



Fatuma explains the GALS methodology to other community members.

Photo Credit: Bertin Bisimwa, SVC.

"I got married young, at sixteen. The GALS training has increased my ability to understand the relationship between men and women in the household, the family, and the community. I am starting to feel more confident. I have more conviction when approaching my husband to share ideas, which has improved our dialogue."

– Fatuma M'Mparara,
GALS Training Participant

Empowering Women to Participate in Household Decision-Making in Eastern DRC

Women in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) actively participate in agricultural production practices, including plowing, planting and weeding fields, and harvesting and marketing crops. However, they don't benefit equitably in the fruits of their labor, as men often decide how revenue is used within the household.

In August 2018 the Feed the Future Strengthening Value Chains Activity organized a series of one-week gender trainings in three territories of Eastern DRC. Each session included leaders and members of cooperatives and companies operating in the coffee, bean and soy value chains learning about the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) methodology. The goal of GALS is to promote gender equity through economic development in target value chains. During GALS training, participants identified gender-related issues within target value chains and developed individual, household and community visions of change for gender equality.

Mrs. Fatuma M'Mparara is a 24-year-old pregnant mother of three, and a coffee cultivator in South Kivu. She was one of 177 people trained as a GALS workshop facilitator. After the training, Fatuma shared some of what she learned with her husband and three of his friends: "I told him that the GALS training explained ways we could improve our living condition by using already available resources. It also explained how, as a woman, I could participate in the household economy if I am more associated with the management of our assets."

At first, Fatuma thought her husband was not listening to her. However, his behavior changed little by little. Now they share responsibility for household planning, and Fatuma's husband has given her responsibility for managing his fishing business and pharmacy. She hopes to save money for her next coffee campaign and to build a nicer house for her family.

On the wall of the pharmacy she manages, Fatuma displays her drawing of a tree she created to illustrate her vision of change for her life and her household. She uses this drawing to teach interested customers about gender relations, to help them change their own lives. She explained, "Since I posted my vision here, I have become a source of curiosity and interest. Many of my clients ask me questions like, 'What do your drawings here mean?' Every time, I encourage each person to define and develop their own vision, and to set goals to achieve their vision." Fatuma has helped other women who participated in GALS trainings to finalize their individual and household visions.