the findings of the process.

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TYPE OF CONSULTATIONS

This was a pilot process on rapid feminist evaluation. Workshops and/or interviews or discussions were held with the institutions involved including:

- Coordinating institutions
- Other entities and organizations involved in the project
- Participant groups, by means of simultaneous consultations with farmers, both male and female, as well as artisan association leaders and other actors participating in the project.
- Field observation

ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK

Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy

Canada is adopting a Feminist International Assistance Policy that seeks to eradicate poverty and build a more peaceful, more inclusive and more prosperous world. Canada firmly believes that promoting gender equality and strengthening the leadership of women and girls is the most effective approach to achieving this goal.



CRITERIA FOR A GENDER DIFFERENTIAL ANALYSIS

To explore, with participating communities, how gender inequalities are being reduced because of the program:



Main findings

Changes in terms of social gender relations and empowerment of women that were a result of project activities with different actors were identified. It should be noted that these findings were identified as part of the rapid feminist evaluation process and do not represent an overall evaluation of the project.

- Progressive inclusion of a gender differential approach in the project, for example, issues of **women's self-esteem and empowerment** were introduced in the farmer field school activities.
- Incorporation of gender-sensitive analysis in assessing the intervention area in order to **identify the inequalities of women producers at the outset**.
- **Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy** provided a significant stimulus to modify project activities and actions with the target population and institutions associated with gender equality and women's empowerment.
- The technical assistance and training given to female producers, **included consideration for unpaid caregiving work in the home**. This enabled them to improve their technical and managerial skills and strengthened their leadership and associativity capacities, which were determining factors for their empowerment.
- In some cases **obstacles for associativity** were expressed. These related to limitations on women's available time, gender-based stereotypes and naturalization of violence, among others.

Good practices

- Quotas for women in the **"manager apprentice"** model for generational renewal planning.
- Qualification and presence of female producers in decision-making positions.
- Family production chains in which the products and **personal income** of women and men are differentiated, as in the case of handicrafts.
- Linking women project participants with **Municipal Women's Panels or Councils**, to strengthen progress towards women's economic self-sufficiency.
- Inclusion of **gender indicators** to measure women's personal income earnings.





Some considerations for this type of initiative

- The costs associated with gender equality and women's economic empowerment are included in the budget for comprehensive rural development programs: **"There is a cost to having a gender focus."**
- The **"junction"** [*juntanza*] (coming together to produce, sell and learn) as a strategy **to overcome resistance to associativity** between female producers and strengthen their economic self-sufficiency.
- Having dedicated spaces for women to discuss progress and influence, such as meetings bringing together women from different regions or linking them with gender councils or feminist panels, helps to **promote economic and political leadership as well as leadership in preventing violence** against women.
- Strengthening the **institutional, community and political willingness** of women and men to address gender equality issues through project activities contributes to the sustainability of women's economic self-sufficiency and the eradication of rural poverty.
- Develop active strategies to increase the participation of women in revenue producing activities and augment personal income. This could include seeking women mentors and peers and participation in local community meetings, among others.
- Periodically document transformative changes resulting from the program, by project phase.



This document presents the results of the pilot participatory process in rapid feminist evaluation of a Government of Canada project in the south of Colombia (Nariño and Cauca departments). A multinational team comprised of two Canadian evaluators (*Global Affairs Canada*) and two external Colombian evaluators, specializing in gender issues and the local context (cultural brokers) interacted with the project participants (target populations) and partners using participatory methods with a gender-differential and feminist approach. Together with the IOM's Executing Team, group interviews and workshops were held with the project participants in Pasto, Nariño, covering the target populations in Cauca and Nariño.

Evaluation team:

Nicole Fuhr, GAC

Nicole.Fuhr@international.gc.ca

Alexandra Santillana, GAC

Alexandra.Santillana@international.gc.ca

Fabiola Amariles, Learning for Impact

famariles@gmail.com

Ana Isabel Arenas, Learning for Impact



Diseño y diagramación:
Cristina Aza Tenganán
cyat.dg@gmail.com



“A transforming factor is the ‘junction’, in which women get together to produce, socialize, and recognize themselves among women. The women together declare themselves more independent”.