

## GENDER CONCERNS IN AGRICULTURAL INSTITUTIONS: A CASE STUDY OF KENYA AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Miriti L<sup>1\*</sup>, Miruka M<sup>2</sup>, Minayo C<sup>3</sup> and Murithi F<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI), National Horticultural Research Center, P.O Box 220-01000 Thika, Kenya

<sup>2</sup>Socio-Economics and Biometrics Section, Kenya Agricultural Research Institute Head Quarters (KARI), P.O Box 57811-00200- Nairobi, Kenya.

<sup>3</sup>Human Resource, Kenya Agricultural Research Institute Head Quarters (KARI), P.O Box 57811-00200- Nairobi, Kenya.

\*Correspondence: [lydiahmiriti@yahoo.com](mailto:lydiahmiriti@yahoo.com), [lydiahmiriti@gmail.com](mailto:lydiahmiriti@gmail.com)

### Abstract

The Government of Kenya requires all public institutions to actively mainstream gender in government policies, plans and budgets to promote equality of opportunity between women and men, and to eliminate sex discrimination. During a training workshop on 'Gender Mainstreaming in Agricultural Research' that was convened by Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA) in November 2010, key gender issues in the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) were pointed out by researchers. To address these gender concerns, the team came up with strategies for KARI which included finalisation of the KARI gender policy, among others. In this regard, a survey was undertaken between May and June 2011 on the current gender concerns in KARI. The purpose of this survey was to identify gender concerns, needs and priorities in KARI and devise ways to address them. Force field situation analysis tool was used to achieve the enhancement or minimizing of forces that will influence gender mainstreaming efforts in KARI. Force Field Analysis is a tool to assess Facilitating and Constraining Forces that act in any situation involving change. The study noted that there are more facilitating than constraining forces and therefore there is the political goodwill to mainstream gender right from the national to the institutional level. E.g. Vision 2030 and the new constitution support gender equality as well as have stipulated mechanisms of mainstreaming gender. This means that awareness creation and training should be done to build capacity, which will lead to specific gender budgeting, hence gender mainstreaming.

**Key words:** Gender Concerns, Gender Mainstreaming, KARI, Force Field Analysis

### Introduction

Agriculture in Kenya contributes an average 29% of the gross domestic product (GDP) and employs 65% of the labor force (Republic of Kenya, 2006). Labor is one of the factors of production and women provide 60% (FAO, 2006). It is in this context that issues of gender need to be seriously addressed. Kenya is a signatory to all the International mandates

on gender mainstreaming including Beijing Declaration, Goal No 3 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The government's commitment to mainstreaming gender is also spelt out in the bill of rights in the constitution, Vision 2030 under the social pillar, Agricultural Sector Development Strategy and in the performance

contracts for public institutions. During a training workshop on ‘Gender Mainstreaming in Agricultural Research on *“Equal opportunity for a just and sustainable agriculture development”* convened by Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA) in November 2010, it was pointed out by researchers from Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) that key gender issues in KARI were: Lack of a gender policy, limited gender disaggregation in positions, Limited gender responsiveness in deployment, a gender insensitive training program, lack of or limited gender mainstreaming in projects and programs; technology development that does not address gender issues because of a limited capacity of scientists to address gender issues in programs and projects among others.

To address the gender concerns raised above, the team came up with the following strategies for KARI: Finalisation of the KARI gender policy which is in draft form, conduct awareness creation and training in gender mainstreaming for all staff, establishment of a stand-alone gender unit in KARI among others. To achieve these goals, it was deemed important to conduct a baseline survey on the current gender concerns in KARI to provide a concrete basis for interventions that would largely centre on mainstreaming of gender in the institute. The purpose of this survey therefore, was to identify gender concerns, needs and priorities in KARI and devise ways to address them. This information is expected to guide completion of a Gender Action Plan and subsequently a Gender Policy for KARI.

