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Integrating Gender into Nutrition Programs

Program Guide



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About USAID Advancing Nutrition

USAID Advancing Nutrition is the Agency's flagship multi-sectoral nutrition project, led by JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc. (JSI), and a diverse group of experienced partners. Launched in September 2018, USAID Advancing Nutrition implements nutrition interventions across sectors and disciplines for USAID and its partners. The project's multi-sectoral approach draws together global nutrition experience to design, implement and evaluate programs that address the root causes of malnutrition. Committed to using a systems approach, USAID Advancing Nutrition strives to sustain positive outcomes by building local capacity, supporting behavior change and strengthening the enabling environment to save lives, improve health, build resilience, increase economic productivity and advance development.

Disclaimer

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Acknowledgments

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Introduction

Who is this guide for?

This guide is for nutrition program planners and implementers who aim to integrate gender into global or country-based multi-sectoral nutrition activities.

How can this guide help you?

This guide shares resources and examples to effectively integrate gender at each phase of a nutrition program. Use this guide whether you are designing an activity, implementing and monitoring an ongoing activity, or learning and adapting to strengthen gender integration for improved nutrition outcomes.

Why integrate gender into nutrition programs?

Gender equality, combined with biological vulnerabilities, influences the underlying determinants of nutrition status, food security, care and feeding, and health. Socially constructed gender roles and expectations can diminish the nutrition of women, adolescents, and children.

BOX I. WHAT IS GENDER?

Gender is not equivalent to “women” or male engagement

Gender is a social construction of roles, rights, power, and expectations on the basis of sex deeply rooted in norms and institutions including households, markets, and government in every society.



Gender norms limit women’s autonomy and decision-making power in households; power and control in markets and communities; and access to information, opportunities, and resources for food selection, service use, and income generation. Yet the multiple roles women play—producing food, generating income, giving birth, providing care, and being part of the community—place them at a critical nexus for ensuring food security and nutrition within their households and communities. Women often have primary responsibility for the health and nutrition of their households and typically support family income in informal and vulnerable work environments. Gender norms also restrict what men can do in the home and family, limiting their own health and well-being (Morrison et al. 2021).

In turn, improved nutrition is a key factor to achieving gender equality. Therefore, gender equality and women’s empowerment are key to sustaining nutrition outcomes (Quisumbing et al. 2021). Women’s social status and empowerment, time use, and health and nutrition status are pathways through which agriculture and food systems impact nutrition (Ruel, Quisumbing, and Balagamwala 2018).

To achieve gender equality and women’s empowerment, gender integration considerations need to be intentionally addressed during program design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. In 2009, USAID established a comprehensive approach to gender integration through its Automated Directives Systems (ADS 205), which included gender analysis as one of two mandatory analysis requirements for strategic planning, project design, and approval. USAID defines a gender analysis as “a socio-economic analysis of quantitative and qualitative information to identify, understand, and explain gender gaps between individuals” and raises “recommendations to narrow gender gaps and improve the lives of women and girls, men and boys, and gender diverse individuals” (USAID 2022).

Promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is a commitment across USAID’s nutrition programs. These are guiding principles of USAID’s Multi-sectoral Nutrition Strategy 2014–2025 (USAID 2019). The USAID Global Food Security Strategy 2022–2026 has a cross-cutting intermediate result that explicitly aims to “increase gender equality and female empowerment” (USAID 2021).

True gender integration is both external and internal; it applies to programs as well as to implementing

organizations and their staff and cultural structures. Having a gender strategy that ensures staff understand and apply gender-sensitive approaches will further strengthen the ability of programs to be gender aware and transformative. For example, operations can include gender training as a part of onboarding; finance can ensure there is a budget for gender activities across projects; knowledge management and communications can support the use of gender positive terms and content; and monitoring, evaluation, and learning can incorporate gender indicators across the organization’s activities.

USAID Advancing Nutrition’s Gender Equality strategy is here: [USAID Advancing Nutrition Gender Equality Strategy](#)

BOX 2: KEY PRINCIPLES TO REMEMBER

TWO KEY PRINCIPLES FOR GENDER INTEGRATION:

- 1 Under no circumstances should projects/activities adopt an exploitative approach, because one of the fundamental principles of development is to “do no harm.”
- 2 Move toward gender transformative programs/policies, thus gradually challenging existing inequities and promoting positive changes in gender roles, norms, and power dynamics.



Steps in the Program Cycle

Effective nutrition programs integrate gender, starting from program design and continuing through program evaluation and learning. This section provides resources and examples to integrate gender into each step of the program cycle.



1. STRATEGIC PLANNING



2. PROJECT DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION



3. ACTIVITY DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION



4. MONITORING, EVALUATION, & LEARNING



1. Strategic Planning

Gender integration includes everyone on the project, from technical experts to management, to communications.

Staff Orientation

The foundation of gender integration is a culture within the organization and program that continually reflects on challenges related to gender and norms. This requires staff at all levels and roles to examine their own lives and contexts, and the organization and program, through a gender lens. This can be thought of as looking at gender from the inside out, meaning we all carry our own gender attitudes to examine. It also gives staff key concepts and basic skills to design, implement, and monitor activities that integrate gender.

Staff orientation or training is relevant for staff on all teams to ensure principles guide strategic planning, program activities, as well as human resources processes—such as recruitment and annual performance reviews—and include gender programming responsibilities (e.g., supporting regular reflection, feedback, and gender analysis updates) in job descriptions.

You may use this training for sessions or inspiration: [Gender Training for Nutrition Programs Package](#). The agenda is three days with four learning objectives: (1) identify key gender concepts, including the gender integration continuum; (2) describe why gender analysis is important; (3) explain how to conduct a gender analysis; and (4) complete a gender integration action plan.

FIGURE I. EXERCISES FOR STAFF ORIENTATION: UNDERSTANDING THE GENDER INTEGRATION CONTINUUM

Ask to place these examples on the gender integration continuum:



Shorter annual or periodic refresher orientations or reflection throughout the life of the program is key to keeping gender on staff minds, answer questions that may arise, and address changes in the context.

