

THE IMPORTANCE OF GENDER IN STRENGTHENING FOOD AND NUTRITIONAL RESILIENCE OF HOUSEHOLDS IN MADAGASCAR

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ABSTRACT

There is enough food in the world to feed all human beings (BITTMAN, 2013), however, malnutrition and hunger are at an intolerably high level. Madagascar is one of the countries most affected by these scourges. Indeed, malnutrition remains a major public health and socio-economic problem in the country, affecting a large part of the population, especially infants and pregnant and lactating women (PNAN-III, 2017).

Madagascar is a country where the majority of the population lives mainly from agriculture (more than 70 % of actives, but only approx. 26% of the GDP). Today, it is unanimously recognized that women play a central role in the agricultural sector. In particular, they supply the bulk of the labour force: 60% of women of working age work in the agricultural sector. The woman also plays an important role in the food security of the communities (management of food stocks ...).

Facing this, in the country, gender inequality exists and persists in many regions, especially in rural zones. Despite the significant role that women play in agricultural activities, and in particular in the food security of the household, They are generally placed at disadvantage relative to men, mainly in regards of access to and control over resources and means of production (land , improved seed, fertilization, agricultural equipment, credit, information and technologies, etc.). In the household, they also have a low decision-making power.

Equity in gender relations and food and nutrition resilience within the household are closely linked. Promoting women's access to productive resources also seems to be a solution, but they must also contribute to social and economic change (BRIDGE, 2014). Women often play a greater role in ensuring food safety and quality, and are often responsible for processing and preparing food in their homes. Giving them importance, for example, nutrition education would help reduce micronutrient deficiencies within the household and improved her cooking capacities. An approach favoring men's positive commitment to children and women will also act as a multiplier effect of change at the individual and community level.

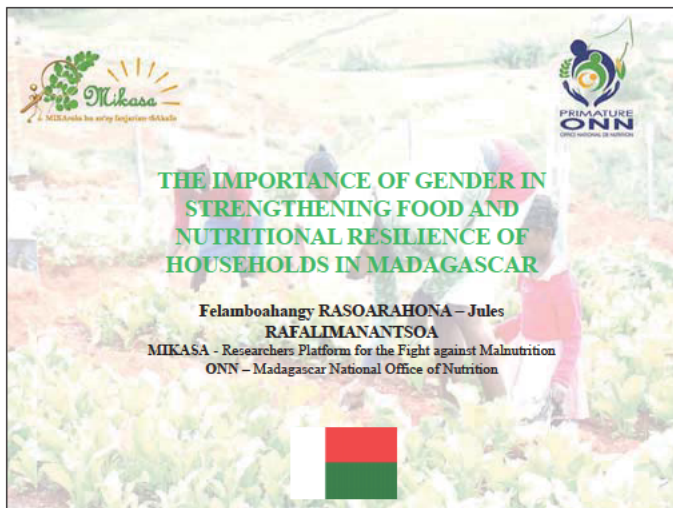
There is, however, another area of hope: increasing women's access to high levels of education, particularly in nutrition-related fields: for example, gender parity is almost attained in the training of agricultural engineers. This development can greatly help to promote gender equality.

KEYWORDS

Gender equity, households, rural, empowering woman, Madagascar.

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- Introduction:

- There is **enough food** in the world to feed all human beings (BITTMAN, 2013), however, **malnutrition** and **hunger** are at an **intolerably high level**
- Madagascar: one of the countries **most affected** by these scourges
- Malnutrition/hunger affecting a large part of the population, especially **infants** and **pregnant** and **lactating women** (PNAN III, 2017)
- Madagascar: 80% rural population, Malagasy women play a central **role** in the **agricultural sector**

