

**BOARD FOR INTERNATIONAL FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
177TH PUBLIC MEETING
THE FEED THE FUTURE LEARNING AGENDA**

Meeting Minutes

**National Press Club
529 14th St. NW, 13th Floor | Washington, DC, 20045
Wednesday, September 12, 2018**

BIFAD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mark Keenum, Board Chairman, President, Mississippi State University
Pamela K. Anderson, Director General Emeritus, International Potato Center
Brady Deaton, Chancellor Emeritus, University of Missouri
James Ash, Food and Agribusiness Group Head, Husch Blackwell
Richard Lackey Founder and Chairman, World Food Bank

Speakers:

Joseph Glauber
Robert Bertram
Julie MacCartee
Stephanie Maurissen
Farzana Ramzan

Susan Pologruto
Jami Montgomery
Tatiana Pulido
James Oehmke
Jessica Bagdonis

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Mark Keenum, BIFAD Chair and President, Mississippi State University

Dr. Mark Keenum called the meeting to order, introducing himself and greeting the audience. Dr. Keenum then asked the panelists to introduce themselves. In his opening remarks, Dr. Keenum gave a brief overview of the Board for International Food and Agricultural Development (BIFAD), explaining that BIFAD was created by Title XII of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, to recognize the importance of higher education in addressing agricultural development and to serve as an advisory board to the USAID Administrator. Following Board Member introductions, Dr. Keenum acknowledged the many assets that U.S. universities bring to bear on development challenges and recognized the directors of the 24 Feed the Future Innovation Labs, who joined the meeting in person; they then stood for recognition.

Dr. Keenum then stated that the purpose of this meeting was to roll out, for public comment, the next iteration of the Feed the Future Learning Agenda. He noted that the public comment period would go through September 28th and that BIFAD was excited to have a role in facilitating stakeholder engagement in this process. Participation for those tuning in via livestream was enabled by Twitter or email.

Dr. Keenum then introduced Dr. Joseph Glauber, Senior Research Fellow for the International Food Policy Research

Center in Washington, D.C., to give an update on the BIFAD-commissioned study to analyze the benefits and capabilities leveraged from investments in developing country agriculture.

Update on BIFAD Commissioned Study: Analysis of U.S. Benefits and Capabilities Leveraged from Strategic Investments in Developing Country Agriculture and Food Security

Joseph Glauber, Senior Research Fellow, International Food Policy Research Institute

Dr. Glauber began his remarks by noting that the goal of this study is to quantify how USAID's history of investments in international agricultural development have benefited U.S. producers and consumers. While quantifying these benefits is a challenge, Dr. Glauber noted that a lot of work has been done looking at how investments in research and development have affected productivity, and in turn, GDP, in developing countries, and how that in turn affects food consumption and trade patterns. The BIFAD-commissioned study augments a lot of this existing research with case studies. Particularly, case studies from the Feed the Future Innovation Labs tell rich stories about how development aid can help the United States in terms of strengthening resilience, food security, international security, and many other angles. Dr. Glauber noted that a conceptual paper and some case studies will be complete in time for World Food Day on October 16, and the full study will be complete by the end of the first quarter of 2019.

Dr. Glauber referred to the August 8th BIFAD meeting, where many impactful comments were made with expert input. Since that meeting, Dr. Glauber noted that he has received many emails with valuable case studies, and he invited further interaction and collaboration as they continue the study. He noted that in an age where development budgets are tightening, this study on the impacts of investment in agricultural development is extremely important. During the question and comment period, Paul Miller from Lutheran World Relief asked for a few examples of how the study measures impact. Dr. Glauber mentioned that there is a large body of existing research on investments in research and development, and how they have affected productivity in the agricultural sector. The impact of these investments can start to be quantified in terms of GDP growth and food demands. However, he noted that it is harder to quantify the impact of infrastructure benefits, such as transportation. For example, reducing transportation costs in African countries can make the cost of trade in those countries go down, which helps increase the household income of both producers and consumers, which contributes to rising GDP. While transportation investments clearly have an impact, it is difficult to precisely quantify. Dr. Glauber noted that an important part of this report will be to tell a compelling story about how benefits from USAID agricultural efforts make their way back to producers and consumers in the United States.

Tim Dalton of Kansas State University asked approximately how many case studies they had received and whether most of them fell within grey literature or peer-reviewed literature. Dr. Glauber acknowledged that his team is still combing through the material since they just started in August and that they need more case studies, as the research is ongoing. Much of what they have received thus far has been grey literature. Cynthia Donovan then asked how the report will treat capacity building, noting the importance of American agricultural for international development. Dr. Glauber highlighted the importance of trying to quantify capacity building impacts, noting that this is one of the important topics the report will focus on. Andrei Sinioukov of Overseas Strategic Consulting asked if the report will look at the impact agricultural investments have on health outcomes, particularly nutrition, anemia, and stunting. Dr. Glauber replied that one of the biggest impacts that agricultural investments have on health is to increase caloric consumption for undernourished populations. The impact this has on health, and in turn on productivity and human capital, is difficult to measure, but there is published research that focuses on this question. Anita Champion of Connexus Corporation said her firm organizes annual conferences, such as the USAID-supported "Cracking the Nut"

conference, which focused last year on scaling up agriculture technologies. She mentioned that some of the case studies that came out of that conference could be useful to the report, and offered to send them to Dr. Glauber.