1. A project in rural Vietnam aimed to improve exclusive breastfeeding through new mothers' confidence. To do so, clinic staff conducted home visits. To include both mothers and fathers, staff scheduled home visits at times when the father would not be in the home (to increase the mothers' comfort to ask questions) and when the father would be at home (to include him in the counseling sessions).

(Suggested answer: Gender accommodating)

2. A multi-sectoral nutrition project in Ethiopia aimed to increase women's and children's dietary diversity. Community activities included peer groups of men, women, and elders. In each group, couple dialogue around food decisions and household food allocation was a focus with modeling by facilitators of new ways to communicate, practice through role-plays, and take-home posters on inclusive family decision-making. Men were more able to initiate dialogue at home than women or elders.

(Suggested answer: Gender transformative)

3. To boost agricultural incomes, a project in rural Tajikistan aimed to increase agricultural output among farmer families. The project emphasized men's traditional role as the primary income earners for their families to encourage men's participation. Ultimately, men became more insistent about control over household income and women's time and energy burden in agricultural production increased. Reports of gender-based violence rose as gender power dynamic imbalances increased.

(Suggested answer: Gender exploitative)

Situation Assessment

At the start of a program, a situation assessment is usually conducted to guide design and next steps. Done through a desk review, stakeholder interviews, or a more intensive process, a situation assessment must integrate gender considerations in order to set up activity plans that integrate gender. Include gender questions in desk reviews by researching existing policies and strategies related to gender and asking questions related to gender opportunities and constraints when interviewing stakeholders and implementing partners. For example, ask—

- How will the different roles and status of men and women affect the results of the program activities (e.g., willingness and ability to engage in activities, make changes to priority behaviors)?
- How will the anticipated outcomes of the program differ for men and women?

By including gender in the situation analysis, this ensures that the gender analysis builds on existing information and does not miss key contextual considerations.

When conducting country or site scoping visits, request a gender analysis and considerations in a visit report. Ensure that background documents reviewed include policies, plans, and guidelines that assess gender-based influences on nutrition.



2. Project Design & Implementation

Conduct a Program-Wide Gender Analysis

A program can conduct a gender analysis as part of formative research or as a separate research study. A gender analysis is required for USAID-funded programs, according to ADS 205, and usually entails original data collection in the program area with program participants. It is an opportunity to use participatory approaches to engage women and men of different ages and backgrounds, and other key stakeholders, to deeply understand their perspectives, needs, and solutions related to gender and nutrition. Use the [SBC Formative Research Decision Tree](#) to select methods needed to answer research questions.

BOX 3. WHAT IS A GENDER ANALYSIS?

USAID Advancing Nutrition has also found that conducting analysis of each activity is useful for continually integrating and adapting specific activities based on gender considerations. See section 3 for a description of that process.

A gender analysis explores and answers two overarching questions:

1. How will the different roles and status of men and women affect the results of the program activities (e.g., willingness and ability to engage in activities, make changes to priority behaviors)?
2. How will the anticipated outcomes of the program differ for men and women?

The specific questions guiding the gender analysis should link to the theory of change, results framework, planned activities, and address key knowledge gaps. Use the five domains to design the gender analysis and organize and analyze findings. (See annex 1 for a gender analysis framework for nutrition. Annex 2 has a completed example.)

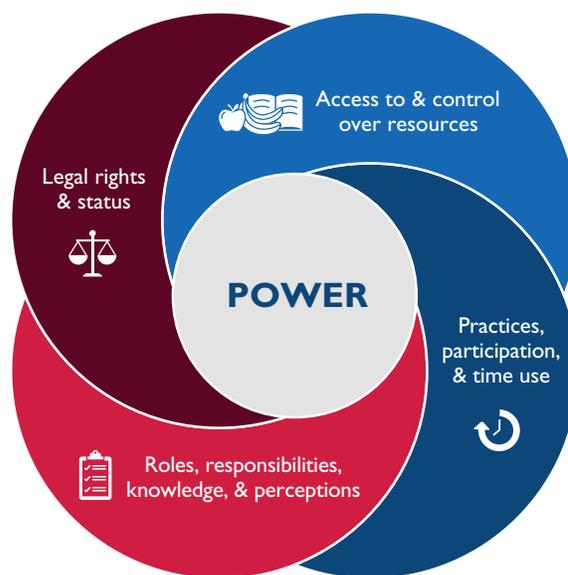
These domains are adapted from USAID's gender strategy and USAID resources from the [Interagency Gender Working Group](#). They are not mutually exclusive, and are not listed in a particular order. The final domain, power and decision-making, is conceived as central and cross-cutting to the other domains (Jhpiego 2016).

In a gender analysis or other research, explore the gender-related factors that prevent or support [priority nutrition behaviors](#). For example, if outcome on theory of change or program impact pathway is related to increasing dietary diversity, the priority nutrition behaviors may be—

- Women eat a variety of nutrient-rich foods daily, for both meals and snacks.
- Caregivers use a variety of nutrient-rich foods each day in the meals and snacks for their 6–23- months-old child.
- Farmers add amendments to restore soil nutrients when growing vegetables for home consultation and sale in local markets.
- Retailers sell nutrient-rich foods in local markets.

When designing research questions, think about why and how gender influences what women and men and gender diverse individuals of different ages and roles do now, what they would want, and what they are willing and able to change and how.

FIGURE 2. GENDER ANALYSIS DOMAINS



BOX 4. FIVE DOMAINS OF GENDER ANALYSIS

These domains help to collect and organize information on gender-related factors with sample questions.



ACCESS TO AND CONTROL OVER RESOURCES

- What kinds of resources do men and women and gender diverse individuals of different ages own?
- What access to activity, training, and employment opportunities do men and women of different ages have?
- What access to nutrition and financial services do men and women of different ages have?
- Given asset ownership and service access, how well can men and women of different ages take up program recommendations?



KNOWLEDGE, BELIEFS, AND PERCEPTIONS

- What is appropriate behavior for a man or a woman? What is an ideal woman and man? How do these expectations influence nutrition behaviors?
- Do expectations for women and men and gender diverse individuals of different ages prevent nutrition behaviors? For example, do people expect that agriculture is something that men do more than women? Do people expect that women serve and eat food last in the household?



