

Use of research by
international NGOs working
on agriculture and nutrition:
Current practices and
opportunities for enhancing
research uptake and impact

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Monica Mueller, Survey Coordinator
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ACRONYMS

A4NH	Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (CGIAR collaborative research program)
AARNET	AVRDC-ASEAN Regional Network for Vegetable Research and Development
AG2NUT	Agriculture to nutrition
AOR	Agreement Officer Representative
ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
AVRDC	World Vegetable Center
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program
CGIAR/CG	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research/Consultative Group
CIP	International Potato Center
CMAM	Community-based management of acute malnutrition
COP	Community of practice
CSO	Civil society organization
DAP	Development Assistance Program
DFAP	Development and Food Assistance Program
EU	European Union
FSN	Food Security and Nutrition network (of TOPS)
GAAP	Gender, Agriculture, & Assets Project (of IFPRI)
GAIN	Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition
HIV/AIDS	Human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
HQ	Headquarters
ICRISAT	International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics
ICCM	International Child Care Ministries
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
ILRI	International Livestock Research Institute
IYCF	Infant and young child feeding
INGO	International non-governmental organization
IP	Internet protocol
LANSA	Leveraging agriculture and nutrition in South Asia
LNS	Liquid-based nutrition supplement
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MYAPS	Multi-year assistance programs
NARAL	TOPS/FSN Nutrition and Agriculture Linkages in Africa Network
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NUS	Nutrition-underutilized species
OFDA	Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance
OFSP	Orange-fleshed sweet potato
PM2A	Preventing malnutrition in children under two
RFAs	Requests for applications
RFPs	Requests for proposals
SCN	UN Standing Committee on Nutrition
SID	Society for International Development
SILC	Savings and internal lending communities
SUN	Scaling up Nutrition initiative
TOC	Theory of Change

KEY MESSAGES

Current Practice and Views of INGOs on Integrated Agriculture and Nutrition Programming

Pick-up of A4NH messages. There has already been considerable pick-up of A4NH messages by INGOs. Donor preference is universally perceived as a powerful driver in shaping INGO approaches to agriculture and nutrition, with the United States government (USG) Feed the Future initiative and Food for Peace program featuring prominently. Another important influence on pick up of research results on agriculture and nutrition programming by INGOs has been the presence of champions in the organization (usually senior managers and/or technical advisors). Results of internal monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and filtering of information disseminated through external research and advocacy platforms have also played a part, though to lesser extent. There is a general interest in scientific literature and research, and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) is a recognized and valued brand.

Trend toward greater integration across sectors. Over the past five years there has been a trend towards greater integration across sectors in development work in general. Integrated programs are giving higher priority to nutrition, and new program emphases have emerged on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), on value chains linking agriculture to markets, and on intra-household dynamics and gender roles.

Adaptation of organizational structures and methods of work. A number of INGOs are experimenting with new organizational structures and methods of work in order to implement integration more effectively than in the past. Training individual community workers to deliver messages and provide training for multiple sectors is being tried by several INGOs. It is hoped that this might help them break away from the past practice of ‘siloeing’ multi-sector programs according to the technical specialties involved, and reduce inefficiencies caused by placing too many community workers with unique technical responsibilities in the same local areas.

Concerns about lack of evidence for integrated agriculture and nutrition programming. INGO awareness of the need for evidence comes across quite clearly in interviews. Many in the INGO community feel that despite the pick-up at the conceptual level, solid evidence to support nutrition-sensitive agriculture or integrated agriculture-nutrition programming is lacking. They worry that significant human and financial resources may be misdirected. Incorporating innovation, even when there is research behind it, is a risk – both for INGO staff, and for the communities the innovation is intended to benefit. Most INGOs are risk-averse and would prefer to stick with ‘tried and true’ approaches until there is a solid body of evidence to support something new. Many feel that INGOs should not be asked to operationalize a new approach until it has been proven to be effective, unless specific funding is provided for testing it. There are exceptions, however. Some see a window of opportunity to try out new ideas about integrating agriculture and nutrition on their own, since donors are not yet at a point where they can say they know what has worked and what hasn’t.

Behavior change as a precondition for success. Several point out that best practices for achieving satisfactory nutritional outcomes have been known for some time, and are currently required by most Title

II programs. Examples include early breastfeeding, maternal care, WASH, preventing malnutrition in children under two (PM2A), 1000 Days, conservation agriculture and integrated pest management. In their view, what is lacking is not greater contribution from agriculture, but rather more concentration on developing and applying techniques for changing behaviors such that these known best practices would become the new local norm.

Need for longer program and project timeframes. Many INGO personnel stress that significant impacts cannot be expected within the 2 to 5-year timeframes of most donor-funded projects, nor can impacts be measured within these timeframes. They see donors as becoming increasingly aware of this, but are pessimistic about their being able to change.

Influences on Pick-up of Research by INGOS

Trend toward evidence-based programming. In the face of tightening budgetary constraints and continuing food insecurity and humanitarian crises, donors increasingly demand that their investments be shown to have the desired impact. This has led to a drive for more evidence-based decision-making, though not always to a concomitant increase in the amount of resources provided to fund internal evaluative research or promote access to external research by implementing INGOS.

Channels used to access research. A wide variety of channels are used by INGOS to keep abreast of latest information about research results that demonstrate positive impact of innovative technologies and best practices. Those most frequently used include:

- development community networks,
- technical literature,
- internet searches,
- informal personal networks, and
- external conferences, workshops and seminars.

Reliance on web-based sources of information. Internet-based communities of practice (COPS) are particularly important mechanisms for networking among development practitioners with a common area of interest such as agriculture or nutrition, as are web platforms for knowledge-sharing. Altogether, 23 COPS, networks or information platforms were mentioned by name as ones on which INGOS rely, and there are likely many others. Websites of NGOs, academic and research institutions, and UN agencies are frequently consulted.

Importance of trusted messengers. Informal personal networks also ranked very high as sources of reliable information. Information that is received from a trusted messenger or through face-to-face encounters with individuals having personal experience with a new technology or practice is much more likely to be picked up and applied without much scrutiny than information from other sources. Often, it takes just one key staff member to pick up a new piece of information and become a champion for that innovation within the organization in order for the innovation to be adopted.

Critical role of technical advisors. Technical advisors, especially at headquarters level, are significant access points through which research enters into organizational discourse. They are the staff members primarily

responsible for staying current with outside research, and for filtering, translating and disseminating findings of interest within their organizations. The technical advisor is one of the main organizational representatives who is backed with resources to attend conferences, workshops and networking events related to their fields of specialization. Organizations that employ technical staff are likely to pick up and try to use new findings from research on their own initiative, whereas organizations that do not do so are more likely either just to stick with tried and true models for activities that they have traditionally implemented, or to rely on donors to determine what research results to pick up and apply.

