



How Farming Families Benefit from Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture

Efforts to enhance smallholder farmers' involvement in agricultural markets under the World Food Programme (WFP) [Purchase for Progress \(P4P\)](#) programme have led to a variety of nutrition-sensitive activities. In many rural communities where P4P and partners work, these context- and country-specific efforts have begun to increase farming families' access to nutritious food and their knowledge of good nutrition practices.

In developing countries, 45 percent of deaths in children under the age of five are linked to undernutrition. Undernutrition affects billions of people worldwide, with irreversible consequences for mental and physical health and development, which in turn impact individuals' ability to reach their full potential and lift themselves out of poverty. With the majority of rural poor engaged in agriculture, farming has a recognized role to play in preventing [malnutrition](#), as a provider of food, livelihoods and income. However, increasing farmers' incomes and agricultural production isn't enough – farmers and their families must have access to nutritious foods that meet their needs, as well as the knowledge to make informed choices about diverse diets and other nutrition-enhancing behaviours.



World Food Programme

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Since this is my first newsletter as P4P Director, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself briefly. I started my career in 1986, as a programme officer in Mopti in Mali, and have since worked in countries such as Afghanistan, Angola, Vietnam and Mozambique. I served as Country Director in Haiti before taking on my current position with P4P.

The past two months have been very busy and gone by like a flash. We are focusing on mainstreaming the many lessons learned from the pilot, while looking toward the future to develop a comprehensive vision for WFP's overarching support to smallholder farmers.

This newsletter highlights some of these efforts, including the ways in which links are formed between P4P and nutrition, home grown school feeding and emergency operations, as well as how we are working toward sustainable change by fostering South-South Cooperation.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ken Davies, who has been such an excellent and tireless advocate for smallholder farmers, and wish him all the best for his future.

Lastly, I would like to thank you for the valued feedback provided in our online survey. Please be encouraged to continue providing us with feedback by email at wfp.p4p@wfp.org.

George Heymell

P4P Director and Global Coordinator

Contents

Nutrition-sensitive agriculture **pgs. 1-4**

Exchange visits **pgs. 5-6**

Smallholders and the Ebola response **pgs. 7-8**

Connecting farmers to markets in Zambia **pgs. 8-9**

P4P in the news, updates and contacts **pg. 10**



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Farmers from the Logo Women's Group in the Mopti region of Mali tend to one of their *niébé* plots.

The P4P approach provides a range of opportunities to fully incorporate nutrition-sensitive efforts. Though the design of the P4P pilot did not explicitly include a nutrition component on a global level, some linkages occurred naturally in the field. These linkages have provided a learning opportunity on how future nutrition-sensitive approaches can be strengthened. Efforts have naturally developed across the value chain, from input supply, production and postharvest handling to processing, distribution and food utilization.

Seeds, storage and production skills, more nutritious crops

More nutritious staple crops have been introduced to smallholder farmers through the input supply channel, and farmers have been encouraged to increase production and consumption of crops high in nutritional value. Additionally, an emphasis on [conservation agriculture in countries such as Nicaragua](#) and Zambia aims to ensure the health of soils, which can increase the presence of nutrients in crops.

In West Africa, WFP began purchasing a [local variety of cowpea called *niébé*](#) which is high in protein and nutrients. *Niébé* is traditionally grown by women farmers in small plots for household consumption. Encouraging women to increase production of *niébé* while teaching them about its health benefits can lead to its increased availability and consumption in households and communities. P4P-supported farmers have received support to produce other

nutritious foods as well, including [soya in Afghanistan](#), and groundnuts in Malawi and Zambia or sale in local markets.

