Gender and Women's Empowerment linking Agriculture and Improved Nutrition

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Overview

• Importance of women’s empowerment to good nutrition.
• How to achieve women’s empowerment in agriculture programmes
• Research and Programatic areas moving forward
• show that women can affect children’s nutrition outcomes either through their own nutritional status or via childcare practices
• women’s discretionary income has a greater impact on child nutrition and food security than men’s
• link between women’s status (defined in different ways) and child nutrition outcomes
• negative implications on nutrition when women are not empowered
• Multi-country study shows over 10% of reductions in child stunting due to women’s empowerment.
• Women’s absence driver of stunting
What RAIN baseline tells us...explanatory variables

Explanatory variable - Autonomy/Empowerment – composite index

- Economic/financial: income earner, say on income, ability to get credit etc
- Agriculture: say in production and on income
- Social: advice and assistance networks, participation in social gathering
- Autonomy to buy food and other household items
- Relation with spouse and attitude toward gender equality
- Access and control over household assets
- Access to media

IYCF Practices - Composite index based on breastfeeding and complementary feeding knowledge (6 indicators)
Importance of gender in the pathways from agriculture to nutrition

Women’s empowerment has a positive association with

- Minimum dietary diversity among children 6-23 months
- Likelihood of visiting health clinic in last 6 months
- Height for Age Z-scores (reduced stunting)

IYCF knowledge index does not have an association with minimum diet diversity or HAZ
RAIN Activities

- Gender needs assessment
- Gender training manual (WfC)
- Gender training at various levels
- Integrate into the work of the District Nutrition Coordinating Committee
BCC materials
Drama group performance
RAIN Impact Evaluation

- RAIN affected women’s empowerment in a number of domains.
- Increased involvement in decision making in agriculture (crop production, use of money from sales)
- Improved social support and networking
- Long way to go for economic empowerment
What can we do? It’s all about design...

- Transforming gender relations is central to the programme
- Obstacles to gender equality recognised and addressed
- Proactive strategies to promote gender equity
- Promote empowerment – agency (confidence, skills, knowledge, association)
- Engaging men as powerholders and fathers
Key Areas of Focus

- Access to land
- Access to and control over other productive resources (draught, water)
- Value women’s production
- Enabling crop choice – availability of extension and inputs

- Representation – membership of farmers associations
- Women’s groups and associations
- Economic empowerment – links to status and greater control over own income
M&E

- Gender Disaggregate
- Composite indices (income, decisions on purchase/sale/consumption, communication, community organizing)
- Attitudes Scales
- Maternal Diet Diversity
- Men’s participation in household tasks and spousal support
Women’s time use: The zero-sum game

Increase Time Available for Caring and Reduce Labour Demands

- Labour saving – cookstoves, woodlots, tools, mechanisation,
- Increased return to asset (esp labour)
- Spread labour demands
- Facilitate access to clean water
- Male involvement in child care and agriculture
Moving Forward

• More evidence on the pathways linking women’s empowerment to nutrition.

• Interventions that address the zero sum

• Integration of gender into multi-sector approaches (health, agriculture, WASH) when working through government

• Optimal duration

• Promotion of gender equality more broadly