Dr. Keenum then introduced Dr. Robert Bertram, Chief Scientist at USAID's Bureau for Food Security, for the next session.

Introduction & Purpose of the Feed the Future Learning Agenda

Robert Bertram, Chief Scientist, Bureau for Food Security, USAID

Dr. Bertram began his remarks by noting that the 2016 Global Food Security Act mandates the development of a Learning Agenda so that findings can be shared with other global actors. He noted that the challenge in the Learning Agenda is finding the right balance between intellectual curiosity and useful outcomes – there is no perfect understanding of that trade-off, but he welcomed attendee input to help balance that out in the Agenda. The current Agenda builds on the last Feed the Future 1.0 Learning Agenda developed in 2012, with the goal to generate meaningful information, synthesize it, and then communicate it.

Dr. Bertram stated that the first Learning Agenda had many assessments and included monitoring of work, which fed into the Global Food Security Strategy (GFSS), as mandated. He highlighted the first Agenda's results framework: inclusive economic growth was measured by reductions in extreme poverty; resilience was measured by reduction in child wasting; and nutrition was measured by reductions in child stunting. The new Learning Agenda will reflect newer emphases that were not present in the first round of Feed the Future. Dr. Bertram flagged the idea that there is an inherent connection between the research strategy developed for the Global Food Security Act and the Learning Agenda, as they need to inform one another. He also noted that this is a systemic approach adopted across the government, as there is a culture of accountability in the government, so monitoring and evaluation is emphasized as part of the Learning Agenda.

Dr. Bertram listed the Learning Agenda Areas, all of which will be discussed later in the session.

- Nutrition
- Water and WASH
- Gender and Women's Empowerment
- Youth
- Risk and Resilience
- Market Systems
- Scaling Technologies and practices
- Policy systems

Dr. Bertram concluded by noting that this session will provide an opportunity to get feedback on the Learning Agenda from BIFAD members, the public, and all attendees, to ensure the determined approach is as effective as possible.

Framing the Learning Agenda

Nutrition Learning Agenda

Julie MacCartee, Knowledge Management & Learning Advisor, Bureau for Food Security, USAID

Dr. Keenum then introduced the first of the Feed the Future (FTF) Agenda speakers: Julie MacCartee, a Knowledge Management and Learning Advisor for the Bureau for Food Security, USAID, who facilitates strategic knowledge sharing and organizational learning to improve the outcomes of global food security and nutrition programs; and Stephanie Maurissen, a Senior Project Design Fellow and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Advisor for the Bureau for Food Security, who is responsible for providing WASH-related technical expertise and assistance to USAID missions that have Feed the Future funds.

Ms. MacCartee presented on the Nutrition Learning Agenda first, stating that they hope to consolidate and focus the nutrition-related FTF learning with group collaboration, as nutrition is fundamental to global health, economic growth, community and household resilience, education, and women's empowerment. She made the important point that chronically hungry people cannot work, grow, and learn to their full potential, so nutrition is vitally important to the Global Food Security Strategy. Ms. MacCartee noted that over a quarter of the world's children under the age of five suffer from undernutrition. Progress can be seen, however, in the decrease of stunted children from 165 million in 2012 to 151 million in 2017. She then showed a FTF progress snapshot, which showed that the average pace of stunting reduction has been 2.5 times higher annually in FTF-focused countries than before the initiative. Despite this progress, world hunger on the whole has increased for the past three years. Thus, chronic food deprivation is a complex issue that USAID and FTF will be combatting for some time.

Ms. MacCartee presented the theory of change for the Nutrition Learning Agenda, which focuses on increasing the number of well-nourished individuals at community and population levels through programs that address 1) access, availability, and utilization of nutritious and safe diets year-round; 2) direct, nutrition-specific interventions and services; 3) more hygienic household and community environments; and 4) women's empowerment. She stated that there is evidence linking water and hygiene with nutrition and health, as clean water and good hygiene lead to decreased parasites and infections, which leads to better health.

Her questions for the Learning Agenda were listed as follows:

1. How can the U.S. government most effectively reduce under nutrition and support a well-nourished population by addressing the determinants of stunting, wasting, and serious micronutrient deficiencies?
2. What are the most efficient ways to identify the determinants of stunting in the contexts where they work?
3. Which nutrition-sensitive interventions, especially in the market systems and value chains, most effectively increase access, availability, and utilization of nutritious and safe diets year-round? (Here, she asserted that access or proximity to markets affects food security and nutrition.)
4. What are the best ways to identify, deliver, and scale up proven nutrition-sensitive interventions, through both public and private sector channels? (Here, she mentioned that this question tries to get at the nuts and bolts of how USAID implements its programs.)

She concluded by saying the questions were complementary to one another and that the Nutrition Learning Agenda team was excited to work with implementation partners to answer these questions.

Water & WASH Learning Agenda

Stephanie Maurissen, Senior Project Design Fellow - Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Advisor, Bureau for Food Security, USAID

Stephanie Maurissen then spoke about the importance of water security to nutrition, noting that water availability, quality, access, and stability affects the utilization, stability, access, and availability of food. She noted that she is excited to see the elevation of WASH under the Global Food Security Strategy. She then listed how each of the three Global Food Security Strategy objectives relate to water:

1. Objective 1: Inclusive and sustainable agricultural- led economic growth -- water is the input for agriculture, along with seed and fertilizers
2. Objective 2: Strengthened resilience among people and systems -- water resources can become conflict issues and may impact food security and resilience. Water is a single resource, but performs multiple functions, so prioritization and coordination between the different uses will become more and more important to resilience efforts; and,
3. Objective 3: A well-nourished population, especially among women and children -- improved access to clean water and food, and overall hygiene, are critical to improving nutritional status.