### **Materials and Methods**

Twelve KARI centers were purposively sampled according to different regions in the country. The Nairobi region comprised of head quarters, Muguga, National Agricultural Research Labs (NARL) and Thika. The rift valley region comprised of Njoro and

Naivasha stations. Western comprised of Kakamega and Kisii station. Eastern region had Embu and Katumani stations While coast and eastern had Mtwapa and Garissa respectively. The staff was categorized into six categories: management, research, technical support, administrative and finance, administrative support and casuals. The study sample was further purposively sampled to include male and female staff giving a total of 290 respondents, 165 men and 125 women. This covers 10% of the population of KARI which stands at about 2,900 as at June 2011 (KARI HRM Report, 2011). The actual respondents were selected randomly from a list of each category provided by the centre directors/administrators. This was to avoid bias based on the assumption that experiences are different.

For data collection, structured and Semi-structured questionnaires were used for the survey. Force field analysis tool was also used to assess facilitating and constraining forces that act in any situation involving change. It is based on the premise that facilitating forces act to support the desired action or change. On the other hand, constraining forces act against the desired action or change and should be minimized or removed whenever possible. Steps followed in force field analysis included: identifying facilitating and constraining forces; prioritizing facilitating and constraining forces; planning to maximize the facilitating forces; planning to minimize the constraining forces and action planning where key questions must be answered for each action identified.

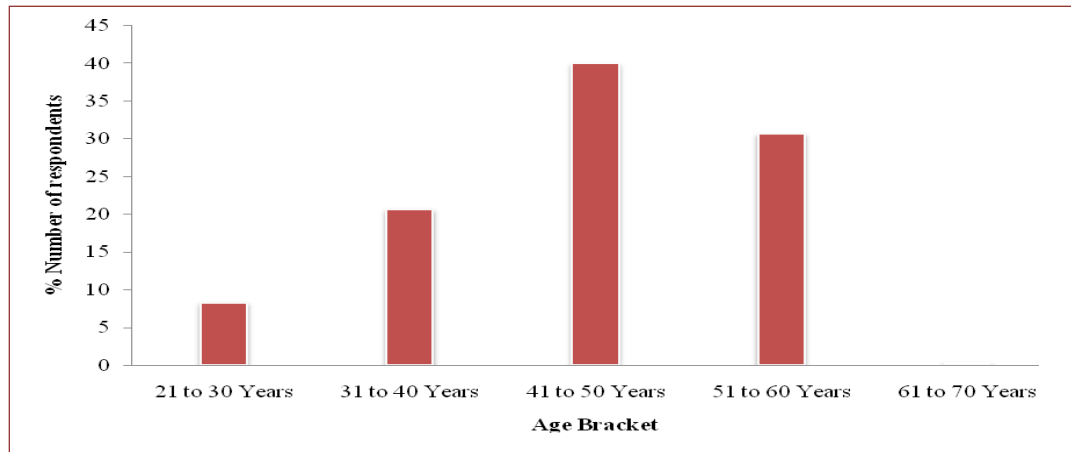
Secondary gender disaggregated data was gathered from the personnel data base in KARI with regards to their distribution in different cadres. This data was analyzed to generate descriptive statistics as at June 2011 and to inform the representativeness of the study sample. Structured and semi structured questionnaires were used to collect primary

data. Secondary data from the KARI database was captured and managed in MS Excel. Qualitative data were organized around themes related to research questions and analyzed manually. Quantitative data were processed through manual editing and coding and eventually analyzed using the SPSS computer software. Findings were presented in form of percentages, charts and frequency tables.

## Results and Discussions

### Characteristics of the respondents by age

Most of the respondents were between the ages of 31 to 60 years of age. Of these, 20.7% were within the age brackets of 31-40, 40% were 41-50 and 51-60 years (Figure 1).



*Figure 1: Representation of respondents by age*

### Gender representation in various cadres in KARI

Using the KARI personnel database as at June 2011 for this analysis, it was found that senior management, comprising of the director KARI, Deputy Directors, chiefs of divisions centre directors and program coordinators are 45 in total, of whom only 5 are female (Table 1). It could be argued that this is partly due to lack of national and institutional commitment to gender mainstreaming coupled with lack of structures such as reporting protocols and formats. They are made worse by cultural biases and rigidity, misconceptions of gender as being feminism, as well as gender stereotyping in institutions that are attitudinal issues that take a long time to change.

Additionally, it was found that from the various categories of work, gender representation in each category was skewed in favor of management, technical support,

administrative and finance had significantly more males than females. Conversely, the administrative support had more females than males (Table 2).

