



BUILDING CAPACITY IN INTEGRATING FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION PROGRAMMING

ANALYSIS OF EXPERIENCE IN THE SAHEL AND THE HORN OF AFRICA

In order to address malnutrition efficiently, an integrated and multisectoral approach is required to tackle simultaneously the different immediate and underlying causes of malnutrition. However, integration between various relevant sectors working in malnutrition is still lacking, and the best practices and lessons learnt are not enough shared between sectors.

Within the framework of the capacity-building project for better integration of nutrition and food security programming¹, FAO has asked humanitarian organizations in Western Africa and the Sahel (Chad, Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali) and in the Horn of Africa (Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan and Ethiopia) to share their experiences and lessons learnt on implementing integrated programmes, and more particularly between nutrition and food security sectors. Data were collected from February to July 2014, using a good practices template (Annex 1) that was distributed to the various institutions. 37 replies were received and analysed, with a majority of the programmes (25) coming from the Sahel and West Africa region, nine from the Horn of Africa and three from other African countries (Rwanda, Malawi and the Democratic Republic of Congo); and with more than 80% implemented in rural areas² (Annexes 2 and 3). Project duration ranged from 4 to 120 months, with an average duration of about two years. This relatively short period of time may

be explained because the projects' main focus was on experience in humanitarian projects and resilience-building programmes. An analysis of lessons learnt and good practices was conducted based solely on the data collected. This document provides the results of this analysis, highlighting the enabling and hindering factors as identified by professionals to maximize project results and impact on nutrition in the food security projects reviewed. In particular, it focuses on agricultural and vegetable gardening activities, cash transfer programmes, and on cross-cutting issues including accountability and gender.

FLAGSHIP ACTIVITIES: LESSONS LEARNT

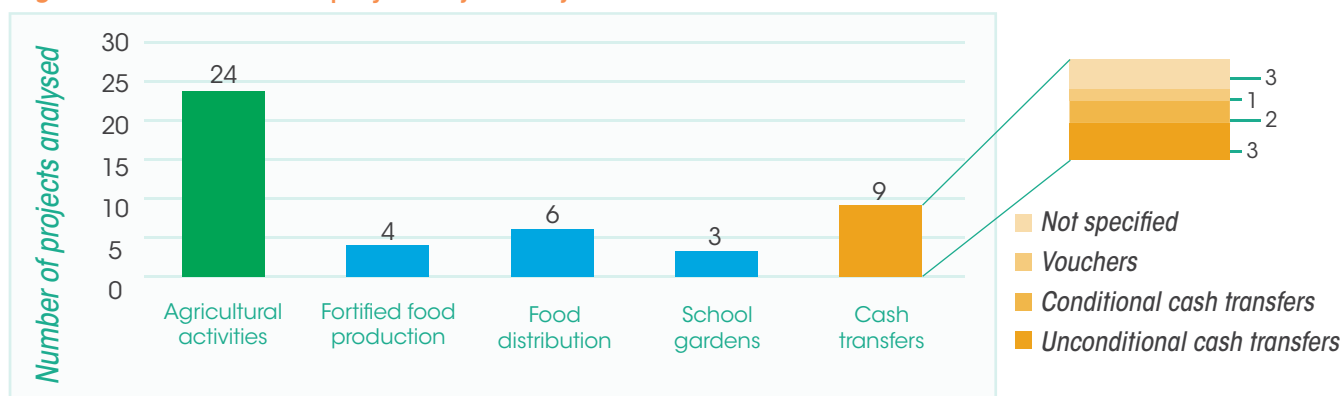
Agricultural and vegetable gardening activities

Two-thirds of the projects analysed include promotion of and support to gardening and agricultural activities. Complementary activities comprised the production of processed foods or setting-up of school gardens. These activities promote the **integration of nutrition and health**, and food security with livelihoods and provide an additional source of income for households. They also contributed to the diversification of household diets and thereby to the prevention of malnutrition. These activities target **different categories of the population**: school gardens for children, crops from improved seeds for men, and collective or family gardens for women - thus involving every single member of the household.

¹Project funded by ECHO and implemented by FAO in the Horn of Africa, in the Sahel and at global level.