Ms. Maurissen then proposed a three-part theory of change: first, implement sound agriculture water management technology and practices, so that countries can achieve sustainable agricultural productivity, improved resilience, and enhanced nutrition outcomes. Second, promote collaboration and coordination between water stakeholders, build capacity to manage conflict, and promote multiple-use systems where appropriate, so communities can manage their water resources more effectively. Third, target water sanitation and hygiene, and animal husbandry and horticulture interventions to improve access and behavior, which would improve health and nutrition outcomes.

She then asked the question, “How can agriculture water management, and water supply, sanitation, and hygiene technologies and practices be best leveraged to achieve sustainable growth, resilience, and nutritional outcomes?” Finally, she listed four sub-questions, asking about ways to increase agriculture productivity and improve resilience; key lessons that ensure successful adoption of water management technologies; what conditions support multiple-use water systems and collaboration between water users; and what contexts and conditions promote different WASH interventions.

Discussion

Dr. Keenum called on the Board to make any comments and ask questions first, followed by public comment.

- Dr. Pamela Anderson commented on the importance of the whole session, stating that all of the important pieces—agriculture-led growth, nutrition, resilience, water-- are in place, which means that a food security paradigm can finally be operationalized. Her overarching concern is the timeframe—can this be made operational and progress be made in a timely fashion? Can we really get smarter about our investments and drive forward faster? She then commented on the need to synthesize what was learned in Phase One of the Learning Agenda, as it would strengthen the new Agenda to be more specific. How is this Agenda building upon what was learned about nutrition work in Phase One? She noted that the interlinkages that have been highlighted are important, but asked, “What does cross learning look like?”
- Ms. MacCartee agreed and said they intend to use Phase One in an intentional way to inform the new Agenda.
- Ms. Maurissen reiterated that they are excited to have Water and WASH as its own focus area so that there

can be intentional cross learning.

- Brady Deaton reiterated the timeline concern of the study, but also said he remains hopeful because the world has woken up to the power of nutrition. He noted that the principles that they delineated need to be reinforced continually. He also noted that partnerships in public health and the medical community could be extremely useful.
- Dr. Keenum stated that in a lot of the FTF countries, conflict is an issue and asked how conflict would be managed.
- Ms. Maurissen agreed that water can be a conflict issue, but also noted that water coordination is a powerful tool in bringing people together. When communities coordinate around water access, they often learn that they can gather around other issues and work out other conflicts in peaceful ways. She acknowledged that water was just one aspect of conflict, but that it is important to understand how to use water to bring people together.
- Russ Webster from Grow to Market then commented from the audience, stating that market systems are important, but market actors are more important. He asserted that the way forward must include incentivizing better nutrition from market actors. For instance, he works on a program that incentivizes market actors to introduce food safety into their business models. He mentioned that it will be important to incentivize young entrepreneurs who have innovative attitudes to adopt new practices and drive the markets forward.
- Shibani Ghosh from the Tufts University Nutrition Innovation Lab agreed that the agriculture to health linkage is a key thing they keep seeing in their research, so she was excited to see this highlighted in the Learning Agenda.
- Larry Schaffer with Schaffer Global Management spoke about wanting to quantify investments and results. Adding to the discussion of water conflict, he stated that, even locally, in California, there is fighting over water. He said addressing water conflict will require a change in mentality of agriculture is done, as most agricultural practices are currently not sustainable. He also noted that in terms of nutrition, nutrition education is extremely important.
- Ms. MacCartee agreed and said they hope to learn these things from the study.
- Nadine Sahyoun from the University of Maryland said that it is important to address food security at all stages of the life cycle, specifically noting that more emphasis needs to be placed on older adults.
- Gbola Adesogan of the Livestock Systems Innovation Lab at University of Florida spoke about including livestock adequately in the Learning Agenda. Recent analysis from their Lab showed the relationship between meat consumption and stunting across the world, and countries with high levels of stunting had little meat consumption.
- The speakers agreed, and that closed the discussion session.

Gender & Women's Empowerment Learning Agenda

Farzana Ramzan, Monitoring, Evaluation, & Learning Advisor, Bureau for Food Security, USAID

Dr. Keenum introduced the next two speakers, beginning with Farzana Ramzan, who is a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Advisor for the Bureau for Food Security who provides technical assistance to USAID missions in Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Zambia. She manages the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index portfolio, and leads the gender metrics and analysis portfolio on her team. He introduced the second speaker as Susan Pologruto, a Senior Democracy Advisor with the Bureau for Food Security, who has worked at USAID for nearly 15 years, promoting local solutions and strengthening civil society engagement.

Farzana Ramzan presented her remarks first, saying FTF has made significant investments on technology and training to promote more inclusive programming, as well as in obtaining gender-disaggregated data. In the Learning Agenda, her team set out to see how they have been doing, how to improve, and to set a path moving forward. Some guiding principles they are using as they develop the Learning Agenda are, “What have we learned? What do we need to understand? What can we answer?”