Culture of learning within the INGO. The philosophy and structure that an organization develops to promote staff learning are critical to moving research from its entry points into the organization's internal discourse in a meaningful way. Some INGOs actively promote a culture of learning and others are attempting to do more. The most common incentives offered for staff development include: (i) encouragement to participate in online forums or webinars, (ii) subsidized attendance at conferences and workshops, and (iii) encouragement to subscribe to listservs or institutional mailing lists. Time constraints are a factor that limits the ability of staff members in some organizations to take full advantage of the opportunities on offer. Also, not all staff members are equally qualified to benefit from participation in conferences and learning events. If such opportunities are offered to all staff, special efforts have to be made to ensure that learning takes place and is shared with others in meaningful ways after the event.

Investment in knowledge management systems. Some INGOs show a strong interest in promoting a culture of learning and using research to improve programming, others clearly do not. This interest is reflected in the knowledge management systems and tools that they employ to disseminate information and encourage learning within the organization. For some, efforts are undertaken without an explicit overarching knowledge management strategy, and are limited to distribution of information (e.g., research reports, statistics) via email circulars, internal listservs, or internal communities of practice (COPs) organized and managed by a technical advisor. These email mechanisms may function as simple distribution channels, but some benefit from more active engagement of COP members, e.g., whereby staff post questions and comments on current topics of program interest and there is a moderator role. . Features of more developed knowledge management systems include intranet Web platforms, virtual meetings or trainings, and online resource repositories maintained by the INGO. The more sophisticated systems tend to have dedicated staff and may also have research and development arms that manage internal research and collaborative research partnerships, and promote application of relevant results.

INGO Involvement in Monitoring, Evaluation and Research

Conduct of monitoring, evaluation and internal research activities of INGOs. Most INGOs engage in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities, both for their own learning and to fulfill donor requirements. Besides formal M&E, many INGOs also rely on regular progress reporting, field visits and trip reports to capture learning from the field. Informal networking among staff and staff meetings that include staff from both headquarters and the field are also important sources of internally-generated information. Besides their regular evaluation activities, some INGOs have set research priorities or objectives related to specific projects that they are implementing. In some instances this is because they have been required to include a research component as a condition of funding. In other cases, they have designated internal or

unrestricted funds for this purpose. Operational research features prominently in the descriptions of the kind of research that INGOs undertake on their own and what they find immediately applicable to their work. Even smaller INGOS that do not have either financial or technical resources to undertake major evaluative studies may conduct operational research to answer specific questions they have about how to improve program design and/or delivery.

INGO experience with research institutions and research consultants. Most INGOs implementing agriculture and nutrition projects have used the services of research institutions or universities and/or commissioned individual research consultants to fulfill a range of advisory functions such as on project design, performance measurement, project monitoring, impact evaluation, or operational research. Many have had long-standing relationships and recurring collaboration with a variety of research partners, either at the INGO's own initiative or as part of grant-funded projects.

INGO experience with collaborative research. Besides providing advisory service to INGOS, academic research institutions also seek out collaborative partnerships with them because projects implemented by INGOs provide a platform for testing and promoting innovations that they are developing. INGOs report that they benefit from the methodological rigor that researchers bring to the table, from the learning they gain from research and evaluation findings, and at times from capacity building, if their staff are afforded opportunities to participate actively in research design, implementation, and analysis. Nevertheless, INGOs also report numerous constraints that prevent collaborative research partnerships from being as beneficial and effective as they would like.

The cultural divide between researchers and practitioners. The most binding constraint to collaborative research is the cultural divide that separates the research and INGO communities. Cultural differences manifest in terms of: (i) different perceived interests of researchers and practitioners (publication in peer-reviewed journals versus short-term availability and use of research data, findings, and recommendations), (ii) communication styles ("high-level," "academic," and "highly technical" versus "practical," "easy-to-understand," and "accessible"), and (iii) the extent to which researchers and INGOs seek consultative relationships for conducting research (little interest in genuine consultation with INGO partners versus strong desire for more consultative relationship with research community). Moreover, since each has its own community of peers, there is little constructive interaction between them.

Other constraints to effective collaborative research. Even if the cultural divide can be overcome, other constraints limit possibilities for effective collaborative research. These include: cost considerations, conflicts over budgetary control, lack of INGO involvement in the formulation of study questions and the nature and number of indicators for which data will be collected, need for contextualization and irrelevance of research conducted in highly controlled environments, difficulty of setting up randomized controls for rigorous quantitative research, timing and duration of the research, and data ownership and access. It is difficult to layer new research onto an existing project, so researchers should make every effort to embed research protocols in project designs during the proposal development phase.

Making collaborative research more mutually beneficial and effective. In order for collaborative research to be effective, there needs to be increased dialogue between researchers and practitioners during design,

analysis, and follow-up stages. Since researchers and INGOs often inhabit very different worlds, and do not speak the same language, there may be a need for facilitation of the dialogue and coordination of the relationship between researchers and INGOs at all stages. While the weak intersection and communication between the two worlds is a cause for concern, nevertheless there is increasing recognition, at least by INGOs, that researchers and practitioners need each other and the feeling that they are, over time, improving the quality of their partnerships, to mutual benefit.

Operationalizing Research Results

Purposes for which INGOs use evidence-based information. Most INGOs use current information about innovative technologies, best practices, and lessons learned from field experience for identifying innovations they may apply or for validating existing practices. This information may be derived from formal M&E systems or from more informal information-gathering mechanisms such as progress reports, field visits and internal staff meetings involving both HQ and field staff.

Who operationalizes research results and when. Senior managers, with support from technical advisors, and program and field office managers, take the decisions required to adopt an innovative technology or new service delivery method that research has demonstrated to be effective. Most often this occurs when opportunity or necessity call for a decision about what to do next, most commonly at the proposal development stage. At such times, there is a flurry of activity and attempts are made to incorporate new research results. Although it would be preferable to begin thinking about how to operationalize research at an earlier stage, time constraints for INGO staff often prevent this.

Importance of operational guidelines. INGOs may use technical specialists to present research in a proposal, but many would welcome help from researchers with writing about it, with telling donors how to fund it. This help can take the form of a toolkit, for example, such as the one produced by IFPRI's Gender, Agriculture, and Assets Project (GAAP), which was cited as a model of how to do this.

Recommendations

Despite the challenges, more INGO participation in collaborative research is generally regarded as valuable. INGOs need to be involved at all stages of the research (design, implementation, analysis and follow-up), and they need to be given credit for their inputs. INGO involvement at the early stages of methodological development and research design is especially important to ensure that the research is appropriately contextualized and feasible. Building the capacity of INGO staff to understand what the research entails and how to use results, should be an integral part of the collaborative process. Researchers also need to pay more attention to the funding cycles of INGOs so that the research can be embedded in program design and completed within the life of a funded program.

More proactive participation of researchers in conferences, communities of practice and online forums of INGOs would do a great deal to help bridge the cultural divide that currently separates them from the world of practitioners. The research community should be represented by individuals who can communicate research questions, methods and results in non-technical language that captures and holds

the attention of the target audience, and these individuals should participate actively in workshops, seminars, and online discussions – listening and learning from what INGOs have to say as well as sharing what research has to offer. Operational and cost implications need to be spelled out clearly when reporting research results, and the messages need to be shared with funding communities as well as with INGO staff.

