

Nepal Updates Sept. 2016



INGENAES stands for Integrating Gender and Nutrition within Agricultural Extension Services. We aim to assist partners in Feed the Future countries to build more gender-responsive and nutrition-sensitive extension approaches and tools to improve agricultural livelihoods for women and men and enhance household nutrition.
ingenaes.illinois.edu/about-us

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Training-of-Trainers workshops for partners working with farmer groups

In June, Bhawna Thapa (UF) led two interactive Training-of-Trainers (TOT) workshops for extension agents and trainers who work with farmer groups engaged in commercial farming in the Mid-west and Far-west regions of Nepal. The workshops included 56 participants from several USAID-funded projects, the local District Agriculture Development Office, and iDE (International Development Enterprises), among others. The overall purpose of the TOTs was to enhance, extend, and build the capacity of extension workers and field agents to design and conduct participatory gender-responsive and nutrition-sensitive activities targeting men and women farmer groups engaged in market development.

Prior to conducting the workshops, Dr. Thapa conducted a rapid training needs assessment of various stakeholders and value chain actors. The assessment consisted of rapid focus group discussions with farmer groups, and semi-structured interviews with project staff and other value chain members (input suppliers and traders) to identify issues in commercial agricultural production and to understand how gender and nutrition is being mainstreamed in the field extension agents’ training approaches.

Results from the assessment were compiled into a field report. Dr. Thapa created a TOT manual for organizations wishing to implement this training. The manual will soon be available in English and Nepali on the [Training Materials](#) page of the INGENAES website.



Photos: © B. Thapa 2016

Focus Urged on Visual Communication Products in Local Languages in Order to Reach Rural Women

In July, Dr. Lulu Rodriguez, Director of the Agricultural Communications Program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, travelled to Nepal to jumpstart a research project that aims to keep stock of the strategies and messages that INGENAES partner organizations have used to disseminate information about nutrition to rural women. The data-gathering phase of the study entailed interviewing key communication and/or extension officers of these partner agencies; interviews were conducted by four students in the Master's of International Cooperation and Development (MICD) program at Nepal's Mid-West University.

Interviewees stressed the need for pictorial communication materials in the local languages. The officers stressed that such materials bridge the literacy divide and are more likely to grab the attention of rural women who are increasingly taking on more active roles in agriculture. These recommendations were communicated in a one-day seminar-workshop entitled "Communication Strategies to Reach Rural Women with Nutrition Messages," which took place in Kathmandu on July 21. Conducted by Dr. Rodriguez, the seminar-workshop was attended by 25 individuals from 12 agencies.

Interviewees and workshop attendees included representatives from the Agricultural Information and Communication Center (AICC) of the Ministry of Agricultural Development (MoAD), BPP-Pariwar, CIMMYT's Cereal Systems Initiative for South Asia, the MoAD's Directorate of Extension, iDE Nepal,

Heifer International, Helen Keller International, USAID's Knowledge-based Integrated Sustainable Agriculture and Nutrition (KISAN) project, the Promoting Agriculture, Health, and Alternative Livelihoods (PAHAL) project, the Sustainable Action for Resilience And Food Security (SABAL) project, Suaahara, and the Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD).

The AICC will be an especially important partner for INGENAES; this is the professional wing of the MoAD which is charged with producing agricultural information relevant to farmers, traders, entrepreneurs, and professionals. The AICC also distributes ag information through print, broadcast and online media. Of their products, the most popular has been the *Krishi Diary*. Published annually, the *Diary* is a compendium of facts and recommended crop and livestock production practices, which serves as a reference guide that extension agents take to the field.



Lulu Rodriguez inspects the page proofs of the AICC's bi-monthly newsletter, produced at the center's printing facilities in Lalitpur.



MICD graduate students Sarita Syangtang (left) and Abhishek Karki (right) interview Suresh Sharma (center), senior agriculture officer in Nepal's Ministry of Agricultural Development.



Representatives from the 12 agencies who attended the seminar-workshop.

