

A Partnership Model Measuring Linkages between Nutrition and Gender Equality

Summary of virtual exchange delivered June 10th 2020

Globally, there is increased recognition that harmonized and quality data are needed for nutrition interventions as well as how to measure the intersection of gender and nutrition. Nutrition International sought to bridge some of these gaps through development of their Nutrition Intervention Monitoring System toolkit, or “NIMS.” The aims of this toolkit are to standardize survey data collection, assure quality and timely data reporting and to integrate gender-related data into NIMS that meet next-generation monitoring needs.

To further address these needs a collaboration between Nutrition International, the Campbell Collaboration and the University of Toronto was established. This collaboration is part of the Canadian Collaborative for Global Health launched by the Canadian Partnership for Women and Children’s Health (CanWaCH), with funding from Global Affairs Canada. This evolving multi-year project has used an iterative process to develop outputs, while recognizing and building on the unique strengths of each institution. The Campbell Collaboration is leading research on the gender components while the University of Toronto is leading the research for updates to the NIMS toolkit. NI provides program-related technical support and contextualization to both institutions as well as managing in-country activities.

Research for updates to the NIMS toolkit involved a formative review of the first round of NIMS survey protocols to assess needs and gaps in sampling, sample size and survey design and formative analysis on data quality and validation measures. This process resulted in a streamlined and standardized NIMS toolkit which includes generic sampling protocols, questionnaires and tabulation plans, quality assurance checklists, ready to use SPSS syntax, standardized metrics for implementing quality control and quality assurance and incorporation of program-related gender indicators.

The Campbell Collaboration team conducted a literature review of gender and empowerment indicators used in health and nutrition research. The results were used to inform the development of a statistical model of the relationship between women and adolescent girls’ empowerment and their nutritional status in East and West Africa. The results of the modelling and the literature review were used to select a series of 13 gender indicators that were piloted in the 2019 NIMS surveys. These indicators assess women’s empowerment regarding their economic power, asset ownership, freedom of movement, time use and household decision-making power. Based on the results of the statistical modelling, it was recommended to include indicators that assess access to information, control over sexual and reproductive health decision-making, and views on gender norms.

Feedback from survey teams and country-level project officers indicated that the NIMS toolkit harmonization reduced the workload during tool development and mapping of indicators to questions, thus liberating time for additional quality checks. By creating harmonized survey tools, NI ensured that data collected were closely aligned with global indicators but were correctly adjusted to fit program needs. Application of these procedures and quality metrics allowed NI program officers to quickly report on the status of nutrition programs, easily demonstrate the level of quality of data and indicators produced and incorporate gender sensitive data for better informed interventions.

Next steps in this project include analysing the gender-related data and conducting a formal internal evaluation of the NIMS survey procedures and updating the toolkit based on these findings. The NIMS toolkit will also be expanded and adapted for use in more frequent monitoring settings and a decision tool will be developed for NI’s Program Managers to streamline how gender can be integrated into monitoring and surveys. Finally, a centralized and harmonization database is being developed to facilitate data storage, access and reporting, with it now being possible to merge data across all NI programs.

For further inquiries: