



## Integrating Gender and Nutrition within Agricultural Extension Services

Activity Sheet  
August 2016

# What Should Go on the Plate?

**Time:** 2 hours

**Materials Needed:**

- Flipchart with activity title and objectives listed.
- Paper
- Markers or crayons
- Masking/scotch tape
- Flipchart with four divisions: Protein, Fats, Carbohydrates, and Vitamins/Micronutrients
- Illustrations of nutritional guidelines in local language
- Copies of Fact Sheet: “Basics of Nutrition”
- Copies of handout: “Nutrient-Dense Foods”



## Introduction

Girls and women often have unequal status in a household which can have negative long-term outcomes. The effects of inequalities in terms of individual health and well-being are well documented. The consequences of poor nutrition include low birth weights, child and maternal mortality, disease, decreased work production, and poor classroom performance. Increasing nutritional awareness when planning, facilitating, and evaluating extension programs is essential for the long-term health benefits not only for women and girls, but also for all family members.

## Objectives

- ✓ To identify the components of a nutritionally balanced diet.
- ✓ To examine the effects of nutritional inequalities in terms of individual health and well-being.
- ✓ To demonstrate the challenges of providing a healthy diet with limited resources.

## Steps

- 1) Review title of activity, objectives, and brief introduction. **(5 minutes)**
- 2) Ask participants to find a partner to work with...preferably someone they have not worked with during the workshop. **(5 minutes)**
- 3) Ask the pairs to draw a plate illustrating a nutritionally balanced lunch for a typical rural household. **(15 minutes)**
- 4) Using the prepared flip chart with the four divisions, ask each pair to name one example of a carbohydrate drawn on their plate...continue with each pair providing an example until all have shared. Use the Fact Sheet: “Basics of Nutrition” to discuss the nutritional value of carbohydrates in the daily diet. Repeat the process for the remaining three categories: protein, fats, and vitamins/micronutrients. **(30 minutes)**



Recommended Food Plate for Bangladesh (Ministry of Family Health & Welfare, FAO, FHI360)



5) Return to the seven plates of food from the previous activity: What Goes on the Plate? Ask the participants how they would rearrange the food so each family member receives a nutritionally balanced meal. Discuss the long-term consequences of under nourishment. Have two volunteers move the food items to the different plates. **(10 minutes)**

6) Ask the participants to form a group of four by joining another pair and complete the following activity. **(30 minutes)**

*Lack of income to purchase a variety of healthy foods is a major barrier for many rural families. If I sent you to the market with \$\_\_\_\_\_ (insert an amount in local currency), what would you buy to provide three nutritiously balanced meals for one day (breakfast, lunch, dinner) for a rural household consisting of a mother, father, two daughters ages 18 months and 8 years, a son aged 13 years, and a mother-in-law.*

7) Invite the small groups to share their “grocery lists”. Then ask the following questions. **(10 minutes)**

- *What was most difficult in selecting nutritious food items for the family?*
- *In what ways can an extension provider encourage all family members to eat a nutritionally balanced diet? (Examples: demonstrating how to develop a home vegetable garden or how to cook and preserve nutritious foods.)*
- *What are three or four nutrient-dense foods you could suggest to help families on limited budgets eat more nutritiously? (Definition of nutrient-dense: foods that have a lot of nutrients but relatively few calories...foods that contain vitamins, minerals, complex carbohydrates, lean protein, and healthy fats; refer to handout.)*

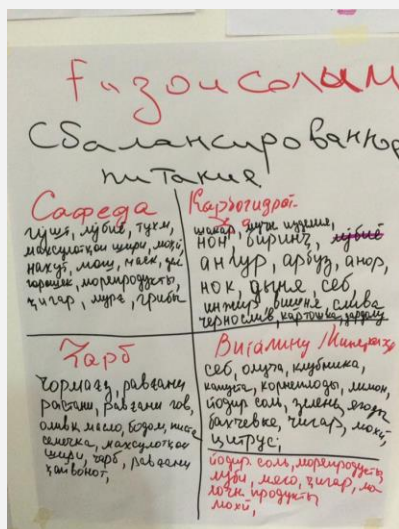
## Now What?

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:

- Have participants draw on the plate what they normally eat for their main meal of the day.
- Ask participants to list the food items commonly found in the local market and to identify the nutritional value of each item.
- Conduct the activity with youth encouraging them to share the exercise with their family.
- Ask participants to list some of the common health problems in the community and discuss how poor health can be linked to a poor diet. **(10 minutes)**



Eat a variety of foods for Protection, Energy and Body Building to be healthy and well. (Zimbabwe, FAO 2015)



### Key Messages (FAO 2013)

- “Eat a well-balanced diet with a variety of foods at each meal.
- Consume moderate amounts of oils and fats.
- Limit salt intake and condiments and use only iodized salt.
- Consume less sugar, sweets or sweetened drinks.
- Drink plenty of water daily.
- Consume safe and clean foods and beverages.
- Maintain desired body weight through a balanced food intake and regular physical activity.
- Practice a healthy lifestyle with right cooking and healthy eating.
- Eat additional food during pregnancy and lactation.
- Practice exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months and start adequate complementary foods in time.”

### References:

FAO (2013). Food Based Dietary Guidelines – Bangladesh. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. <http://bit.ly/1pw297p>

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Designed to be shared.