

Gender Equality and Youth Program



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Table of Contents

Acronyms.....	4
Summary.....	5
Main gender challenges in agrifood systems.....	8
Gender Equality and Youth Program.....	13
Work pillars of the Gender Equality and Youth Program.....	17
Annex 1: Key concepts.....	20
Bibliography.....	22

Acronyms

CA4SH	Coalition of Action for Soil Health
CIM	Inter-American Commission of Women
COP	United Nations Conference on Climate Change
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ELTSA	Leadership School for the Transformation of Agrifood Systems of the Americas
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IABA	Inter-American Board of Agriculture
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IICA	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
LiSAM	Living Soils of the Americas
OPSAa	Public Policy Observatory for Agrifood Systems
MTP	Medium-Term Plan
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNFSS	United Nations Forum on Sustainability Standards
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN-Women	The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Summary

Despite decades of initiatives aimed at improving the situation of rural women in relation to their male counterparts and recognizing the importance of rural youth, the figures shown below show that, far from improving, this lag has increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The latest estimates indicate that, at the current rate, gender gaps will close in 286 years, and it will take around 140 years to achieve equal representation in positions of power and leadership in the workplace (UN Women, 2022).

The inequalities that affect a large part of the population of the Americas are the product of large structural gaps including gender gaps, which are recognized by all the nations and are included in the 2030 Agenda as one of the challenges that humanity must resolve to achieve equality among all people and sustainable development.

To achieve sustainable, equal and inclusive development, it is necessary to work with an intersectional gender approach, as well as an intergenerational approach, transforming the restrictive social norms that have created a social, cultural, political and economic environment that fails to recognize the high and profitable economic returns that gender equality and youth inclusion could bring.

Based on the 2022-2026 Medium-Term Plan (MTP) of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the Gender Equality and Youth was created with the objective of strengthening the strategic vision and technical cooperation actions aimed at reducing gender gaps and inequalities, thus building a stronger gender architecture in Member States.

The Program focuses its actions on helping Member States to reduce structural gaps through the strengthening of technical capacities, technical and political forums, support in the generation of public policies, joint work with strategic alliances, digital platforms, all with a view to developing an intersectional gender approach and empowering rural youth and women, strengthening and creating networks, and promoting their participation in decision-making spaces within agrifood systems.

The Program's main areas of technical cooperation include the care economy, equal participation in decision-making spaces and disaggregated statistical information, given the impact that these topics have on closing gender and generational gaps.

The Program promotes a work culture that is respectful of differences and the promotion of parity, building multi-level, multi-sector and multi-stakeholder alliances to cooperate and collaborate with technical support in the construction of an egalitarian and inclusive hemispheric vision, particularly focused on gender, rural women and youth, generating networks and mobilizing technical and financial resources in the Americas.



The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), established in 1942, is the specialized agricultural agency of the Inter-American System that supports the efforts of its Member States to achieve agricultural development and rural well-being. The Institute's operations are aimed at the implementation of three strategic technical cooperation actions:

1. Support the strengthening and transformation of agrifood systems, in accordance with the mandate of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture expressed in resolution 531, in which it endorses the 16 messages presented by the Americas at the United Nations Food Systems Summit of 2021).
2. Provide tools and inputs that contribute to the formulation of a new generation of public policies aimed at recognizing the contribution of agriculture in agrifood systems and in solving the climate crisis, as well as addressing science and innovation issues, placing agricultural and livestock producers of all contexts and scales at the center; and
3. Support the collective action efforts of member countries in areas linked to their institutional mandate.

For this reason, the new Medium-Term Plan (MTP) established the creation of a new integrating body called the Public Policy Observatory for Agrifood Systems (OPSAa). The Observatory carries out cross-cutting actions in all areas of the MTP and operates in coordination with the Leadership School for the Transformation of Agrifood Systems of the Americas (ELTSA).

