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‘Embracing Change’ at the P4P Annual Consultation

The fifth P4P Annual Consultation was held in Rome from 28 to 31 January 2014. It was attended by nearly 200 P4P stakeholders from around the globe, who discussed the pilot’s achievements, challenges, and objectives for the future. All participants attended the discussions on 29 and 30 January, while 28 and 31 January were internal sessions.

As the five-year P4P pilot phase draws to a close, the consultation’s theme was “Embracing Change.” The main focus was on moving the P4P concept into the post-pilot era. Representatives of farmers’ organizations, governments, private sector and development partners, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the United Nations Rome-Based Agencies (RBAs) presented their perspectives, building on lessons learned, addressing achievements and challenges, filling gaps, and discussing objectives for the future.

To read about the highlights of the Annual Consultation click here
To watch recordings from the Annual Consultation click here
To view the PowerPoint presentations used at the Annual Consultation click here

A snapshot of the speakers:

Ertharin Cousin
Executive Director, World Food Programme
“Learning from P4P is now a core part of WFP’s new strategy, and we are committed to supporting and delivering change for today’s farmers.”

Heather Oh
TechnoServe, Ethiopia
“Give a hand up, not a hand out, to foster farmers’ ownership and pride.”

Bornwell Kaunga
Manager, Mwandama Farmers’ Organization, Malawi
“The first sale to WFP changed the whole mind-set of farmers in Mwandama. It convinced them that they could do business with the grain, if only they could be all together.”

P4P in the news...

20 P4P pilot countries
Asia: Afghanistan
Africa: Burkina Faso, DRC, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia
Latin America: El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua
Throughout the pilot phase, P4P has focused on assisting women farmers to benefit economically from their work, gaining confidence and voice in their communities and homes. Mazouma Sanou, a farmer from Burkina Faso, has first-hand experience of these benefits as well as the challenges still facing women farmers.

“P4P started as a gender conscious project,” says P4P gender consultant Batamaka Somé, during the 2014 P4P Annual Consultation. From its inception, he says, P4P faced many challenges to women’s empowerment, such as women’s limited access to inputs and credit, their unpaid contributions to farming, and the male-held control of household production and marketing.

To address these challenges, P4P’s first step was to create realistic goals, and a framework within which these could be achieved. This was documented in a gender strategy. The development of the strategy was led by the Agricultural Learning Impacts Network (ALINe), and included extensive field research and literature review, which provided a nuanced and culturally specific view of women in agriculture.

Today, a number of P4P’s targets related to gender have been met. Women’s participation in P4P has tripled since the beginning of the pilot, and some 200,000 women have been trained in various capacities. Skills and income gained through P4P have boosted women’s confidence, enabling them to participate and engage more in markets. However, many challenges remain to further assist women to access markets and benefit economically from their work.

One woman’s experience
Mazouma Sanou is a 43-year old woman farmer from Burkina Faso. She is married and the mother of three children. Mazouma is a member of a P4P-supported cooperative union called UPPA-Houet. Today, the union has 20,500 members, 11,000 of whom are women. Mazouma contributes maize, sorghum, and niébé (cowpeas) to her union’s sales to WFP. Mazouma also works as a field monitor paid by WFP and OXFAM to coach 25 rural women’s groups affiliated to her union, assisting them to produce and earn more. She works as an intermediary between groups and partners, and assists women to better organize their groups. She also supports them throughout the production process, making sure their products meet standards and working with them to improve their marketing and gain access to credit.

Changing family and community dynamics
P4P has contributed to an improvement in family dynamics by increasing women’s economic power through P4P-supported sales, finding that with money in their hands, women have more voice in their communities and homes. P4P and its partners also carry out gender sensitization training for both men and women, illustrating the tangible benefits which can be realized by households when women participate fully in farming activities.

Mazouma says that since their involvement in P4P, many women are able to make family decisions in collaboration with their husbands. She states that this has made income management easier, allowing families to plan for the possibility of unexpected illness, and to set aside money for enrolling their children in school.

Additionally, Mazouma has seen great changes at the community level. She says that thanks to their increased economic power, women are now more involved in decision-making and planning both in the cooperative union and their communities.

QUICK FACTS: P4P and Gender

- Since the beginning of the pilot, P4P has tripled women’s participation in P4P-supported farmers’ organizations from 100,000 to 300,000.
- Some 200,000 women have been trained in various capacities.
- Women make up 29% of the P4P-supported farmers, however this figure is skewed, as female membership in P4P rises to 48% on average if Ethiopia is excluded. The relative weight of Ethiopia biases the results as P4P in Ethiopia targets Cooperative Unions with a large membership base where only 13% are women.
- Women are now able to access credit and diversify their agricultural power.
- Women have been able to access time- and labour-saving technologies, and use them in creative ways.
- More women are now accessing land individually or as a group, for example, in Mali, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Uganda, and Kenya.
Challenges
While Mazouma says that gender dynamics are certainly changing for the better in her community, she acknowledges that there are still challenges ahead. She says that certain men do resist women’s increasing voice, and that she often works with women to discuss family life and helps them negotiate with their husbands.