1. INTRODUCTION

Within the development community, large international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) constitute an important block of actors engaged in delivering training, goods, and services aimed at improving agriculture-based livelihoods and the nutritional status of households engaged in small-scale agriculture. The international agricultural research community would like to ensure that the design, conduct, and presentation of its research on nutrition-sensitive agriculture and integrated agriculture and nutrition programming are responsive to the felt needs of INGOs, and that INGOs are picking up and using the results to improve the nutritional impact of their agricultural activities in the field.

To this end, the CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH), led by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), contracted TANGO International to help formulate a theory of change (ToC) for how research results, in particular the results of program evaluations, would contribute to the achievement of development outcomes and impacts—IDOs and SLOs in the language of the CGIAR results framework—through their uptake and use by NGOs and other program implementers. To inform the ToC, TANGO conducted a study, including online surveys and purposive interviews, on use of research results and evaluation findings by large INGOs. This paper reports the findings of that study.

2. METHODOLOGY AND PROFILE OF RESPONDENT POOL

The study was comprised of an online survey and phone (or Skype) and in-person interviews. Both data collection methods were designed to solicit feedback from potential users of A4NH research in the INGO community on how their organizations currently access and use research, and their thoughts on how to improve the link between research and practice.

Online survey design

The online survey instrument was developed by the study coordinators in early spring of 2014. It underwent a series of revisions pursuant to review and input from the study's point persons in IFPRI and CGIAR. The IFPRI IRB approved a final instrument in May 2014 and TANGO programmed it into Survey Monkey online software.

The survey was administered via Web link to the Food Security and Nutrition (FSN) network listserv with an accompanying invitation from TOPS staff on June 4, 2014; a reminder note was sent mid-month. The survey contains 47 questions and employs a variety of question types: multiple choice, rating, and open-ended. The summary of online survey findings for this report is limited to data collected between June 4 and July 8, 2014, i.e., any surveys completed after July 8 are excluded from the analysis¹.

Semi-structured interview design

Interviews were semi-structured and guided by a topical outline developed the study team. As with the online survey, the topical outline benefitted from review by the study's point persons in IFPRI and CGIAR and was reviewed and approved by the IFPRI IRB. The topics roughly parallel those addressed in the online survey. The interview process included providing informants a two-page handout in advance of the interview. The handout summarizes the purpose of the study and interview, provides relevant definitions, defines and requests consent to participate, and details contact information for reference and study follow-up. This handout was reviewed and approved by IFPRI. In addition, one or more respondents from each organization interviewed were requested to complete a brief organizational profile form.

The interview guide, consent form and two-page handout, and organizational profile form are provided in Annex 2.

Identification of interviewees. In the first stage of study planning, the study coordinators developed a list of international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) to target for staff interviews. The guiding principle for selection was to identify organizations that are potential users of A4NH research. Selection of organizations was based on the following specific criteria:

- The INGO is a current A4NH partner, a TANGO partner, or a civil society member of the Committee on World Food Security.
- The INGO maintains a website.

¹ The text of the online survey is available upon request.

- The INGO conducts developmental activities in the fields of nutritional health or agriculture, either directly or through local partners, in more than one country.

The final list of INGOs that met these criteria contained 24 organizations. Within these, TANGO sought to identify potential interviewees by soliciting names of staff members performing functions in program management, technical advising in agriculture and nutrition, research, monitoring and evaluation, and knowledge management. TANGO identified potential informants in these categories via personal referral by IFPRI, TANGO, and TOPS colleagues; by e-mail and phone solicitation from key contacts in the target organizations; by contacts made at the July 10-11 FNS learning event in Washington, DC; and by snowball method as we interviewed and interacted with more and more contacts throughout the study process.

Participation in both the online surveys and the interviews was voluntary. Respondents are likely to have opted in because of their interest in the study topic, because it fit well with their current jobs, and/or because they were interested to provide input into a subject they consider valuable to their work. Indeed, a few commented that they were pleased that IFPRI/A4NH was reaching out to the NGO community for feedback on improving linkages between research and practice, and expressed appreciation for an opportunity to be part of such a discussion. Having input from such interested parties, often with well-formed opinions about the study topic, has provided valuable insights. If a more rigorous follow-up survey is contemplated, the information obtained through this survey gives useful indications for designing the sampling frame.

Profile of respondents

Online survey respondents. Seventy-five people accessed the online survey in the period from June 4 through July 8, 2014. Of these, 73 consented to participate, however 11 did not continue the survey beyond the consent page.

Sixty-two respondents opted to record the organization where they work and other basic descriptive information about their jobs and work locations. The organizations listed by respondents fall into the following categories, as defined by TANGO as part of data analysis. If two or more respondents came from the same organization - whether country, regional or HQ office - the organization is counted only once. At the time of the survey, 41 of the 62 respondents worked for international NGOs, the focus of this study. Respondents from other categories also provided valuable information and insights, and these have been incorporated in the analysis.

TABLE 1. COUNT OF ONLINE SURVEY RESPONDENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS FOR WHICH THEY WORK, BY ORGANIZATIONAL CATEGORY

Category	Response Count	
	No. of respondents	No. of organizations
Non-profit NGOs	41	20
Private sector development practitioners	5	3
Research institutions	6	6
Universities	1	1
Government aid agencies	4	4
UN agencies	3	3
Uncategorized due to lack of sufficient information	2	2

Thirty-two percent of the 62 online survey respondents have been working with their organizations for more than five years, and the percentage is the same when considering only the 41 INGO respondents. Similarly, in both cases, ten percent have been with the same organization for ten years or more.

TABLE 2. COUNT OF ONLINE SURVEY RESPONDENTS, BY NUMBER OF YEARS WORKED FOR THEIR ORGANIZATIONS

Years Worked	Response Count			
	N=62		N=41	
	Count	Count/n	Count	Count/n
1-2 years	19	0.31	12	0.29
3-5 years	23	0.37	16	0.39
6-9 years	10	0.16	9	0.22
10-14 years	5	0.08	3	0.075
15-19 years	2	0.03	1	0.025
>20 years	3	0.05	0	0

Most respondents perform multiple job functions, with provision of technical support in a specific programming area topping the list at 77 percent for the 62 online survey respondents and 78 percent for the 41 INGO respondents (Table A.1). The other two functions that ranked high for both groups are program management (60 and 61 percent respectively) and monitoring and evaluation or research (56 and 58 percent respectively).

Among the 62 online survey respondents, perspectives from across the globe are well represented. Altogether, they work in 29 countries, with INGO respondents working in 23 of them. The largest numbers are based in East and Southern Africa and the United States, but West and Central Africa, South and Southeast Asia and Europe are also well represented.

