

GCAN Partner Workshop:

Report on Lessons and Recommendations for Policy Engagement and Capacity Strengthening

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Background

The Gender, Climate Change and Nutrition Integration Initiative (GCAN), led by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), has been working to integrate gender, climate resilience, and nutrition considerations into policy, interventions, and research since 2016. Since 2023, the initiative has been working in five focal countries with support from the Gates Foundation.

To advance these goals and strengthen collaboration among partners, GCAN recently convened a partner workshop that brought together the IFPRI GCAN team and partners from five focus countries (Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Nigeria, and Senegal), as well as guest speakers. The workshop had three main objectives:

- To develop and coordinate capacity strengthening activities based on preliminary results of a capacity needs assessment of institutions working on climate change, gender, and/or nutrition issues across the focal countries.
- To share achievements and document lessons learned from approaches to policy engagement and advocacy in the focal countries
- To strengthen coordination and communication within and across GCAN focal countries and teams

Throughout the sessions, partners showcased their approaches to influencing policymaking, building strategic partnerships, developing guidelines and frameworks, engaging key stakeholders, and addressing capacity gaps. They also highlighted their work in raising awareness about the need for greater coordination and cooperation to meaningfully integrate gender and nutrition into climate action.

The workshop agenda and participant list are included in the annex.

Highlights from Day 1: Insights on Capacity Needs and Approaches for Capacity Strengthening

On the first day of the workshop, participants were welcomed by Mary Nyasimi, Founder and Executive Director of Inclusive Climate Change Adaptation for a Sustainable Africa (ICCASA), one of the GCAN partners, and co-host of the workshop and Berber Kramer, Senior Research Fellow at the IFPRI Nairobi office who works on gender-responsive climate advisory services and insurance among other topics. Nyasimi introduced the work of ICCASA, a nonprofit Kenya-based development organization committed to building resilience to climate change through a gender-transformative approach. Kramer shared IFPRI's mission to improve food systems, nutrition, and rural livelihoods across Africa through strong engagement with local communities, and collaboration with government partners and other stakeholders.

Elizabeth Bryan, Research Fellow at IFPRI and GCAN project lead, then reflected on progress towards GCAN objectives across its three workstreams: policy engagement and capacity strengthening, advisory services and technical assistance, and strategic research. She noted significant achievements in terms of mapping the institutional landscape, conducting situational analyses of the status of gender equality, climate resilience, and nutrition issues and their intersection, and assessing capacity needs and assets in each of the focal countries.

Findings from the Capacity Needs Assessment



Photo: Selam Esayas Negatu, FSS

The capacity needs assessment employed a mixed-methods approach, combining a survey of 136 experts in climate change, gender, or nutrition across four focal countries—Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, and Senegal—with key informant interviews (KIIs). The survey aimed to evaluate organizational and systems capacities, based on the perceptions of experts in climate change, gender, and/or nutrition. The KIIs further explored contextual factors, perceived capacity strengths and gaps, and potential areas for intervention, investment, and collaboration.

Overall, **the results of the cross-country survey** revealed that fewer than half of respondents felt that the gender, climate change, and nutrition nexus was adequately integrated into policy design at the national or

state level, although this perception improved when respondents considered how well these issues were integrated into their own organizational strategies. Respondents with gender expertise were slightly more critical of how well nutrition is incorporated into both organizational and national gender and climate policies, though their sample size was smaller. Additionally, professionals specializing in climate and gender were less likely to report that nutrition was addressed in national policies or their organization's strategies.

Respondents generally believed their area of expertise was well embedded within their respective organizations, with gender strategies particularly well articulated. Respondents also pointed to several factors that enabled integration of these topics into their organizational strategies including having access to information or data on the topics, the availability of relevant indicators to assess progress, and strong advocacy supporting the integration of these areas. Respondents also noted that there remains a lack of sufficient evidence to support integration, a need for greater synthesis of existing evidence, and better

documentation of what solutions and interventions work. Survey results also identified opportunities for organizations to conduct their own analyses of gender, nutrition and climate change issues to inform their organizational strategies and programs.

The results of the KIIs were presented by country partners, highlighting several persistent challenges to fully integrating climate change, gender, and nutrition into policy design and implementation. Across all four countries, respondents consistently highlighted **a lack of dedicated budgets, donor dependency, and weak coordination across ministries** as major challenges to effectively integrating gender, nutrition, and climate change into organizational strategies, policies, and interventions. The importance of having strong political commitment, leadership, and governance was also highlighted as a key enabling factor across countries. These systemic issues were seen as key barriers to progress, regardless of country context.

Across countries, there is a strong recognition of the **need to build capacity** for integrating gender, climate change, and nutrition (GCAN) into policy and programming. There is also considerable **latent knowledge and technical expertise** in each of these areas and some workshop participants expressed surprise at the depth of knowledge shared during key informant interviews (KIIs). Despite the wealth of untapped expertise in each of the three areas, integration remains a major challenge. Many institutions operate in silos, with limited coordination mechanisms and fragmented mandates. This results in poor implementation, weak monitoring and evaluation systems, and lack of data and evidence—particularly at the intersection of the three themes. Moreover, while many stakeholders claim to integrate GCAN, this integration often lacks depth and is treated as an “add-on” rather than a core component of policy and programming.

Common capacity gaps also include **a lack of tailored training programs, inadequate analytical tools, and limited availability of and access to data**. There is also a **shortage of operational guidelines** on how to integrate the three themes effectively. Participants also noted that while policies and guides exist, they are often **not inclusive or actionable**.

There is also a need to shift institutional cultures to support integration and to build leadership capacity to champion GCAN. Some stakeholders emphasized the importance of expanding the focus beyond nutrition to include broader themes like food security and conflict. The GCAN project itself has played a catalytic role in creating platforms for integration and fostering political buy-in, which was not present before.

The findings also emphasized that the capacity to integrate gender, climate change, and nutrition into policy processes is deeply shaped by country-specific contexts:

- **Ethiopia:** Stakeholders reported that policy processes tend to be largely top-down with limited opportunities for stakeholder input and engagement. Integration efforts are also often driven by donor-funded projects, with NGOs leading community-based initiatives. However, among CSOs, the sustainability of these efforts is frequently affected when visionary leaders within these institutions shift priorities or leave, resulting in a loss of momentum and continuity. Moreover, institutional silos, rapid shifts in policies, and staff turnover in key agencies pose challenges.



