



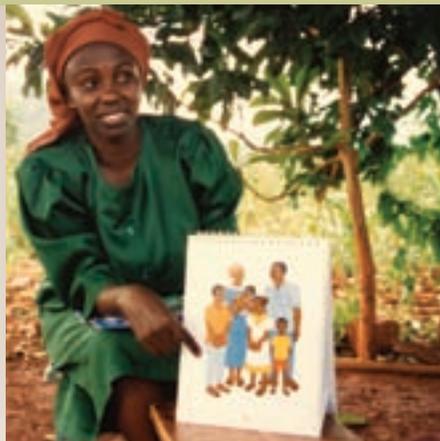
USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



SMALL GRANTS **BIG IMPACT**

A Retrospective of the
TOPS Small Grants Program

2010-2015



Published November 2015

DISCLAIMER

The TOPS Program was made possible by the generous support and contribution of the American people through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents of this guide were created by The TOPS Program and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the U.S. Government.

RECOMMENDED CITATION

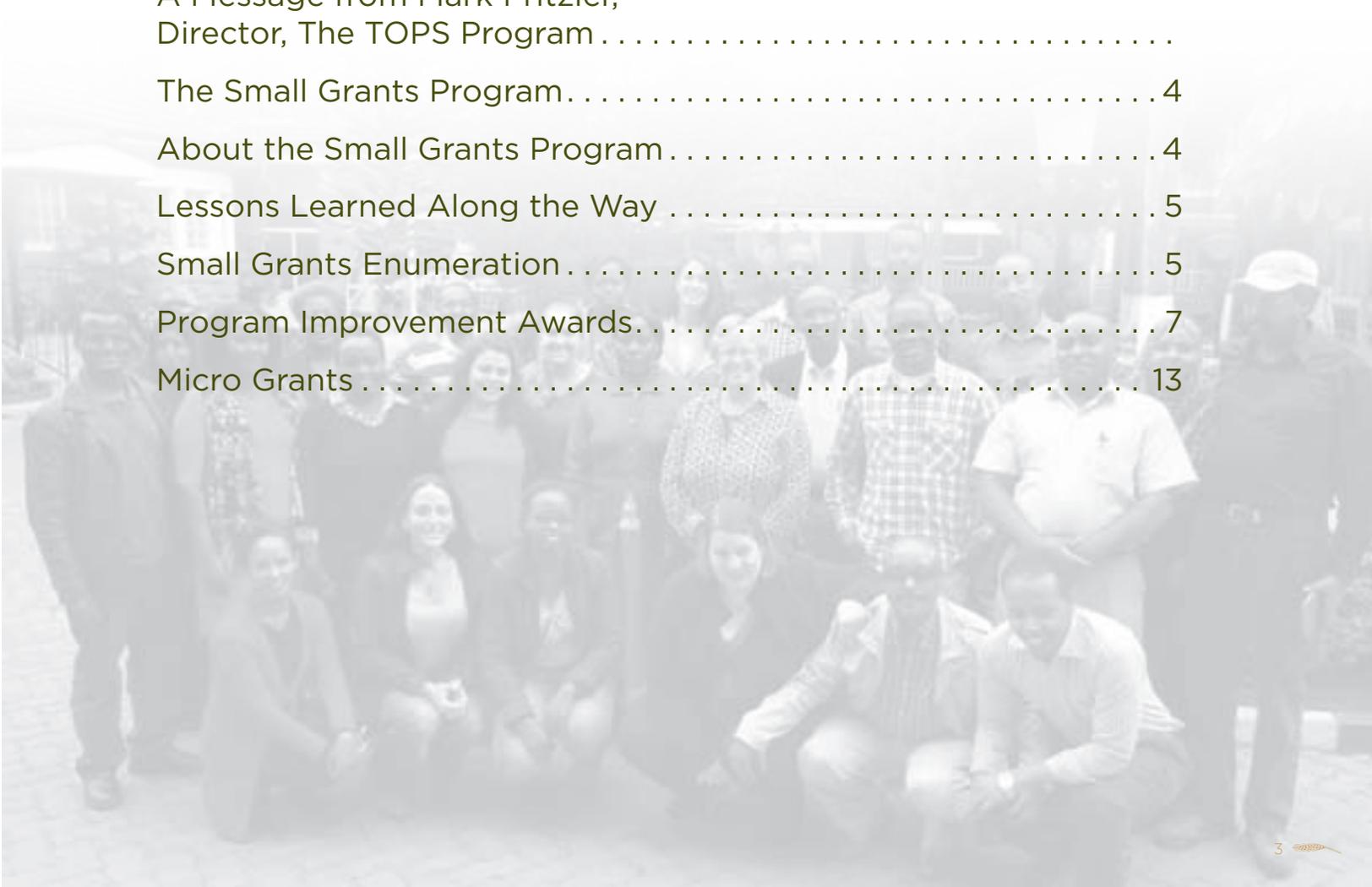
The TOPS Program. 2015. *Small Grants, Big Impact: A Retrospective of the TOPS Small Grants Program 2010–2015*. Washington, DC: The TOPS Program and Save the Children US.

CREDITS

Design and layout by Patrick Calder, The Design Foundry
Cover photos all courtesy of Photoshare: © 2006 Rose Reis, © 2013 Chelsea Hedquist, © 2013 Valerie Caldas, © 2004 Melinda Nowak, and © 1994 John Riber.

CONTENTS

Introduction	2
About Small Grants, Big Impact	2
About The TOPS Program	2
Acknowledgements	2
A Message from Dina Esposito, Director, USAID Office of Food for Peace	3
A Message from Mark Fritzler, Director, The TOPS Program	
The Small Grants Program	4
About the Small Grants Program	4
Lessons Learned Along the Way	5
Small Grants Enumeration	5
Program Improvement Awards	7
Micro Grants	13





INTRODUCTION

About Small Grants, Big Impact

The Small Grants Program provided an opportunity for TOPS to facilitate the work of food security program implementing partners in developing creative and innovative tools, materials, and promising practices. After more than four years implementing the program, TOPS wanted to showcase the impact the program has had in the development community and document our experiences and lessons learned in running the program.

The descriptions of the small grants contained in this booklet are based on text collected from grantee-submitted reports, small grant outputs, and TOPS technical staff. TOPS is grateful for the input of so many into these descriptions and, though we are unable to cite every source, we acknowledge the hard work that went into carrying out these small grants projects.

About The TOPS Program

The Technical and Operational Performance Support (TOPS) Program is the USAID Office of Food for Peace-funded learning mechanism that generates, captures, disseminates, and applies the highest quality information, knowledge, and promising practices in development food assistance programming, to ensure that more communities and households benefit from the U.S. Government's investment in fighting global hunger. Through technical capacity building, a small grants program to fund research, documentation and innovation, and an in-person and online community of practice (the Food Security and Nutrition [FSN] Network), The TOPS Program empowers food security implementers and the donor community

to make lasting impact for millions of the world's most vulnerable people.

Led by Save the Children, The TOPS Program draws on the expertise of its consortium members: CORE Group (knowledge management), Food for the Hungry (social and behavioral change), Mercy Corps (agriculture and natural resource management), and TANGO International (monitoring and evaluation). Save the Children brings its experience and expertise in commodity management, gender, and nutrition and food technology, as well as the management of this 7-year (2010–2017) US\$30 million award.

Acknowledgements

The Small Grants Program

Many people contributed to the success of the Small Grants Program; it was truly a community-wide effort. TOPS is grateful to all the organizations and individuals that sought funding through the program, whether or not they were awarded a small grant. TOPS would like to express gratitude to the 24 grantee organizations that put forth great effort, creativity, and innovation to produce these 42 small grants. And, many thanks to all the TOPS staff, past and present, that reviewed small grants proposals, reports, technical content, and outputs.

TOPS would especially like to thank three people without whom the Small Grants Program could not have run so smoothly.

