The Challenge

Smallholder farmers in Nepal and Bangladesh often do not benefit from established input supply and output marketing systems supported by the public and private sector. This results in low farm productivity and an inability for farmers to lift themselves and their families out of poverty. Additionally, food insecurity and lack of a nutritious diet has a disproportionate impact on women and children, denying children the food and nutrition they needed to reach their physical and cognitive potential.

The Goal

The Agriculture and Nutrition and Extension Project (ANEP) was developed after recognizing that to overcome this challenge, smallholders in Nepal and Bangladesh need access to improved agricultural technologies, markets and to engage in better nutrition behaviors. ANEP’s goal was to sustainably raise agricultural productivity and promote effective market linkages to improve the nutrition of poor rural and urban households in the south of Bangladesh and the Nepal plains, especially women and children. The specific objectives of the project were:

1. To improve the food security and nutrition of smallholders by introducing and facilitating the adoption of productive and environmentally sustainable agricultural technologies which improve beneficiaries’ livelihoods.

2. To create/improve market linkages to improve food and nutritional security of both rural producers and urban consumers.
OUR SOLUTION

ANEPI's solution is rooted in ideas around how we can intervene in markets to support better outcomes for the poor. These ideas have been articulated in the Making Markets Work for the Poor (M4P) approach and other methodologies, which assert that development agencies and other external actors should play a facilitation role in the market system that is temporary and catalytic, seeking to leverage the power of the market to benefit poor and vulnerable groups.

The ANEP consortium adapted the Participatory Market Chain Approach (PMCA) developed by DFID to execute these ideas. The project sought to develop the existing social, financial, and human capital of the local community, and strengthen smallholders' position in the local market by helping them build trust-based relationships with wider market actors. In this, the ANEP staff played the role of facilitators, bringing together local private sector actors (PSAs) with the target smallholder farmers, to extend affordable agricultural technologies which increase their productivity, incomes, and linkages with the market.

The PMCA encourages PSAs to focus on the project beneficiaries as the main source of benefit (as potential consumers) rather than the project itself. This supports the development of trust based relationships between market actors which can sustain beyond the duration of the action. ANEP selected the PMCA because it:

- Is a flexible rather than prescriptive implementation modality which is open to opportunities presented by the market.
- Supports the development of market systems that are sustainable in the long-term.
- Mobilizes stakeholders in subsector thematic groups that provide coordination and joint management of activities.
- Adapts easily across regions and markets because of its generic three phase process.
- Focuses on market demand and trust building.
- Builds project activities upon market actor preferences and requirements.
- Stimulates innovations among thematic groups based upon shared ideas, trust, and incentives.

Main ANEP Activities

1. Form and facilitate access to training for farmer groups on new agricultural technologies
2. Conduct agricultural demonstrations with and through the private sector
3. Develop and train private local service providers in new technologies
4. Develop and strengthen public and private institutions to extend new technologies
5. Develop and improve rural and urban market linkages, including agriculture-nutrition linkages
6. Develop exchange and systems for exchange of Bangladesh and Nepal technologies and organizations
7. Conduct nutrition education, monitoring, and counseling for poor rural and urban households to increase their consumption of nutritious foods

Participatory Market Chain Approach*

PROJECT START

Market Chain Actors

Development Partner(s)

Phase 1

Interest

Leadership

Phase 2

Trust

Facilitation

Phase 3

Collaboration

Backstopping

PROJECT END

The overall objective of the project was to improve the food security and nutrition of the target poor and vulnerable communities. ANEP achieved this: increasing food secure months by more than the target baseline plus one month and decreased the prevalence of underweight children by an average of 14.44% against the baseline.

KEY RESULTS

Impact of the Project**

The sustainability of project results after withdrawal of the development partner. ANEP was found to have established significant sustainable technology transfer and market linkage infrastructure.

Return on Investment of the Project**

Results indicate that there was a significant amount of value created for the funds invested in the ANEP project.

Consortiums can bring significant value and advantage to a program.

The ANEP harnessed the partners' core competencies by focusing on achieving a shared set of goals and measuring progress together. Partners synergised in developing new solutions, rather than deploying existing modalities independently. Regular meaningful interactions by the partner institutions ensured that all aspects of the project built upon the partners' collective expertise and field implementation was fully coordinated.

There are key success factors to consider when building a consortium.

Lessons Learned


** Data collected by an independent consultant and current as of December 2, 2014. Study can be provided upon request.

*** Chart averages the findings for children under 2 and children between the ages of 2 and 5.