



Netherlands Enterprise Agency



# Nutrition and SDGP

Sustainable Development Goals  
Partnership Facility (SDGP)

## Nutrition

The world is making progress on Sustainable Development Goal 2: Zero hunger. But estimates show that around 512 million people may still be undernourished by 2030 . This shows how big and persistent the challenge is. Malnutrition is not only about food availability, but also about affordability, diet quality and inequality in food systems. Therefore, ending malnutrition is a complex global challenge. It is not only about agriculture and health alone. It requires action across sectors.

The Sustainable Development Goals Partnership (SDGP) contributed to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2: Zero hunger by promoting public-private partnerships (PPPs). This approach recognises that nutrition is complex and cannot be addressed by the public or private sector alone. By bringing together governments, businesses, knowledge institutions and farmer organisations, PPPs make sustainable solutions possible.

This factsheet looks at lessons learnt on nutrition from SDGP projects. It shows how public-private partnerships put these approaches into practice in different situations.

It also highlights the challenges, what worked well and practical lessons to help with future plans and projects.



## Nutritional impact in the SDGP portfolio

SDGP had four core themes . Of the 34 SDGP projects, 1 project had the theme Nutritional Value as their core focus and objective. However, an additional 20 projects contributed to nutrition in some manner<sup>3</sup>, through:

1. Promoting more diverse and nutritious diets, that include, for example, more fish, legumes and vegetables.
2. Good agricultural practices focusing on crop protection, soil health and agricultural management for sustainable production of nutritious foods.
3. Improved processing, storage and preservation to lower post-harvest losses and seasonable availability, increase shelf-life and add more nutritional value.
4. Expand markets to increase access to nutritious foods.
5. Increase nutritional awareness and the demand for nutritious foods through, for example, nutrition education.

Promoting more diverse diets and increasing awareness of nutrition both played a particularly important role in stimulating nutrition.

### 1 2.1 Food security indicators: latest updates and progress towards ending hunger and ensuring food security

2 Nutritional Value; Efficient Value Chains; Sustainable and climate resilient agriculture; and Better Work and Income for Youth and Women

### 3 Nutrition sensitivity of agriculture value-chain projects under RVO's SGD Partnership Facility

## More diverse and nutritious diets

More diverse diets help achieve good nutrition and avoid malnutrition. Expanding household consumption of nutrient-dense foods allows farming communities to access the micronutrients and dietary variety necessary for optimal health. This is particularly important for women and children. This was done, for example, in the **Good Farming, Good Food** project in India by promoting vegetables and soybean. Some projects promoted the availability of nutritious foods and more diverse diets, such as producing fish in **Powering Aquaculture Progress (PAP)** in Myanmar or in Burundi, as outlined below:

The Fish Farming Value Chain Development project in Burundi brought more diverse diets to the local market by promoting fish as another nutrient-dense food option. The 5-year project was designed to strengthen rural communities through 3 integrated components:

1. Sustainable agricultural practices through the PIP Mboniyongana approach,
2. Community-based fish farming for economic opportunities, and
3. Community organisation and development.

The project showed significant results across all 3 areas, including improved crop yields, environmental restoration, successful fish production and the formalisation of village associations into accredited cooperatives. This has improved food security, income generation and community resilience.

### Nutrition awareness training and demonstrations

Nutrition awareness training helps improve nutrition by giving households practical knowledge about dietary diversity, better food choices and improved consumption of nutrient-dense foods. This is done through trainings, campaigns and cooking demonstrations to teach participants practical skills in preparing nutritious and healthy meals. These demonstrations were designed for learning through experience and promote behavioural change.

For example, the **Building inclusive value chains for organic soybean, sesame and shea** project in Uganda. This project included a gender and nutrition game to raise awareness. This interactive game invited men and women to pick an event card and describe what they think about that event. For example, a card could show a man eating while his wife and child are waiting for him to finish. Another example is images of vegetables or fried foods. The model helped promote learning and make topics such as gender and nutrition more approachable and accessible.

Another example is the **Good Food, Good Farming** project in India.

The **Good Farming – Good Food (GFGF)** project was a Public-Private Partnership initiative implemented across 5 districts of Madhya Pradesh. The project aimed to improve nutritional security and smallholder farmer livelihoods. It promoted high-yielding soy and vegetable varieties. The project's main challenge was shifting perceptions of soy. Madhya Pradesh is India's largest soy producer. But soy was mainly viewed as animal feed rather than human food in the state. The project objective was to support farmers to grow more diverse crops, particularly soy and vegetables.

The project addressed nutrition through targeted nutrition awareness campaigns. At the household level, structured nutrition awareness programs and cooking demonstrations resulted in significant shifts in behaviour. More families included soy

products into their diets, and nearly all surveyed households regularly consumed fresh vegetables after the intervention. Soy and vegetables were also included in more school meals. 1,317 school chefs and 568 Anganwadi cooks were trained to integrate soy and fresh vegetables into meals across 598 schools and 433 Anganwadi centres.

The project also trained 39,624 farmers (31% women) on improved vegetable production practices. The trainings used 905 vegetable demonstration plots and distributed 346 kitchen garden kits. This promoted adoption of sustainable farming techniques by households.