²All analysed data sheets are available on the project website: www.fao.org/in-action/food-security-capacity-building/project-components/nutrition/bestpractices/en/

Figure 1: Distribution of projects by activity



*Promoting and developing capacity for collective women-led vegetable gardens was part of a successful **Nigerian Red Cross** programme. Still in progress, this project increases income at household level, improving the community's nutritional status. The success of this project has also been successful in strengthening social cohesion.*

The majority of the programmes analysed focus on the following elements:

- identifying **crops to be promoted**: selection of seeds and plants with high nutritional values depending on local micronutrient deficiencies and after assessing local dietary habits and preferences.
- Promoting the **combination of short-cycle crops** which are easy to grow and which motivate beneficiaries, with longer-cycle, more nutritious crops.
- Ensuring both theoretical and practical training in agricultural techniques and in nutrition to **maximize the nutritional impact** of implemented activities. For example, training could include topics such as the nutritional value of specific crops, demonstrations of cooking methods which better maintain the nutritious value of foods during preparation and storage, and cultivation techniques.

- Ensuring a **favourable environment** for sustainable agricultural and vegetable gardening activities. This may include issues related to land and access to farmland for the poorest households; integration of a Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) component to ensure sufficient irrigation of crops; training in good hygiene practices; and addressing the issue of drifting animals, which cause considerable crop damage in Sahel countries.

Setting up production units

Some programmes support the production of locally fortified foods such as flour. Recommendations for this activity include:

- allowing **sufficient time** (mostly inadequate in the programmes reviewed) for setting-up the units and technical training of the future workers, as well as training potential unit managers in financial management.
- Creating **partnerships** with public institutions and the local private sector to better distribute fortified flour for young children; for example marketing and distribution to health centres and schools.
- Paying greater attention to the sale price of products, in order to avoid breaking down the local trading system and to be within the means of targeted users.
- **Ensuring access to markets** and developing flour **marketing opportunities** in such a way that smallholders have comparative advantages for producing, e.g. contract farming, women producers' organizations.

Cash Transfer Programming (CTP)

25% of programmes analysed include one or more cash transfer component using diverse modalities being used (such as cash distribution and vouchers, mostly granted under certain conditions but sometimes without conditions). The experiences emphasize:

- setting conditions when distributing cash, especially in cases of acute crisis. For example: conditioning cash distribution to beneficiaries' participating in nutrition education sessions and/or cooking demonstrations. This encourages beneficiaries to use **their additional resources towards the improvement of household welfare**.
- Prioritising **women** as recipients of cash or vouchers as they are responsible for child feeding and are more likely to put the cash to good use (towards child care and household welfare).

Focus should be also placed on:

- The use of cash transfer programming to increase productive assets for the agricultural and/or hygiene and sanitation sectors.
- The **combination of several modalities** - such as cash transfers, food distribution, conditional or unconditional vouchers (cash/voucher for work) to best fit local nutritional requirements in line with the beneficiaries' calendar of activities.

TWO COMMONLY MENTIONED SUCCESS FACTORS

Lift the taboos and promote behaviour change in feeding and child care practices through: information, education and communication, targeting all community and household members.

Nutrition education activities have been recognised as key success factors in integrated programmes for half of the projects reviewed. Food taboos, cultural beliefs and traditions in care and feeding practices can be contrary to the general recommendations for better nutrition. Social structure and hierarchy are other major obstacles to the success of integrated humanitarian programmes on nutrition. Hence the

need for nutrition education which should focus on behaviour change and overcoming **cultural barriers**. The content of education and awareness sessions must of course be adapted to the context and to the previously identified local beliefs. The topics addressed usually include **basic concepts** such as good hygiene practices, recognizing the symptoms of malnutrition, the nutritional value of food, and also more specific elements related to the programme being implemented, such as how to take anthropometric measurements in those programmes with a community-based nutrition screening component, and the nutritional value of distributed seeds or food produced within the framework of the project.

Demonstration sessions were found to be effective in raising women's awareness about healthier cooking practices, particularly when demonstrating how to use and cook locally grown crops or locally transformed food products, or about good child care practices.