Photo: Hamza Muhammad Usman, ECF

- **Nigeria (Kano and Adamawa states) and Kenya:** Respondents noted that integration is hindered by difficulties in coordinating across ministries. However, in Nigeria platforms have been established to bring stakeholders together, and there is strong support for GCAN among local actors. In Adamawa, for example, the GCAN project helped establish a Climate Change Sector Working Group, and there is interest in scaling this model to other states. In Kenya, multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs) already exist and could be leveraged to support integration and coordination across institutes working on gender, climate change and nutrition.
- **Senegal:** Stakeholders noted that Ministries, such as agriculture, are beginning to address climate change within their mandates, but often in isolation. As in the other countries, coordination across sectors remains limited, which hinders a more holistic and integrated policy approach.

Despite these challenges, there are strengths to build on: **political commitment** in some countries (e.g., Kenya and Nigeria), **growing awareness among technocrats**, and **strong stakeholder interest in GCAN**. NGOs are often leading integration efforts, and there is momentum to develop training manuals, share best practices, and create platforms for cross-country learning.

To strengthen capacities at the intersection of climate, gender, and nutrition, the capacity needs assessment and workshop discussions point to several recommended actions:

1. **Investing in training and skills development** for scientists, policymakers, and stakeholders to enhance understanding and awareness of the climate change, gender, and nutrition nexus and to build technical expertise and interdisciplinary understanding.
2. **Producing and disseminating research, including localized, context-specific evidence** through studies, policy briefs, and technical papers to raise awareness, support evidence-based action, and guide decision-making.
3. **Scaling successful approaches and initiatives**—such as the Climate Change Sector Working Group (CCSWG) in Adamawa State, Nigeria—that demonstrate effective integration of gender, climate change, and nutrition.
4. **Advancing gender- and nutrition-responsive budgeting** to address persistent gaps, especially the marginalization of gender in financial planning.
5. **Creating and reinforcing cross-sectoral alliances** to foster coordination, policy dialogue, and shared learning. Leveraging existing multistakeholder platforms and communities of practice may be used for this purpose and establishing these in countries or states where they do not exist.
6. **Developing decision-making tools and guidance** that equip policymakers with accessible, actionable insights.
7. **Engaging GCAN partners to develop and share capacity-building materials** and facilitate communities of practice to share learning as capacity strengthening activities are carried out.
8. **Getting the buy-in of local leadership and stakeholders** to sustain long-term collaboration and action at the climate change, gender and nutrition nexus. Participants noted that one way to institutionalize the integration of these issues in policy processes is to hold policy dialogues with key decision-makers.

Lessons from AWARD's Experience with Capacity Building

Special guest and GCAN International Advisory Committee (IAC) member, Susan Kaaria, joined the first day of the workshop to share lessons from the experience of the African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) with capacity strengthening and to identify opportunities to better collaborate

with the GCAN project. She noted that the persistent challenge of the “leaky pipeline,” where women drop off as they ascend the career ladder, underscores the need for sustained interventions that strengthen the capacity of individuals (pillar 1) and institutions (pillar 2), and promote an enabling policy environment (pillar 3). AWARD’s strategy focuses on these three pillars to foster individual and system level change. Kaaria noted several of AWARD’s programs that are particularly relevant for GCAN. These include the AWARD Climate Fellowship which aims to build a pool of capable, confident, and influential African women leading climate action and catalyze production of gender-responsive climate-smart solutions. This program offers training on gender integration in climate solutions alongside seed funding for research and innovation projects and has already graduated fellows across six African countries, with a new fellowship application currently open for a new cohort of fellows. The One Planet Fellowship aims to enhance the leadership and scientific research capacities of African researchers working on climate solutions, focusing on their ability to integrate gender in climate change research. This program also catalyzes south-south and south-north research collaborations and fosters mentoring relationships.



Photo: Susan Kaaria, AWARD

Kaaria noted that training women in isolation isn’t enough. Returning them to environments that are unsupportive or even hostile can stall progress. That’s why working with institutions is equally critical. Programs like those led by AWARD have emphasized the importance of building the capacity of managers—because, as one participant put it, “if they don’t believe in it, it’s hopeless.” Strengthening researchers’ capabilities then follows. Success depends on recognizing that institutions operate at varying levels of readiness and capacity and have different needs, so a one-size-fits-all model would not be successful. AWARD focused on supporting the specific needs of institutions to integrate gender. The Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB) in Nigeria, for instance, developed a gender policy and trained leaders and scientists, while the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in Ghana established a mentoring framework tailored to its context.

Through the discussion several possible points of collaboration between GCAN and AWARD came to light:

- **GCAN could develop capacity training materials** that would be of interest to AWARD. GCAN can also learn from AWARD’s approach to institutional capacity strengthening.
- **GCAN can draw on the expertise of AWARD fellows.** For example, there is a Kenyan researcher working on women’s land access. There is also a researcher in Nigeria working on developing a tool to assess and track gender commitments in climate change-related policies in the agriculture sector, called G-SMART. GCAN’s partners in Nigeria were especially interested to connect with fellows in Nigeria who have formed a network that GCAN can tap into.
- **GCAN doesn’t have to reinvent the wheel**—there are lots of materials for capacity strengthening that can be built on and adapted for our purposes such as the IDRC toolkit on gender equity and inclusion.
- **GCAN can support applicants** in the next fellowship application process. If GCAN partners identify any promising young women scientists we can help them develop an application for this very competitive process.

- **GCAN could also sponsor some promising women leaders** identified through GCAN partners to participate in AWARD’s leadership training.
- **The Gender Responsive Agricultural Systems Policy (GRASP) Fellowship** also needs mentors—GCAN team members or partners could offer to serve in this capacity.

Priorities and Next Steps for Capacity Strengthening

During breakout group discussions the GCAN team members discussed the following questions:

1. What are the highest priority areas for capacity strengthening in the focal countries, based on the capacity needs assessment?
2. What are some concrete next steps we can take to address these priorities? Consider what can be done at the organizational, sub-national/national, and GCAN-wide levels.
3. What resources, partnerships, or support would be needed to implement these activities effectively? e.g. technical expertise, access to evidence, communications support
4. Are there opportunities to share materials and resources for capacity strengthening across the GCAN countries?