Furthermore, the programs were adjusted to adequately reflect the emerging issues of the new global scenarios and priorities. IICA currently has the following hemispheric programs:

- Innovation and Bioeconomy
- Territorial Development and Family Farming
- International Trade and Regional Integration
- Agricultural Climate Action and Sustainability
- Agricultural Health, Safety and Agrifood Quality
- Digitalization of Agrifood Systems
- Gender Equality and Youth

Lastly, a set of interdisciplinary technical cooperation initiatives was established to respond to strategic demands in specific inter-programmatic areas, and the need to build bridges between countries, the region and the world, and between the different issues and disciplinary areas. Some very important initiatives under way include Living Soils of the Americas, the Coalition of Action 4 Soil Health, and the Agriculture Innovation Mission for Climate. Other initiatives that are at discussion or negotiation stage in the sphere of the UNFSS and the 27th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change are the Global Methane Pledge, the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use, and the Sustainable Productivity Growth Coalition.

Through these changes, the Institute seeks to continue consolidating the vision of an IICA that looks outward to the world from the Americas and that, through its network of national delegations and its various regional and subregional technical cooperation mechanisms, provides member countries with technical cooperation of excellence, offering real solutions to the Ministries of Agriculture of the Americas.

The general objective of the Gender Equality and Youth Program is to foster the mainstreaming of the gender perspective and support youth to contribute to attaining substantive equality in the Americas. Based on this objective, the Program directs its actions together with the Member States to the reduction of structural gaps, by strengthening technical capacities through technical and political forums, supporting the generation of public policies, strategic alliances, and digital platforms. The ultimate goal is to work with an intersectional gender approach and empower rural youth and women, promoting the creation of networks and increasing their participation in decision-making spaces.

Main gender challenges in agrifood systems

Many of the efforts to address gender inequalities have focused on women. This practice as affirmative action is necessary to equalize their situation in relation to that of men; however, the fact that it is a central axis of many initiatives does not change the traditional dynamic that excludes men and institutions from the search for substantive equality between all genders nor does it consider the intersectionality present in the people involved in the Americas.

This explains the reasons why, despite decades of initiatives aimed at improving the situation of rural women with respect to their male peers and recognizing the importance of rural youth, the figures show that, far from to improve, their lag increased with the COVID-19 pandemic. The latest estimates indicate that, at the current rate, gender gaps will close in 286 years. Furthermore, it is estimated that it will take around 140 years to achieve equitable representation in positions of power and leadership in the workplace (UN Women 2022).

The inequalities that affect a large part of the population of the Americas are the product of large structural gaps such as gender gaps, which are recognized by all nations and are included in the 2030 Agenda as one of the great challenges facing humanity, which must be resolved to achieve equality between all people and sustainable, egalitarian and inclusive development in all areas and sectors.

For this, it is essential to approach the matter from two different social perspectives: intergenerational and intersectional. The first one refers to the importance of addressing the challenges of the present century in an **inclusive and intergenerational** manner, where youth are given an active sociocultural, economic and political role. At the same time, it implies providing them with the necessary opportunities to develop in rural areas. The second approach refers to the need to achieve **gender equality** in all its **diversity and intersectionality**, as well as the empowerment of rural women. The gender approach and the inclusion of youth are necessary to recognize and address the inequalities of those who are part of the agrifood systems of the Americas and face the consequences of stereotyping in these areas. Furthermore, working with these approaches can contribute to the transformation of restrictive social norms that have created a social, political and economic environment that has failed to recognize the high and profitable economic returns that gender equality and the inclusion of youth would imply.

Rural women represent approximately 50% of the formal food production force in the world (CIM 2020). Although they own less than 15% of the land and less than 2% of the registered productive units, they generate up to 80% of the production in most developing

countries. In Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), there are 58 million rural women, who play a strategic role in guaranteeing the food and nutritional security of families, just like in the rest of the world (Balbo 2019).

However, despite their strategic role in food security, women are the most affected by conditions of inequality. For example, almost 40% of women who live in the countryside in LAC do not have their own income, compared to 14% of rural men (Otero 2019). Additionally, the feminization of rural household heads has increased as a result of the contraction of the agricultural sector, and there has also been a surge in households headed by women under 35 years of age (Bárcena 2019).

