



A4NH Consultation on Equity Research Priorities

CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH)

June 28 & 29, 2018

Kempinski Hotel, Accra, Ghana

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Abbreviations and acronyms

A4NH	CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health
ANH	Agriculture, Nutrition, and Health
CIAT	International Center for Tropical Agriculture
FANRPAN	Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network
GAIN	Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition
GEE	Gender, Equity, and Empowerment
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
ILRI	International Livestock Research Institute
LMIC	Low- and middle-income country
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OSP	Orange-flesh sweet potato
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SPEAR	Supporting Policies, Programs, and Enabling Action through Research

Objectives

1. Learn about equity work at partner organizations in Africa.
2. Inform partner organizations in Africa about A4NH's equity work.
3. Identify priorities for equity research, resource and information needs related to equity, and recommendations for A4NH's equity strategy.

Proceedings

The CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH) held two one-hour consultation sessions to learn about equity work at partner organizations in Africa, inform partners about A4NH's equity work, and identify priorities for equity research to guide creation of an equity strategy for the research program. These sessions were side events to the Agriculture, Nutrition, and Health (ANH) Academy Week conference at the Kempinski Hotel in Accra, Ghana, on April 28 and 29, 2018.

The two sessions were divided by research theme and together covered A4NH's five flagship research areas. The first session focused on equity issues in research on food systems (Flagship 1), biofortification (Flagship 2), and nutrition policies and programs (Flagship 4). The second session focused on equity issues in research on food safety (Flagship 3) and human health (Flagship 5).

Before the consultations, attendees and A4NH representatives were sent three questions to guide the discussion:

1. In the near term, what equity areas and research questions are your organization or research group addressing?
2. How does your organization or research group integrate equity into its work?
3. What resources, knowledge, and tools does your organization or research group need to effectively address these priorities?

John McDermott, director of A4NH, opened each session with a short introduction to A4NH. **Agnes Quisumbing**, senior gender advisor to A4NH, then introduced A4NH's Gender, Equity, and Empowerment (GEE) unit. After these introductions, **Gloria Folson**, research fellow at Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research at the University of Ghana Legon, facilitated an open discussion about equity research, focusing on the guide questions.

Equity work in A4NH and partner organizations in Africa

The consultations identified a variety of equity-related research projects that A4NH and its partner organizations are implementing in Africa.

The Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN), which is based in South Africa but currently works in 17 African countries, works to engage governments and policymakers around their policy research and analysis. Their policy work considers equity, including looking at voice and capacity development. They have recently started to look at youth involvement in policy issues, given the large youth population in Africa, and are planning to set up a policy academy similar to the ANH Academy to engage young people in policy processes. In addition, they have worked to address equity issues in nutrition in Tanzania by communicating nutrition information to families through school nutrition clubs.

International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) is interested in equity issues related to geography and migration. Since donors want them to work where they can show impact in the short term, they

often work repeatedly in the same communities. This pattern can unintentionally contribute to geographic inequities.

Millennium Promise is working at the community level to reach the MDGs and SDGs through rural livelihoods programs centered around agriculture. They look at how gender norms influence who grows which crops. For example, in the forest zone, men cultivate cash crops such as cocoa and women cultivate food crops. Illegal mining has created challenges for food crop production because miners often destroy fertile farm land. Millennium Promise is working with local and religious leaders to empower women to control the resources that they need for food production.

The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) in Ghana is applying the value chains for nutrition diagnostic, looking at key food baskets and interventions for improving diets. Different groups in the population have different nutritional needs and challenges. For example, there are many types of food in urban areas, but poor people have limited resources and often do not have the support of social networks that exist in rural areas.

Agribusiness Systems International is running a poultry and nutrition program in Burkina Faso that focuses on equity issues. They identify inequities in program sites before starting programming. They have developed modules to assess inequities in the communities through consultation and collaboration with local leaders.

The International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) is working to improve disease surveillance and breeding interventions to allow people to produce more food. For example, they work to link poor communities to markets to sell the food that they produce and connect women with access to credit and cooking devices so that they do not need to search for firewood.

