

Integrating Gender and Nutrition within Agricultural Extension Services

Activity Sheet
August 2016

Who Eats What?

Time: 45 minutes

Materials Needed:

- Flipchart with activity title and objectives listed.
- A big dish filled with uncooked rice or some other type of grain.
- Variety of raw vegetables.
- 3 eggs...stones or ping pong balls to represent eggs.
- Drawings of dried fish or other photos representing local meats.
- 7 plates to put foodstuffs on.



Introduction

Child and maternal malnutrition – in particular child underweight, child micronutrient deficiencies, poor breastfeeding practices, and anemia – are by far the largest nutrition-related health burdens at the global level. “Cultural norms” are sometimes responsible for contributing to these issues and can be analyzed if the intra-household consumption patterns are “unpacked” with the community. If these cultural norms are better understood, opportunities for changing long-standing gendered behaviors related to food security and malnutrition can be improved.

Objectives

- ✓ To examine inequalities based on gender and position within a household and the potential impact of such inequalities on the type and amount of food each family member receives.
- ✓ To explore who has the authority to decide and who may be disadvantaged in terms of food distribution in a household.

Steps

- 1) Review title of activity, objectives, and brief introduction. **(5 min)**
- 2) Construct a typical rural family that is familiar to everyone by asking for volunteers to come forward and giving each a sign indicating their role: Husband, Mother-in-law, Father-in-law, Eldest daughter, Youngest son, Youngest daughter, Wife (add others if needed). Have men play the part of female family members and women play the part of male family members. **(5 min)**
- 3) A female participant takes the role of the wife. Ask the wife to invite her family to sit down so that all participants can see them and place an empty dish in front of each. Explain that it is dinnertime and the wife has prepared rice, vegetables, eggs, and some fish (or other culturally appropriate food items). An example of how the food items can be distributed among family members. **(15 min)**

Husband – full plate of food with a bit of everything, including one egg

Father-in-law – same as husband’s plate, but smaller amounts, including one egg

Mother-in-law – rice , vegetables, and one piece of fish



Eldest daughter – small amount of rice and vegetables

Youngest son – rice, one piece of fish, vegetables, and egg

Youngest daughter – small amount of rice and vegetables

Wife – smallest amount of rice and leaves from vegetables

4) Thank the players...then ask the following questions for everyone to respond. **(15 minutes)**

Why did some family members get more food than others?

*What gives some family members **more access** to food than others?
Less access than others?*

Who decides how much and what each family member will get to eat?

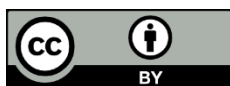
Now What?

Putting the activity into practice. Ask the participants to provide ideas and examples of how they see themselves using this activity in the field...how they would adapt and adjust the exercise depending on a specific audience. For example:

- Compare two different plates: one that is the current reality and one that is the ideal nutrition for each family member.
- Have male participants take the role of female family members and likewise for female participants. **(10 minutes)**

References:

- Helen Keller International (2015). Nurturing Connections. Part 2: Exercising Power; Activity 3: What is Assertiveness?
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- SPRING. Strengthening Partnerships, Results and Innovations in Nutrition Globally. Project website: www.spring-nutrition.org
- USAID Integrating Gender and Nutrition into Agricultural Extension Systems (INGENAES) (2015). Integrating Gender and Nutrition with Agricultural Extension Services Facilitator's Guide. <http://ingenaes.illinois.edu/wp-content/uploads/Gender-and-Nutrition-Facilitators-Guide.pdf>



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