It could be argued that although the institute basically meets the 30% representation of either gender for females as per the requirement by the government, certain areas are very underrepresented by either gender, mostly female. Means and ways of addressing these inconsistencies in the short and long-term should be thought through, possibly through affirmative action when qualifications are equal. However it may be argued that some jobs take into consideration the reproductive roles of women e.g. security officers but this is a subject of debate.

### Work place Environment

It was found that for the large part, both males and females felt that the treatment for the work

environment was equal. However paternity, maternity leave as well as facilitation on breast feeding mothers was emphasized: A majority of respondents said:

*“Men are given less days in paternity leave which needs to be increased. KARI has no facilities /provision for women with small babies. Maternity leave is not adequate since the baby should breast feed for six months”*

#### **Gender based harassment at work**

Results indicated that all categories had experienced gender based harassment. The experiences were minimal for all categories, 25% and less. However, there were more casuals, 33%, who said they were harassed (Figure 2).

**Table 1: Gender representation in various cadres in KARI**

<b>Job Title</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Total</b>
Senior Management	5	40	45
Research officers incl. program coordinators	152	338	490
Lab Technologists and technicians	62	177	239
Technical officers & assistants	45	135	180
Personal secretary	14	0	14
Copy Typists	88	1	89
Computer programmers	16	17	33
Accountants	10	52	62
Telephone operators	32	3	35
Clerical officers	104	155	259
Auxiliary staff	213	303	516
Artisans	1	48	49
Drivers	18	205	223
Engineering technicians	0	11	11
Plant operators	0	26	26
Security guard/supervisors	1	56	57
All KARI Staff (Not total)	993	1,947	2,940

**Table 2: Area of work in relation to gender in KARI**

<b>Main area of work</b>	<b>% Male</b>	<b>%Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Management	71	29	100
Research	60	40	100
Technical Support	69	31	100
Administrative and finance	67	33	100
Administrative support	37	63	100
Casual	57	43	100

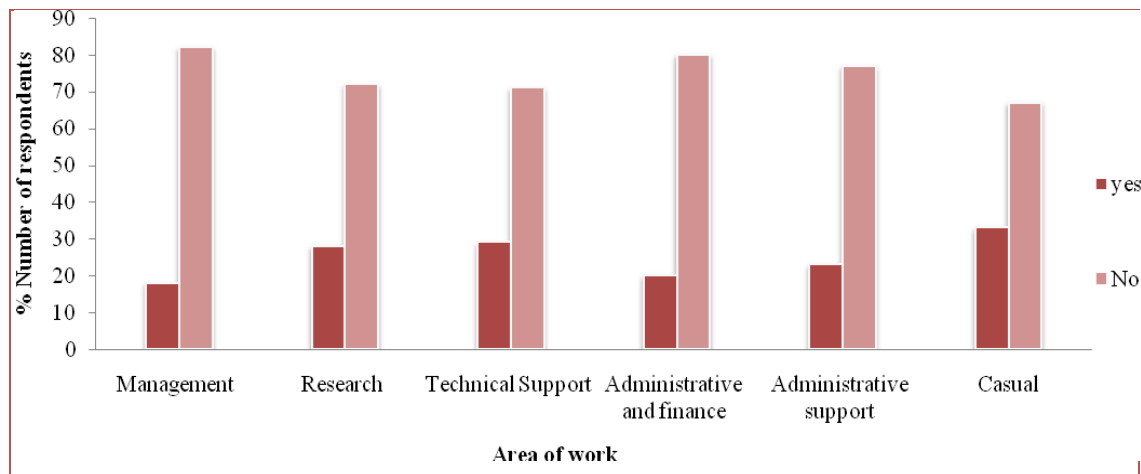


Figure 2: Occurrence of gender based harassment at KARI based on staff categories, June 2011

The following statements of various categories of gender harassment (figure1) were captured from respondents:

#### Female

- *A man accused me of stealing because I refused to yield to his harassment and when I reported no action was taken*
- *Sometimes male bosses take the office like their homes and treat the secretaries like their wives*
- *Some officers do not like lady drivers*

#### Male

- *Being a man I have been severally transferred from various stations*
- *I competed for a house with a lady and she was given. I was told I am a man and can endure hardships*
- *My opportunity for training was given to a lady*

#### Casual

- *As a casual laborer I have realized that we have been discriminated against because most of us are males*
- *I was harassed because I am a casual and forced to do what am not supposed to do*

#### General

- *When we come to KARI headquarters we are treated badly as if we are not KARI workers*

The above scenario shows that both men and women are harassed at the workplace. Female harassment is more sexually based. Results revealed that 33% of those who complained were casuals. The general category of harassment calls for personal relations of all KARI Headquarters staff.

