RESEARCH PROGRAM ON Agriculture for Nutrition and Health
CGIAR
Led by IFPRI
A4NH



Flagship 4: Supporting Policies, Programs, and Enabling Action through Research (SPEAR)

Highlight 3: Building Capacity at the National Level to Address Malnutrition

In order to create national programs and policies that address malnutrition in all its forms, policymakers and other stakeholders rely on forums convened and tools designed and tested by experts in the field of nutrition. A4NH researchers are often called upon for their expertise and insights; in 2019, those contributions included trainings, stakeholder engagement on policy, and project design guidance.

In March, the Transform Nutrition West Africa (TNWA) program hosted 32 nutrition professionals from nine West African countries for a short course on "Evidence for Policy and Programming." Participants included policymakers, civil society professionals, and practitioners. The course focused on creating awareness of the latest evidence on nutrition globally and relating it to the West African context. In an interactive learning environment, attendees also had the opportunity to compile an evidence base to help inform transformational change in nutrition for their countries, or the region for participants who work at the level of the West African region.

Later in 2019, TNWA teamed up with the African Nutrition Leadership Programme (ANLP) to facilitate the program's first francophone short course, "Leading Change in Nutrition." Twenty participants from eight countries (Benin, Mali, Togo, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, Nigeria, and Burkina Faso) participated in the five-day capacity strengthening course, held in Saly, Senegal, which was led by an all-African team.

Case studies were used to generate further discussion and link the leadership to the multisectoral and multistakeholder work environment at country and regional levels. Participants were struck by the similarity of challenges they face across countries, and saw an opportunity to learn from one another's experiences, particularly at the regional level. They also called for additional leadership training, given the complexities of such a multidimensional, multisectoral issue like nutrition, for everyone from those currently in leadership posts to those still in graduate study programs.

A4NH researchers from Bioversity International, in partnership with the International Fund for Agricultural Development built upon the success of their Nutrition-Sensitive Value Chain program design manuals with publication of the multivolume guide in Spanish and French to supplement the original English version. They are also working to complete an e-learning course to accompany the guides, led by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in collaboration with the Rome-based Working Group on Sustainable Food Value Chains for Nutrition.



Following the success of the "Stories of Change in Nutrition" case studies on undernutrition, A4NH researchers in SPEAR have returned to the approach of fostering learning across contexts, this time with a new focus on how countries are addressing the challenge of overweight and obesity. The new series, called "Stories of Challenge in Nutrition," entered development in 2019 in South Africa, Ghana, Viet Nam, and Indonesia with a mini-study aimed at what other countries can learn from the positive experience of the city of Brighton, UK. In addressing these newer issues, stakeholders are faced with a much smaller body of available evidence, data, experiences, and stories, making it all the more critical to share information across contexts. Together, the sets of case studies will provide a window into how different actors across sectors are coming together, guided by evidence and experience, to tackle the complexities of malnutrition in all its forms.

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