Answering the question, “What have we learned?” Ms. Ramzan stated that they know increasing the application of agriculture technology and improved practices, especially among women, is necessary for agricultural-led growth. Doing so helps increase women’s productivity and earnings, promote women’s empowerment, and promote sustainable and resilient agricultural systems. Ms. Ramzan noted that FTF training has been reaching more and more farmers, and reaching women and men in fairly equal numbers. Although data shows that improved technology and practices are being applied, the gender gap in their application still persists. Some questions drawn out of this for the Learning Agenda include:

1. What contributes to the gender gap in application of improved agricultural technology and practice, and what are the best approaches to improve women’s application of these practices?
2. What are some of the gendered impacts of applying different agricultural practices?
3. What is the influence on nutrition outcomes and resilience capacities?
4. What underlying factors contribute to changes in women’s empowerment overtime?
5. How have changes in women’s empowerment translated into food security and nutrition outcomes?

She stated that evidence from these questions would be used to shape what technologies are developed and promoted, focusing on high-impact levers to increase female empowerment in agriculture. These questions are steps to shape agricultural technology to be more inclusive and effective. She concluded by stressing the importance of closing the gender gap and ensuring the impacts of technology applications are beneficial for everyone.

Youth Learning Agenda

Susan Pologruto, Senior Democracy Advisor, Bureau for Food Security, USAID

Susan Pologruto took the podium to give her remarks, beginning by stating that engaging civil society and youth in agricultural development early and often is extremely important. She stated that research on how well FTF activities have engaged youth is limited since data has until this point not been disaggregated by age. Starting next year, FTF will track age-disaggregated data. Youth, she asserted, play a critical role in helping to sustainably reduce global hunger and malnutrition. Most young people live in rural areas and will work within agriculture food systems, but the formal labor market only holds about 25 percent of jobs. Thus, it is necessary to figure out how to engage youth in a productive way when jobs are limited.

Ms. Pologruto then presented her theory of change. First, engaging youth in FTF activities, helping them develop skills and networks, access resources, and overcome certain barriers will help them be better prepared to productively engage in, and earn livelihoods from, diverse areas of agricultural-food systems as they transition to economic independence, which will positively contribute to Global Food Security Strategy outcomes of improved agriculture-led economic growth, resilience, and better nutrition. Second, identifying new opportunities that attract or facilitate increased capital investment, on or off the farm, will help make job opportunities in which youth are

especially suited more plentiful, leading to progress in achieving GFSS outcomes through job creation.

She continued that it is important to focus not only on technology skills and training, but also on non-cognitive skills like time management and self control. She asked, “How can we improve the enabling environment of businesses? How can we help youth be more entrepreneurial?”

She then presented the Learning Agenda questions as follows:

1. Are there youth-specific opportunities or constraints to engaging in agriculture-food systems, and do those differ by gender, socio-cultural and enabling environment factors?
2. What programmatic approaches work to overcome youth-specific constraints so that youth can productively participate in agriculture-food systems? If FTF programs succeed, are youth proportionally sharing that success?
3. Which areas of agriculture-food systems are best suited to engage youth, and how can FTF support youth to get involved?
4. How can FTF collaborate with other key actors (i.e. health education, democracy and governance, private sector, etc.) to best support and empower youth?

Discussion

Dr. Keenum called on the BIFAD Board to pose questions first:

- Richard Lackey agreed that investing in youth is very important, and noted that educating youth requires they have a system of support as well. He stressed that youth-development projects should be systems-based, vertical and integrated with the value chain, as much as possible.
- Dr. Anderson asked a question about the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) as an instrument, suggesting the Learning Agenda speak to the instrument itself and how it has been refined. She expressed a concern that data on girls may fall between cracks, since “age-specific” data doesn't mean they'll get data on girls. She suggested they distinguish between data on women and girls, or parse that out in the youth section of the Agenda, or both.
- Ms. Ramzan stated that they have developed a project-level WEAI on challenges and areas of improvement and have learned a lot from it. Dr. Anderson encouraged them to write about it. Ms. Ramzan agreed that 'girls' have been a challenge. She noted that the next iteration of data will not be layered; age and sex will both be tracked, but not together. There are budget constraints that inhibit them from collecting that information, so they're trying to manage that, but they do understand there are gaps in the data they are collecting. She stated there is a general focus on female empowerment and they'll rely on partners to help them navigate that.
- Ms. Pologruto also responded, saying that the question of 'girls' will be taken seriously and considered. She gave an example of one country, Uganda, that created an entire Mission Strategy around the 14-year-old girl. For every country intervention they consider, they will ask, “How does this help the 14-year-old girl?” She suggested that this is a country that USAID can learn from. For reporting purposes, though, she asserted that specifically reporting on the 14-year-old girl, for example, would probably not be acceptable, but she agreed it's a creative approach that enables the country to see indirect links between intervention impacts.

