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Gender Equality



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GENDER
Platform

A GUIDE FOR IMPLEMENTING GENDER-RESPONSIVE NUTRITION PROGRAMS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This guide offers a detailed framework for incorporating gender considerations into nutrition-sensitive programs within agrifood systems. The guide explores the complex relationships between gender roles and nutritional outcomes in the agricultural sector, promoting strategies that advance gender equality, reduce hunger, and improve overall health. The guide also encourages the involvement of men and youth in nutrition programs, traditionally seen as women's domain, and advocates for better dietary practices among adolescents and children, promoting intergenerational equity.

The guide highlights the importance of understanding how gender influences food access, preparation, and consumption within households. It identifies systemic inequalities that limit women's contributions to food security and provides methodologies for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment in nutritional outcomes. Designed for diverse stakeholders, including policymakers, researchers, and community leaders, the guide offers practical tools, such as checklists and evaluation metrics, to ensure gender-sensitive approaches in nutrition programs. It focuses primarily on crop-based systems in developing economies, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, where gender disparities are most evident. While acknowledging the unique challenges faced by different groups, the guide serves as a valuable resource for transforming agrifood systems through gender-responsive strategies, aiming to improve nutritional outcomes and promote equitable practices across communities.

ABBREVIATIONS

CGIAR	Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centres
GAF	Gender Analysis Framework
KALRO	Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization
Pro-WEAI+HN	Project-level Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index Health and Nutrition (pro-WEAI+HN) Module
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UU	Ukama Ustawi

PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE

This guide provides insights and guidance on gender integration in nutrition-sensitive programs.

1. Assess gender dynamics in the agricultural sector and provide strategies and frameworks for ensuring gender-sensitive measures within agrifood systems that reduce hunger and contribute to good health.
2. Exploring the interconnections and synergistic measures between gender and nutrition nexus within the agrifood systems is key to achieving gender equality, reducing hunger, and contributing to responsible consumption of healthy and nutritious diets (Sustainable Development Goals 1, 5, and 10).
3. Engage men and youths in nutritional activities, often considered women's responsibility.
4. Promote Intergenerational equality, where adolescents and school-going children are encouraged to consume better diets and engage in nutrition activities during life transitions.

Why is this guide necessary

Gender influences nutritional outcomes in households and communities. It defines the socially and culturally constructed attributes associated with men's and women's food provision roles and choices. It investigates how socially constructed categories of people (women, men, boys, and girls) interact with food, nutrition and health. It closely assesses the role of women and men in food provision and preparation, often influenced by urbanization, culture, traditional taboos, and climate change. Recognizing existing differences in power relations between men and women is one of the pathways towards achieving gender equality in nutritional programs. This guide uses agrifood systems to demonstrate a methodological approach to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) for better nutritional outcomes. This guide illustrates how structural constraints to equality facing men and women in agri-food systems differ, including women's exclusion from high-value agri-food value chains and difficulty **navigating the food environment**.



Gender influences nutritional outcomes in households and communities. It defines the socially and culturally constructed attributes associated with men's and women's food provision roles and choices

Apart from gender, the guide also provides a glimpse into **intersectional axes of differentiation**, with youth as one source of social differentiation that influences the success of nutrition-sensitive programs. This guide first undertakes a gender analysis to demonstrate the avenues to gender integration in nutrition-sensitive programs. It illustrates how understanding men's and women's differential access to resources, assets, opportunities, and roles based on social and cultural norms and other institutional factors affects access and consumption of nutritional food.

TARGET USERS

This toolkit targets several users of diverse interests in nutrition programs and efforts to promote gender equality.

- **Policy makers and planners:** Those engaged in designing and planning agricultural and nutritional programs targeting gender equality.
- **Researchers and academics:** Those working on the intersection between gender and nutrition.
- **Community leaders and local organizations:** Targeting community-based projects that integrate gender equity as one of its outcomes. Community health action groups that mobilize and advocate for gender equity.

- **Program implementers and health field workers:** Mainly engaged in nutrition and women empowerment programs in rural communities.
- **Local nutrition and gender officers:** Engaged in nutritional and gender activities and training in the local communities.
- **Private sector partners:** Those engaged in developing nutritious and healthy products.

Overall, the guide will inform gender and nutrition trainers of trainees in different sectors on how to integrate gender in nutrition-focused projects and how to effectively design agricultural-based programs that promote gender equality.

PROGRAM CHECKLISTS

This toolkit guide provides practical checklists for ensuring gender equality in nutrition-sensitive programs.

- **Gender inclusivity checklists:** metrics and indicators for creating gender-sensitive programs in nutrition.
- **Food system checklists:** tools for evaluating gender and nutrition integration in various nodes of the agrifood systems and how to measure impact.
- **Gender-sensitive and responsive nutrition tools: tools to understand men's, women's, and youth roles and responsibilities in the value chain, gaps to close,** and where intervention is key.
- **Women Empowerment Agriculture Index (Pro WEAI) with the nutrition module:** assess the effect of men and women's participation, decision-making and contributing to a food-secured and healthy household.

SCOPE OF THE GUIDE

The guide builds on insights from scientific research and offers a roadmap for achieving gender equality in nutritional outcomes by;

- Enhance understanding of guide users on the best pathways for integrating gender in nutrition within the agrifood systems.
- Offer guidance for addressing structural inequalities in agricultural activities contributing to malnutrition and hunger.

- Suggests actionable steps for designing gender-sensitive nutrition approaches in the agrifood systems.

