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FOCUS | Gender and Equity

Highlight 3: Incorporating Equity into A4NH's Research Agenda

Equity and equality are concepts rooted in the idea that all people should be treated as equals. Equality means that the outcome is the same for all groups, while equity refers to the fair distribution of a good or process among groups. Inequities are differences that are unnecessary, unavoidable, unfair, and unjust. Since there are large disparities in nutrition and health outcomes between groups, and resources and processes related to these outcomes are often distributed inequitably, we must consider equity in A4NH's research.

External review of equity in A4NH

In 2017, consultants from the Institute for Development Studies (IDS) carried out an external review of equity issues in A4NH research. They found that our research investigates several areas of equity, including gender, income, poverty, life stage, youth, and geography. Currently, the A4NH program focuses systematically on gender equity. Using the recommendations from this review and input from our management and advisory teams, A4NH will explore expanding its systematic approach to gender to other areas of equity during the remainder of Phase II.

Integrating equity into A4NH research

Building capacity through equity hubs

To integrate and strengthen gender research, A4NH drew on a gender “hub,” based at IFPRI and composed of an existing network of gender researchers brought together by IFPRI's Gender Task Force. A4NH will create similar equity hubs, based outside of IFPRI, that will focus on the regions where A4NH research takes place—South Asia and Africa. Through these hubs, A4NH will engage local researchers to build a network of experts who can contribute to and advise equity research.

Setting priorities for strategic research

A4NH has led strategic research—developing tools and methodologies and addressing key evidence gaps in the field of gender and nutrition. Now, A4NH will develop strategic research on equity, including flagship- and country-specific investigations, as well as cross-cutting research to address gaps in knowledge and tools for equity research across A4NH's portfolio.

A4NH's flagships and focus countries—Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria, and Viet Nam—will lead equity work in the research program. As such, priorities for equity research will be informed through a series of consultations with partners, researchers, and leaders within the flagships and focus countries. In addition, A4NH will commission a literature review to assess existing research on equity in agriculture, nutrition, and health, focusing on gaps in knowledge relevant to A4NH's flagship research areas.

Launching equity research in 2018

A4NH's five flagships will kick off their equity research in 2018 through formative and/or diagnostic research projects. These projects will help each flagship understand its needs, priorities, resources, and/or capacity for equity research. Potential projects include analyzing existing data through an equity lens, adding equity considerations to existing theoretical pathways, and revising monitoring and evaluation systems with an equity lens, among others.

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