- Fiti Wedajeneh managed the Small Grants Program, facilitated the application review and award process, communicated regularly with grantees, ensured compliance, processed payments, and much more.
- As TOPS's associate director for grants management, Rana Olwan ensured that all contractual requirements were followed and payments were processed appropriately.
- On the Food for Peace side, Violet Dancheck ensured that all small grants applications underwent a smooth review and approval process and were administered in a timely manner.

Small Grants, Big Impact

This booklet would not have been possible without the significant contributions of all TOPS staff. All of the sections and entries in this booklet were strengthened by the writing and editing of Adam Keehn, Fiti Wedajeneh, Jessi Mann, Joan Jennings, Julia Crowley, Kristi Tabaj, Mary DeCoster, and Rachel Elrom.

Finally, TOPS is indebted to those grantee staff that submitted timely and thorough milestone reports, photographs of small grants activities, graphics, text, and quotations, both for program monitoring in general and this booklet specifically. Special thanks go out to Alyssa Rychtarik (Grandmother Project), Christa Davis (Project Concern International), Christina Gagliardi (Project Concern International), Jennifer Burns (International Medical Corps), Lisa Kitinoja (World Food Logistics Organization), Lisa Roner (Land O'Lakes), Nicki Connell (Save the Children US), and anyone else that may have been inadvertently omitted.

A MESSAGE FROM

DINA ESPOSITO, DIRECTOR
USAID OFFICE OF FOOD FOR PEACE

The Office of Food for Peace is very pleased to support the production of this booklet summarizing the TOPS Small Grant Program (SGP). The SGP is an integral and innovative component of The TOPS Program, awarded in 2010 to a consortium led by Save the Children and including CORE Group, Food for the Hungry, Mercy Corps, and TANGO International.

Food for Peace was intrigued by the potential of the SGP to fund small, non-traditional initiatives to advance thinking and practice in relatively under-explored areas of food security and nutrition programming. We were also excited by the opportunity the SGP presented to engage smaller, less well-known organizations in such programs.

The SGP has more than met our expectations. From field-based formative research, such as the GOAL project, which used a “gender lens” to examine the impact of floods and droughts on communities in Malawi, to practical tool development, such as Project Concern International’s Warehouse Staff Safety Guide, the SGP has enabled the food security and nutrition community to increase evidence and learning in areas where knowledge gaps exist and where new approaches may result in significant gains.

As The TOPS Program moves into its follow-on phase, we are excited to see what new areas for learning and program improvement the SGP can explore. We are pleased to be able to support this program and remain committed to using the lessons that emerge from these small grants to advance the full range of programs that FFP supports.



Dina Esposito



MARK FRITZLER, DIRECTOR
THE TOPS PROGRAM

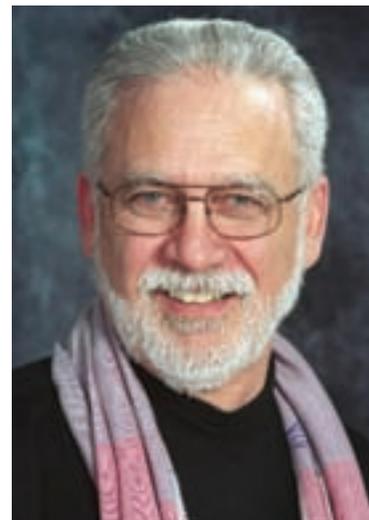
Those who devote themselves to helping the vulnerable achieve sustained food security and healthy nutrition for their families form a committed and creative global “community of practice.” However, due to resource constraints, members of this community are often unable to pursue many creative ideas, promising practices, or opportunities to strengthen and share skills. Since its creation in 2010, The TOPS Program has addressed this need through its Small Grants Program.

Over the past five years, TOPS has offered the practitioner community a forum to strengthen and sustain organizational skills, and to build more collaborative communities of practice that deliver high-quality food security and nutrition programming. These TOPS-supported projects have strengthened FFP-funded programs around the world by generating, evaluating, and disseminating knowledge and improved practices throughout the implementing community.

I am proud of the resources generated by the Small Grants Program and of its contributions to our global community of practice. I am grateful to everyone whose hard work has helped make the program a success. I look forward to more successes under the next group of small grants to be awarded beginning in fall 2015 and over the final two years of The TOPS Program.



Mark Fritzler



THE SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM



ABOUT THE SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM

Since it opened in 2011, the TOPS Small Grants Program has issued 42 small grants to 24 organizations totaling US\$2.4 million. The first phase of the program closed in August 2015. The USAID Office of Food for Peace extended TOPS until August 2017. The second phase of the program opened in fall 2015 and will continue until August 2017. Two types of small grants were available in the first phase: Program Improvement Awards and Micro Grants.

Program Improvement Awards

Program Improvement Awards were designed for food security and nutrition implementing organizations to conduct and/or document innovative, best practice-focused activities, operations research, or pilot programs to strengthen the quality and efficient effective delivery of Food for Peace-supported food security programs. The emphasis for awards was on activities that would produce evidence-based results and recommendations and guidance that could support others in the food security community to implement innovation or promising new practices, strengthen existing practices, or improve organizational technical capacity. Proposals were reviewed quarterly and were eligible to be funded up to US\$100,000 per award.

The TOPS Program funded 12 of the 20 applications accepted for consideration, totaling US\$1,177,773.69.

Micro Grants

Micro Grants were designed to build and sustain the high-quality technical skills and capacity of Food for Peace grantees, implementers, partners, and collaborators, particularly in the context of a frequently changing or challenging local operating environment. Improving and strengthening the technical and managerial skills in the overall community of practice is important for increasing the effectiveness of development food assistance programs in global socioeconomic development. Emphasis for awards was on innovative approaches, strengthening existing best practice skills, disseminating promising new practices and skills, and reaching a wide audience of practitioners in the operating environment. Proposals were funded up to US\$50,000 per award.

The TOPS Program funded 30 of the 64 applications accepted for consideration, totaling US\$1,285,753.39.

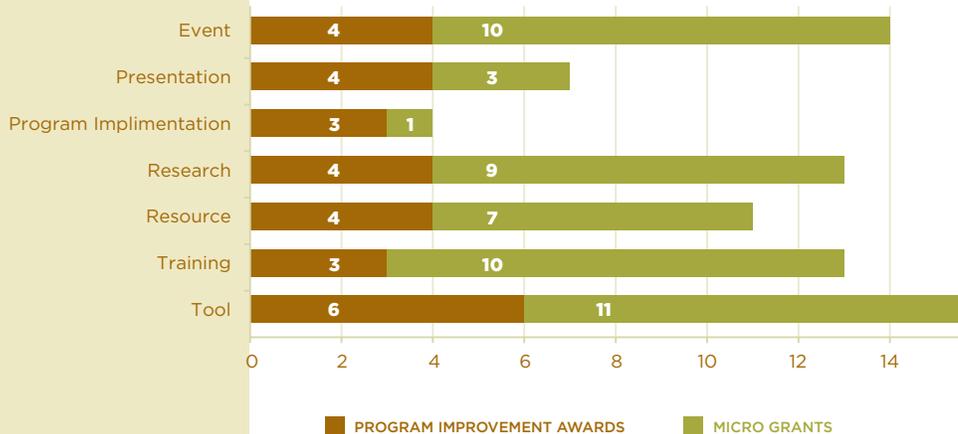
LESSONS LEARNED ALONG THE WAY

- Access to higher levels of funding draws in not only greater interest in small grant funding, but more diverse proposals as well because grantees are able to do more with more funds.
- It is important to widely publicize the program through multiple avenues and media, and to clearly describe what the program has to offer and what caliber of proposals the program is looking for.
- Clear and transparent processes established at the start of program implementation ensures that the program will run more smoothly. Creating and sharing guidelines and templates with grantees helps to ensure that the program is standardized, efficient, and thorough.
- Project staff that supervise or contribute to the program need to be clear on their roles and responsibilities to ensure proper follow-up.
- Guidance and requirements for the program should cover both programmatic and financial aspects, and provide clear guidance for use of organizations' names and logos.
- The small grants program does not end at the moment the final payment is made to the grantee! Some follow-up after the grant period has ended will help ensure that the knowledge sharing objective of the program across the food security community is realized.

