

# A DIFFERENT STRATEGY

## Integrating Gender and Nutrition within the Zambia National Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services Strategy

The 6 million people working in Zambia's agriculture sector gain key support to succeed in farming with access to a well-rounded extension system. Agriculture accounts for up to 85% of Zambia's workforce and is the main source of livelihood for rural people, of which 77% are poor, so an encompassing, well-functioning extension system is necessary to improve their lives.

The Zambian government recognizes the need to establish a pluralistic agricultural extension system that serves the needs of both men and women and improved nutrition for everyone. Most farmers are scattered over great distances across the rural landscape, and many of them are smallholder or subsistence farmers who would benefit from quality agricultural extension services that are responsive to their needs and help them attain food and nutrition security. The government therefore engaged with INGENAES (Integrating Gender and Nutrition within Agricultural Extension Services) to advance a gender-responsive and nutrition sensitive National Agricultural

Extension and Advisory Services Strategy (NAESS), which Zambia officially launched on March 10, 2017.

This strategy, four years in the making, is a major step towards achieving food and nutrition security and helping Zambians rise out of poverty.



Stakeholders at a NAESS meeting in July 2016

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INGENAES was privileged to assist in the development of a more gender-responsive and nutrition-sensitive extension strategy alongside the Ministry of Agriculture and the Zambian Forum for Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services (ZAFSAAS).

ZAFSAAS, a multi-stakeholder body for professionalizing extension services in Zambia that INGENAES helped to establish, played a critical role in organizing and integrating stakeholder feedback for the final strategy. INGENAES also provided direct technical input to the NAESS draft and worked closely with its authors to ensure that gender and nutrition were fully included in the strategy.

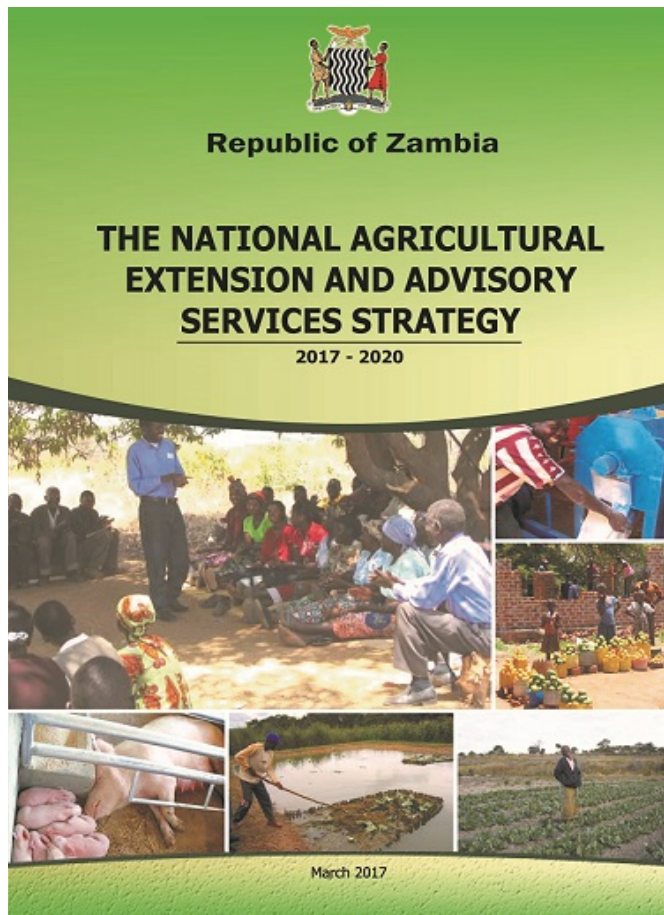
Integrating gender and nutrition into a national strategy is a lengthy consultative process to ensure it appropriately reflects the context and has widespread support. The process cannot just include the government and requires other stakeholder involvement. A strategy that will influence the work across a spectrum of stakeholders requires validation by those involved in its implementation at all levels, from front-line implementers to those drafting policy.

After many consultations, stakeholder workshops, and validation processes supported from all levels of extension, the extension strategy ultimately reflects Zambia’s mission to address limitations on gender and nutrition components in public and private extension, like hiring more women extension workers and including nutrition education components in extension materials. In fact, Objective 13 “Mainstreaming Gender into Extension and Advisory Services” and Objective 15 “Mainstreaming Nutrition into Extension and Advisory Services” are direct results of INGENAES’s contributions to the extension strategy, helping ensure

it is forward-looking and positions Zambia to be a leader on gender and nutrition issues in extension.

Through its support to the development of the national extension strategy, INGENAES has helped lay the foundation for a more inclusive extension system able to better support agricultural and nutrition improvements among women and men farmers.

*Story written by Wesley Laytham, Edye Kuyper, and Katy Mosiman*



**Cover of the NAESS document**

Cover photo © INGENAES, taken by K. Mosiman in Zambia in 2015

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