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FAO eLearning
ACADEMY



International Technical Webinar
Nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems

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Scaling Up
Nutrition



Nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems

24 February 2021

Recording Link: <https://youtu.be/wK2oiJ4FEEo>

Questions and Answers

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1) For some FAO courses, online access is not possible due to technical issues with Adobe Flash Player. It's not supported longer by Adobe. Is there any update?

The Flash based courses were removed and are no longer available, as the technology is now obsolete.

2) People tend to define nutrition sensitive agriculture in a different way. From your view what is the best definition of that? Is there also FAO resources on food systems the same way there the compendium on indicators?

FAO has developed a toolkit through a participatory expert consultation using a food systems perspective. The 10 recommendations are tailored to increase awareness on what constitute nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems. The toolkit can be accessed here:

www.fao.org/nutrition/policies-programmes/toolkit

3) What exactly do you want and/or expect from partners? What to achieve together?

We are interested in partnering with country-based organizations, including UN and NGOs, national academic or research institutions that work with SMEs and/or CSOs, and collaborate on the adaptation and uptake of resources. We want to build capacities using innovative and sustainable ways (e.g. blended learning courses that combine e-learning with coaching and face-to-face capacity development).

4) Any evidence on what type of Organizational Human Resource Structure is effective for mainstreaming of Nutrition in the large national agriculture programs?

The type of Organizational Human Resource Structure for mainstreaming nutrition in large national agriculture program should be based on a comprehensive needs assessment to identify the number of professionals needed for different roles. As mentioned in my presentation, beyond nutrition professionals, it is equally important to assess the (actual and expected) participation of (1) senior management to ensure ownership and (2) technical people with a required complementary skill set.

An example of institutional capacity development is the CAADP Nutrition Initiative conducted from 2011 with the support of AU and NEPAD.

<http://www.fao.org/nutrition/policies-programmes/capacity-development-resources/capacity-development/caadp/en/>

The SUN Movement report (2019) showcases country cases studies where there are institutional transformations that could be a good starting for mainstreaming nutrition in large scale national agriculture programs. https://scalingupnutrition.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Regional_East-and-Southern-Africa_ENG_Web-Final.pdf

5) How would you incorporate gender into these activities?



To incorporate gender into nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems, it will be important to first conduct a gender sensitive analysis, then identify possible solutions to address gender based constraints. For detailed information, please refer to the FAO e-learning course on Developing gender-sensitive value chains:

<https://elearning.fao.org/course/view.php?id=543> and Guidelines:
<http://www.fao.org/3/i9212en/I9212EN.pdf>

6) How is 'nutritious' food being measured? What is the measuring tool? What is the indicator?

The nutrient value of specific foods can be found in national and regional food composition tables/databases. Some of these databases can be found here:

<http://www.fao.org/infoods/infoods/tables-and-databases/en/>

However, the consumption of nutritious foods should be measured to ensure adequate intakes of macro and micronutrients to constitute a healthy diet and reduce risk of malnutrition. The compendium of Indicators for nutrition sensitive agriculture, Table &. provides examples of commonly used, validated indicators for measuring dietary quality at the individual level, as well as methods for measuring quantitative dietary intakes.

<http://www.fao.org/3/i6275e/i6275e.pdf>

7) Do you see these types of courses as being used to strengthen the background of participants in country-level Food System dialogues in preparation for the Food Summit? Are their links to their sites?

Yes. Links to the courses have been shared during the webinar. However, the e-learning courses are for individual learning. They could be useful for the facilitators of country-level Food Systems dialogues. However, the content would need to be further tailored and adapted to support policy dialogue with different audiences.

This is something that FAO is interested to facilitate (our contacts have been provided in the presentation).

8) How are you working to build demand for a product like pickled vegetables that is probably not common in the local diet?

Strategies used cover doing month end specials, consumer education in shops by merchandisers and onsite tasting of products.

9) How do country-based organization get in touch with FAO?

