

FINAL TECHNICAL REPORT / RAPPORT TECHNIQUE FINAL

ANNEX 13C- ANNUAL PROJECT REVIEW WORKSHOP

SUMMARY

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IDRC Grant / Subvention du CRDI: 107982-001-Scale Up of Homestead Food Production for Improved Nutrition in Cambodia (CIFSRF Phase 2)

Annual Project Review Workshop

November 2017

Scale up of Homestead Food Production for improved household food security and nutrition in Cambodia

FISH ON FARMS PHASE 2:

FAMILY FARMS FOR THE FUTURE (FF4F)

IDRC Grant Agreement No. 107982-002

Helen Keller International and University of British Columbia



IDRC/CIFSRF Support for Global Research on Food Security and Nutrition: update from Dr. Annie Wesley

Each project works in isolation however, when all projects are taken together, they contribute to a much larger global program addressing global issues in food security. The goal of the CIFSRF program, launched in 2008, was to test and scale up innovations to improve food and nutrition security of the poorest by addressing the three pillars of food security—availability, accessibility, and utilization.

By putting a strong emphasis on gender and sustainability in all funded projects, we also sought to ensure that research move beyond academic circles and contribute to broader development goals. We did this through partnership with Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and because of this strategic relationship, expanded our reach to 25 countries.

The CIFSRF projects fit into the bigger picture of global food and nutrition security by carrying out specific activities and outputs that generate research results and contribute to the body of knowledge on nutrition and food security. In the next sphere of influence, programs also have the potential to influence policy and this is the area of focus now. How do we position immediate research outcomes in a way that is connected to development outcomes and the global agenda through Sustainable Development Goals? As we are concluding this program, we must synthesize information to Canadian stakeholders. We need to focus energies on ensuring results are taken up by countries or agencies well positioned within countries to carry them forward.

Discussion Questions

1. *What is IDRC's plan for dissemination of this portfolio to internal Canadian audiences including GAC and other donor organizations? Since Canada has a stronger voice than implementers would in several multilateral organizations e.g. (World Bank, Asian Development Bank, African Development Bank), what is IDRC's role in disseminating lessons learned?*

IDRC is in a phase of critically analyzing the information we have and seeing who the stakeholders are who ultimately will be using or implementing findings. We frequently update GAC and there is a connection with both the Australian International Development Research Centre and Gates Foundation that can be leveraged. A strategy that is currently under development is to synthesize one or two sentences from each project on what is relevant and applicable for uptake and share this with FAO as a suite of workable solutions that they can recommend to member states.

2. *After learning about the achievements, findings and challenges of the FF4F project, what in your view should be our next steps to achieve further scale up?*

Fundamental question is what sector would ultimately take this up. Ideally, it would be the agriculture sector and organizations that fund the agriculture sector because there are limited resources allocated to nutrition. This could be complemented by leveraging Canada's relationships and voice within multilateral organizations such as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and African Development Bank to become champions of these sorts of innovations that doesn't dispense with the need to do a bottom up build at the country level. The challenge with Ministry of Agriculture is that they see this an income generating mechanism and we need to get acceptance that nutrition indicators are something the sector should be tracking as well.

One of Cambodia's strengths is the relationship with the government, but ultimately public-sector extension is essential and will require a fundamental policy shift in what extension agents are accountable for. Currently, the performance metric is yield so there's work to be done to shift some of those accountabilities beyond yield to include number of farmers supported and building their capacity to do it. The skillsets required for this sort of extension are also quite different than those required when working with larger scale farmers who have resources. To do this we need to determine what a saturation approach would be; this can be tested across countries with adequate extension services to determine what this would look like at the policy level, training level and then adjust the monitoring framework for the performance of the agriculture sector. This would move us beyond projects.

3. Have we demonstrated efficacy of EHFP in improving nutritional status?

The objective nutrition outcomes seem to be intractable with agricultural interventions. It's hard to show changes in stunting or biochemistry. From two randomized trials on EHFP, we have not moved the needle on nutritional outcomes; we have only shown a small effect size on self-reported diarrhea in the unblinded Burkina Faso study, so donors may have trouble believing efficacy. I think we all believe that HFP, if allowed to reach fulfillment in its full fecundity will have an effect but what we have now in terms of research hasn't clearly demonstrated that.

We provide farmers with multi-purpose skillset and promote multiple crops rather than few to diversify diets, and to serve as a protection mechanism against adverse events. Part of the evolution of this scale up is the expansion of our unit of analysis. It's not just the household, it's the market, the food system at a local district and what fundamental changes we're making here in terms of better nutrient availability at an affordable cost. This research has shown us that stunting should not be the only metric nutrition sensitive agriculture is evaluated on. Our aim should be cost of nutritious diet; our goal is to try to bring this down and stabilize it throughout the year. Then we can start holding district agriculture officers accountable to that and this will fundamentally change the way that extension agent thinks about agriculture in that district.