However, the guide restricts itself to assessing how gender interfaces with nutrition, specifically the crop-based system. The guide builds on the context of developing economies in sub-Saharan Africa, from which the cited case studies are also drawn.

INTRODUCTION

Integrating gender perspectives in nutritional activities is crucial for achieving SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality). These goals emphasize the need to eliminate hunger and ensure gender equality, highlighting the importance of addressing both in nutrition programs. SDG 2 aims to end all forms of hunger and malnutrition by 2030, ensuring all people – especially children – have sufficient and nutritious food all year round. SDG 5 seeks to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, addressing barriers such as discrimination, violence, and lack of access to education and healthcare.

In its Agenda 2063, the African Union outlines seven aspirations recognizing the priority for shared prosperity and well-being in which women and girls can realize their potential. Prioritizing the well-being of women and girls denotes the gender-based constraints women encounter that create gender inequality in their social, economic, and political spheres.

The agricultural sector plays a double role in the



The industry offers an ideal opportunity to design and implement gender-sensitive programs across all levels of decision-making

region as a source of food and livelihoods. Thus, the industry offers an ideal opportunity to design and implement gender-sensitive programs across all levels of decision-making, resolving the social norms, prejudices, and structural inequalities that have gendered various activities in the agricultural sector and overall agrifood system.

HOW TO USE THE GUIDE

This guide aims to transform agri-food systems in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) by identifying pathways for integrating gender across various subsystems, such as nutrition.

It delves into some practical measures capable of addressing structural constraints emanating from gender and intersecting social differentiation to achieve equality in nutritional programs. The insights and lessons provided should inform your next course of actions.

As a leader or a change agent in your community, you can, through this guide;

- Identify nutritional and reproductive business practices that increase women's burden, thus disfavoring women's participation in the agricultural sector, and advise on appropriate actions to reverse these business practices with support from spouses and household members;
- Suggest governance measures at households, communities and institution levels that are required to address hunger due to climatic shocks and stressors magnified by existing social norms in the agri-food systems, for instance, the creation of peer-to-peer networks, engaging men and youths as champions, including traditional and church leaders as change agents, formation of gender committees for ensuring gender articulation in policies, and design and implementation of nutrition projects;
- Enhance a healthy, equitable, sustainable program for better nutritional and gender outcomes.

GENDER GAPS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Box 1: Facts about women in Sub-Saharan Africa¹

- There are 47.8 million more moderately or severely food-insecure women than men.
- Small-scale farmers, the majority of whom are women, produce 1/3 of the world's food.
- Closing the gender gap in farm productivity and the wage gap in food systems would reduce the number of food-insecure people by 45 million.
- Less than 40% of agricultural landowners or rightsholders are women in 32 out of 49 countries from 2011-2022.
- Alarming, nearly half of 68 countries with available data on women's land ownership and control (SDG 5.a.2) from 2019 to 2022 lack sufficient legal protections.
- In sub-Saharan Africa, women spend 3.1 times as many hours a day on unpaid care and domestic work as men.
- Gains from joint household production are often not fairly distributed.
- Women's access to land is mostly through usufructuary rights.
- Men make most decisions on income and food provision from agricultural produce.
- Women mostly provide labour on family farms.
- Women in polygamous marriage arrangements usually operate separate spousal budgets since they maintain economic agency.

Systemic Issues affecting women

Women are disadvantaged in the three domains of the agrifood system: women's contribution in the formal labour force, women's contribution to reproductive labour, and women's physical and emotional connection with food.

Agriculture supports about 70% of the population that mostly dwells in the rural areas, of which women make up 50 to 70%. Agriculture remains the primary driver of economic growth, employing a majority of the rural farmers, providing raw materials for industrial development, a source of food and income for the rural farmers². Thus, agriculture supports the livelihoods of rural communities (providing income for poverty eradication) and is a source of food and nutritional security for urban communities.

1 UN-Women and DESA. 2024. Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2024. New York: UN-Women and DESA. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/resources/gender-snapshot>

2 Nchuchuwe, Friday Francis, and Kehinde David Adejuwon. "The challenges of agriculture and rural development in Africa: the case of Nigeria." *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development* 1, no. 3 (2012): 45-61.

Table 1: Major constraints women face

CONSTRAINTS	CAUSES	IMPACT	POSSIBLE SOLUTION
Mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women having greater care responsibilities • Non-egalitarian gender norms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less access to information • Limited participation in income-generating activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase decision-making and link them with other actors in multistakeholder platforms for better connections and markets • Collective marketing • Women to women connect through coaching and mentorship
Psychological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Values and beliefs women hold • Social stigma and stereotypes • Discrimination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low confidence and self-efficacy • Reduced aspiration to participate in leadership roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and awareness campaigns • Implement communication, behavioural and social change strategies
Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of supportive policies • Ineffective legal frameworks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited access to resources and opportunities • Systemic barriers to gender advancement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement gender-sensitive policies • Strengthen legal frameworks • Build the capacity of institutional actors



GENDER IN THE AGRI-FOOD SYSTEM

Women play a fundamental role in ensuring members of their households can access food. Their food provision role in the family grants them the right to farm the lands but not ownership³. The proportion of men to women engaged in agriculture in most African economies varies, most averaging at 50%. Agriculture as a food-producing sector plays a central role in poverty alleviation, hunger and malnutrition eradication, and the generation of economic growth for well-being. However, household farms' labor provision is dominated by women, who do not make a lot of decisions over what food to produce, sell and how the money is invested. In developing countries in the Global South, and particularly sub-Saharan Africa, more women than men in the rural areas are engaged in agriculture and other operations within the agrifood systems⁴.