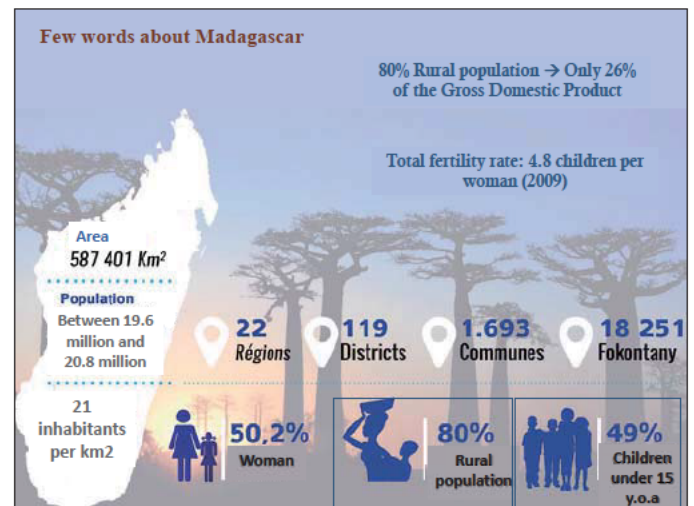
➔ **How « promoting gender equity » can help in strengthening food and nutritional resilience of households in Madagascar?**

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Presentation plan

- Few words about Madagascar
- Food and Nutrition situation in Madagascar
- Gender equity in Madagascar
- Promoting Women for Food security

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Food and nutrition situation in Madagascar

ALARMING SITUATION (1/2)

- 1/3 of households are in a situation of severe food insecurity (33% in rural zone and 18,7% in the capital and the large urban centers)
- Insufficient diet in terms of quality and quantity (not meeting daily energy requirements)
- ENSMOND 2012-2013 (National survey on the follow-up of the Millennium Goals):
 - * diet is poor in quantity in 76% of households;
 - * and in quality in 84%.

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Food and nutrition situation in Madagascar

ALARMING SITUATION (2/2)


- Very **weak agricultural speculation** for all essential crops (rice, cassava, corn, sweet potato)

Because of several problems: Low utilization of inputs, lack of farmer training, outdated traditional agricultural practices, lack of hydro-agricultural infrastructure...

- One child out of two suffers from chronic malnutrition:

8% of children under 5 suffer from acute malnutrition

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Food and nutrition situation in Madagascar

National Action Plan for Nutrition III (2017-2021)

Specific Sensitive


Communication, Risk and Disaster Management

Governance

"Reduce the rate of chronic malnutrition among children under 5 years from 47% to 38% nationally by 2021"

Nutrition, a guarantee of human capital for sustainable social and economic development

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Gender Equity in Madagascar

- Women supply the bulk of the production force: **60%** of them of working age work in the agricultural sector (INSTAT, 2015)
- Women also play an important role in the **food security** of communities (management of food stocks ...)

➔ **Gender inequality exists and persists in many regions**


- Women are generally placed at **disadvantage relative to men**, mainly in regards of **access to and control over resources and means of production** (land, improved seed, fertilization, agricultural equipment, credit, information and technologies ...)
- In the household, they also have a **low decision-making power**

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Gender Equity in Madagascar


Some examples ... (1/2)



- Access to factors of production is almost impossible for women either through **ignorance, tradition, or the distribution of roles within society**
- The man who "**nourishes the family**" is looking for work outside his home area. The money he sends to his wife is **derisory** and can not support the needs of his family, especially food. Sometimes he also has a **second wife**.


⇒ **Food insecurity affects mainly women and children.**

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Gender Equity in Madagascar


Some examples ... (1/2)



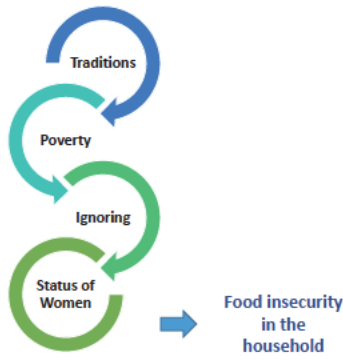
Socio-cultural practices negatively affect the nutritional status of pregnant, lactating women and young children:

- Men have the privilege of being served first, having the best shares and imposing their food preferences
- The practice of polygamy puts women in competition in order to have the consideration of the husband
- The woman has no special nutritional status during pregnancy. They continue to work on the fields

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Gender Equity in Madagascar



Traditions

Poverty

Ignoring

Status of Women

➔ **Food insecurity in the household**

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Promoting Women for Food security




Equity in gender relations

Food and nutrition resilience within the household

Promoting women's access to productive resources also seems to be a solution, but they must also contribute to social and economic change (BRIDGE, 2014)

