



Integrating Gender and Nutrition within Agricultural Extension Services

Activity Sheet

March 2016

Exploring Gender Myths

Audience:

Organizational leaders providing agricultural extension services in some way, policy makers, and frontline extension agents

Time:

2 hours

Materials Needed:

- Flipchart with activity title and objectives listed
- Flipchart with two columns labeled: *Positive Behaviors* / *Negative Behaviors*



Introduction

Sex is defined by the biological difference between men and women and is assigned at birth. Gender is defined by the socio-cultural roles assigned to men and women, and is determined by society through various socializing agencies, such as families, peers, schools, and religious institutions. Gender roles can and do change over time and across cultures. Women and men learn to behave and work in certain socially prescribed ways that reflect cultural norms and customs. Raising awareness about gender myths and their impact on men and women can help extension providers to challenge some of these stereotypes and offer more equitable access to and control over resources and information.

Objectives

- To explore perceptions about how women and men behave, and about what is appropriate and inappropriate behavior for women and men.
- To identify where and how gender myths develop within a society.
- To examine the implications of negative and positive behaviors on the individual household and the community.

Steps

- 1) Review title of activity, objectives, and brief introduction. **(5 minutes)**
- 2) Ask participants to get into two lines. Males in one line by age and females in another line by age, youngest to oldest. Form small groups of four members by selecting the oldest male with the youngest female and the oldest female with the youngest male. Continue in this manner until all participants are in a small group of five to six members ensuring that the groups are mixed: males and females, young and old. Add “extra” participants to small groups as needed. **(10 minutes)**
- 3) Provide the following instructions for the role play. **(5 minutes)**
The men in your small group will be portraying how women/girls are supposed to behave and the women in your group will be portraying how men/boys are supposed to behave in a typical rural household. The acting will be in the form of charades - that is no talking, just silently portraying the behavior. All group members must perform in the role play. Your role play should be 5 to 6 minutes.



- 4) Allow each group to identify the behaviors they want to portray. Encourage participants to locate props in or near the meeting room. **(20 minutes)**
- 5) Invite each group to perform their role play. After each role play, ask the performers to explain the overall message they were trying to convey, the role each member was playing, and how each member felt about playing a member of the opposite sex. **(45 minutes)**
- 6) After all the role plays have been performed, gather the participants into a circle and ask the following questions. Capture the responses on flipchart. **(30 minutes)**
 - What **negative** behaviors did you observe in the role plays?
 - What **positive** behaviors did you observe in the role plays?
 - Where do perceptions about how men and women should behave come from?
 - In what ways can the **negative** behaviors you observed in the role plays be addressed by the individual household and by the community?
 - In what ways can the **positive** behaviors you observed in the role plays be encouraged and nurtured?

Now What?

Putting the activity into practice. Ask the participants to return to their small groups and discuss how they see themselves using this activity in the field by responding to the following questions, ensuring that every group member has the opportunity to provide his or her response:

- As the trainer, in what **ways** and with what **audiences** could you implement this activity?
- What **changes** might you need to make to the activity?

Ask each small group to share one idea from their discussion with the whole group. **(20 minutes)**

References

“Integrating Gender and Nutrition with Agricultural Extension Services” Facilitator’s Guide. USAID Integrating Gender and Nutrition into Agricultural Extension Systems (INGENAES), 2015. <http://dev.ingenaes.illinois.edu/wp-content/uploads/Gender-and-Nutrition-Facilitators-Guide.pdf>

“Dispelling the Misconceptions and Myths about Gender by Dumisani Nyalunga. International NGO Journal Vol. 2 (1), pp. 001-005, January 2007. <http://ddp.org.za/information-material/articles/Dispelling%20the%20Misconceptions%20and%20Myths%20about%20nder.pdf/view>



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