

Integrating Gender and Nutrition within Agricultural Extension Services

Case Study
Guatemala
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Developing a Gender-Sensitive Training Module on Value Chains for Extensionists in Guatemala

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© INGENAES, taken by E. Smith, CENMA Produce Market in Guatemala City, Guatemala

The University of California, Davis (UC Davis) has been working with Counterpart International (CPI) and the Universidad de San Carlos (USAC) since 2013 to develop and execute extensionist training courses that build capacity in the areas of extension methodologies, agro-technologies, and food security. They are part of a Food For Progress (FFPr) project funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). In 2017, under a second round of funding, UC Davis' took on the task of developing of a new, training module on gender sensitive value chain strengthening covering several key value chains in Guatemala. The module should address the challenges that producers in particular face in these value chains, and extension's role in helping producers overcome these challenges.

The **purpose** of this case study is to share the approach and resources used to create a context-specific, gender-sensitive value chain training module that can be used by development practitioners doing similar work in other contexts.

Background

Extension in Guatemala

Public extension in Guatemala is in a period of reconstruction after the 36 year armed conflict that dramatically changed the social and political landscape of the country. Public extension was officially suspended at the signing of the country's peace accords in 1996 and was re-established in 2012.

It is now called the National System of Rural Extension (SNER) and run by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (MAGA). Each municipality is assigned three SNER extensionists: the Rural Development Extensionist (usually a man) who is responsible for administration of extension activities within the municipality; the Family Farming Extensionist (usually a man) who provides technical agricultural training to producers; and the Healthy Household Extensionist (usually a woman) who provides training related to nutrition, childrearing, and other household topics (McNamara & Moore, 2017).

The SNER operates through the use of a system of Centers of Learning for Rural Development (CADER). CADER members are usually associated with agricultural production and own some land or garden). Each CADER is led by a community member called the *promotor*, who is in charge of organizing and hosting CADER meetings. Extensionists provide technical assistance in various forms to the groups depending on the needs of these groups (Aguirre, 2012).

Gender Equity and the Case of Guatemala

Gender equity “involves fairness in representation, participation, and benefits afforded to men and women. It recognizes that in order to achieve equality a ‘leveling of the playing field’ must first be done to compensate for gender gaps and the legacy of discrimination (Rubin & Manfre, 2015).” Lack of gender equity—in the form of lack of access to productive resources, education, finances, and markets—disproportionately affects women (FAO, 2011).

Gender inequity has large social and economic consequences. Studies have shown that an increase in productive resources for women

could increase their farm yields by 20-30% (FAO, 2013). Evidence also suggests that women’s education contributes to 43% reduction in childhood malnutrition (FAO, 2013).



© Ernesto Sanchez, with MAGA Extensionists at MAGA headquarters in Santa Cruz, Quiche, March 9, 2018.

The culture in Guatemala is famously *machista*, meaning that strong male chauvinism is highly prevalent in societal norms (BEVAN, 2014; *Machista*, n.d.). The country ranks 119 out of 155 countries on their Gender Inequality Index score (UNDP, 2015). According to UN Women Representative María Machicado Terán, “80% of men believe that women need permission to leave the house, and 70% of women surveyed agreed” (Guinan, 2015). The *machista* attitude also translates into gender-based violence being normalized in the country. Although the government passed a law in 2008 to criminalize femicide and other forms of gender based violence, it has had limited positive effects to date (Guinan, 2015).