TABLE 3. COUNT OF ONLINE SURVEY RESPONDENTS AND COUNTRIES WHERE THEY WORK, BY SUB-REGION

Location	Response Count			
	N=62		N=41	
	No. of respondents	No. of countries	No. of respondents	No. of countries
East and Southern Africa	16	10	14	10
United States	18	1	12	1
West and Central Africa	6	5	6	5
South and Southeast Asia	9	6	4	3
Europe	8	5	4	3
Caribbean	2	1	1	1
North Africa	1	1	-	-
Not stated	2	-	-	-
TOTAL	62	29	41	23

Around 60 percent of INGO respondents and 56 percent of all survey respondents work away from headquarters in country, regional, field or global offices, with most working at the country level.

TABLE 4. COUNT OF ONLINE SURVEY RESPONDENTS, BY TYPE OF OFFICE WHERE THEY WORK

Office Type	Response Count	
	(N=62)	(N=41)
Headquarters	24	16
Country office	23	18
Regional office	8	5
Field office	2	1
Global office	2	1
Program office	1	-
University	1	-
Home office	1	-

Interviewees. Twenty-three current staff members from 12 unique INGOs were interviewed over the course of this study. Most (21) were currently working in their organization’s headquarters offices; the other two were from a country office and from a regional office. The skewing toward headquarters responses was partly a function of the referrals we received (technical advisors and technical directors were overwhelmingly the most common staff function referred, and these tend to be housed at headquarters), though given the time available for interviewing, these interviewees were also often the most accessible. Nevertheless, we feel that this seeming over-representation of headquarters’ perspectives does not necessarily detract from the well-roundedness of the input received: most headquarters staff have past field experience – having held country-based positions within their organizations – as well as regular, ongoing contact with the field offices they support, which includes travelling to the field in the exercise of their current functions.

TABLE 5. COUNT OF INTERVIEWEES, BY POSITION CATEGORY

Position category	No. of interviewees
Nutrition	6
Food security/ food and nutrition security	3
Management (country or regional director)	3
Health	2
Agriculture	2
Monitoring and evaluation	2
Resource development, program development	1
Economic development	1
Livelihoods	1
Knowledge management and learning	1
Social and behavioral change	1
TOTAL	23

Table 5 shows the position categories of the interviewees within their organizations. We made these categorizations based on interviewees' current job titles and on how interviewees described their current jobs. We note that there are some judgment calls here, in that interviewees' positions and scope of performance often span multiple categories and are influenced by the internal structure of the INGO. For example, an INGO may have a unit or department for "food security" or "food security and nutrition," which may house staff with agricultural expertise but whose thematic focus is framed more broadly in terms of food security. In our categorizations, we have attempted to preserve the framing given by the respondent. In addition, where an interviewee has more than one major area of work, we have characterized his/her position under what we understand to be the primary area. We note that the overlap of sectoral and functional responsibilities within any one position reflects integration of programming generally, and that categorization is not easily "neat": placement in one category does not mean the person's scope of work does not extend beyond that category. A nutrition technical advisor, for example, often has concurrent responsibilities in knowledge management, program development, and resource/business development.

3. CURRENT PRACTICE AND VIEWS OF INGOS ON INTEGRATED AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION PROGRAMMING

Recent Trends

Trend toward integration across sectors. Interviewees described a few trends in the past five to ten years (or longer) relating to integrated programming. Many large INGOs have multiple missions and mandates relating to human development, reduction of poverty, economic empowerment, health and nutrition, emergency response, and peacebuilding, among others. In pursuit of these broad goals, these organizations have worked in multiple sectors simultaneously, often for several decades. (Box 3.1)

BOX 3.1. COMMENTS ON INTEGRATED PROGRAMMING FROM TWO TECHNICAL ADVISORS

This organization’s mandate has a focus on undernutrition. We have always had a holistic approach combining food security and livelihoods, WASH and nutrition. Now it has evolved more into how to measure impact.

We have done multi-sector programming for many years. More recently, this is more intentional. This comes from both USAID and internally because we are a child-focused organization and focused on objectives in child wasting, stunting, and undernutrition – we recognize that this must be tackled from all sides.

The interviewees reported that recently there has been greater emphasis on integration across sectors. Trends have shifted from early conceptions of humanitarian assistance as delivering imported food aid, to approaches that focus on livelihoods, human rights, and more recently, resilience. This has necessitated integrated, cross-sector programming and shifted the focus to include the household and community as well as the vulnerable individual. Also, there is growing recognition that complex, multi-causal problems demand holistic solutions.

The trend toward integration across program sectors has led some organizations to introduce a new emphasis on formulation of more coordinated programs in agriculture and nutrition in their strategic plans and has resulted in the restructuring of program departments, teams and intra-organizational working groups to facilitate multi-sector consultation and holistic thinking. This is in contrast to descriptions of traditional and past approaches as “stovepiped,” “tubular,” and “siloeed.”

Prioritization of nutrition. Along with integration has come a higher prioritization of nutrition (Box 3.2).

BOX 3.2. EXAMPLES OF RECENT INGO ACTIONS TO INCORPORATE NUTRITION IN INTEGRATED PROGRAMS

We added an explicit nutrition objective during reformulation of a multi-year project.

We have introduced greater integration of three pre-existing projects on agricultural production, value chains and nutrition.

Our organizational frameworks are now giving greater emphasis to nutritional outcomes.

We are shifting to nutrition-sensitive programming in agriculture “because agricultural development is the way to get micronutrients into the diet.”

We are partnering with the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) on an integrated food security program to understand how crop diversity affects aflatoxins in groundnuts and legumes, and to work on improving post-harvest handling to decrease aflatoxins.

BOX 3.3. RESPONDENT INTEREST IN SMALLHOLDER AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION

Respondent Interests	Very high	High	Some-what high	Not very high	No interest	Total
	Percent (n=62)					
What is your level of interest in smallholder agriculture ?	82	8	10	0	0	100
What is your level of interest in nutrition ?	92	8	0	0	0	100
What is your level of interest in both smallholder agriculture and nutrition ? (calculated)	79	---	---	---	---	---

Implementation of integrated agriculture and nutrition activities by INGOs.

Nearly all INGOs represented in this study implement some kind of activity in agriculture, nutrition, and/or integrated agriculture and nutrition, and 79 percent of online survey respondents indicated that they had a high or very high interest in both agriculture and nutrition (Box 3.3 and Table A.2).

Forty-four online survey respondents indicated the thematic categories under which the activities of their organizations are implemented (Box 3.4 and Table A.12). The online survey also indicated the geographic spread of agriculture and/or nutrition-related activities (Box 3.5 and Table A.14). Although the effort appears concentrated in East, Southern and West Africa, there is presence in all developing regions of the world.

