

Integrating Gender and Nutrition within Agricultural Extension Services

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Getting the Right People to Come

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.

Technology adopters are highly diverse in any community. People live in many forms of household, including child-headed, polygamous, male and female-headed, and so on. There may be different ethnic and religious groups as well as people with disabilities and living with HIV/AIDS. Getting young women and men on board and excited about farming is important. It is vital to target women in male-headed households, and women heads of household. Remember that targeting is not just about getting a specific number of selected groups into a training course. Understanding the gender-related constraints that limit women's participation and the type of support they require is important.

Women in male-headed households

Link women's participation in the training event to the wider goals of the whole family. Frame the development of women's knowledge and skills within broader goals centring on achieving the goals the family considers important (for example, health, nutrition and education).

Ensure that direct links between women's contributions and entitlements are made. Build direct associations between women's improved capacity to contribute to the household economy (income generation; household food and nutrition security) and their right to secure benefits in terms of more equitable food distribution and voice in cross-cutting expenditure decisions (e.g., investments in businesses, children's education, and other important goals). It is essential that the dreams and aspirations of the women themselves, for themselves, is included in this.

Women-headed households

Women heads of household are often particularly hard to reach. Whilst some may benefit from remittances, many others struggle with a lack of adult (often male) labour, weak access to productive resources, and poor social capital. A special effort needs to be made to reach and support such women in training events, and to ensure the content is relevant to them. In some cases, working with initiatives to develop the productive resources of such households may be a necessity if they are to implement the new technologies effectively. When such women become empowered they become role models because everyone sees that they do not need to negotiate decisions and access to resources with men. Telling successful stories is a necessary entry point for this group.

Action Steps

Set targets for women participation in training events

- In some cases women-only training events may be best.
- Set straightforward targets of (for example) at least 30% women's participation in the training event. The national government may set

minimum quotas which should be taken as a starting point for building on - rather than accepting as the baseline.

- Set a target for young people as well, for instance 30% youth with 50:50 participation between female and male youth. This sets a cultural expectation which, even when the original participants move on, can be replicated in subsequent training events.

Get technology users and decision-makers to come

- Heads of household are often invited to training events although they may not be responsible for actual technology implementation. It is best to ensure the head of household and their spouse both participate.
- Ensure women heads of households are invited and are facilitated to participate actively.

Use the training event as a change mechanism

- Use the training course as an opportunity to address gender and social inequalities in the community. If the training is longer than a day give participants homework on things to reflect upon with their families or on their own. Ask them to share their reflections next day.
- Make sure you have identified the needs of socially marginalized women and men for the technology and make sure you engage them successfully. Meet them prior to the training if possible to reassure them that their participation is important and encourage them to come. Marginalised people feel empowered when they come to the training event and are warmly welcomed by the facilitator. This builds their sense of self-worth.
- If possible, make individual visits to the marginalized person's homes to see how they are implementing the technologies and give 'on the spot' advice. This promotes their standing in their community.

The information contained herein is adapted from the GENNOVATE resource "Enhancing the gender-responsiveness of your project's technical farmer training events." The original author is Cathy Rozel Farnworth. This derivative and expanded information was developed by CIMMYT staff and partners for the public good. For more information, visit <http://maize.org/gender-strategy> or www.cimmyt.org/project-profile/gennovate.