

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.

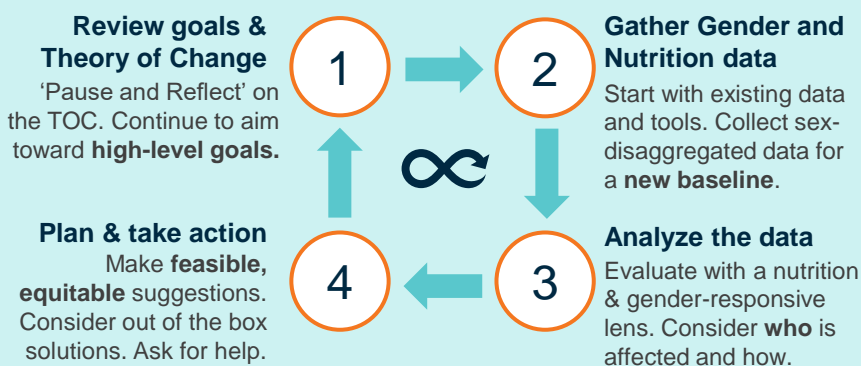
The organization-level general emergency plan provides overall safety and communication guidance while preparing for gender and nutrition-sensitive responses.



### 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.