For those who had been harassed the results show that the issue was resolved in different ways for different categories of staff. For instance, more researchers and technical staff did not bother to pursue the issue while more casuals and administrative support staff reported it to their head of department or manager (Table 3).

#### Awareness of gender sensitive behavior

There was a general lack of awareness on gender sensitive behavior to prevent gender based harassment at work. This is because a majority of respondents (41%), were not sure of whether KARI complies with gender sensitive behavior, e.g. in terms of language used, jokes and comments made while about a quarter of them didn't think so (Figure 3). The findings were similar across categories of staff

and gender. This indicates again that there are no guidelines on what gender sensitive behavior is and points towards a need for it.

Not surprisingly then, 41% of all respondents are not sure whether KARI code of conduct sets out standard principal guidelines on sexual and work place harassment while 27% thought it didn't and the remaining 32 % indicated that it did.

**Capacity for gender mainstreaming in KARI**

On enquiring whether a situational analysis has been undertaken that identified different needs, roles and responsibilities of women and men in the centres or departments, majority of respondents (69%) indicated it had not been done, 22% were not sure while only 9% said it had been done. It was found that the greatest hindrance to building capacity for gender mainstreaming were lack of training, lack of financial resources institutional culture, lack of awareness of gender analysis tools, lack of support by senior management and other issues (in order of priority). It is seen here again that lack of training (and awareness

creation) is an area that should be addressed as a first step in gender mainstreaming.

**Gender awareness training levels**

Results revealed that attendance to gender trainings was dependent on staff category (Figure 4). Scientific staff had more exposure to training and awareness as compared to the non-scientific. For those that had attended any exposure, it was mostly on gender awareness and sensitization. This shows that there has not been in depth gender awareness creation for staff in KARI and this should be given a priority.

**Presence of gender focal points**

Majority of respondents indicated that there is no focal point at their centers while a negligible number indicated they did not know (Table 4). Although the figures are not significant, it is worth noting that more researchers and management than the administrative staff were aware that there are gender focal points. This can be explained by the fact that at the time gender focal points were appointed, mainly researchers and not necessarily social scientists, may have been able to cut across to HRM.

**Table 3: Methods of addressing gender based harassment at work by different staff categories at KARI**

Staff category	Reported to the following:				
	Gender Coordinator	Department Head	Personnel Department	Was ignored	Did not bother to follow up
Management N=20	0	20	0	0	20
Research N=47	12	6	0	6	47
Technical Support N= 54	8	8	0	0	54
Administrative and finance N=	14	29	0	14	29
Administrative support N=6	0	35	12	12	6
Casual N=14	0	43	14	0	14