In relation to youth, approximately 1.2 billion people in the world are young, which is equivalent to 14% of the world population. Youth represent a significant part of the population, so involving and empowering them in agrifood systems not only contributes to meeting the economic and employment needs of this population, but also ensures the sustainability of rural territories and nations. Of the total youth in LAC, 19.6% reside in rural areas (UN Women 2020), where agriculture is an important source of employment. This population group continues to grow in number each year and poses the challenge of generating more employment opportunities and comprehensive development (UN Women 2020).

If we add to this the global challenge of increasing food production between 50 and 70% to meet the demands of the 10 billion people who will inhabit the planet in 2050, it is urgent to address gender and generational gaps with an inclusive approach, and by carrying out actions aimed at strengthening agrifood systems and "leaving no one behind", as the 2030 Agenda calls for.

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), if the gender gap improved by 25%, global gross domestic product (GDP) could increase by \$5.3 billion in 2025. According to this organization, if the gender gap were closed, an average increase of 35% in the countries' GDP could be achieved (Dabla-Norris and Kochhar 2019). This confirms that improving the rights of women and youth would bring about a positive impact on empowerment, investments, management of natural resources, access to services and institutions, resilience and food security, among many other benefits. Most of these rights depend on those who manage public and private policies and can guarantee the effective exercise of human rights and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Firstly, one of the greatest challenges that these populations face is the digital divide, not only because of the existing inequalities, but also because of the opportunities offered by digitalization. However, the existing infrastructure and institutions must be further strengthened.

In addition, there are challenges that broaden these gaps even more, such as the difficulty to ensure connectivity in remote or isolated rural areas. The conditions of certain territories make it difficult for vulnerable populations to improve their living conditions,

since they live in areas where incentives for technological investment are lacking. This hinders access to technical and financial services due to the absence of Internet service, as well as the insufficient training in the use of technologies for the population. Therefore, it is necessary to simultaneously address the gap in access and use of new technologies and provide a prompt solution to the lack of digital skills.

According to IICA, University of Oxford, IDB and IFAD, in LAC, around 72 million people living in rural areas do not have access to connectivity with minimum quality standards. Regarding gender connectivity gaps, evidence shows that “online inequalities often reflect offline sociodemographic inequalities, and the digital gender gap is a widely known dimension of this inequality” (IICA, University of Oxford, IDB and IFAD n. d:22).

For their part, youth in rural areas experience significant gaps with respect to their urban counterparts. They have higher levels of poverty than rural adults, as well as urban youth. Problems such as low digital literacy and lack of connectivity or lack of opportunities and decent jobs make it very difficult for them to enjoy an acceptable standard of living (Guiskin 2019). Furthermore, the exodus that this causes has a direct and negative impact on the adequate development of agriculture in the region, since, in terms of employment, the majority of rural youth in the region find themselves in low-productivity jobs, with lower incomes and without social security. These indicators are aggravated by the intersectionality of other variables, such as gender and ethnicity.

Another major challenge in the region is the lack of access to disaggregated statistics. The biases in the collection of information, where the notion is reproduced that women and rural youth are not producers but rather assistants or secondary producers, have an impact on the design and implementation of services aimed at strengthening agrifood systems, which focus on the male and, predominantly, adult population.

This causes significant under-reporting of female participation, since many of the agricultural activities carried out by women are usually counted as unpaid domestic work. This, in turn, contributes to the little or no recognition of the work of rural women in agrifood systems, and has an impact on the differentiated access of women and men to productive resources, financial services and credit, digitalization and technical assistance. For example, rural women have access to only 10% of agricultural credits (Moreno 2019:84) and to only 5% to technical assistance programs (IICA, IDB and Microsoft 2021).