Some smallholder farmers are now growing biofortified varieties of local crops – such as maize, beans and sweet potatoes. Biofortified crops are traditionally bred to contain higher quantities of micronutrients. In Nicaragua, efforts are underway to introduce two varieties of biofortified beans produced by the *Instituto Nicaraguense de Tecnología Agropecuaria* (INTA; Nicaraguan Institute for Agricultural Technology). The beans, which contain 60 percent more iron and zinc than traditional varieties, will be purchased by WFP and used in school meals. P4P is also [collaborating with HarvestPlus to increase the availability of biofortified crops](#) in Rwanda, Uganda and Zambia. Smallholder farmers produce these crops and sell the surplus back to HarvestPlus as seed, or small quantities to WFP for food assistance – primarily school feeding and [mother and child health and nutrition initiatives](#).

An emphasis on [crop quality and safety](#) has raised awareness about the dangers of consuming unsafe food and improved the quality of smallholders' produce, including that which is retained for household consumption. There has been a particular focus on reducing aflatoxin, a chemical compound unsafe for human consumption, which is also thought to contribute to stunting in children.

Linking farmers with millers and processors

In many countries, P4P-supported smallholder farmers have been linked to millers and other processors who buy their surplus crops for the production of fortified foods such as flour blend and high energy biscuits. In Guatemala, a project under the [Scaling up Nutrition \(SUN\)](#) movement is linking [smallholder farmers to agro-industry companies](#) that supply processed nutrient-rich food to WFP for distribution to at-risk populations. A similar project is carried out in Afghanistan, where P4P provides support along the entire value chain – from farmers to [local millers](#) and processors. Locally-produced wheat and soya are used in the production of fortified flour, [high-energy biscuits](#) and lipid-based nutritional supplements. Smallholder farmers have also been linked to private sector millers and processors in Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi and Rwanda.

Distributing locally-sourced foods through school meals

By linking local agricultural production to school meals, [Home Grown School Feeding \(HGSE\)](#) capitalizes on the traditional benefits of [School Feeding programmes](#) and multiplies advantages for rural communities. HGSE contributes to the diversity and freshness of the food basket served in schools, which can improve students' nutritional intake. [Micronutrient powders](#) can also be added to the school meals to combat micronutrient deficiencies as needed. Strengthening the nutritional value of school meals is one of the ways in which nutrition-sensitive agriculture can play a critical role in contributing to larger social protection initiatives.

In Honduras, school meals help improve schoolchildren's food security and nutritional intake by providing them with diversified menus containing a variety of micronutrients (essential vitamins and minerals) based on local habits. School meals in Honduras now incorporate locally-produced vegetables, fruits, eggs and dairy products, most of which are produced by smallholder farmers, as well as fortified maize flour produced on the national level. [A similar project is carried out in Malawi, under PAA Africa.](#)

Nutrition education and awareness-raising

Nutrition-sensitive interventions can be used as a platform for delivering nutrition education and increasing the reach of nutrition communication efforts. For example, in Afghanistan, an advocacy campaign is being carried out with the Government's Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) to increase demand for [fortified foods produced locally from smallholders' produce](#).

School meals also present the opportunity to teach schoolchildren about the importance of good nutrition, lessons which they can bring back to their families and household. An emphasis on nutritious fresh foods can promote diet diversification at home, a lesson which many schools, such as the [Hanja Chafa Primary School in Ethiopia](#), reinforce through nutrition education. Similarly, when Vitamin A Maize was being introduced to school meals in Zambia, cooking demonstrations were held in schools and communities to illustrate its benefits and relative similarity to that of the traditional white maize – despite its different colour. After these demonstrations, the schools



Preparing locally-produced fresh food for school meals in Malawi.



Copyright: WFP/Alessandro Pavone

Workers in Afghanistan produce fortified high energy biscuits made with wheat sourced from local smallholder farmers.

requested biofortified seeds for planting in their school gardens.

Because women farmers are often responsible for childcare and food preparation, P4P's gender component has proven particularly effective for delivering nutrition education. For example, under the [SUN movement in Guatemala](#), food insecure people, especially women, are assisted to create home gardens and carry out soil conservation activities. Mother-to-mother support groups discuss feeding and care practices, equipping mothers with the tools to provide their children with adequate nutrition. Similarly, in Mali [sessions were held detailing the benefits of eating niébè at home](#).