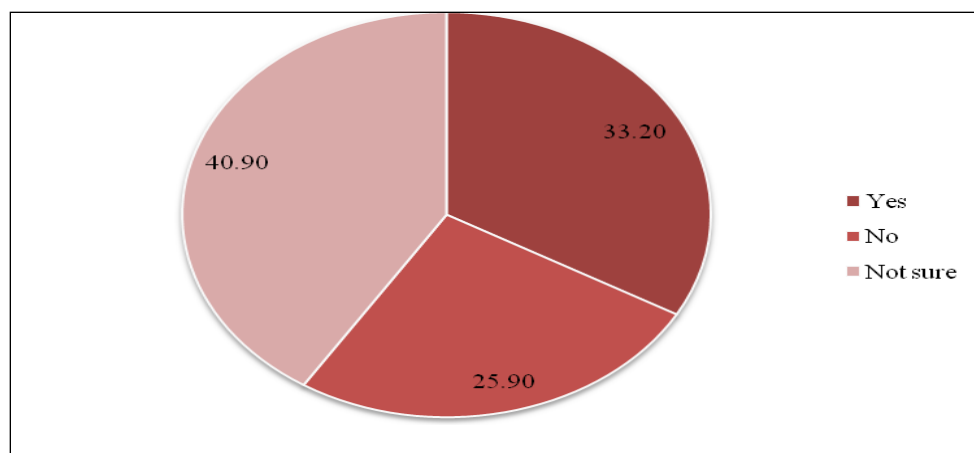


Figure 3: KARI staff awareness of the institution's code of conduct

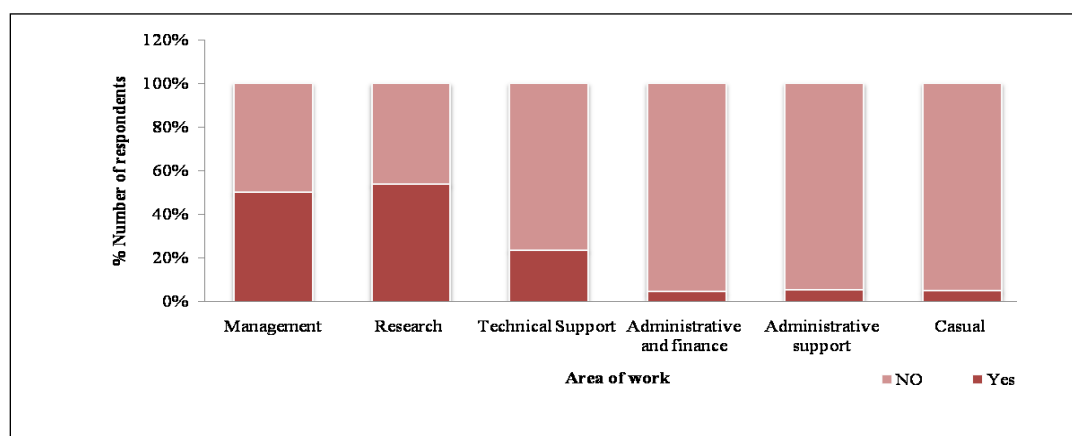


Figure 4: Staff categories in KARI who have attended any training and awareness on gender as at June 2011

Table 4: Awareness of gender focal points and necessity for these by KARI staff, June 2011

Staff category	Awareness of a gender focal point			Think it's important to have one?	
	Yes	No	Do not know	Yes	No
Management	26.1	73.9	0	94.7	5.3
Research	33.8	66.2	0	94.5	5.5
Technical Support	6.7	91.1	2.2	95.5	4.5
Administrative and finance	9.1	88.6	2.3	97.7	2.3
Administrative support	9.3	90.7	0	94.4	5.6
Casual	21.1	78.9	0	93.3	6.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>17.0</b>	<b>82.3</b>	<b>.7</b>	<b>95.2</b>	<b>4.8</b>

### Gender policies and institutions

Only less than 30% of respondents have any awareness of all the documents while up to

45% of are aware of them but not what they entail (Table 5). The rest have no awareness at all. This indicates a need for an understanding



of the salient points about each of these policies and institutions. A first step would be to summarize each one of them in a manner that can be disseminated to the different categories of staff in preparation for awareness creation.

### **Gender mainstreaming in research**

Analysis indicated that some researchers and technical support staff did not know or incorporate gender in their programs and projects (Table 6). More of the technical support staff (62.5%) were in this category. These findings point to a need for inclusion of gender aspects in projects, whether or not they are required by donors. This process should

begin by awareness creation and training of how this can be done so that it is demystified to those who are not aware. There is a misconception that gender mainstreaming is a separate effort all on its own while in fact it can be incorporated in programs in much easier ways. It means that social scientists need to be part of the research design and implementation team so that the value chains are more inclusive. A study by Ngugi et al. (2004), Kooijman and Mbabu, (1998), demonstrated that incorporation of gender concerns in projects leads to proper diagnosis and planning of the appropriate strategies resulting to active participation of male and female farmers.