Despite their great contribution to agriculture, women disproportionately do not benefit⁵, unlike men who attract better job terms. Structural barriers facing women's participation explain this disparity, leading more women to live in poverty compared to men. Statistics show that women experience 27% higher risk than men in facing severe food insecurity⁶ since climatic conditions determine food production in most parts of the world.

Outright, women walk a tightrope in coming to terms with the structural barriers that affect their livelihood, household responsibilities, and reproductive roles. In their attempts to fight off the shackles of poverty and malnutrition, women always find themselves in unfavorable situation. Since agriculture holds great potential to attain nutritional security, befitting the nutritional preferences of women and girls and employing the majority of women in rural areas, emphasis on

3 Kabeer, Naila. *Gender Mainstreaming in Poverty Eradication and the Millennium Development Goals: A handbook for policy-makers and other stakeholders*. Commonwealth Secretariat, 2003

4 Agrifood food systems is understood as interrelated activities within agricultural sector from farm production to the final consumer. Similarly, agriculture in this guide is understood as activities encompassing production, processing, and other value additions on agricultural products

5 Women fetch low pay on similar tasks undertaken by men, women's contribution in agriculture in most cases is not captured in official statistics, and women are likely to be involved in management.

6 UN Women, 2021

developing gender-sensitive interventions in the sector seeks to accord women, girls, and youths agency and voice.

EXISTING INEQUALITY IN AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS

With agriculture being a dominant employment sector in most parts of the SSA, women have a double role—reproductive and productive roles. Despite this crucial role, the agricultural sector is still characterized by great disparities that determine men's and women's participation in growing and selling food.

Though agricultural technology has improved productivity over time, it is often ad hoc and does not integrate technical and social innovations. The local context and people's realities must be considered to achieve a more inclusive and sustainable system. Moreover, agricultural technology is an encompassing issue that is inherently political, enabling some social options while disabling others. The biggest question to address is ensuring technologies enhance gender equality aligned to nutritional outcomes.

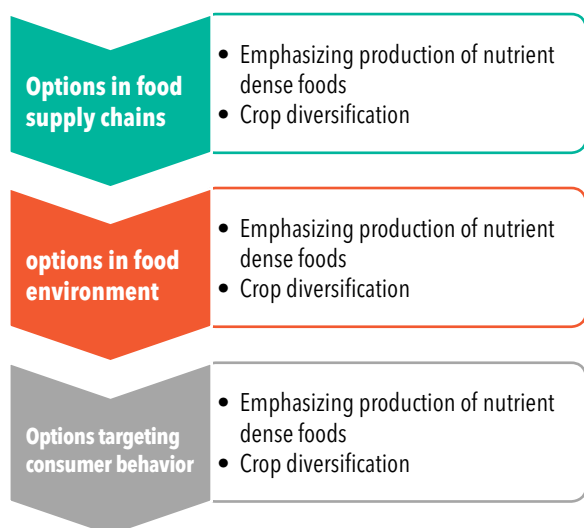
NUTRITION-SENSITIVE INTERVENTIONS IN AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS

Nutritional interventions are often across the value chain. They begin with men, women, and youths' choices of varieties and their preferred traits⁷. These choices are sometimes linked to cultural preferences, palatability, nutrition (iron and zinc), yield, market opportunities, early maturing, etc. To meet nutrition and health needs, crop diversification and crop rotation are also promoted through diverse climate-smart and regenerative agricultural practices. These are important but sometimes not considered in participatory varietal selection processes. When these varieties are grown, then comes issues of accessibility, availability and affordability, which drive production, dietary patterns, marketing and consumption.

7 Nchanji, E.B.; Lutomia, C.K.; Ageyo, O.C.; Karanja, D.; Kamau, E. Gender-Responsive Participatory Variety Selection in Kenya: Implications for Common Bean (*Phaseolus vulgaris* L.) Breeding in Kenya. *Sustainability* 2021, 13, 13164. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su132313164>

Food taboos define what people eat or not⁸, and sometimes, historical events associated with a particular crop. For example, in Kenya, yellow maize is considered poor man's food as it was given as aid during the famine. Nutritional projects have often focused on children in the first 1000 days, those under five, pregnant women, etc., with a focus towards micro-nutrient deficiencies, but there has been a call for a more intersectional and intergenerational approach with a focus towards the root causes.

There is now some exciting work on school-going children (through school feeding programs) and engaging boys and men as champions and agents of change. The focus on men and boys results from their roles as food providers and sometimes the ones who determine what would be prepared, often without understanding the nutritional and health implications.



With the push towards consuming healthy and nutritious foods, branding and labelling are becoming critical for people to understand the ingredients in their food.

While private sector partners are increasingly labelling their foods as healthy and nutritious, standards and procedures for accountability and transparency are missing as diverse groups consume these foods. An example is what type of salty foods children should eat. Dietary diversity

8 Ketema, D.; Abeshu, Y.; Nchanji, E. (2024) *Sirna nyaataa koorniyaa irratti xiyyeeffate cimsuun haala sirna soorataa fooyyessuu: Maanuwaala/ Qaleelcha leenjii*. 64 p. <https://hdl.handle.net/10568/151881>

NUTRITION MYTHS

- Women are solely responsible for food provisions in their households.
- Only women know what is suitable and appropriate for household consumption.
- Only men provide finances for household food acquisition.
- Men and boys cannot prepare nutritious meals.
- Domestic chores and child-caring responsibilities are for women and girls only.

is also becoming key, especially in SSA, where stable foods are often cereals. In Kenya, personal conversations with farmers have shown that one without maize to feed his family is poor and can't talk when talking. Thus, creating awareness of crop diversification and promoting consumer awareness of healthy diets are key.

