



# 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



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



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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



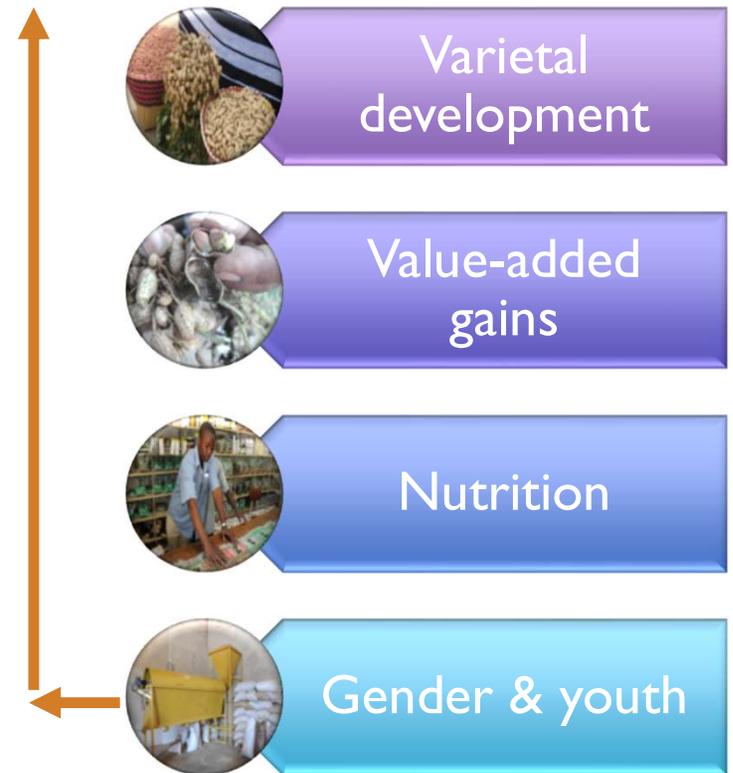
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# Gender & Youth in the Peanut IL

### 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



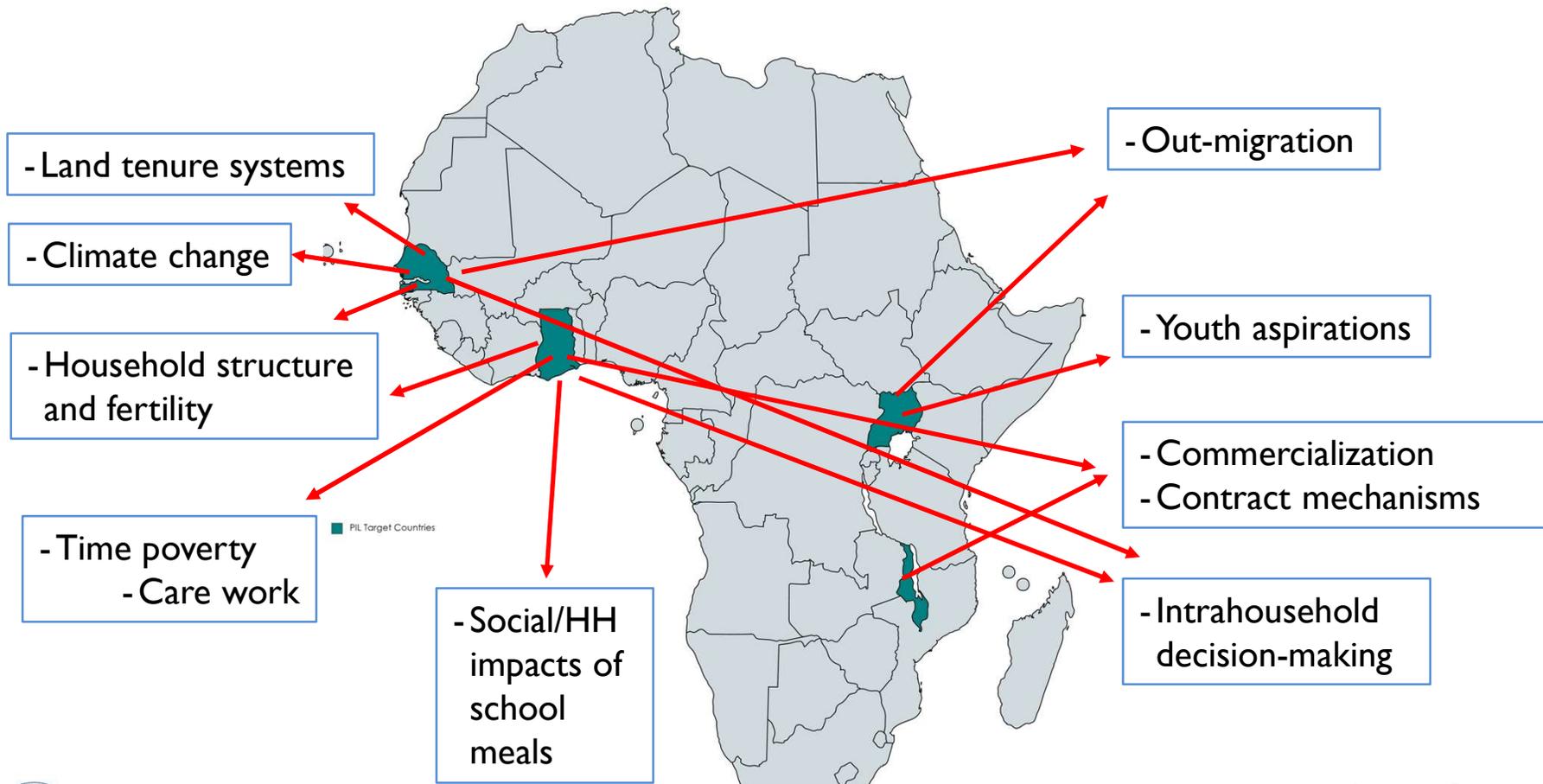


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## How have we benefitted?

### 1. Deeper understanding of root causes



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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!

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