Dr. Keenum then called on the public to pose questions:

- Eliza Chard from Making Cents International said she was surprised that there was no mention of positive youth development. She said her organization found that a holistic approach to positive youth development is really helpful to engaging youth. She mentioned a guide created by Youth Power and the Bureau for Food Security on youth inclusive agriculture as a helpful resource.
- James Ash noted that the group's last three questions were very specific and he encouraged others to be as specific.
- Jan Middendorf from the Kansas State University Innovation Lab on Sustainable Intensification suggested looking at the relationship between Peace Corps volunteers, local research agencies, and innovation labs, as they involve youth engagement at all levels. She mentioned one Senegalese women whose research, for example, informs work going on with the Peace Corps, and she has a daughter who is involved in the work as well. She encouraged the speakers to think about how to capitalize on these kinds of case studies.
- Hillary Egna from the Oregon State University Aquaculture Innovation Lab noted that in many countries, youth are leaving rural areas for the cities, and that youth who remain in rural areas work on the farms of others as day laborers. She asked, how will they make urban connections with FTF when most of the youth who will advance and make money are going to be urban actors, not out on the farm? She then posed an ethical question: are we trying to keep people on the farms when they naturally want to gravitate to cities?
- Ms. Pologruto noted that this is a common question her office contemplates. They realize many young people want to go to cities for economic opportunities, but their goal is to show that there are economic opportunities both on and off the farm. She provided an example that veterinarians in many countries have vet assistants, so one program called "Youth on Wheels" trains youth to drive motorbikes to check on animals for vets. This approach is basically extension, but it engages youth in a more "attractive way" because they are on motorbikes. She said mobile phones and apps are also useful to engage youth and asked, "Where along the value chain can we engage youth?" She concluded by saying youth do not necessarily have to work the land, there are other ways to engage youth in agriculture.
- Mywish Maredia from Michigan State University's Legume Systems Research Innovation Lab stepped up to ask another question: are they thinking of creating an index similar to the WEAI for youth empowerment? She suggested that, to elevate youth, they need to think about collecting rigorous data.
- Ms. Pologruto asserted that it is too early to create an index of this sort yet, but they have contracted with Making Cents International, which has developed a two-part guide for them on how to engage youth. That is their first step, and they may or may not create an index. She further commented that relying solely on quantitative measures like indexes does not always allow a full picture of nuances with regard to social hierarchy, and encouraged systems approaches that consider both quantitative and qualitative measures.

The group then takes a short break.

Framing the Learning Agenda (Continued)

Risk & Resilience Learning Agenda

Jami Montgomery, Resilience Advisor, Center for Resilience, USAID

Dr. Keenum then introduced the next two panelists, starting with Jami Montgomery, a Resilience Advisor with USAID's Center for Resilience, who focuses on integrating resilience into food security and related development programming. He then introduced Tatiana Pulido, the Market Systems Management Lead for the Bureau for Food Security, who developed the guidance on applying system measurement tools to the U.S. Government's Feed the Future initiative and co-authored guidelines for monitoring, evaluation, and learning in market systems development.

Ms. Montgomery gave her remarks first, beginning by defining "resilience" as the ability of people, households, communities, countries, and systems to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses in an effective manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth, without compromising their future wellbeing. She said resilience is elevated in the Learning Agenda, and it protects our investments in the face of shocks, helping partners and beneficiaries to manage risk and adapt to changing conditions. Ms. Montgomery stated the theory of change that, if resilience capacities are successfully strengthened and maintained at the individual, household, community, national, and systems levels, then people will be able to better protect critical assets; food security will be improved and sustained; and populations will sustainably escape poverty and vulnerability, even in the face of recurrent shocks and stresses.

She mentioned that there are certain sources of resilience and resilience capacities that cut across contexts. For instance, resilient livelihoods that enable households to diversify and manage risks are important. Markets that create and sustain opportunities and systems for managing natural resources and disaster risk are also important to developing resilience. She also noted that resilient people are empowered and have the aspiration to achieve and maintain food security and pursue livelihoods.

The five questions for the Learning Agenda were listed as follows:

1. What sources of resilience explain why some households and communities that are subject to recurrent shocks and stresses are able to manage these events without compromising current and future wellbeing, while others are not? How can these sources of resilience be strengthened? Here, she stated that they know some of the sources of resilience that are important, but they need to explore how to strengthen and build upon those.
2. What roles do inclusive, agriculture-led growth and agriculture value chain development play in strengthening the resilience of households, communities, and market systems?
3. What individual, household, community, and systems-level resilience capacities are important for enabling poverty escapes and what risks pose the greatest threats to sustaining these escapes over time? How can these capacities be strengthened? She noted that they want to maintain development achievements and outcomes.
4. How is resilience strengthened, and food security gains best achieved, in areas of protracted conflict and/or subject to violent extremist threats?
5. What contribution does improved resilience and food security make to addressing some of the underlying causes of conflict, including conflict related to violent extremism?

Market Systems Learning Agenda

Tatiana Pulido, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Advisor, Bureau for Food Security, USAID

Dr. Pulido opened by saying it is encouraging that everyone seems to be in agreement about the importance of market systems and having a systemic approach. She stated that improving the effectiveness of the FTF initiative through the Learning Agenda is their overall goal. Central to achieving poverty reduction through agriculture-led growth is the existence of a resilient, competitive, and inclusive market. The market system lays the foundation for achieving resilience and nutrition by delivering availability of goods and services to all. She shared the theory of change for the Market Systems Learning Agenda, which is that, through a facilitative approach, agriculture and food market systems projects and activities aim to address the underlying causes of poor market performance that matter to people living in poverty in order to create lasting impact through systemic change, leading to inclusive, resilient economic growth and ultimately sustainable poverty reduction and food security. She then listed their three principal questions as follows:

1. What monitoring methods, tools, and indicators best capture market systems changes; are cost effective; and work well in developing country operating environments? How do you measure resilience? How do they calculate that?
2. How can donors, governments, and other public sector actors most effectively incentivize private sector investments in ways that reduce poverty, hunger, and malnutrition?
3. How does market system development maximize indirect impacts? What interventions have had positive effects? What are the cross market functions that strengthen systems?