Photo: Eric Kiriimi, ICCASA, sharing highlights from breakout group discussion

There are several **highest priority areas for capacity strengthening** identified across GCAN countries. These include the need to build stronger capacity for integrating gender, climate change, and nutrition into policy design and implementation. Institutional silos and weak coordination mechanisms remain major barriers, making cross-sectoral collaboration essential. Many countries also face challenges in generating, accessing, and using integrated data for informed decision-making, alongside a need for robust monitoring and evaluation systems with specific GCAN indicators. Communication and advocacy efforts are often underutilized, highlighting the importance of training in policy communication and public engagement. Furthermore, sustained integration requires leadership buy-in and shifts in institutional culture.

Lastly, there is a pressing need to develop capacity in gender- and nutrition-responsive budgeting and resource mobilization across sectors.

To address these priorities, **concrete next steps** are proposed at different levels. At the **organizational level**, GCAN partners should develop and deliver tailored training programs to build stakeholder capacity on GCAN integration, strengthen communication efforts to effectively disseminate policy messages, and provide support to improve data systems to promote evidence-based decision-making. The findings reinforced that, at the **sub-national and national levels**, GCAN efforts should continue to focus on establishing or strengthening MSPs and task forces to coordinate GCAN activities, conducting participatory dialogues and advocacy campaigns to build awareness and political will, and promoting the integration of GCAN priorities into national development plans and budgeting processes. **Across the GCAN initiative**, there is a need to develop and share training manuals and toolkits, facilitate cross-country learning exchanges and joint capacity-building initiatives, and organize regional conferences or side events at global forums to elevate GCAN on the policy agenda.

Achieving these goals will require specific **resources, partnerships, and support**. Technical expertise in policy integration, monitoring and evaluation, and budgeting is essential to guide implementation. Institutional partnerships with universities, civil society organizations, and research institutions will be valuable for co-developing and delivering training and research initiatives. GCAN can contribute by disseminating evidence and developing analytical tools to strengthen informed decision-making. Evidence should be disseminated through accessible communication products, such as policy briefs, fact sheets, and videos, and through engagement with the media (including social media). Sustainable funding—both domestic and international—is critical to maintain and expand GCAN activities. GCAN can create opportunities to share funding announcements and work with GCAN partners to support proposal development and joint fundraising efforts.

Finally, there are important **opportunities to share materials and resources across GCAN countries** to maximize impact and efficiency. Utilizing online platforms to disseminate training materials, case studies, and best practices can foster wider reach. Facilitating cross-country learning exchanges through workshops, webinars, and study tours will encourage peer learning and innovation. Collaborative development of toolkits, guidelines, and communication materials tailored to diverse contexts can support consistent yet flexible implementation. Systematic documentation and dissemination of GCAN partner approaches and achievements will help inform, inspire, and guide future efforts across the network.

Highlights from Day 2: Lessons from Policy Engagement and Advocacy Efforts

Partner Achievements and Lessons from Policy Engagement and Advocacy

The second day of the workshop began with GCAN partners presenting their policy engagement and advocacy approaches. Presentations provided an overview of the policy landscape in each country/state, described each partner's approach to policy engagement and advocacy, shared notable achievements from these efforts, noted any obstacles encountered, and described plans for policy engagement efforts going forward.

Inclusive Climate Change Adaptation for a Sustainable Africa (ICCASA)

In Kenya, Inclusive Climate Change Adaptation for a Sustainable Africa (ICCASA) supported the integration of gender, climate, and nutrition into county-level Climate Change Action Plans and contributed gender-responsive inputs to [Kenya's Food Forward NDCs](#). ICCASA also participates actively in national platforms, such as the Gender & Climate Change Sub-Committee, of the Kenya Climate Smart Agriculture MSP, and the Inter-Sectoral Forum on Agroecology and Agrobiodiversity (ISFAA). They also led the formation of the GCAN Technical Working Group, drawing on members from existing MSPs providing technical guidance and coordination. ICCASA also shares GCAN insights at major national and regional events including the 2nd Eastern Africa Agroecology Conference, UNFSS+4 Stocktaking Moment, and CGIAR Science Week. ICCASA also produced policy briefs, blogs, and promoted the use of gender-disaggregated data. They additionally convened co-creation workshops and consultations, strengthening collaboration among ministries, counties, and civil society organizations (CSOs). ICCASA also raised awareness of GCAN and amplified the voices of women and marginalized groups in climate-nutrition discussions.

Currently ICCASA is developing a Gender-Transformative Training Manual to build capacity at the national and county levels. They are also finalizing a GCAN Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Framework and Digital Tool to track gender-responsive and nutrition-sensitive climate actions. This tool was developed through a participatory process with multiple stakeholders to ensure its appropriateness and acceptability. Through the development of this tool ICCASA aims to strengthen systems for generating sex-disaggregated evidence and support coordination mechanisms to harmonize stakeholder engagement across sectors. ICCASA also continues to facilitate dialogues, knowledge sharing, and documentation of best practices.

Going forward ICCASA plans to advance the inclusion of gender, climate change, and nutrition in county-level planning and implementation processes. They also plan to pilot and facilitate uptake of the M&E tool and training manual in at least three counties. ICCASA further aims to formalize the GCAN Technical Working Group as a national coordination mechanism. They will continue to host targeted policy dialogues and learning sessions, and document success stories to support advocacy and scaling.

Agricultural and Rural Prospective Institute (IPAR)

The Agricultural and Rural Prospective Institute (IPAR) completed an assessment of Senegal's institutional landscape, identifying that only 2 of the 6 finalized sector-focused National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) have integrated gender. They found that the main climate institutions—the National Agency for Civil Aviation and Meteorology (ANACIM) and the National Committee on Climate Change (COMNACC)—lack capacity to integrate gender and nutrition. IPAR also identified and categorized key stakeholders working across gender, climate change, and nutrition, and validated the country profile developed by GCAN through engagement with key stakeholders in the country. In early 2025, IPAR held a workshop to raise awareness among institutions, CSOs, and research bodies on the gender-climate-nutrition nexus. They also submitted a formal request to COMNACC to participate in the NDC review process.