Women in Agriculture

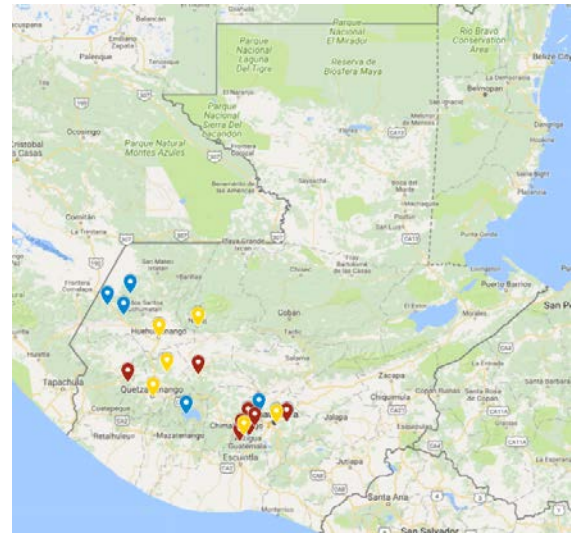
Gender inequity is also pervasive in Guatemala’s agricultural sector. Results from the Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index, a validated tool to assess women’s empowerment in agriculture, showed that major gaps exist in access to important factors like credit, land, and

extension as well as decision making power in the home (Angeles et al, 2014). These gaps must be addressed in order to increase the level of women's empowerment in Guatemala.

As more and more men migrate to cities and/or other countries for work, women are increasingly taking over tasks in agricultural production that were formerly done primarily by men (World Bank Group, 2015); however, this fact has yet to translate into women producers gaining more access to a CADER or extensionists that would provide them with technical production assistance (USAID| Guatemala, 2012). These inequalities in access and decision making power extend beyond the production link of the value chain, also limiting women's ability to fully participate in various other links along the chain including processing and marketing. Development practitioners and extensionists must focus on addressing inequalities in access and empowerment to start making value chains more gender equitable.

Extension Training in Guatemala

Prior to the suspension of the public extension system in Guatemala, extension was a degree offered at various universities in the country. This is no longer the case, however (McNamara & Moore, 2017), and there are now few formal training requirements for public extensionists in the country. Some have the equivalent of a high school specialization or bachelor's degree in an agriculture related field, but the majority of their training is on-the-job instruction from their peers (McNamara & Moore, 2017). Some NGOs and universities in Guatemala seek to establish rigorous requirements and training courses for aspiring extensionists. One such training course has been created through the FFPr project discussed in this document, although it has yet to be formalized as a requirement for extension workers.



Areas covered by interviews, categorized by Value Chain Roles: Blue: Producers | Red: Extensionists | Yellow: Other Actors

Methodology

Analysis of Key Value Chains

The UCD team spent 10 weeks in Guatemala gathering information for the development of the value chains module. In order to create the module, there must be a more comprehensive understanding of different value chains in Guatemala. The study focused on coffee, honey, vegetables, flowers, and livestock value chains. By looking at the chain structure, the team gained insight into the specific value chain links, primary actors, secondary actors, context and influence of context on the value chain, and challenges in particular for the producers within the chain.

A combination of secondary sources from in-country research institutions (i.e., Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture, IICA), governmental entities (i.e., the National Council on Agricultural Development, CONADEA), and larger scale databases (i.e., Duke Global Value Chains Center, FAO) were consulted as part of this study. These secondary sources provided the

framework needed to conduct a series of key informant interviews with various value chain actors including producers, researchers, relevant government entities, producer organizations (such as federations, cooperatives, and associations), input providers, end buyers, export companies, extensionists and technical assistance providers (see Map 1).

Each provided a unique perspective on the landscape and challenges of the selected value chains. The team conducted formal and informal interviews, carried out surveys, and employed a variety of participatory methods for the purpose of the study. For more information and instructions on these different techniques, see Box 1 and Box 2.

Box 1 – Interviewing Techniques

Surveys: Guidelines for assessing nutrition-related Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice

www.fao.org/docrep/019/i3545e/i3545e00.htm

(Note: While these are guidelines for nutrition surveys, we have found them readily adaptable for other topics)

Participatory Rural Appraisal:

www.crs.org/sites/default/files/tools-research/rapid-rural-appraisal-and-participatory-rural-appraisal.pdf

Focus Group Facilitation:

www.marketlinks.org/good-practice-center/value-chain-wiki/guides-interviews-and-focus-groups

Evaluation of Gender in Value Chains

The team used the INGENAES Guatemala Landscape Analysis in order to get a basic understanding of gender related issues in Guatemala while researching for the module. Specific questions relating to gender were asked in almost all of the interviews that were conducted.