She concluded by saying that she hopes to center learning around these questions over the next five years.

Discussion

Dr. Keenum called on the BIFAD Board to pose questions first, followed by audience questions:

- Dr. Deaton commented that these were demanding questions in terms of data systems, but he was very excited about the potential. He noted that there are vast stores of data available, like educational data in Africa available from African institutions, that could help give insight into questions such as youth and resilience. While the data may not be perfect, it could be a good starting place.
- Dr. Anderson said the area she's most concerned about is this particular area, market systems but the learning focus on productivity has fallen off the Learning Agenda. She said the assumption is that focusing on market systems and market demand will increase productivity, but noted that there is a persistent yield gap, so even when there are functioning markets, they often can't deliver because of lags in productivity. She wanted the group to address productivity or explain why they know enough about productivity not to address it in this Agenda.
- Dr. Keenum asked about the effects of resilience due to violent extremism, asking what approach they will pursue in that regard.
- Ms. Montgomery said they would look at the question of violent extremism and its effects on resilience in two ways: first, how can FTF strengthen resilience and meet poverty reduction and nutrition objectives in conflict contexts? Second, how can FTF expand learning around what the relationship is between food and security, and how they may contribute to the environment where violent extremism and conflict may arise. She said they have preliminary studies on this, where extremist groups have used business loans to engage youth and others that may be of interest to them. She wanted to understand this phenomenon better and see how they might frame programming around this.

- Jagger Harvey from Kansas State University asked, “How are the learning findings going to be synthesized, so USAID can collectively better target its work and enable working together across programs? For instance Food for Peace uses the Famine Early Warning Systems”
- Ms. Montgomery said they are trying to create a robust Learning Agenda to try and meet those needs and communicate their findings, but there has been no discussion around setting up similar early warning systems. She stated that they want to make sure they’re framing learning around supporting country-led processes to better manage their own risks and strengthen their resilience.
- Douglas Steinberg from NCBA CLUSA International spoke about the idea that more income translates to better nutrition, and better value chains lead to better nutrition, but he asserted that that is not always true unless nutrition is an intentional outcome. Outside of USAID, he said, there are a lot of other agencies that should be involved in nutrition programming—particularly USDA-- that do not explicitly have it as a mandate.
- Vara Prasad from the Kansas State University Sustainable Intensification Innovation Lab asked how to measure resilience since it means different things to different people.
- Ms. Montgomery said they are aware of that issue and the Center for Resilience has spent many years focusing on this question. She acknowledged they do not know everything, but they do have an expert who has been spearheading the effort to find measurements of resilience, trying to capture what is most important to measure and how to measure strength.
- Larry Schaffer suggested they that they do a vulnerability assessment and threat assessment to understand risks that are natural versus risks that are manmade. Specifically in extremist environments, it is important to understand complexities of the environment and manmade threats.
- Paul Miller said that climate change affects nutrition and all other aspects of health, so he asked why it was not included in the learning agenda. He also noted that they mentioned the humanitarian crisis, but not the science of implementing humanitarian and resilience work.
- Ms. Montgomery clarified that shocks and stresses included a variety of things, even if not specifically listed, so climate change is included. However, she said it is important to realize that household-level shocks, like illness or someone’s death, can be just as impactful to a family, or more so, than large shocks such as a drought. In reference to the second question, she noted that they are explicitly taking a developmental focus on these crises and no longer viewing shocks as anomalies, recognizing the need to plan for risks in the long term.
- Pete Goldsmith from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Soybean Innovation Lab followed on to Dr. Anderson’s point on productivity, noting that until markets stabilize with productive farms and a consistent supply, there will not be high economic multipliers. He concluded that they need productivity to increase and they need inbound material, so they can invest and hire.
- Dr. Pulido answered that farmers need an incentive structure to increase yields and need to determine how they can access resources feasibly to increase yields. She stated that although this theme does not explicitly talk about productivity, productivity is understood as part of the market systems outcomes they want to achieve. She acknowledged that they could be more explicit around increasing productivity.
- Dr. Anderson asked, “do we understand the barriers to closing that yield gap?” If so, that point should be explicit; if not, they need to make that question a part of the Learning Agenda.
- Pete Goldsmith followed on to ask, “Are the signals in the commodity space so bad that farmers don’t have the right incentives?” He argued no. He reiterated that productivity and farmers’ ability to hit the mark is the issue. He suggested they also address market signals, but basic access to good input needs to be addressed as a priority.
- Robert Bertram noted that the Market Systems concept came out of understanding the efficiencies and

synergies that could come from the integration of value chains, which connect production to market. He agreed that it would be important to continue considering production and addressing the yield gap. He said market efficiency is increasing due to information flow in the digital age and improved infrastructure, but they need to think about how they integrate the two concepts.

- An unidentified man noted that the international agriculture research budget is under threat, so the productivity issue is an important linkage back to that. Research helps drive gains in productivity.

