

BEYOND THE TRAINING

Extensionists Adapt INGENAES Gender and Nutrition Training to Fieldwork

In the remote Tharu community that extensionist Rajendra Choudhary serves, women typically wake up at 4 am to begin their day. They will generally continue working nonstop until 10 pm seven days a week, while a typical man will work seasonally to produce cereal crops and take advantage of his free time by playing cards instead of helping with women's tasks. As this characteristic workload balance attests, Rajendra confirms that gender inequity is a challenging issue for this rural community.

Recently, Rajendra made an effort to facilitate greater understanding and open the dialogue about gender and nutrition challenges within the community by using training techniques he learned at an INGENAES workshop. Rajendra used four INGENAES activities from the workshop for agricultural extension-related professionals held in Kathmandu, Nepal in May 2016: (1) Who Does What? (2) Who Has Power and Control? (3) Who Gets What to Eat? (4) and Agricultural Value Chains.

The ready-made Activity Sheets helped Rajendra more successfully conduct the field-based training with eleven participants, which included two women. During the training, Rajendra facilitated conversations among the participants concerning issues related to gender and

nutrition in the household and the field, like who gets to make decisions, use financial resources, and does which tasks in the household and farm. As a result, "The group realized the work load gap between men and women. They were surprised and said they never thought about the women having such a heavy workload."



Adapting training tools to field-based contexts is key to transformation in Jajarkot. © Aryal 2016

By using training activities that he learned at the workshop, Rajendra was able to incorporate greater awareness about gender roles and equity in his own work that has direct implications for the farming villages he serves. At the end of the Rajendra-led training, “One member of the group was excited and saw the training as a real eye-opener; he said he would try to improve himself and teach others.”

Rajendras’s experience is one of many instances in which the 60 Nepal and India-based representatives from non-governmental organizations, ministries of agriculture, and universities in Nepal and India are using the training activities they learned from INGENAES workshops in their respective fields. The program, entitled “Integrating Gender and Nutrition into Agricultural Extension Services”, has been adapted for different regions around the world, and been implemented in Tajikistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Malawi, Sierra Leone, and Uganda, and applied to the local context. Aimed at professionals in agricultural extension, from front-line workers to national program managers, the workshops are highly interactive, incorporating role-playing, drawing, and props to bring gender and nutrition challenges that to life.

“My understanding of the words Sex and Gender became very clear...not to use and incorporate the word Gender just for the sake of it, but to become more intentional about gender transformation.”
- Nepal workshop participant

After the interactive workshops in Nepal, participants shared the insights gained that have changed the way they think about gender. “I gained so many new ideas and skills to improve my work in the villages; I can implement all of the activities and techniques when I work with the community people,” one participant remarked.

Another shared, “I train rural and urban women for my organization so this was a totally new ‘trainings of trainers’ learning experience; learning new ways to engage groups, especially using role play and providing new information at the community level in an interactive way.”

Two of the representatives from Winrock, Tuk Aryal and Janak Acharya, recently took the INGENAES Agricultural Value Chains training activity to the field. Tuk, the district coordinator for Jajarkot, adapted the Agricultural Value Chains activity to Jajarkot’s context by facilitating a session

on the maize value chain. He first requested the participants, made up of smallholder men and women farmers, to identify all of the activities involved in producing, harvesting, transporting, and marketing maize.



Tuk leads “Who Does What?” in Jajarkot. © Aryal 2016

The group named 26 different activities, five being done by men, six by women, and 15 done by both. Though this seems to be an equal distribution at first glance, Tuk noted, “Further discussion revealed that women do not have control over any of the resources and all of the activities are decided by men. After further discussion, the men were convinced to join hands with the women to achieve complementary success from their farm activities.”

Janak, the district coordinator with the KISAN project, adapted the value chain activity to Doti district during a post-harvest and marketing training on rice. He first made a rice value chain map using colored notecards and markers, where village participants designated different agricultural activities by sex. Through the exercise, the group found that “Women were doing most of the physical activities, such as transplanting, rogueing, weeding, harvesting, threshing, cleaning, and packing. Men were involved in selecting seed, ploughing, transporting, and marketing.” During the discussion, “Participants realized the higher physical workload women have compared to men...and that men have more to eat than women at meals even though the women have a heavier workload.” By the end of the activity, “Training participants committed to supporting the women more than presently and providing this message to their neighbors for women empowerment.”



Soumyashree Tripathy (PRADAN India) presents the different roles of men and women along the rice value chain.

To build the capacity of extensionists that have not attended an INGENAES training, transforming their awareness of and responsiveness to gender and nutrition issues in their target communities, it is important for the public and private extension providers to train staff at an organizational level. This is where Shanti Upadhyaya comes in. Shanti works with Plan International and PAHAL, a national extension organization, where she incorporated the “What Goes on the Plate” activity into five financial literacy trainings during the session on nutrition. Additionally, the Plate activity and “Who Gets What to Eat” was incorporated into PAHAL’s 17 nutrition trainings offered to staff at the national, regional, and district levels. It was also used during a three-day training at the national and regional level staff and a five-day training for district-level staff. In this way, PAHAL is scaling up these activities intensively at the field level so they can reach more rural communities and better serve men and women farmers.

As extension organizations and front-line workers incorporate and address gender and nutrition challenges into regular extension activities, gender equity in agriculture and at home and better nutrition for the whole household is becoming a reality.



Kabita Devkota (INGENAES In-Country Coordinator) and Arati (FWEAN) found that the amount and type of food that family members eat varies by sex and level of power within the household.

Story written by Katy Mosiman and Jan Henderson, with input from Kathleen Colverson and Nepal workshop participants.

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