A4NH and Wageningen University are engaging Ethiopian master's students in food systems research. HarvestPlus is developing tools to inform equitable targeting of biofortified crops at multiple levels. The University of Nairobi is working with both formal and informal institutions to address zoonotic diseases and food safety. Other groups are using community radio to communicate nutrition information to men and women; working with community leaders to address gender norms related to diet; incorporating equity into milk hygiene work; and interviewing policy makers about the importance of gender mainstreaming

Priorities for equity research in Africa

As they discussed their research and experiences, participants identified priority areas for equity research, as well as relevant resource and information needs. These insights can be used to guide the creation of A4NH's equity strategy.

Priority areas for equity research in Africa

The discussions highlighted several areas of equity that are relevant for agriculture, nutrition, and health research in Africa:

- Age and youth – Nutritional need and inequities can vary between age groups. In Africa, there is a large youth population. Youth should be addressed in research and young people should be engaged in policy making processes.
- Area – Aspects of marginalization can be different for people living in rural and urban areas. For example, food in urban areas is often abundant but inequitably distributed; in rural areas, food is sometimes more scarce, but people have stronger social support networks.

Pastoralist communities in rural areas also face unique equity issues and are often left out of agricultural research.

- Capacity development – Traditional agricultural training does not incorporate nutrition, so many farmers are not educated in this area. Agricultural extension can be used as a platform to promote nutrition-sensitive agricultural practices.
- Disability
- Education – Education is an important aspect of equity and platform for addressing inequities for both children and adults. For example, school feeding programs can be a platform for addressing nutritional inequities and should be targeted to both public and private schools. Schools can also be a platform for nutrition education. Sometimes the school child is the most literate family member, so communicating about nutrition through children can address equity issues.
- Gender – Both men and women participate in food production, diet, and health, and gender norms influence how this occurs. For example, in some parts of Nigeria, women traditionally should not eat eggs or the most nutritious parts of the meat.
- Geography – Inequities and nutritional outcomes vary by geographic area. There is currently little evidence of this variation at subnational or smaller scales. Also, researchers unintentionally neglect certain geographic areas when they return to the same project sites over time, which can unintentionally contribute to geographic inequities.
- Income and poverty

The discussions also delved in to some of the complex issues and challenges that arise when studying equity in Africa:

- *Intersectionality between different aspects of equity.* Researchers can start to look at intersectionality by disaggregating data by multiple categories at the same time. For example, poor women may experience different marginalization than poor men.
- *Understanding equity and marginalization on multiple levels.* Solutions based on national-level evidence may not be applicable to the local context. African countries contain diverse communities, cultures, and food systems. Researchers should work with local communities to identify and address important equity issues. Also, research and policy should benefit the communities that were studied. For example, marginalized communities often suffer the most from food safety outbreaks but benefit less from disease prevention activities.
- *Socio-cultural issues and perceptions* can be barriers to equitable food access and diets. For example, cultural norms may drive men and women grow different crops in the same area or limit women's ability to eat nutritious foods such as eggs and meat.

Resource and tools needed to address these equity issues

Several resources and tools will be needed to understand and address these areas of equity.

- *Agriculture to nutrition pathways that incorporate multiple aspects of equity and equality.* Current versions of the agriculture to nutrition pathways incorporate gender and women's empowerment. These pathways should be adapted to consider other areas of equity and equality, as well as different actors in the food system. The pathways can also be customized to consider the most important aspects of equity in a particular context and the role of local culture.
- *Indicators of equity and equality* in agriculture, nutrition, and health
- *A tool to help researchers avoid the unintended consequences* of interventions and policies for specific groups.

- *Donor support that considers equity issues.* Much work on equity and equality in the past has been donor driven, but donor priorities and requirements do not necessarily lead to the most equitable approaches. For example, focusing on geographic areas where we can show impact over a short period can perpetuate geographic inequities. Also, donor priorities do not always align with local needs and inequities.
- *Enhanced capacity in the research community to study equity and equality*

Approaches for understanding and addressing inequities

- *Use a food systems approach* to studying agriculture, nutrition, and health. This shift from research on value chains to food systems indicates that researchers have excluded certain groups of people over time. A food systems approach can help us to map the relevant actors and work with them in an inclusive way. The food systems and actors may vary between rural, peri-urban, and urban areas.
- *Engage both formal and informal markets* to make sure that food safety interventions are equitable. Many countries want to build modern food systems but focusing on only formal markets may exclude certain groups of people. Researchers and policy makers should encourage governments to create change that will not neglect marginalized groups. For example, introducing Aflasafe in only certain markets could create a stream of maize that is clean a stream of maize that is contaminated with aflatoxins.
- *Analyze existing datasets* that have been underutilized. Many large data sets have been collected about agriculture, nutrition, and health in African countries. Further analysis of these data could provide insights into equity and equality issues.
- *Make existing resources, knowledge, and tools* for equity research available to people working on research and implementation.
- *Create and strengthen a diverse set of partnerships.* Partnerships with local policy makers, research groups, and academic institutions can provide better understanding of the local and national context.
- *Engage in local, national, and international policy making* processes and discussions. For example, A4NH is present in its five focus countries through country teams and partners. This model allows them to identify entry points for sharing research results and engage continually with policy makers at multiple levels.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Lessons for consultation implementation

