

## Acknowledgement:

This work was carried out with the aid of a grant from the International Development Research Centre, Ottawa, Canada, and with the financial support of the Government of Canada provided through the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (CDFATD).

### GEAT MEMBERS

Dr. (Mrs.) O. F. Deji   Mrs. Kaothar Adeniyi Alabi  
Dr. Olugbenga T. Alao   Mr. Busari Ahmed Olugbenga  
Dr. Olatunde J. Ayinde   Mr. Koledoye Gbenga Festus  
Mr. Olatunji Matthew

**For further enquiries: Contact,**  
**Dr. (Mrs) O. F. Deji** - [odeji2001@yahoo.com](mailto:odeji2001@yahoo.com)  
(+234 8033716695)

**Dr. J. O. Ayinde** - [tundeyjoy@yahoo.com](mailto:tundeyjoy@yahoo.com)  
(+234 8035719389)



## *NI-CAN-VEG Project for Food security* **Gender, Decision Making and Dietary Diversification**



## STORY 2



Foreign Affairs, Trade and  
Development Canada

Affaires étrangères, Commerce  
et Développement Canada



**IDRC**

**CRDI**

International Development Research Centre  
Centre de recherches pour le développement international

A Publication of Gender Equity Assessment Team (GEAT) of Nigeria-Canada Vegetable (NICANVEG) Project. Contact:  
Olanike F. Deji, Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Nigeria.  
[Dejiolanike@gmail.com](mailto:Dejiolanike@gmail.com)



Farmers children working on vegetable farms

Traditionally, in Nigerian rural communities, men take decision at the household level and public places. It is still a taboo in most rural communities for women to contribute to decision making or oppose any decision made by men. Hence decision making in atypical rural household and community is absolutely men's; a tradition that is impacting negatively on sustainable rural development in Nigeria. In the course of Gender Equity

Assessment (GEA) activities of the NiCanVeg project, the farmers have been taught on the significance of male and female participation in decision making, especially about under-utilized indigenous vegetables (UIVs). The farmers' acquired knowledge of importance of gender equality has enhanced women participation in the project's activities and UIVs' production in the study area-the southwest Nigeria. The gender-specific division of labour and jobs is gradually eroding. Some males are participating enthusiastically in traditionally labeled female's jobs/activities, such as marketing of vegetables.



Female children performing their traditional roles of transporting farm produce from the farm to the market or home



Women farmers harvesting vegetables for sales in the market



A woman farmer harvesting vegetables



Decision making is a crucial aspect of any enterprise. Who makes decisions determines the time to produce, sell, store, weed, and carry out every activity concerning a project. The knowledge of gender has really helped the farmers to allow their women to make decision concerning their farming activities. Many of the women farmers can now visit their farms, plant, weed and hire labour to perform farm operations.



Women vegetable farmers participating in public decision making

**Probe from Researchers:** Who takes final decision on issues bothering on your farming enterprise, personal as well as family welfare?

**(a). Response:** Being the household head, I used to be the sole commander and decision maker on issues that concern my farming business and family welfare. This is in line with the dictates of our culture. However, this project has really changed my orientation so much that we now have round table deliberations on issues that are germane to our welfare and harmony in the household and everybody's input counts.



Men and a woman farmers participating in a group discussion on their farms

### A Female Farmer

**(b). Response:** You see, men generally appreciate women that are financially relevant in the family. They listen to them much more than the full housewife types. More so, our own situation here is very peculiar. We are married to military men who are strong minded and hardly compromise on issues. Thus, various packages of this project have really empowered me economically and made me an active financial player in my home.

As such, my husband reckons with my opinion on all issues related to welfare in the home front.

### 2. Dietary Diversification

#### A Female Farmer:

One of the goals of the NICANVEG project is to improve the farm households' dietary diversity and nutrition through increased consumption of UIVs. Before the intervention programme, many of the UIVs were not popular in local vegetable markets and on most households' meal tables, despite their high nutrient values. Under-utilized vegetables were taken

as ornamentals. However, through the intervention of the project many of the UIVs are now commonly found in the markets and backyards of many people within the project coverage areas.

#### **Here are the responses of some farmers:**

Probe from Researchers: How have the underutilized indigenous vegetables affected your food choices or do you only grow them for sales?

**(a). Response:** As you all know, food choices and their preparation are exclusive business and responsibilities of women. My own duty as the head of my household is to appreciate and savour the taste of the kitchen output. Interestingly enough, I have two wives. And guess what? They tend to go into cooking competition and rivalry with each other in a bid to satisfy my taste so they could earn my love and support at all times. Meanwhile the indigenous vegetable has improved our dietary options a great deal especially when woorowo is prepared with bush meat and served with pounded yam. You begin to see heaven as you eat.

#### **A Male Farmer**

**(b). Response:** Yes, the indigenous vegetables have really changed our food options and we are really happy as such. The vegetables as we were told have certain medicinal values apart from their food values most especially Ugu which gives blood. Moreover, we were taught better preparation methods by the project researchers and this has really improved my cooking sense and I have seen the result on the good health states of my household members. As for me and my family, the era of conventional vegetable consumption is gone. Kudos to the project sponsors and the researchers for the great job they are doing. More grease to their elbows.

#### **A Female Farmer**

**(c). Response:** Definitely NO. We eat considerable proportion of our vegetable before we sell the rest. In fact, indigenous vegetables have highly changed our taste and dietary options. We now hardly consume the conventional species. This is due to the fact that the indigenous species stay longer in our pot with the taste preserved unlike the conventional ones which are only better consumed in a day. My husband and children prefer the taste and I cook different types of the indigenous species and serve them with varied food items like pounded yam, amala, eba, rice etc.

A Female Farmer taste and dietary options. We now hardly consume the conventional species. This is due to the fact that the indigenous species stay longer in our pot with the taste preserved unlike the conventional ones which are only better consumed on the day of cooking. My husband and children prefer the taste and I cook different types of the indigenous species and serve them with varied food items like pounded



Profiled Researcher: Mrs Kaowthar Alabi-Adeniyi  
(GEAT member, University of Osun State, Osogbo, Osun State).