SMALL GRANTS ENUMERATION

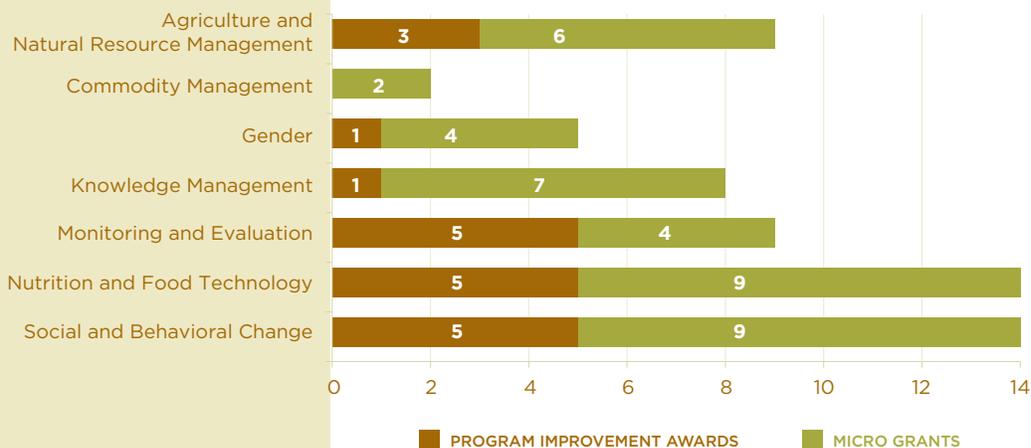
Small Grants by Output Type

Note that the total number of outputs (79) is greater than the number of small grants (42) because some small grants yielded multiple outputs.

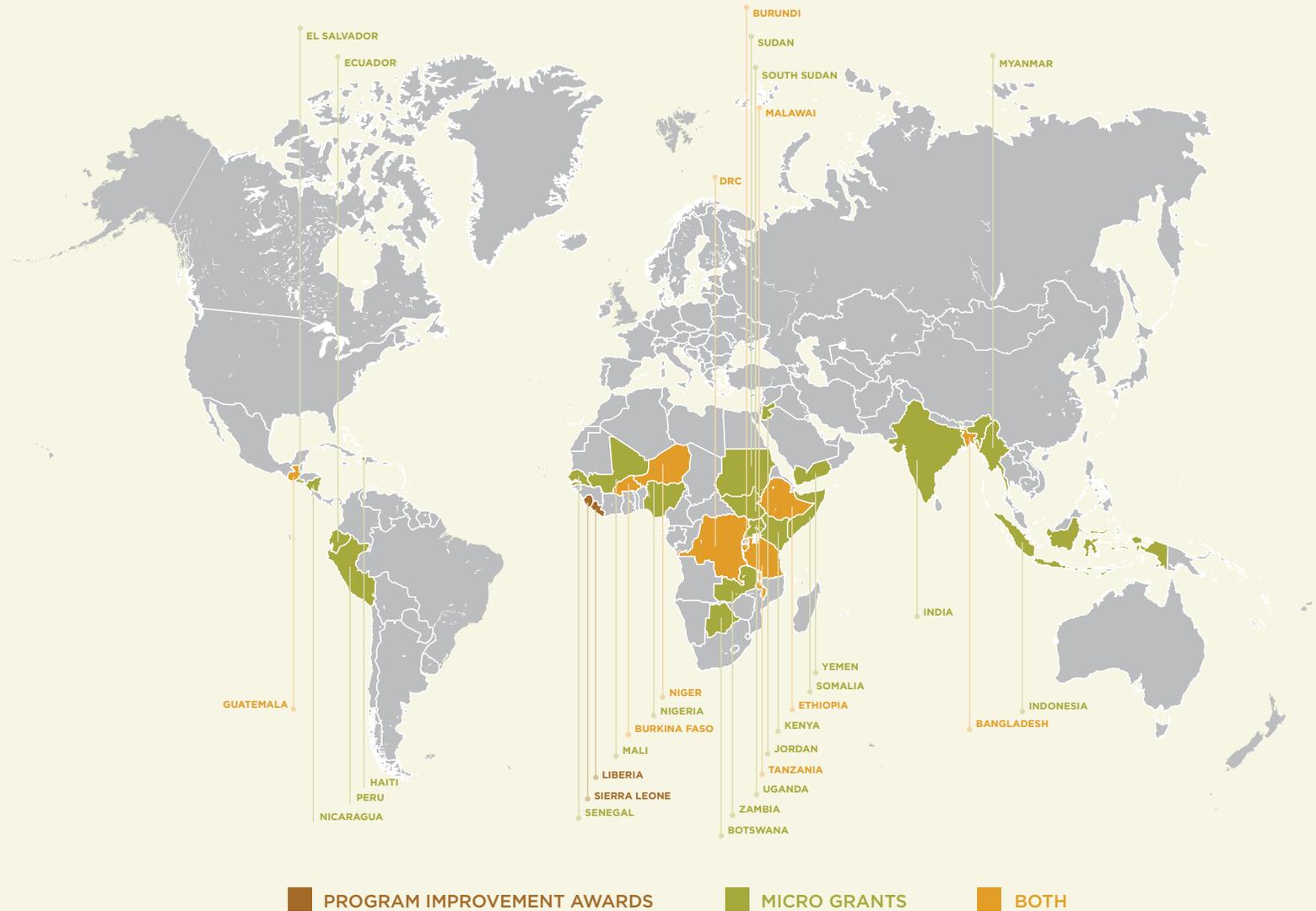


Small Grants by Technical Sector

Note that the total number of small grants by technical sector (61) is greater than the number of small grants (42) because some small grants addressed multiple technical sectors.



COUNTRIES REACHED BY THE SMALL GRANTS



This map shows the individual countries reached by Small Grants Program. Some grants reached entire regions or were more global in scope.





PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT AWARDS

**BUILDING ON
COMMUNITY
STRENGTHS:
Identifying and
Addressing the
Social and Cultural
Aspects of Maternal,
Infant and Young
Child Nutrition in
West Hararghe Zone,
Oromia Region,
Ethiopia**



GOAL

November 2014 to May 2015

Grant outputs: Project implementation, research, training

Technical areas: Knowledge management, nutrition and food technology

The project aimed to test and verify the hypothesis that “men, if strategically targeted, can positively contribute to an improvement in maternal dietary intake and diversity, [maternal, infant, and young child feeding,] as well as household hygiene and sanitation practices in rural communities in Western Hararghe Zone, Eastern Ethiopia.” GOAL’s impressive accomplishments under this small grant included establishing peer-to-peer learning and support groups, training government health officials and government and local health workers in health and nutrition best practices and approaches, and developing a draft tool to assess maternal nutrition.



**CARE GROUPS IN
EMERGENCIES:
Evidence on the Use
of Care Groups and
Peer Support Groups
in Emergency
Settings**



International Medical Corps

November 2014 to April 2015

Grant outputs: Event, presentation, research, resource

Technical area: Social and behavioral change

The Care Group approach, a specific type of peer support and learning group model, has proven instrumental in addressing issues of food insecurity and nutrition within many development contexts. International Medical Corps and other implementing partners modified the model for use in emergency contexts. International Medical Corps sought a small grant to gather evidence on the use of Care Groups and two other types of peer support and learning groups, Cascade Groups and Mother-to-Mother Support Groups, in emergency settings and develop recommendations to ensure their effective use in these contexts.