- *Send guide questions to the participants in advance.* This gives participants an idea of what will be discussed and allows them to prepare if needed. Some participants also sent written responses to the guide questions before the consultations.
- *Hire a local facilitator.* Gloria Folson, a researcher at a medical center in Accra, facilitated both consultations. It was useful to have someone familiar with both the local culture and relevant research in the region facilitate the sessions. In addition, having an external facilitator allowed A4NH staff to participate in the discussions, take notes, and deal with logistics.
- *Use a condensed format if needed.* As these sessions were side events to the ANH Academy Week conference, they were limited to one hour each. This length limited how much background could be shared about A4NH and partner organizations. However, the shorter period also forced a more focused discussion and kept participants engaged throughout the consultation.
- *Small groups encourage open participation.* We had fewer than 20 participants in each consultation. This allowed for a collegial environment in which everyone had the chance to contribute to the discussion.

Appendix 2: Agenda

8:00-8:20 AM	<p>WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS</p> <p>*Coffee and breakfast will be available during the consultation.</p> <p><i>Welcome and introduction to A4NH: John McDermott, Director, A4NH (5 min)</i></p> <p><i>Gender and equity in A4NH: Agnes Quisumbing, Senior Gender Advisor, Gender, Equity and Empowerment (GEE) Unit, A4NH (7 min)</i></p> <p><i>Introductions of attendees (8 min)</i></p>
8:20-8:55 AM	<p>PRIORITIES FOR EQUITY RESEARCH</p> <p>Attendees and A4NH representatives discuss the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In the near term, what equity areas and research questions are your organization or research group addressing?• How does your organization or research group integrate equity into its work?• What resources, knowledge, and tools does your organization or research group need to effectively address these priorities?
8:55-9:00 AM	<p>CLOSING</p>

Appendix 3: List of participants

Thursday, June 28	Friday, June 29
Noora-Lisa Aberman (IFPRI)	Wema Adere (ILRI)
Abdul-Razak Abizari (University for Development Studies, Ghana)	Silvia Alonso (ILRI)
Francis Amagloh (University for Development Studies, Ghana)	Francis Amagloh (University for Development Studies, Ghana)
Margaret Amar-Klemsu (Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research, University of Ghana)	Kebede Amenu (College of Veterinary Medicine and Agriculture, Addis Ababa University)
Inge Brouwer (Wageningen University and Research)	Salome Bukachi (University of Nairobi)
Namukolo Covic (A4NH/IFPRI)	Namukolo Covic (A4NH/IFPRI)
Gloria Folson (Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research, University of Ghana)	Gloria Folson (Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research, University of Ghana)
Stuart Gillespie (IFPRI)	Janet Hodur (A4NH/IFPRI)
Keith Lividini (HarvestPlus)	Lizzy Igbine (Nigerian Women Agro Allied Farmers Association)
Mercy Lungaho (CIAT)	Mercy Lungaho (CIAT)
Elena Martinez (A4NH/IFPRI)	Vivian Maduekeh (Food Health Systems Advisory, Partners in Food Solutions)
Mduduzi Mbuya (GAIN)	Elena Martinez (A4NH/IFPRI)
Joseph Mensah-Homiah (Millennium Promise, Columbia University)	John McDermott (A4NH/IFPRI)
John McDermott (A4NH/IFPRI)	Agnes Quisumbing (IFPRI)
Agnes Quisumbing (IFPRI)	Jordania Valentim (GAIN)
Mahama Saaka (University for Development Studies, Ghana)	Sita Zougouri (Agribusiness Systems International)
Simbarashe Sibanda (FANRPAN)	
Amanda Wyatt (A4NH/IFPRI)	
Saudatu Zakariah-Akoto (Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research, University of Ghana)	