BOX 3.4. CATEGORIES OF AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION OR INTEGRATED AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED BY INGOs

Activity Category	Percent (n=45)
Nutrition	89
Agriculture	82
Food Security	78
Livelihoods	73
Resilience	69
Gender	60
Poverty Reduction	58
Community health	56
Relief and rehabilitation	42
WASH or sanitation (3 write-ins)	
HIV and AIDS (1 write-in)	
Bio-fortified foods (1 write-in)	

BOX 3.5. PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS REPORTING ACTIVITIES, BY SUB-REGION

Sub-Region	Percent (n=45)
East Africa	64
Southern Africa	62
West Africa	58
Central America and Caribbean	47
Southeast Asia	47
Central Africa	44
Central Asia	33
South Asia	33
Western Asia	27
South America	24
Eastern Asia	22
North Africa	22
Eastern Europe	18
No agriculture/nutrition projects	02
Other (Middle East) (3)	
Other (Pacific Islands) (1)	
Other (presence in about 35 countries) (1)	
Other (don't know) (1)	

Other new program emphases. Several interviewees pointed to additional new emphases they see in their own organizations or in the overall development field, e.g., WASH; value chain interventions; and attention to intra-household dynamics. In many cases, these are the result of challenging long-held assumptions of cause and effect. Several remarked on the development community's self-reflection about the impacts of increasing agricultural productivity and household income, especially in the context of prevailing gender dynamics. They pointed to questions about use of and control over additional income, and effects on household food consumption and nutrition. The interviews suggest a strong consciousness of the need for, and complexity of, formulating the right questions to be able to

develop evidence-based programming and attribute results accurately in a highly complex impact pathway. In the words of a senior-level livelihoods program manager with over 20 years' experience in development:

Before, there was a broad notion that increases in household access to nutritious food would do the trick – that increasing agricultural productivity and income would work. The assumption was it would result in many positive outcomes for nutrition. But there was not the evidence for this. Gender was not widely taken up.

Recognition of need for longer program timeframes. Another important trend raised by some interviewees is development practitioners' recognition of the need for longer program timeframes. The argument is that organizations – and, significantly, their funders – must make longer-term commitments in order to spur the social and behavioral changes necessary to generate lasting impact of development interventions. Resilience approaches are partly a reflection of the demand for a farther-reaching vision – for timeframes that extend beyond the more typical two-to-five-year program cycle. Similarly, interviewees expressed a need for longer research and measurement timeframes that would allow impact measurement. As one interviewee stated:

We need longer studies, five to six years, especially to measure impact.

While recognition of the need for longer program timeframes is seen as gaining ground among donors, in practice, with some exceptions, the funding trends are not changing apace with this increasingly acknowledged need.

Drivers of change

Internal champions. Interviewees attributed the shift toward integrating agriculture and nutrition to both internal and external drivers, and to the evolution of multi-sector programming generally. Internal drivers were identified as individuals within an INGO who promoted the integrated approach. These could be technical advisors, program managers, or higher-level leaders whose internal advocacy was particularly influential. Several interviewees named specific individuals in their organizations who were powerful forces in strategic thinking and who brought about change at the corporate or ground level by pushing new ideas through (Box 3.6).

BOX 3.6. CHAMPIONS AS INTERNAL DRIVERS OF CHANGE WITHIN INGOS

Often it is that someone in the organization “knew”. Someone is fixed on a certain idea they want to incorporate into our programming.
Leadership, experience and personalities drive the integrated approach; our organization director has great ideas.
We have leadership – from the president on down – that is very supportive of integrated agriculture/nutrition programming, and pushing it.
It's very much a personality thing. Innovation is driven by individuals with an interest.
For myself, I have ideas about what to do in agriculture and nutrition and I promote them within my organization.
The reason for our interest in integrated agriculture and nutrition programming is internal to our organization and is driven by field demand.
We have two regional vice-presidents who have given lots of direction, and the senior vice-president has been very engaged in the nutrition approach.

Internal monitoring and evaluation. Interviewees also stated that they learned a lot from the monitoring and evaluation of their own programs and from institutional experience gained with different approaches over time, and applied these lessons to future program design, which in many cases led to more integration across program sectors.

External research and advocacy. Research was cited as an important external driver of change. Several interviewees named *The Lancet* maternal and child nutrition series of 2013 as influential. Others said they pay attention to IFPRI as a research source, describing IFPRI as a trusted and valuable brand. A few remarked more generally that literature reviews and scientific literature influence their program approaches for agriculture and nutrition. The Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) movement was cited as bringing more attention to nutrition. There is awareness that the research results most easily accessible in the United States (US) come mainly from US-based or funded research institutions, and some curiosity as to how these results compare to those from other parts of the world. As one interviewee put it:

Can IFPRI bring us a summary of the literature that shows us the school of thought from the US, from Rome, from the African research organizations – so we can see the convergence of these different worlds? This would be exciting to see. It would be interesting to think about how we can touch the larger world beyond USAID, and benefit from what European and other regional organizations/research institutions are doing.

Donor requirements. Interviewees also noted that there is a push toward integration from the donor side, evidenced in donor requests for applications (RFAs) or requests for proposals (RFPs) that require greater integration across program sectors. Donors have also increasingly valued projects that demonstrate partnership with institutions with complementary comparative advantages, again emphasizing strategic connections across sectors (Box 3.7).

BOX 3.7. INGO VIEWS ON INFLUENCE OF DONOR REQUIREMENTS FOR MORE INTEGRATION OF AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION

We play according to what the donors and the country governments want.

Once an issue, such as agriculture for nutrition, gets the attention of the donors, then it gets into the RFA.

The integration approach is not internally driven in our organization. In the last four to five years, the integration concept came from the donor community: agriculture is seen as an instrument of promoting nutritional outcomes. If you compare proposals from now and five years ago, you'll see more integration now.

I have done some research on how donors are looking at integrated agriculture and nutrition. The biggest supporters are USAID and the Gates Foundation. DFID has not been so strong in this area but they are beginning to improve.

I see the donor support, such as from USAID and Gates Foundation, as an opportunity for improved programming, for many programs in different areas to come together. For example, the idea that women should eat eggs to improve nutrition, this brings in agriculture. But in a context where women eating eggs while pregnant is taboo – this point of view needs to be considered in program design.

With very few exceptions interviewees underscored the influence of the USG Feed the Future Initiative and Food for Peace Program. This may be a reflection of the fact that the INGOs represented in the interviews are US-based, and for many, USG-funded projects comprise a substantial part of their portfolio. Nevertheless, the topic of donor influence on program approach elicited rich commentary. The interview responses suggest that donor preference is a powerful driver in shaping INGO approaches to agriculture and nutrition, with Feed the Future and Food for Peace featuring prominently (Box 3.8).

BOX 3.8. INGO VIEWS ON INFLUENCE OF FEED THE FUTURE AND TITLE II/FOOD FOR PEACE

There is a lot of donor influence, from Title II (Food for Peace) in particular. Integrated agriculture and nutrition in our organization first started with a Food for Peace Development Assistance Program (DAP) we were implementing.

USAID, through Food for Peace (Title II) programs and Development and Food Assistance programs (DFAPs,) typically have required a health-nutrition-agriculture mix. Health and nutrition have always been integrated; now there is more emphasis on integrating them with agriculture. The main difference in the last five years is that now we work to ensure that efforts toward agricultural improvements have an impact on households with pregnant and lactating women and children under two and we use stunting as an indicator of impact.

Integrated agriculture and nutrition came about four to five years ago when Feed the Future started. We brought someone in with a nutrition background for our Title II and Feed the Future programs.

