

# Gender Responsive Banana Breeding



## Research GAP

Understanding the priorities, criteria and values that women and men separately assign to particular traits is useful for breeding programs when priority setting and during variety selections. They are likely to vary based on the socio-economic-cultural context and along gender lines related to division of labour, ownership of land and access to markets. However, there is limited documentation of **gender differentiated trait preferences** for banana and/or products made from certain varieties. As these factors invariably affect the adoption of new banana varieties it is **important that these views are incorporated into the banana breeding pipeline.**



## What WE DID

**Participatory** and **gender-sensitive protocols** were used to collect **sex-disaggregated quantitative and qualitative data**. Protocols and sampling strategies were designed with **equal representation of men and women.**



A **multidisciplinary** team, involving social scientists, food scientists and breeders provided for a deep insight into decision making, and how the breeding process could become more gender responsive. Collection and analysis of **intra-household sex-disaggregated data** further enabled insight into intra-household dynamics, banana trait preferences and other socioeconomic variables at the household, community and country level.

**Preference ranking exercises** were conducted with male and female farmers to assess the physical characteristics of NARITA hybrids and local checks. A protocol was developed for culinary sensory evaluations, based on insights **on banana products preferred by male and female farmers** from 5 sites across agroecological zones. This gender-disaggregated information was then used to select NARITA hybrids for farmer managed on-farm testing. For on-farm testing, a **gender inclusive protocol and citizen science approach** was developed and tailored to localities where trials will be implemented.



## What WE ACHIEVED

The specific **banana trait preferences** of men and women farmers were identified and the **gender roles** for preparation of banana-based products determined. Preference of certain traits differed between men and women, while others, such as quality consumption traits did not.

However, some traits, not currently included in the breeding profile, such as ease of peeling, peel thickness and speed of cooking were highlighted as important by women.



## Why THIS IS IMPORTANT

Incorporating the feedback from men, women and other social groupings **gives voice to the spectrum of potential adopters**. During the process of identifying and prioritizing key traits responsible for the adoption of new varieties, the respective views of men and women can vary widely, depending on the socio-economic setting and location. Participatory varietal selection methods ensure **better understanding of gender differentiated preferences**, which inform genotype selections for advancement and can subsequently **improve adoption rates and upscaling** once released. Gender-disaggregated information on preferred traits and varieties are therefore important to inform **current and future breeding efforts** in better understanding priority traits, which are heritable and which varieties to include in selections.

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