**Table 5: Awareness of various gender related policies and institutions by KARI staff, June 2011.**

<b>Document/ Institution</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Draft KARI Gender Policy	Yes	19.6
	No	47.1
	Aware but not sure	33.2
Draft KARI Gender Action Plan	Yes	18.6
	No	52.5
	Aware but not sure	28.9
National Gender Policy for Development and Equality(2000)	Yes	17.2
	No	43.7
	Aware but not sure	39.1
The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development (2005) Strategic Plan (2008 to 2012)	Yes	27.1
	No	36.1
	Aware but not sure	36.8
Sessional paper No.2 of 2006 on gender equity and development	Yes	20.3
	No	47.5
	Aware but not sure	31.9
National Commissions on Gender and Development (2004)	Yes	21.3
	No	41.5
	Aware but not sure	36.8

**Table 6: Respondents awareness levels on projects in KARI that incorporate gender, June 2011**

<b>Awareness of gender in projects</b>	<b>Management</b>	<b>Research</b>	<b>Technical Support</b>	<b>Total</b>
Yes	68.8	63.2	33.3	57.4
No	31.3	32.4	62.5	38.9
Not applicable	0	4.4	4.2	3.7
Total	100	100	100	100

### **Force Field Analysis**



## Conclusions and Recommendations

From this study it has been found that there is need to set up a gender mainstreaming training program that is appropriate to all categories of .. Initially there will be need to do a training of trainers (TOT) so that the program can be successfully rolled out to all centres. Paternity and maternity issues can be addressed with understanding and should form part of awareness creation for management and can be taken further into institutional policy. Along with the gender policy, it is recommended that awareness be created on key policies in KARI so that they are not just documents done as procedure. Staff should be sensitized on the need for gender budgeting both for human resources and in research projects and programs. To a large extent, gender mainstreaming is undertaken in projects and programs but there is still need for gender mainstreaming especially for biophysical scientists and management who feel that it is an area to be left to social scientists. Given, they need to include them in their projects to ensure that gender and other social analysis areas are covered, but they also need to internalize the necessity of doing so for proper integration.

**Table 7: Forces that could influence gender mainstreaming efforts in KARI**

<b>Facilitating Forces</b>	<b>Constraining Forces</b>
<p><b>Existing conditions that can help achieve the change desired:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kenya is a signatory to all the International mandates on gender mainstreaming e.g. Beijing Declaration and MDGs (goal No 3).</li> <li>• On the national level, Vision 2030 and the new constitutional order support gender equality</li> <li>• In addition, there is specific legislation (e.g. Public officers and Ethics Act that supports ethical public behavior) as well institutional frameworks that support GM and the creation of the National Gender policy in the country under the new National Gender Commission.</li> <li>• On a sector level there are existing Agricultural development policies and strategies that emphasize on gender integration in specific programs and projects. These include strategic plans, performance contracts and policy documents that emphasize on gender e.g. the Agriculture Sector Development Strategy (ASDS), the National Agricultural Sector Extension Program (NASEP).</li> <li>• At the institutional level there are GM efforts since 1995 that saw the creation of a gender task force that can be built upon.</li> <li>• There is a policy in draft form and a unit dedicated to mainstreaming in KARI.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Existing conditions constraining the changes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of National and Institutional commitment to GM</li> <li>• Lack of structures such as reporting protocols and formats</li> <li>• These are made worse by cultural biases and rigidity, misconceptions of gender as being feminism, as well as gender stereotyping in institutions that are attitudinal issues that take a long time to change.</li> <li>• Many a times in the past GM has been donor driven and in many instances remains just that.</li> <li>• As well, uncoordinated, disjointed and duplicated GM activities among the same donors, institutions, programs and projects leads to confusion (from different frameworks and ideals) and waste of resources.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Financial, human, natural and social resources contributing to the change:</b></p>	<p><b>Financial, human, natural and social resources lacking or limited:</b></p>

- Existing human capacity is the biggest resource there is for GM in KARI.
- This has been done through training and sensitization.
- A good number of scientific staff have received some form of awareness on gender issues.
- Within the institution and specific programs and projects there are financial resources available for training, gender studies and gender responsive infrastructure.
- Lastly, there exists a gender disaggregated data base in KARI headquarters and KARI centres (KARI-GARD) and there are updated guidelines for proposal writing that incorporate gender.
- Inadequate human capacity to collect gender disaggregated data is most pressing resource
- Lack of gender budgeting in institutions and in specific programs as well as unreliable financial flows within the same.
- Lack of appreciation of the need for gender disaggregated data which in turn leads to poor documentation and dissemination of gender disaggregated information.
- Specific groups of people do not support the change such as some biophysical scientists and administrative staff who do not yet appreciate the need for GM at all levels.

