Achievements and Lessons Learned from the Building Nutritious Food Baskets Project


9th Annual SPHI TECHNICAL MEETING, Nairobi – Kenya
26 September 2018
Combating hidden hunger through nutritious food baskets

Outline

• Background
• Key achievements of BNFB
• Lessons Learned
• Conclusion
Building Nutritious Food Baskets (BNFB) Project

- Three-year project (Nov 2015 – Oct 2018) funded by Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- Adopts a multi-crop – nutritious ‘food basket’ approach
- Implemented in Nigeria and Tanzania - builds on the Reaching Agents of Change (RAC) project
- Led by CIP and implemented through a consortium: (CIAT; CIMMYT; IITA; HarvestPlus; FARA; Governments of Nigeria and Tanzania; African Union; NEPAD & a range of partners)
“scaling up is dependent on supportive policy environment, strong institutional capacities and proven technologies”
Key Achievements – Objective 1 - Advocacy

- 3 advocacy strategies developed and implemented at national and regional levels.

- Strengthened the capacity of 101 advocates and champions (national / regional levels - who are advocating for policy change / raising new investment.

- Supported and facilitated the raising of over $6.1M in support of initiatives on biofortification.

- Integrated biofortification into 11 major policy documents to guide implementation of programmes addressing hidden hunger.

- Influenced the inclusion of biofortification in 5 programmes aimed at reducing micronutrient malnutrition.

- National multisectoral policy platforms strengthened and discussing biofortification.
**Key Achievements – Objective 1 – Media Advocacy**

- Trained **41 journalists** who are producing **high quality print / online articles, features, documentaries, radio programs.**

- BNFB **web page** developed and is providing regularly updated information and knowledge on biofortification.

- **Social media** active in promoting biofortification through Tweets, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp.

- **Biofortification Excellence in Journalism Media Awards** in Tanzania – incentivizing objective reporting on biofortification.
• Diverse Advocacy and social and behavior change communication materials developed and widely disseminated and used to support advocacy and behavior change.
Combating hidden hunger through nutritious food baskets

Key Achievements – Objective 2 – Capacity Development

• Strengthened the capacity of 40 national and community institutions – which are designing and implementing gender sensitive projects on biofortification.

• **4 key learning toolkit** have been developed and used for training:
  
  (1) updated ToT manual on Everything you ever wanted to know about sweetpotato;
  
  (2) Biofortification: a sustainable solution to hidden hunger;
  
  (3) High-iron and zinc beans: a biofortified solution for iron deficiency; and
  
  (4) Pro-vitamin A maize: a biofortified solution for vitamin A deficiency.

• **6,405 (3,190 female) change agents** trained, who are training others along the BNFB training model.
Key Achievements – Objective 2 – Seed systems

- BNFB fast-tracked the release of 7 varieties of biofortified crops including ‘Solo Gold’ – a new OFSP variety in Nigeria.

- More than 980,865 households growing and consuming biofortified crops (includes data from HarvestPlus – using their own funds).

- The capacity of 4 private sector agripreneurs strengthened to process and market biofortified food products - (1) AFCO Investment Co. Ltd - PVA maize and OFSP flour; (2) Mama Organic - OFSP flour; (3) JAGEF Group – high iron and zinc bean flour; 4) Mahauty Health Solutions - OFSP infant-weaning products.

- 6 crop-specific platforms - OFSP, PVA maize and high iron and zinc beans established to accelerate uptake of biofortified crops.
Lessons learned

BNFB Project Design:

Observation 1 – Assumed:
- Availability of technologies that were ready to scale up;
- No varieties of high iron beans and PVA maize varieties – Tanzania;
- Seed of PVA maize and high iron and zinc beans will be available in October 2018;
- PVA maize seed was not available for farmers;
- Additional varieties of OFSP expected to be released in 2019.

Lesson 1
- Fast-tracking the release of biofortified crops and scaling up their production and consumption is a long process;
- Multiplying seeds to ensure access by farmers is dependent on seasons (2 years for PVA maize)
- Projects that entail fast-tracking the release of biofortified crop varieties and scaling up should take a minimum of 5 years to allow adequate time for release, seed multiplication to pave way for advocacy, capacity development, growing, processing and utilization.
Advocacy:

Observation 2

• BNFB identified advocates and champions at national and regional levels;

• Advocates and champions were at different levels of understanding the benefits of biofortified crops and how to conduct effective advocacy.

Lesson 2

The most important factors for successful national/regional advocacy for biofortification is a critical number of well equipped advocates and champions from multiple sectors and organizations located in strategic organizations.

*Equipping advocates and champions with appropriate skills, tools and materials enables them exploit opportunities to influence the inclusion of biofortification in policy documents / implementation and advocate for new investment.*
Lessons learned

Capacity Development:

Observation 3:

• Assumed availability of ready-to-go technologies for scaling up;
• No varieties of high iron beans and PVA maize varieties released in Tanzania at project inception;
• Few training activities on PVA maize and high iron and zinc beans were carried out.

Lesson 3:

• The project focused on interventions targeting seed multipliers (private and public sector) and selected agricultural officers.

Capacity development interventions aimed at strengthening national / community research and extension capabilities should be done for technologies that have been officially released and where seed is available to farmers.
Lessons learned

... Capacity Development – seed systems:

Observation 4

• Market linkages were weak;
  • Sellers did not know who was producing OFSP;
  • Processors did not know where to get regular supply of good quality roots because the OFSP value chain was not well developed.

Lesson 4

Coordination and collaboration across multiple sectors and actors is crucial for developing value chains. Creating national crop-specific platforms (e.g. OFSP) is fundamental for strengthening linkages among key actors along the value chains of biofortified crops.

The WhatsApp groups provided a quick forum for joint problem solving, finding markets for roots and products which helped to stimulate demand.
• Scaling up biofortified crops calls for **effectively managed multidisciplinary and multi-organizational partnerships** that prioritize the inclusion of nutritious crops into policies and programmes.

• Achievements of the BNFB scaling up model of multiple biofortified crops have demonstrated that **effective scaling up is dependent on supportive policy environment, strong institutional capacities and proven biofortified technologies.**
The Building Nutritious Food Baskets: Scaling up Biofortified Crops for Nutrition Security seeks to reduce hidden hunger by catalyzing sustainable investment for the production and utilization of biofortified crops (Orange-fleshed sweetpotato (OFSP); vitamin A (yellow) cassava, vitamin A (orange) maize and high iron/zinc beans) at scale. The project is implemented in Nigeria and Tanzania, to demonstrate how biofortified crops can be scaled up through a multi-crop (“food basket”) approach. BNFB draws on complementary expertise for scaling up through a partnership between CGIAR centers and programs, regional organizations and other public and private sector agencies to create a movement that will eventually reach the target populations. BNFB’s hypothesis is that scaling up is dependent on supportive policy environment, strong institutional capacities and availability of proven technologies.

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

National implementing partners – public, private civil society organizations