

insights



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REPUBLIC OF MOZAMBIQUE COUNTRY STRATEGY AND PROGRAMME EVALUATION

Rome-based agencies collaborating to improve nutrition in Mozambique

Chronic undernutrition has been high in Mozambique for many years. The Five-Year Government Programme 2015-2019 established the objective of reducing malnutrition for children under five from the 2013 calculated rate of 43 per cent, to 35 per cent. The Government also launched a Multi-sectoral Action Plan for the Reduction of Chronic Malnutrition in Mozambique 2011-2020.

The European Union-funded grant umbrella programme Support to Accelerate Progress towards Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 1C in Mozambique was approved in 2012, to be implemented by the three United Nations Rome-based agencies (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations [FAO], International Fund for Agricultural Development [IFAD] and World Food Programme [WFP]) for a total value of EUR 67 million plus EUR 10 million from the Government of Mozambique. The Programme has three main goals: (i) Enhance agricultural and fisheries production; (ii) Improve access to adequate and appropriate food; and (iii) Improve the nutritional status of vulnerable groups, in particular women and children.

The IFAD Sub-Programme (MDG1c) came into force in June 2013, with completion planned for June 2017. It initially amounted to EUR 25.9 million from the European Union and Euro 4.4 million from the Government of Mozambique. Its main purpose is to expand the work of

three IFAD loan projects supporting, respectively, the National Agricultural Extension System, the artisanal fisheries sector and administration along the national coastline, and the development of value chains for small producers in the Northern region. Funds were also allocated to a small-scale aquaculture development grant project. Moreover, a nutrition component was integrated in two loan projects to “facilitate the sustainable reduction of malnutrition among the families participating in the IFAD-supported projects”. Activities in the nutrition component include demonstration gardens and kitchens, women peer-to-peer groups, community radio messages and nutrition classes in primary schools.

Similarly, both FAO and WFP used the European Union funds to strengthen their ongoing initiatives in the country. FAO articulated its funds across six sub-components: a) Support to the seed sector; b) Increase access to inputs through an electronic voucher scheme; c) Support to

extension through consolidation and expansion of farmer field schools; d) Post-harvest handling and infrastructure at household level; e) Improving vaccination service of poultry against Newcastle disease; and f) Home gardens and nutrition education. WFP opted for providing additional support to nutrition activities and strengthening market access, as well as mainstreaming the Purchase for Progress pilot, aimed at building capacity of smallholder farmers to help them become competitive in agricultural markets, with a particular focus on women.

Implementation of the European Union-funded programme

Between 2008 and 2011, FAO, IFAD and WFP implemented the joint programme “Building Commodity Value Chains and Market Linkages for Farmers’ Associations”, funded by the Spanish Millennium Development Goals Fund. The programme promoted food production by Mozambican small farmers to supply WFP operations in the country, and obtained a prize from IFAD for the joint work between the three agencies, built on their respective comparative advantages.

This successful experience was a good stepping stone for the three agencies to prepare a consolidated, though not joint, project proposal in 2011 to meet the explicit request by the European Union. At that time, the work of the three agencies overlapped only in the Sussundenga district, while two of them were present in six districts, out of 68 in total targeted by the Programme.

By September 2016, progress had been made in terms of collaboration at field level. In Zambézia Province, IFAD worked on value chains and agricultural production with farmers who were also supported by FAO, which was promoting e-vouchers for input purchases. In Sussundenga, the three agencies were coordinating work at community level by supporting vegetable gardens through farmer field schools, nutrition and health committees through Mothers’ Groups and Health Committees, and aquaculture pond development.

Furthermore, the MDG1C programme is contributing to developing tools, such as manuals, and good practices addressing malnutrition that bring together the experience of the three agencies, which the Government will be able to scale up through its line ministries.

The MDG1c offered a platform for the Rome-based agencies to develop the habit of working together in the country, and at different levels. In addition to the frequent interactions among MDG1C coordinators in each agency, the three heads of office in Maputo carried out a series of successful field visits to the provinces and districts where projects supported with MDG1c funds were operating.

Challenges and lessons learned

A major challenge faced by the programme stemmed from the different approaches to nutrition improvement and education that the three agencies pursue, as part of their corporate strategies. These range from FAO and IFAD’s strong focus on agricultural and food-based interventions to improve nutrition to UNICEF’s approach largely based on food supplements.

A European Union Mid-Term Review in 2015 recognized the relevance of the programme, but pointed out the lack of coordination among the three agencies, which originated in the initial conception of the grant as separate streams of resources for each partner. It also stressed that the possible complementarity of interventions between agencies had not been realized, due to different intervention approaches, also due to the diversity of funding patterns for each agency, and the mentioned lack of coherence for nutrition education. The major lesson was that unless a programme is jointly designed, there are limits to the extent of “jointness” that can be achieved during implementation.

At the same time, the efforts towards practical coordination were generating a precious “social capital” that deserves attention in terms of two critical success factors: upscaling and strengthening at country level, and for policy dialogue with the responsible ministries; providing a knowledge management product for broader use beyond Mozambique.

Further information:

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