“Women have to help educate their husbands. Dialogue can certainly change attitudes, but you can’t command people to do things,” she says. “I ask the woman ‘if you get that money, what will you do,’ and she says ‘help the children,’ so I say ‘your husband can take another wife but your children can’t have another mother. Your children can really benefit from this.’”

Many women in Mazouma’s farmers’ group have benefited economically from their work with P4P. Despite this, while over 50% of the UPPA Houet’s members are women, only 32% of the farmers’ organization’s sales to WFP were supplied by women, putting just 22% of the union’s sales directly into women’s hands. The five-year pilot illustrated that progress has been made, however continued efforts are required to ensure that more women benefit economically from their work with P4P.

Future plans
When asked about the future of her cooperative, Mazouma says, “from the very start P4P has been a school where we have learned how to improve our work, how to improve quality. I think we need more training, so women can help women train each other and develop their work.”

Though women such as Mazouma have received benefits from their participation in P4P, there is still is a long way to go. Change at a community and household level is slow, and many of the deep-seated cultural and social challenges identified at the beginning of the project have still not been completely overcome. However, the progress made so far is an indicator of the potential impact of culturally specific, flexible and nuanced gender programming.

“A great deal of work still needs to be done for gender equity to be fully realized,” says WFP gender advisor Veronique Sainte-Luce. “But P4P has been identified as something valuable, something positive, which has made a difference in women’s lives.”

Article by Chelsea Graham, P4P, Italy

Read More:
P4P Gender Strategy
P4P and Gender: Literature Review and Fieldwork Report

Stories from the field:
Burkina Faso: From Subsistence farmer to business woman
Mozambique: Supporting women to produce more
Zambia: Shellers enable female farmers to reduce workload

Video: Produced in South Sudan

During the 2014 Annual Consultation, P4P partner GIZ showed this video, which illustrates their collaboration with P4P in South Sudan. This partnership demonstrates how WFP’s demand can synergize efforts already being carried out by development partners such as GIZ, who train smallholders to improve the quantity and quality of their yields.

“It is a win-win situation because GIZ is now assured that the excess production that they are supporting enters into a market. And it is a win-win situation for WFP because we are assured that there is actually surplus to buy because GIZ is supporting the farmers. And the farmers win because now they have an assured market, they have more income and they are becoming more resilient in their lives,” says Emmanuela Mashayo, P4P country coordinator in South Sudan.
Emerging P4P results show importance of capacity building

In order for P4P to generate increased production and sales among smallholders, significant investments in capacity building are necessary. Emerging quantitative results, presented at the P4P Annual Consultation in January 2014, show how smallholders have benefitted from capacity building by P4P and its partners, leading to improved overall livelihoods.

The incentive provided by WFP’s demand alone is not necessarily enough to increase smallholders’ production of quality crops. Many of the farmers’ organizations (FOs) targeted by P4P had never marketed collectively before, and the smallholders’ agricultural practices were generally poor, leading to limited production of low quality crops.

Because of this, capacity building has been emphasized as one of P4P’s key pillars throughout the pilot phase. P4P has collaborated with a variety of private and public partners to ensure that smallholders and their organizations can access inputs, as well as improved farming technologies and tools in order to increase crop yields. This has been critical to achieving the increase in household income expected from participation in the P4P programme. Reduced post-harvest losses, improved quality and better on-farm storage facilities are other positive indicators.

Capacity building at two levels

P4P and its partners are building capacity at two levels. At the household level, individual farmers receive training and tools, which support them to improve their agricultural practices and increase productivity. At the level of the farmers’ organization, which is WFP’s entry point to negotiate most contracts, capacity building focuses on business management and marketing.

Emerging results from P4P’s global monitoring and evaluation system show how improved skills, such as how to use fertilizer and how to dry and clean crops for better quality, have allowed smallholders to produce more surplus. The data also suggests that this has led to farmers’ organizations aggregating and selling larger quantities more effectively.

Increased income leads to improved household welfare

In Tanzania, households participating in P4P have almost doubled their maize production, from an average of 1.35 metric tons (mt) per hectare in 2009 to an average of 2.47 mt per hectare in 2011. In Malawi, participating households increased their maize production from an average of 1.53 mt per hectare to 2.37 mt per hectare during the same period. Particularly in Tanzania, this increase seems to be connected to the use of certified maize seeds and fertilizers, a practice encouraged through P4P capacity building.

A common investment that households make with their increased income is to improve their houses. Magreth Simon Mgeni from the Usomama Savings and Credit Cooperative (SACCO) in Tanzania is one of the P4P-supported farmers who has invested in permanent materials for her home.

“Before P4P I was living in a mud house, but now I have an improved house. I am now taking my children to school without any problem. Today my neighbours are learning from me, understanding how the market works, and doing as I do,” Magreth says. When she joined P4P in 2009, Magreth was cultivating 2 acres of land. She now cultivates 9 acres, and in 2013, she sold 4,000kg of maize through her SACCO.

Increase in farmers’ organizations’ capacity

One way of measuring the impact of capacity building at the FO level is to study the services offered to their members, the quantity of their sales and the diversity of their buyers.