Agriculture and nutritional context in sub-Saharan Africa

This guide makes particular reference to crop-based agriculture. Agriculture significantly contributes to the region's economy, as many national economies rely on the sector for GDP. Agricultural production is a major food source, though food processing still operates below optimum. In attempts to meet food and nutrition needs, SSA struggles with the daunting task of ensuring that most people, usually poor, can access nutritious and high-quality diets. Low poverty levels restrict the majority of poor households from living on monotonous staple-based diets, contributing to high malnutrition in the region. Despite the majority engaging in food production, albeit on a small scale, malnutrition persists since access to nutritious foods is influenced by other factors such as processing, distribution, and other value chain operations hindered by producers' weak agency. Even if primary production could yield diverse food crops, existing gender inequalities exacerbate undernutrition and malnutrition⁹. Widening inequalities contribute to poor access to nutritious foods and limit access to care services

9 Action Against Hunger, *Gender Policy and Toolkit: Increasing the Impact of Action Against Hunger's Work Through Gender Equality Programming*, March 2014, accessed July 18, 2024, <https://knowledgeagainsthunger.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Action-Against-Hunger-Gender-Policy-EN.pdf>.

such as clean water, health care, and proper sanitation.

Prevalent Gender norms with impacts on nutrition

Gender norms and attitudes dictate the responsibilities and contributions of men and women at the household and community level. Projects initiated in the community should understand how gender norms can contribute or not towards successful outcomes. The essence of understanding gender norms and attitudes enables the guide users to unravel gender-based constraints that impede positive nutrition outcomes.

Community action group or a facilitator using this guide should understand:

- Gender roles and responsibilities in the community
- How these roles influence food provision, preparation and consumption
- How gender norms influence food production, provision and consumption
- Food taboos
- What is grown and what is consumed

TAKEAWAYS:

- Nutrition-sensitive programs should be understood as programs that also impact health. Agriculture promotes women's empowerment through the provision of income, which in turn women spend on health and nutrition of the family, implying that women's control of income is indicative of good household nutrition.

INTERACTION BETWEEN GENDER AND NUTRITION-SENSITIVE AGRICULTURE

Nutrition-sensitive Agriculture

The agricultural sector is important for food production and employment creation. A critical focus for the sector's stakeholders is ensuring a capacity to produce enough and sufficient nutritious foods for the population. Targeting the agricultural industry for nutritional security implies undertaking nutrition-specific programs for nutritional outcomes.

KEY ACTIONS:

- Explain how agriculture link with nutrition (food production, income generation, gender in decision-making).
- List down agricultural activities that promote nutrition.
- State the gender mostly involved in the agricultural activities.
- State factors that influence nutrition in your community (access to diverse food year-round, access to proper sanitation and clean water, types of food available in the community).
- Point out excessive labour demands associated with agricultural activities and those mostly.
- List down the occupational hazards associated with gender roles.
- List down the most rampant outcomes of malnutrition in their community (reduced work productivity in the farms, low IQ and poor school performance, and low living standards).

Mainstreaming gender in agriculture

Recognizing the contribution of women in the social, economic, and political spheres is essential in creating a just society. This recognition implies that projects for societal human development should integrate gender in their design and implementation. Integrating gender in policy design, and implementation in agricultural projects must always aim to address socially-determined relationships between men and women that prevent women's full employment of women in some agricultural value chains or expose women to occupational hazards due to their biological risks. Identifying these differing roles influences the synergy and trade-offs required for women and men to participate optimally in agriculture for nutritional outcomes. Assessing gender consideration in SSA's agriculture should determine the following defining characteristics:

- i) Households' allocation of food and nonfood resources (is it a unitary arrangement/ pooling of resources, or do household members act individually?)
- ii) The proportion of income expenditure on food and other necessary items by men and women.

- iii) The types of crops men or women cultivate individually or together.
- iv) The participation of men and women at different levels of agricultural value chains (identify nodes dominated by either men or women).
- v) Determine household responsibility in a SSA household setup, time involved, and the executioner.
- vi) Determine the diversity of agricultural-related health risks and men's and women's exposure to the risks.

Effective gender mainstreaming takes diverse forms, including programs that give women agency to participate favorably and address the structural and systemic challenges women face. Connecting SDG 5 targets in SSA's agricultural sector offers insights and the opportunity to track the progress.

In addition to tracking progress toward achieving gender equality through the agricultural sector, a community action leader should also take inventory of possible remedial actions available in the community. They should also employ gender transformative approaches to increase the power and agency inequities that have caused limiting participation and ownership of resources.



Gender dynamics affect every stage of the food system, from production and processing to consumption and waste management. For example, women's roles in food preparation and childcare directly influence household nutrition, while their participation in agricultural production impacts food availability and diversity.

Gender inequality can be addressed at different levels: at the local, meso, and macro levels¹⁰. To make an impact, the solutions must address the nested structural constraints, restrictive gender norms, and the interconnect between the formal and informal root causes of inequalities.