PRACTICES, PARTICIPATION, AND TIME USE

- What gender-related constraints and opportunities influence priority nutrition behaviors?
- Who else needs to take action to address gender-related constraints and opportunities?
- What is the gendered division of labor: roles, activities, work, and responsibilities of women and men in the house? farm? community?
- Do men or women have restrictions on their mobility? What are these restrictions? How do they influence women's access to services and/or supportive social networks?
- What types of activities, meetings, associations, and groups do they engage in?
- What times of day and seasons is it possible for men, women of different ages to participate in the activity?



LEGAL RIGHTS AND STATUS

- Are women and men and gender diverse individuals equally likely to be owners of property that might serve as collateral for an agribusiness loan (e.g., land, car, equipment, etc.)?
- Do women and men and gender diverse individuals have equal rights to inheritance—both by law and by custom?



POWER AND DECISION-MAKING

- What is the role of women in nutrition when designing legislation, policies, plans, and guidelines?
- Who makes decisions about food production, processing, and storage? Who makes decisions about food purchase and household allocation of different kinds? Which kinds of decisions are made jointly?
- Will women have control over and benefit from the funds and assets they may accrue as a result of participating in the project?



Clément Tardif, NCBA, CLUSA



Example: Kyrgyz Republic Gender Analysis

Kyrgyz Republic Gender Analysis Insights

In support of the project’s *Strategy 1.1: Improve knowledge, attitudes, and motivation for healthy nutrition practices in target communities*, USAID Advancing Nutrition was tasked with conducting a gender analysis and action plan to investigate the relationship between gender and nutrition; differences in roles and demands on time and labor; and how project activities could affect women, men, girls, and boys.

We conducted a non-systematic desk review of research and program experience in the Kyrgyz Republic, as relevant to the project’s objectives. The second effort was a formative assessment that consisted of gendered focus group discussions and a social norms exploration activity in three rayons of Batten oblast, with one urban and one rural community for each rayon.

Then using the domains of gender analysis as a guide, project staff synthesized learnings, and developed a practical process for implementing gender strategies to objectives and activities in the project’s intermediate results framework. Based on the gender analysis, we identified four gender-transformative approaches that will be applied across the project’s portfolio of activities and strategies:

The gender analysis and action plan informed the project’s social and behavior change (SBC) strategy, and the basis of training for staff and partners, to foster continued reflection on the relationship between gender, nutrition, and work over the life of the project.

FIGURE 3. GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACHES OUTLINED IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC GENDER ACTION PLAN



Positive couples’ communication



Positive engagement of men and boys



Women’s empowerment and decision-making



Social norms shifting through modeling of gender-equitable care practices



3. Activity Design and Implementation

Challenging and changing harmful gender expectations benefits women and men, and girls and boys, alike. Gender norms and dynamics underlie nutrition and can limit men and boys just as they limit women and girls.

Prepare a Gender Action Plan

A gender action plan is based on gender analysis findings. The gender action plan should be realistic and outline a clear and detailed plan for implementing and integrating the results of the gender analysis into the program's theory of change or program impact pathway and the design, and implementation of activities for the remainder of the program. It can include—

- findings by purpose or result area
- implications of the results for changing the theory of change or program impact pathway
- inputs into developing analysis for each priority nutrition behavior with change pathways
- implications for implementation of activities planned
- roles and responsibilities for gender integration
- measurement considerations.

The gender action plan can be combined with the SBC strategy or a separate document. When separate, the SBC strategy helps to operationalize the gender analysis and action plan. This tool can help to organize findings for the gender action plan and SBC strategy: [Using Research to Design a Social and Behavior Change Strategy for Multi-Sectoral Nutrition](#)



Example: Transform Nutrition Mozambique's Gender Action Plan

The USAID-funded Transform Nutrition project aims to improve the nutritional status of pregnant and lactating women, adolescent girls, and children under two years in Nampula Province, Mozambique. Transform Nutrition conducted a gender analysis in 2020, the first year of the project, to understand the gender-related barriers and opportunities in households, communities, and health services that may impact or facilitate the project's work. The gender analysis identified core gender-related concepts and actions that would contribute to achieving all the priority nutrition behaviors:

- Nurture shared family responsibility and care for women.
- Support “harmonious households” for improved communication between couples.
- Facilitate collective action on traditional gender roles and social norms for greater gender equality.
- Engage families to support adolescent girls for improved nutrition and health.
- Support women leadership in the community.

For each project result, the gender action plan outlines activities to integrate these gender-related concepts and actions into planned activities. For example, under “*IR 2: Increased adoption of optimal behaviors to improve the nutritional status of target populations*” the project will, for example:

- Incorporate gender equality concepts into training for staff and supervisors with facilitated reflection on gender norms and women's roles and responsibilities, as well as more balanced distribution of household tasks and childcare between men and women.
- Mobilize male community volunteers and champions who support their families through joint decision-making, and equitable participation in community work, and provide them additional platforms to discuss gender equitable practices.
- Promote female volunteers and women leadership figures to gain confidence to speak up in community meetings and advocate for gender equitable solutions and decisions.

- Use games and dynamic activities (e.g., negotiated practices) to engage family members, such as husbands and mothers-in-law, to reflect on how they can support mothers and encourage couples in open communication and discussion in the household.
- Model household dialogue through planned community radio and videos, aiming to increase community acceptance of shared responsibilities between husband and wife, and more equitable distribution of food.