IPAR is addressing the challenge of fragmented coordination by working to establish a multi-stakeholder platform using existing structures. Specifically, IPAR formalized collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and initiated the process to revitalize a community of practice with the climate change department. The revitalized platform is being prepared with institutional grounding, a roadmap, regular meetings, and a dedicated budget. They noted the importance of embedding the multi-stakeholder platform formally within existing institutions to ensure it is locally owned and sustained beyond the life of the GCAN project. If their formal request is granted, IPAR is also planning to engage actively in the NDC review process to advocate for stronger integration of gender and nutrition in national climate policy. Through the formal collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, IPAR is aiming to support integration of GCAN objectives. IPAR is also developing a Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) tool to support tracking of gender- and nutrition-sensitive climate actions. IPAR will also organize workshops to validate the results of the capacity needs assessment and to launch the revitalized community of practice.

Forum for Social Studies (FSS)

The Forum for Social Studies (FSS) made significant strides in laying the groundwork for GCAN policy engagement in Ethiopia. They conducted a comprehensive [policy analysis](#) and stakeholder mapping exercise, identifying key actors across government, civil society, academia, and the private sector. Through targeted visits and consultations, FSS built rapport with strategic institutions and initiated coalition-building efforts. An introductory workshop and policy dialogue brought together diverse stakeholders, enabling the presentation of initial findings and discussions on policy gaps. These engagements helped refine

strategic objectives and fostered goodwill for future collaboration. FSS also conducted key informant interviews and surveys to assess capacity gaps and integration challenges across gender, climate change, and nutrition. As a result, the GCAN Ethiopia team successfully convened stakeholders and gained insights into organizational strengths and training needs, positioning the project for more impactful engagement.



Photo: Abera Woldekidan Ashebir, FSS

FSS continues to observe critical challenges in Ethiopia’s policy landscape, including a lack of cross-sectoral linkages and a mismatch between policy formation and implementation. Gender is present in national strategies, but implementation lacks depth and coordination. Climate change strategies like the Climate-Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) are progressive but remain sectoral, while nutrition is primarily addressed through the health sector with limited integration elsewhere. FSS is addressing these gaps through ongoing cross-sectoral dialogues and by leveraging its strong communications strategy and network. Their approach includes direct engagement with policymakers to build buy-in and raise awareness of the interconnections between gender equality, climate resilience, and nutrition. FSS is also working to mainstream GCAN themes into its broader programming and public dialogues, using digital platforms and alternative formats like working-lunch meetings to sustain momentum.

Looking ahead, FSS aims to strengthen cross-sectoral dialogue and translate evidence into actionable policy recommendations. They plan to facilitate capacity-building initiatives and ensure the sustainability of GCAN activities by embedding them into other FSS-led efforts. Recognizing the absence of formal multistakeholder platforms in Ethiopia, FSS will continue to build informal coalitions and foster collaboration through its networks.

Environmental Care Foundation (ECF)

The Environmental Care Foundation (ECF) adopted a top-down approach to policy engagement, beginning with securing the endorsement of the Governor of Adamawa State. This high-level support opened many doors for the GCAN project, enabling ECF and its partners to formally establish a Climate Change Sector Working Group (CCSWG) under the State Ministry of Environment. Although stakeholders had long advocated for such a group, it was only after the GCAN project was introduced that the CCSWG was officially launched. The group is now locally owned by the ministry and its members, ensuring sustainability beyond GCAN’s initial seed funding. The CCSWG has already proposed several forward-looking initiatives, including the creation of a Savanna Climate Change Research Centre to support evidence-based policymaking. ECF also conducted 36 advocacy visits and hosted multiple CCSWG meetings and policy dialogues, which brought together representatives from government, NGOs, academia, and the private sector. These efforts laid the groundwork for Nigeria’s first gender-nutrition-climate policy in Adamawa. Additionally, GCAN’s influence elevated ECF’s Principal Investigator, Yohanna Moses, to the role of Special Advisor to the State Governor, significantly enhancing the project’s strategic reach.

ECF continues to build on its early successes by deepening stakeholder engagement and institutionalizing the CCSWG as a central platform for multi-sectoral collaboration. The group has become a hub for evidence-based dialogue and policy development, with active participation from diverse sectors. ECF

has also formed strategic partnerships with academic and research institutions, media, and women-led NGOs to broaden advocacy efforts. These collaborations have helped amplify community voices and push for inclusive climate action. The organization is also addressing challenges, such as capacity gaps in mainstreaming gender and nutrition, political turnover, and limited localized data by investing in stakeholder training and maintaining consistent advocacy. The CCSWG remains an important mechanism for sustaining engagement and driving the GCAN agenda forward.

Looking ahead, ECF aims to sustain momentum for the adoption and implementation of gender- and nutrition-sensitive climate policies. Plans include advocating for dedicated budget lines to support these initiatives and scaling the CCSWG model to other Nigerian states. ECF also intends to support and promote research on the interlinkages between gender, nutrition, and climate change, including through the proposed research center. To achieve these goals, ECF seeks additional sources of funding and to expand and deepen partnerships.

Aliko Dangote University of Science and Technology (ADUST)



Photo: Prof. Musa Tukur Yakasai, ADUST

Aliko Dangote University of Science and Technology (ADUST) has effectively leveraged GCAN funding to catalyze a wide range of impactful activities. One of the most notable achievements was the establishment of a GCAN directorate at the university, which brought together professors working across GCAN-related issues and attracted additional donor funding. This institutional commitment positioned ADUST as a key player in state-level climate policy processes. As a result, the university was invited to participate in the development of a new policy bill that successfully integrates gender and nutrition—marking a significant step forward in inclusive climate governance. This success led to an invitation to support the ongoing policy review in neighboring Jigawa State. ADUST was also invited to contribute to the national gender policy review, further extending its influence beyond the state level.

ADUST also led to a series of workshops, seminars, and training sessions aimed at mapping and validating the interconnections between gender equality, climate resilience, and nutrition. These events engaged a wide range of stakeholders, including women’s organizations, government officials, and academia. The project also received 11 research proposals from university students, following a public call, and convened a presentation session to evaluate them.

