



Integrating Gender and Nutrition within Agricultural Extension Services

Activity Sheet
August 2016

Exploring Gender Stereotypes

Time: 2 hours

Materials Needed:

- Flipchart with activity title and objectives listed



Introduction

Sex is the biological difference between men and women and is determined at birth. Gender is the socio-cultural roles assigned to men and women, and is determined by society through various socializing agencies, such as families, peers, schools, and religious institutions. The fact that we are born male or female is unchangeable, however gender roles can and do change over time and across cultures. Women and men learn to behave and work in certain socially prescribed ways that reflect cultural norms and customs. Raising awareness about gender myths and their impact on men and women can help extension providers to challenge some of these stereotypes and offer more equitable access to and control over resources and information.

Objectives

- ✓ To explore perceptions about how women and men behave ...about what is appropriate and inappropriate behavior for women and men.
- ✓ To identify where and how gender myths develop within a society.
- ✓ To examine the implications of gendered stereotypes on the individual household and the community.

Steps

- 1) Review title of activity, objectives, and brief introduction. **(5 minutes)**
- 2) Ask participants to get into two lines. Males in one line by age and females in another line by age, youngest to oldest. Form small groups by selecting the oldest male with the youngest female and the oldest female with the youngest male. Continue in this manner until all participants are in a small group of five to six members ensuring that the groups are mixed: males and females. Add "extra" participants to small groups as needed. **(10 minutes)**
- 3) Provide the following instructions for the role play. **(5 minutes)**

The men in your small group will be portraying how women/girls are supposed to behave and the women in your group will be portraying how men/boys are supposed to behave in a typical rural household. The acting will be in the form of charades - that is no talking, just silently portraying the behavior. All group members must perform in the role play. Your role play should be 5 to 6 minutes.



4) Allow each group to identify the behaviors they want to portray. Encourage participants to locate props in or near the meeting room. **(20 minutes)**

5) Invite each group to perform their role play. After each role play, ask the participant observers to explain the overall message they think the performers were trying to convey and the role each member was playing; allow the performers to confirm and share their responses. Ask each performer to share how felt about playing a member of the opposite sex. **(45 minutes)**

6) After all the role plays have been performed, gather the participants into a circle and ask the following questions. Capture the responses on flipchart. **(30 minutes)**

What **negative** behaviors did you observe in the role plays?

What **positive** behaviors did you observe in the role plays?

Where do perceptions about how men and women should behave come from?



Now What?

Putting the activity into practice. Ask the participants to provide ideas and examples of how they see themselves using this activity in the field...how they would adapt and adjust the exercise depending on a specific audience. For example:

- Have men and women take the opposite role, but not dress up.
- Place stickers on role players to identify family members or verbally identify before the role play begins.
- Explain why changing roles can be a fun activity, but with a very serious message.
- Have youth play the role of their elders with the elders/parents watching.

(10 minutes)

References:

Nyalunga, Dumisani (2007). Dispelling the Misconceptions and Myths about Gender. International NGO Journal Vol. 2 (1), pp. 001-005.

<http://ddp.org.za/information-material/articles/Dispelling%20the%20Misconceptions%20and%20Myths%20about%20Gender.pdf/view>

USAID Integrating Gender and Nutrition into Agricultural Extension Systems (INGENAES) (2015). Integrating Gender and Nutrition with Agricultural Extension Services Facilitator's Guide. <http://ingenaes.illinois.edu/wp-content/uploads/Gender-and-Nutrition-Facilitators-Guide.pdf>

