

REACH

ENDING CHILD HUNGER AND UNDERNUTRITION

PROJECT OVERVIEW

LOCAL PROCUREMENT: DOUBLE BENEFITS OF COMBATING MATERNAL AND CHILD MALNUTRITION AND ENHANCING MARKET LINKAGES TO SMALLHOLDER FARMERS

BACKGROUND

REACH: Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Partnership was jointly established by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP). REACH is a global partnership committed to meeting the nutrition needs of the world's most vulnerable children and women, through evidenced based analysis and innovative programming that builds government institutional capacity, strengthens policy planning skills and prioritizes scarce resources. The REACH inter-agency team provides technical expertise, program, managerial and administrative support from its headquarters in Rome, hosted by the World Food Programme, and from regional hubs hosted by partner agencies. For more information about the REACH partnership, please visit our website at www.reach-partnership.org.

PROJECT CONTEXT

The REACH partnership is launching a new project to develop and test national models to boost nutrition programmes and scale up demand for nutritious foods through purchasing locally from small-scale farmers. The project is funded by a US\$1.1 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), the host agency of this joint UN initiative.

REACH will conduct operational research in Sierra Leone to explore the interactions between the smallholder value chain and nutrition programming. REACH will apply its facilitated capacity building model, tested in several countries in West Africa and Southeast Asia, to identify ways to link smallholders to nutrition programming, develop guidelines for agriculture and nutrition practitioners, governments, and NGOs; and develop a national action plan to scale-up nutrition interventions in Sierra Leone to increase smallholders' access to market opportunities. The knowledge and good practices generated through this process will be documented in an expanded series of intervention guides and case studies and disseminated to practitioners and policy-makers in other countries through the REACH knowledge-sharing service.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- Identify ways to link smallholders to nutrition programming
- Provide guidance to critical stakeholders to sustain agriculture-nutrition linkages
- Facilitate coordination of agriculture-nutrition linkages at country, regional, and global levels

MALI FEASIBILITY STUDY

An additional component of the project supports analysis of cross-border flows of local agricultural procurements. The main activity is to conduct a local production and procurement feasibility study in Mali. The specific objectives of the feasibility study are to promote the local purchases and the use of fortified food products by fostering a broad and strategic alliance among government departments, UN agencies, NGOs, private sector companies, local smallholder farmers and communities. WFP has conducted similar feasibility studies in the region in countries such as Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso, Senegal and Cameroon. Thus, by completing a feasibility study in Mali, there will be sufficient data to make projections about potential cross-border flows of local agricultural procurements in countries such as Ghana and Burkina Faso. Extensive interviews with agricultural and health practitioners will yield concrete recommendations on the methods and costs required to encourage the local purchase of adequate and sufficient food inputs.

PRELIMINARY RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Components of smallholder value chain linking supply and demand for nutritious foods at household level