Policy Systems Learning Agenda

James Oehmke, Senior Food Security & Nutrition Advisor, Bureau for Food Security, USAID

Dr. Keenum then introduced the next two speakers: first James Oehmke, a Senior Food Security and Nutrition Advisor for the Bureau for Food Security, who is the Bureau point of contact for mutual accountability, agricultural and rural transformation, nutrition policy, and gender policy. Secondly, Dr. Keenum introduced Jessica Bagdonis, a Human and Institutional Capacity Development Advisor for the Bureau for Food Security, who has worked across higher education global engagement, agricultural extension, and international development for more than 15 years.

Dr. James Oehmke took the podium to give his remarks, saying better policy systems help people create better lives, lower poverty, improve food security, improve water security, improve resilience, and improve nutritional outcomes, leading to self reliance. He then looked at the agricultural growth rate, showing that countries who are leaders in agricultural policy are those that fully implemented the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) early on. The growth rate shows that countries that have adopted CAADP have seen a decrease in their need for emergency food aid.

Dr. Oehmke's presented the theory of change, which is that effectively supporting partner countries in the development of a prioritized policy agenda (i.e. what should countries do to move their agriculture and food systems forward), an institutional architecture (i.e. structures where citizens engage in policy and implementation), and mutual accountability (i.e. all stakeholders need to be involved and accountable for the solution), will lead to measurable contributions to the Bureau and Feed the Future goals. His questions for the agenda were, therefore, as follows:

1. Is the theory of change correct?
2. What are the most promising policies?
3. How do we policy-program effectively?
4. How do we measure progress? (i.e. showing better institutional programs, etc.)

He stated that there is an application of answers to these questions at all levels. One platform for getting these answers, for example, was shown in the African Union's 2014 Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Transformation and Growth. In January 2018, 47 of 55 African countries produced reports that reported on their progress. Country reports included areas of strength, weakness, and how to solve those weaknesses. Each head of state received copies of all reports. Botswana was the leader in strengths. Tanzania was the leader in weaknesses. Dr. Oehmke showed that they could leverage this data at the country level to improve policy. He noted that many recommendations to address weaknesses are not policy related, but they are related to other areas that are useful. He concluded that the work that Innovation Labs are doing can inform recommendations that other countries use to move forward through this platform.

Scaling Technologies & Practices Learning Agenda

Jessica Bagdonis, Human & Institutional Capacity Development Advisor, Bureau for Food Security, USAID

Dr. Bagdonis began by acknowledging that “scaling” can mean different things to different people, so for this presentation, she noted the definition of “scaling” is the process of sustainably increasing the adoption of a credible technology/practice, or package of those, with the quality to retain or improve the demonstrated positive impact of that technology/practice and achieve widespread use by stakeholders. She noted examples where widespread adoption of a technology/practice could increase agricultural productivity, such as the widespread adoption of improved genetics for seeds or livestock breeds. She also mentioned that widespread adoption of practices such as hand washing could support nutrition achievements.

She said the theory of change is: if we assess scalability or the potential of an improved technology/practice to be taken up, and we understand and address stakeholder incentives, constraints, and capacities, and we create an enabling environment, and we demonstrate the business value, and adequate financing is available, then we will achieve widespread adoption of technologies and practices. However, getting all of these to happen is a difficult problem. The Learning Agenda, therefore, is about seeking data on these elements that can enable an understanding of generalizable patterns across contexts.

Dr. Bagdonis then listed the Agenda questions:

1. What implementation models and interventions best support achieving widespread adoption of improved technologies/practices? What are the roles of USG agencies and their partners in promoting widespread adoption of improved technologies and/or practices? What potential actions should they avoid?
2. What are the best methods for monitoring this scaling? What indicators and metrics are most important for monitoring this performance? How do they develop an estimate of the temporal and spatial pattern of diffusion of an improved technology/practice?
3. And in the interest of accelerating uptake by delivery pathways, what are the most effective approaches for increasing the rate of uptake? How should such findings be integrated into research plans by FTF partners?

Discussion

Dr. Keenum called on the BIFAD Board to pose questions first, followed by audience questions:

- Dr. Deaton asked, what were the correlates with USAID investments and investments in the agriculture sector? Is there a correlate with education generally?
- Dr. Oehmke said they haven't looked at education correlates, but they will in time. Very few countries scored exceptionally on their own investment commitment to the agricultural sector. Rwanda scored the highest on their commitment. He said many heads of state were upset that they had not scored well and they have seen some initial positive developments resulting from disappointment in the low scores.
- Dr. Anderson said they did not talk about the quality of national data, so she asked for more detail on that.
- Dr. Oehmke agreed that data quality would be an important investment moving forward. He deferred to Dr. Bertram to talk about who would manage data improvement, but he noted that the African Union has held a series of learning activities about successes and failures, focusing heavily on data quality and data systems. He noted that there is a roll-out plan to ask countries to improve data over the next year.
- Richard Lackey made a comment related to scaling, saying that many farmers do not look at the long term--if there is no demand for a product that season, farmers will not grow it next season, as they want

immediate payback. He noted the importance of making sure all stakeholders are in play to walk the system forward, and knowing the entire economic system to ensure the value chain is intact.

- Dr. Bagdonis said they do realize the whole system needs to be included and tried to reflect that in their Theory of Change. They are also thinking about how to work together across programming, so they can get things done at the right time and shorten the time for uptake.