This data shows the high concentration of women in care activities, due to cultural norms and the absence of childcare services and care services for older adults or people with disabilities. “Rural women in Latin America dedicate an additional ten hours to care work and domestic responsibilities, in relation to women in cities, and three times more than rural men. This also makes them less mobile and more dependent on their immediate environment” (Ramos 2019:93). The little or no participation of men in care activities makes it easier for them to focus on production, employment, and income generation, but it limits their family time and dedication to raising their children, which reinforces their male role as family providers and decision makers.

The feminization of care also means that local organizations, national institutions and society as a whole all believe that the care economy is part of their responsibility along with the collective management of human and economic development. This concentration of time and energy on the part of women makes it difficult for them to obtain formal employment, participate in organizations and in decision-making in their communities and territories.

On the other hand, the climate crisis not only affects men and women unequally, but other variables come into play that enhance the effects and reduce adaptation options. The risks of climate change are usually more serious from an intersectional perspective, with more serious consequences for young women or girls, migrants, residents in remote areas or in regions prone to conflicts and disasters, among others. Women and youth play a fundamental role in the management of natural resources, as well as in other productive activities and in the community. This positions them as strategic agents in climate adaptation and mitigation measures.

Therefore, for economic, political, social and cultural development actions to positively impact the reduction of gaps, it is necessary to work with a gender and intersectionality approach, promoting generational integration, empowerment and substantive equality as fundamental pillars for sustainable and inclusive development in agrifood systems.

Just as gender gaps can be overcome by mainstreaming the gender perspective in development processes to strengthen agrifood systems, it is essential to overcome the adult-centric vision that excludes youth, so that young people can become agents of change and not only a replacement generation or a generation of the future. The sector must leave behind the ancient idea that favors the white, adult male, and must direct actions towards recognition of the diversity of actors instead: women and men, youth, Afro-descendants, indigenous people and other people. Inclusion must embrace intersectionality.

Technical Cooperation Actions for Substantive Equality

IICA has extensive experience in gender, rural women and youth; initiatives have been carried out since 1975 that seek to promote and strengthen these areas of work, some of which are:

In 1990, with support from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), a regional study was carried out with information from 18 countries on the participation of rural women in agricultural and food production in the region. This partnership resulted in the creation of the Agricultural Sector Policy Analysis Program regarding Women Food Producers in Latin America and the Caribbean in 1992.

Between 1993 and 1995, the Communication, Gender and Sustainable Development Project of IICA and the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) emerged, whose purpose was to promote the articulation of communication, sustainable development and gender approaches in governmental and non-governmental organizations that worked in rural development in Central America.

In 1997, the IICA/SIDA alliance continued with the creation of the Hemispheric Program for Gender Equity and the Development of Rural Women (PADEMUR), in order to promote projects that allowed women to have access to productive assets. This program continued to exist after 1998 as the Gender Program for Sustainable Rural Development.

Subsequently, in 1999, through resolution No. 342, the IABA set a legal, regulatory and operational precedent within IICA, by ordering the incorporation of the gender perspective in the institutional system. Since 2000, IICA has carried out gender-sensitive technical cooperation actions aimed at women and rural youth, promoted from the Institute's headquarters and in the Delegations in the Member States.



Gender Equality and Youth Program

The Gender Equality and Youth Program supports the work of IICA, as it promotes new public and private policies, the investment of technical and financial resources, and the implementation of a new approach to strengthen agrifood systems with an intersectional gender perspective and with the inclusion of youth.

In 2021, the IABA established in its Resolution No. 534 the following:

1. Ask the Director General to strengthen the strategic vision and technical cooperation actions in IICA's MTP for the period 2022-2026, aimed at reducing gender gaps and inequalities, so that they lead to empowerment and equal inclusion of rural women in the development of agrifood systems in the Americas.
2. Support the findings of the First Forum of Female Ministers and Vice Ministers of Agriculture of the Americas and the forums held with rural women in the hemisphere. Solid, gender-sensitive public policies must be fostered in order to reward women who live and work in rural territories.
3. To instruct the Director General of IICA to institutionalize a space for dialogue with ministers, vice-ministers and other high-level officials of the public sector, as well as with representatives of rural women of all ethnicities of the Member States of the Institute, with the purpose of make the participation of rural women visible and propose policies with a gender perspective that reduce gender gaps and inequalities and favor their participation and inclusion in rural development on equal terms..

