

IGNITE Partners Discuss Applied Research Findings on Gender and Nutrition Integration in Agriculture

Practical findings collected over three years were discussed by representatives of national, regional, and continental African institutions and organizations.

Nairobi, Kenya, January 25, 2023/ -- The IGNITE project (*Impacting Gender & Nutrition through Innovative Technical Exchange in Agriculture*) organized a Research Summit in Nairobi, January 23 through 25, to share findings and evidence collected around six broad programmatic learning questions concerning ways of effectively and efficiently increasing women's empowerment in agriculture as well as equitable consumption of nutritious diets. Over 70 participants attended the Summit, representing more than 20 IGNITE partners from Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, and Kenya. The IGNITE Research Summit has brought together practitioners from the private sector, NGOs, governmental agencies, policy making agencies, researchers and academia.

With escalating food and nutrition insecurity in the world, Africa has not been spared. According to [the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022](#), 828 million people suffered from hunger in 2021, including 278 million people in Africa. There are many causes behind food and nutrition [in]security, and one that is often overlooked is the gender dimension.

With a conviction that gender inclusion has an influence on food and nutrition security in Africa, the IGNITE project was launched in 2018. IGNITE is a five-year investment, implemented by [Tanager](#), in partnership with [Laterite](#), and [60 Decibels](#) to strengthen African institutions' ability to integrate nutrition and mainstream gender into their way of doing business and their agriculture interventions.

"IGNITE is bringing a modern gender and nutrition lens to agriculture with 18 partner organizations who are agricultural institutions, service providers, regulators and universities with a large continental reach and influence in 17 African countries," said Maureen Munjua, IGNITE Team Leader and Tanager Country Representative in Kenya.

At the IGNITE Research Summit, the results of 16 decision-focused research studies, conducted jointly with six partner institutions, were shared, and discussed. According to these institutions, on one hand, tailored technical assistance and training, gender and nutrition coaching, strategy development and implementation support, have been key to building their staff and institutional capacities. On the other hand, evidence stemming from research and concrete recommendations are helping them improve their business activities.

"[Digital Green](#) is invested in an ambitious initiative called DAAS (Digital Agricultural Advisory Services) which aims to reach 40 percent of women as part of our activities. We worked with IGNITE to conduct a gender assessment and other research activities that resulted in our new gender policy. Today, gender is the centre of our focus, and we are seeing the results. For example, an increased effectiveness of Community Based Agents (CBAs), better results on dairy farmers' uptake of our digital tools, and more effective demo farmer households'

experience,” shared Daniel Tesfu, Head of Monitoring and Evaluation at Digital Green in Ethiopia.

Rufaro Madakadze, Senior Program Officer at the [Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa \(AGRA\)](#), shared that, “...as an outcome of IGNITE research findings, we are rethinking, redesigning, and informing our institutional approach to agricultural extension. Across the board, more female extension workers and women Village Based Agents are being engaged in our programs.”

While making attribution of changes experienced over the past three years, many of the IGNITE partners also reported that engagement with IGNITE has brought a whole new meaning and perspective to gender and nutrition, which is influencing their activities. “Before IGNITE, the focus of the [African Agricultural Technology Foundation \(AATF\)](#) was on productivity and income. Today, our approach towards nutrition and gender-sensitive agriculture will result in benefits to farm mechanization for cassava farmers in Nigeria,” shared Dr. Cecilia Limera, Programme Officer and Nutrition Lead at AATF.

The extensive information shared during the three days further validated the existing body of evidence that increasing women’s incomes and enabling them to have more decision-making over that income benefits the whole family through improved health, nutrition, and education. However, having specific case studies, and rigorous data supporting this objective was the driving force behind IGNITE’s design of its ambitious learning agenda.

“We are extremely proud of being part of building a solid case for market actors that there is positive return on investment derived from integrating and mainstreaming gender and nutrition considerations within their business models. We now have the technical know-how, the tools, and the experience in providing technical assistance on gender and nutrition integration and mainstreaming in agriculture. We are open to collaborate with institutions who have a need in those areas, and we will keep on improving our technical assistance delivery with existing partners,” concluded Maureen Munjua.

Access IGNITE research outputs and resources here: <https://bit.ly/3EQPG8D>

About Tanager:

Tanager is an international non-profit that brings people together at the table, on the ground, and across supply chains to co-create economic and social opportunities that change lives. Tanager is the lead partner on the IGNITE project. Learn more: <https://tanagerintl.org/>

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