

Integrating Gender and Nutrition within Agricultural Extension Services

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Great Training Approaches

Purpose

This series of Tip Sheets is geared at extension and advisory service providers (managers, field staff; public or private sector, NGOs).

It sets out simple suggestions for making sure **women** and **men** - including youth, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized groups:

- feel wanted and included in training events,
- are fully informed about technological, production, or process options,
- learn effectively, and
- have the confidence to implement what they have learned.

Over time, both women and men should be able to build on the training to innovate by themselves in response to changes in the wider environment and their specific resources and needs.

Good training events need more than great content. **How you train is vitally important.**

It is essential that both women and men are able to speak their minds and have opportunities to shape the training event for their own requirements.

As future farmers, the needs of young women and men in farming households need special attention in order to encourage those interested to stay in the sector.

Make your training event interactive and provide plenty of opportunities for participants to do, speak, share, think, and have fun.

Ensure the training methodology is 'right' for the participants

- Plenty of practical, hands on, demonstrations work well, particularly in the participants' own fields. Learning by doing using one's own resources helps to promote control over experimental design and encourage experimentation.

Language

- Use the language spoken by participants rather than a national or international language, if appropriate. Women in particular may be less fluent in national or international languages.
- Don't use forms of language that promote hierarchies of understanding such as 'experts' and 'trainees'.

Check for gender and other stereotypes

- Check for hidden gender and other assumptions in your training materials. These may make women, persons with disabilities, and other socially marginalized participants feel excluded.

Create a respectful atmosphere

- Encourage people to respect each other's opinion however much they may disagree with it.
- Agree with everyone that the event is meant to be a safe space for learning and experience sharing.
- Ask participants not to make fun of other's well-intentioned comments or repeat unflattering stories outside the workshop. Confidentiality must be respected.

Where possible, promote flat learning and knowledge-sharing structures

- If women are unfamiliar with speaking in public, create small safe environments with say a maximum of 4 to 6 people. Make sure that there are at least two to three women in each small mixed group so they can support each other, and encourage them to speak.

- Encourage equal participation through group and pair work discussions, rotating seat assignments, limiting speaking time per participant, male/female speaking order.
- Role-playing can be fun whilst encouraging debate around potentially sensitive topics, such as marketing.
- Ensure flat power relationships between women and men in a group setting. It is better to have equals in a group rather than boss/ workers.
- In some cases, women may prefer to meet separately to formulate their ideas before bringing them (often anonymized) to the larger mixed group.

Foster positive interactions in mixed groups

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Use ICTs, film, other media

- Consider multi-media forms of training such as ICTs, mobile phones, radio, and other media during and beyond the training event.

Feedback

- Course evaluation criteria should be robust and easy to use.
- Encourage women and men to comment openly on the processes of inclusion in the event, the training methods, and the content, of the training.
- Feedback should be disaggregated by gender.
- Ask participants to commit themselves to one action immediately after the course and to share these with others.