*In the Bandundu province of the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, local beliefs and local taboos were found to be the main contributors to konzo disease. **ACF** implemented a cross-sectoral programme with a nutrition education and training component. At the project baseline, 74% of the sampled population attributed the disease to a metaphysical origin, while 88% correctly noted the food-related causes of konzo at endline.*

Raising awareness should be continuous and target **all members of the community**, and not limited to direct beneficiaries who are usually children and women. Involving community leaders such as village chiefs, spiritual leaders or traditional healers is indeed essential for the project to be accepted and legitimate in the community's eyes and therefore efficient. In the same way, traditional healers, grandmothers and husbands often play an important role in the household and decision-making (health, feeding, child care and household expenses); care must therefore be taken to include them in the awareness campaign.

If changes in knowledge are rapid, it is clear that behaviour change is a slow process that requires a continued awareness effort over a long period of time. This is unfortunately rarely achievable due to the relatively short time of most of the humanitarian projects reviewed. Direct impacts of awareness activities are therefore often difficult to observe within the projects' timeframes.

Working in partnership

An integrated project cannot be truly successful if it doesn't run in multi-partnership; this is a lesson learnt from more than three-quarters of the experiences reviewed. The causes of malnutrition are multiple and addressing malnutrition problems requires different and complementary mechanisms and expertise, starting with a joint targeting strategy between partner organizations. Multi-partnership means collaboration between actors from different organizations working in the same sector (NGOs, public institutions, private sector), but even more important is collaboration between professionals working in different sectors. Agriculture and health are the sectors which are most highly represented in the projects, but others such as education, trade and social protection are equally relevant.

In Chad, collaboration between IRC and Oxfam in the same area resulted in: (i) Oxfam and IRC using the same community workers in their programmes; (ii) compatibility of awareness-raising materials and agreement on a common list of key themes to include in their nutrition education activities; and (iii) having a joint targeting strategy: after being detected as malnourished by Oxfam, children were referred to IRC therapeutic feeding units.

Engaging with the government is key for project sustainability. Examples of beneficial public policies include promoting fortified flours for children, developing health centres and including the basics of nutrition in the schools' curricula.

In Burkina Faso, ACF participated in a multistakeholder project that contributed to reducing food insecurity in two provinces. At local level, local authorities supported targeting process and social mobilisation. A strong collaboration between ACF and GRET – which supported the implementation of production units for of enriched flour, enabled GRET staff to be trained by ACF staff on screening of malnourished children and on improved infant and young child feeding practices. Finally, at national level, a common framework between EHCO-funded NGOs was established in order to harmonize approaches, indicators and monitoring systems.

FOCUS ON ACCOUNTABILITY TO AFFECTED POPULATIONS

One of the elements this study particularly focused on was the accountability issue. Most programmes reviewed acknowledge the need to take into consideration accountability towards the community and its involvement during each phase of the project cycle: situation analysis, design and implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. This can be efficiently achieved by adopting a participatory community-based approach. It is indeed important for households to take part in the activities, not only as beneficiaries but as actors of the programme involved in every step of the project.

The following good practices were promoted in the various projects analysed with the aim of improving the programmes' accountability.

During situation analysis:

- ensure there is a thorough understanding of the community's environment and how it functions so as to set up appropriate activities in terms of the amount of time needed for implementation and how to proceed.
- This also calls for a participatory analysis, involving the community when identifying beneficiaries: for example, by identifying poor and very poor households.

During project design and implementation:

- Consult communities to define **activities**: which national actors should take part? Which foodstuffs and plants does the population consume and prefer? What is a good timeframe in which to implement the different activities?
- For the targeting of beneficiaries: **establish targeting committees** making sure that all potential groups of beneficiaries are represented and that the hierarchy mechanisms are understood and respected by the project team.
- Conduct an **exhaustive information campaign** so that everyone knows about the project launch and what activities will be implemented and how.
- **Hand over the leadership** of some activities to a community committee which represents and is recognized by each socio-economic group and by different ethnic and religious groups.
- Create **volunteer groups** and teach them how to train other community members. These community network members should be provided with simple monitoring tools in order to guarantee proper adoption and sustainability of activities.