4. Ask the Director General to strengthen the strategic vision and technical cooperation actions in IICA's MTP for the period 2022-2026, aimed at reducing gender gaps and inequalities, so that they lead to empowerment and equal inclusion of rural women in the development of agrifood systems in the Americas (IABA 2021). **NOTA DE TRADUCCIÓN: VER COMENTARIO: CONTENIDO REPETIDO.**

Based on this resolution, the Gender Equality and Youth Program, formerly called the Cross-cutting Gender and Youth pillar, is created as part of the Medium-Term Plan for the period 2022-2026. Its objective is to strengthen the strategic vision and technical cooperation actions aimed at reducing gender gaps and inequalities, with a view to strengthening the gender architecture of the Member States.

To achieve this objective, the Program prioritizes: the intersectional approach to gender, the intergenerational approach, and the empowerment and autonomy of women and rural youth as affirmative actions. It also gives special emphasis to addressing gender gaps, including the care economy, equal participation in decision-making spaces and disaggregated statistical information.

Inter-sectional gender approach

All the actions carried out by the Program take into account the intersectionality of ethnicity and race, socioeconomic level, migratory status, geographic location, sexual orientation, gender identity, and all aspects of people's identity that could generate discrimination. Including this perspective and promoting it with counterparts allows for a more comprehensive and inclusive analysis. This type of gender analysis identifies the roles, disparities and gaps between men and women, so that based on this knowledge of reality, policies are formulated, specific technical and financial resources are generated, and gender monitoring and evaluation systems are designed. All of this enables the identification of corrective actions, when necessary, to contribute to substantive equality in the region without leaving anyone behind.

Incorporating the intersectional gender approach means working with the entire population of all genders and their diversities, considering the importance of building positive masculinities, the change of traditional gender roles, the creation of a gender architecture in institutions and in organizations, and the recognition of the diversity that characterizes the population of the Americas.

Inter-generational approach

The Program works and promotes an intergenerational approach to address the gaps that people face due to their age, given the predominance of adult interests, also associated with the subordination of young people and the exclusion of older adults.

The active participation of youth in decision-making spaces is essential to achieve gender equality and promote the fair and inclusive development of the agrifood systems

of the Americas. The inclusion of youth in these processes guarantees the representation of different voices and the incorporation of perspectives that may have been excluded.

In addition, the Program considers intergenerational justice, where equal rights, opportunities and living conditions are guaranteed for all generations. Promoting the participation of rural youth challenges stereotypes and fosters a more inclusive environment, where the potential and capabilities of all people are recognized, regardless of their gender or age. This, in turn, boosts self-esteem, confidence and the ability to influence policies and decision-making spaces.

Women and youth empowerment and autonomy as affirmative actions

Women and youth face obstacles in accessing productive resources and credit, since they tend to receive lower amounts and higher interest rates when they resort to informal credit. Furthermore, a significant proportion of women in rural areas do not have their own income, which leaves them in a situation of economic dependence. These gender challenges represent significant obstacles to the inclusive and equitable development of the agrifood sector in the Americas, limiting the ability of women and youth to fully participate in agrifood production, as well as their ability to invest, expand their activities, and participate in making substantive decisions. Therefore, it is paramount to implement affirmative actions aimed at women and rural youth to equalize their situation in relation to the adult male population, thus contributing to the reduction of gender and generational gaps.

It is necessary to strengthen institutional capacities in order to mainstream the gender and youth inclusion intersectional approach to guide technical cooperation actions, identifying the specificities of gender and intersectionality and contribute to the empowerment of women and rural youth. This will facilitate a more effective and efficient technical cooperation with systemic and profound impacts. For this reason, multi-sector, multi-level and multi-stakeholder coordination is essential to address these differences and work together in the construction of guidelines, the use of tools and the formulation of gender indicators.