ADUST is now actively supporting the implementation of the newly adopted climate policy in Kano State, continuing its leadership in integrating GCAN principles into governance. The university remains engaged in national-level policy processes and is working to sustain GCAN’s momentum through its directorate and academic networks. Through GCAN, ADUST continues to facilitate stakeholder engagement through evidence-based dialogues, media outreach, and capacity-building activities. The project has helped bridge institutional gaps by convening joint roundtables and fostering collaboration between federal and state actors. Despite initial challenges—such as limited stakeholder understanding of the interlinkages between gender, nutrition, and climate, and difficulties in coordinating across sectors—ADUST has made significant progress in building awareness and institutional alignment.

Going forward, ADUST will continue participate in state-level and national policy dialogues. Specifically, ADUST plans to support the development of an implementation plan for the revised climate change policy and assist Jigawa State in both finalizing its policy and creating an implementation framework. The university aims to further embed GCAN themes into its academic and outreach programs, ensuring long-term sustainability. Another key priority is the establishment of a standing integration committee to ensure that all relevant organizations, including those from the private sector, work in synchrony towards shared goals.

Panel Discussion: Effective Policy Engagement Approaches in Kenya

A panel discussion on “Effective Policy Engagement for Integrating Climate, Gender, and Nutrition” featured Kenyan experts from government, civil society, and research institutions, including Veronica Nzilani Ndetu, former Ministry of Agriculture official and negotiator in UNFCCC processes, and member of GCAN’s International Advisory Committee; Beatrice Kiage, Research Scientist, African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC); Edgar Onyango, National Project Coordinator, Scaling Up Nutrition, Civil Society Network (SUN-CSA); and Eng. Laban Kiplagat, Agriculture Engineering Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, and Cooperatives and Chairman, Intersectoral Forum on Agrobiodiversity and Agroecology (ISFAA); and was moderated by Faith Gikunda of ICCASA.

Beatrice Kiage emphasized the importance of co-producing research with communities to ensure relevance and impact. APHRC integrates community voices from the research design phase through to policy engagement. They use participatory methods like digital storytelling, citizen-led data collection, and visual tools (e.g., murals, photo voice) to communicate findings. Their work spans multiple African countries and includes projects on climate variability, food environments, and mental health. APHRC also tailors communication for policymakers through policy briefs and media engagement.



Photo: Panel discussion on effective policy engagement in Kenya. From left to right: Veronica Ndetu, Beatrice Kiage, Eng. Laban Kiplagat, Faith Gikunda

Eng. Laban Kiplagat shared how the ministry collaborated with civil society and other stakeholders to develop Kenya’s National Agroecology Strategy. The process involved forming multi-sectoral teams, con-

ducting public consultations, and validating the strategy nationally. The strategy integrates climate resilience, gender equity, and nutrition through thematic areas such as sustainable food systems, social equity, and research and innovation. The ministry also supports technical working groups and multi-stakeholder platforms to ensure inclusive implementation.

Edgar Onyango outlined a six-pronged approach to policy engagement:

1. **Advocacy:** Supporting policy and budget advocacy at national and county levels.
2. **Legislative Engagement:** Establishing a parliamentary caucus on food security and nutrition with over 150 members.
3. **Champion Development:** Training over 600 champions from communities, academia, and government.
4. **Capacity Building:** Strengthening institutional and technical capacity of stakeholders.
5. **Community Voice:** Facilitating community dialogues and media engagement to elevate local perspectives.
6. **Commitment Tracking:** Supporting governments in meeting global and national commitments like the Nutrition for Growth and UN Food Systems Summit.

Edgar also highlighted SUN-CSA's role in developing climate-smart nutrition action plans in 43 counties and supporting early warning systems for drought response.

Veronica Nzilani Ndetu shared her experience as a negotiator in UNFCCC processes. She noted that while gender is increasingly acknowledged in climate negotiations, nutrition remains underrepresented. She emphasized the role of civil society in submitting evidence and influencing negotiation agendas. She also explained the importance of aligning national implementation with global frameworks like the Sharm El-Sheikh Joint Work on Agriculture, which now includes food systems.

Several cross-cutting takeaways emerged from this discussion:

- Evidence must be timely, accessible, and actionable to influence policy effectively.
- Community engagement is essential for legitimacy and sustainability of policy solutions.
- Multi-sectoral collaboration is key to integrating climate, gender, and nutrition.
- Policy influence requires both top-down and bottom-up strategies, including legislative advocacy, technical working groups, and grassroots mobilization.
- Data and storytelling are powerful tools for bridging the gap between science and policy.

Key Insights or Lessons from the GCAN Partners' Presentations and Panel Discussion

In this session, partners reflected on the discussions held throughout the workshop and proposed future plans to enhance policy engagement and advocacy. The GCAN partners' presentations highlighted that while political will exists in many countries, there is a significant gap in technical capacity to effectively integrate gender, climate change, and nutrition (GCAN) into policy and practice. One of the most resonant insights was the importance of building capacity among policymakers and bureaucrats through targeted training and curriculum development. Partners emphasized the need to define and broaden the concept of nutrition beyond food access to include issues like malnutrition, diet quality, and non-communicable diseases, which vary by region. Another key lesson was that many countries have existing platforms and communities of practice, which can be leveraged for cross-sector collaboration and knowledge exchange. The importance of consistent stakeholder engagement, documentation of GCAN activities, and the use

of mass media for broader outreach were also underscored as essential strategies for effective policy engagement.



Photo: From left to right: Bedru Balana, IFPRI; Somyashree Tripathy, WASSAN; Yohanna Moses, ECF; Mary Nyasimi, ICCASA; Ara Go, IFPRI

Several recurring challenges emerged across contexts. A major issue is the **lack of coordination** between policies related to gender, nutrition, and climate change, which are often treated as cross-cutting rather than core themes. This siloed approach leads to fragmented implementation and weak accountability. Another challenge is the **absence of robust monitoring and evaluation systems**—many policies are not tracked beyond their design phase, and existing data are often fragmented or poorly disseminated. High turnover in government positions further disrupts continuity in policy engagement. Additionally, short project cycles and limited funding hinder long-term advocacy efforts. The private sector, while central to climate finance, remains largely disengaged from GCAN issues. GCAN is well positioned, and, in many cases, partners are already addressing these challenges, for example, by facilitating cross-sector dialogue through working groups and MSPs, supporting the development of M&E tools and guidance, and seeking ways to leverage other funding sources to expand and continue GCAN activities. GCAN partners are also working to embed gender, climate change, and nutrition considerations into their own organizational strategies and programs, such as through an avocado project in Kenya and the Green Adamawa Project in Nigeria. Such actions can help sustain GCAN priorities beyond the project timeline.