During the monitoring and evaluation phase of the project:

- Ensure a **double flow of information**: on one hand, the implementing organization should provide information to the beneficiaries about the results of activities in the village; on the other hand, the beneficiaries should provide their feedback and comments on the interventions. Information-sharing and being transparent with communities, both within the organization and with the donors, is key to approaching accountability issues. In many projects, this was illustrated by setting up mechanisms **to handle complaints**. Frequently, **complaints' committees** or networks are created and should provide the data received by community members to the project team. Other mechanisms could be used, such as setting up a **free dedicated hotline**, organizing regular interviews with beneficiaries or **focus**

groups, and **conducting surveys** or participatory self-evaluation. When designing these mechanisms for handling complaints, make sure that their role has been well understood and that they are accessible to everyone. This means making sure that the members of the complaints' committee are representative of the local population, maintaining awareness on the importance of those mechanisms throughout the duration of the project, **using the local language** to communicate with communities (e.g. the hotline staff should be able to speak the local language), and ensuring that any information provided will be kept confidential.

*The Ejo Haza programme led by Global Villages and **Save the Children** in Rwanda adopted a programming approach based on individuals and families' specific needs, rather than having a pre-determined "package" of actions and services. It ensures that resources are used more efficiently to increase impact on welfare and well-being. Participation in activities is on a "self-selection" basis. At the same time, networks of community volunteers are responsible for group training and nutrition education.*

Finally, engaging an effective accountability approach requires its **own budget line** to support the specific activities of complaints' mechanisms, translation of tools and documents into the local language, and training and communication kits. It should also cover extra costs such as transport and the organization of meetings with beneficiaries and community members.

*In a **CARE** project conducted in Chad, beneficiaries were involved in the needs assessment (participation in the HEA data collection), and in the identification of beneficiaries (via a village committee). Furthermore the management of complaints was handled by community sentinels, and local leaders monitored how activities such as cash transfers and the distribution of "Plumpydoz" proceeded.*

This part tackles the involuntary side-effects or negative impact that the implementation of a food security project or some of their activities can have on the population's nutritional status. It puts forward possible actions to avoid or limit negative impacts.

Women's workload

One of the main elements taken into account in the projects that were analysed was the risk that an **increased workload for women** due to participating in the project's activities could have on the running of their households. For example, this could have a negative impact on nutrition in the long run by reducing the time allocated to child care.

Most of the programmes pay great attention to the **distribution of working time** among different tasks that women have: child care, looking after the house, income-generating activities and involvement in project activities. Good practices can tackle this issue, for example by setting up day-care for children whose mothers are participating in an activity or by providing technologies which reduce women's workload.

Nevertheless, before setting up specific actions, it is important to compile data during the situation phase analysis on women's work schedules on how and when different tasks are carried out throughout the year. In the same way, understanding the cropping calendar and local traditions is necessary.

Use of resources

Another example of possible negative effects is the poor use of income generated through project activities. Again, an awareness campaign is essential to ensure that additional income is allocated to child care or covering basic needs such as feeding members of the household.

The inequalities existing between men and women are still strongly defined in African societies and this has a strong impact on the populations' nutritional status: the greater the gender inequality, the greater is the rate of undernutrition (Mucha, 2012). Gender inequality can negatively influence agricultural production, food and nutrition if, for example, women who safeguard household nutrition do not have access to the family's income or other resources (land, credit, etc) nor are empowered to make any decisions on their use and distribution. Designing and implementing gender-sensitive activities are major factors towards the success of a programme addressing malnutrition and food insecurity.

Good practices related to the issue of gender-sensitivity were identified through the analysis of the different experience sheets:

- 56% of the programmes **specifically target women**, of which: 60% for pregnant and lactating women; 20% for women-led households; and 20% for priority to women rather than to men.
- **Representation of women** in proposed activities (production or food processing units for example) and in the different community committees (targeting, steering, handling of complaints, etc.) can be ensured by fixing quotas in the project design process.
- Furthermore, in order to **empower them within the community**, women are sometimes the only recipients of resources distributed within the scope of the project - cash transfers, kits and food, etc. This also ensures that the resources will reach their intended beneficiaries and objectives: improving children and household nutrition status. Women may also take part in the implementation process, for example by being the ones distributing the food or vouchers.

It is evident that empowering women is a priority in the various strategies of organizations and institutions. However, the role of men is sometimes forgotten. Nevertheless, for behaviour and habit changes to be recognized and legitimate within communities, men also have to be taken into consideration. Therefore, some actions are necessary to fully address the gender issue:

- **raise awareness among men on issues of malnutrition** and inform them about the programme before implementation of the activities. Communication strategies and materials should be adapted to a male audience.
- Include both male- and female-specific activities, integrating their respective roles and needs. For example, agricultural production is often male-oriented and food processing or home gardening more usually carried out by women.

