

“Integrating Gender and Nutrition into Agricultural Extension Systems”

Report on a daylong workshop hosted by Dr. Kathy Colverson
during AFAAS Extension Week, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

October 12, 2015

Agenda

- I) Welcome/Introductions
- II) What is Gender Analysis and why is it important? (overview of gender frameworks and basic tools)
- III) Break
- IV) How are Men and Women supposed to act?
- V) Factors that Influence Gender Roles – What can we influence?
- VI) Gender and Nutrition Myths and their Impacts
- VII) Lunch
- VIII) Who Gets What? Who Eats What? (exercise on gendered intra-household consumption and its impacts)
- IX) Break
- X) Analyzing an Agricultural Value Chain (exercise on creating and analyzing a local value chain from a gender and nutrition lens)
- XI) Closing/ Next Steps/Evaluation



Statements and Observations by Participants

How are Men and Women supposed to act?

Men:

- Public sphere – dominate, leaders, role models, show-offs, confident, strong, pro-active, protector and provider for the family, make decisions, competent, authoritative, sit in front
- Private sphere – leaders, commanders, providers, dependent on wife, disciplinarian, decision maker, weak (compared to wife), caring, confident, own everything, role model, protector

Women:

- Public sphere – timid, humble, submissive, feminine, caring, shy, talk less (visible but not audible), helping, emotional, support men, followers, work for men, weak, suppressed, not confident
- Private sphere – multi-tasker, strong, caring, submissive, organizers, in control, act as themselves, expressive, mentoring, supporting husband, assertive, nurturing, housekeeper, reproductive (child care), nagging, providers, enduring, hardy, protected, industrious, busy

Factors that influence gender roles

- Culture (buying into gender stereotypes), Upbringing, Religion, Social Structure, Education, Political systems and policies, Environment, Sex (biology- how you are born)

What and how can we influence these factors to increase awareness of and about gender equity?

- Increase women's educational levels – helps increase gender equality
- Sensitize others about gender issues and what they can do
- Identify “bad behaviors” that perpetuate gender stereotypes and correct through behavior change communications
- Improve the policies and political systems to be more gender equitable – not just lip service
- Increase women's awareness of their rights – especially in rural societies
- Tackle gender myths through drama and “mirroring” techniques
- Raise awareness within our own organizations of our gender biases
- Always question “why” when encountering gender roles and myths
- Question and change mass media's portrayal of men and women
- Promote “good” gender practices and approaches and be aware of our own gender biases
- Political systems may have gender equitable laws – but they are not enforced
- Limited knowledge by lawmakers of rural women's issues
- Ministries of women and children (where gender usually is) are not taken seriously and are siloed from other ministries
- Review and use “gender best practices” from other country's ministries for gender
- Identify and scale up gender appropriate technologies, and approaches
- “Mis-translations and mis-perceptions of religious texts reinforces paternalism and misogyny

- Work with religious leaders and school groups to increase awareness of gender issues and how to tackle them
- Encourage incremental change of improved nutrition with targeted women in a step by step process
- Include nutrition education in primary schools and school feeding programs
- Change the name of certain crops that are seen as food for poor people – ie. Cassava, millet and sorghum were called “orphan crops,” they are now called “traditional high value crops” – increases consumption and status
- Need more research on indigenous crops to contribute to increased consumption

Gender and Nutrition Myths and their Impacts

- If pregnant women eat eggs – child born with no hair
- If pregnant women eat chicken – child born with a beak
- Men don't like and shouldn't eat vegetables – they make you weak
- If adolescent girls eat eggs – they have no breast development
- If women drink milk they will become too strong for their husbands to control
- If women and girl children eat eggs or chicken there will be a curse on the family
- If widows in TZ grow “Bambara nuts” - the family will die. The community will uproot the plants as they think they are a bad omen
- If men step into a field of groundnuts (typically a woman's crop) – the pods will be empty when harvest comes
- Women should not eat raw meat – consumption will give them: a) endless menses, b) a “substance” will grow in their reproductive organs, c) they will get divorced
- Women cannot eat chicken gizzards – they are only for men, if they eat them they will get divorced. It is the last part served from the chicken and is always reserved for men.
- In SW UG, men do not eat fruits – that is only for women and children
- Green vegetables are for poor people – meat has status
- Women cannot have soured milk until they have had their first child
- Young, married women cannot have goat meat until they have lived with the husband's family for awhile
- The woman and children must wait for the husband to arrive before they can eat – sometimes they will go to bed hungry if he has not arrived in time
- Women and children eat last after the adult males. Young boys get more food (and higher protein value) than young girls
- In Kenya, the village head must have sex before he can plant his crops, and the rest of the village must wait until he does his planting first
- Pregnant women cannot eat sugarcane or their skin will crack

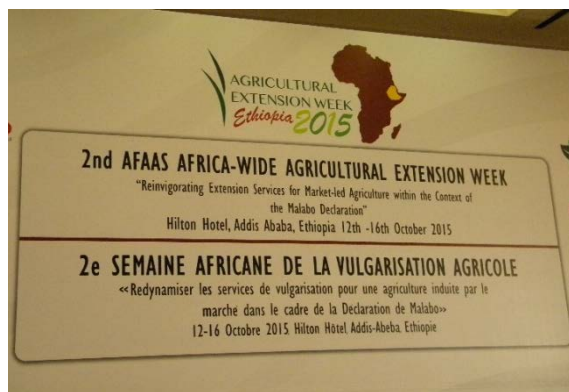
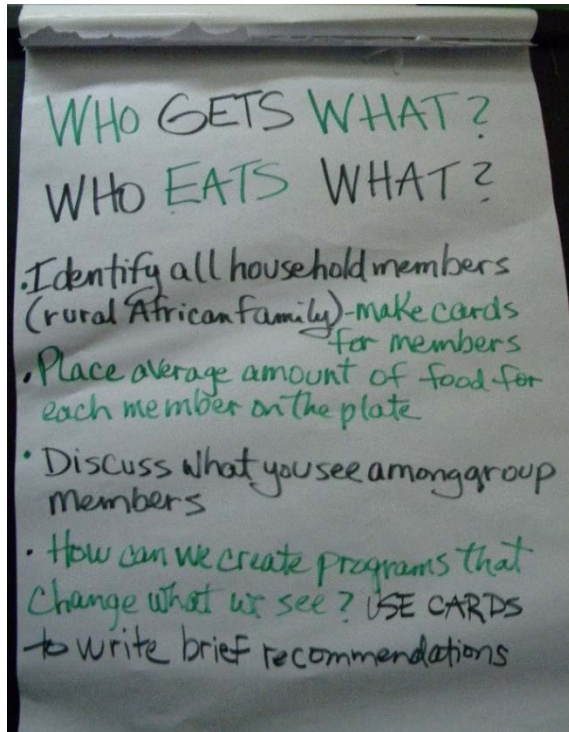
Conclusion

In plenary, we discussed who in the family has higher nutritional needs – pregnant, lactating women and babies and growing children. We discussed how the gender and nutrition myths

perpetuate women and children being malnourished and how the previous exercise on what we can do to influence gender and nutrition myths and roles can be applied.

Afternoon exercises were interactive and photos were taken of the final results.

Selected Workshop Photos¹



¹ Taken by Dr. Kathy Colverson