This educational approach successfully transformed farmer attitudes. More farmers cultivate soy and vegetables for household consumption alongside traditional feed production. Overall, the project resulted in more diverse food production, improved market access and more positive dietary behaviours.



## Lessons learnt in SDGP

The SDGP programme was not a nutrition programme, but the SDGP portfolio had interventions which contributed to improved nutrition. More attention was also brought on this subject where there were opportunities to strengthen nutrition within the SDGP portfolio. This is covered in the publication [Nutrition sensitivity of agriculture value-chain projects under RVO's SGD Partnership Facility](#). There were also 2 project add-ons developed in Cambodia and Burundi, to strengthen nutritional activities.

In Cambodia, the RiceTech project implemented a project add-on that supported rice-fish farming and vegetable companion fish culture to improve household nutrition and food diversity. This included training on rice-fish farming techniques and fish-rearing. 71 new small-scale rice and vegetable fish farmers were established. Similarly, the **Fish Farming Value Chain Value Chain Development** project in Burundi



did a project add-on to better identify dietary habits and available foods and observe household food consumption. The project also found out how much fish was eaten in households. Alongside a household survey, the pilot held several nutrition awareness-raising sessions, interactive cooking demonstrations, and tastings of various fish recipes. These activities helped the participants gain an understanding of the nutritional qualities of fish and cooking techniques with local resources.

The SDGP programmes provided 3 significant lessons learnt:

### 1. Make nutritional awareness accessible

Tailor nutritional trainings to fit the context and provide different ways of bringing the message across. This proved effective, for example, with gamification in Uganda and cooking demonstrations in India.

### 2. Avoid one-off trainings

In all SDGP projects with nutrition interventions, trainings were provided frequently. For example, Government Extension Agents (EAs) were effective in the **Transforming Nigeria's Vegetable Markets** project. The EAs increased outreach and scaled up knowledge transfer and improved sustainability. Most farmers engaged with the EAs on a weekly to monthly basis, ensuring regular but not too frequent support. This consistent engagement provides a foundation for nutrition-related knowledge and skills

### 3. Involvement of women in interventions for nutrition

Involving women is critical to the success of nutrition initiatives. In many of the target groups, women traditionally prepare food and make decisions about the household diet. Programmes can influence household dietary practices more directly by targeting women.

For example, the **Good Farming – Good Food** project in India also addressed the cultural habits of 'women eating last' through grass root level health education and other interventions. Similarly, in the add-on of the **Fish Farming Value Chain Development** project, women, and particularly mothers of young children, played an important role in several nutrition awareness-raising sessions and interactive cooking demonstrations.

## Takeaways for future programming

SDGP projects also taught lessons about handling challenges of running nutritional interventions..

- **Integrate data collection on nutrition:** Data on nutrition outcomes is difficult to collect. It requires difficult assessment methods, such as household-level indicators or extensive surveys. Measuring true nutritional impact requires data collection at several points in time. Impact assessments that cover the baseline, midterm, endline and beyond the project period are resource-intensive. In some cases, it is also necessary to measure the nutritional quality and make-up of foods to comply with nutritional standards and optimise product quality. **The Fish Farming Value Chain Development** project in Burundi is one example.
- **Nutritional expertise within the partnership:** According to the **Nutrition sensitivity of agriculture value-chain projects under RVO's SGD Partnership Facility** study, most project partners did not have nutritional expertise. Most had backgrounds in international development, agronomy, monitoring and evaluation and business management, but not nutrition. It is important to bring in external nutrition experts or providing specialised nutrition training.

## Conclusion

SDGP projects show that improving nutrition is not simply a technical or agricultural challenge. It is a systemic challenge that requires integrated solutions across sectors. Projects demonstrate that nutritional outcomes can be strengthened through awareness training, making diets more diverse and capacity-building. At the same time, SDGP highlights opportunities for future nutrition-focussed programme-making.

The insights confirm isolated interventions are not enough to address nutrition. It demands strong nutrition-sensitive programming, better performance indicators and increased investment in knowledge, skills and collaboration between actors. Ultimately, the findings reinforce that SDG 2 cannot be achieved by acting in a single sector. Ending malnutrition is a complex, interconnected global challenge. Sustained collaboration between public and private partners is essential to create scalable and impactful solutions.



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- Capacity Development and SDGP
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## Sources

Information is based on the final reports and final evaluation reports of SDGP projects, as well as discussions with the relevant RVO project advisors. Additional relevant information was collected from external studies financed by the SDGP [\*\*Impact Accelerator for public-private partnerships\*\*](#) and external literature.

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These factsheets aim to provide an overview of SDGP interventions and lessons learnt on specific themes. The factsheets are the result of an analysis performed by the Sustainable Development Goals Partnership Facility (SDGP) team, based on available project documentation. The factsheets are prepared to the best of our knowledge, but are not necessarily complete and will be updated when relevant. This article is intended for learning purposes and internal use by the Dutch government. Suggestions for updates or improvements can be shared with [sdgp@rvo.nl](mailto:sdgp@rvo.nl)

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