Less than half of the projects involve men in their activities even though organizations that do include them report major positive impacts.

*In a one-year project led by **ACF in Kenya**, support and discussion groups related to new income-generating activities were created for women. At the same time, the men, who were indirect beneficiaries, participated in awareness sessions on the role and functions of these groups. Women were then "authorized" and encouraged to attend the activities and the menfolk greatly appreciated the new core role of women in the community.*

Integrating Nutrition and Food Security programming For Emergency response and Resilience Building



Case Study / Sharing Good Practices - Template

The following template serves to gather examples of case studies or good practices on project, programs or initiatives that aim to better integrate food security and nutrition (in terms of situation analysis, response analysis, project design, M&E, impact assessment, coordination etc.) with a particular emphasis on lessons learned. The case studies and good practices will be used to share experiences during the training events and organized in the context of the FAO Capacity Building project for better Nutrition and Food Security programming.



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Title of project/programme/initiative	
Implementing /responsible organisations(s)	
Geographical Coverage (region, country, area)	
Duration of project/programme/initiative:	
Start date:	
End date:	
Ongoing:	
Contact person (name, e-mail):	
Humanitarian context (i.e. emergency response, post-crisis, resilience-building):	
Type of context (urban, rural, camps, ...):	
Phases of humanitarian project cycle. Please tick boxes in the list below (several choices possible)	
☐ Situation analysis ☐ Response analysis ☐ Project design	☐ Project monitoring ☐ Evaluation ☐ Impact assessment

Main topic(s). Please tick boxes in the list below (several choices possible)

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Livestock and Nutrition | ☐ Urban settings and nutrition |
| ☐ Cash Transfer Programming and Nutrition | ☐ Joint Food Security and Nutrition assessment |
| ☐ Nutrition counselling / education | ☐ Multi-sectoral planning for nutrition |
| ☐ Diversifying local production | ☐ Joint implementation |
| ☐ Supporting local livelihoods | ☐ Others. Please specify: |
| ☐ Nutrition sensitive value chains (including bio/fortification) | _____ |
| ☐ Micronutrients-rich food and crops | _____ |
| ☐ Income Generating Activities and nutrition | _____ |
| ☐ Food aid and nutrition | _____ |

Main objectives of the project including nutritional objectives (please specify if these objectives are included in the logical framework)

Main food security and nutrition issues addressed by the project (including issues of target groups, causes of food insecurity and malnutrition)

Implementation process and activities

Actors/ coordination mechanisms involved

How **gender** and **accountability** are taken into consideration?

Specific tools/methodology (developed or used)

How the **outcomes/ impacts** have been measured (process and indicators; existence of base-/endline)

Main results/impacts achieved

What has worked and what has NOT worked and why?
Difficulties encountered?