The care economy

Promoting a society of care generates a positive impact on gender equality, the human rights of women, the fight against poverty and inequality, and contributes to food security and the sustainability of agrifood systems in the region. Therefore, the care economy is a matter of inclusive economic growth and human development, given its impact on gender equality, GDP growth, the creation and access to decent employment, food security and poverty reduction.

If women were able to reduce the hours they dedicate to unpaid care work to the same level as men, they could participate in training, production and employment, which

would reduce the time poverty that affects them. To avoid the disastrous consequences of the absence of participation in the care economy in families, communities and countries, it is essential to democratize and establish comprehensive care systems with public and private participation, and this must be the responsibility of states and societies as a whole.

Furthermore, care work must be democratized, and public and private services have a central role in providing such care, so that women can fully enjoy their autonomy and men can become more involved in these activities.

It is necessary to implement comprehensive legal frameworks, policies, programs and care systems with an intersectional perspective that includes affirmative actions and that respect, protect and guarantee the rights of those who provide and receive care, whether paid or unpaid. To achieve growth and sustainable development of our agrifood systems, the care crisis must be at the center of the agenda and discussions at the highest level, to change gender roles, recognize and promote co-responsibility and provide men with an important space for participation and women, the opportunity to integrate into the economy and decision-making spaces on equal terms.

Equal participation in decision making

It is paramount to form alliances and articulate joint advances to enable spaces for impact and offer empowerment opportunities for women, rural youth and populations in vulnerable conditions. This will help to better address the challenges and foster the capitalization of opportunities of the agrifood sector in the hemisphere. When adequate and active participation of women and youth in decision-making spaces is achieved, they can advocate for policies and programs that address these needs and promote equal opportunities, guiding these populations towards greater economic and social autonomy, as well as greater participation in decision-making in other areas of society.

To this end, the Program seeks to guide the efforts of its counterparts in creating the necessary conditions so that women and rural youth can be part of key decision-making in their immediate environments, in their countries, and in the hemispheric agenda of the agrifood systems. A gender and intergenerational focus is a requirement to recognize, address and reduce existing disparities that limit equal participation. Therefore, the modification of traditional gender roles and the adult-centered vision must be promoted to encourage male participation in the private sphere and in care activities and female and youth participation in decision-making spaces.

Disaggregated statistical information

The collection and analysis of accessible, reliable, timely and trustworthy data with a gender perspective are essential steps for strengthening initiatives and assessing their results and impacts. This will contribute to the reduction of gender and generational gaps in the hemisphere. Furthermore, this data must cut across different areas of knowledge

and all statistical fields, as well as have basic characteristics such as disaggregation by sex and age and other categories, in order to recognize roles and avoid gender stereotyping and to identify the origin and reproduction of many of the existing gaps.

In the case of the agricultural sector in the region, there is limited availability of accurate, detailed and updated statistical data on the participation of women and youth. For this reason, statistics in this sector tend to under-record and even omit variables that are essential for a clear understanding of rural development activities, which visibilizes the work and contribution of women and rural youth.

Work pillars of the Gender Equality and Youth Program

The work of the Gender Equality and Youth Program focuses its attention on improving the conditions of sustainable agriculture and the quality of life of communities, through an intersectional gender and intergenerational approach, which recognizes gaps and promotes substantive equality.

In accordance with IICA's MTP for 2022-2026 (IICA 2022:35-36), this program aims to strengthen the mainstreaming of the gender perspective and support rural youth in achieving substantive equality in the Americas. To this end, it develops technical cooperation actions aimed at:

1. Strengthening the institutional capacities of the region with a gender perspective and supporting youth, by promoting regional networks that bring them together and give them an important role in the strengthening and transformation of agrifood systems.
2. Supporting the development of a new generation of public policies and programs that position the region and enhance its connection to global agendas.
3. Strengthening the gender perspective in the Institute and the role of women in agriculture and rural areas in the Americas, for which it has innovative capacities to meet the demands of the Member States.
4. Leading an initiative on young leadership in agriculture for the Americas, which involves youth in defining the new generation of public policies and in making decisions that contribute to the transformation of agrifood systems.