Roles and responsibilities for gender integration are described in the gender action plan as follows:

TABLE I. TRANSFORM NUTRITION MOZAMBIQUE GENDER ACTION PLAN ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

TRANSFORM NUTRITION MOZAMBIQUE GENDER ACTION PLAN	
Roles	Responsibilities
Chief of Party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct and allocate resources for gender integration. • Ensure activity design considers gender from all perspectives to implement the most effective and efficient approaches. • Ensure gender balance in staff recruitment processes at all levels. • Implement inclusive and equitable workplace policies.
Monitoring and Evaluation Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure routine data collection is age- and sex-disaggregated. • Track gender-related indicators regularly and report accurately. • Monitor for unintended consequences of project activities. • Identify opportunities for gender reflection and learning.
Technical Experts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track progress and challenges in gender integration in project activities, including supervision; and support provincial teams to adopt and disseminate new practices. • Identify needs for capacity building on gender issues among staff, including local partners and government partners. • Report on results of gender integration.
Provincial Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the gender action plan, and monitoring and supervising activities in the field to ensure all means and resources are available and activities are ongoing. • Ensure data are correctly collected and registered. • Review data monthly to take action to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment. • Continue to challenge own attitudes and practices to become more gender equitable, and support provincial teams to become models. • Orient all staff on gender equity principles.
Finance and Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget for adequate resources to integrate gender across activities. • Support logistics for mentoring, training, and supervision for the technical team.
Government Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in capacity strengthening efforts on gender equality. • Disseminate concepts to provincial level and other stakeholders. • Disseminate gender polices and laws.

The monitoring and evaluation plan includes indicators specific to gender to assess change between baseline and endline in—

- women’s attendance at village savings and loans groups
- percentage or proportion of community groups with women in leadership and membership roles
- proportion of women who report making nutrition-related decisions jointly with their male partner
- proportion of women who report that their husband or partner attended antenatal care visits.

Improving nutrition ultimately depends upon dietary intake, care, and use of services by nutritionally vulnerable populations, especially women and children. Women and children are part of family systems, which influence roles, relationships, and interactions between family members (Aubel, Martin and Cunningham 2021). Whether working at the community, service, market, or policy level, nutrition programs benefit from intentionally considering family systems in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of activities. Gender, age, and power dynamics within the family can directly shape and influence nutrition behaviors. The family systems, in turn, exist within and interact with broader community and societal contexts.

If you are designing a program, an activity, a policy or service that aims to integrate gender or strengthen family engagement in nutrition, use this theory of change. Consider the **drivers** as you review existing research or conduct formative research and gender analyses. Use the intervention **strategies** and **illustrative approaches** as you consider strategies and activities, and the outcomes as you create program implementation pathways to change.

FIGURE 4. NORMATIVE THEORY OF CHANGE FOR FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN NUTRITION

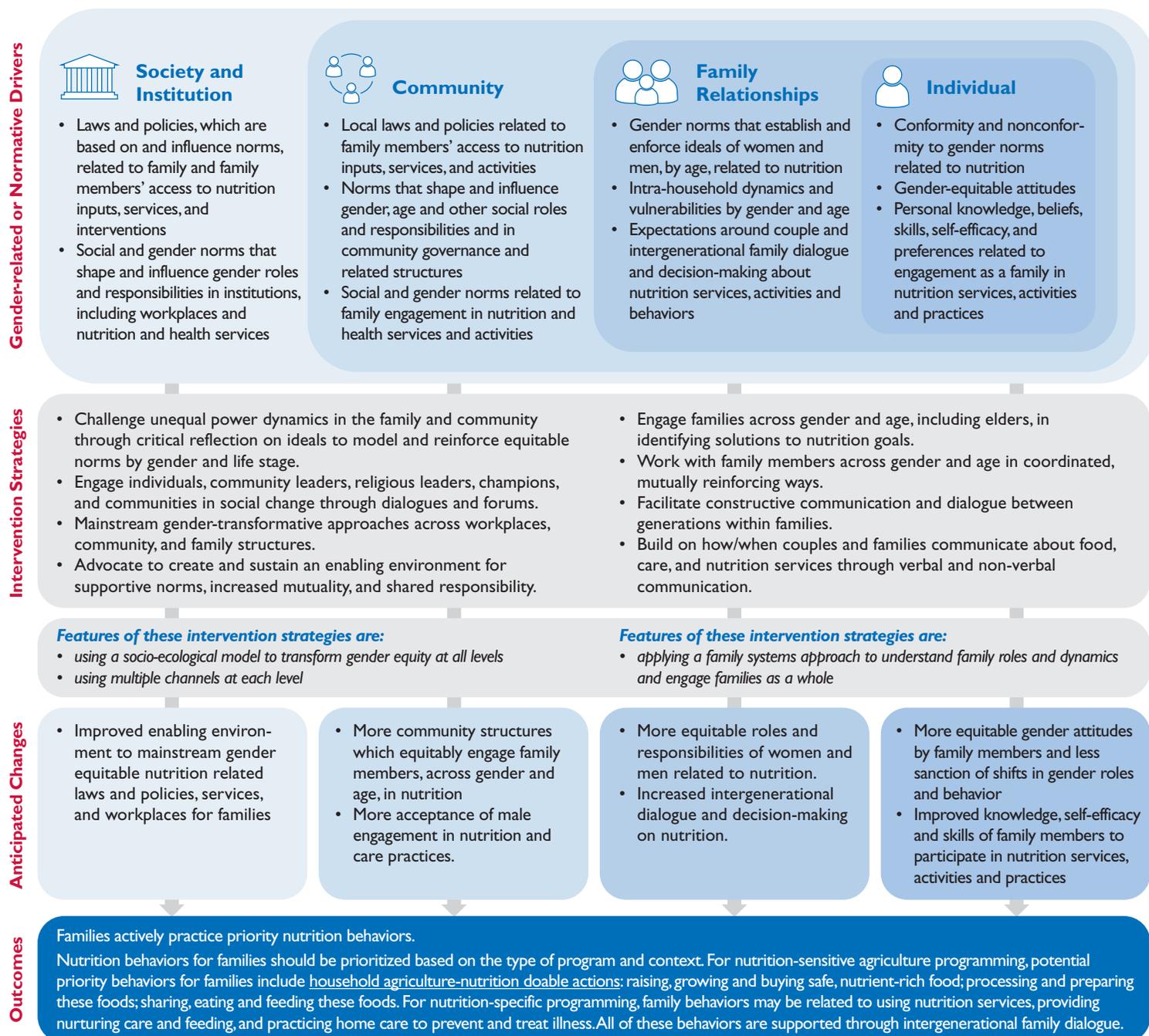


FIGURE 4. NORMATIVE THEORY OF CHANGE FOR FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN NUTRITION CONT'D



Society and Institution

- Advocate to pass or enforce laws and policies that favor equitable family engagement in nutrition-related workplaces, services and activities.
- Amplify policy and institutional “champions” willing to model and personify gender equitable norms related to family engagement in nutrition.
- Encourage media, and workplace discussions of policies and norms related to gender roles and equitable family engagement in nutrition, such as land ownership, and parental leave, etc.



