



STRENGTHENING CAPACITIES FOR NUTRITION-SENSITIVE FOOD SYSTEMS IN GHANA, KENYA AND VIET NAM

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) that work in food production, processing and retail play a key role in agrifood systems, especially in sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia, where opportunities for commercialization are expanding. Indeed, agrifood SMEs can take advantage of these opportunities to compete and thrive in the market, while increasing local access to nutritionally dense foods and promoting healthy diets.

This project was formulated to leverage the power of SMEs in three countries that have great potential for creating an enabling environment for developing nutrition-sensitive food systems: Ghana, Kenya and Viet Nam. Through its multistakeholder approach, the project created synergies among the private sector, academia and civil society, which is critical to boosting in-country capacities to support healthy diets.



WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

University curricula in each country were enhanced through the implementation of learning gap assessments, curriculum reviews and through the development of teaching modules and materials on nutrition-sensitive food systems. To facilitate and accelerate the dissemination of the materials, a twinning mechanism was established under the project to promote interuniversity technical support, which led to an additional 25 universities in Kenya, Ghana and Viet Nam beyond those originally targeted expressing an interest in enhancing their own curricula. In Ghana, a new Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture and Food Systems course was developed at post-graduated level, and nutrition approaches were integrated into 15 existing courses in all three countries, benefiting 1 720 students.

Capacity-development interventions also targeted SMEs. In each country, a capacity needs assessment was carried out with 115 SMEs (55 percent run by women, and 45 percent run by men), which led to the production of training materials, the organization of seminars, webinars and face-to-face training sessions, as well as mentoring and coaching programmes for 60 SMEs, based on the needs that emerged from the assessment.

Upgrades to business plans and models that included the incorporation of investments in product formulation, food-safety and quality-management systems and the use of new technologies were also fostered.

The creation of long-term knowledge and the dissemination of information on nutrition-sensitive food systems was another goal of the project, which was realized through the development and dissemination of two open-access FAO e-learning modules on SMEs and nutrition. At the time of writing, a total of 1 428 people from around the world had taken the courses.

KEY FACTS

Latest Approved Budget

USD 1 589 229

Duration

December 2016 – May 2022

Resource Partners

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) of Japan

Partners

Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT), Vietnam National University of Agriculture (VNUA), University of Ghana (UoG), International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Association of Ghana Industries (AGI), Bioversity International-Center for Tropical Agriculture (BI-CIAT), and the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN)

Beneficiaries

University students in Ghana, Kenya and Viet Nam in fields related to food systems; training and governmental institutions involved in the design of curricula related to food systems and nutrition; private-sector stakeholders, such as Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), including producer organizations and cooperatives and SME service providers; and participants in FAO e-learning courses on SMEs and nutrition

IMPACT

The project facilitated the adoption of improved nutrition practices among public and private stakeholders through the implementation of capacity-development activities targeting academia and SMEs to promote healthy diets and sustainable, nutrition-sensitive food systems in Ghana, Kenya and Viet Nam.

ACTIVITIES

- Training of trainers (ToT) sessions took place for university professors and other staff, based on learning needs assessments (LNAs) that were carried out.
- University courses were enhanced by integrating nutrition-sensitive food systems concepts and approaches.
- Online events with the Japanese private sector were held to boost collaboration and to increase the involvement of SMEs in nutrition-sensitive food systems.
- A Cooperation Agreement was signed among public and private institutions in Ghana to provide a framework for coordination on capacity development for agrifood SMEs.
- A capacity-development approach for SMEs was developed and validated in the three countries, including the LNA, development of training material, design of coaching and mentoring programmes and evaluation of the uptake into the business models and practices of SMEs.
- A series of two e-learning courses was developed and peer reviewed by experts, published and disseminated and an evaluation survey was designed.



Project Title
 Strengthening capacities for nutrition-sensitive food systems through a multistakeholder approach (involving private sector, civil society organizations and academia)

Project Code
 FAO: GCP/GLO/712/JPN



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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS