

**Theme 5. Gender and Nutrition Sensitive Policies to Promote Inclusive
Agri-Food System Transformation
(Moderator: *Veronique Theriault*)**

This session will feature highlights of research conducted by FSP-IL on the cross-cutting issues of gender and nutrition sensitive policies, followed by insights and comments from panelists.

DETAILED OUTLINE

A. Introduction: Veronique Theriault (3-5 minutes)

B. Presentations (12 minutes/each)

- The Integrated Framework for Gender Analysis of Nutrition Policy (Malawi) (Elizabeth Mkandawire; +5 minutes Video)
- How Paying Greater Attention to Gender-Defined Roles in Households and Communities can Contribute to Address Malnutrition (Nigeria) (Todd Benson)
- Gender and Diet Diversity (Mali) (Melinda Smale)
- Implications of the Ongoing Diet Transformation on Nutrition (East & Southern Africa) (Dave Tschirley)
- Emerging Early Actions for Bending the Curve in Sub-Saharan Africa's Nutrition Transition (East & Southern Africa) (Steve Haggblade)

C. Discussions: (30 minutes)

- Gender: Krista Jacobs, USAID (7 minutes)
- Nutrition: Tim Quick, USAID (7 minutes)
- Presenters' responses (16 minutes)

D. Q&A from the audience: 20 minutes

PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS

The Integrated Framework for Gender Analysis in Nutrition Policy (GINA)

~ Elizabeth Mkandawire

Gender is often misconstrued to mean women, when in fact it refers to men and women's roles, responsibilities and relationships. Nutrition policies, in particular, understandably emphasize women because children's nutrition is linked to women's nutrition during pregnancy. However, in low-income countries, socially constructed gender patterns often limit women's decision-making and access to resources in the household, preventing women and as a result, children, from accessing nutritious food. Policymakers are often influenced by gender norms prevalent within their own societies. These norms influence policy decisions. Using Malawi as a case study, we found that Malawi's nutrition policies reinforced the role of women in nutrition, neglecting the vital role of men in maternal and child nutrition. Community members' interpretations of gender differed significantly. Men reported taking up work that was previously perceived to be women's responsibility, shifting traditional gender roles. However, the design of men's involvement interventions reinforced inequalities. For example, bylaws that support withholding services from women who attend antenatal care without their partners discriminate against women. While policymakers may appreciate the benefits of involving men in nutrition, they are unable to recognize flaws in policy design that may lead to unintended

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gender outcomes. Interventions by the team led to the recently adopted nutrition policy being far less gender-blind compared to its predecessor. Dialogue between policy-makers and communities is needed to ensure that policies are responding to emerging gender constraints and challenge the systems that reproduce gender inequalities.

Key documents on this work:

Babu, S., Jayne, T., Hendriks, SL., Mkandawire, E., Boughton, D. and Meyer, F. 2019. FSP Synthesis Report 3 (forthcoming).

Mkandawire, E and Hendriks, SL. 2017. The Integrated Framework for Gender Analysis of Nutrition Policy, [FSP Policy Research Brief 32](#).

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How paying greater attention to gender-defined roles in households and communities can contribute to addressing malnutrition in northern Nigeria ~ *Todd Benson*

Authors: Todd Benson (presenter), Mulubrhan Amare, Motunrayo Oyejemi, and Olusegun Fadare

Close to half of all under-fives in northern Nigeria were stunted in their growth in 2013, compared to 22 percent in the rest of the country. Trends in stunting show no progress. To guide programming, a rapid scoping study of the drivers of child undernutrition in northern Nigeria was conducted in Kebbi and Bauchi states in April 2017. The particular gendered structure of communities and households in northern Nigeria was found to be a basic determinant of the poor nutritional outcomes seen there. While the challenges this presents is apparent across all of the underlying determinants of nutritional status, it is most clearly seen with regards to the poor nutritional care infants and young children receive, particular around feeding practices. Given the limited education most mothers of young children have received and the many social constraints to their obtaining further information due to women commonly being secluded in their households after marriage, ensuring that they have the knowledge to effectively provide proper nutritional care is a significant challenge. Efforts to strengthen flows of information on optimal nutritional care practices requires a ‘whole community’ approach, rather than only targeting mothers. This presentation considers several of the information channels that reach young mothers in communities in northern Nigeria and how they could be used to enable mothers to provide good nutritional care so that their children have much stronger potential to live healthy, productive, and long lives.