Community

- Advocate to form or shift community structures and governance to more equitably engage family members across gender and age in nutrition.
- Support “champions” who foster dialogue and model and personify gender equitable norms related to family engagement in nutrition.
- Identify supportive leaders to communicate approval for equitable family engagement across gender and age in nutrition services and activities.
- Encourage community discussions of gender roles and nutrition (media, theatre, etc.)
- Counter negative responses to people taking on roles that counter gender norms.
- Social media and other outreach to model more equitable family and gender roles.



Family Relationships

- Facilitate and normalize intergenerational family dialogue (i.e., during family visits, media, positive role models, etc.) about shared values and actions to be taken by family members, challenges that may occur, and solutions
- Recognize the beneficial, or potentially beneficial, roles of family members and build on these /motivate change (dialogues, support groups, champions, media etc.).
- Affirm the cultural knowledge and experiences of all family members, including elders, through practices of praise and by identifying strengths to empower their roles in nutrition.
- Strengthen capacity and create space for elder leadership to acquire knowledge to support nutrition.



Individual

- Address personal norms and gender ideals through peer group discussions, counseling visits and media.
- Discuss perceived barriers and facilitators to change in norms and roles and potential solutions.
- Provide skills, resources, models and opportunities to support women and girls to increase agency and overcome internalized personal norms related to sacrifice and subservience.
- Provide information, skills, models and recognition to enable boys and men to feel confident in engaging in nutrition.

This normative theory of change is inspired by [Know, Care, Do: A Theory of Change for Engaging Men and Boys in Family Planning](#) (Breakthrough ACTION 2021), applied here to family engagement to improve nutrition outcomes.

Note: This theory of change focuses on normative drivers of family engagement in nutrition, especially influential social and gender norms. The many other structural and individual-level factors that influence family engagement, including access to inputs and services, income, and education, for example, are acknowledged but beyond the scope of this theory of change.



Morgan Wingard, USAID



3. Activity Design and Implementation

Conduct Activity-Specific Gender Analyses

In addition to conducting a formal gender analysis study with primary data collection per USAID requirements, described in section 2, it can be useful to ask the same questions for specific activities:

- How will the different roles and status of men and women, girls and boys, and gender diverse individuals affect the results of the program activities (e.g., willingness and ability to engage in activities, make changes to priority behaviors)?
- How will the anticipated outcomes of the program differ for men and women, girls and boys, and gender diverse individuals?
- Using the five domains to design the gender analysis and organize and analyze findings helps you consider gender dimensions and potential consequences of your activities, whether or not intended. The gender analysis can also help team learn and adapt so that activities continually consider and respond to key issues. The activity team can conduct a gender analysis, or individually, through self-reflection. (See annex 1 for a gender analysis framework for nutrition. Annex 2 has nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive examples.)

Activity-specific gender analyses help you identify and describe gender differences, and the relevance of gender roles and power dynamics, to make important shifts in activity plans to better consider gender dynamics and needs. For example—

- To prepare a guide on marketing techniques to promote healthy diets among low-income consumers, we first interviewed practitioners. A gender analysis informed the survey and interview design, guiding discussions around how gender roles and inequities affect what foods women and men can buy, prepare, and consume. These insights ensured specific lines of inquiry related to women's unique needs across the lifecycle.
- To support delivery of high-quality lipid-based protein nutrient supplements we surveyed implementing partners funded by the International Food Relief Partnership (IFRP) on current supplementary feeding programs and documented findings from a gender perspective. This ensured exploration and recommendations specific to women's safety and security.
- To design counseling cards on responsive care and early learning for early childhood development, a gender analysis led to more inclusive images with fathers to ensure that traditional, limited roles for fathers can be challenged during counseling.

Integrating Gender by Type of Activity

Gender integration refers to incorporating gender equality principles and practices, issues and needs, and objectives throughout all phases of programming including, but not limited to, strategic planning, project and activity design, procurement, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation (USAID 2022).

Similar to planning the overall program, the same two questions are useful to plan each activity or deliverable:

1. How will the different roles and status of men and women, girls and boys, and gender diverse individuals, affect the results of the program activities (e.g., willingness and ability to engage in activities, make changes to priority behaviors)?
2. How will the anticipated outcomes of the program differ for men and women, girls and boys, and gender diverse individuals?

Again, each activity can benefit from a rapid analysis using the gender analysis framework.

Example Types of Program Activities



Formative or Implementation Research

- Include a gender-related research question or lens of inquiry.
- Examine qualitative and/or quantitative data on gender norms, constraints, and/or opportunities.
- Examine how findings impact men and women of different ages differently.



Systems Strengthening

- Establish a monitoring system and mitigation approaches, as necessary, to identify and address the unintended negative consequences of activities, including gender-based violence and the overburdening of women's time and workloads.
- Support local marketplace layout and vendor engagement to ease barriers to women's participation, considering such factors as proximity, safety, and sanitation facilities.
- Advocate or support advocacy groups to develop or enforce gender transformative policies in areas, such as land rights, financial inclusion, agricultural research and development and national extension and advisory services, labor market policies, and social protection—including social insurance.
- Provide technical assistance that advances gender-sensitive food safety regulatory and management systems for informal markets where women small-scale producers and retailers tend to concentrate.



Capacity Strengthening

- Facilitate capacity strengthening to support women's success in roles as producers, entrepreneurs, employees, managers, policymakers, and leaders in the food and agricultural sector.
- To enhance women's productivity, design contextually appropriate gender-sensitive training on climate-smart technologies, financial and extension services, and markets.
- Strengthen women's skills in governance, research, and food systems organizations at all levels, and in managing and governing land, fresh water, marine, and other natural resources.



