What hinders men to participate in project activities linking nutrition and agriculture?

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Introduction

Women and children are the focus of most nutrition programmes. Though mobilization of both, men and women, is essential for a sustainable impact of those. This is because men are most often the main decision maker in the household. Therefore it is necessary to find out how men perceive nutrition programs and how their participation can be improved.

Methods

- Women from 50 Households in Kapchorwa, Uganda took part in a trials of improved practices (TIPs) on dietary diversity and food preservation
- The trials included several steps (see Fig. 3)
- Husbands were invited to participate in a solar dryer construction workshop and in the final evaluation workshop
- No incentives were paid, but travel allowance was provided for joining the final evaluation workshop
- Analysis of the data was performed through structured content analysis

Fig. 1, 2: Men participating in workshops (EaTSANE)

Results

37 men participated in the evaluation workshop whereas only 6 out 47 households where represented by a husband at the construction workshop. Reasons for nonparticipation and participation of men were given by men and women seperately.

Women articulated more reasons for their husband’s nonparticipation during their TIPs interviews than men did during the FGDS at the evaluation workshops. Moreover, only women described their husband’s disapproval of the project activities to the project team.

“he said that the project wasted a lot of time and did not give anything at the end” (wife) (Q5)

Internal factors like personal interests are mentioned as well as external factors like social gender norms.

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“it is always women coming so we thought only women were invited” (husband) (Q2)

“the husband said he doesn’t have time for that, it is for women only” (wife) (Q1)

Fig. 4: Internal and external influencers hindering or facilitating male participation in a solar dryer construction workshop in Kapchorwa

“it wanted to know whether the dryer works. We were told to come and construct the dryer, we received the letter and I wanted to know” (husband) (Q3)

“I cannot waste my time on things which are for free” (wife quoted her husband) (Q4)

Conclusion

- Social norms need to be addressed when educating men and women on healthy diets including vegetables (Q1, Q2)
- Alternative motivators need to be identified to improve participation of both, men and women, to enhance the impact of nutrition-agriculture projects (Q4, Q5)
- Men need to be able to talk about their experiences and attitudes towards the activities in a non-judgemental environment

Fig. 3: Timeline of activities for TIPs in Kapchorwa with number of participants in the workshops

Fig. 5: Men seeing the solar dryer for the first time during the workshops (EaTSANE)