We started a nutrition integration working group in the first year of the Feed the Future initiative. Its purpose was to be a sounding board to see what works, what doesn't work; when it started, at first people thought they weren't doing anything integrated in this area, but once we got into it, we realized that there was actually a lot we were doing "naturally." For example, our dairy projects focused on production – we realized this had nutritional value because the milk was used to feed children; also, horticulture projects, which provided households with nutritious foods.

Practitioner concerns

Lack of evidence for integrated agriculture and nutrition approach. INGO awareness of the need for evidence came across quite clearly in interviews. There is a widely-held view within the INGO community, however, that the agriculture for nutrition approach is being promoted ahead of the evidence for it, and that impacts remain to be tested. A number of interviewees expressed the view that the research, donor and development communities are still very much engaged in a learning process. They are particularly concerned that the causal pathways between economics and nutrition are not well-

understood, and believe that more evidence regarding the relationship of income outcomes to nutrition outcomes is needed before attempting to operationalize the approach (Box 3.9).

BOX 3.9. CONCERNS ABOUT THE STRENGTH OF THE EVIDENCE IN SUPPORT OF INTEGRATING AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION

The agriculture-nutrition argument laid out in the Lancet series and other research reshuffles the cards of a deck that we've always had, but I see no real changes in agriculture-nutrition approaches.

Integrated agriculture and nutrition is just the 'flavor of the day' among some donors.

There is a lot of research about the agriculture-nutrition linkage, but nothing on impact, which is astounding.

There is a notion that nutritional outcomes are in lockstep with changes in income, but there is no evidence for it. It can be positive or negative. The mediating factors are not understood – we are interested in what these are, but it's complicated and the discourse is way out in front of the evidence.

We get the big journals on integrated agriculture and nutrition, but I don't know if anyone has really cracked it. How do you attribute change given the multi-causal nature of malnutrition?

In Feed the Future, implementers are held accountable for nutrition outcomes. But the discussion of agriculture to nutrition is not evidence-based. The face validity of those pathways is weak.

I recall an early A4NH meeting where they were basically saying that they had not gotten it right, and recognizing that we need to look at barriers to nutrition because you can't change nutritional status with agriculture alone; you can't just plant this seed and assume positive nutrition outcomes will follow.

Importance of behavior change. Focusing on behavior change was mentioned by a number of interviewees as gaining prominence in their organizations. In their view, adoption of new approaches, new products or new technologies is an exercise in social and behavior change. One described this as the primary emphasis of her organization. Some remarked specifically on the emphasis now being given to behavior change and remarked how this priority was on par with engaging in new research (Box 3.10).

BOX 3.10. IMPORTANCE OF FOCUSING ON BEHAVIOR CHANGE

We focus on behavior change – getting people to adopt approaches that have been around and proven for a long time.

We need to focus more on how to integrate technical areas and how to change behavior. This is where the biggest change happens, and this is where our organization is very good: it is our comparative advantage. We promote practices that have been tried and true as long as 20 years ago – where we come in is to bring them to people who have not yet adopted them. So we are not focusing on the early adopters; we are not doing the high-tech stuff. We still have a need for information but not at the high level of a lot of the research out there. We need to know what causes people to change their behavior and adopt a new technology or practice that we are promoting.

There is so much research out there but so what? We use it if we find it applicable, but the reality is that communities have used the same practices for a long time and it is hard to change this. For example, if they've been using white potato and you introduce orange potato, they will not just pick this up – there needs to be community sensitization.

The challenge for picking up innovations at the community, household, and farmer level is not necessarily that the research is not there to support the innovation. It's about changing people's longstanding behaviors. The challenge for picking up innovations at the community, household, and farmer level is not necessarily that the research is not there to support the innovation: it's about changing people's longstanding behaviors.

Challenges in implementing integrated approach. Many interviewees indicated that there had been some shift in their organizational structures or *modus operandi* to better suit integrated approaches, but that they had faced several challenges in achieving integration in practice (Box 3.11). The longstanding

separation of technical fields appears slow to change: new working relationships and modalities are in incipient stages relative to the long-engrained ones that preceded them. Some interviewees noted that their departments and even their project proposals have been shaped by how donors think about programming, e.g., In RFAs or RFPs, donor specification of separate objectives for agriculture and nutrition.

BOX 3.11. CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING INTEGRATED APPROACH

[My organization...] has had a food and nutrition security strategy for a long time. At the institutional level, agriculture and nutrition have been fundamentally connected and accepted as such for a long time. But at the practical level, there is a spectrum in the degree to which this integration is reflected in programming, and a bias from the technical direction [to keep them separated].

In the field we promote integration but it doesn't really converge; it's more siloed.

Within a given NGO, there tends to be compartmentalization, e.g., nutrition departments look at immediate nutrition and utilization; livelihoods teams look at access; and there are teams for gender, emergencies or humanitarian assistance, advocacy. There may be close collaboration among all teams.

Adaptation of organizational structures. The move toward integrated programming brings with it the challenge of adapting to organizational change, such as to a new intra-organizational architecture. Respondents offered a few examples (Box 3.12).

BOX 3.12. ORGANIZATIONAL INNOVATIONS TO SUPPORT INTEGRATION

We are multi-sectoral and we have tried to do integrated work by putting a health promoter and an agriculture promoter together on the same project. Now we are wrestling with how to get one person/position at the community level to do both. One thing we are doing to support this is equipping local staff at the managerial level with manuals and flipcharts in technical areas so that we don't pressure the community staff with creating these.

A few years ago, my organization drafted a new agricultural strategy with four pillars. One was agriculture and health. This did not get immediate follow-through, as no one was dedicated to it. I was hired four years later to lead that work!

In our current (since two years) Food for Peace DFAP, we've had some pushback at the zonal level, in our trying to facilitate coordination of the two sectors, in trying to de-specialize the staff positions to integrate health/nutrition and agriculture into one. We encourage staff who need expertise in an area where they are not specialized to take the technical issue back to their supervisor for support.

Riskiness of innovation. Another important consideration for INGOs regarding the utility of research on integrated approaches is that regardless of the evidence, applying new research entails some risk-taking. Incorporating innovation, even when there is research behind it, is a risk both for INGO staff and for the communities the innovation is intended to benefit. Adoption of new approaches, new products, new technologies is an exercise in social and behavior change.

As one interviewee pointed out, INGOs will be risk-averse unless donors encourage them to innovate.

Research needs to be not too new in order for us to take a chance on it. We can propose innovations to donors but (with the exception of Gates) donors tend to be conservative unless the proposal is for a very small innovation. Targeting the NGO is not enough to get pick-up of ideas; the donor needs exposure, too.

In the absence of evidence of impact of agriculture for nutrition approaches, ‘tried and true’ approaches hold sway over innovations that research is still investigating. Given the presence of long-established evidence for best practices in other areas, many interviewees noted their or their organizations’ inclination to focus efforts on designing programs that follow approaches that are known to work and have been widely accepted for a long time. As one nutritionist put it,

Approaches such as early breastfeeding, maternal care and WASH are nutrition-sensitive as much as agriculture: it doesn’t matter if you have orange-fleshed sweet potato if you have diarrhea.