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Results of “Design Thinking Study” with Returning Migrant Workers

This past summer Dr. Nancy Erbstein (UC Davis Department of Human Ecology), Mr. Prabhas Pokharel (Stanford University and Kathmandu Living Labs), Dr. Nama Budhathoki (Kathmandu Living Labs) and Ms. Megha Shrestha (Kathmandu Living Labs) collaborated on a design thinking study to assess potential opportunities and strategies to support nutritionally sensitive, gender-inclusive agricultural production among returning Nepalese migrant workers and their families. Emerging findings from this study include:

- Returning migrants who left Nepal for work or education are important potential newcomers to the agricultural sector
- There is a hunger for accessible, accurate, useful information that can inform agricultural entrepreneurship within this population but limited attention to nutritional value
- Video holds particular promise as a tool to support learning about agricultural practices and nutrition given the types of information and modes of learning of interest
- Engaging youth—and young women of targeted caste, ethnic and regional backgrounds in particular—in video production might be a powerful mechanism for facilitating skill and knowledge development
- An important challenge is how to effectively combine grassroots expertise and formal “expert” agricultural and nutrition knowledge (both Nepalese and global)
- Another important challenge is providing adequate information on local environmental context to facilitate knowledge adaptation given Nepal’s many micro-ecological contexts
- A final challenge is presenting the nutritional value of certain foods not adequately represented in local diets in a way that motivates farmers to grow and consume them.

This fall and winter we will build on our summer research to design and resource a pilot project that responds to these findings.

Fourth Annual Agriculture-to-Nutrition Scientific Symposium

By Kabita Devkota, INGENAES/Nepal in-country coordinator

The Innovation Lab for Nutrition's 4th Annual Agriculture-to-Nutrition Scientific Symposium was co-organized and hosted by Institute of Medicine, Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health, Nepal Agriculture Research Council, Nepal Technical Assistance Group (NTAG), and Tufts University in Kathmandu from 18-19th July 2016. Researchers on nutrition, agriculture, and other areas focused on rural issues of Nepal presented during the symposium.

Because INGENAES focuses on agriculture, gender, and nutrition in Nepal, it was a great opportunity for me to be a part of this symposium. Various meetings and discussions with development practitioners from different organizations working in Nepal brought a good insight about the issues that the rural people are facing and what programs and policies can work best to address these issues.



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Organizational Capacity-Building Workshops

In July, Dr. Muthusami Kumaran (UF) facilitated two three-and-a-half day long workshops that provided practical, action-oriented organizational capacity building tools for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that promote gender equity and nutrition in various communities of Nepal. A total of 48 NGO representatives participated in these workshops, plus three officials from the Nepal Ministry of Agriculture, Directorate of Extension Services. One of the underlying themes of the workshops was to improve collaborative partnerships between NGOs and the extension services for improving gender equity and nutrition sensitivity in Nepal.



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Conservation Practices for Vegetable Production

During the month of August, Laina Schneider, a graduate student researcher at UC Davis, conducted a technology assessment in Nepal. The assessment focused on conservation practices for vegetable production as implemented by the Horticulture Innovation Lab and IDE (International Development Enterprises) in Nepal. The goal was to learn how implementation of mulching, reduced tillage and drip irrigation practices impact vegetable farmers in three areas: 1. time and labor; 2. food availability and quality; and 3. income and assets. The assessment included interviews with trial farmers, extension agents, community business facilitators and horticulture cooperative members in four districts (Lalitpur, Banke, Surkhet and Dadeldhura). The information gathered during the assessment will be used to create a technology profile about conservation agriculture for vegetables and will inform the scaling up of this technology across the IDE Nepal network. The assessment is planned to begin in October 2016.

YPARD Blog Posts on INGENAES activities



The Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD) network in Nepal has written two blog posts about recent INGENAES activities that were attended by YPARD members. The [first post](#) describes Dr. Kumaran's organizational capacity-building workshops; the author writes, "The workshop was captivating with such a proficient and welcoming facilitator." [The second blog post](#) describes the communication workshop led by Dr. Lulu Rodriguez. The INGENAES team is pleased to count YPARD as a partner and to receive this visibility on their website. Worldwide, there are 10,000 members of YPARD from 168 countries.

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We look forward to hearing from you!



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