Moving forward, partners proposed several actionable steps at different levels. At the organizational level, there is a need to develop evidence-based advocacy materials, such as policy briefs and factsheets, and to continue to integrate GCAN themes into ongoing projects. Sub-national and national efforts should focus on continuing to establish or strengthen MSPs, training policymakers on policy formulation and implementation, and ensuring policy consistency across sectors. In addition, GCAN-wide, partners suggested creating digital repositories to share resources and digital dashboards, monitoring tools, data and guidance effectively, organizing biannual partner meetings, and developing comprehensive communication and dissemination strategies.



Photo: Marame Cisse, IPAR, contributing to plenary discussion on policy engagement approaches

To implement these plans, partners identified several critical needs, including how to leverage technical expertise, evidence and data across the wider GCAN team and to share resources, materials, and learnings more effectively. Several parallel efforts related to monitoring and evaluation were identified, with the potential for sharing and joint learning. Partners also discussed collaborating more on communication efforts—including the development of policy briefs, media engagement strategies, and knowledge management systems—to help amplify GCAN’s impact. Financial resources remain a key constraint; thus,

joint fundraising efforts and leveraging in-country funding sources are necessary to sustain activities beyond the project cycle. Finally, creating shared platforms—such as WhatsApp groups or digital repositories—will facilitate the exchange of materials, best practices, and lessons learned across GCAN countries.

New GCAN Partner, Watershed Activities and Support Services Network (WASSAN), Presents their Plans for Policy Engagement

The workshop provided an opportunity for the newest partner in the GCAN initiative to present their plans for policy engagement and capacity strengthening and get feedback from the other GCAN partners. The Watershed Activities and Support Services Network (WASSAN) outlined their approach to policy engagement and advocacy in India, with a focus on Odisha state. They noted that the policy landscape in Odisha is complex, with multiple government strategies addressing climate change and agriculture, but lacking integration of gender and nutrition. There is a notable absence of gender-disaggregated data, and vulnerable groups are often excluded from planning processes. Civil society organizations face fragmentation and funding challenges, while academic institutions have limited engagement with policymakers.

WASSAN, a network-based organization established in 1999, works across various domains including watershed management, rainfed agriculture, seed systems, millet, livestock, nutrition, and biodiversity. A significant portion of India’s agricultural land is rainfed, which overlaps with regions with high poverty and tribal populations. Odisha is faced with several overlapping climate risks, such as reoccurring droughts and floods. This context underscores the importance of ecological agriculture and community-led initiatives, such as women’s self-help groups (WSHGs), community seed systems, and integrated farming systems. Despite technical successes and increased incomes, gender disparities persist in Odisha. WASSAN’s presentation raised critical questions about whether current programs reduce or exacerbate vulnerabilities, and whether they adequately include women and build sustainable systems.



Photo: Somyashree Tripathy and Trinath Taraputia, WASSAN, responding to questions about their policy engagement plans

Given the short timeframe of WASSAN’s participation in the GCAN initiative (with only 2 years remaining), WASSAN will leverage their existing activities to achieve GCAN goals. For example, WASSAN has already initiated several actions, including a pilot project focused on single women, participatory machinery development to reduce drudgery, and capacity-building programs for women leaders in farmer producer organizations (FPOs). The organization also emphasizes the importance of recognizing and integrating women’s traditional knowledge, particularly in seed systems and millet cultivation. Through a parallel activity, WASSAN is planning to implement participatory rural appraisals in four different agro-climatic zones of Odisha, focused on climate resilient, nutrition-sensitive agriculture and gender equality. WASSAN will leverage the GCAN funding to disseminate the results of this work through thematic consultations and convenings at local and state levels and establish an advisory committee to guide WASSAN’s activities and recommendations emerging from the PRAs. These activities aim to generate evidence, identify best practices, and advocate for policy changes. Capacity-

building workshops will target both institutional stakeholders and community members. The plan also includes the development of policy briefs and research papers, with support from GCAN for advocacy at national and international forums.

Highlights from Day 3: Enhancing GCAN’s Communication Strategy and Efforts

This session focused on strengthening both internal and external communications within the GCAN project, at both the country and global levels. Participants emphasized the need for a structured internal communications strategy to guide all outreach and engagement efforts. The strategy should begin with clear objectives, identifying target stakeholders, selecting appropriate communication channels, crafting tailored messages, setting timelines, and establishing evaluation mechanisms to assess effectiveness.

In terms of external communications, participants discussed the importance of using a variety of communication formats, including research publications, media engagement, digital tools, and events. Creative approaches such as using dramas, poems, infographics, videos, and storytelling were encouraged to make messages more relatable and impactful. Many of the partners shared examples of effective communication practices including impactful write-ups of events by local bloggers, producing short videos, and inviting experts to speak on relevant topics. The importance of accessibility was highlighted, with suggestions to format materials for diverse audiences, including those with visual impairments or limited access to digital platforms. It was also noted that assuming audiences are receiving information can be a mistake—communication strategies must be adapted to local contexts, such as using radio in areas with low social media penetration.

The session also emphasized the value of synthesizing learning across countries into shared communication products, and the need to monitor how GCAN-related issues are being discussed in national forums, such as parliaments. Lay audiences, including the general public and media, were identified as

key targets for outreach, and country-level strategies should be tailored to the most effective platforms in each context.

Internally, tools like WhatsApp groups, webinars, and monthly meetings were proposed to facilitate knowledge sharing and coordination. There was also a call for refresher training in communications and the formation of a working group to support ongoing collaboration.