We promote what already exists and for which there is evidence. We use already-proven interventions even if they are not recent. We can’t always point you to a particular piece of research that said so or that influenced our approach; often this information has been around for a long time.

On the other hand, a less risk-averse interviewee had this to say:

Most of our funding is from US government programs. They dictate that we use PM2A, conservation agriculture, integrated pest management, 1000 Days – because these are tested methods and there is evidence that they work. But with integrated agriculture and nutrition, donors are not at a point where they can say they know what has worked and what hasn’t. This gives NGOs an opportunity to try things.

Need for impact studies. The need for impact studies that will generate a solid evidence base for the new approach is especially important for INGOs when they consider making substantial investments or scaling up pilots in a limited resource environment. A richer pool of relevant impact studies would render the new approach lower-risk, and would provide justification for INGOs to modify existing approaches that have proven effective.

There is a lot of research about the agriculture-nutrition linkage but nothing on impact, which is astounding.

4. INFLUENCES ON PICK-UP OF RESEARCH BY INGOS

Trend toward evidence-based programming

In the development world generally, with increasingly strained resources and in a context of chronic, protracted food insecurity and crisis, both funders and implementers have growing financial incentives to invest in development approaches that reliably yield positive outcomes. Hence there is a drive for more evidence-based decision-making, and increasing demands from donors that their investments be shown to have the desired impact. This is part of the motivation for demanding high-quality monitoring and evaluation M&E and for paying close attention to recommendations stemming from evaluation and research. Some interviewees commented that the research focus has increasing traction in the development world, and part of this comes from donor emphasis (Box 4.1).

BOX 4.1. INCREASING DONOR CALLS FOR RIGOROUS IMPACT EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

This research collaboration came about because of more emphasis on the need for evidence-based decision making, so the research side is gaining huge momentum. We need to partner with centers of excellence. Partnerships used to be with fellow NGOs, but in the last five years, it's been more with partnerships with NGOs plus one research partner.

Donors have a big influence on impact evaluations. Now, we are starting to see donors pushing for and having evaluation policies; USAID, US Department of Agriculture (USDA), and Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) have them. This is a good trend and opportunity. They are asking for rigorous research, for theories of change in all programs, for hypothesis testing, for proper sampling and analysis. If these are not in place, results do not qualify as evidence. This is an opportunity because it brings funding: policy drives resource allocation.

Organizational culture of learning

Several of those interviewed remarked on the “culture of learning” (or lack thereof) (i) in development organizations generally, (ii) with respect to their own organizations, or even (iii) with respect to specific geographic regions. Interviewees reported that organizational culture of INGOS regarding use of research varies from there being little interest, to developing knowledge management systems and processes to support access to and use of research, to the dedication of staff positions or departments to research functions (Box 4.2).

BOX 4.2. DIFFERING INGO EXPERIENCES WITH THE CULTURE OF LEARNING IN THEIR ORGANIZATIONS

We are a learning organization.

My organization is trying to involve staff in research. We design research in collaboration with staff from the start, to promote ownership. If this is well done, then people get excited and there is a better chance to see how the research can be used to shape programming.

The culture in the NGO community is a big problem. NGOs are implementation-oriented and compliance-oriented. There is no room for reflection or centers of excellence.

We are oriented to accountability to the donor, to the church, and to beneficiaries, that's all – so the learning part is weak.

The culture is reactive in nature – there is no long-term thinking. With a five-year funding horizon, you spend the first year just opening the office, hiring staff, etc. But there are some good trends.

There is a culture of looking at research as an expense rather than an investment. The result is there is no generation of knowledge, no appetite for knowledge. If this is not fixed in the immediate term, it becomes a long-term problem.

Staff themselves need to accept the research information – otherwise how are they going to put it into practice?

A lot of projects have a staff development component. If you identify something that will help your professional growth, the organization will try to support you. Staff are very encouraged to attend events, and the organization tries to foster opportunities, for example, we can take courses for language learning; we have arrangements with a university to take online classes; we have a learning program for new staff. Staff don't always take advantage of all of these opportunities.

There is a need to educate and advocate about the value of research.

Learning incentives. The incentives an organization provides to encourage staff to access and use research give some indication of that organization's interest in promoting a culture of learning. The most commonly supported incentives reported by online survey respondents were: (i) encouragement to participate in online forums or webinars, (ii) subsidized attendance at conferences and workshops, and (iii) encouragement to subscribe to listservs or institutional mailing lists. Other support options requiring organizational resource outlays, (e.g., paid staff memberships in professional associations and paid access to online subscription-only resources such as journals, libraries, and databases) are also offered, but to lesser extent (Table A.24).

The level of satisfaction of online survey respondents with the incentives their organization provides to encourage staff to keep up to date with latest research results relevant to its work is quite mixed. Of those who replied to this question, 34 percent were satisfied or very satisfied, but 39 percent were not very or not at all satisfied (Table A.4). Write-in comments highlighted internal "WebEx" meetings where speakers/researchers are invited to share information, and the institution of a research and development arm within the organization, as means their organizations were employing to promote staff access to research. A follow-up question asked about satisfaction with how the respondent's organization feeds recent research into programming. Here 40 percent of respondents said they were satisfied or very satisfied in this regard, whereas only 25 percent were not very or not at all satisfied (Table A.5).

Donor influence. The role of the donor in promoting a culture of learning, and in attributing value to research related to integrated agriculture and nutrition and other emerging topics in development, was highlighted by a few interviewees, generally in the context of the need for adequate resources to undertake research activities and promote learning processes. This interviewee articulated a practical perspective regarding this point:

The donor is the frontline for the wake-up regarding the importance of research. If it's not required by the donor, the NGO won't do it. So if the donor does not require research and a workshop to present it, it doesn't happen. More often the donor just says send us a report, and then we don't get feedback on it. I would recommend including research utilization in the RFA or grant agreement, as more often it's the case that if we do the research it's ad hoc and nothing formally written comes out of it.

This statement drives home the point that the support needed for a productive learning culture is not only one of philosophy or attitude: it is also financial.

Diverse channels for accessing research

The online survey listed 20 channels that INGOs might use to access research, and asked respondents to check all that applied to their organizations. Of the 55 survey respondents that replied to this question, over half checked every channel in the list (Box 4.3 and Table A.3). This indicates the wide variety of entry points through which INGOs can be reached by the research community. Most frequently selected (85 percent or more of respondents) were:

- development community networks,
- technical literature,
- internet searches,
- informal personal networks, and
- external conferences, workshops and seminars.

Participation in formal communities of practice, networks and information platforms. Online survey data and interviewees’ responses indicate that staff members at all levels participate in a variety of communities of practice (COPs) or information-sharing networks relevant to their fields. Some of the most valued information sources named by interviewees in this respect were: the TOPS Food Security Network (FSN), CORE group, SUN Initiative, the USAID-funded SPRING project, and the Gates-funded Alive and Thrive initiative. Box 4.4 (Table A.23) lists all the external COPs, networks, and information platforms mentioned by online survey respondents in response to an open-ended question asking the names of agriculture and nutrition networks and alliances in which their organization participates.

