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Integrating Men and Boys into Household Nutrition – Why is it Important?



Photo: Three Stones International,
Kigali, Rwanda

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Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Livestock Systems



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WHAT IS “SEX”?

WHAT IS “GENDER”?



“Sex”

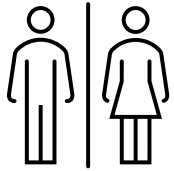
Biological, fixed, mostly unchangeable differences between males and females

“Gender”

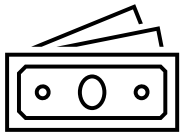
Socially constructed, changeable, culturally specific roles for women and men



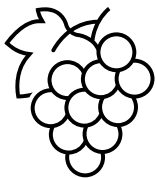
WHY ARE GENDER AND NUTRITION IMPORTANT?



Gender inequality is a common constraint to food and nutrition security in traditional social systems. Women are responsible for cooking and feeding their families, however husbands, mothers-in-law, and other family members also promote and implement proper nutrition practices and can impede them if not informed and engaged.



Traditional extension programming often fails to recognize who has the economic authority and who is responsible for nutrition and care within households.



Programs that engage men and boys have focused on reproductive health, particularly HIV-AIDS prevention. There is little research on the influence of men and boys in household nutrition, particularly as it relates to choices around food purchases and consumption (SPRING, 2018)



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PROJECT: “ENGAGING MEN IN SUPPORTING MATERNAL AND CHILD CONSUMPTION OF MILK AND OTHER ANIMAL SOURCE FOODS IN RWANDA”

Study conducted with households who received a cow through the government’s Girinka program in two districts in Rwanda to:

Assess men’s and women’s perceptions of their own and *each other’s roles in nutrition*, especially animal source food production, consumption and purchase, and the *gender dynamics affecting these roles*

Assess *men’s preferences* on ways to engage them in maternal and child nutrition, and *women’s preferences* on how they want men to be engaged, and *identify potential barriers* and enablers to their engagement





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PROJECT GOAL

Implement a nutrition intervention for men, which facilitates their engagement in and support for nutrition, including consumption of milk and Animal Source Foods produced in the household and other optimal maternal and child nutrition practices





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PROJECT BACKGROUND

In Rwanda, women and men share responsibility for nutrition. Men provide ASF to their families through providing money to their wives. Women buy ASFs with this money and prepare food. However, consumption of ASFs is low.

Men lack knowledge of nutrition and do not provide sufficient monies for the purchase of ASFs. They may also sell ASFs they produce rather than allocate them to their families. Women generally feel disempowered through male-dominant decision-making processes.

Men respondents are interested in being trained on nutrition. They want training through village leadership, presumably to enhance the prestige and legitimacy of the training, and they primarily want to be trained in male spaces. Yet, men who seek to enact more gender-equitable behaviors can be scorned at community level thus reducing incentives to change.





PROJECT METHODOLOGY

Baseline and endline surveys conducted with fathers with a child < 5 years of age (N=151) to evaluate the effects of a social and behavior change (SBCC) intervention on their children's Animal Source Food consumption (ASF) and on fathers' knowledge and support for children's ASF consumption.

Study used semi-structured checklists for Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KII) – two FGDs and KIIs conducted each with men and women. The men FGDs and KIIs also discussed ways in which they would like to be engaged in maternal and child nutrition and how women would want men to be engaged.





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PROJECT METHODOLOGY

Intervention materials and key messages developed through internal design workshops, feedback sessions with research partners, and design workshops with the National Child Development Agency (NCDA). Final messages, images and materials translated into Kinyarwanda, and developed for dissemination.

Model fathers were selected from intervention households in each administrative sector. Fathers were identified as leaders in their communities with some knowledge on nutrition and animal husbandry. Facilitator trainings were held for Community, Environmental & Health Officer (CEHOs) and Model Fathers.





PROJECT METHODOLOGY

- Developed contextualized Social and Behavioral Change (SBCC) materials, including 5 counseling cards, brochures, and a poster, and a Community Health Worker training curriculum.
- Observations of CEHOs and model fathers to deliver messages occurred monthly by NGO, Three Stones International (TSI). TSI coordinators used a checklist for each activity observed and conducted meetings and additional training for each CEHO and model father group. CEHO and Model Father facilitators conducted one activity each from June-December 2021 to reach intervention fathers and community members with key messages.

Importance and **benefits** of ASFs and milk consumption for Pregnant and Lactating Women and children 1 - 3 ½ years



WHAT DO WOMEN WANT MEN TO KNOW ABOUT NUTRITION

- Men should be trained by professional nutritionists or village elders (who have been trained) about how to prepare balanced meals for children
- Men should be trained on the importance of milk consumption for children in the household, instead of selling the milk for income
- Men should be trained on milk hygiene and safe handling of dairy products, especially the dangers of raw milk due to lack of pasteurization





PROJECT RESULTS POST INTERVENTION

Gender norms about 'appropriate masculine and feminine behaviour' strongly affects intra-household nutrition.