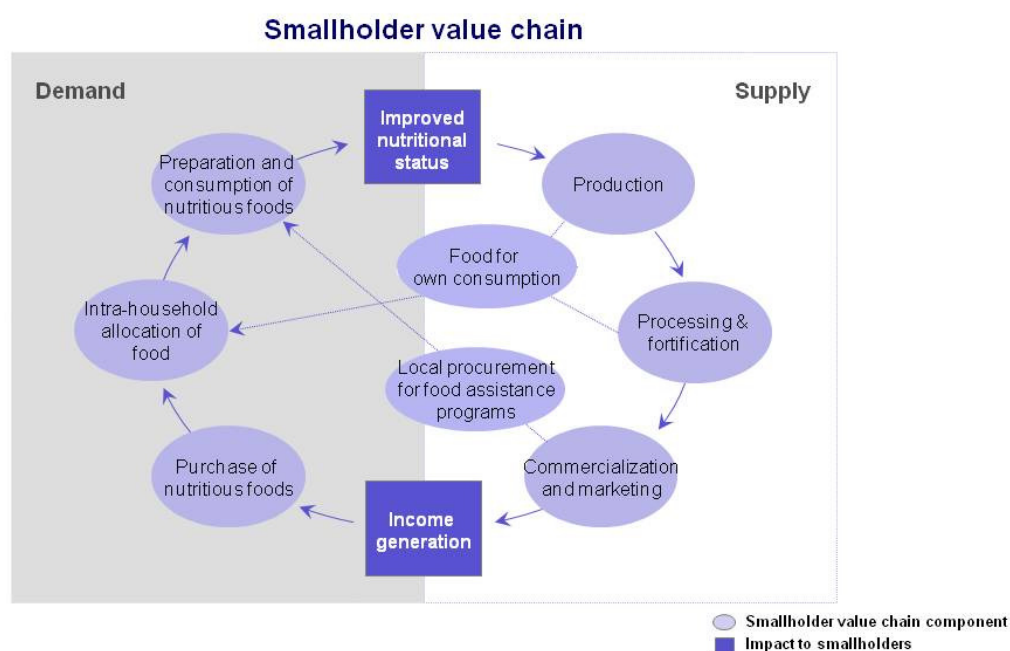


Figure 1. The supply side (righthand side of diagram) encompasses 'traditional' agricultural development and food security initiatives focusing on improving production and access to markets with a goal of increasing the income of smallholder farmers. However, evidence has shown that income generation alone is not sufficient to improve nutritional status.

Hence, in order to reflect a nutrition 'lens' on the smallholder value chain, the demand side of the equation (lefthand side of diagram) – the smallholder farmer as consumer of

nutritious foods – must also be considered as they relate to household decisions regarding purchase of food, allocation of resources to different household members, and knowledge of safe and nutritious food preparation and child feeding practices.

There are two different primary pathways of focus in this depiction of the smallholder value chain linking food production with food consumption and nutrition.¹ The most direct pathway relates to subsistence-oriented production for the household’s own consumption. The other pathway results from the sale of agricultural products to supply demand for nutritious food products, specifically for nutrition programmes.

Seven areas of institutional intervention targeting each component of smallholder value chain

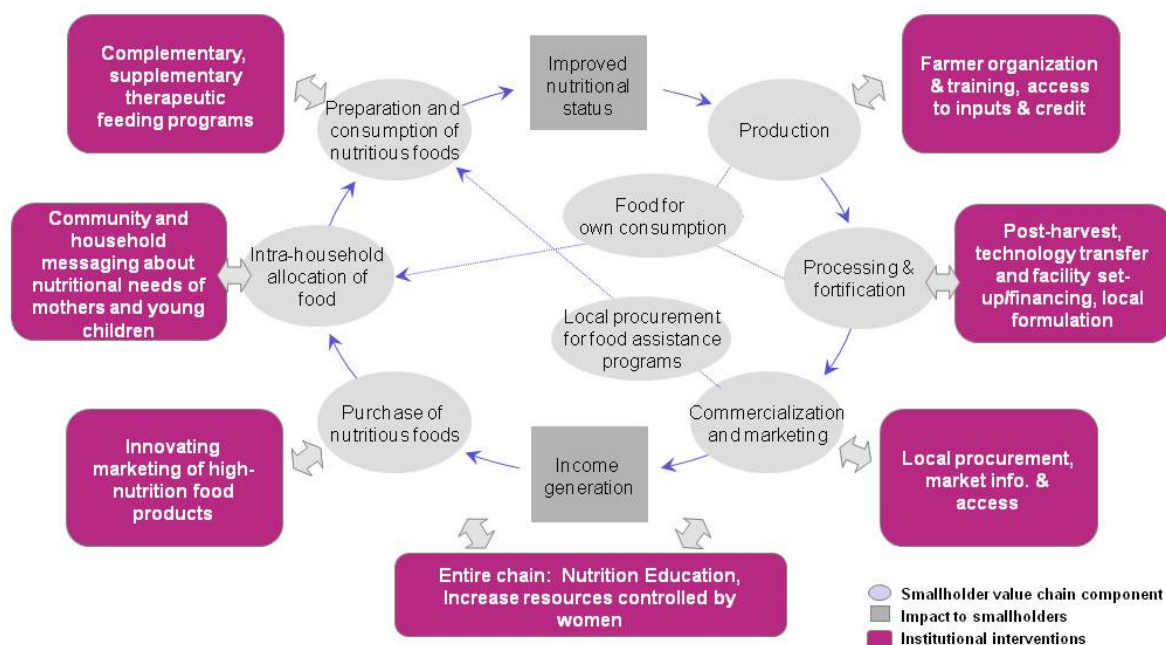


Figure 2. Different institutions play a critical role in supporting smallholder farmers at each point in the value chain through a number of interventions. Evidence suggests that interventions to increase resources controlled by women, as well as nutrition education, are critical across the entire chain.

¹ World Bank, 2007. *From Agriculture to Nutrition: Pathways, Synergies, and Outcomes*. Report No. 40196-GLB. World Bank, Washington, DC.