FAO has a FAO Representative at the country level and organizations are welcome to engage. Furthermore, the FAO website has many resources and tools to help streamline the needs. FAO also sits on many coordination mechanisms at country level, particularly with SUN's UN Nutrition Network as a potential entry point for collaboration.

<https://www.unnutrition.org/>

FAO is also collaborating with networks of NGOs such as the SUN Civil Society Network and the SUN Business Network.

Our contacts have been provided in the presentation.



10) Did you use a nutrition-sensitive value chain framework for program design, implementation and M&E? If so, what was that framework, did it work well in real life? What were the lessons learned?

IFAD has published the following guideline in two volumes: Nutrition-sensitive value chains: A guide for project design:

<https://www.ifad.org/en/web/knowledge/publication/asset/40805038> and also Nutrition-sensitive value chain from a smallholder perspective: A framework for project design:

https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/30_Research_web.pdf

These three FAO e-learning courses can be useful:

- Design and monitor Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture and Food Systems Programmes may also be helpful:
<https://elearning.fao.org/course/view.php?id=603>
- Home Grown School Feeding explores short value chains to diversify the food basket provided in school meals as well as generate income for local producers:
<https://elearning.fao.org/course/view.php?id=529>
- Sustainable Food Value Chains for Nutrition:
<https://elearning.fao.org/course/view.php?id=566>

11) What is the willingness for farmers to use mobile digital technology to facilitate up-to-date information about their crop (assuming there are no restrictions to telephony costs)? In respect to give buyers immediate knowledge on market goods availability?

Farmers are willing to use modern technology, but the limitation is that the infrastructure and provision of such services is limited in farm areas. We are seeing farmers now creating WhatsApp groups for sharing information.

FAO has been emphasizing the importance of digital technology. Mobile technologies and web-based devices are often used to connect farmers to supply chains, giving access to higher quality seeds and fertilizers that can boost production and quality, and also enable them to sell directly to consumers, maximizing profitability by avoiding intermediates.

Some of the FAO's resources are found here:

<http://www.fao.org/digital-agriculture/digital-portfolio/en/>

<http://www.fao.org/digital-agriculture/en/>

12) Is Botswana supporting agroecology which restores soil health, increases nutrient/carbon/water cycling into plants and increases nutrient density of vegetables, fruit and grains? Healthy soils = healthy ecosystems = healthy plants = healthy food = healthy people?

Farmers are required to do soil testing for accessing arable agriculture assistance programmes.



13) Finished agri-products development and marketing by small or medium entrepreneurs can be sustainable?

Indeed this can be sustainable if proper structures are put in place to facilitate the marketing of produce.

14) What are you doing concretely to make your products more accepted by consumers (who think that products from South Africa are better) in the market?

We do product promotions and aggressive advertising of our products using different media.

15) Does the plant buy products directly from farmers or via cooperatives? How is the price set?

Yes, we buy directly from farmers in the area and negotiate on the price.

16) Are there known results and achievements applying these interventions?

Yes, through this project farmers will be trained on various aspects that will contribute to an increase in their production. The consultants who were working with the farmers assisted them in record keeping and other aspects of business and this has helped them improve how they run the farm as a business entity.

17) What are you doing to ensure the project conserves biodiversity to ensure sustainability of the ecosystem?

For now nothing is being done along those lines but discussions have started on how to go about it.

18) From where food nutrition and quality start in the production system and what should be done on the ground where agriculture stands?

Addressing nutrition and food/diet quality requires taking action to address all stages of the food value chain - from input quality, production, post-harvest handling, processing, retail to consumption.

FAO places importance on the eco-systems to affect food quality and diversity from healthy soils, to the conservation of under-utilized species, to water conservation methods, to the sustainable management of forestry, marine, etc. Biodiversity is the foundation of diversified foods and diets.

