



FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Peanut

Gender & Youth as a Stand-Alone Research Area



Jessica Marter-Kenyon, IL Director's Meeting, 9/2023



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Our Mandate

Agricultural Research *for Development*

- FtF/IL goal: reduce global hunger, poverty and undernutrition by **“addressing the root causes of poverty and hunger”**
 - Discrimination
 - Low education
 - Underemployment
 - Lack of access to contraception
 - Unequal access to power
 - Insecure rights
 - Climate change
 - Access to water
 - Unfair trade rules
 - Burden of disease
 - Financial exclusion
 - Access to childcare
 - Conflict and violence
 - Weak infrastructure
 - Colonialism, patriarchy, capitalism



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Context

Agriculture = a human-environment system

- Comprises both human and non-human elements
 - Requires more than technical & biophysical knowledge (**social science**)
- Conditioned by relationships of power
 - Without explicit attention to the poor, women, youth, and other marginalized groups, we won't achieve development gains (**gender and social inclusion**)



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Context

Agricultural Research *for Development*

- Key to greater impact from USAID research investments lies in “putting the culture back in agriculture” (Cernea, 2006)
 - **“Ignoring the content & methods of social science research has been damaging...** imagine dozens of highly trained & well-equipped scientists, arriving with all sincerity, zeal, and commitment in... the developing world, attempting to solve their agricultural problems without any understanding of those societies, their structures, & systems! It would be laughable if it weren't so tragic” (Swaminathan, 2007)
 - Goals of germplasm management & production intensification can't be complete w/out **intensified socio-cultural research** that keep... research & strategies **relevant to pro-poor development & impact oriented** (Kassam, 2021)



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Context

→ A (Slow & Incomplete) Paradigm Shift

- Institutional attention to social dimensions, inclusion c. 1970s
- Better recognition of social sci. but still struggle 50 yrs later
 - Funding, training, integration of findings into systems and policies
- Signs of change
 - Donors increasingly focused on root causes, gender equity, social inclusion and interdisciplinarity



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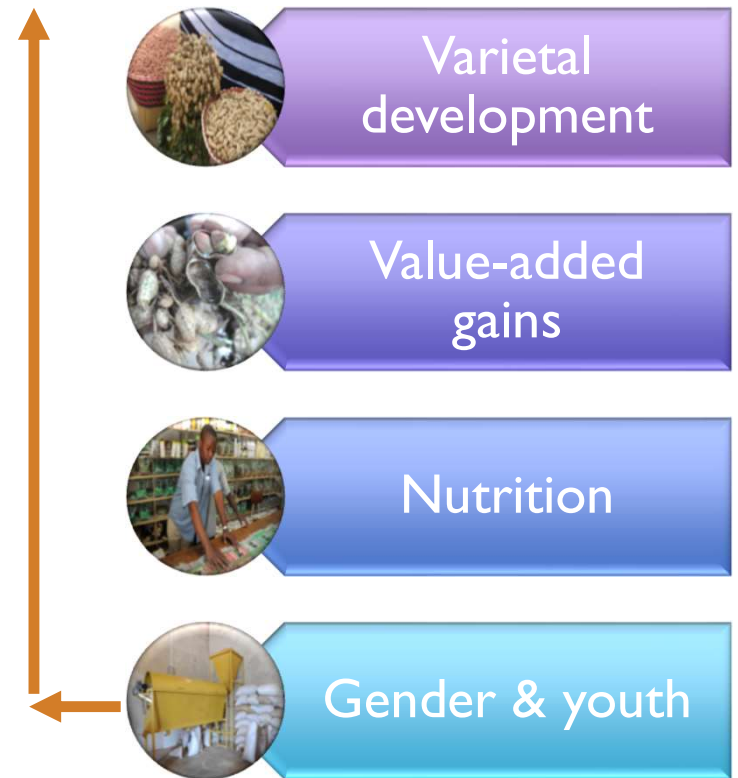
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Our Approach

Gender & Youth in the Peanut IL

Dual approach:

- Gender and youth is a **cross-cutting theme** and a focus of capacity-building
- Gender and youth is also a **stand-alone area** of research
 - ~ 1/3 research budget
 - 7+ projects in SSA
 - 50+ scientists and grad students



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How have we benefitted?

The map shows five target countries in West and East Africa. Red arrows indicate the following research topics:

- Land tenure systems
- Climate change
- Household structure and fertility
- Time poverty
- Care work
- Social/HH impacts of school meals
- Out-migration
- Youth aspirations
- Commercialization
- Contract mechanisms
- Intrahousehold decision-making

Legend: ■ PIL Target Countries

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How have we benefitted?

2. Changing mindsets + cross-pollination



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How have we benefitted?

3. Increasing our value to other actors



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CONCLUSION

- Beyond cross-cutting: make gender, inclusion and the social dimensions of agriculture a major, well-funded **area of inquiry** within AR4D programs (inc. Innovation Labs)

... AND QUESTIONS!

- Is this model (i.e. gender as a stand-alone area of inquiry) being applied in other IIs?
- What do you think about it? What are the implications?



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Thank you!

INNOVATION LAB FOR PEANUT:
[HTTPS://FTFPEANUTLAB.CAES.UGA.EDU/](https://FTFPEANUTLAB.CAES.UGA.EDU/)

CONTACT:
JESSICA MARTER-KENYON
JSMK@UGA.EDU



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