Link between the Gender Equality and Youth Program and the SDGs

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), defined as guiding principles by the international community as a whole, represent a key pillar for the institutional actions of the Gender and Youth Equality Program, particularly SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, which establishes the actions required in the international agenda to achieve gender equality.

For their part, both women and rural youth have a fundamental role in the 2030 agenda and their well-being is closely tied to some of the objectives. They highlight the end of poverty (SDG 1), health and well-being (SDG 3), quality education (SDG 4), decent work (SDG 8), the reduction of inequalities (SDG 10), action for climate (SDG 13) and even other cross-cutting initiatives such as alliances to achieve the objectives (SDG 17). For these reasons, the Gender and Youth Equality Program reinforces the importance of promoting affirmative actions that contribute to the generation of public policies and the improvement of living conditions in the rural sector, as well as the reduction of gaps from an intersectional gender approach.

The 2030 Agenda establishes a widely accepted roadmap for collective action in which the public, private and civil society sectors come together. It establishes the commitments of the states to advance in the reduction of inequalities and has mechanisms and instruments for measuring progress in their fulfillment. This program works jointly with its counterparts to contribute to meeting the SDGs, by promoting a comprehensive, inclusive and transformative approach and to move towards a more just, equal and sustainable region, leaving no one behind.

In this way, the Gender Equality and Youth Program develops numerous initiatives that link technical actions with the political sector; proof of this are the forums it organizes. The Permanent Forum of Female Ministers, Vice Ministers and Senior Officials of the Americas stands out, which seeks to position the role of women who, from the highest level of public service, work for the sustainable development of agrifood systems. This creates a space for dialogue and exchange of information in which valuable management experiences and the priorities of the hemispheric agenda are shared. All of this has the objective of positioning issues such as the reduction of gender and generational gaps and inequalities and the needs of rural women in the Americas.

From the technical viewpoint, the Program carries out actions with a participatory perspective. It focuses on listening to the populations of the IICA member countries and, ultimately, the technical forums make it possible to generate information for decision-making and provide sustainability to the processes.

Through work with a multiplicity of actors, the Program develops training and technical assistance actions to work with a gender and intergenerational approach and contribute to bridging gaps. It does so by contributing to the generation of information, analysis and knowledge, articulated with other organizations. This helps to visibilize, analyze and propose solutions with an intersectional, intergenerational gender approach.

Likewise, spaces for articulation and exchange are offered through tools such as the Hemispheric Platform for Rural Women (PHMR) or the Hemispheric Community of Rural Youth (CHJR), both of which have a participatory and dynamic nature to generate networks and mobilize female and youth participation. Likewise, the Program builds alliances, coalitions and joint actions with other technical cooperation programs and the IICA Delegations in the member countries, referring particularly to gender and youth issues, among others that may arise. This facilitates the creation of networks and mobilizes technical and financial resources.

In order to achieve its objectives, the Program develops actions through the internal strengthening of a work culture with an intersectional gender approach to foster inclusive technical cooperation at IICA. This translates into initiatives, activities and projects that materialize thanks to the coordination and cooperation of the Program with the other six technical cooperation programs of the Institute, as well as with the delegations in each of the member countries and the Permanent Office in Europe. Consequently, internal work is part of a bidirectional line of action, where it is essential to generate multi-level, multi-sector and multi-stakeholder alliances to cooperate and collaborate by providing technical support in the construction of an egalitarian hemispheric view that contributes to the generation of knowledge and agricultural innovation in the Americas.

