



Rapporteur Note

Session: Learning from Country Case Studies

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Chair: **David Beckmann**, President
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Panelists:

Derek Headway, Research Fellow, Development Strategy and Governance Division,
International Food Policy Research Organization, Ethiopia

Beatriz da Silveira Pinheiro, Director General, Strategic Studies and Capacity Strengthening,
Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA), Brazil

Ann Lartey, Associate Professor, Department of Nutrition and Food Science,
University of Ghana and President-Elect, International Union of Nutrition Sciences (2009-13),
Ghana

S. Mahendra Dev, Director,
Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research (IGIDR), India

The session on learning from country case studies in leveraging agriculture for improved nutrition and health highlighted the following critical issues: importance of multisectoral approach in improving nutrition outcomes; good governance/political commitment; and evidence based programming.

The panel accentuated that economic growth especially agricultural growth has positive impact on improving nutrition outcomes; however addressing malnutrition sustainably requires a multisectoral and stakeholder engagement. From the data comparisons by Derek Headey and contribution from session participants, there was consensus that bringing health and education sectors on board would augment impacts of nutrition initiatives: nutrition sensitive interventions. The puzzle of higher economic (agricultural) growth and lower decline in malnutrition in some developing countries was an indicator that many other factors like inequalities across regions and poor infrastructure, governance, low education levels etc influence the changes in nutrition outcomes. Agriculture initiatives alone cannot sustainably impact the nutrition outcomes but are an essential prerequisite toward that end even with low level of development. The participants' discussion this point was in agreement that for strong multisectoral and stakeholder involvement all development programmes should nutrition as an in built aspect.

Ann Lartey and Beatriz da Silveira Pinheiro stressed the need for good governance and political stability in creating a supportive policy environment for improving nutrition outcomes in developing countries. Both Ghana and Brazil made significant strides in the achieving the MDGs on poverty and hunger following

political commitments through: policies on poverty reduction, infrastructure improvement, resource mobilization and increased investment in nutrition sensitive interventions. However, this level of progress requires vast high level advocacy campaigns including identification of multisectoral nutrition champions and build capacity of policy makers for better the comprehension of nutrition in the political arena. They also pointed to wider stakeholder engagement (government, civil society organizations, development partners, private sectors, and academia) in nutritionalising agriculture programs planning, design, implementation and evaluation. Engage the nontraditional stakeholders and approaches such as adoption of business approaches in nutrition programming like opening markets to farmer groups, private sector engagement, cash transfers etc should be explored.

Operational research and cross country learning from promising practices is important but often less prioritized by governments and development agencies in developing countries. The panel was entirely in consensus with S Mehendra Dev on the need for increased investment in operational research to bridge the gap not only between agriculture and nutrition but more so inform the interaction necessary for maximum impact in the relationship between health, nutrition and agriculture. Derek Headey remarked on the existence of promising country experiences that could be learnt from as well as adopted for particular contexts but limited evidence of this. Research also informs design and implementation nutrition programming as progress is often not uniform populations, regions and countries - social inequality, access to basic health services, hygiene and sanitation, levels of education and governance etc differs. Investment in research minimizes losses (both monetary and kind) incurred in large scale programmes which have limited impact.

In conclusion, most countries with significant impact on nutrition outcomes have good economic management, agricultural growth but also health and education investments. Good governance and political commitment have a role in leveraging agriculture; health and nutrition in developing countries thus build capacity for food and nutrition security advocacy. Both traditional and nontraditional resources mobilization are required that is donor governments and agencies, governments but also the private sector engagement is often an untapped resource base. There is need for strong coordination, monitoring and evaluation and resource accountability for better efficacy in leveraging agriculture for improved health nutrition outcomes.