We need to be explicit in the assessments. What are the multiple benefits because if they are not captured we cannot compare them properly. We have demonstrated improvements in quality of diet and proxy measures which are important because they have other health outcomes. Perhaps we shift discourse around HFP from a nutrition sensitive focus to wider health benefits and capture indicators on dietary quality because we know the health benefits of improved diets. We should also be cognizant that one of the fundamental levers here is women's empowerment. As women exercise greater control over resources and assets, they access more health services. It won't solve stunting but it's a contribution.

We're not going to see a step change in stunting reduction unless we start layering on many more nutrition specific interventions including quality of antenatal care for infection control of mother during pregnancy. That next step is using these platforms to bridge with health services, so you improve that health services access and uptake. NGO role here would then entail provision of technical assistance for agriculture sector and health sector to create those favorable conducive conditions. NGOs can show this proof of concept that shows these programs help women provide for their families and then access services...but if those services are not available then it doesn't work. Therefore, it's critical that both fronts, supply and demand, are worked on in parallel.

4. NGOs like HKI are pushing for nutrition investment through advocacy effort at all levels, but how can donors do more in advocating for governments to increase their investment on nutrition in balance with their investment in other areas?

This is context dependent. At the Gates Foundation, there is an emphasis on evidence generation to understand what the highest impact interventions are. The Foundation has worked with the World Bank and Scaling Up Nutrition to develop costed plans that lay out nutrition interventions and their trade-offs. Further the Foundation engages directly with governments and civil society organizations to advocate for increases in domestic resource spending on nutrition by influencing the way concessional financing is spent.

Several countries are in negotiations with the World Bank on how they're going to spend items. This is an opportune time sit at the table with the Ministry of Finance with costed nutrition plans. Civil Society can play a strong role here in sensitizing the world bank office to nutrition; without an interlocutor who is nutrition friendly it's not going to happen. As a philanthropy, the Foundation doesn't have the same relationships as bilateral organizations do because they can do more to make conditionalities about funding. The typical bilateral model is that a huge amount of the decision-making is at the country mission level and if they are not sensitized to the issues, that cascading of messages from headquarters or donors to the field offices doesn't occur. We need to improve this.

5. *Donors stress that investing in nutrition is fundamental to development, and that tackling malnutrition is one of the most effective ways to boost economic development. How would you as donors see investment in this sector going in the next 5-10 years, especially in LMICs like Cambodia? And what would be their priorities for the investment in nutrition?*

Traditional bilateral funding is going to be flatlined over the next decade or so; particularly for countries like Cambodia that have relatively growing economies. If there is not concrete money on the table that is evident from the government, donors are going to walk away from programs. More of the funding for any nutrition program is going to come from both domestic resources and concessional financing.

The donor role and role of development partners like HKI moves away from funding programs at scale to working to develop proof of concept/programmatic models and working hand in hand with governments and other partners to build the capacity to take it to scale. Oddly, traditional bilateral donors are getting more conservative, yet they still want to buy results. Typical metrics we use to measure organizational health are irrelevant because they focus on whether organizations' budgets are growing and what percentage of budgets are going to direct program implementation. However, if you take a more positive developmental trajectory, the overall budget shouldn't be growing and less and less should be going to direct program delivery and more and more should be going to human resources; having a skilled human resource base is what will drive success because they will serve as credible interlocutors with government partners.

The metric of success in terms of funding streams should be how much money is the government putting into these programs and how can we have traceability of that. This is a fundamental shift in mindset because typically your value is how big of a budget you have; instead, it should be more about how much of an impact we have on the ecosystem we're trying to change and transition to governments. The challenge is how we square this with bilateral donors becoming more conservative and wanting direct accountability of numbers how households reached, when in actuality these are indicators of failure as we have created parallel delivery systems. This is something that donors need to start having conversation about. Development partners must be willing to become more distal from direct impact and held accountable for certain system change, and donors shouldn't hold them accountable any longer for that direct impact on the ground.

6. *How do you facilitate that transition to government?*

It is country specific. There are some countries that donors look at and say they are ready to take up that responsibility and then there are others they are not convinced the government delivery system is going to work so they pay for the parallel structure. This is the concern in Cambodia; it has been reliant on donor funding for so long that there is uncertainty that it could it switch. The solution for Cambodia lies in a strong robust civil society that holds government accountable for the things they should be accountable for. This can be done by building those relationships at the technocratic level and trying to make the investment case as to why this is good for the country.