Annex 1: Key concepts

Below are some guiding concepts for the actions developed within the framework of the Gender Equality and Youth Program:

1. **Adultcentrism:** An approach that places boys, girls, adolescents and young adults in a subordinate position with respect to adults. Likewise, older adults lose power as they age, along with a reduction of their productive capacities (UNFPA 2018).
2. **Care economy:** According to ECLAC (2023:7), care is the right to receive care, to care for others and to practice self-care, as part of the human rights already enshrined in international pacts and treaties, which make the sustainability of human life and the care for the planet possible. In addition, it recognizes the value of the work of those who provide care and the need to guarantee their rights. Its principles are equality, universality, progressivity and non-regression and social and gender co-responsibility between the State, the private sector and families.
3. **Empowerment:** It is the process through which people jointly develop capabilities, skills and resources to control their life situation, acting consciously and critically, to achieve the transformation of their environment according to their needs and aspirations. Empowerment allows people to increase their participation in all aspects of their personal, social, political and economic lives (UN 1995, IICA 2017).
4. **Gender equality and substantive equality:** As mentioned by UN Women, gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. In this sense, equality does not mean that women and men will be equal, but rather that the rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men will not depend on whether they were born with a certain sex (2018). Furthermore, substantive equality requires prioritizing all groups that face discrimination, whether directly or indirectly, by implementing measures with defined goals to support these populations, including with affirmative actions (OHCHR 2014).
5. **Gender gaps:** The existence of significant disparities between men and women, as well as between boys and girls, is mainly reflected in the achievement of development goals, access to resources and levels of participation. The presence of a gender gap is an indicator of gender inequality (UNICEF 2017).
6. **Gender:** Gender refers to the roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society at a given time considers appropriate for men and women and other genders. Therefore, gender determines what is expected, what is allowed, and what is valued in a woman or a man and other genders in a given context. This is part of a broader sociocultural context, as are other important criteria of sociocultural analysis, including class, race, poverty level, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, etc. (UN Women 2018).

7. **Intergenerational approach:** Highlights the importance of promoting the integration of knowledge and experiences between different generations to create a horizontal dynamic that reduces existing gaps and contributes to the creation of spaces for participation for all people. It integrates the youth perspective as a frame of reference to position young people. It is recognized that youth are not a replacement generation, but rather represent a group, with rights, needs and demands, visions and proposals that must be present on the global agenda.
8. **Intergenerational justice:** This concept implies equity between generations, based on the idea that the search for well-being by the current generation should not harm the opportunities for a good and dignified life for future generations (UN 2013).
9. **Intersectionality:** Intersectionality is the interaction between two or more social factors that define a person. Identity issues such as gender, ethnicity, race, geographic location, and age do not affect a person separately as such. On the contrary, these are combined in different ways and generate structural inequalities that affect realities and access to economic and social opportunities (Ríos 2022).
10. **Multi-sectoral, multi-level and multi-stakeholder approach:** The multisectoral approach refers to the approach to gender and youth issues from various sectors, such as the economic, political, social, environmental, cultural, among others. This approach proposes inter-institutional measures and promotes the participation of the people to whom they are addressed (UN Women 2023). On the other hand, the multilevel approach focuses on addressing the different levels of governance (central, local, regional). Finally, through the multi-stakeholder approach, there is articulation with other key stakeholders in an integrated manner that promotes the exchange of knowledge and experiences.
11. **Parity:** It refers to the equality of men and women at all levels of the organization and spaces of participation. It must include significant participation of both men and women, particularly at higher levels or decision-making spaces (UNFPA 2019:49).
12. **Social inclusion:** Process to integrate people who are in a position of exclusion, whether for reasons of economic inequality or any other disadvantage, due to their identity, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, among others. This process makes it possible to bridge social, political and economic gaps and gives a voice to the diversity of people that make up society. This process guarantees them greater access and participation in decision-making, especially those that influence their lives, and guarantees more equal access to markets, services and political, social and economic spaces (OAS 2016).
13. **Temporary special measures:** Based on the recognition that historically men and women have received differentiated access to the goods and services of a society, as well as to development opportunities. Its objective is to reduce the gap between the sexes by carrying out actions that favor women as a way to compensate for the discrimination they have suffered in the past and still suffer today (...). Temporary special measures are often called “affirmative actions”, “positive actions” or “positive measures” (UN Women 2015:3).

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