With gender being a sensitive topic in Guatemala, the team created two types of questions: those regarding gender constraints in value chains, and questions to solicit input on how to discuss gender-related issues with sensitivity in the context of the training course. These questions were directed towards producers, extensionists, gender-researchers, and aid workers. We interviewed men and women individually and in focus groups divided by gender in order to get a more holistic understanding of the gender-based constraints in Guatemalan value chains.



© Vitalino Mendez Sumpango. Interviews with Avocado Producer Group, Sacatepéquez, March 15, 2018

Assessing Extensionists' Knowledge

In order to design a training module that would truly meet extensionists' training needs, all three types of extensionists working in various regions in Guatemala were surveyed. Surveys included questions related to the frequency with which extensionists train producers on value chains-related topics (technical production and processing assistance, value addition, access to technical information, certification requirements, access to financing, financial management, group strengthening and organization, access to established farmer organizations, access to local, national, international markets, and exportation requirements) as well as their comfort level with providing these trainings. Responses to these

surveys informed the topics we focused on in ensuing personal interviews.

Finding Interviewees

CPI capitalizes on its many connections with actors in management roles across the value chains, such as cooperative leaders and agricultural export companies. Interviews with those entities often led to connections with other players along the value chain. USAC faculty members also provided information and facilitated contact with extensionists and other government entities working on value chain growth. The team further relied on other in-country development organizations like Peace Corps to connect directly with extensionists, who in turn introduced the team to producers.

Box 2 – Interviewing through a Gender Lens

Value Chain with Gender Lens:**

<https://ingenaes.illinois.edu/wp-content/uploads/ING-Activity-Sheet-2016-7-Integrating-G-and-N-into-Agricultural-Value-Chains.pdf>

Who does what:**

<https://ingenaes.illinois.edu/wp-content/uploads/ING-Activity-Sheet-2016-1-Who-Does-What.pdf>

Seasonal Calendar:

https://ingenaes.illinois.edu/wp-content/uploads/MEAS-Tips-and-Facts-2016_06-Focus-Group-Seasonal-Calendar.pdf

Spanish Versions available at <https://ingenaes.illinois.edu/library/#language-spanish>

Interviews

Interviews were conducted in Spanish. Detailed bulleted notes were taken in Spanish during interviews, and then translated, typed and organized as soon as possible after completing each interview so that the module developers could record the most complete information possible. While recording results, the surveying team paid close attention to recurring themes in the survey responses, calling for further investigation. The team followed up on those topics via subsequent interviews with the same person, involving other parties as necessary. Some of the themes that emerged include access to markets, risk management, financial management, access to credit, and collaboration amongst producers.

Keeping a running list of common knowledge and access gaps identified by extensionists and other players gave a good idea of what major topics needed to be covered in the training module. In this study, we used Google Suite to type up interviews and keep track of information; more formal qualitative data processing tools (ie. dedoose) can also be used.

Gender Analysis

During data analysis, special attention was given to gender-specific issues. In Guatemala, like in many other countries, women are not adequately recognized for their contributions to agriculture (D. Riviera, personal communication, February 15, 2018). Because of this, they have reduced access to technical production assistance, producer organizations, and credit when compared to men farmers (USAID| Guatemala, 2012). The lack of recognition also means that women often work much longer hours than men do; they are typically responsible for not only all of the household responsibilities

like cleaning, cooking, and childrearing but also agricultural work (L. De Mendez, personal communication, March 3, 2018).

Although women face many challenges along the value chains, results showed that they are generally more likely and able to participate in value chains that have a lower time commitment. Quite a few women are taking up honey production. Many women's groups also produce household cleaning products and sell them locally. In interviews, women shared that they were more readily able to participate in these value chains because they enabled them to stay close to the home, which let them take care of other responsibilities, too. These topics that came about in interviews with women producers and other actors along the value chain, and were prioritized when developing the module content.