Collective Engagement

- Facilitate increased women's control over resources, specially decision-making power over income, to support access to and affordability of safe and nutritious foods.
- Engage women, men, and other influencers in community-based activities to reflect on and challenge intra-household dynamics and vulnerabilities that impact household food and labor distribution.
- Model and show proof of shifting gender roles through community influencers in dialogues, events, and media

SBC Communication

- Establish home visits and peer support group models that engage family members.
- Model and show proof of shifting gender roles through community influencers in dialogues, events, and media

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Disaggregate data by gender and age, as available and relevant.
- Highlight any data or knowledge gaps around gender and include them as recommendations for future research and programs.

Documentation (such as technical/advocacy briefs or reports)

- Assess the extent to which policies, programs, research, etc. (related to the brief's topic) identify, analyze, and/or address gender opportunities and constraints.
- Analyze how policies, programs, research, etc. (related to the brief's topic) directly or indirectly affect outcomes differently for men, women, boys, and girls.
- Include evidence and recommendations that support gender equitable outcomes related to the brief's topic.
- Review and highlight any intentional gender-transformative and gender-sensitive programmatic approaches or interventions relevant to the activity or program.
- Review the extent to which gender equality and related issues were reflected in the design of the activity or program.
- Review the extent to which gender equality and related issues were reflected in the design of the activity or design and in the process of carrying it out.
- Review any data on different outcomes for men, women, boys, and girls that resulted from the activity or program. If none exists, highlight relevant gaps.

Dissemination Opportunities

- Feature gender-transformative and/or sensitive approaches as they relate to the main topic.
- Ensure the content, including any presentations, disaggregate and/or discusses any data, findings, results, outcomes by gender and age, as possible.
- Comment on gender issues/implications as part of introductory and/or conclusive remarks.
- Comment on how the topic relates to gender equality, opportunities, and constraints, as well as different implications of their topic, including gender-related knowledge gaps.
- Include content, such as slides or text boxes, specific to gender issues and/or implications, under each topic or summarizing gender issues/implications across the opportunity.
- Aim to ensure that everyone's voice is heard during any discussion.

BOX 5. ENGAGING FAMILY MEMBERS

See the *Engaging Family Members Guidance* for more details on engaging family members, which often has synergies with gender integration [Program Guidance: Engaging Family Members in Improving Maternal and Child Nutrition \(USAID Advancing Nutrition 2020\)](#).





4. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

Disaggregating indicators by women and men is necessary, but not enough to improve nutrition.

To understand the effectiveness of gender integration, you will need to embed monitoring and evaluation throughout program design and implementation.

Selecting Indicators

Integrate gender through program and activity indicators.

1. Disaggregate program indicators on participation by sex¹ as well as other key segments, such as age, ethnic group, and location.
2. Include gender-sensitive indicators to track progress in addressing gender-related factors identified in the gender action plan and SBC strategy that impacts the outcomes and goal. For example—
 - women's and men's access to food production, processing, and storage assets
 - women's and men's access to nutrition services
 - decision-making about food production, sales, and consumption
 - intrahousehold food distribution
 - women's and men's gender attitudes
 - perceptions of roles and opportunities of women and men.

¹ Disaggregating by sex means that data are collected and analysed separately on males and females. Survey data usually note if a person is a male or female (sex) not the characteristics of women, men, girls, and boys that are socially constructed (gender). Nevertheless, gender statistics rely on these sex-disaggregated data.

Select indicators to capture both qualitative and quantitative gender information. After indicators have been established, plan for monitoring progress and evaluating success.

To assess change, measure outcomes before and after the intervention is implemented. Multiple measurement points allow for tracking progress over time. For example, the change in proportion of men and women in farmer's groups associations or women in leadership positions could be used to show change.

Monitoring and Unintended Consequences

During implementation, regularly monitor changes in outcomes, responses, and behaviors to know when and where to make adjustments to your strategy and activities. Regularly monitoring changes in gender-related factors helps you understand how things are going and where and when to make program adjustments. This [tool](#) can be helpful when setting up a monitoring plan.

Monitoring includes process indicators that measure such issues as—

- attendance and coverage of activities to women and men of different age groups
- experience of women and men of different age groups participating in activities
- perceived benefits of activities to women and men of different age groups.

Monitoring is also important in preventing harmful unintended consequences. Collect and use process data on harmful unintended consequences that can be used, as needed, to change the course of the intervention mid-implementation. For each activity, reflect together with staff and partners to answer these questions:

- What is working? (successes)
- What is not working? (challenges)
- How is our work affecting people and stakeholders, things, systems, and practices?
- What signs of change have you seen in the past three months? Which are supportive/not supportive of goals?
- How have frontline workers or change agents reacted to such changes? How have staff reacted?
- If not working well: Can you imagine doing the activity in a completely different way? What might be the value?

Propose changes based on the reflection.

Conclusion

Gender integration into nutrition programs is not new; it is widely recognized as critical to achieving outcomes. The resources and examples in this guide are offered to program planners and implementers as examples to inspire ideas, create local solutions, and continue this important work.

In addition to improving nutrition outcomes, gender transformative nutrition programming is an invaluable opportunity to contribute to sustained change in communities and in health and food systems.