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Promoting Women for Food security


Concrete case 1: Nutrition education to help reduce micronutrient deficiencies

Inadequate food practices are often the cause of malnutrition

It is necessary to educate women who are primarily concerned with feeding the household:

- Definition of a **balanced diet**
- **Dietary requirements** according to age, sex and activity (pregnant and lactating women)
- Association of food groups to prepare **balanced meals**
- **Role of food** and health problems related to dietary deficiencies
- Role of **breastfeeding**

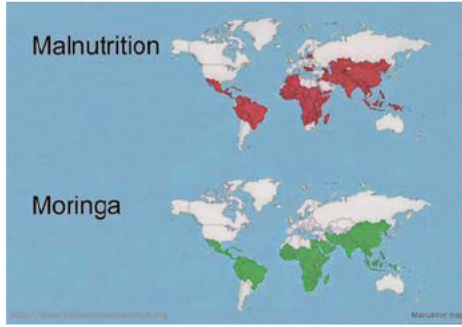
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Promoting Women for Food security

Concrete case 1: Nutrition education to help reduce micronutrient deficiencies

Moringa oleifera : a miracle tree?



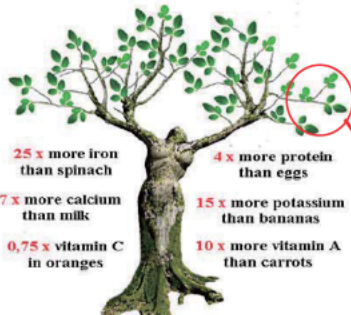
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Promoting Women for Food security


Concrete case 1: Nutrition education to help reduce micronutrient deficiencies

Moringa oleifera : a miracle tree?




- Unrecognized Virtues
- Considered as "food of the poor" yet with multiple virtues
- Abundant in the coasts of Madagascar
- Can be consumed by young children, pregnant and lactating women

25 x more iron than spinach
17 x more calcium than milk
0,75 x vitamin C in oranges
4 x more protein than eggs
15 x more potassium than bananas
10 x more vitamin A than carrots



www.miracletrees.org

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Promoting Women for Food security

Concrete case 1: Nutrition education to help reduce micronutrient deficiencies

Moringa oleifera : a miracle tree?

NUTRITION EDUCATION

- To make known the virtues of the plant
- How to consume it while maintaining its nutritional value
- Provide nutrient recipes from the plant
- Produce the plant and transform it (powder)

→

- Contributing to household food security (especially young children, pregnant and breastfeeding women)
- Create a value chain: one part will be destined for household consumption and the remainder may be destined for sale

↓

Income generating activity = Promoting women


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Promoting Women for Food security

Concrete case 1: Nutrition education to help reduce micronutrient deficiencies

Moringa oleifera : a miracle tree?

Malagasy's women preparing Moringa leaf



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Promoting Women for Food security

Concrete case 1: Nutrition education to help reduce micronutrient deficiencies

« Eating Food with rainbow color »

- Madagascar has a very **wide diversity** in terms of **fruits** and **vegetables**
- Conveying this type of simple message can help to bridge **micronutrient deficiencies** through **food diversification**




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Promoting Women for Food security
Concrete case 2: Nutrition education to improve cooking capacity

Cassava

- During the lean season, **cassava** is the **staple food** in rural areas in Madagascar
- However, consumed alone, this food is **not nutritionally balanced**

Transforming cassava in a simple way to make it more appetizing

Provide more nutritious recipes by combining cassava with other ingredients




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Promoting Women for Food security
Concrete case 2: Nutrition education to improve cooking capacity

Cassava




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- Improving the **nutritional status** of the households
- Eventually, creating an **income source** for women

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Promoting Women for Food security
Concrete case 3: Urban Agriculture



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Promoting Women for Food security

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Increasing women's access to high levels of education

Another area of hope to promote gender equity



For example, in the training of Agricultural Engineers: parity is almost obtained

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Conclusion

- Women play a **greater role** in ensuring food safety and quality
- **Gender inequality** still persists and this can have multiple adverse consequences
- An approach favoring **men's positive commitment to children and women** will also act as a multiplier effect of change at the individual and community level

➔ **Promoting women = one solution to the fight against malnutrition**

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