



CRP 2020 Reviews: Agriculture for Nutrition and Health



Advisory
Services

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Background

A4NH is one of four cross-cutting Global Integrating Programs within the CGIAR portfolio. A4NH focuses on the potential for agriculture to significantly improve nutrition and health.

Purpose

In 2020 the CGIAR CAS Secretariat is conducting independent reviews of the 12 CGIAR Research Programs (CRPs), including this one of A4NH. The reviews will provide information on quality of science and effectiveness in each CRP.

Review Questions & Methods

- To what extent does the CRP deliver quality of science, based on its work from 2017 through 2019?
- What outputs and outcomes have been achieved, and what is the importance of those identified results?
- To what extent is the CRP positioned to be effective in the future, seen from the perspectives of scientists and of the end users of agricultural research (such as policymakers, practitioners, or market actors)?

Sources of data and information for the review include A4NH program documents; interviews with A4NH leaders, donors, and partners; staffing and financial resources; and annual reporting data (2017–2019) related to the CGIAR common results reporting indicators (CRRIs), including outcome impact case reports (OICRs), plus bibliometric studies of the 528 reported peer-reviewed journal articles. Details of analysis methods are provided within the report.

Selected Findings & Conclusions

Quality of Science

The A4NH program has a strong footprint in the scientific literature. A4NH publications appear in high-impact journals across a broad set of disciplines, indicating the subject matter reach of this global integrating program. The vast majority of this published research is relevant to the core program objectives. There are high-impact contributions from all flagships. Most published research demonstrates international collaborations with both advanced research institutions (ARIs) and country partners. A4NH researchers are productive in terms of journal article publication and impact, and diverse in terms of disciplinary affiliation and gender. New external institutional partnerships have broadened the scope of research in A4NH and have brought about new and meaningful program collaborations.

Achievement & Importance of Outcomes

A4NH set out ambitious numeric 2022 targets for adoption of improved varieties and crop production practices, as well as reducing the number of people suffering from micronutrient deficiencies or consuming limited diets. Substantial progress has been made in farm households' adoption of biofortified varieties (and associated reductions in micronutrient deficiencies). By the end of 2019, the number of farm households growing biofortified crops had reached 8.5 million—double the number from three years earlier—and 95,000 households had adopted aflatoxin controls. No progress has been reported on improving dietary diversity. Proposed system-level outcome (SLO) targets will not be achieved (e.g., 20 million farm households), in spite of good progress. However,

A4NH innovations at the delivery stage appear to have further potential for scaling up and out.

A4NH is producing important global public goods with health and nutrition benefits. In many cases, A4NH impact comes through tools or methods applied by next-stage users to improve programs or policies. It is clear that A4NH has succeeded in influencing nutrition and health policies and investments at global, regional, and national levels. The newer portions of the A4NH program in FP1 and FP5 are just getting underway and will need more time to demonstrate impact. There are missed opportunities for sharing lessons across FPs and countries, including in the use of gender tools.

Future Orientation

A4NH has made real progress in bringing a nutrition and health focus to the CGIAR and building out from legacy programs. As a result of the A4NH CRP, the CGIAR is now engaged with and recognized by a wider audience in nutrition and in health. COVID-19 has delayed progress but also brought a new spotlight to A4NH research in One Health and demonstrated why One Health will be an important part of CGIAR research moving forward. The food systems approach in nutrition is gaining momentum worldwide, and A4NH is well positioned to contribute. The creation of a CGIAR Gender Platform is also promising, and the innovative work in the A4NH GEE unit may find a broader audience there. The inclusion of external partners (WUR and LSHTM) in A4NH has now been consolidated and is paying dividends in terms of connectivity, interdisciplinary approach, expertise, and stakeholder engagement. Future research modalities should seek to reduce the economic inefficiencies (increased costs) of a CRP-type structure but maintain the added value from program integration.

Recommendations

Recommendations for A4NH POWB 2021

- Recommendation #1: Carry out a separate strategic analysis of highest-return areas in agriculture for health to direct the research in what is now FP3 and FP5 beyond 2021.
- Recommendation #2: Design a comparative study of delivery models in FP2 and FP3 in order to glean the lessons learned from comparisons of these public-private efforts for cost-effectiveness, sustainability, and scalability.
- Recommendation #3: Prioritize the policy engagement and cross-country learning exercise (on processes and approaches) planned for FP1 for completion.

- Recommendation #4: Carry out a scoping study to consider where and how to apply gender tools in FPs where they have not been previously used but are clearly relevant.
- Recommendation #5: Complete the synthesis report on what has been accomplished in the five focus countries across flagships and through the investment in the focus country approach.

Recommendations at the System Level

- Recommendation #1: Maintain a deliberate focus on nutrition and health in new research modalities.
- Recommendation #2: Develop a plan for the future of the external partnerships supporting the two new programs in FP1 and FP5, including criteria for their continuation.
- Recommendation #3: Align programs, outputs, and milestones with desired impacts by using theories of change more effectively.
- Recommendation #4: Redesign and streamline the programming, monitoring, and reporting systems.
- Recommendation #5: Use an incremental approach to achieving longer-term goals and longer funding cycles to facilitate measuring progress toward SLOs.

Team

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The full A4NH Report is provided at the following link: <https://bit.ly/A4H-CRP-2020>