The toolkit mentioned above in the answer for question 2, in particular the publication [Nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems in practice. Options for intervention](#) and the FAO e-learning course Design and monitor Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture and Food Systems Programmes may be helpful for answering this question <https://elearning.fao.org/course/view.php?id=603>

19) Do you work with the current germplasm available or you introduce commercial varieties? Do you work with the research sector/ academia to select the best suited varieties?



The project is being run as a spinoff of a food research institution. In the initial stages farmers in the area were mobilised and encouraged to grow process varieties which are suitable for products earmarked for production by the plant. Part of the farmers training also covers issues of what to grow if they intend to supply the plant.

20) How did you involve large groups of key stakeholders, such as the people from smaller food establishments (e.g. people who sell in the food and vegetable markets, the small-scale farmers)?

We have engaged them via the Minister of Agriculture, the Central Market and local tourism associations, local governments and municipalities. It does need various ways to involve them since these are the most diverse and difficult segments to access. We are now working on a major scale communication program in order to identify and engage with this important and most popular segment.

21) I was wondering if the street food sector was also integrated within these initiatives?

Yes but in minor scale. In Costa Rica this sector is highly regulated by the Minister of Health and does not operate as in other countries.

22) How nutrition-sensitive agriculture is mainstreamed value horticulture value chains or other nutritious crops and market plans?

Efforts are geared towards empowering farmers to use agricultural production systems which improve nutritional quality of available foods and promote soil conservation.

23) Costa Rica ranks 6th in the 2020 Global Hunger Index report, with a consistent good score over the past 4 rankings. Which part of the food systems would you attribute to the improved outcomes; and what would you advice countries seeking to improve their score to implement as best practises?

Mainly due to the very professional involvement during many years of the Ministry of Health, Education Department and the Social Security System, which together provides meals to school children, and very low or no income families (extreme poverty levels). These have been achieved, through a very comprehensive nationwide program. The high penetration levels of educational programs among all communities have facilitated the identification of low or no income families. These are the more important factors that have contributed to maintain good scores over the years.

24) For the e-learning courses that provided in the chat, how can member countries register? can people register individually? Or do we need to register with formal letter from the government? because we have many agriculture extensionist that might be interested to join the courses. Have you identified potential partner in Indonesia?

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25) How does FAO help Government partners to do trainings about nutrition-sensitive food systems?

FAO strengthens participation, responsiveness and accountability of all relevant stakeholders in food systems to institute strong governance for improved nutrition. As previously mentioned we are interested to promote blended learning combining e-learning courses for individuals with institutional training co-organized with networks of partners including Universities.

For example, in 2020, FAO has conducted an online webinars with seven countries on trade and nutrition targeting government personnel working on trade. In 2021, FAO has facilitated a blended learning course in Eritrea combining online individual training with group training through remote and face-to-face workshops targeting government personnel from the MoA. Since 2016, FAO is promoting the ENACT course (Education for Effective Nutrition in Action) in collaboration with African Universities and with Indian Universities for the professional development in nutrition education. <http://www.fao.org/nutrition/education/professional-training/enact/en/>

Building on its expertise, FAO works with partners on an innovative participatory process for policymakers and program managers to optimize the design, implementation and evaluation of sectoral programs and investments to accelerate progress in promoting healthy diets. This approach focuses on the joint-development of theories of change and related impact pathways to select specific entry points in the food systems for transformative actions. The impact pathways help to visualize how a desired chain of changes can be triggered in a given context taking into account external drivers, assumptions and trade-offs as emerging from the consultation process with stakeholders from governments, development agencies, civil society, and private sector. Guidance notes for each sector (i.e., Crop Production, Fishery and Aquaculture, Forestry, and Livestock) have been developed building on experience from 12 countries, namely, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Uganda, Eswatini, Ivory Coast, Mali, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Chad, Mauritania and Democratic Republic of the Congo. This model will be adapted to build capacity at country level for inclusive policy and programmatic dialogue on the promotion of healthy diets to address all forms of malnutrition.



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