Annex I

CHECKLIST FOR GENDER INTEGRATION IN NUTRITION PROGRAMS

	QUESTIONS	YES/NO	COMMENTS
Program Planning			
Staff orientation	Does the staff orientation— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> include all staff and partners? encourage personal and professional reflection on consequences of rigid gender norms? 		
Situation assessment	Does the situation assessment include— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> interview questions on gender considerations for key informants? documents on gender in background review, including policies and guidance? 		
Gender analysis			
Program-wide study	Does the analysis— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> include women and men of different ages and segments? explore the 5 domains (Access to and control over resources; Practices, participation, and time use; Roles, responsibilities, knowledge, and perceptions; Legal rights and status; power)? 		
Strategic design and implementation			
Gender action plan	Does the action plan or strategy— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> specify how it will address the gender issues identified in the gender analysis? encourage community groups, especially women's groups, to participate in the development planning process? 		
Activity-specific analyses	Does the activity analysis— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> explore the 5 domains in light of specific issues or needs of women and men of different ages and segments? 		
Implementation considerations	Do activities— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> meet the different needs and priorities of women and men? occur at a time and place that is convenient to all participants? include facilitators who are comfortable with discussing gender sensitive issues? address the power imbalances between women and men? encourage discussion about socially assigned gender roles affecting women, men, adolescents, and the elderly? take women's and girls' safety considerations into account? are women/gender focused groups, associations or gender units in partner organizations consulted and included? 		
Measurement			
Monitoring and evaluation	Are indicators— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> responsive to gender equality results? cover gender issues and behavior changes toward greater gender equality? 		

Glossary

Gender: People are categorized by gender (men, women, and gender diverse individuals) according to a socially constructed set of rules, responsibilities, entitlements, and behaviors associated with being a man, a woman, or a gender diverse individual, and the relationships between and among people according to these constructs. These social definitions and their consequences differ among and within cultures, change over time, and intersect with other factors (e.g., age, class, disability, ethnicity, race, religion, citizenship, and sexual orientation.) Though these concepts are linked, the term gender is not interchangeable with the terms women, sex, gender identity, or gender expression (USAID 2022).

Gender equality: Equal opportunities for men, women, boys and girls, and other gender diverse people to reach their full potential as individuals.

Gender equity: The process of ensuring women and men, boys and girls, and gender diverse individuals receive consistent, systematic, fair, and just treatment and distribution of benefits and resources. Equitable approaches are different from approaches in which resources are distributed equally to all persons or groups regardless of specific circumstances or needs. Gender equity is the process that needs to be followed to reach the outcome of gender equality (USAID 2022).

Gender integration: Incorporating gender equality principles and practices, issues and needs, and objectives throughout all phases of programming including, but not limited to, strategic planning, project and activity design, procurement, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation (USAID 2022).

Gender norms: Gender norms are social norms defining acceptable and appropriate actions for women and men in a given group or society. They are embedded in formal and informal institutions, nested in the mind, and produced and reproduced through social interaction. They play a role in shaping women and men's (often unequal) access to resources and freedoms, thus affecting their voice, power and sense of self (Cislaghi and Heise 2020).

Gender-sensitive programs or activities: Programming that acknowledge and/or consider how gender-based differences and opportunities could impact program results.

Gender transformative approach: An approach that seeks to fundamentally transform relations, structures, and systems that sustain and perpetuate gender inequality. This approach requires

1. Critically examining gender roles, norms, power dynamics, and inequalities
2. Recognizing and strengthening positive norms that support gender equity and equality and an enabling environment
3. Transforming underlying power dynamics, social structures, policies, and broadly held social norms that impact women and girls, men and boys, and gender diverse individuals and perpetuate gender inequalities.

This approach recognizes that gender equality cannot be achieved or sustained without an approach that includes all three of these components (USAID 2022).

Gender-transformative programming: Programming that challenges and shifts inequitable power dynamics between men, women, boys and girls, and other gender-diverse people by addressing the causes of gender-based inequalities and inequities across levels of the socio-ecological model, with an emphasis on higher levels that shape and influence the enabling environment for gender equality and equity (e.g., gender and social norms, policies, laws, institutions, resources).

Family engagement in nutrition: This approach entails programs and services working to gain better insights into family systems and to apply them in ways that meaningfully support different family members to improve nutrition outcomes. It also refers to a shared responsibility for nutrition within families that requires mutual respect for the roles and strengths each member has to offer (HHS 2022).

Men’s and boys’ engagement or male engagement: An intentional process that supports men and boys to participate fully and meaningfully in FP/SRH both individually and with their intimate partners (e.g., individual and partner contraceptive use), families, and communities in supportive, affirming, and gender-equitable ways (Breakthrough ACTION 2022)

Sex: People are categorized by sex (as males and females) according to biological and reproductive characteristics.

Social Norms: Social norms refer to a person’s beliefs about what they think people should or should not do in their community and their perceptions of typical and appropriate behavior within their social network represent social norms. These expectations are the perceived informal, primarily unwritten, rules that define acceptable, right, and obligatory actions within a given group or community. Social norms are learned, sometimes explicitly but often implicitly, and evolve over time (IRH 2021). Social norms are culturally embedded and represent underlying cultural meanings and values, power configurations, or shared cultural models (Edberg and Krieger 2020).

Women’s empowerment: When women and girls in all their diversity act freely, claim and exercise their rights, and fulfill their potential as full and equal members of society. All individuals have power within themselves; however, cultures, societies, and institutions create conditions that facilitate or undermine the possibilities for empowerment (USAID 2022).

Useful Resources

[Gender Analysis Toolkit For Health Systems](#)

Jhpiego. 2016. *Gender Analysis Toolkit for Health Systems*. Baltimore, MD: Maternal and Child Survival Program for USAID.

[Gender Guidance for Nutrition-Related Programmes](#)

MQSUN+. 2020. *Gender Guidance for Nutrition-Related Programmes*. Washington, DC: PATH.

[Gender-Based Violence Resource List and Good Practices for Agriculture and Other Sectors](#)

Young, E., J. Arney, and K. Cheney. 2020. *Gender-Based Violence Resource List and Good Practices for Agriculture and Other Sectors*. AWE Call Order 7200AA19F50025. Rockville, MD: EnCompass LLC.

[Integrating Gender in the Monitoring and Evaluation of Health Programs: A Toolkit](#)

Fehringer, Jessica, Brittany Iskarpatyoti, Bridgit Adamou, and Jessica Levy. 2017. *Integrating Gender in the Monitoring and Evaluation of Health Programs: A Toolkit*. Chapel Hill, NC: MEASURE Evaluation.

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Breakthrough ACTION. 2021. *Know, Care, Do: A Theory of Change for Engaging Men and Boys in Family Planning*. Washington, DC: Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs.

