

The COVID-19 pandemic revealed the **vulnerability** of agricultural households in Sub-Saharan Africa, and the marginalized groups within them. While COVID-19 is unprecedented, other crises like political conflicts, droughts, infestations, and others related to climate change, are increasing. **Agricultural institutions implementing gender and nutrition-sensitive agriculture interventions must be able to adapt.**

COVID-19 Challenges for Agricultural Households

1. Decreased **market access** (for buying and selling)
2. Declining **nutritional quality**
3. Strained **household dynamics** between women & men
4. Lack of **income opportunities**
5. Reduced **farm-level productivity** due to lockdowns and diminished access to high-quality inputs
6. Increased **emotional burden** and **stress**

Lessons Learned



Before a Crisis

Deliberate Preparation

1 Integrate critical gender & nutrition concepts into habits and rhetoric.

A focus on gender and nutrition 'mainstreaming' creates advance buy-in that ensures gender and nutrition issues remain priority.

2 Build capacity of program staff around gender and nutrition.

Staff prepared with best practices around gender and nutrition can ensure responses are sensitive across each program and area of expertise.

3 Build and leverage key relationships.

Public and private sector actors can leverage networks to reduce risk in programmatic activities.

4 Develop robust data systems.

Have a healthy Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) system in place before a crisis, with appropriate gender and nutrition indicators.

5 Develop a Crisis Action Plan.

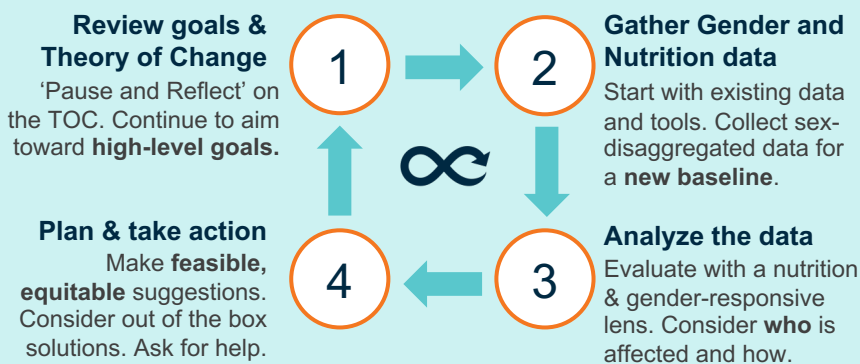
The organization-level general emergency plan provides overall safety and communication guidance while preparing for gender and nutrition-sensitive responses.



During a Crisis

Thoughtful Reaction

6 Apply a systematic process for data-driven, comprehensive adaptation.



Repeat: Crises change quickly. Plan for ongoing feedback and re-assessment.



After a Crisis

Continued Care

7 Remember that recovery takes time.

Smallholders will be recovering for years, so remain gender and nutrition-sensitive as time use, total wealth, and income streams are now distorted.

8 Look for emerging opportunities to promote high-level goals.

As market dynamics, like pricing, labor sources, and inputs availability, will have shifted in the crisis, seek out and take advantage of emerging gaps.

9 Learn from the crisis.

'Pause and reflect' to understand what worked, what did not, and why. Then update crisis plans, collect data, and plan resilience into programs.

10 Advocate and raise awareness.

Help governments and partners understand consequences of crisis-related policies and effects on smallholders and market systems.