Addressing risks and overcoming challenges

Agricultural development can play an important role in improving nutrition. However, at the most basic level, nutrition-sensitive interventions should be carefully designed to ensure a “do no harm” approach. For example, empowering women farmers to engage more fully in agricultural activities could mean less time for childcare and food preparation. In addition, increased emphasis on staple crop production could alter land use

away from more nutrient-rich foods.

Recognizing these potential risks, WFP will continue ensuring that nutrition is taken into account in its pro-smallholder market development efforts. Continued efforts will be made to provide nutrition education. Plus, solutions to ensure that women's participation in agriculture does not negatively impact household nutrition will continue to be emphasized. WFP will continue supporting women to access the technology and skills to reduce the demands of their labour and help them better balance their time between responsibilities.

Moving forward, increased efforts to explicitly incorporate nutrition objectives and to track nutrition-sensitive outcomes are needed in WFP's pro-smallholder programming. As P4P is mainstreamed into WFP's regular work, there is an increased opportunity to build more conscious links with nutrition into its design. Using the nutrition value chain, potential entry points for adding or strengthening nutritional value to P4P activities can be systematically identified, and recommendations made accordingly. Moving forward, WFP will continue to develop guidance for best incorporating nutrition-sensitive efforts into its portfolio of work.

Read more about P4P and nutrition:

[Increased sales of local bean in West Africa](#)

[Improving links between smallholder farmers and school feeding programmes](#)

[Promoting increased access to micronutrient-rich crops](#)

[Soya production in Afghanistan](#)

[Guatemalan smallholders support improved nutrition](#)

[Afghanistan: Buying from farmers, baking nutritious biscuits](#)



Marie Thérèse Toé from Burkina Faso congratulates Malawian farmer Michael Banda on his success.

Exchange Visits Inspire Pro-Smallholder Efforts

In many countries where Purchase for Progress (P4P) is implemented, exchange visits are held to promote first-hand learning about effective approaches for supporting smallholder farmers. The exchange of resources, technology, and knowledge between government officials, farmers and WFP staff develops crucial capacity and relationships between actors, fostering South-South Cooperation.

Innovative Aggregation Methods

In late 2014, [Malawi](#) hosted a delegation from [Burkina Faso](#), including representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, farmers' organizations and WFP staff. The delegation was particularly interested in the [commodity exchange \(CEX\) and Warehouse Receipts System \(WRS\)](#), mechanisms that enable smallholder farmers in Malawi to access storage facilities, credit and markets.

The Malawi experience is particularly relevant to Burkina Faso, where there are similar agricultural and economic conditions for smallholder farmers. Exchange visit participants visited stakeholders and structures critical in implementing the CEX and WRS – including government officials, farmers' organizations, and private companies – to see how WRS and other tools can be adopted in Burkina Faso. Marie Thérèse Toé, who represented one of the farmers' organizations from Burkina Faso, said she

learned a great deal from the rigorous post-harvest handling and storage procedures Malawian farmers' organizations use to manage their stocks to reduce losses and improve quality.

Strong Commitment to Smallholder Farmers

While acknowledging the differences between the two countries – the Malawian market is more liberalized – participants noted a variety of lessons which can be applied in the context of Burkina Faso. After observing Malawi's effective warehouse receipts system, government officials and WFP staff emphasized the importance of strengthening public-private partnership and encouraging private sector investment in order to best support smallholder farmers.

The Government of Burkina Faso is developing a national strategy to create a warehouse receipts system. Under this strategy, part of the national budget has been allocated to fund the construction of storage infrastructure, with logistical support from WFP. A committee led by the Ministry of Agriculture is monitoring the implementation of specific recommendations from the visit.