Key messages to communicate

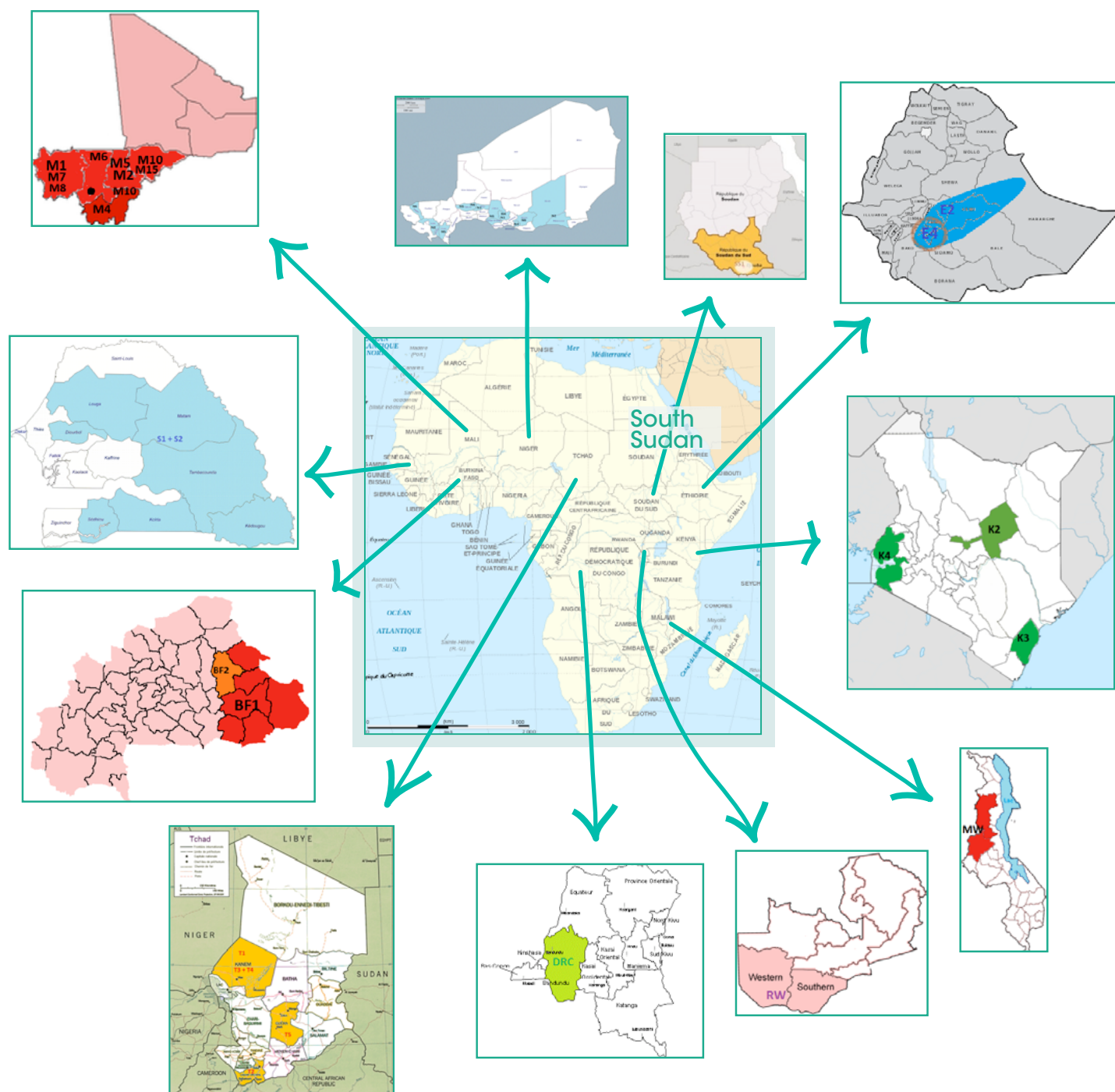
Main enabling/success and **hindering/failure factors**

Recommendations for the up-scaling of successful practices

Please provide **references** for documentation (e.g. reports, surveys, etc.).

If any pictures, charts or diagrams have been produced to illustrate the project/programme/initiative, please attach the most representative illustrations to this template.

ANNEX 2: GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF ANALYSED GOOD PRACTICE SHEETS



ANNEX 3: LIST OF PROGRAMMES REVIEWED

COUNTRY	PROJECT TITLE	ORGANISATION
Ethiopia	Farmers' Participatory Training on the Production of High Quality Protein and Drought-Tolerant Maize: Experience of Farmer Field Schools (FFS) in Jeju ADP, Ethiopia	World Vision
Ethiopia	Targeted Supplementary Food Programme	Ministry of Health (MOH), Disaster Risk Management Food Security Sector (DRMFSS), WFP and UNICEF
Ethiopia	Creating resilience through integrated multisectoral approach in emergency-prone areas of Wolayta zone, SNNPR region	International Medical Corps- Ethiop
Kenya	Reconciling agriculture and nutrition: Case study on agricultural policies and nutrition in Kenya	Action Against Hunger (ACF)
Kenya	Improving nutrition outcomes through linking High Impact Nutrition Interventions (HiNi) beneficiaries to food security and livelihoods interventions	ACF
Kenya	Magarini Integrated Livelihood Project	Kenya Red Cross Society, Finnish Red Cross – Kenya
Kenya	Aphiplus Western And Nyanza	World Vision In A Consortium With Path (Lead), Egpaif, Jhphiego, Broadreach
Kenya	NjaaMarufuku Kenya Project (NMK)	Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (MOALF) Kenya
Rwanda	Integrated Improved Livelihoods Programme (IILP) of EjoHeza-Rwanda	Global Villages (Formerly CHF), Save the Children, FEG Consulting, Agland Investment Service Consulting Inc, Local partners
South Sudan	Food security and livelihood diversification	ZOA – South-Sudan
Dem Rep Congo	Impact of cross-sectoral approach to addressing Komzo	ACF
Burkina Faso	Appui à la mise en place d'un réseau de petites entreprises qui produisent des aliments fortifiés (UE, Unicef, ECHO, USAID, CRS) en partenariat avec ACF et HKI	GRET