Men respondents are interested in being trained on nutrition through:

- Village leadership, presumably to enhance the prestige and legitimacy of the training
- Trained in male, or neutral spaces ie. churches, market centers, cooperatives.
- Fathers' knowledge of which foods a child needs to grow and develop their brain, foods that are considered Animal Source Foods (ASFs) and their awareness of the projects' ASF consumption messages increased significantly from baseline to endline with intervention.
- Train men and women together



PROJECT RESULTS POST INTERVENTION

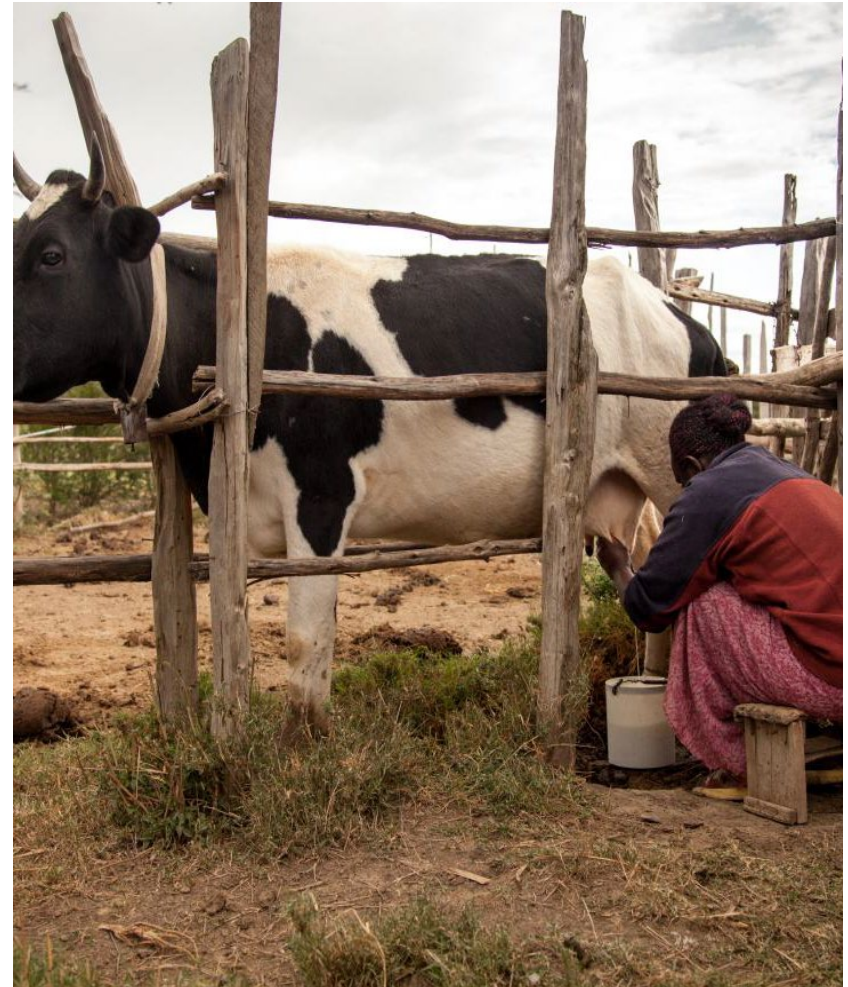
- The ASFs most frequently consumed by children < 5 years were milk, fish, chicken eggs, and beef, respectively.
- Children's odds of consuming any ASFs 2 or more times in the last week increased significantly from baseline to endline.
- Children's odds of consuming milk, eggs, and beef two or more times in the last week also increased significantly from baseline to endline, while their consumption of fish did not change.





PROJECT RESULTS POST INTERVENTION

- Percentage of fathers reporting that their own production went to children, purchased ASFs for children, and advised their wife to give children ASFs increased significantly, while the percentage who gave their wife money to buy ASFs for children decreased significantly from baseline to endline.
- Percentage of fathers reporting that decision-making about use of home-produced milk is made jointly by husband and wife increased significantly from baseline to endline.





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RESOURCES ON GENDER AND NUTRITION

Rwanda Project:

- Video that shows men engaged in nutrition interventions and some of the initial outcomes - <https://youtu.be/X4LBf7u8BbE>
- Barker, G. et.al. *“Men Who Care: A Multi-Country Qualitative Study of Men in Non-Traditional Caregiving Roles”*. (2012). Washington, D.C. International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) and Rio de Janeiro: Instituto Promundo
- BRIDGE, (2015). *“Gender and Food Security: towards Gender-Just Food and Nutrition Security”*. Institute of Development Studies, Brighton.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/e319912004-001>
- Catholic Relief Services, (2016). *“Father Engagement in Nutrition: A Qualitative Analysis in Muhanga and Karongi Districts in Rwanda”*.
<https://www.crs.org/sites/default/files/tools-research/father-engagement-in-nutrition.pdf>



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RESOURCES

Promundo-US and Plan International Canada. (2020). *“Recruitment and Retention of Male Participants in Gender-Transformative Programs”* Washington, D.C.

Verhart, N., Wijngaart, A. Van Den, Dhamankar, M., Danielsen, K., (2015). *“Bringing Agriculture and Nutrition Together Using a Gender Lens”* (No. 6). Amsterdam

Integrating Gender and Nutrition into Agriculture Extension Systems (INGENAES)

<https://ingenaes.illinois.edu/ifta/>

Feed the Future Livestock Systems Innovation Lab

<https://livestocklab.ifas.ufl.edu/themes/cctgy/>



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GRACIAS PARA TU ATENCION!

Questions?

Preguntas?

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Disclaimer

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