In sum, the next steps for communications activities identified at the workshop include the following:

1. **Develop a comprehensive internal communications strategy** that includes objectives, stakeholder mapping, messaging, channels, timelines, and evaluation metrics.
2. **Tailor country-level communication strategies** to local contexts and preferred media platforms.
3. **Create and share diverse communication products**, including blogs, videos, podcasts, and social media content, with a focus on storytelling and accessibility.
4. **Establish a GCAN communications working group** to coordinate efforts, share materials, and amplify partner outputs.
5. **Conduct regular after-action reviews** to assess the effectiveness of communication strategies and adjust as needed.
6. **Organize refresher trainings** for GCAN partners on communication tools, techniques, and inclusive practices.
7. **Leverage creative formats** such as dramas, poems, infographics and expert interviews to engage broader audiences.
8. **Monitor and evaluate communication impact**, including tracking engagement, reach, and influence on policy and public awareness.

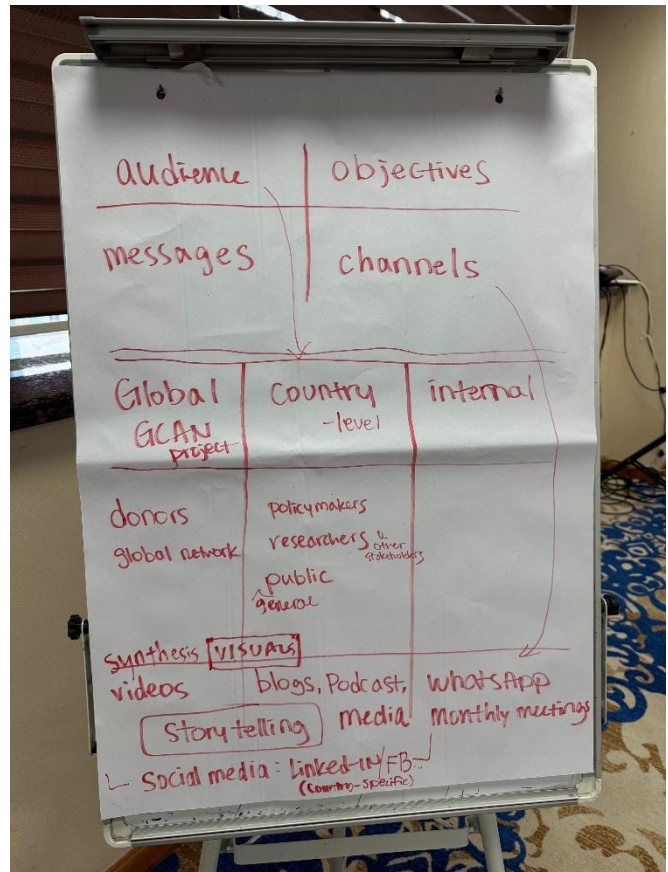


Photo: Notes from discussion on communications

The group also decided to further develop several communications products. For external communications, these include developing a **GCAN Infographic** to illustrate the connections between gender, climate change and nutrition. The GCAN Framework can be used for this purpose, and an interactive tool to support its application could be developed. Participants also discussed developing a **short, animated video** to describe the connections between gender, climate change and nutrition, similar to videos that were previously produced to describe the Reach, Benefit, Empower and Transform Framework, and irrigation-nutrition linkages. The group also revived an idea to create **short videos with GCAN partners** describing their change stories as a result of the GCAN project. Since many partners are using social media to disseminate GCAN activities and messages, it was agreed to develop a **LinkedIn group** at the

project level to repost country level activities and, in this way, reach out to a wider audience. Similarly, participants discussed leveraging the **GCAN Newsletter** to share achievements and other activities at the country level. Lastly, GCAN has several **factsheets and briefs** that have been developed which could be further refined and/or shared amongst GCAN partners to support their outreach efforts.

To improve internal communications, the partners decided to create a **WhatsApp group** to continue informal information-sharing. It was also suggested to use the **GCAN team monthly meetings** more effectively, by giving partners the opportunity to present and get feedback on specific pieces of work. This will encourage greater information/resource sharing, improve coordination, and avoid duplication of efforts across the GCAN partners.

Final Reflections

During the closing session, participants emphasized the importance of conducting rigorous research on GCAN topics, and ensuring that partner activities meaningfully inform the research agenda. There was a call to clarify the project's nutrition goals—whether focused on food access and affordability, child and maternal malnutrition, or food safety—and to ensure that data generated by GCAN and other teams serves as a strong foundation for policy engagement.

The discussion also highlighted the need to measure long-term impacts of policy implementation and to identify and build the capacity of champions who can advocate for GCAN priorities. Strengthening the capacity of CSOs and community-based organizations (CBOs) was seen as essential, as was providing support to country partners in proposal development and fundraising.

Participants raised questions about how to measure the project's achievements and how to institutionalize stakeholder engagement, including the suggestion to form a steering committee composed of government, CSOs, and private sector representatives. The importance of documentation was also emphasized, including the development and circulation of a workshop report.

Some final thoughts shared by partners included:

1. Develop a clear research agenda that aligns with GCAN goals and is informed by partner activities and country priorities.
2. Clarify and define nutrition objectives within the project to guide data collection, analysis, and advocacy.
3. Support country partners in proposal development and resource mobilization to sustain and scale activities.
4. Build the capacity of CSOs, CBOs, and local champions to advocate for GCAN issues and engage in policy processes.
5. Institutionalize stakeholder engagement through the formation of a multi-sectoral steering committee.
6. Strengthen documentation and knowledge sharing, including the development of a comprehensive workshop report.
7. Identify and implement immediate, medium-, and long-term actions to ensure continuity and impact beyond the project lifecycle.
8. Establish systems to monitor and evaluate the long-term impacts of GCAN interventions and policy influence.

