



Income-generating activities as a contribution to resilience for food and nutrition security

Chicken rearing, Burkina Faso

Experience from 10 years of implementing the Global Programme on Food and Nutrition Security, Enhanced Resilience

Income-generating activities (IGAs) are small-scale business initiatives often carried out in resource-constrained contexts. They target community members who have previously had limited involvement in the cash economy, with the goal of gradually building their technical and financial skills to enable them to successfully run a small business. Often these community members are organised as a group to facilitate implementation of the activities. Women in particular face barriers to participating in the cash economy, and IGAs can be used to contribute to their empowerment.

The Global Programme on Food and Nutrition Security, Enhanced Resilience implements a multisectoral approach combining various activities in areas such as agriculture, social behaviour change and health, with the **objective** of improving food and nutrition security and resilience and with a focus on women of reproductive age and children under two. In eleven of the twelve countries where the programme is implemented, IGAs have been part of this approach. In addition to their contribution to food and nutrition security and resilience, IGAs have the potential to contribute to women's empowerment, which is a cross-cutting goal in all the programme's work.



Beekeeping training, Yemen

IGAs address three fundamental pillars of **food security**, as defined by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE). First, the income generated enables vulnerable populations to **access** a diverse diet, as they have more money to purchase food and meet their basic needs. Second, IGAs are often linked to agricultural production and food processing and therefore directly improve the **availability** of nutritious food, either through increased production or the processing of agricultural products, which enhances their shelf life. Third, IGAs strengthen **stability** because they improve food availability and access to a healthy diet and increase **resilience** to shocks by diversifying sources of income.

IGAs targeting women can also contribute to **women's empowerment**. Increasing women's personal income enhances their economic independence and bargaining power in the household. This, in turn, has a significant positive effect on family planning, child survival, the education of the children in the household (especially girls) and women's involvement in household decision-making. Lastly, when women participate in IGAs, their household spends more on food, thereby improving the nutrition and health of the whole family.

The IGAs implemented by the programme involve 1) agricultural production, 2) food drying, processing and preservation, 3) establishment and improvement of live-stock and poultry raising and 4) handicrafts and services. The programme supports IGAs by 1) developing capacities, 2) improving access to financial services and 3) providing productive assets and inputs.

IGAs related to **agricultural production** have been implemented in eight out of the twelve countries. In **Madagascar**, for example, community members sell nutritious vegetables, vitamin A-rich orange-fleshed sweet potatoes and legumes to school canteens supported by USAID. Participants in the programme earn additional income and schoolchildren benefit from a nutritious diet of locally produced food. In **Burkina Faso**, nursery operators are being trained to improve different mango tree varieties to increase the availability of the vitamin A-rich fruit from February to September. A total of 3,500 households participated in a campaign to plant 12,000 wild mango trees using locally available mango kernels. Nursery operators have started to improve them in return for a small contribution from households and are also selling improved seedlings in their communities. In **Kenya**, community members sell vegetables, fruit and fruit trees to generate income and provide nutritious food for their communities. To support these IGAs, community members participate in training on business basics and on good agricultural practices and innovative techniques. IGA participants also receive inputs such as seeds and equipment including solar-powered water pumps and threshers.



Soy processing, Togo

Food drying, processing and preservation IGAs have been implemented in eight out of the twelve countries. Making food last longer reduces loss and waste and increases availability throughout the year. One method of preservation is drying. IGA participants dry and sell mangoes in **Malawi**, tomatoes and onions in **Mali** and okra, sweet potatoes and green leafy vegetables in **Burkina Faso**. Processing is another way to make food last longer. In **Togo**, participants process soybeans into oil, tofu and soy milk. These IGAs are supported in a variety of ways. In **Burkina Faso**, for example, a short video on production and processing techniques was produced and shown in different communities. In other countries, community members participate in training on financial literacy (where possible in cooperation with the global project Promotion of agricultural finance for agri-based enterprises in rural areas, e.g. in Zambia) and on preservation and processing techniques. In addition, the programme also provides equipment such as solar dryers, soy mills and warehouses where the food can be processed and stored hygienically.

IGAs related to the **establishment and improvement of live-stock and poultry raising** were supported in eight out of the twelve countries. In **Yemen**, beneficiaries received training and supplies for beekeeping, which resulted in a successful IGA. In **Burkina Faso**, the programme supports chicken rearing by providing solar-powered egg incubators, poultry vaccinations and technical advice. Poultry and eggs are nutritious foods that can be consumed by households and generate some extra income at the same time. In **Cambodia**, community members participate in training on buffalo farming and the processing of buffalo milk, enabling them to make and sell yogurt and mozzarella. In other countries, community members are trained in financial literacy and in raising animals such as goats and poultry.

The programme supports women in producing and selling **handicrafts** and offering **services** in six out of the twelve countries. It provides training in handicrafts, services and financial management so that participants are better equipped to make a profit and later expand their small business. In **Mali**, women produce cotton fabrics, and in Togo, karité nuts are processed into shea butter. In **Madagascar**, women weave mats and baskets to store and dry food and seeds, thereby improving food and nutrition security in communities. They also make soap, which encourages handwashing.

*In eight out of the twelve countries, the programme has improved **access to financial services** to support the implementation of IGAs. In Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Togo and Zambia, community members were supported in establishing saving groups. Participants receive support to invest their savings in IGAs. In addition, access to microfinance institutions is facilitated in Malawi and Togo, and IGAs are supported through revolving funds in Cambodia and Madagascar.*



Buffalo milk production, Cambodia

Results from the regular household surveys implemented by the Global Programme indicate that IGAs have a positive effect on the food and nutrition security of participants. For instance, in Togo, women participating in IGAs have significantly better dietary diversity than those who do not, as measured by the Individual Dietary Diversity Score (IDDS). In Mali, participants who increased their income through

project activities that were explicitly aimed at income generation (such as rice and vegetable processing or petty trading) or that led to increased income as a side-effect (such as vegetable and rice cultivation and milk processing) achieved significantly better outcomes in terms of food security (as measured by the Household Food Insecurity Experience Scale), dietary diversity (as measured by the IDDS) or both.

Sources and further information

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