**DIETARY
DIVERSITY AND
DETERMINANTS
SURVEY**



**Catholic Relief Services
January to December 2013**

Grant outputs: Resource, tool

Technical areas: Monitoring and evaluation, nutrition and food technology

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) developed the Dietary Diversity and Determinants Survey (DDDS) to improve the efficiency and quality of its food security and nutrition programming. The DDDS can be adapted to collect two types of dietary diversity information—an individual’s Dietary Diversity Score and an indicator of household-level food access—and capture data on determinants of dietary diversity, such as land ownership and gender factors. CRS’s Burundi office developed the digital data collection tool from a survey questionnaire, then pilot-tested it in and refined it with input from CRS programs in Burkina Faso, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, and Malawi. Also, as part of the grant, CRS created Dietary Diversity and Determinants Survey Guide and User’s Manual to accompany the DDDS.



**INTEGRATION OF
THE CARE GROUP
MCHN BCC MODEL
WITH THE WOMEN
EMPOWERED
SOCIAL AND
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
MODEL: Synergies
in Food and
Nutrition Security
Programming**



**Project Concern International
May 2013 to April 2014**

Grant output: Research

Technical areas: Nutrition and food technology, social and behavioral change

Project Concern International (PCI) tested a framework for integrating two peer support group models in its ongoing programs: the Care Group model and PCI’s Women Empowered (WE) model. The study, conducted in Liberia, compared interventions using both models to those using only the Care Group model. Interventions using both models exceeded savings and lending targets, saw a higher percentage of participants accessing credit, increased women’s sense of self-efficacy, increased participation in community improvement, and increased sense of cooperation, support, and trust among the WE participants.



“Thank you! We’ve been waiting for these guidelines and will put them to good use!”

- PCI Program Coordinator based in Quetzaltenango



INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR MANAGEMENT, ANALYSIS, AND REPORTING TIMELINESS (I-SMART) AND I-SMART VERSION 2.0

ACDI/VOCA

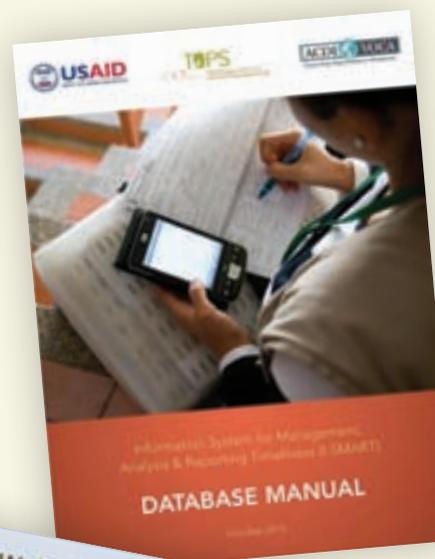
February 2013 to January 2014 (version 1.0) and August 2014 to April 2015 (version 2.0) (two small grants)

Grants outputs: Event, presentation, tool

Technical area: Monitoring and evaluation

ACDI/VOCA developed, tested, and refined a user-friendly, cost-effective information management system tool, called I-SMART, that supports multisectoral program management and donor reporting. The tool uses MagPi and Microsoft Access software and is designed to easily capture information and create unique identifiers at all levels, including individual and household. This allows a program to ensure accurate reporting in terms of beneficiary numbers and households reached, as well as potentially allowing for an analysis of food security impact by type of intervention. The system can generate reports by type of activity or by beneficiary. As part of the development process, I-SMART was vetted during an initial workshop with partners in Washington, DC, and field-tested in Sierra Leone.

Using a second small grant, ACDI/VOCA updated and improved I-SMART, including by focusing more on distinguishing categories of beneficiaries (pregnant, lactating, child) within the food distribution activity. I-SMART Version 2.0 was field-tested by ACDI/VOCA in Burkina Faso, by OIC International in Liberia, and by Save the Children in Zimbabwe. The revised tool was highly rated on efficiency, user-friendliness, accuracy (fewer errors), real-time data availability to all with access to the database, language capabilities, ability to track unique beneficiaries, and ability to capture disaggregated data.





INTEGRATING GENDER THROUGHOUT THE PROJECT LIFE CYCLE 2.0

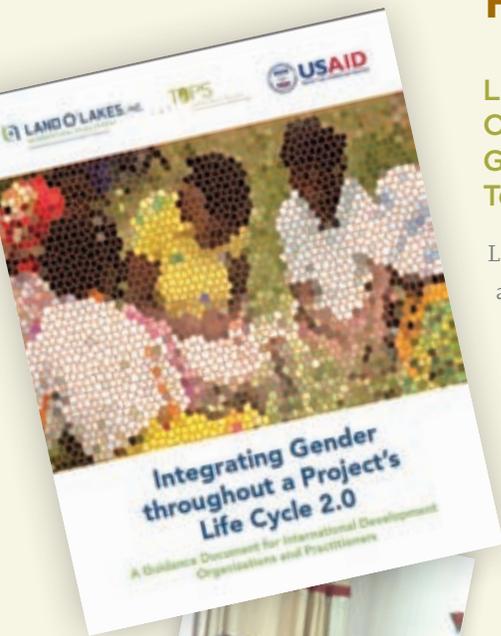
Land O'Lakes International Development
October 2014 to April 2015

Grant outputs: Event, training, tool
Technical area: Gender

Land O'Lakes led an initiative to update and expand its internal Integrating Gender throughout a Project's Life Cycle toolkit. This initiative started pre-small grant, when Land O'Lakes received TOPS support to host a webinar to launch the first edition to and solicit feedback from the food security community. Land O'Lakes used this feedback to revise the toolkit.

Integrating Gender throughout a Project's Life Cycle 2.0 was developed for use by staff of food security, nutrition, and agriculture development programs and addresses the entire life cycle of a program. A hands on guide, the revised toolkit gives organizations the first steps to integrate gender into their internal policies and practices and to maximize program impact in a way that exceeds donor requirements around gender. Since its completion, the toolkit has been promoted to field staff in Tanzania during a launch and training, to Washington, DC-based practitioners during a launch and networking event, and in online forums reaching a global audience.

Land O'Lakes partnered with five other organizations to create the second edition of the toolkit: Cultural Practice, Development & Training Services, Inc.; Partnership for Transparency Fund; Project Concern International; Save the Children US; and TechnoServe. This joint effort created a more comprehensive tool that showcases promising practices and successes from a variety of perspectives.



CARE USA with Catholic Relief Services January to December 2013

Grant output: Event, presentation, tool

Technical area: Monitoring and evaluation

The Price Monitoring, Analysis and Response Kit (MARKit) was developed by representatives from the Local Regional Procurement (LRP) Learning Alliance to guide food assistance practitioners through the steps to monitor markets during the implementation of food assistance programs and to ensure that programs remain responsive to changing market conditions. The purpose of the toolkit is to help food assistance programs maximize their effectiveness and maintain the principle of “do no harm” standards by mitigating unintended impacts on market systems. During the development process, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and CARE user-tested the tool at workshop in Niger with representatives from 15 international and national humanitarian agencies, gathering input on feasibility and user recommendations from food security program managers. Using its own funds, CRS piloted the tool in Eastern DRC and Niger, testing the tool’s effectiveness and revising based on project feedback. MARKit is now being used in other countries. MARKit was published in August 2015.

Helen Keller International November 2014 to May 2015

Grant output: Resource

Technical areas: Agriculture and natural resource management, nutrition and food technology, social and behavioral change

This manual is an adaptation of the highly successful first Nurturing Connections, which was developed in north-west Bangladesh to complement nutrition education and homestead food production training for women, a combination that greatly improved women’s agency in their homes. The manual was adapted to make it relevant and appropriate to the context of southern Bangladesh, including through pilot-testing new activities in the field and adapting their content and messages during several stages of desk-based revisions. While retaining content around equitable food distribution and adequate nutrition, the new version includes activities on advancing the role of women in agriculture as a key element of effectiveness for household well-being. However, the manual can be applicable to almost any context by adapting examples and discussion points to reflect the local context.