"It has been a fruitful trip that allowed us to learn directly from farmers and the institutions they work with. We will use this knowledge to develop a strategy for implementing a warehouse receipts system," says Denis Ouédraogo, Director of Rural Economy in Burkina Faso's Ministry of Agriculture.

Government Ownership Lends a Strong Example

The Government of [Rwanda](#) was the first government to take full ownership of P4P, scaling up the approach across the country in an initiative called “Common P4P” (CP4P). [Delegations from Burkina Faso, Ghana and Kenya have all visited Rwanda](#) to learn first-hand from the government’s coordination of pro-smallholder procurement and how national governments can use P4P as a tool for agricultural development.

In Burkina Faso, lessons learned during the exchange visit provided the basis for a new agricultural inputs distribution system and encouraged SONAGESS, the national food reserve agency, to dedicate 30 percent of purchases to smallholder farmers. The inputs distribution system and institutional purchases under SONAGESS are important components of the Government’s efforts to use the P4P approach to support smallholder farmers.

Similar exchange visits and workshops have been carried out under [PAA Africa](#), a joint project of WFP, FAO, local governments and the governments of Brazil and the United Kingdom. PAA Africa is piloted in Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique, Niger and Senegal. The project seeks to strengthen South-South Cooperation by engaging host governments to build off from the learnings from Brazil’s widely acclaimed local procurement programme and from similar initiatives from other African countries.

In May 2015, a workshop held in Malawi included Mozambican government officials and civil society representatives, who visited several schools, learning about budget allocation to local governments, involvement of communities and civil society and local-level diet diversification programmes. Mozambique is building from these lessons by testing decentralized procurement in its school feeding programme. Through the [WFP Centre of Excellence](#), a number of African governments, including Tanzania, have visited Brazil to learn more from the PAA approach.

Farmers Learning from Farmers

Exchange visits have also been organized between farmers and their organizations through P4P. In Malawi, P4P-supported

farmers [visited the Mwandama Farmers’ Organization](#) in November 2013. Farmers discussed business strategy, learning about how Mwandama grew into a self-sufficient business by asking detailed questions about legal resources, business strategy, member expectations and leadership skills.

One of the participants in the study tour was Clement Mpoto, from the Kaso farmer’s organization in the Dowa district. Through his participation, Clement saw the concrete benefits of investing in collaboration with his farmers’ organization. “After seeing the Mwandama model, I think it would be good to designate a certain amount of production that a member has to contribute to the cooperative’s stock in exchange for loans or inputs. This would make sure that the business moves forward as we could produce and sell more,” he said.

Exchange visits have also been held in countries such as Kenya, Mali and Rwanda. In Kenya more than 30 farmers’ organizations participated in exchange visits from 2009 to 2013, sharing ideas and visiting aggregation sites.

Through exchange visits between or within countries, participants are exposed to new ideas and have the opportunity to see concrete solutions to challenges they face. Countries such as Rwanda and Malawi have become prototypes for others, demonstrating effective government ownership and innovative aggregation systems, respectively. High capacity farmers’ organizations have also hosted visits, giving smallholder farmers the opportunity to learn directly from their peers.

Scaling Up P4P

As P4P is incorporated into WFP’s regular work, other countries beyond the original 20 P4P pilot countries will benefit from the P4P experience. Exchange visits will have a major role to play in this process.

Read more:

[PAA Africa Workshop](#)

[Malawian farmers share their success](#)

[Learning from government ownership in Rwanda](#)

[Sudan learns about school feeding in Brazil](#)

Smallholder Farmers Supply WFP with Food during the Ebola Outbreak and Recovery

When the Ebola outbreak began in mid-2014 in Guinea Conakry, Liberia and Sierra Leone, the landscape for smallholder farmers in the affected region changed rapidly. New challenges, including restricted movement, threatened to disrupt the World Food Programme's (WFP) efforts to connect smallholder farmers to markets. Despite this, smallholder farmers rose to the occasion and continued producing and selling food to WFP throughout the emergency response.

