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**New seeds and women’s welfare: A revolution revisited – The case of NERICA upland rice and gender labor dynamics in Hoima District, Uganda**

The contemporary consensus that broad-based and inclusive agricultural growth is pertinent to effectively, equitably and sustainably fight rural poverty and food insecurity in Sub-Saharan Africa

makes a persuasive case for technology-driven modernization of food staples production on small

(family) farms and conveys hopes for a second Green Revolution. The promotion of labor-intensive

agricultural technology in this context has been identified as particularly desirable, so as to capitalize

on what is claimed to be the poor’s most abundant asset. However, such universalism has more recently been undermined as some authors have drawn attention to that any intensification process

where people have to work harder is social and gendered. Therefore we have to examine whose labor

within the households is expended when new (labor-intensive) technologies are promoted, and

whether those that are providing this labor are remunerated. It is well-documented that in the trails of

new technologies, women, more often than men, are the ones losing out, often having their labor

unduly exploited while not being able to establish control over the proceeds. With the rigidity and

resilience of gender divisional arrangements, such development may thereby not only sustain unequal

intra-household ill-being, but exacerbate it. In this paper we present findings from our research in

Uganda on NERICA (New Rice for Africa), a recent example of a labor-intensive technology. This new

group of high-yielding and stress tolerant upland rice varieties were developed in Africa for Africa so

as to address the continental-wide rice cereal challenge, poverty and food insecurity. As such, it has

been described as a ‘boon’, a ‘miracle’, and a ‘revolution’; some even believing it can become a similar

locomotive in Africa’s “Green Revolution” as the new rice HYVs were for Asia. However, to date, this

branding of ‘success’ exclusively resides in empirical household welfare outcomes, such as production

growth and household income gain that create shifts in income poverty on household level. None of

the research on NERICA to date is particularly gender-informed, and it is not concerned with how

these household welfare outcomes were arrived at and at what (and whose) cost. Instead, intrahousehold dynamics are systematically ignored. Little is therefore known about how the introduction of NERICA affects the different household members’ well-being. Since it is widely accepted that rice turns on labor-intensive cultivation practices compared to other crops and that there is rich evidence from other rice-based interventions of disappointing adoption dynamics relating to labor, documenting the working conditions architecture and how labor burdens are shared is particularly relevant. This paper therefore addresses this lacuna, providing a timely illustration of the impact the introduction of NERICA upland rice in Hoima District, Uganda, has had on the gender labor dynamics in smallholder households there, grounded in the local context and the lived experiences of particularly women farmers. Drawing on both qualitative and quantitative research, we conclude that the extreme labor burden NERICA induces on women in especially weeding and bird scaring has exacerbated their time poverty and drudgery, making the adoption of NERICA highly unsustainable.