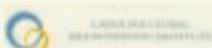
MONITORING, ANALYSIS AND RESPONSE KIT (MARKIT)



NURTURING CONNECTIONS: Adapted for Homestead Food Production and Nutrition



READING AND RESPONDING TO YOUR BABY



Food for the Hungry, with the Carolina Global Breastfeeding Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill September 2014 to May 2015

Grant outputs: Research, program implementation, tool

Technical areas: Nutrition and food technology, social and behavioral change

This project tested the feasibility of incorporating messages on infant feeding and behavior cues in order to improve breastfeeding and complementary feeding in ongoing nutrition programming in a small cluster of communities in Alta Verapaz, Guatemala. As part of the project, Food for the Hungry developed key educational messages, created educational materials using these messages, and trained Food for the Hungry/Guatemala staff on how to use the materials.



REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL MARKET PRODUCTION OF SUPER GARI (RAMPS)



OIC International with World Initiative for Soy in Human Health Programming January to December 2013

Grant outputs: Presentation, program implementation, training

Technical areas: Agriculture and natural resource management, social and behavioral change

Within the ongoing OIC International Health, Agriculture, and Nutrition Development for Sustainability (HANDS) program in Liberia, this grant activity encouraged the use of a locally produced fortified food product called Super Gari as a means to meet populations' nutrition needs, strengthened the capacity of Super Gari producers, and promoted consumption and market expansion across Liberia. Super Gari is a fortified product made of cassava, soy flour, and micronutrients with a blend of protein, carbohydrates, and micronutrients formulated to prevent malnutrition among pregnant and lactating women and children under 2 years old.

“It was the first time that most of the participants had ever been exposed to practical postharvest training and had a chance to see these technologies in action.”

– Lisa Kitinoja, WFLO

EVALUATION OF A POST-HARVEST EXTENSION UNDER THE HORTICULTURE COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH SUPPORT PROGRAM IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

World Food Logistics Organization
August 2014 to April 2015

Grant outputs: Resource, training

Technical areas: Agriculture, monitoring and evaluation

WFLO evaluated the Postharvest Technology and Service Center (PTSC) model, which is designed to build capacity, reduce food losses, and improve the effectiveness of food security programming. The evaluation aimed to:

- Determine the major capacity building outcomes and impact of PTSC and training of trainers program
- Identify promising practices in the management of the PTSC and its extension services
- Identify problems, concerns, and obstacles in making the PTSC a sustainable and replicable model
- Provide refresher technical training to 70 Master Trainers who are delivering postharvest training and services to small farmers in four Sub-Saharan African countries

Some of the lessons learned from the evaluation included how a package of postharvest information, technical training, demonstrations, tools, and advice on costs/benefits can spur economic development when individuals gain confidence and are willing to invest in improved technologies. A key finding was that the success of the pilot project was due to the combination of extensive and intensive training of trainers followed up with providing those trained with postharvest tools and long-term mentoring. This combination of training and support allowed those trained to gain the confidence to share what they have learned with their local communities.



MICRO GRANTS

BARRIER ANALYSIS



Mercy Corps **June 2014 to May 2015**

Grant outputs: Research, tool

Technical areas: Agriculture and natural resource management, social and behavioral change

Mercy Corps Guatemala carried out a Barrier Analysis survey to identify what prevents vulnerable families from adopting good agricultural practices, specifically during harvest and post-harvest, to prevent mycotoxins (the toxic chemical produced by fungi) in maize, which contribute to chronic malnutrition. Guatemala has the highest prevalence in stunting in children in Latin America (UNICEF 2012 Annual Report for Guatemala, TACRO) and maize, a key staple crop in the country, is associated with high levels of mycotoxins. The Barrier Analysis results supported efforts to identify, develop, and promote low-cost practices, including through improved harvesting, storage, and food preparation, to significantly reduce the contamination risk from mycotoxins.

CASE STUDY ON ADOLESCENT INCLUSION IN THE CARE GROUP APPROACH: The Nigeria Experience



International Medical Corps **April to June 2015**

Grant outputs: Research, tool

Technical areas: Nutrition and food technology, social and behavioral change

International Medical Corps has been using the Care Group approach, using peer-to-peer learning and support, to address malnutrition and to promote optimal birth and health outcomes in the northwest state of Sokoto, Nigeria, since 2014. International Medical Corps sought a small grant to describe the experience of including adolescent girls in Care Groups and to highlight barriers, facilitators, and lessons learned. As a result of this research, International Medical Corps provided consolidated promising practices on how to overcome barriers for including adolescents and strengthen program quality to include adolescent girls in Care Groups and meet their unique needs.



Food for the Hungry July to September 2014

Grant outputs: Tool, training

Technical area: Commodity management



Food for the Hungry conducted an extensive, 5-day commodity management (CM) echo training for 31 staff from all five food security program implementing partners in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to address the lack of capacity in commodity programming and management in that country. “Echo training” is a process where people who have attended regional trainings train others at the country level to help disseminate the knowledge gained at the regional trainings. Food for the Hungry used TOPS-created materials and modules, but adapted them using DRC-specific events and challenges. Participants agreed to share their knowledge with colleagues that were not able to attend, and partners in DRC will continue to share information on how to address CM challenges.

Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition October to December 2014

Grant output: Event

Technical areas: Nutrition and food technology, social and behavioral change communication

In partnership with USAID and the Strengthening Partnerships, Results, and Innovations in Nutrition Globally project (SPRING), the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) convened the conference “Designing the Future of Nutrition SBCC at Scale” to identify, establish, share, and adapt innovative methodologies for nutrition social and behavioral change communication (SBCC) and to strengthen its adoption in the field. Conference outcomes included a list of key principles that are suggested for integration into nutrition SBCC to achieve impact at scale and a strategic research and implementation agenda and action plan for getting to more and better nutrition SBCC globally.

COMMODITY MANAGEMENT ECHO TRAINING



DESIGNING THE FUTURE OF NUTRITION SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL CHANGE COMMUNICATION



DEVELOPING A RESILIENCE THRESHOLD



Mercy Corps June 2014 to May 2015

Grant outputs: Event, research, tool
Technical areas: Knowledge management

This project sought to create practical guidance on how to measure resilience in the context of food aid programs, addressing the need for tools to integrate resilience thinking into food aid programs alongside traditional food security objectives. Mercy Corps chose to implement the project in Niger because of the numerous environmental shocks and stressors this country and the wider Sahel region currently faces. As part of the project, Mercy Corps held a workshop with its partners in Niamey, Niger, to discuss using the Household Economy Approach (HEA) methodology to measure community resilience to external shocks and determine the impact of food aid programming on resilience. Mercy Corps worked on this project in partnership with Save the Children and Catholic Relief Services.



ENERGY-WATER- FOOD NEXUS BENCHMARKING



Mercy Corps January to May 2015

Grant outputs: Research, tool
Technical area: Agriculture and natural resource management

Mercy Corps tested and refined an assessment tool within the Growth, Health and Governance program to help analyze “nexus” (energy-water-food) intersections within the program’s focus areas in Northern Uganda. The results of the assessment helped the Growth, Health and Governance program design follow-on interventions that take into consideration water and energy as inputs for achieving the food security and livelihoods development objectives of the program, while also offering a practical example of how other agencies implementing Food for Peace programs can analyze and design programs with nexus considerations in mind. Mercy Corps developed a draft tool and study plan with the small grant funding

FLOOD AND DROUGHT THROUGH A GENDERED LENS: Mitigating Strategies for Women/Girls/ Boys/Men in Malawi



GOAL December 2014 to April 2015

Grant outputs: Research, resource
Technical area: Gender

GOAL implemented a study to review the different experiences of women, men, boys, and girls within disasters, most notably floods and droughts in Blantyre rural, Neno and Nsanje, Malawi. The research revealed that men, women, boys, and girls are affected differently and have different experiences during droughts and floods. In some instances, experiences were universal to all the gender groups. The findings suggest that disaster response strategies that take account of how women, girls, men, and boys each experience disasters, particularly their unique needs in times of crisis, are more effective in



addressing needs and leveraging strengths. The research also noted how strategies employed in development programming designed to mitigate against the impact of disasters is better effected and has greater impact when the differing needs and strengths of women, men, boys and girls are considered.