Cislaghi Beniamino and Lori Heise. 2020. "Gender norms and social norms: differences, similarities and why they matter in prevention science." *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 42:2:407–422. doi: 10.1111/1467-9566.13008

Edberg Mark and Laurie Krieger. 2020. "Recontextualizing the social norms construct as applied to health promotion." *SSM-Population Health*, 10:100560. doi: 10.1016/j.ssmph.2020.100560.

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USAID (U.S. Agency for International Development). 2019. *Multi-sectoral Nutrition Strategy 2014–2025*. Washington, DC: USAID.

USAID (U.S. Agency for International Development) Advancing Nutrition. 2019. *USAID Advancing Nutrition Gender Equality Strategy*. Arlington, VA: USAID Advancing Nutrition. www.advancingnutrition.org/resources/usaids-advancing-nutrition/resources/usaids-advancing-nutrition-gender-equality-strategy

USAID (U.S. Agency for International Development) Advancing Nutrition. 2020. *Kyrgyz Republic Gender Analysis and Action Plan*. Arlington, VA: USAID Advancing Nutrition.

USAID (U.S. Agency for International Development). 2021. *Global Food Security Strategy 2022-2026*. Washington, DC: USAID. www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Global-Food-Security-Strategy-FY22-26_508C.pdf

USAID (U.S. Agency for International Development). 2022. *Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy [DRAFT]*. Washington, DC: USAID.

Annex 2: Gender Analysis Framework

Technical Team:	Activity:
Activity Manager:	Supporting Gender Team Member (if applicable):

A gender analysis helps us understand how gender may affect activities and results, and to address potential unintended consequences and disparities between men and women.

How could the different roles and status of women, men, girls, and boys affect the design and implementation of your activity?	What are the potential consequences if the considerations are not taken into account?	What changes can you make to the activity to mitigate these consequences?	How will your (revised) activity impact men, women, boys, and girls? Will the impact on men, women, boys, and girls be the same or different?
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Access to and control over resources

Food, education, training, social capital, employment, information, services, markets

Practices, participation, and time use

Leisure time and workload, mobility, paid labor versus unpaid labor

Roles, knowledge, and perceptions

Food-based norms and preferences, who provides care, attitudes toward violence

Legal rights and status

Business ownership, land tenure and inheritance, protection against violence

Power (cross-cutting)

Ability to make decisions on production, diet and care; response to gender-based violence; distribution of power/in community groups

Annex 3: Example of a Completed Gender Analysis Framework

Activity: Landscape Assessment on Food Processing

A gender analysis helps us understand how gender may affect our activities and results, and to proactively address potential unintended consequences and disparities between men and women.

How could the different roles and status of women, men, girls, and boys affect the design and implementation of your activity?	What are the potential consequences if the above considerations are not taken into account during the activity design?	What changes can you make to the activity design to mitigate these consequences?	How will your (revised) activity impact men, women, boys, and girls? Will the impact on men, women, boys, and girls be the same or different?
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<p>Access to and control over resources Men and women, given their roles and status, may have different access to food to process, education, training and information about food processing and processed foods; social capital around food processing; access to employment in food processing; access to markets for inputs for food processing or for sale of processed foods; and access to credit and financing for food processing activities. Boys and girls may have different access to processed foods or contributing to paid or unpaid labor for food processing, either in the home or commercially.</p>	<p>The activity would miss potential key recommendations to improve food processing with regard to women’s access to food; education, training, and information about food processing and processed foods; social capital around food processing; access to employment in food processing; access to markets for inputs for food processing or for sale of processed foods; access to credit and financing for food processing activities; and access to processed foods for consumption.</p>	<p>Include the gender considerations in project design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation for projects related to food processing.</p>	<p>The revised activity that includes gender considerations, which were already included in PYI, may impact men and women by taking into consideration the 5 domains and ensuring that they are considered in the recommendations for gender analyses for Feed the Future interventions related to food processing.</p> <p>The impact on men and women may be different, depending on the country and context, since this is a global landscape assessment.</p>
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<p>Practices, participation, and time use Men and women, given their roles and status, may have different workloads that may support or inhibit their capacity to participate in food processing; may have different opportunities to participate in food processing given mobility; and/or different opportunities for paid versus unpaid labor in food processing.</p>	<p>Consider workloads that may support or inhibit capacity to participate in food processing; opportunities to participate in food processing given freedom or lack thereof to move around; and/or opportunities for paid versus unpaid labor in food processing.</p>	<p>Include the gender considerations in project design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation for projects related to food processing.</p>	
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How could the different roles and status of women, men, girls, and boys affect the design and implementation of your activity?

What are the potential consequences if the above considerations are not taken into account during the activity design?

What changes can you make to the activity design to mitigate these consequences?

How will your (revised) activity impact men, women, boys, and girls? Will the impact on men, women, boys, and girls be the same or different?

Roles, knowledge, and perceptions

Men and women have different roles that influence who is allowed to work outside the home; or, if items are produced for sale in the home, who has access to the individuals who may support the marketing and sale of items produced in the home. Food processing activities must work to “do not harm” if they work with women and ensure that if women’s access to work or resources changes, to mitigate any possibilities for any violence from households or society.

Consider how gender roles limit women’s access to income-generating activities around food processing, who has access to the individuals who may support the marketing and sale of items produced in the home, and issues related to gender-based violence if food processing activities alter roles and access to resources.

Include the gender considerations in project design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation for projects related to food processing.

Legal rights and status

Men and women, given their roles and access, may have different rights to own a business or land, or inherit a business or land that is used for food processing. The legal framework may not allow for protection of household members against gender-based violence.

Consider rights to own a business or land or inherit a business or land that is used for food processing, and the legal framework for protection of household members against gender-based violence.

Include the gender considerations in project design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation for projects related to food processing.

Power (cross-cutting)

Men and women may have different access to decision-making power related to producing processed foods, working in food processing, or buying and consuming processed foods.

Consider access to decision-making power related to producing processed foods, working in food processing, or buying and consuming safe, nutritious processed foods.

Include the gender considerations in project design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation for projects related to food processing.



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