Guatemalan smallholders support improved nutrition

WFP recently launched a new project in Guatemala linking P4P with the Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) movement. This initiative, called *Maíz Chapín contra el hambre* (Guatemalan Maize Alliance Against Hunger), aims to improve nutrition and increase farmers’ income by using their surplus to create supplementary foods for at-risk populations.

In Guatemala, poverty and malnutrition are widespread. Chronic malnutrition or stunting occurs among 50 percent of children under the age of five, the fourth highest in the world. The *Maíz Chapín contra el hambre* project seeks to address malnutrition by promoting the consumption of nutritious foods and food supplements. It will also bolster the Government of Guatemala’s efforts to fight hunger and rural poverty by supporting P4P’s work in developing the capacities of smallholder farmers and their organizations.

**Linking smallholders to the private sector**

Through this programme, WFP will provide processed, nutrient rich foods to at-risk populations. These supplementary foods will be bought from agro-industry companies which have agreed to purchase the necessary basic grains from P4P-supported farmers’ organizations. This will provide smallholders with a new market for their yields, thereby providing opportunities to increase their incomes.

In Guatemala, P4P’s focus has been to strengthen farmers’ organizations by providing technical assistance and capacity development. The *Maíz Chapín contra el hambre* project will scale up capacity development in areas including improved agricultural production, storage and transformation, environmental practices, commercialization and institutional strengthening. The
links to credit and insurance already initiated through P4P will be reinforced and expanded.

**Improving nutrition**
The supplementary foods will be distributed to targeted beneficiaries. The project specifically targets pregnant and lactating women as well as infants and children aged 6 to 23 months, to foster healthy cognitive and physical development, combatting the effects of malnutrition and breaking its intergenerational cycle.

Through the project, WFP will also establish partnerships to assist food insecure people, particularly women, to create home gardens and soil conservation activities to increase targeted households’ resilience against natural and economic shocks. WFP and its partners will also form mother-to-mother support groups. These groups will discuss feeding and care practices, equipping mothers with the tools to provide their children with adequate nutrition.

**Focus on women**
The project will especially emphasize the participation and leadership of women in farmers’ organizations and their communities. Gender equality training will be provided to both men and women to demonstrate the tangible benefits of increasing women’s active participation in and gains from farming activities. Women will be specifically targeted for leadership training. The initiative will also work with farmers’ organizations to develop and implement gender equality policies, and to organize knowledge fairs and exchanges of experience between both men and women participants.

Women play an important part in improving nutrition, as women are generally the primary caregivers of children and take the leading role in food preparation. Women have been found to spend their increased incomes improving the lives of their children by investing in education, health care and nutritious foods.

**Partnerships vital to project**
*Maíz Chapín contra el hambre* is sponsored by the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development of Canada (DFATD), and has been made possible by partnerships between WFP, the national government, the private sector, and NGOs. It will be implemented in eight departments and target some 42,000 beneficiaries.

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**Spotlight on P4P in Ghana**

In Ghana, smallholder farmers are limited by low productivity and post-harvest losses. From 2011 to 2013, P4P supported smallholders to increase their maize yields by 67 percent. Despite the progress, many challenges remain, including the limited access of smallholders to markets beyond WFP. To learn more about P4P in Ghana, read the country factsheet [here](#).

P4P in Ghana aims to address low productivity, post-harvest losses and poor market infrastructure. Farmers receive training from WFP and partners in skills along the value chain — including production, post-harvest handling, marketing and quality control — to improve the quality and quantity of their products. Direct contracts with WFP have provided a substantial and reliable market for farmers’ organizations. P4P-supported farmers’ organizations in Ghana have also participated in soft tenders, allowing them to learn competitive processing. This prepares them to progress towards taking part in traditional competitive procurement. WFP and its partners are currently working to enhance infrastructure through community storage facilities and energy-saving stoves, further assisting farmers to reach markets.
From food beneficiaries to food suppliers

In Kenya, the P4P pilot has enabled a remarkable transformation of WFP’s support to HIV/AIDS-affected farmers. By further developing WFP’s partnership with the health sector organization AMPATH, the project has combined medical treatment for HIV/AIDS-affected smallholders with capacity development and organizational support. Now, farmers who were once recipients of food assistance are increasingly supplying food for themselves and the market.

Proper food and nutrition play an essential role in the treatment of HIV/AIDS, allowing patients to stay healthy longer, increasing the effectiveness of the treatment and reducing its side effects. However, due to the effects of the disease, HIV-positive individuals often face increased difficulties providing for themselves and their families. The combination of food insecurity and HIV/AIDS can result in higher levels of poverty, malnutrition and increased health risks. This in turn can act as major barriers to seeking and adhering to treatment.

