



Cultural Practice joins consortium to empower women farmers through improved agricultural extension and advisory services

Cultural Practice, LLC (CP) is a partner in a new consortium led by the University of Illinois Urbana- Champaign (UIUC) that was recently awarded \$7 million from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to contribute to the goals of the Presidential Initiative Feed the Future of increasing global food security and supporting effective rural development by empowering women to contribute to higher household incomes, increase agricultural productivity, and improve nutritional outcomes for family and community members. The consortium also includes the University of California, Davis and the University of Florida (UF), Gainesville.

The new project, “Integrating Gender and Nutrition within Agricultural Extension Services” (INGENAES) aims to strengthen gender and nutrition integration within and through agricultural extension and advisory services and ultimately reduce poverty, improve food security, and reduce malnutrition. INGENAES is the latest of three associate awards that have followed the \$12 million, USAID-funded, UIUC-led Modernizing Extension and Advisory Services (MEAS) project. CP is a part of the MEAS consortium which serves to define and disseminate good practice strategies and approaches to establishing efficient, effective, and financially sustainable rural extension and advisory service systems in selected developing countries.

INGENAES will draw from the MEAS hallmark framework of “Teach, Learn, and Apply,” three components that function not as stand-alone activities but as integrated modules to inform, influence, and build on each other.

Andrea Bohn, MEAS project manager and INGENAES associate director, explains:

The ‘teach’ component is to pass on what we already know. It turns out there are many things we don’t know, and existing knowledge only takes us so far. That’s where the ‘learn’ component comes in as applied research, learning what works and what doesn’t. In MEAS, we have learned by working with people in the field not as an observer but engaged in the learning process. The ‘apply’ component is when we put things into action. We will work with partners on the ground to put into action what we’ve learned. These three components, like gears, influence each other and work together. It is learning with a purpose..

Dr. Paul McNamara, INGENAES project director and associate professor in the UIUC Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics, adds:



[INGENAES] is a program of action. We will be working in these countries to help improve women farmers' access to extension services. We will also be using extension services to improve women's access to critical inputs and helping extension services address nutrition concerns through their programs. We have committed to not just thinking and writing about these issues but to actually improving the situation; it is action-oriented scholarship and outreach.

CP will support the management team and provide technical assistance to the program. CP is well connected to organizations that will benefit from this new program including universities, NGOs, the CGIAR centers, government extension systems, and men and women farmers around the world. Led by McNamara, the team includes three associate directors: Andrea Bohn (UIUC), Kathleen Earl Colverson (UF), and Kristy Cook (CP).

Associate INGENAES Director and CP Senior Technical Advisor, Kristy Cook, said:

INGENAES explicitly links agriculture, gender and nutrition. We all know that agriculture is key to improved nutrition. But we don't pay enough attention to the roles and relationships of men and women in agriculture. These relationships determine what is produced, sold, purchased and fed to children. We're ready to join our INGENAES colleagues to contribute to the goals of the presidential Feed the Future Initiative through supporting extension and advisory services that empower women, and men, and improve nutrition for their families.

The INGENAES team will be working in at least eight countries applying a multi-step programmatic approach over 15 months.

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[The U.S. Agency for International Development administers the U.S. foreign assistance program providing economic and humanitarian assistance in more than 80 countries worldwide.](#)