10 Farhall, Kate, and Lauren Rickards. "The "gender agenda" in agriculture for development and its (lack of) alignment with feminist scholarship." *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems* 5 (2021): 573424.

Equally, solutions focused on gender-based constraints will also emphasize crosscutting social inequities.¹¹ such as age, ethnicity, and other context-specific discrimination.



Engaging Men in Nutrition

Strategies for involving men in nutrition programs to promote gender equity and improve outcomes include:

- i) Education and Sensitization: Educating men about the importance of nutrition and gender equity.
- ii) Role Models: Engaging male role models to advocate for gender-sensitive practices.
- iii) Joint Decision-Making: Encouraging shared household decision-making regarding food and nutrition.

CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY 1: Gender-sensitive nutrition training in Makueni and Nakuru Counties, Kenya

The CGIAR Gender Equality Initiative (HER+) EMPOWER worked with the Ukama Ustawi (UU) in Kenya (Nakuru, Embu and Makueni Counties) to integrate social and innovation bundles in their technological-based interventions. Following a systematic process and guide, we co-designed and implemented socio-technical innovation bundles (STIB) with all stakeholders. This allowed us to determine later what bundles contributed to the empowerment, resilience and food security of men, women and young farmers.

The socio-technical bundles included training farmer groups on gender-sensitive nutrition, creating awareness of joint decision-making, emphasizing a balanced diet, and linking farmers to market and finance. The project focused on ensuring men participated in nutritional activities such as deciding what to eat and what to grow, assessing food bias, rituals, and customary taboos

11 McDougall, C., Elias, M., Zwanck, D., Diop, K., Simao, J., Galiè, A., Fischer, G., Jumba, H., and D. Najjar. 2023. "Fostering Gender-Transformative Change for Equality in Food Systems: A Review of Methods and Strategies at Multiple Levels." *CGIAR GENDER Impact Platform Working Paper #015*. Nairobi, Kenya: CGIAR GENDER Impact Platform.

affecting food access and consumption^{12, 13}.

The gender-sensitive training was done with the nutritional and agricultural officers in the wards supported by KALRO and CGIAR colleagues. During the gender-sensitive nutrition focus, the project looked at who buys the food, sourcing for the food, food preparation, food quality and quantity for diverse household members. To depict the scenario of decision-making for household dietary observance, the study used a participatory approach to visualize the situation in multiple households, and circumstances in the community. The training employed a role play on meals and diet to demonstrate the impact of food quality and quantity in establishing a balanced diet. The role play was done with voluntary single parents (men or women), widows/widowers, young couples or elderly ones to show us two meals they prepared in their households, and we discussed the quantity and quality of food given to diverse household members and why. Through the illustrations, the participants made food choices from the foods assembled from the region.

Lessons learnt:

- The concept of a balanced diet is conceived differently by different categories of people.
- Gender roles influence food choice and preparation, with various categories of people opting for foods based on ease of preparation and time.
- Maintaining a balanced diet can be influenced by the seasonality of available foods, access and preparation methods.
- Culture and food taboos have a significant influence on what people eat.
- Engaging men and young boys is key to improving our diets and health
- Purchasing power is important as some geographical areas are constrained, and

12 Ouya, F.; Muriithi, C.; Lutomia, C.; Ketema, D.; Waswa, B.; Nchanji, E.; Kagete, M.; Amboga, S.; Magoti, R.; Nyokabi, M.; Nyaguthii, M.; Wainaina, M.; Gatehi, W. (2023) Gender-sensitive nutrition training in Embu County in Kenya. Gender Equality Technical Report. 25 p. <https://hdl.handle.net/10568/138693>

13 Ouya, F.; Muriithi, C.; Lutomia, C.; Ketema, D.; Waswa, B.; Nchanji, E.; Kagete, M.; Amboga, S.; Magoti, R.; Nyokabi, M.; Nyaguthii, M.; Wainaina, M.; Gatehi, W. (2023) Gender-sensitive nutrition training in Embu County in Kenya. Gender Equality Technical Report. 25 p. <https://hdl.handle.net/10568/138693>

one cannot grow all the foods needed for a healthy diet

Case study 2: HER+ initiative promoting gender-responsive nutrition programs in Ethiopia

The HER+ initiative in Ethiopia focuses on empowering women and fostering climate resilience through gender-sensitive nutrition programs. To address the impact of gender inequalities on nutrition, the initiative has developed a comprehensive gender-sensitive nutrition training manual used in training workshops and tailored to local contexts. Through Training of Trainers (ToT) programs, HER+ equips local nutrition educators with tools to address malnutrition and promote gender equality, particularly emphasizing women's roles in food preparation and decision-making. The initiative also engages men as champions of change, promoting shared caregiving responsibilities and encouraging community leaders to advocate for gender equality in nutrition. Culturally rooted food taboos are addressed with respect, while community discussions challenge traditional stereotypes, aiming for greater male participation in household nutrition.

The results have been promising, with women reporting increased knowledge of nutrition and more diverse diets within their households, while men have taken on greater roles in caregiving tasks. Community leaders have also embraced gender equality, further raising awareness about the importance of balanced nutrition. HER+'s approach to monitoring and evaluation ensures continuous program improvement, helping reshape nutritional practices in a way that benefits both families and communities. Ultimately, the initiative not only improves dietary outcomes but also fosters sustainable changes in gender relations and health, contributing to overall community well-being^{14, 15}.