The Ebola outbreak had a devastating effect on local economies, particularly the agricultural sector. Smallholder farmers – who already face many challenges in profiting from their work – were particularly affected. To control the spread of the virus, restrictions were placed on public gatherings, and many local markets, borders and roads were closed. This prevented farmers from harvesting, planting and selling their crops, and restricted the movement of agricultural extension workers and development partners, posing a great deal of challenges for the agricultural season.

Challenges for Implementation

In the Purchase for Progress (P4P) programme, smallholder farmers are encouraged to work together to meet the quantity and quality requirements of commercial buyers like WFP. Most often, this is accomplished through farmers' organizations, where crops are aggregated and sold as a group. Farmers also access other important services through these organizations, including milling equipment, warehouses, farming inputs and training.

Restrictions on movement and gathering meant that WFP staff and partners were sometimes unable to deliver scheduled training sessions, or conduct quality inspections. In some cases, particularly in Liberia, this meant that commodities ready for delivery to WFP could not be collected on time. This put additional pressure



"Ebola hit us hard," says Marie Kargbo, Chairwoman of Sabenty Farmers' Association, Sierra Leone.

on farmers' organizations, which would need to store the rice for longer periods than planned, often without adequate storage infrastructure, and incurring additional charges such as for fumigation and security.

Local Purchases during the Ebola Response

Despite many challenges, WFP contracted around 2,870 metric tons (mt) of food locally for the Ebola response, with a total value of around US\$1.9 million. Some 1,220 mt have been delivered to WFP so far, with deliveries still ongoing. A portion of this food came from smallholder farmers, supporting farmers' livelihoods and local economies throughout the crisis.

In Guinea Conakry, 900 mt of rice was contracted from 12 farmers' organizations for use in the Ebola response. To date, 520 mt have been delivered. In Liberia, food supplied by smallholder farmers was used throughout the outbreak and will continue to be used in food distributions to aid in recovery. In total, farmers' organizations were contracted to supply around 940 mt of milled rice. The 700 mt of this rice delivered has been used to feed patients quarantined in medical centres. In Sierra Leone, WFP contracted more than 1,030 mt of rice locally, including 250 mt from 25 small-scale farmers' organizations.

Moving toward recovery

WFP and partners are now supporting the recovery of countries affected by the outbreak, alongside continued efforts to reach zero Ebola cases. Recovery efforts include an expansion of the school meals programme as well as continued support to smallholder farmers' organizations

from which much of the food for school meals will be sourced. Local purchases made from smallholder farmers, as well as investments in local markets and production will play a role in improving smallholders' livelihoods as well as the recovery of the agricultural sector and rural economies.



Video: Life After Ebola WFP Supports Ebola-Affected Farmers In Sierra Leone

"Because of Ebola, we don't have a place to sell our produce. There are no markets. Only WFP buys the produce," says Rugiatu Kamara.

Watch the video [here](#)

5 Facts: Connecting Farmers to Markets in Zambia

Smallholder farmers account for 90 percent of national maize production in [Zambia](#). However, small-scale farmers face a great deal of challenges accessing formal markets. Most are located in remote rural areas with poor infrastructure – especially roads – and little access to important price information. The World Food Programme (WFP) Purchase for Progress (P4P) project supports farmers to overcome these challenges by providing them with access to crucial resources and encouraging them to work together in farmers' organizations.



Golden Lwiindi, a smallholder farmer in Zambia's Southern Province, uses the hammer mill he bought with proceeds from his sales to WFP.

Copyright: WFP

1. UN agencies, NGOs and private sector work together

In Zambia, P4P brings together numerous partners to help farmers access a broad range of services, such as training, equipment and inputs. Partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) are particularly important, with [FAO providing support to scale up conservation agriculture, and an agreement with IFAD for road rehabilitation](#). A local company called NWK services manages a revolving fund [enabling farmers to access tractors](#) on loan.