PAYS	TITRE DU PROJET	ORGANISATION
Burkina Faso	Programme Echo soudure	ACF
Chad	"Improving the resilience of chronically food and nutrition insecure households in Nokou, Kanem Region "	FAO
Chad	Mise en place d'un foyer communautaire de récupération nutritionnelle	World Vision Suisse
Chad	Relèvement des ménages affectés par la crise alimentaire 2012	ACF
Chad	Prévention et prise en charge de l'insécurité nutritionnelle dans la Région du Kanem	ACF
Chad	Soutien alimentaire aux ménages à risque ou affectés par la malnutrition et l'insécurité alimentaire suite à la mauvaise campagne 2011-2012 dans le Nord Guéra.	Oxfam
Niger	Food Security and Livelihoods: From Recovery to Resilience	ACF
Niger	Programme d'amélioration de la Sécurité Alimentaire et des moyens d'existences des populations affectées par les catastrophes et les crises alimentaires (DFID, Croix-Rouge Suédoise, Croix-Rouge Norvégienne, Croix-Rouge du Japon,...)	Croix Rouge
Niger	Programme d'Appui à la Sécurité Alimentaire des Ménages « Tanadin Abincinlyali » PASAM-TAI	CRS
Niger	Appui au Développement de la Viande Déshydratée du Niger Phase expérimentale	CESA0
Niger	Projet d'appui aux populations vulnérables en période de soudure pour prévenir la malnutrition	Alliance de 5 ONGI au Niger: ACF, Acted, Concern, Oxfam, Save The Children
Mali	Renforcement des capacités de résilience des ménages les plus affectés par la crise alimentaire dans les régions de Kayes et Koulikoro au Mali	ACF
Mali	Appui à la prévention et à la prise en charge de la malnutrition aigüe face à la crise nutritionnel dans sept districts sanitaires	ASDAP Mali
Mali	Mobilisation communautaire pour la réduction de l'insécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle dans le cercle de Kolondiéba	WHH
Mali	Soutien au projet de jardinage scolaire dans l'Unité de Programme de Barouéli (Région de Ségou)	FAO

PAYS	TITRE DU PROJET	ORGANISATION
Mali	Projet IEC Nutrition dans 23 villages de l'aire de santé de Dialakoroba dans la commune rurale de Dialakoroba, cercle de Kati, région de Koulikoro	ONG SIA
Mali	Projet d'appui à la prévention et la prise en charge de la malnutrition aigüe sévère dans le cercle de Yélimané.	Croix Rouge Malienne
Mali	Projet d'intervention nutritionnelle et coupon alimentaire dans le cercle de Diéma/Kayes	SCUK
Mali	Mali PD/Hearth and Food Security Project (PD/ Hearth ou Foyer de deviance positive)	WV
Mali	Prise en charge de la malnutrition à base des produits localement produits (jardinage) dans les foyers de déviance positive	WV
Mali	Appui à la prévention, au dépistage et à la prise en charge de la malnutrition aigüe au niveau communautaire/ Projet intégré WASH in Nut de lutte contre la malnutrition dans le District Sanitaire de Mopti	ACTED
Senegal	Prévention et prise en charge de la malnutrition chez les enfants dans les régions hautement vulnérables (Nutrition Enfance Sécurité Alimentaire : NESA)	5 agences de l'ONU
Senegal	Programme Intégré Santé Education Nutrition (PISEN)	FAO
Malawi	Improving Food Security and Nutrition Policies and Programme Outreach	FAO/Ministère de l'agriculture / Ministère de la santé
Mauritanie, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Tchad	ACF Food Security and Livelihoods intervention for 2012 Sahel Crisis	ACF

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