AgriTechTalk International U.K. January to December 2014

Grant output: Training

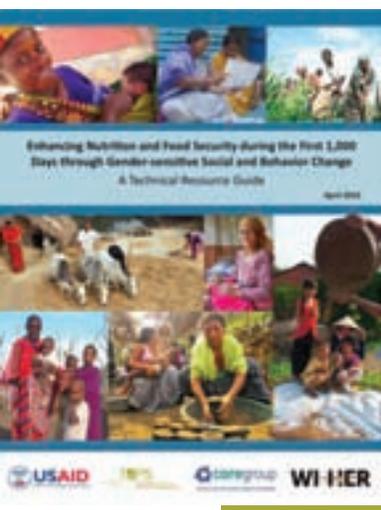
Technical sector: Agriculture and natural resource management

AgriTechTalk International U.K. provided a series of farm numeracy lessons in Kitgum, Acholi, Uganda, based on a fictional extension agent called “Uno How.” Dialogue between Uno How and two farmers, depicted through a series of pictures, provided lessons in functional numeracy. The series included multiple modules, ranging from counting to measurement of fields and determining rates of application of seeds, fertilizers, and sprays. These modules were tested and used in a cascading training curriculum in Northern Uganda delivered through voluntary membership of two tiers of self-help Uno How Clubs.

CORE Group and Women Influencing Health, Education, and Rule of Law January to April 2015

Grant outputs: Presentation, resource

Technical areas: Gender, nutrition and food technology, social and behavioral change



CORE Group turned to Women Influencing Health, Education, and Rule of Law (WI-HER) to develop a technical resource guide, technical brief, presentation for CORE Group’s spring 2015 Global Health Practitioner Conference, and webinar that present the rationale, critical actions, best practices, resources, and tools for integrating gender-sensitive social and behavioral change into nutrition and food security programming. The materials were based on the 1,000-days approach, which focuses on pregnant and lactating mothers and children under 2 years of age and prioritizes the critical period between a woman’s pregnancy and her child’s second birthday to maximize impact.

Catholic Relief Services with CORE Group January to April 2012

Grant output: Event

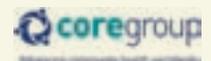
Technical area: Nutrition and food technology

Getting the Knack of NACS was a two-day State-of-the-Art (SOTA) meeting held Feb 22–23, 2012, and attended by 103 participants from 48 organizations. It provided an overview of current thinking and predominant issues surrounding the design, implementation, and evaluation of programming using the Nutrition Assessment, Counseling, and Support (NACS) approach. The participants represented a range of knowledge and experience about NACS, and the agenda was designed to include everyone by starting with the background, history, and science of NACS and leading to discussion about implementation and integration.

FUNCTIONAL NUMERACY FOR FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION



GENDER SENSITIVE SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL CHANGE



GETTING THE KNACK OF NACS: A State-of-the-Art Event on Nutrition Assessment, Counseling, and Support

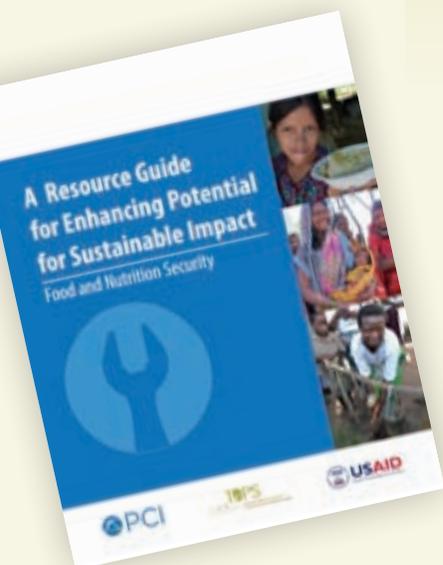


A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR ENHANCING POTENTIAL FOR SUSTAINABLE IMPACT

Project Concern International
December 2013 to November 2014

Grant outputs: Event, tool

Technical area: Knowledge management



Project Concern International (PCI) developed the resource guide as a toolkit to help practitioners enhance the potential for sustainability of their programs' impact through the use of practical guidance and tools that can be readily applied throughout the project life cycle. It helps orient project teams to promising practices, common pitfalls, flexible guidance, and adaptable tools so they can tailor the most effective sustainability strategy for their program context to ensure real and lasting change. The guide does not prescribe a specific methodology or approach, but rather attempts to compile and present existing concepts and tools in such a way that practitioners can more effectively ensure real and lasting change.

The guide was developed through a unique year-long process of regional workshops (Americas: Guatemala City, Guatemala, May 26–28; Asia: Delhi, India, June 23–25; and Africa: Blantyre, Malawi, September 8–10) and multisectoral practitioner engagement in 2014 culminating with a launch event in Washington, DC (October 2014). The workshops provided an opportunity for local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), international NGOs, government organizations, donors, and others to come together, learn, and share knowledge and experiences on sustainability, as well as provide critical input to the guide development process.

“This workshop helped elevate my level of consciousness regarding sustainability. That it should be an ‘umbrella’ that covers all aspects of the project. Right now we have different projects in different cycles. The four of us who attended will make sure to share this with the rest of our teams. There is a lot of potential here. I appreciate my new level of consciousness regarding sustainability.”

- A participant in the Guatemala Sustainability Resource Guide Launch

CORE Group
December 2013 to November 2014

Grant outputs: Resource, training
Technical area: Knowledge management

The Catholic Relief Services Consortium Alignment Framework for Excellence (CAFE) Manual, proven to be a useful tool for food security implementers working in consortia, was designed to be used during the consortium development process to check for organizational compatibility and to plan for how consortium members will work together. However, the manual does not provide skill-strengthening training to help consortium managers develop better management and leadership skills, a gap that food security program staff indicated needed to be filled. Based on this identified need and findings and comments from CORE Group-led sessions at TOPS regional knowledge sharing meetings and CORE Group conferences, CORE Group developed the Consortium Management and Leadership Training Facilitator’s Guide.

Save the Children US
February 2014 to January 2015

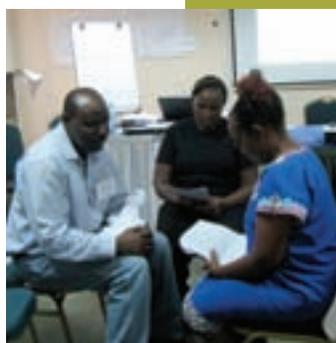
Grant output: Tool
Technical area: Nutrition and food technology

The IYCF-E Toolkit, co-funded by Save the Children’s IDEA Fund, is a collection of tools organizations need to begin implementing programs that address infant and young child feeding in emergencies, or IYCF-E. These tools complement, rather than replace, national protocols. The toolkit is an easy-to-use compilation of tools and resources that allow program planners and technical staff to rapidly access needed inputs and begin implementation as soon as possible, without needing to spend a lot of time searching for the tools required. Save the Children US plans to pilot and further develop these tools, through updating existing tools and adding new ones as needed, and encourages the implementing community to assess them and provide feedback.

Save the Children US
April 2015 to May 2015

Grant output: Training
Technical area: Nutrition and food technology

On September 28 to October 2, 2014, Save the Children US trained 15 participants from the Middle East region from relevant agencies and nongovernmental organizations on infant and young child feeding in emergencies (IYCF-E). Held in Istanbul, Turkey, participants included practitioners and program planners that are instrumental in designing and implementing IYCF-E responses in the Middle East region, as well as regional personnel who focus on IYCF-E strategy. On May 11–15, 2015, Save the Children US trained 22 participants including government ministry staff in Nairobi, Kenya, using the same curriculum. Both trainings complemented Save the Children US’s initiative to design a global IYCF-E capacity-strengthening plan moving forward.