Gender sensitization efforts are carried out through the Kawambwa District Farmers' Organizations and the Young Women Christian Association (YWCA). Partnership with the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) strengthens linkages between smallholder farmers and the private sector, as well as the provision of warehouses and training in post-harvest handling and soya production.

2. Heifer International helps women farmers access draft power

In Zambia, P4P partners with [Heifer International](#) to [provide women farmers with cattle for draft power](#). Access to animal traction, coupled with the opportunity to market their crops to WFP, can reduce women's heavy workload, and increase their production and sale of quality crops. Cattle also provide a sustainable source of organic fertilizer and can improve household nutrition through the consumption of milk. Under Heifer's [pass on the gift](#) principle, participants give their cattle's first female offspring to another family in their community, fostering ownership and ensuring the project's sustainability.



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Martha and Spector Miyoba are benefitting from cattle thanks to WFP's collaboration with Heifer International.

3. Smallholders are producing micronutrient-rich crops

P4P partner [HarvestPlus](#) works to reduce micronutrient deficiencies worldwide by developing and disseminating high yielding staple crops bred conventionally to be rich in vitamins and minerals. [Smallholder farmers' organizations in Zambia](#) are growing [Vitamin A Maize](#) both for household consumption and sale. HarvestPlus redistributes a part of these crops as seed. A government-led awareness-raising campaign has been fundamental to introducing the orange maize – which has a different physical appearance than the white maize traditionally produced and eaten in Zambia – into the diets of households and school meals.

4. Equipment and infrastructure are making farming more lucrative

Two agribusiness centres have been built in Kasamanda and Kawambwa. The centres are hubs for communities to access agricultural information, storage space, processing equipment and agricultural inputs, such as seeds and fertilizers. Though progress has been made, many smallholders still lack access to adequate storage facilities, and poor road quality makes it difficult for the private sector to access rural areas where smallholder farmers are located.

5. Nutritious foods are bought from local farmers for school meals

By linking local agricultural production to school meals, [Home Grown School Feeding \(HGSF\) programmes](#) can multiply benefits for rural communities, increasing attendance, improving nutrition and providing smallholders with markets. In Zambia, biofortified maize, protein-rich pulses and dairy products purchased from P4P-supported smallholder farmers are used for nutritious school meals. The market for pulses has been particularly beneficial for women farmers, with 30–50 percent of pulses required for HGSF in Zambia being procured from P4P-supported women farmers' organizations.



Video: "P4P Helped my Community"
Ireen Musonda's experience as a farmer in Zambia

Watch the video [here](#)

UPDATES



High Level Forum on Connecting Smallholder Farmers to Markets

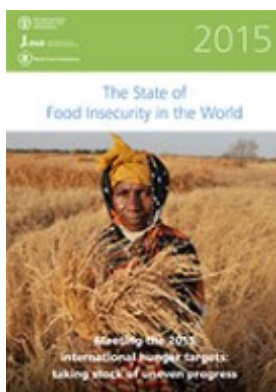
A [High Level Forum on Connecting Smallholders to Markets](#) was held 25 June by [the Committee on World Food Security \(CFS\)](#). Representatives of governments, academic institutions, private sector companies, UN agencies and farmers' networks discussed ways in which development efforts and policy can better support smallholder farmers to access markets.

Read more [here](#)

State of Food Insecurity Report Release

The interagency report *State of Food Insecurity in the World 2015* was released by FAO, IFAD and WFP. The report highlights achievements made toward hunger reduction goals set out in the Millennium Development Goals (MDG1) and at the World Food Summit. The contribution of family farming and smallholder agriculture to improving food security is highlighted on page 31.

Full report available [here](#)



IN THE NEWS

WFP investments in Uganda improve agricultural practices and link farmers to markets

Read the article [here](#)

Farmers in South Sudan feed their conflicted country through sales to WFP

Read the article [here](#)

Government of Brazil, FAO and WFP support food security, nutrition and agriculture in Colombia

View photo gallery [here](#)

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