14 Ketema, D.; Abeshu, Y.; Nchanji, E. (2024) Improving dietary status through strengthening gender nutrition-sensitive interventions. Training Manual. 52 p. <https://hdl.handle.net/10568/151851>

15 Yami, M.; Ketema, D.M.; Nchanji, E.; Lutomia, C.; Ahmed, A.; Zewde, Y.; Jaleta, G.; Asrat, A.; Hailu, S.; Biruk, F. (2023) Report on Gender Equality (HER+) Initiative training workshop on gender-responsive and nutrition-sensitive agriculture Ethiopia. Gender Equality Technical Report. 16 p. <https://hdl.handle.net/10568/138684>

Lessons learnt:

- Educating women on nutrition leads to healthier and more diverse dietary choices within households.
- Involving men in nutrition-related caregiving tasks fosters more equitable distribution of household responsibilities.
- Addressing food taboos respectfully while promoting nutritional improvements helps increase acceptance of healthier practices in local communities.
- Leveraging the influence of community and religious leaders encourages broader acceptance of gender equality in nutrition.

CONCLUSIONS

The integration of gender considerations in nutrition-sensitive programs is crucial for achieving sustainable development goals. This guide has highlighted the multifaceted relationships between gender, nutrition, and agrifood systems, emphasizing that addressing gender disparities is essential for improving nutritional outcomes and food security. The following conclusions can be drawn:

Empowerment through inclusion: Engaging both men and women in nutrition programs fosters shared responsibility and promotes intergenerational equity. By encouraging the participation of men and youth, we can challenge traditional norms and broaden the scope of nutritional interventions.

Addressing systemic inequalities: There is a necessity of recognizing and addressing systemic barriers that limit women's contributions to food security and nutrition. Gender-sensitive approaches must be implemented to dismantle these barriers and ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities.

Importance of contextual understanding: Understanding the local context, including cultural norms and practices, is fundamental to designing effective interventions. Tailoring programs to the specific needs and dynamics of communities will enhance their effectiveness and sustainability.

Continuous learning and adaptation: The dynamic nature of gender roles and nutritional needs calls for ongoing research, monitoring, and adaptation of programs. Engaging community leaders and stakeholders in these processes will ensure that interventions remain relevant and impactful.

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Recommended Readings

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Otieno, Gloria, Wesley Mlsna Zebrowski, John Recha, and Travis William Reynolds. "Gender and social seed networks for climate change adaptation: evidence from bean, finger millet, and sorghum seed systems in East Africa." *Sustainability* 13, no. 4 (2021): 2074. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13042074>

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Role Plays on Meals and Diets: Step-by-Step Role Play Scenario

1. Preparation and Introduction (10 minutes)

Facilitator's role: Start by introducing the purpose of the role play to the participants. Emphasize the importance of considering the unique nutritional needs of different household members (men, women, and children) while promoting equality in food allocation.

Materials needed: A variety of food props or visuals representing different food groups (vegetables, fruits, grains, proteins, dairy, fats/oils, etc.). A flipchart to categorize food groups and nutritional values.

Participants: Select three volunteers to play the roles of a husband, a wife, and a child. Ensure the selection process is inclusive, involving both male and female participants to demonstrate gender equality in the process.

2. Role Assignment and Briefing (5 minutes)

Volunteer roles

Husband (male volunteer): The breadwinner who does physical labor (e.g., farming or construction). His nutritional needs include higher energy and protein intake.

Wife (female volunteer): The homemaker, possibly pregnant or breastfeeding, requiring additional nutrients such as iron, calcium, and proteins.

Child (either male or female volunteer): A growing child who needs balanced nutrition, focusing on micronutrients, proteins, and vitamins to support development.

Facilitator's briefing: Provide each volunteer with a basic understanding of their role and the nutritional needs typically associated with their character. The husband may need more energy-rich foods, the wife might need more nutrient-dense foods, and the child needs a balanced diet for growth.

3. Food Selection Process (10 minutes)

Food display: Arrange food props/visuals representing different food groups on a table or display area (Plate 1).



PLATE 1: Display of foods available for selection

Selection: Allow each volunteer to select foods they believe are appropriate for the family's main meal. They will also select additional foods that they believe should be prioritized for their character's needs (husband, wife, and child).

The volunteers should make choices based on their perception of their roles and what they believe each family member requires for good health.

4. Food Presentation and Discussion (15 minutes)

Presentation: After making their selections, each volunteer presents their chosen meal (Plate 2). They will explain why they selected each food and how they believe it meets the nutritional needs of the family member they represent.


 The volunteer should select foods they believe are appropriate for the family's main meal. They should make choices based on their perception of their roles and what they believe each family member requires for good health.



PLATE 2: Foodstuffs placed according to types and portions per gender

Facilitator's role: Encourage open discussion. Ask the other trainees to observe and take notes on the food choices and placement. Allow them to ask the volunteers questions, such as:

- Why did the husband receive more food than the wife?
- Did you consider the wife's potential additional needs (e.g., pregnancy)?
- Is the child's portion adequate for their growth?

5. Nutritional Expert's Analysis (10 minutes)

Facilitator or nutritionist's role: Move around to observe the food choices made by the volunteers. Take notes on whether the food choices reflect balanced nutrition and gender-inclusive considerations.

Feedback and analysis

- Highlight positive aspects of the food choices, such as ensuring variety or including all food groups.
- Point out areas of improvement, such as if

one family member was given significantly more or less food than others or if important nutrients were overlooked.

- Emphasize the importance of ensuring gender equity in food distribution, considering not only the man's needs but also the woman's and child's specific requirements.