**How existing infrastructure and services can support the change:**

- KARI has a national coordinator on gender and gender advisors in some centres.
- However for these to be effective, there needs to be an established and networked gender coordination unit with staff and a separate budget all the way to the centres.
- Standard operating procedures and gender responsive indicators should be developed.
- The starting point would be to undertake a needs assessment and evaluate the existing framework, identify gaps and strengths and create a way forward.
- This was the purpose of the gender concerns survey.

**Maximizing the facilitating forces:**

- The first effort towards GM is to summarize and disseminate the specific aspects of the constitution and other international, national and institutional policy documents that support gender integration.
- There have to be deliberate efforts to enhance capacity to mainstream gender within the institute both in human resource and in research.
- This means that funding for the gender coordination unit within the institute has to be well thought out either through Government of Kenya funding or grant making.
- To ensure funding in project, gender budgeting will have to be integrated.
- Last but not least, past efforts shouldn't go to waste therefore it would be a good thing to review , upgrade and disseminate the gender and agricultural research database (GARD) to make in dynamic to the realities of today

**Acknowledgements**

The authors would like to convey special appreciation to the men and women KARI staff who volunteered their time to respond to long questionnaires and discussions. We also acknowledge the Director, Kenya Agricultural Research Institute, Dr. Ephraim Mukisira who offered us financial support to conduct the research. We appreciate the management staff in all the sampled KARI centers for the support and participation in the survey.

**References**

- Action for Equality, Development and Peace, (1995). <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/> Beijing, China
- FAO (2006), Gender, Food and Security. Facts and Figures, pp.23-25. <http://www.fao.org/Gender/en/agrib4-e.htm>
- Gender Mainstreaming in Agricultural Research: Equal opportunity for a just and sustainable agriculture development.

- Training workshop by ASARECA in November 2010
- Government of Kenya (2008). Ministry of Agriculture Strategic Plan 2008 – 2012, Nairobi [www.kilimo.go.ke](http://www.kilimo.go.ke)
- Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (2010). Draft KARI Policy on Mainstreaming Gender. Gender Department, KARI
- Kenya's Vision 2030 (2010): An Audit from an Income and Gender Inequalities Perspective
- Society for International Development: Nairobi, Kenya.
- Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (2011). KARI's Population as at June 2011: Human Resource Department Report, KARI.
- Kooijman M. and A.N. Mbabu, (1998). Institutionalising gender Issues in Agricultural Technology Development and Transfer. The case of the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute, Pages 23-33 in the Proceedings of the Gender Conference, KARI Headquarters, Nairobi, Kenya, 5-7 October 1998.
- Millennium Declaration (2000). <http://www.un.org/millennium/> United Nations.
- Millennium Declaration Goal 3 (2000). <http://www.undp.org/mdg/goal3.shtml> United Nations
- Ngugi, N., Nyongesa, D.J., and Okitoi, L.O. (2004). Gender Concerns in Research and Household Poverty Reduction: The Case of Kenya Agricultural Research Institute Project on Indigenous Poultry in Western Kenya.
- Road Map towards the Implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (2001). <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/docs/56/a56326.pdf> United Nations
- Performance contracts for public institutions. [www.gender.go.ke/index.php/.../44-Performance-Contract.html](http://www.gender.go.ke/index.php/.../44-Performance-Contract.html)
- Republic of Kenya (2006). Country Social Analysis: Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development Africa Region. World Bank Country Social Analysis
- Republic of Kenya (2007). Kenya's Presentation of the 5th and 6th Combined report on the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) [www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw39/.../kenya.pdf](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw39/.../kenya.pdf) United Nations
- The new constitution of Kenya (2010). [www.kenya-information-guide.com/kenya-constitution.html](http://www.kenya-information-guide.com/kenya-constitution.html)