Since the beginning of the pilot in Tanzania, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of P4P-supported SACCOs offering marketing, post-harvest handling, and production related services. Half of them are also offering transportation services to deliver the produce to buyers. A similar trend is observed in other P4P pilot countries. In Tanzania, volumes sold by SACCOs have also increased significantly, particularly due to sales to WFP.

This sharp increase confirms that SACCOs have been able to scale up aggregation and master WFP quality specifications. This suggests that P4P’s method of providing FOs with the necessary post-harvest handling infrastructure, equipment, training and a reliable market, does indeed support FOs to aggregate and sell larger volumes.

Collective sales to markets beyond WFP

Data collected in Tanzania shows that SACCOs are increasingly selling to sustainable markets, such as the National Food Reserve Agency (NFRA). In Malawi, FOs are also selling increasingly to buyers beyond WFP, such as small and medium traders. Some FOs with higher capacity have also increased their sales to larger traders through the warehouse receipt system (WRS) and the Agriculture Commodity Exchange (ACE).
ACDI/VOCA partners with P4P in Ethiopia, Ghana, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Tanzania to build the capacity of smallholder farmers, providing them with sustainable and diverse skill sets. In this post William Sparks, ACDI/VOCA Vice President, shares his experience with the five-year pilot P4P project and his hopes for the future.

**ACDI/VOCA** began operations in 1963 and has since worked in 146 countries. At ACDI/VOCA, we share a common goal with the World Food Programme’s Purchase for Progress (P4P): to promote positive economic and social change worldwide by linking smallholder farmers to the global economy.

P4P is one of the most exciting new ideas in the development sphere. Our projects with P4P have varied in size and design across each of the countries we’ve collaborated in, but in each one we have achieved much by focusing on three core principles: **incentives** for improving business and farming practices, **investments** to enhance operations and upgrades, and **leveraging** of partnerships and new opportunities.

**Incentive to change**
WFP’s demand for staple crops is an important incentive for smallholders. It offers them a clear opportunity to sell a quality product for a premium price. This potential profit is a tangible benefit that can be earned through improved business and farming practices. For example, in **Rwanda**, farmers are now able to meet rigorous quality standards, thanks to skills acquired through **Sell More For More™** training. This program, designed by ACDI/VOCA and recognized by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) as a best practice, reduces post-harvest losses and strengthens farmer management of collective aggregation practices. These trainings create a ladder of skills for farmers to climb in order to reach WFP’s standards and attractive prices.

Through a **Common P4P** program, the government of Rwanda now contributes its own incentives by procuring directly from smallholders. Across the border in **Tanzania**, we’ve supported a similar initiative in collaborating with the National Food Reserve Agency to make purchases from smallholder farmer organizations. P4P has demonstrated how large buyers can be an incentive for smallholder farmers to acquire new skills.

In order to continue improving the lives of farmers everywhere, we must provide guidance and resources to NGOs, governments, and the private sector to assist in the ongoing development of farmers. If P4P is the incentive for farmers to progress to the next level, then we must provide a ladder of skills for farmer organizations to climb. This will equip farmers with stronger abilities to improve their practices, outputs, and, ultimately, income.

**Investments for improvement**
P4P and ACDI/VOCA have successfully encouraged and facilitated farmers’ investments, and have in turn invested in these farmers to ensure their success. In **Ghana**, we have helped farmers in isolated regions to invest in inputs for sustainable rice intensification, including improved seed varieties, small equipment, and warehouses. These investments have helped them to produce large amounts of high-quality rice and establish Ghana’s first warehouse receipt system through which they can sell to WFP and other premium buyers.

Additionally, we helped women in Ghana invest in labor-saving technologies, such as semi-mechanized parboiling vessels and energy-saving stoves for parboiling rice. This allows women to add value to their crops, and saves them the time and labor required to parboil rice in the traditional manner. Women-owned enterprises reported that operating costs dropped by half because of these measures, helping them increase their profits and abilities to re-invest in their businesses.

To continue fostering smallholder investment, we must continue our work helping farmer organizations access improved agricultural inputs, equipment and other investment opportunities. We must also continue promoting aggregation and warehouse standards, including certification methodologies, to ensure protection of valuable commodities and farmers’ investments.

**Leveraging with partners**
Through our participation in the Ethiopian Maize Alliance, P4P and ACDI/VOCA have combined forces to create a greater collective impact. The alliance includes 10 organizations that coordinate plans and join resources, with P4P as their nucleus. Together, we improve the ability of cooperative unions to support smallholder farmers...continue reading this blog [on the P4P website](https://www.p4p-voice.org/).
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**P4P IN THE NEWS**

WFP invests 9.8 million in the production of high quality grains
Click [here](#) to read an article from La Tribuna (in Spanish) about P4P’s work in Honduras.

WFP purchases from smallholders in Haiti
Click [here](#) to read about WFP procurement, which is leveraging P4P lessons in order to boost Haiti’s economy and meet the food needs of the country’s poor.

High Level Canadian delegation visits UNICEF and WFP project sites in Ghana
Click [here](#) to read about a visit to WFP project sites, including a P4P-supported farmers’ organization.

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