6. Group Reflection and Q&A (10 minutes)

Facilitator's role: Encourage trainees to share their thoughts on the activity. Guiding questions can include:

- What stood out to you about the food choices made?
- How do these food selections align with gender roles in real households?
- What can we do to ensure more equitable meal distribution in households where gender dynamics might influence food choices?

Q&A session: Allow participants to ask the nutritionist questions about the nutritional content of the meals, dietary guidelines, and how they can promote gender-inclusive nutrition in their communities.

7. Conclusion and Key Takeaways (5 minutes)

Facilitator's role: Summarize the key lessons from the role play. Highlight the importance of understanding and respecting the nutritional needs of all family members, and ensuring that meal distribution is both equitable and based on actual nutritional requirements.

Call to action: Encourage participants to apply what they've learned when conducting nutrition programs in their communities, advocating for gender-sensitive approaches to food distribution and meal planning.

For more context on the role plays, refer to Ouya et al. (2023)¹⁶ and Njiru et al. (2023)¹⁷

16 Ouya, F., Muriithi, C., Lutomia, C., Ketema, D., Waswa, B., Nchanji, E., ... & Gatehi, W. (2023). Gender-sensitive nutrition training in Embu County in Kenya.

17 Njiru, E., Karanja, D., Mutida, N., Syanda, J., Ooro, P., Moraa, L., ... & Lutomia, C. K. (2023). Gender-sensitive Nutrition Trainings in Makueni and Nakuru: Kenya Implementation Report.

APPENDIX 2: The project-level Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index Health and Nutrition (pro-WEAI+HN) Module

The pro-WEAI+HN measures health- and nutrition-related agency. Indicators of women's health and nutrition-related instrumental agency include:

- Decides on own health and diet
- Decides on own health and diet during pregnancy
- Decide on child's diet
- Decides on weaning and breastfeeding
- Decides to purchase food and health products
- Can access food and health products
- Decides to seek healthcare

The pro-WEAI+HN is an additional, optional module of the pro-WEAI scale. It presents 17 women's health and 13 child health decisions and asks female respondents about the normal decision-makers for the activity (up to 3 individuals) and the extent to which they participated in the decision.

Some of the items are included below:

Decisions about women's health and nutrition

1. When decisions are made about [ACTIVITY], who normally takes the decision?
2. To what extent do you participate in decisions regarding [ACTIVITY]?

Activities:

- Whether or not you consult a doctor or go to a clinic when you are ill
- How much you can rest when you are ill
- Whether or not you have a/another child †
- Whether or not you use a contraceptive method (such as birth control pills, condoms, hormonal shot, or sterilization)? †
- What foods to prepare every day
- What foods (available in the house) you can eat
- Whether you consulted a doctor or went to a clinic during your current or most recent pregnancy*
- How much you worked during your current or most recent pregnancy*
- How much you could rest during your current or most recent pregnancy*

- Whether you could eat eggs during your current or most recent pregnancy*
- Whether you could consume milk or milk products during your current or most recent pregnancy*
- Whether you could eat meat, poultry, or fish during your current or most recent pregnancy*
- How much you worked when your youngest child was being breastfed* †
- How much you could rest when your youngest child was being breastfed* †
- Whether you could eat eggs when your youngest child was being breastfed* †
- Whether you could consume milk or milk products when your youngest child was being breastfed* †
- Whether you could eat meat, poultry, or fish when your youngest child was being breastfed* †

Response Options:

Not at all - 1

To a small extent - 2

To a medium extent - 3

To a high extent - 4

Decisions about child's health and nutrition

3. When decisions are made about [ACTIVITY], who normally takes the decision?
4. To what extent do you participate in decisions regarding [ACTIVITY]?

Activities:

- Whether your child is taken to a clinic, or a doctor is consulted when he/she is sick
- Whether your child gets vaccinations †
- Whether your child visits the health clinic to see if he/she is growing well
- How to feed your child when he/she is sick †
- Who will care for your child when you need to go outside the home for an extended period of time †
- Sending your child to school †
- Whether your child is offered eggs to eat**
- Whether your child is offered milk or milk products, other than breastmilk**
- -Whether your child is offered meat, poultry, or fish**
- Whether to breastfeed your child***
- When to stop breastfeeding your child***
- When to start introducing foods and liquids

(other than breastmilk) to your child

- Whether or not your child is fed foods prepared or bought especially for children that adult household members do not eat or drink, such as fortified cereals or baby foods?
** *** †

Response Options:

Not at all - 1

To a small extent - 2

To a medium extent - 3

To a high extent - 4

Health and Nutrition Products

5. When decisions are made whether or not to purchase [PRODUCT], who generally makes the decision?
6. You may acquire an item that you need in a variety of ways, such as purchasing or cultivating it or having someone purchase or cultivate it for you. When you need [PRODUCT], can you usually acquire it?

