



SCALE CREATIVE ADAPTATION AWARD

HONORABLE MENTIONS

JANUARY 2021





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INTRODUCTION

As communities around the globe face unprecedented challenges due to COVID-19, humanitarians have rapidly adjusted the ways in which they deliver critical aid and programming. The USAID/Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA)-funded SCALE Award released the Creative Adaptation Award to recognize these timely innovations, with a focus on adjustments made within agriculture, natural resource management (NRM) and alternative livelihoods activities. Submissions came from across the food security implementing community and included a range of donor-funded programs and partner initiatives in both emergency and development contexts. Amongst the incredibly strong applications, the SCALE team selected the following adaptations as Honorable Mentions. Though not ultimately chosen as award finalists, these initiatives demonstrate creativity in action and provide valuable lessons for other implementing partners. Read on to learn more about these adaptations and join us in applauding their innovation and impact.

The SCALE Team

FEED THE FUTURE NEPAL INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT PROJECT (FTFNIPM)

At the onset of COVID-19 lockdowns in March of 2020, the Feed the Future Nepal Integrated Pest Management Project (FTFNIPM) discovered their “last-mile” network of sales and service agents were still actively serving their rural communities despite the constraints, traveling by foot and connecting with farmers in-person. The team quickly responded with essential messaging via SMS and through social media to assist these entrepreneurs, providing them with the information necessary to identify the virus and to adjust their own behaviors in ways that could prevent its spread. In partnership with USAID and Nepal’s national Plant Quarantine and Pest Management Center, the program developed a series of weekly messages that addressed immediate COVID-related needs, promoted positive agricultural practices and alerted farmers to potential emergencies. The program also engaged in weekly rapid field assessments through the agent network and tested a number of different communication models to ensure recipients were understanding, using and further disseminating the messages. Based on recent data collection, the program found that last-mile market actors were reaching 83,000 farmers in 28 districts of Nepal with practical, actionable information. Learn more about FTFNIPM’s initiative and other work [here](#).



Deepa Poudel, a last mile Community Business Facilitator (CBF) Plant Doctor Agent and one of the market actors the program has been communicating with weekly. (Photo: Bimala R. Colavito/iDE, 2020).

CORONAVIRUS RESILIENT VILLAGES

As part of its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Hunger Project rapidly rolled out a “Coronavirus Resilient Villages” (CRV) initiative in 1,500 villages throughout Bangladesh. The program is a volunteer-driven, community-led decentralized effort to contain and mitigate the impacts of the virus through the mobilization of self-help group members. The CRV is just one example of how the Hunger Project has applied the Participatory Action Research approach, which supports participants to take the lead in shaping their own futures. The self-help group members - composed primarily of impoverished women – engage in a range of activities including savings groups. With these savings, members can mitigate the impacts of the pandemic by raising fish, cattle and/or chicken and producing handicrafts and other non-traditional items to supplement their income. The partners (traditionally referred to as ‘beneficiaries’ or ‘program participants’) are the main actors in the CRV initiative, which is based on the principle of self-help and self-reliance. So far, partners have formed over 1,200 self-help groups with nearly 30,000 members and mobilized more than half a million volunteers to carry out CRV activities. The program is now strengthening members’ capacity to become economic and social entrepreneurs, and introducing them to digital technologies to enhance the production and marketing of their products. To learn more about the CRV initiative, visit this [link](#).



Risk communication materials are handed out to ensure community members practice WHO recommendations for mask wearing, social distancing and handwashing. (Photo: The Hunger Project, 2020).

SUAAHARA II

When a nationwide lockdown restricted movement in Nepal, USAID’s integrated nutrition program, Suaahara II, turned to technology. A key component of the program is to reduce malnutrition by improving year-round access to diverse and nutrient-rich foods. Suaahara II provides initial inputs such as seeds and chicks to Village Model Farmers (VMF) and families who have a pregnant woman or child under two years (“1000-day families”), and builds their agriculture-related knowledge and skills through training and regular follow-up home visits for observation and hands-on support at their farms. Although this type of face-to-face engagement has been put on hold, Suaahara II’s continued support is more vital than ever to mitigate the emerging challenges. Fortunately, technology offered a solution. Using telephones and social media, particularly Facebook, program staff helped VMFs and households with pregnant women and/or children under two years old by answering their farming questions remotely. From April to July, 2020, more than 5,000 tele-counseling sessions were held to support VMFs in Nepal’s rural and remote areas. To read more about Suaahara II’s adaptations in the COVID-19 context, click [here](#).



A group of women in Sindhupalchok district are seen using a solar dryer to preserve surplus produce. (Photo: Hikmat Raj Upadhyaya, Suaahara/USAID, 2020).

HOME FOREST GARDENS

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Home Forest Gardens program could not meet with participants to continue trainings, provide technical support services or monitor the progress of gardens. With the onset of the rainy season, it was critical to move ahead with family forest garden implementations and avoid missing the rain. To adapt to the circumstances, the program implemented the following steps: 1) the program's Agriculture Technician created short videos of each of the steps involved in creating and maintaining a family forest garden; 2) the program identified three of the Agriculture Technician's top gardeners (promoters) in each community and implemented a virtual training of trainers during which she shared the training videos and empowered volunteers to become trainers themselves; and 3) garden promoters went from house to house to train and give technical assistance to households, with additional virtual support from the Agriculture Technician. In this way, the program was able to start 60 new gardens during the month of June alone. As of September, they have created eight different videos covering everything from how to prepare the garden bed to making organic pesticides with products from households' own gardens, to producing the live fencing to protect the gardens. Learn more about Feed the Children's work in Guatemala [here](#).



An agriculture promoter teaching gardeners how to apply liquid worm compost and home-made pest repellent to plants. (Photo: Feed the Children, 2020).

LIVESTOCK FOR LIVELIHOODS EMERGENCY SUPPORT

In Karamoja, Uganda, restrictions imposed to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 significantly impacted the fledgling private sector veterinary service system. Members of women's groups participating in Farm Africa's Livestock for Livelihoods program found themselves unable to participate in typical income-generating and group saving activities due to restrictions on movement and public gatherings. This left the women unable to pay for basic veterinary services needed to keep their goats healthy and productive. At the same time, the Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs) who normally provide these services found themselves unable to reach trading centers to retrieve supplies or villages to visit women and their goats. With emergency support from Irish Aid, Farm Africa equipped 51 CAHWs with personal protection equipment and veterinary supplies (hand spray pumps, detergent, face masks, eye goggles, disposable gloves, washable overalls, gumboots, acaricides, dewormers and wound spray) sourced from program-supported agrovets and their suppliers further up the supply chain. Using this equipment, CAHWs sprayed, dewormed and treated 14,860 goats, ensuring that goats owned by program communities remained healthy and the fledgling private sector system strengthened by the program was able to sustain the crisis. For more information on the initiative, click [here](#).



A Community Animal Health Worker spraying goats in Tapac Sub County, Moroto District, Uganda. (Photo: Farm Africa, 2020).



Photo: The Hunger Project, 2020.

DISCLAIMER

This document is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of the SCALE Award and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

ABOUT SCALE

SCALE (Strengthening Capacity in Agriculture, Livelihoods, and Environment) is an initiative funded by USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) and implemented by Mercy Corps in collaboration with Save the Children. SCALE aims to enhance the impact, sustainability and scalability of BHA-funded agriculture, natural resource management, and off-farm livelihood activities in emergency and development contexts.

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Front cover: Bimala R. Colavito/iDE, 2020.
 Introduction page: Patrick Meinhardt/Mercy Corps, 2020.