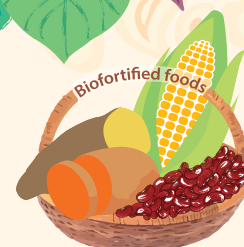


# Insights from the Field



Building Nutritious Food Baskets

## “Take lead – take off” Approach to Capacity Development for Sustainability and Impact: A success story of the Agricultural and Rural Management Training Institute in Nigeria

“Agricultural and Rural Management Training Institute (ARMTI) has partnered with International Potato Center (CIP), through the Reaching Agents of Change (RAC) and Jumpstarting Projects. These partnerships have helped to build the capacities of the staff that participated in these projects and helped ARMTI in achieving some of her agricultural and rural development mandates”.

Dr. O. A. Oladunni, Ag. Executive Director, ARMTI, Nigeria

The Agricultural and Rural Management Training Institute (ARMTI) is a parastatal organization under the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Federal Government of Nigeria. ARMTI is situated in Ilorin Kwara State of North Central Nigeria. It is a center of excellence for agricultural and rural development (ARD) management training and ARD manpower development in Nigeria in general. The work of ARMTI serves very well to demonstrate emerging impact and sustainability of the foundation laid by the Reaching Agents of Change (RAC) project’s capacity development efforts.

Between 2011 and 2014, the International Potato Center (CIP) and Helen Keller International (HKI) implemented the RAC initiative that advocated for increased investment in orange-fleshed sweetpotato (OFSP), to combat vitamin A deficiency among young children and women of reproductive age and to develop institutional and community capabilities to produce and consume OFSP. To ensure sustainability, RAC strengthened the capacity of national institutions like ARMTI, Sokoine University of Agriculture (Tanzania) and Eduardo Mondlane University (Mozambique), and that of individual change agents. The aim was to enable them self-organize, drive their own agenda, mainstream the OFSP training program into their activities, and pass down the skills acquired to the end-users – the small-scale farmers.

The RAC project worked closely with ARMTI in planning and delivering the Training of Trainers (ToT) courses on “Everything you ever wanted to know about sweetpotato” using adult learning methodologies. This was achieved through a collaborative agreement that was successfully implemented between December 2012 and July 2014. The ToT course is a hands-on course that comprises of fourteen topics on sweetpotato knowledge along the value chain, including production, utilization and investment in sweetpotato.

To reach a critical mass producing and consuming OFSP, RAC applied a “cascading” model for capacity development, where experts (agriculturalists, nutritionists, health, marketing and



Figure 1 ToTs at ARMTI



gender experts) attended a 10-day workshop facilitated by CIP, HKI, ARMTI and other national experts. These experts became the primary facilitators who in turn facilitated shorter and contextualized ToTs to various levels of audiences (secondary and tertiary). This upscaling approach ensured that the training was cascaded down to farmer trainers who finally trained the end users in their communities as illustrated in figure 1.

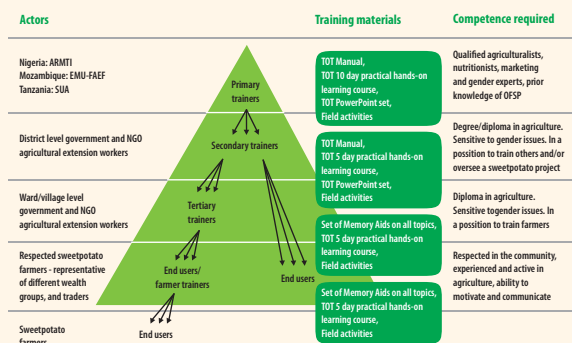


Figure 2 Cascading Approach to Capacity development

In the first year (2012); the RAC project specialists (CIP and HKI) led the process of organizing and conducting the ToT course while the national counterparts from ARMTI backstopped the process. In the second year (2013), the national counterparts from ARMTI took lead in organizing and conducting the training while the RAC project specialists backstopped. By the third year (2014), ARMTI's capacity was developed and they organized and conducted the ToT course on their own with the RAC project team acting as observers and only offering partial financial support as illustrated in figure 2.

