

KEY LESSONS LEARNED (1994-2006) IN THE SPECIAL PROGRAMME FOR FOOD SECURITY (SPFS)¹

BACKGROUND

- SPFS launched in 1994 as pilot programme to promote food security developments globally.
- To date 105 countries have been involved in SPFS pilot field activities of which 33 are being up-scaled through national programmes.
- Pilot activities focused on water management, sustainable intensification, diversification and monitoring of constraints but broadened from these over time.

LESSONS

The strategies presented for the Gates' programme are somewhat similar to the SPFS pilot phase. Below are some key lessons the SPFS programme has learned in hope that new work will benefit from SPFS's experiences.

- **Water management** is a key limiting factor to better agriculture, livestock and livelihoods. While large scale irrigation works need to be considered in some regions, many other effective and affordable water technologies are available and where small-scale village operated schemes are more appropriate. Participatory irrigation rehabilitation is a good starting point in many communities where farmer owned water user associations working with an engineer and receiving some concrete and reinforcement bar can have quick and sustainable impact on water supply. Food for work (WFP input often) may be needed to ensure that poor families, including HIV/AIDS affected families, can participate in community efforts. In rainfed areas, technologies such as water harvesting and improved soil management are affordable for extensive scale crops. On smaller scales, simple drip-irrigation and treadle or motorized pumps are cost effective for high value vegetables and fruits/nuts. Watershed protection, social forestry and agro-forestry all contribute to sustained water supply.
- **Sustainable intensification** of crops allows a greater return from the same land. While soil improvements are certainly needed, fertilizers are only cost effective under good soil and water regimes and appropriate commodity prices. Periodic deep plowing to break hard pans and improving soil management to increase soil organic matter with minimum tillage (conservation tillage) and nitrogen or carbon fixing crops also lead to long term yield improvements. Many organic agriculture methods can provide higher yields with a minimum dependence on external inputs by using better management practices as the major improvement and input. Crop intensification will of course require linkages to markets so building marketing groups and farmer skills is essential. Pushing credit ahead of markets is not advisable, but promoting savings is. Mechanization appropriate to economic returns needs careful analysis and a strong policy environment and a service and repair infrastructure (e.g. standards, spares and mechanic training).
- **Diversification of income sources** comes with improved management skills by farmers and extension staff as well as access to new assets. Short cycle animals (e.g. sheep, goats, pigs and chickens), fish ponds and coast fisheries, market vegetables/fruits, mushrooms, honey production, silk production and other on- or off-farm income methods need to be linked to markets and appropriate skills. Therefore investment incentives for processing and marketing are needed in many cases –

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including adequate roads and power. Even where markets are not strong, which is often the case where the poor are living, household nutrition levels can be improved with better diversified dietary sources including promotion of indigenous crops from home and school gardens. Use of in kind-credit methods such as revolving livelihood schemes, seed banks and savings groups are important to help build livelihood and productive assets.

- **People are central in all the above.** Human and social capital must be improved with capacity building to improve skills, knowledge and organizational capacity to achieve better use of available resources or to identify new opportunities. Using better management is usually better than using more costly inputs. Livelihood training in areas such as numeracy, literacy, HIV/AIDS and malaria prevention/mitigation, cleaning water and saving money are also as necessary as basic training on water, intensification and diversification. Farmer field schools, study groups and farmer business schools are all good stepping stones to building community organizations such as marketing groups, saving groups and multi-purpose cooperatives – or preparing for contract farming of various types. Training for government officers, lecturers and development practitioners capable to implement broad-based and integral programmes in communities would be needed in many countries with old-style top down extension systems.
- **Telecommunications, internet, radio and other communication support** are important for farmers to have access to markets and “middle-services” such as transport, storage and traders while knowing fair prices. Using ICTs to raise awareness amongst policy and decision makers and civil society on the direct linkages between hunger and reduced economic growth, good governance and internal conflicts and insecurity is also important.

PRECAUTIONS

- **Don't continue doing pilot projects.** Committed countries and communities are ready now for large scale programmes able to face food security problems and plenty of technologies are available.
- **Don't assume governments can't do the job.** Governments need support when they have highly qualified staff but no operational budgets. Funds are made more effective when they are tied to field activities.
- **Do promote monitoring food security** which includes people and communication systems (hardware and software) to target and manage.

FINAL ADVICE

- **Human and social capital is key to success – not technologies alone.** Build people and their organizations, village by village.
- **Ensure linkages between productivity, health and livelihood improvement** using programme instruments like field schools.
- **Integrate access to mobile phones, internet and radio** to complement capacity building and linking to markets.

Way Forward with National Programmes for Food Security

- The large scale problem of food insecurity requires large scale actions and therefore many countries are preparing national programmes for food security (NPFS) based on national commitments and implemented by countries themselves. These NPFS are embedded in national policy and based on reaching the Millennium Development Goal 1 in tandem with poverty reduction.
- FAO/SPFS strongly encourages the Foundation to partner with emerging NPFS. A list of countries which have requested FAO assistance is provided in Annex 1 below. FAO/SPFS would gladly facilitate NPFS-Foundation introductions.

Annex 1: National Programmes for Food Security (NPFS) status.

Name of country	NPFS type	Planned duration (years)	Budget (US\$ million)	Funds committed (US\$ million)	Source of Funds (US\$ million)
OPERATIONAL					
Algeria	Integrated	2005-2009	48	48	Government
Brazil	Comprehensive	2002-2006	9000	9000	Government
Chad	Comprehensive	2006-2010	196	5	Government
Indonesia	Comprehensive	2006-2009	203	10	Government
Kenya	Comprehensive	2004-2013	70	10	Government
Madagascar	Cross-sectoral	2006-2009	250	20	EU, World Bank
Mali	Comprehensive	2006-2010	216	1	Government
Mexico	Cross-sectoral	2002-2006	26	26	Government
Nigeria	Upscaled	2006-2010	364	364	Government, Islamic Bank, BADEA, IFAD
Philippines	Integrated	2004-2006	70	70	World Bank
South Africa	Integrated	2006 (1 st yr.)	4.5	4.5	Government (national & provincial)
Tanzania (M)	Cross-sectoral with integrated ag component	2006-2010	600 (ASDP only)	263	AfDB, World Bank, ASDP basket fund
Venezuela	Cross-sectoral	2002-2006	38	38	Government

All budgets denominated in currencies other than US\$ converted at rate of exchange on 1 July 2006.

Name of country	NPFS type	Name of country	NPFS type
ENDORSED AND AWAITING FUNDING		UNDER ACTIVE FORMULATION	
Cambodia	Upscaled	Afghanistan	Upscaled
Malawi	Comprehensive	Angola	Cross-sectoral
UNDER ACTIVE REVIEW		Botswana	Comprehensive
Burkina Faso	Comprehensive	Colombia	Cross-sectoral
Cape Verde	Upscaled	Gabon*	Comprehensive
Congo Rep	Comprehensive	Liberia	Comprehensive
Ghana	Cross-sectoral with integrated ag component	Pakistan	Upscaled
Lesotho	Cross-sectoral	Sudan	Upscaled
Sierra Leone	Comprehensive	Tanzania (Z)	Cross-sectoral
Senegal	Comprehensive	Zambia	Cross-sectoral
Swaziland	Comprehensive		