The US Agency for International Development’s (USAID) Gender Informed Nutrition and Agriculture (GINA) Alliance piloted in Uganda, Mozambique and Nigeria has proven effective in reducing hunger and poverty. The programme employed a gender-focused, community-based approach to improving household food and nutrition security in sub-Saharan African communities, with a particular emphasis on the nutritional status of children under five. Overall, the GINA programmes in the three countries were able to reduce inadequate weight for age of 3,000 children under five during the period from programme baseline to follow-up evaluation. Additionally, GINA resulted in increased availability of nutritious foods in participating households; increased awareness and understanding of the basic causes of malnutrition; increased food production leading to greater consumption of nutritious foods and increases in income; a link between markets and GINA farmer groups; and the development of gender-diverse farmer groups complete with a well-functioning organizational structure.

GINA’s focus on gender roles led to an upgrading in the status of women and recognition of them as producers and processors of food. As a result, women’s control over their assets as well as the size of their assets increased.

Due to the successful pilot, USAID is now scaling up the GINA model through a new US$15 million Nutrition Collaborative Research Support Program (Nutrition CRSP). This research is specifically designed to build the evidence base to demonstrate how agricultural interventions implemented and co-located with health activities may lead to improvements in the nutritional status of women and children at scale.

Key words: gender; poverty; food and nutrition security; sub-Saharan Africa; children; food production; GINA; agricultural intervention