



## **Agriculture to Nutrition (ATONU)**

### **Improving Nutrition Outcomes Through Optimized Agricultural Investment**

The odds are favorable that a healthy, well-nourished woman will have a healthy baby. But, at a time when agricultural investments and productivity of food staples are finally increasing in Africa, the number of stunted children in Africa rose from 50.8 million in 2000 to 58.6 million in 2012. Malnutrition undermines the health and limits the opportunities of almost one in four people in Africa. It is estimated that high rates of malnutrition can reduce a country's gross domestic product (GDP) by as much as 12 percent. The disconnect between agriculture and nutrition must end.

Agricultural development initiatives have the potential to improve the nutrition of those most vulnerable to malnutrition. While the link between agriculture and nutrition seems intuitive, it cannot be taken for granted. Direct evidence linking agricultural programs and nutrition outcomes is weak. The intense focus of many agricultural programs on increasing productivity of staple foods can come at the expense of nutritional security. To fulfill their potential for reducing poverty and hunger, agricultural development initiatives must incorporate nutrition-sensitive interventions, and ensure consumption of diverse diets with essential proteins, minerals and vitamins and sufficient caloric intake.

#### **Agriculture to Nutrition Initiative - ATONU**

ATONU is a six-year Agriculture to Nutrition African initiative focusing on how agriculture can deliver positive nutrition outcomes to smallholder farm families through the implementation of robust, evidence-based nutrition-sensitive interventions.

ATONU provides technical assistance to integrate tailored nutrition-sensitive interventions into planned and ongoing agricultural investments through (i) generating tools and frameworks for diagnosing the opportunities to incorporate tailored nutrition-sensitive interventions into agriculture investments; (ii) offering technical assistance for designing, testing, and rigorously monitoring and evaluating the impact of the tailored nutrition-sensitive interventions; (iii) documenting best practices and evidence and adding to the agriculture for nutrition knowledge base; (iv) advocating for evidence-based decision making at all levels; and (v) strengthening African capacity and building a community of practice in agriculture for improved nutrition.

ATONU is implemented by the Food, Agriculture, Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) and its partners. The regional initiative is focusing on three countries - Ethiopia, Nigeria and Tanzania.

ATONU's specific focus is on women of child-bearing age and young children in the first 1,000 days of life from conception to the second birthday, where the high nutritional demands of pregnancy, development and early childhood must largely be met through own farm food production, women's empowerment, income and knowledge on the need to purchase nutrient-dense foods and consumption of a diversified diet.

#### **ATONU PATHWAYS**

ATONU explores five pathways: **Pathway 1: Food production for household consumption**; **Pathway 2: Income-oriented production** for purchase of nutrient dense food; **Pathway 3: Empowerment of women** as agents instrumental to household food security and health outcomes; **Pathway 4: Reduction in real food prices** associated with increased agricultural production and **Pathway 5: Nutrition-Sensitive Agricultural Growth** - through the agriculture sector's contribution to national income and macroeconomic growth.

## ATONU NUTRITION-SENSITIVE INTERVENTION FRAMEWORKS

ATONU has developed four frameworks that (1) identify country readiness for nutrition-sensitive agriculture; (2) tests project suitability for integrating nutrition-sensitive interventions; (3) identifies possible nutrition-sensitive interventions; and (4) guides the design of the impact evaluation of nutrition-sensitive interventions. The four frameworks are available for use by partners for the development of agriculture-nutrition interventions for planned and on-going agricultural programs.

### ATONU Pilot Projects

ATONU, in partnership with the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), has embarked on the development of nutrition-sensitive interventions to complement agricultural investments and help enhance nutrition outcomes in Ethiopia and Tanzania through the African Chicken Genetic Gains (ACGG). The goal of the ACGG Project is to increase access of poor smallholder farmers in sub-Saharan Africa to high-producing but agro-ecologically appropriate chicken genetic products. The ATONU nutrition-sensitive interventions are:

1. **Nutrition and hygiene behavioral communication change** to improve consumption of diverse foods, including chickens and eggs at household level.
2. **Gender equity in chicken value chains** to improve women's participation in joint household production and income expenditure decisions to improve diets.
3. **Household vegetable production** to improve consumption of vegetables and dietary diversity.
4. **Assess the impact of introducing chickens in an agricultural system** as a nutrition-sensitive intervention.

## ATONU WORK PACKAGES

ATONU will accomplish its objectives through four main work packages:

- **Work Package DIMELT** - focuses on Design, Intervention, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning tools. It guides the selection of agriculture investments and determines best-bet nutrition-sensitive interventions through rigorous impact assessment.
- **Work Package POCTA** - provides technical assistance for the implementation and evaluation of context-specific tailored nutrition interventions, and proof of concept.
- **Work Package PACK**- focusses on Policy Advocacy, Communication and Knowledge management and dissemination of ATONU's research evidence.

- **Work Package CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT** - focusses on the Capacity Development of participating

individuals and African institutions, with the objective of building an African ATONU Community of Practice (CoP) in agriculture for improved nutrition.

### **Implementing Partners**

FANRPAN is the lead organization for the ATONU project. FANRPAN works in partnership with consortium members that include Agribusiness Systems International (ASI); Leverhulme Centre for Integrative Research on Agriculture and Health (LCIRAH)/London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) and Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA); various international experts and organizations - Harvard School of Public Health and the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI); and Country Implementing Partners (CIPs) – the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR) and Tanzania Livestock Research Institute (TALIRI) that bring distinct expertise in agriculture and nutrition in areas spanning the four work packages. ATONU partnerships include governments, NGOs, research organizations, community organizations, women's groups, farmers' organizations, agriculture and nutrition specialists, and other key stakeholders such as donors, private foundations and investors to harmonize approaches, develop a tried-and-tested range of tools to facilitate the identification, design, implementation and evaluation of nutrition-sensitive agricultural programs.

### **ATONU TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES**

The ATONU team is available to provide technical assistance to existing and pipeline agricultural programs that would like to deliver positive nutrition outcomes in the three focal countries – Ethiopia, Nigeria and Tanzania. ATONU Technical Assistance services include:

- Testing project suitability for intervention
- Identifying potential nutrition-sensitive interventions
- Designing, testing and evaluating the impact of the nutrition-sensitive interventions.

### **For more on ATONU contact:**

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