Key document on this work:

FSP Research Paper 82: [Study of the determinants of chronic malnutrition in northern Nigeria: Qualitative evidence from Kebbi and Bauchi states](#)

FSP Research Paper 83: [Study of the determinants of chronic malnutrition in northern Nigeria: Quantitative evidence from the Nigeria Demographic and Health Surveys.](#)

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Fertilizer Subsidy Effects on the Diet Quality of Farm Women in Mali

~ *Melinda Smale*

Authors: Melinda Smale and Veronique Theriault

Agricultural policies affect the diets of rural households through various channels. Here, we take the example of a policy that has been widely promulgated across nations of Sub-Saharan Africa—the fertilizer (input) subsidy. Although an impressive body of literature has measured the impacts of fertilizer subsidies in Sub-Saharan Africa, we find less than a handful so far that examine nutritional implications, and few have documented effects on women within male-headed households. In this paper we focus our analysis on correlation between the amount of subsidized fertilizer received and the diet quality of women of reproductive age who manage plots within male-headed households in Mali. We utilize survey data of 5900 women of reproductive age who were interviewed regarding their consumption in the preceding 24 hours. We constructed two indicators of the diet quality of women: 1) minimum adequate dietary diversity score, and 2) women’s dietary diversity score. We find a disturbingly low proportion of women (43%) who meet the minimum adequate score of consuming foods from 5 or more of 10 key food groups in the day preceding the survey. Sample statistics suggest that women managing plots planted to crops targeted by the subsidy were more likely to consume sources of food rich in iron, but also to consume snacks or meals outside the home, and sugar (mostly added to tea or coffee). Finally, we found that the overall effect of the fertilizer subsidy on the diet quality of women who manage plots of targeted crops was likely to be very small in magnitude, although the association between kgs per ha and the count of food groups is statistically significant.

Key document on this work:

Smale, M. V. Theriault, and A. Assima. 2018. Fertilizer Subsidy Effects on the Diet Quality of Farm Women in Mali. [FSP Research Paper 121](#).

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Nutritional implications of the diet transformation: Evidence from Tanzania ~ *David Tschirley*

Authors: D. Tschirley, R. Dhar, D. DeYoung, T. Charles, F. Chuma

Diets across the developing world are becoming more purchased, perishable, processed, and prepared and consumed away from home. Nutritionally, the outstanding result of this diet transformation is a dramatic change in the mix of nutritional challenges facing consumers and policy makers: undernutrition (wasting, stunting, underweight) falls rapidly, and over-nutrition (overweight and obesity) and its associated non-communicable diseases, rise even more rapidly. Using data from Tanzania’s National Panel Survey, we show: (1) the ratio of households with problems of overnutrition to those with undernutrition doubled in six years (2008-2014), from 40:100 to 80:100; (2) measures of urbanicity are strongly positively associated with individual likelihood of being overweight or obese, and (3) moving from the 20th to the 80th percentile in processed food consumption is associated with an eight percentage point rise in the probability of overweight/obesity. Tanzania, and nearly every other low income country, is rapidly entering Popkin’s nutrition transition, and doing so in a policy vacuum. They need urgently to learn from regulatory approaches in other areas of the world to stem the tide of overweight, obesity, and their associated non-communicable diseases.

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Emerging Early Actions for Bending the Curve in Sub-Saharan Africa's Nutrition Transition

~ *Steve Haggblade*

Authors: Haggblade, Duodu, Kabasa, Minnaar, Ojijo and Taylor

Sub-Saharan Africa is the last region to undergo the nutrition transition. This transition emerges where growing urbanization, changing diets and reductions in physical activity associated with urban lifestyles that together translate into growing rates of overweight, obesity and related non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Apart from South Africa, where over 40% of the adult population is now overweight, most sub-Saharan African countries have come late to the nutrition transition. As a result, Africans enjoy a rare opportunity to learn from experiences and mistakes made elsewhere in order to undertake pro-active early actions to “bend the curve” onto a more favorable trajectory. This presentation and associated article explore emerging responses aimed at “bending the curve” in sub-Saharan Africa’s nutrition transition in order to steer public health outcomes onto a healthier trajectory. After reviewing broad trends in African nutrition transitions, the paper examines early responses in three African countries at different stages of food system transformation: South Africa (advanced stage), Ghana (intermediate), and Uganda (early stage). Comparison with broader international experience suggests four promising early actions: a) maternal and child health programs that simultaneously address short-term undernutrition problems while at the same time helping to reduce future tendencies toward overweight; b) regulatory and fiscal actions to limit access to unhealthy foods; c) unconventional educational efforts centered on oral hygiene; and d) supply-side efforts to increase food industry motivation, capacity and responsiveness to emerging public health concerns.

Key document on this work:

Haggblade et al. (2016). Emerging Early Actions to Bend the Curve in Sub-Saharan Africa’s Nutrition Transition. *Food and Nutrition Bulletin* 1-23. DOI: 10.1177/0379572116637723