Outcomes

The extensionists who will be participating in this training will come from a wide variety of geographic areas within Guatemala. The farmers they work with grow different products at varying scales, and their access to markets is limited by poor infrastructure and other context-specific factors. Extensionists work with demographically and ethnically diverse farmers, representing variation in sex and age. As Guatemala is home to 23 different indigenous groups (República Nacional de Guatemala Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2003). The extensionists themselves also have a varying levels of training and experience in working with value chains and commercialization. Thus, while the team sought to make the content of the module as context-specific as possible, efforts were limited by a great variety of backgrounds represented in the classroom. Therefore the team designed the module in such a way that extensionists will be exposed to a variety of

topics and provided with additional resources to turn to in order to adapt what they learned to their specific contexts.

Historically, Guatemalan agricultural extension has mainly focused on providing producers with technical assistance (A. Garcia, personal communication, February 15, 2018). When speaking with extensionists, many expressed an uncertainty about working with producers on activities outside of the realm of agricultural production. A section was included early on in the module about the role of extension in value chains. Other topics to be covered were based on the knowledge gaps and uncertainties discussed in the interview process.

Many producers discussed their fear of trying new things because of uncertain repercussions; the team decided to include a section on risk management in the value chain in order to give extensionists a framework to help producers navigate some of these risks. Extensionists also identified the need for consistent volumes of product as one of the biggest competitive constraints for many of their producers, and mentioned the difficulties they have in creating a cohesive work environment with other producers. A section on collaboration was further developed in an effort to provide extensionists with tools for helping their producers collaborate and choose pre-existing producer organizations to be a part of. Conversations with extensionists pointed to forming market linkages as one of their main knowledge gaps. To help fill this gap, we included several market related sections in the module such as market analysis, market competition, marketing, and market requirements as well as case studies and field trips to purchasing companies to help extensionists understand buyer requirements.

A wide variety of topics can be explored in a module on value chains and commercialization, yet it was not possible to go in-depth about each of the themes in the module, nor talk about all of the subjects that came up in interviews. The team included a Networking Fair component so that extensionists could learn what resources for further learning are available to them and make connections for future collaboration.

Incorporating Gender in the Module

The function of this module is to train extensionists about value chains and commercialization in a gender-sensitive way. Training about gender equity is a complex and delicate matter that would best be covered in its own module. Project constraints did not allow for the possibility of a separate module on gender, which may reflect the attitudes of the institutions involved in this extension training. The team implemented gender-sensitivity into the extensionist training course to the degree possible, given the time allotted and other project parameters.

The gender-related content in the value chains module builds on gender-focused content that trainees will grapple with during Module Two of the training course, which is focused on Extension Methodologies. Although it was impossible to cover gender equity to the extent that we would have liked to, the basics of gender in value chains are presented along with resources that extensionists can use to learn more about how to incorporate gender equity into their projects. The module has a two-pronged approach to targeting gender issues: one section explicitly addresses gender equity in value chains, and the theme is also touched on throughout the module through various examples and activities that keep gender equity

at the forefront of trainees minds throughout the module.

Explicit Gender Training

The term gender-sensitive indicates approaches that consider gender relations; gender-specific deals with addressing differences between genders in order to promote gender equity (WHO, 2010). The “Gender in Value Chains” section of the module was designed to be both gender-sensitive and gender-specific. The section begins by providing extensionists with a tool to analyze the disparities between genders in the value chains they work with. The tool was adapted from the Agri-ProFocus Gender in Value Chains Toolkit (also available in Spanish). In the activity, extensionists work as a group to identify all of the actions that go into a particular link of the value chain, as well as which gender is usually responsible for each activity.

Finally, they brainstorm ideas for addressing the identified restrictions. This activity presents itself as a tool that can be used in the future to help extensionists think through and address gender-related topics and other challenges that arise in their specific contexts.