The three-headed monster
“In Sub-Sahara Africa, HIV/AIDS is intimately enmeshed with its dreaded twins, poverty and hunger. The three heads of this monster feed off of each other and no medical care system can by itself expect to break the vicious downward cycle,” says Cleophas Chesoli, Associate Safety Net Programme Manager, Academic Model Providing Access to Healthcare (AMPATH).

AMPATH works with the Government of Kenya to provide medical treatment for HIV/AIDS patients, most of them residing in farming communities with high agricultural potential. The majority are food insecure due to poverty compounded by the effects of HIV/AIDS, which has an impact not only on those living with it, but also on their households and communities.

WFP has partnered with AMPATH since 2005, with the provision of vital food assistance to compliment medical treatment provided to patients. Since 2009, P4P has added a new dimension to the partnership. The main goal of P4P’s engagement with AMPATH has been to complement food assistance and medical treatment by supporting beneficiaries to exit food assistance and become self-sufficient. This has been accomplished by assisting HIV/AIDS-affected farmers to increase their agricultural production for household consumption and also for sale to the market. Not only has this provided farmers and their communities with a sustainable source of income and food, but has also increased their resilience to shocks.

Giving back to the community
One participating smallholder was previously unable to continue working on her farm due to the effects of HIV. However, food and medical treatment provided by AMPATH and WFP enabled her to regain her strength, and support from P4P allowed her not only to begin farming again, but to learn more productive farming practices and gain larger profits on a sustainable basis.

The trust built by AMPATH throughout years of living and working in the targeted communities has been vital to reaching HIV/AIDS-affected smallholders. Today, 40 percent of AMPATH’s patients are members of farmers’ organizations supported through P4P.

Not only have members of P4P-supported farmers’ organizations contributed to their own food and income security by producing more and selling to WFP, they have contributed to their community as a whole. In December 2012, two farmers’ organizations donated staple crops to AMPATH to be distributed to other patients who require food assistance.

Lessons learned from targeting
At the beginning, the initiative faced challenges due to the vulnerability of HIV/AIDS-affected households, and the stigma associated with the disease. At first, new farmers’ organizations were created entirely of smallholders living with HIV/AIDS. However, it was soon discovered that integrating these households into pre-existing farmers’ organizations was more effective, as the community and other service providers were more receptive to this method. This also provided farmers’ organizations with a better platform for business success. Today, many farmers involved in P4P have been able to overcome the stigma attached to their disease and regain ‘normal’ lives.

As lessons from the five-year pilot project are being compiled, the example of P4P’s collaboration with AMPATH is emerging as a successful and sustainable model for addressing the food needs of HIV/AIDS affected people. The potential benefits of encouraging newly infected individuals to embrace this model to attain food self-sufficiency at an early stage of the disease have also been recognised.
Blog: Diversified credit, enhanced project ownership and long-term planning to boost project success

P4P partner TechnoServe works with farmers cooperatives in Ethiopia, assisting them to improve their governance, business management and operation management so that they can sell to large institutional buyers such as WFP. In this blog, Heather Oh, Senior Business Development Manager, East Africa discusses her experience working with P4P.

TechnoServe works with enterprising people in the developing world to build competitive farms, businesses and industries. We are a nonprofit organization that develops business solutions to poverty by linking people to information, capital and markets. To date, we have worked in more than 40 countries across Africa, Latin America and Asia, assisting thousands of businesses and improving the incomes of millions of people.

Joint efforts
Since 2009, TechnoServe has worked in Ethiopia, integrating smallholder coffee farmers into commercial markets. We now use our experience and knowledge of capacity development to complement the market opportunities P4P offers small-scale staple crop farmers. By providing cooperative unions with training to strengthen their business and financial management skills, we assist farmers to aggregate maize for their contracts with WFP.

Together with P4P, we participate in the Ethiopia Maize Alliance, a group of key stakeholders convened by the Ethiopian Government’s Agricultural Transformation Agency (ATA). This collaboration has led to increased influence and improved joint problem solving in the field. Through these P4P partnerships, we have successfully contributed to improved livelihoods for tens of thousands of smallholder farmers. Meanwhile, there are still plenty of challenges to be faced.