**IMPROVING
PROGRAM
MANAGEMENT
SKILLS WITHIN
TITLE II PROJECTS
THROUGH THE
DEVELOPMENT
OF NEEDS-BASED
TRAINING MODULES**



**IYCF-E TOOLKIT:
Rapid Start-Up
Resources for
Emergency Nutrition
Personnel**



**IYCF-E TRAINING
FOR EAST AFRICA
AND THE MIDDLE
EAST**



LEARNING FOR GENDER INTEGRATION



Lutheran World Relief
December 2013 to November 2014
Grant outputs: Event, resource
Technical area: Gender



Lutheran World Relief (LWR) held the first international gathering of participants involved in its Learning for Gender Integration project for a midterm workshop, bringing together LWR and local implementing partner staff from the U.S., Honduras, India, Nicaragua, and Uganda, to share experiences and reflect on the progress of the initiative. The workshop was an opportunity to assess how far LWR has improved its ability to design and manage gender-integrated programs, as well as to identify successes and challenges within the LGI pilot projects. With remaining funds, LWR created 2014 Storybook: INGO Experience with Gender Integration, which tells the story of how six different agencies are integrating and mainstreaming gender into policies, programs, and procedures.

LIVESTOCK EMERGENCIES GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS (LEGS) TRAINING OF TRAINERS COURSE



Vetwork U.K.
February to April 2015
Grant output: Training
Technical area: Agriculture and natural resource management

This training of trainers (TOT) course, held in Burkina Faso and adapted to the West African context, was based on previous LEGS trainings of trainers. The LEGS TOT course aims to teach participants about the LEGS Approach, to train participants to train others in the approach, and to apply the LEGS handbook as a tool to plan more effective livelihoods-based livestock interventions in emergency responses. The TOT took place April 12–17, 2015, with 18 participants from seven francophone West African countries. All participants felt that the training was relevant for their work and the training objectives were fully or mostly met.



Catholic Relief Services, with Cornell University, Land O'Lakes, Mercy Corps, and World Vision

January 2011 to March 2012

Grant output: Event

Technical area: Knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation

CRS, Mercy Corps, World Vision, and Land O'Lakes worked with Cornell University to create the Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement (LRP) Learning Alliance to develop a global monitoring and evaluation framework for U.S. Department of Agriculture LRP Projects implemented by the agencies in the Alliance. In November 2011, the Alliance hosted a one-day workshop in Arlington, Virginia, to educate 95 food security program implementers, including government agencies, academic institutions, and nongovernmental organizations, on LRP. The Alliance also used the event to share their experiences with LRP Projects, as well as the effectiveness and challenges of such programs in addressing food insecurity.



LOCAL AND REGIONAL PROCUREMENT LEARNING AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING WORKSHOP



Save the Children US

April to May 2015

Grant output: Research, training

Technical area: Social and behavioral change communication

Save the Children US conducted a workshop using the Make Me a Change Agent (MMCA) draft curriculum (since published in June 2015) in Maradi, Niger, on May 18–22, 2015. The MMCA curriculum seeks to build the skills of community-level workers so they can be more effective behavior change promoters in their communities. Twenty-one participants attended, representing all three development food assistance programs in Niger and two Burkina Faso programs as well as two regional RISE programs. This was the first time the MMCA curriculum had been conducted in West Africa and only the second time it was conducted in French.

MAKE ME A CHANGE AGENT WORKSHOP ON SBC LESSONS AND PRACTICE FOR COMMUNITY-BASED VOLUNTEERS, MARADI, NIGER



CARE USA

January to April 2015

Grant output: Research, training

Technical area: Gender, monitoring and evaluation, social and behavioral change

In response to requests from program implementers, CARE USA applied the TOPS funding to finalize a set of standardized, but context-specific, gender monitoring indicators (or Progress Markers) and formats for tracking intra-household and social norm changes (including men's engagement) and to broadly disseminate CARE USA's innovative monitoring and evaluation processes for gender-transformative food security programming. The small grant covered two activities to support these goals: a gender indicator design workshop, held in Lilongwe, Malawi to develop the preliminary set of Progress Markers for five countries and a dissemination meeting organized in Washington, DC, to share CARE USA's tools and processes with the food security community. The process was recognized by USAID's Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA) case study competition in 2015.



MEASURING AND MONITORING GENDER BEHAVIOR CHANGE



“Before we thought that our ideas were not important because the programs didn’t involve us. But in this program we were asked to give our opinions, people listened to us and now we know that our experience is important to the community.”

– Tobo,
grandmother leader



FOCUS ON FAMILIES AND CULTURE: A GUIDE FOR CONDUCTING A PARTICIPATORY ASSESSMENT ON MATERNAL AND CHILD NUTRITION

The Grandmother Project
December 2014 to April 2015

Grant outputs: Presentation, tool (English and French)

Technical area: Nutrition and food technology, social and behavioral change

In non-Western collectivist cultures, nutritional practices of women and children typically are influenced by various and multigenerational household actors. Many tools for conducting formative research, or assessments, on maternal and child nutrition focus on mothers and do not investigate the roles and influence of other family members on the mothers’ nutrition-related attitudes and practices. To address this gap, Grandmother Project – Change through Culture developed a more holistic framework and tools for investigating household dynamics and influence. The guide contains a set of participatory tools that can be used by someone with both qualitative data collection skills and group facilitation skills together with a team of program implementers involved in carrying out the assessment.

“This methodology considers the cultural context of our communities. The household is not just “the couple” or mother and father. The household must include all members who have the knowledge and influence related to maternal and infant nutrition. Without them—in particular the grandmothers—no intervention will be effective.”

– Mamadou Coulibaly, Program Manager, Grandmother Project



Catholic Relief Services
January to December 2014

Grant output: Program implementation, research

Technical area: Monitoring and evaluation



The Post-PRIZE Monitoring for Resilience project aimed to measure the sustainability of the Promoting Recovery in Zimbabwe project's (PRIZE) infrastructure and livelihood activities and the overall resilience of the communities served after program completion to determine what factors enabled sustainability or prevented it. Findings showed that the majority of the assets rehabilitated and skills transferred by PRIZE were still in use after the program closed. Some of the more notable lessons learned included dedicating adequate resources to knowledge management and skills transfer and proper efforts to ensuring community ownership of the program activities.

Concern Worldwide
February to May 2015

Grant outputs: Research, resource

Technical areas: Agriculture and natural resource management, nutrition and food technology

Concern Worldwide saw the opportunity to conduct and use research to leverage investments being made in conservation agriculture at a national and regional level, including within other USAID projects; to contribute to the literature about nutrition-sensitive conservation agriculture, of which there is very little; to improve the conservation agriculture methodology more broadly; and to share findings among both the agriculture and nutrition communities. To meet these objectives, Concern Worldwide conducted a study to generate and disseminate information that will inform how interventions based around conservation agriculture practices can integrate nutrition outcomes. The study was successfully conducted and resulted in a project report and a project brief, including clear recommendations on how to improve nutrition outcomes within conservation agriculture. The report was featured in a 2015 issue of *Field Exchange*, the online and print technical publication on nutrition and food security in emergencies and high burden contexts.

**POST-PRIZE
MONITORING
FOR RESILIENCE
PROJECT**



**POTENTIAL FOR
NUTRITION-
SENSITIVE
CONSERVATION
AGRICULTURE IN
ZAMBIA**



**PROMOTING A
FEMALE-FOCUSED,
SAVINGS-LED
MICROFINANCE
MODEL IN FOOD
AND NUTRITION
SECURITY
PROGRAMMING**



**Project Concern International
January to October 2012**

Grant outputs: Event, training

Technical area: Knowledge management

Project Concern International organized and hosted the three-day capacity building workshop “Don’t Just Borrow, Be the Bank: How Savings-Led Microfinance Can Make Food and Nutrition Security Programs More Sustainable.” Held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the workshop was attended by 65 participants from seven African countries, representing more than 20 organizations that came together to learn, share, and brainstorm how Savings Group methodologies can augment, support, or improve food-aid and nutrition security programs. Throughout the event, participants developed specific technical recommendations, identified themes, and shared resources designed to support and advocate for savings approaches in new and existing food security and nutrition programs and agreed to form a virtual group to promote ongoing collaboration around the themes and connections developed in Addis Ababa.