Angeles et al. (2014) found a large disparity between women and men’s access to credit, land, and extension in addition to decision making power in households in Guatemala. Hence, the module included content to address ways to increase women’s empowerment in value chains. The segment covers topics like the contribution of women to agriculture, main challenges that women face along value chains, and how to create projects that specifically address the needs of women.

After viewing a short video about the brand, students and instructors discuss the positive benefits of the *Café Feminino* program. They then talk about the specific roles that extensionists could have around a gender-equitable brand

program. In Guatemala, these roles could include connecting women producers to cooperatives and associations that are operating with this brand, connecting producer organizations to certifying entities, and providing technical assistance to help producers comply with the brand standards.

Implicit Gender Training

Practical ways of addressing gender inequities are incorporated throughout the module. It is particularly emphasized in the sections on collaboration and competition (with reference to the importance of making sure that producer organizations are accessible to men and women) and access to financing.

Instructor's Guide

The instructors for the module are a mix of representatives from UC Davis and USAC. They were chosen by the respective schools to share their expertise on various subjects. There is no project requirement that they have gender-related training, and because of time and budget constraints, we were unable to provide such capacity building. In order to encourage instructors to consider gender when presenting, we developed an instructor's guide with recommendations that they include a gender lens both in their pedagogy, and content when teaching their topic during the module.

Final Project

In addition to classroom instruction, training participants work on a group project throughout the week. The purpose of this project is for extensionists to analyze a value chain that they are familiar with and outline an improvement project for that chain. One of the requirements for that project is that extensionists demonstrate

consideration of gender restrictions when developing their improvement plan.



Interviews with Avocado Producer, Santa Maria Jesus Sacatepéquez

Lessons Learned

There is no silver bullet to value chains training. Every value chains solution will be context-specific. Thus, every value chains training must be as context-specific and adaptable as possible in order to be useful to the trainees.

Representatives of the group being trained are some of the best informants about training needs. While manuals can provide an understanding of general training needs, it is critical to directly engage with groups that will be trained to find out where the gaps in their knowledge and training are.

Facilitating networking is often the best way to help people learn what they need to. Access to information was repeatedly cited as a limiting factor to extensionists helping producers improve their positions in value chains. Extensionists know what information they lack. Providing opportunities for them to connect with sources of information and training is an effective way for them to tailor their training experience to their particular needs.

It is important to address the difference between acknowledging the need for gender equity and acting on it. Many of the extensionists shared that they understood the importance of gender equity in society and in their work. However, we observed that often their words and actions did not reflect a true understanding of gender equity.

It is necessary to emphasize the importance of having mixed gender groups where men and women participate as equals. Many of the extensionists work with groups of only men or of only women. While there are some advantages to having gender-specific groups, this is an incomplete strategy for advancing gender equity. When extensionists facilitate groups where men and women participate together and have the same access to technical assistance, inputs, and leadership opportunities, this can bring about a cultural shift as men and women begin to see each other as equals.

Concrete tools and recommendations around how to improve gender equity are needed. While many extensionists that we worked with expressed enthusiasm about promoting gender equity in the work they were doing, they also shared with us that they did not feel like they had the appropriate training and tools to do so. In trainings about gender, it is important to teach not only theory but also practical methods that extensionists can implement in their work.

Next Steps

The module described in this case study is still in its developmental stages. The module content will be piloted with a group of volunteers in Davis, California in July of 2018. It will then be used in Guatemala as the fifth module in the aforementioned extensionist training course during the second week of August, 2018. It will be evaluated by participants at various points throughout the week, and evaluations will be taken into consideration in later iterations of the module.

Note: The opinions and ideas in this material do not reflect USDA's or CPI's official positions on the subject, and the case study is not a part of FFPr activities

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ⁱ The term “value chain” refers to the “entire system of production, processing and marketing from inception to the finished product. [Value chains] consist of a series of actors, linked together by flows of products, finance, information and services” (KIT et al., 2012).