Public Comment Period

Moderator: Mark Keenum, Mississippi State, BIFAD

- Dr. Keenum then transitioned to the public comment period and noted that the comment period would remain open through September 28th.
- John Lamb, an independent Agribusiness consultant, spoke about being concerned about proportionality, as there is a tendency to forget the industrial aspect of food. He said there is still a supply orientation focus in USAID, and is concerned that so few of USAID's research and development efforts target post-Farm Gate activities. He noted there is a missing middle of market intermediaries that needs more attention as well, as there was almost no mention of any subsector or commodities. He suggested that the Learning Agenda include explicitly in each category what is different from one major subsector to another; why it matters; and how that can be applied to different countries.
- Richard Lackey responded that post-Farm Gate issues and others are important, but he cautioned that they could artificially influence certain markets if they are not careful in their research. He noted that they need to spend more money in university settings to see what impacts those actions could have.
- Anita Campion noted that access to financing is a huge impediment to scaling up, as smallholders need funding to take up new technology.
- Beth Mitcham from the Horticulture Innovation Lab noted that nutritious food often tends to be more perishable, which is a challenge, but also an opportunity. She said they have been engaged with the Guinea mission on a youth-led horticultural service center, where they train young people to teach farmers how to reduce losses and gain market access. She noted that the issue is there are a lot of losses after harvest, and it is hard to get farmers to adopt new practices and technologies unless they have a market linkage that will reward them for their efforts. She concluded that the market linkage is essential and that farmers must have the expectation that they'll have a better market or market price if they improve their practices.
- Tag Demment of APLU said that the issues they have discussed reside in the human capital in other countries, and they need a strategy to develop that human capital, so those people can develop policy and move agriculture along. He asked, how do we produce these people? He noted that this would help countries be more self-reliant; otherwise, USAID will have to keep intervening.
- Mark Varner of APLU took a couple of online questions. Janeen Simon from Feed the Children Guatemala asked via email, "Will the panelists talk about the link between conflict, violence, migration, and food nutrition security? Does food/nutrition insecurity lead to conflict/violence/migration? Does conflict/violence/migration create food/nutrition insecurity and will the Agenda focus on this?"
- The second online comment from Richard Caldwell at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation was that he would like to hear more about the process that thematic groups used for coming up with the Learning Agendas.
- Dr. Keenum commented that conflict has been a topic of discussion for the Board. He said that yes, food insecurity does lead to conflict, and conflict also leads to food insecurity. USAID is very much aware of this

and looking at how it can address this critical issue. Administrator Green is also very concerned about this.

- Jami Montgomery said conflict is multi-causal and reasons people migrate are multi-causal, so she was hesitant to make those direct links between conflict and food insecurity. From the Learning Agenda perspective, she said they were really trying to understand the interplay between these dynamics and hope to mitigate the drivers of these phenomenon.
- Zachary Baquet, Knowledge Management Specialist in USAID's Bureau for Food Security, noted that the process of developing the Learning Agenda has been ongoing for a while, and that part of the process is reviewing questions other missions have developed, pulling questions from other sources, working with technical folks in BFS, and then branching out into USAID further and to inter-agency partners to get feedback. Now they need public input, so he mentioned there is an online survey available on Agrilinks.org, and they are looking for planned or ongoing research activities that could help feed into these Learning Agenda questions. They want to ensure they are asking the best questions throughout the process.
- Dr. Anderson said she thought the online question was asking more about what the process was to choose the eight themes that they are looking at.
- Zachary Baquet followed up to note that their Agenda relates to the last Agenda, so there is some continuity between it and the new one. They are trying to develop that and build out some areas which were underrepresented before, such as gender and youth. The Learning Agenda looks at 'sticky issue' questions that need to be addressed to make the whole initiative successful. He acknowledged that the themes are only parts of the whole, but that conversations have highlighted the themes in this framework as items that need to be pushed forward to make FTF successful.
- Larry Schaffer mentioned that nothing was said about carbon emissions and the energy demands of agricultural production. He asked if those metrics were included in any of the measurements or if they will be going forward.
- Mark Varner took another online question that asked if the Learning Agenda questions on nutrition might consider food loss and waste and their effect on nutritious consumption at the household level.
- Otto Gonzalez from the USDA said via email that land grant universities have a long experience with fostering involvement with youth and agriculture and asked if there was any intent to use that experience.
- Assa Balayara via email from Senegal asked, "In villages, in order to enhance nutrition, women are growing fruits and vegetables; what about in urban areas? What do you learn?"
- Dr. Keenum allowed James Ash the last comment: Mr. Ash said he would conduct his own Learning Agenda today, which was admittedly not very scientific. He asked the question to follow onto Tag's question: have non-U.S. citizens who have participated in U.S. post-graduate education programs impacted what you do? Almost everyone in the audience raised their hands to say yes.

Closing Remarks

Mark Keenum, Mississippi State, BIFAD

Dr. Keenum thanked Rob Bertram and the other speakers for their contributions. He also thanked Clara Cohen, Executive Director of BIFAD; Learning Team Leader Zachary Baquet; Jessica Bagdonis; Karen Duca and Carole Levin at USAID; and to Mark Varner and Devin Ferguson at APLU. The meeting was adjourned for lunch.