Products:

- Small quantities of food, for example smaller than 5 kg
- Large quantities of food, for example larger than 5 kg
- Eggs
- Milk or milk products
- Meat, poultry, or fish (including organ meats)
- Special foods for children (i.e., foods prepared or bought especially for children that adult household members do not eat or drink, such as fortified cereals or baby foods that programs or health workers tell you should be consumed †
- Any nutritious foods that a program or health worker told you to consume †
- Medication, vitamins, or supplements for children
- Medication, vitamins, or supplements for yourself
- Clothing for children †
- Clothing for yourself †
- Toiletries, such as soap and toothpaste

Response Options:

Yes

No

Not applicable

* Only asked to women who have been pregnant or given birth in the last 2 years

** Only asked to women who have a child aged 6 months or older

*** Only asked to women who have a child aged 2 years or younger

† Item not used in indicator construction

Recommendations for Use
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use +HN in addition to core pro-WEAI, because it assesses different domains• The seven indicators are not designed to be aggregated• Some indicators only apply to specific life cycle phases (e.g. pregnancy). Select what is needed• Pair pro-WEAI +HN with other nutrition- and diet-related outcomes• Compatible with common impact evaluation designs• Using pr-WEAI +HN can contribute to evidence on how nutrition-sensitive agriculture may foster women's empowerment and the extent to which women's empowerment contributes to nutrition and health outcomes
For a comprehensive understanding of the pro-WEAI +HN, refer to Heckert et al. (2023) https://doi.org/10.1111/mcn.13464

APPENDIX 3: Gender Transformation Status Assessment Tools

Gender integration guide

Focused on identifying gender gaps in access to and agency over resources, and gendered power relations standing in the way of solutions to the perennial problems.

Guiding questions

The guiding questions are thematically organized around the: i) the evident problem to be solved; ii) the affected population; iii) the gendered context; iv) the gender gaps and barriers relating to the problem

- What problems do projects supporting nutrition-sensitive programs intend to achieve? Provides the social context of the problem.
- Who is affected by this problem? Those mostly affected by the problem or likely to benefit from the proposed solution. How does the problem differentially affects people based on the social and demographic characteristics?
- What is the gendered context in which the problem exists? (identify barriers, challenges, opportunities that come with association with particular gender). What are the gender differences in the time use for the problem? What institutional policies reinforce or challenge gender inequalities?
- An understanding of the gender differences that relate to who decides on the problem and the intervention, technology, or product
- What are the gender gaps and barriers affecting this problem? (gender gaps preventing access, agency over resources, how people benefit from the intervention, the existing data supporting the identification of gender gaps, sectorial outcomes enabled by gender gaps and barriers, how the gaps can bring proposed solutions.
- In what way will the proposed solution integrate a gender lens?

Proposed solution visualized

This provides an idea how the proposed solutions can integrate gender lens

Solutions to gender gaps	Analysis of potential risks	Activities and outputs engaging men	Activities and outputs benefiting everyone	Specific outcomes and outputs	Measurement plan	Gender expertise required	Addressing power relations and gender gaps
e.g. women-focused business loans	e.g. indicators for the risks associated with loans	e.g. assess how men can also assess the loans	e.g. how access to loans can benefit everyone	e.g. rise in access to resources by women	e.g. sex-disaggregated data, how such data will address gender gaps	e.g. skills and positions needed for the outcome	e.g. increasing women and girls' empowerment

APPENDIX 4: Gender-responsive Nutrition Training Questionnaires

Training questionnaire: All participants

NAME	
SEX	
OCCUPATION	
MARITAL STATUS	
COUNTY	
SUB-COUNTY	

1. Did you understand what gender is? Yes { } or No { }
2. What is gender? Women { }, men { }, men and women { }, men, women, youths { }
3. Did you understand what nutrition is? Yes { }, No { }
4. What is good nutrition? Balanced diet { }, three meals a day { }, heavy meal { }
5. How satisfied are you with the training? Very satisfied { }, satisfied { }, average { }, Poor { }
6. Did you gain any additional knowledge? Rank from 1 to 5.

1 = Poor, 2 = Fair, 3 = Good, 4 = Very Good, 5 = Excellent.

KNOWLEDGE BEFORE THE TRAINING	TRAINING SESSIONS	KNOWLEDGE AFTER THE TRAINING
	What is gender-sensitive nutrition	
	Role play on meals and diets	
	Nutritional value of food to pregnant women, children under five and elderly	
	Tasting and ranking the food products	

7. What is your take-home message/messages

Product testing questionnaire

NAME	
SEX	
OCCUPATION	
MARITAL STATUS	
COUNTY	
SUB-COUNTY	

A1: Before today, were you aware of any processed value-added bean products? _____
 [0=No, 1=Yes]

A2: If Yes, kindly mention the products you are aware of. _____

A3: Have you ever consumed any processed value-added bean products? _____
 [0=No, 1=Yes]

A4: If yes, kindly mention the products you have consumed? _____

Now, I request you to test these products, and I will ask you a few questions thereafter.

A5: Products: On a scale of 1-5, please rate the products on the following:

PRODUCT 1

Codes E: 1= Very good 2= Good 3 = Indifferent 4 = Not good 5=Not very good

	VERY GOOD	GOOD	INDIFFERENT	NOT GOOD	NOT VERY GOOD
COLOUR					
TASTE					
ADDITIVES					
FRESHNESS					

PRODUCT 2

Codes E: 1= Very good 2= Good 3 = Indifferent 4 = Not good 5=Not very good

	VERY GOOD	GOOD	INDIFFERENT	NOT GOOD	NOT VERY GOOD
COLOUR					
TASTE					
ADDITIVES					
FRESHNESS					

For more context on the training questionnaires, refer to Njiru et al. (2023)¹⁸

18 Njiru, E., Karanja, D., Mutida, N., Syanda, J., Ooro, P., Moraa, L., ... & Lutomia, C. K. (2023). Gender-sensitive Nutrition Trainings in Makeni and Nakuru: Kenya Implementation Report.



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