

How GAFSP Is Improving Food and Nutrition Security

The Global Agriculture and Food Security Program Nutrition Brief

4.5 million people

4.5 million people have better access to healthy food and diverse diets thanks to GAFSP's investments as of 2023.



A powerful tool

Agriculture remains one of the most powerful tools for boosting economic growth, promoting shared prosperity, ending extreme poverty, and feeding a projected 10 billion people by 2050.

The growing hunger crisis

Despite global commitments to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 2 of zero hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition continued to worsen in 2023 for the fifth consecutive year. An estimated 122 million more people faced hunger in 2023 than in 2019.

As people worldwide recover from the devastating impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic and the consequences of the war in Ukraine, shockwaves continue to affect commodity and energy markets. Food price fluctuations fuel uncertainty, and inequality in some parts of the world is deepening. While progress toward reducing hunger is being made in Asia and Latin America, it is rising in Western Asia, the Caribbean, and Africa.

At the same time, what we eat globally falls short of the minimum standards for healthy and sustainable diets. Combatting malnutrition in all its forms—including undernutrition, inadequate vitamins or minerals, overweight, obesity, and diet-related noncommunicable diseases—remains one of the world's greatest health challenges. Obesity and diet-related noncommunicable diseases have reached epidemic levels.

Improving nutrition presents one of the greatest development opportunities today

Investing in nutrition could yield total economic gains of up to \$5.7 trillion per year by 2030. GAFSP is actively working to combat hunger and extreme poverty. Through its partners and country collaborations, GAFSP is striving for a world where food is nutritious, healthy, sustainable, affordable, and readily available to the poorest and most vulnerable. GAFSP, the only multilateral partnership for food and nutrition security financing, has deployed over USD \$2.5 billion in funds, financial, and technical resources to address poverty and hunger, from farm to table. With over 300 projects in the poorest and most vulnerable countries, the program has reached over 20 million people.

GAFSP's portfolio shows a strong focus on nutrition.

Out of 80 public sector projects reviewed by March 2024, 74% included activities related to nutrition, with \$522.8 million in support.



Mohamad Al-Arief / World Bank

Investing in agriculture means supporting smallholder farmers

A balanced diet with sufficient calories is essential for sustaining an active and healthy lifestyle. Improved nutrition can transform the lives of billions and is crucial for achieving at least 12 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including those related to health, education, employment, gender equality, poverty, and peaceful and inclusive societies.

Moreover, growth in the agriculture sector is two to four times more effective at raising incomes among the poorest compared to other sectors. By investing in agriculture and directing funds to smallholder farmers on the frontlines of crises, GAFSP helps communities address food and nutrition security and build long-term resilience to shocks.

Ensuring that people have the calories and food they need to survive is not enough. GAFSP is committed to rigorous efforts to address hunger and increase the availability of healthy, nutritious food. This includes promoting the cultivation of nutritious crops, supporting livestock production, and encouraging sustainable farming practices that improve soil fertility and ecosystem health.

GAFSP-funded projects provide funding, technology, training, and inputs for smallholder farmers to diversify their production, grow fruits and vegetables for local markets and to improve local school lunches. These interventions have enhanced the availability and consumption of nutritious foods, bolstered community resilience to food shortages, and also strengthened the role of women as the main producers of food crops, nutrition school participants, and school lunch board members.

Lessons learned

Ten years of investing in nutrition taught GAFSP key lessons for reaching nutrition objectives. These include identifying vulnerable groups, monitoring nutrition, educating all family members about nutrition, promoting home health practices, ensuring safe food storage and handling, connecting with school feeding and rehabilitative programs, developing community health and nutrition workers' capacity, advancing biofortified crop varieties, and increasing access to affordable protein sources. We know that simply increasing agricultural production and diversifying crops does not guarantee improved nutritional outcomes.



BHUTAN

The Building Resilient Commercial Smallholder Agriculture Project enhances food security by using the WFP's CLEAR tool to analyze long-term risk and vulnerability, investing in post-harvest facilities, and employing the School Menu Planner PLUS to improve school meal nutrition. Additionally, the project studies dietary diversity among women and creates a Social Behavior Change Plan to improve local nutritional outcomes.



BURKINA FASO

The Sustainable Strengthening of Resilience to Food and Nutritional Insecurity Project not only promotes agricultural resilience and dietary diversity through Farmer Field Schools and nutritious gardens, but also directly targets nutrition through nutrition education campaigns and enhances capacity building of various beneficiaries to advocate for climate resilience, women leadership, and improved nutrition in their communities.



HONDURAS

The Innovation for Rural Competitiveness Project (COMRURAL III) integrates nutrition, gender, and climate efforts by promoting nutrient-rich, biofortified crops and extensive nutrition education. It enhances agricultural resilience with climate-smart practices and community-level vulnerability mapping that incorporates gender inclusion. Nutrition security is also strengthened through improved school feeding program.