**REGIONAL
DESIGNING FOR
BEHAVIOR CHANGE
WORKSHOP**



**International Medical Corps
April to October 2014**

Grant output: Training

Technical area: Knowledge management, social and behavioral change

The field-tested, 6-day Designing for Behavior Change (DBC) curriculum is a practical behavioral framework that strategically aids community development program planners and managers in planning for maximum effectiveness. At a workshop in Nairobi, Kenya, International Medical Corps used the DBC curriculum to train 26 participants from 13 organizations in 7 countries. As part of the closing session, each participant identified three things he or she will do in the coming three months to building on what he/she learned during the workshop. IMC tracked participant progress three months after the workshop and found that many had shared at least some of what they learned during the workshop with their organizations and some conducted DBC workshops for their colleagues.



Project Concern International
June 2014 to May 2015

Grant outputs: Presentation, tool

Technical area: Knowledge management



Project Concern International (PCI) has served as facilitator and secretary of a collaboration committee promoted by the USAID Feed the Future program, made up of 13 organizations carrying out projects in 24 municipalities of the department of Huehuetenango, Guatemala. PCI created this resource guide to offer guidelines, recommendations, examples, and lessons learned to improve and promote effective project coordination and collaboration. The development process gave PCI and the committee the opportunity to learn about real examples that illustrate promising practices, document the challenges and barriers that come up when trying to create effective coordination and collaboration, and, based on the experiences of this committee, identify the elements that facilitate collaboration.

CORE Group
November 2014 to April 2015

Grant outputs: Event, resource

Technical area: Social and behavioral change communication

This two-day Technical Advisory Group (TAG) meeting brought together 33 practitioners in the Care Group approach, a specific type of peer support and learning group model. As final outputs of the meeting, participants developed recommendations related to national adoption, advocacy, and communication; formed a steering committee to follow up on TAG findings and recommendations; planned a follow-on meeting on research needs; planned for further dissemination of the Care Group TAG results; and agreed to pursue a partnership with UNICEF on the Care Group approach. Discussions on advocacy for and communication about Care Groups resulted in the tool *Care Groups – An Effective Community-based Delivery Strategy for Improving Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health in High-Mortality, Resource-Constrained Settings: A Guide for Policy Makers and Donors*.

International Medical Corps
March to May 2015

Grant output: Training

Technical area: Monitoring and evaluation

Held April 6–9, 2015 in Washington, DC, this training strengthened the capacity of 24 staff from USAID, International Medical Corps, Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), FHI 360, Food for the Hungry, IntraHealth, Mercy Corps, OIC International, and PATH to use Theory of Change throughout the project cycle to support program planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation and to adapt programs when shocks occur.

**RESOURCE GUIDE
FOR BUILDING
EFFECTIVE
COLLABORATION
AND INTEGRATED
PROGRAMMING**



**TECHNICAL
ADVISORY
GROUP MEETING
ON CURRENT
INNOVATIONS,
SCALE-UP, AND
RESEARCH ON
CARE GROUPS IN
TITLE II PROGRAMS**



**THEORY OF
CHANGE
TRAINING**





WAREHOUSE STAFF SAFETY GUIDE AND POSTERS

Project Concern International
December 2013 to November 2014

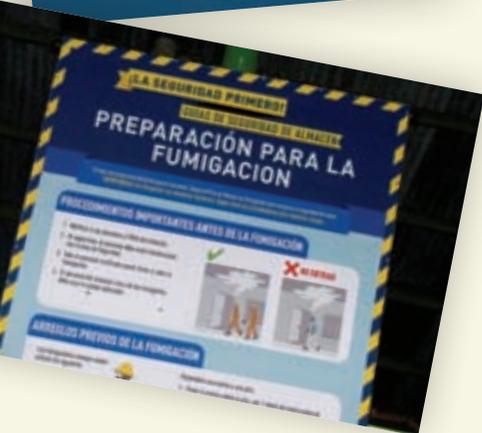
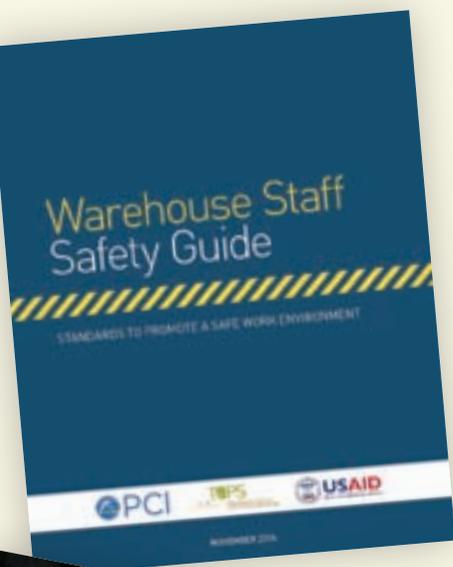
Grant output: Tool

Technical area: Commodity management

Warehouse staff safety is critical, but the development of the Warehouse Staff Safety Guide marks the first time clear guidance on how to secure staff safety in the warehouse became available. Project Concern International (PCI) developed this unique tool to provide international development organizations with information, recommendations, and materials to promote safety in warehouses where food commodities are stored, with the overall objective of reducing staff illness and injury in the warehouse. In addition to staff safety, the guide also helps organizations increase staff capacity and knowledge of proper warehouse management. The process for creating the guide and posters was a true collaboration of the entire commodity management community. In total, over 75 individuals working for various implementers and USAID were involved in the development and review processes of the guide and posters. The guide and posters were launched on November 19, 2014, at a TOPS/FSN Network Commodity Management Task Force meeting at PCI headquarters in Washington, DC.

“Having been in this work for a very, very long time, I am extremely pleased to see something like this get produced. A functional, user-friendly safety guide is long overdue and has really been needed.”

– Judy Grooms, USAID Office of Food for Peace



CORE Group

November 2014 to April 2015

Grant output: Training

Technical area: Nutrition and food technology

CORE Group hosted a training-of-trainers workshop in the Essential Nutrition and Hygiene Actions Framework and tools for health providers and community volunteers. Held December 8–12, 2014, the highly participatory workshop was developed and led by CORE Group's Nutrition Working Group and attended by 23 staff from 11 implementing partners in 13 countries. At the workshop's close, each participant developed an action plan, which CORE Group followed up on three months after the workshop. Also, based on workshop participants' feedback, CORE Group revised and reformatted key guides and reference materials in its Essential Nutrition Actions and Essential Hygiene Actions Framework.

Mercy Corps

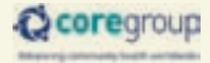
January to July 2014

Grant outputs: Event, research, resource

Technical area: Agriculture and natural resource management

In the Dry Zone of Myanmar, Mercy Corps assessed the vulnerability of farming communities to variable and shifting environmental conditions, a disabling governance and policy environment, and inefficient agricultural markets. To share assessment findings, Mercy Corps developed a case study document and held a webinar. Mercy Corps also developed Food Security Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment Guidance to provide guidance for implementing a regional-scale food security-focused vulnerability and capacity assessment, an integrated process for identifying and prioritizing shocks and stresses and understanding capacities to absorb, adapt, and transform when faced with them. Mercy Corps has used learning from this initial experience to inform an agency approach to strategic resilience assessments, which has now been applied in Nepal, Uganda, Zimbabwe, and Niger.

TRAINING OF MASTER FACILITATOR- TRAINERS IN THE ESSENTIAL NUTRITION ACTIONS AND ESSENTIAL HYGIENE ACTIONS



VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT





THE TOPS PROGRAM

c/o Save the Children US
2000 L Street, NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20036
info@thetopsprogram.org
www.thetopsprogram.org