Diversify connections with financial institutions
The Maize Alliance was instrumental in successfully facilitating unions with access to finance, which is a major focus of TechnoServe’s. This was enabled through a deep engagement with the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia (CBE), and led to cooperative unions following through with an impressive 100% repayment rate in the 2012-2013 season. Plus, forward delivery contracts have been successfully introduced, and are both understood and responded to by farmers. Finally, an improved business environment at the farmer and community level has been created, as we can now see how unions use aggregated contracts for sales beyond WFP.

Despite our success in connecting cooperative unions to CBE, there are still many challenges to be faced in providing smallholders with sustainable access to credit. First and foremost, we increasingly need to continue linking them to a variety of banks beyond the CBE in order to foster competition. We must also ensure banks’ commitment to provide loans to cooperative unions in a consistent matter, even without pressure from the Maize Alliance.

Fostering ownership among farmers
At TechnoServe, we believe that it is vital to foster ownership and pride among farmers. We found that many farmers have “Santa Claus” expectations of WFP due to a history and continued practice of providing equipment free of charge under P4P. Together we are working to change this mindset in Ethiopia.

Working with P4P throughout the past few years has changed our impression of WFP, illustrating that the organization is committed to engaging in development work with smallholder farmers. In the future, we hope that WFP will further emphasize sustainable practices such as revolving funds in order to allow unions to pay for their equipment, at least in part. These funds can then be used to purchase equipment for other CUs in the future.

Continues on page 5
The necessity of multi-year planning
Throughout our partnership with P4P we have successfully supported cooperative unions through the deployment of business advisors as well as field and business coordinators. Most importantly, union staff members have been trained as primary cooperative trainers. This allows for self-sufficiency and sustainable peer-based training, and facilitates the trickle down of skills.

Though our participation with P4P has had many successful outcomes, our 12-month partnership agreements make implementation difficult and costly. We hope that in the future we will be able to engage in multi-year commitments in order to work towards longer-term sustainable change, and allow us to create long-term plans to save costs and improve overall impact.

Investing in the smallholder supply chain
In order to create sustainable change in the lives of smallholder farmers in Ethiopia, we must invest in the smallholder farmer supply chain. This requires that we graduate smallholders from capacity building support, while ensuring that they are provided with sufficient supporting functions. Continued work in collaboration with the Maize Alliance and the Government of Ethiopia will further provide smallholders with an enabling environment and policies conducive to their success.

Perhaps most importantly, we must continue supporting smallholders to access markets beyond WFP by working with other institutional buyers to show them the benefits of committing to developing the capacity of farmers’ organizations. This will facilitate the emergence of a market system that will allow cooperative unions to function successfully when operating in the open market.

As WFP continues moving forward, leveraging lessons learned through P4P, continued support for smallholder farmers in Ethiopia is vital, as they are early on in their process of moving forward in development. With more than four decades of proven results, we here at TechnoServe believe in the power of private enterprise to transform lives.

Blog post by Heather Oh, Senior Business Development Manager, East Africa, TechnoServe
(Note: These views are the author’s and do not necessarily reflect those of WFP.)

A comment from Ken Davies, P4P Global Coordinator:
As the P4P Global Coordinator, I have visited almost all 20 P4P pilot countries. These visits have allowed me to see first-hand how essential partnerships are for the successful implementation of P4P. As we focus increasingly upon documenting what we have learned throughout the past five years of implementation, it is important that we also learn from the experiences of our partners. I am therefore delighted to have the opportunity to share TechnoServe’s perspective through this blog post.

With this in mind, I would like to re-emphasize WFP’s commitment to promoting sustainable solutions such as cost-sharing and revolving funds, rather than providing equipment free of charge. This commitment to give a ‘hand up’ rather than a ‘hand-out’ has been reinforced in 2014 and will continue being implemented in all P4P pilot countries.
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NEWs

Joint efforts to improve nutrition in Afghanistan
Click here to read more about the network of partners working with P4P on food fortification projects in Afghanistan.

Canadian delegation visits P4P-supported farmers in Ghana
Click here to read more about the high-level mission undertaken by the Canadian High Commissioner to Ghana and the Deputy Minister of International Development.

IYFF Photography Contest
The International Year of Family Farming (IYFF) is holding a photo competition awarding cash prizes for photos that represent the motto “Family Farming: Feeding the world, caring for the earth”. To read more about the criteria and how you can participate, click here (available in English, Spanish and French). To submit a photo directly, click here.

The Yara Prize
The Yara Prize is a grant of US$ 60,000 awarded to individuals or organizations working towards sustainable agriculture in Africa. Click here to nominate someone who has made a significant contribution to reducing hunger and poverty. Deadline for nominations is April 15, 2014.

The update is published by the P4P Coordination Unit in Rome, Italy.
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