Appendix 1: Workshop Agenda

GCAN WORKSHOP AGENDA

June 17-19, 2025 | Tanzanite Room (3rd Floor), Golden Tulip Hotel, Nairobi

Objectives of the workshop:

- Develop and coordinate capacity strengthening activities based on preliminary results of the capacity needs assessment
- Share and document lessons learned from approaches to policy engagement and advocacy
- Strengthen coordination and communication across GCAN focal countries and teams

AGENDA

Day 1 – Tuesday, June 17

08:30-09:00 Registration

09:00-09:30 Opening session

- Welcome remarks
 - Mary Nyasimi, Founder and Executive Director, ICCASA
 - Berber Kramer, Senior Research Fellow, IFPRI-Kenya

09:30-10:00 Introductions and workshop kickoff

- Ice breaker (15 mins)
- Agenda overview – Ara Go, Senior Program Manager, IFPRI (5 mins)
- Reflections on progress toward GCAN objectives – Elizabeth Bryan, Research Fellow, IFPRI (10 mins)

- 10:00-11:00 Presentations: Preliminary results of the capacity needs assessment
- Online survey results – Marilia Magalhaes, Senior Research Analyst, IFPRI (15 mins)
 - Qualitative results from key informant interviews (10 mins per partner organization)
- 11:00-11:30 Coffee/tea break & group photo
- 11:30-12:00 Presentations (continued)
- 12:00-13:00 Plenary discussion
- Discussion of capacity needs assessment findings
 - Facilitator: Bedru Balana, Research Fellow, IFPRI
- 13:00-14:00 Lunch
- 14:00-15:00 Guest speaker
- Susan Kaaria, Director, African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD)
- 15:00-15:30 Coffee/tea break with guest speaker
- Informal discussion and networking opportunities
- 15:30-16:30 Breakout groups
- Discussion on capacity strengthening activities, focusing on next steps
- 16:30-17:00 Report back
- Rapporteurs from each group share key points
- 17:00-17:15 Reflections on Day 1

Day 2 – Wednesday, June 18

- 09:00-09:30 Opening
- Reflections on Day 1
 - Overview of the Day 2 agenda and expectations

- 09:30-11:00 Presentations: Approaches to policy engagement and advocacy
- Partners present the characteristics of their policy landscapes, approaches taken, what worked well and what challenges were encountered (10 mins per partner organization)
- 11:00-11:30 Coffee/tea break
- 11:30-13:00 Panel discussion: Effective policy engagement for integrating climate, gender, and nutrition
- Veronica Nzilani Ndetu, SM Consulting Company, Former Coordinator of the Climate Change Unit of the Ministry of Agriculture
 - Beatrice Kiage, Research Scientist, African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC)
 - Edgar Onyango, National Project Coordinator, Scaling Up Nutrition, Civil Society Network (SUN-CSA)
 - Eng. Laban Kiplagat, Agriculture Engineering Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, and Cooperatives and Chairman, Intersectoral Forum on Agrobiodiversity and Agroecology (ISFAA)
 - Moderator: Faith Gikunda, Advocacy and Communications Director, ICCASA
- 13:00-14:00 Lunch
- 14:00-15:00 Breakout groups
- Participants reflect on what's discussed and propose future plans for policy engagement and advocacy
- 15:00-15:30 Report back
- Rapporteurs from each group share key points
- 15:30-16:00 Coffee/tea break
- 16:00-16:45 Presentation:
- WASSAN (India partner) shares its plans for policy engagement
 - Group feedback and discussion
- 16:45-17:00 Reflections on Day 2
- 19:00 Group dinner
- The View, Mövenpick Hotel & Residences Nairobi

Day 3 – Thursday, June 19

- 09:00-09:30 Opening
- Reflections on Day 2
 - Overview of the Day 3 agenda and expectations
- 09:30-10:15 Presentations:
- GCAN communication strategies – Marilia Magalhaes, IFPRI
 - ICCASA communication strategies – Faith Gikunda, ICCASA
 - Reflections from other partners on their own communication approaches
- 10:15-11:00 Breakout groups
- Participants discuss how to strengthen communication of project activities/results
- 11:00-11:30 Coffee/tea break
- 11:30-12:00 Report back
- Rapporteurs from each group share key points
- 12:00-13:00 Plenary discussion
- Discussion on key takeaways and next steps
 - Facilitator: Elizabeth Bryan, IFPRI
- 13:00-14:00 Lunch
- 14:00-17:00 Individual partner meetings
- One-on-one meetings with country teams to discuss specific needs and issues

Appendix 2: Participant List

Muzna Alvi, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), India

Abera Woldekidan Ashebir, Forum for Social Studies (FSS), Ethiopia

Bedru Balana, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), USA

Elizabeth Basauri Bryan, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), USA

Maramé Cissé, Initiative Prospective Agricole et Rural (IPAR), Senegal

Awa Dia, Initiative Prospective Agricole et Rural (IPAR), Senegal

Faith Gikunda, Inclusive Climate Change Adaptation for a Sustainable Africa (ICCASA), Kenya

Ara Go, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), USA

Eric Kirimi, Inclusive Climate Change Adaptation for a Sustainable Africa (ICCASA), Kenya

Susan Kaaria, African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD)

Berber Kramer, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Kenya

Marilia Magalhaes, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), USA

Harriet Mawia, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Kenya

Yohanna Moses, Environmental Care Foundation (ECF), Adamawa State, Nigeria

Selam Esayas Negatu, Forum for Social Studies (FSS), Ethiopia

Mary Nyasimi, Inclusive Climate Change Adaptation for a Sustainable Africa (ICCASA), Kenya

Trinath Taraputia, Watershed Support Services and Activities Network (WASSAN), Odisha, India

Somyashree Tripathy, Watershed Support Services and Activities Network (WASSAN), Odisha, India

Hamza Muhammad Usman, Environmental Care Foundation (ECF), Adamawa State, Nigeria

Bello Abba Yakasai, Aliko Dangote University of Science and Technology, Wudil (ADUST), Kano State, Nigeria

Musa Tukur Yakasai, Aliko Dangote University of Science and Technology, Wudil (ADUST), Kano State, Nigeria

Taddese Zerfu, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Ethiopia

Veronica Nzilani Ndetu, SM Consulting Company, Former Coordinator of the Climate Change Unit of the Ministry of Agriculture

Beatrice Kiage, African Population and Health Re-search Center (APHRC)

Edgar Onyango, Scaling Up Nutrition, Civil Society Network (SUN-CSA)

Eng. Laban Kiplagat, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, and Cooperatives and Inter-sectoral Forum on Agrobiodiversity and Agroecology (ISFAA)

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DISCLAIMER

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