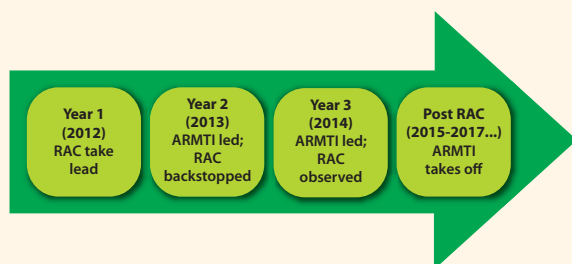


Figure 3 "Take lead – take off" Approach

## 'Take off' Post RAC

Post RAC project implementation (2014 onwards), ARMTI's capacity was fully developed and the ToT course was domiciled in ARMTI and they now took complete charge of running the course on a full-cost-recovery basis. ARMTI established and maintained demonstration OFSP plots for field practical exercises during the ToT courses. However, this was not without challenges; for example, in the first attempt to run the course in March 2015, there were no applicants (with funding) despite efforts to advertise the course extensively within and outside Nigeria and subsidizing the tuition fee specially to attract national participants. The second attempt in October 2015 yielded some success attracting six participants. This prompted ARMTI to become more innovative in mobilizing resources

to support the course and ensure that the OFSP course remained a priority, and was fully integrated into ARMTI's programs.

ARMTI management developed a proposal to mobilize resources to run the course under ARMTI's Human Capacity Development Capital Project and submitted it to the Federal Government of Nigeria. These efforts yielded results and in 2016, when the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development approved funding of 16,500,000 Naira (equivalent to USD 54,635.76 at a rate of \$1 to N302), which was included in the 2016 ARMTI's Human Capacity Development Capital project. Through this support, ARMTI was able to run two more ToT courses – the first in December 2016, and the second in March 2017. In these two courses, ARMTI trained up to 53 (12 female) agents of change on "Everything you ever wanted to know about sweetpotato. This brings to a total 138 (42 female) agents of change (national and international) that have been trained through ARMTI between 2012 and 2017, reaching over 21 states of Nigeria (see table 1).

The national participants were mainly drawn from six states, which are high producers and consumers of sweetpotato i.e. Kwara, Osun, Ebonyi, Kaduna, Benue and Nasarawa. The first cohort of ToTs trained in December 2016 included four new States i.e. Kogi, Oyo, Abia and Kano States as well as Capital Territory; while the second cohort trained in April 2017 included Bauchi, Gombe, Plateau, Niger, Taraba, Anambra, Delta, Rivers, Akwa Ibom, Ekiti, and Ogun States. These new states have great potential for sweetpotato production and consumption and it is expected that more states will be included in subsequent courses to eventually cover all the states in Nigeria.

Table 1: Breakdown of ToT Participation 2012-2017

Year	Number of Participants	Sex		Nationality	
		M	F	Nigerian	International
2012*	20	12	8	20	-
2013*	28	17	11	24	4
2014*	31	21	10	22	9
2015**	6	5	1	6	-
2016*** 1st Batch	32	25	7	32	-
2017*** 2nd Batch	21	16	5	21	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>13</b>

\* conducted under RAC funding, \*\* conducted on cost-recovery basis, \*\*\* conducted under 2016 ARMTI's capital project and cost-recovery basis

ARMTI plans to continue with this sustainable capacity development initiative and to attract more funding from the Federal Government of Nigeria; this way reaching more agents of change; impacting on local institutions and farmers to produce and consume the vitamin A-rich OFSP. Catalyzing demand and investment for OFSP while strengthening institutional and community capacities, is critical to addressing hidden hunger by reaching more households in Nigeria to produce and consume biofortified crops.

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