BOX 4.3 CHANNELS USED BY INGOs TO ACCESS RESEARCH	
Channels	Very + somewhat important
	Percent (n-55)
Development community networks	100
Technical literature	99
Internet searches	97
Informal personal networks	95
Conferences, workshops, seminars external to your organization	85
Online fora or webinars	82
Thematic working groups in the field	80
Web sites of NGO networks	80
Web sites of academic departments and/or research institutes	78
Web sites of UN agencies	75
Listservs external to your organization	73
Staff meetings	69
Listservs internal to your organization	69
Professional association membership	67
Web sites of donors	67
Conferences, workshops, seminars internal to your organization	64
Intranet Web platform for sharing learning and resources	60
Web sites that provide humanitarian/development news (e.g., trust.org, devex.com, etc.)	57
TV, radio and print media	54
Social media (e.g., Facebook, Google+, Twitter, etc.)	53
Research that the national program has done (write-in)	
Conversations with smallholder farm families (write-in)	
Behavior change communication tools, social mobilization (write-in)	

The level of engagement in these communities of practice, networks, and information platforms varies considerably, from very passive (receiving emails) to quite active (leading an online discussion or making a presentation; direct participation in a given initiative; organizational representation on a steering group). It bears noting that some COPs can be quite large; one INGO’s internal COP for nutrition has 140 members. The same holds true for external COPs. For example, the Agriculture to Nutrition (Ag2Nut) COP has over 1,000 members, and the TOPS/FSN Nutrition and Agriculture Linkages in Africa Network (NARAL) has 398² members. These numbers illustrate the extensive coverage that is possible via online COPs – though their utility to users

² NARAL membership figure provided by Patrick Coonan of CORE group. Email communication September 22, 2014.

depends not only on online access, but also on the organization’s capacity to provide and moderate relevant content and to facilitate discussion. Some INGOs have greater capacity in this regard than do others.

BOX 4.4. COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE, NETWORKS AND INFORMATION PLATFORMS THAT INGOS REPLY ON FOR ACCESSING RESEARCH
Agriculture to nutrition (Ag2Nut)
AgriLinks
Agri-ProFocus
AVRDC-ASEAN Regional Network for Vegetable Research and Development (AARNET)
Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP)
CGIAR and CG Centers
Cocoa Sustainability Partnership
Community Nutrition and Climate Change Group
Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)
Devex
Eldis
Feed the Future
Food Security Clusters at country and regional levels
GAIN
Grow Africa
International Child Care Ministries (ICCM)
IFPRI
International Union of Nutritional Sciences
Ministry of Agriculture-housed agriculture and nutrition platforms
Rice Research Network
Secure Nutrition (World Bank)
Society for International Development (SID)
United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition (SCN)
World Bank

Pros and cons were summed up by one nutrition advisor as follows:

What do COPs do well? They give highlights, snapshots – still, I have been overwhelmed with some of the discussions and exchanges. An exception was, I was invited to participate in one platform – a closed group, 15 people, with a specific topic and questions each day. It was well facilitated. This worked well because they seek your individual commitment to be part of it, so you show up! Other kinds of exchanges go quickly through my inbox.

Technical literature. Technical specialists employed by the INGO are the primary users of technical literature (Box 4.5). Technical advisors and technical directors for specialties such as nutrition, health, HIV/AIDS, agriculture, natural resource management, learning and impact, and social and behavior change were an important category of interviewees. It is very clear from interviews with these and other organizational informants that the technical advisor, who is often

headquarters or regionally-based, plays a significant role in staying current with outside research, and in filtering, translating and sharing it with staff to whose work it is applicable.

BOX 4.5. ROLE OF TECHNICAL ADVISORS IN KEEPING ABREAST OF RESEARCH

We [technical advisors] are conduits for research.
In our organization, outside research gets noticed because our agriculture specialist in headquarters (HQ) looks for it, stays on top of it, and links research to specific country programs, informing those country offices.
The technical teams in HQ keep email lists – some are really good in that when the technical staff person learns of something key happening in Uganda that could be relevant to India, they’ll point this out.
Regional technical advisors and I are responsible to identify the bright ideas and to ensure that they have science behind them.
We [technical advisors] try to stay up on the different forums, events, do reading – in the larger programs we have specialized staff who also do this.
Both the health and the agriculture teams participate in conferences (e.g., TOPS) and make sure we incorporate new ideas/research into program implementation.

The technical advisor is one of the main organizational representatives who is backed with resources to attend conferences, workshops and networking events related to their fields of specialization. INGOs that do not employ technical specialists are much more likely either just to stick with tried and true models for activities that they have traditionally implemented, or to rely on their donors for technical guidance.

Besides accessing and filtering research, the technical advisor also has the function of disseminating and “translating” outside research for internal use (Box 4.6). Most interviewees commented that a main challenge of using the research products issuing from research and academic institutions is that – in addition to research on any given topic being too voluminous to process and manage – the research products themselves are too “high-level”: too lengthy, too academic, too theoretical for practitioners to easily process and apply. This is the gap that the technical advisor seeks to fill, by culling through and prioritizing research most relevant to the organization’s current programming and strategic direction and presenting it in a format that is more “practitioner-friendly.” This may include generating new documentation around the research for internal use (e.g., briefs, summaries), conducting trainings or workshops in country or regional offices, or participating in proposal design teams either virtually or in country.

BOX 4.6. HOW TECHNICAL ADVISORS TRANSMIT RESEARCH RESULTS WITHIN THEIR ORGANIZATIONS

When I visit the country programs, I do presentations and go to the field and meet with all staff at all levels. Also for pre-proposal analysis, I accompany the agriculture and nutrition team and we do it together.

I keep up on the literature and am involved in proposal writing, so this is one way the research gets reflected. I do presentations, for example on Stuart Gillespie’s research, and show examples using our own work and showing how it applies. I share journal articles and I’m trying to set up a community of practice. More often, our country program staff write to me with requests and I send them relevant items.

There’s a role of translation of research, and it’s good for headquarters to play this – for one, they share budget for this. Plus, for a translator you need someone with a depth of understanding and knowledge of how the program works on the ground – what’s possible and probable – to identify aspects of the research like timing, donor requirements; to know what our organization’s strategic priorities are. The M&E people are too overburdened to play this role. The translator needs an academic background or someone in the same role to meet them in the middle.

The senior manager of the program tends to do the reading, then it goes to midline staff ... but more directly, the readers are staff in social and behavior change, technical nutrition people, and program designers. Time is a problem; others never read it. Probably just 20 people do.

It is part of technical advisors’ responsibility to stay abreast such as by attending conferences. The technical team translates materials from 30-page documents to pieces that can be used in the field; however, it is a long way from all of our duties to be able to stay abreast of all of the current literature!

Internet searches. Internet searches ranked very high among online survey respondents as a channel for accessing research, and the interviewees also reported heavy reliance on internet-based mechanisms for research access. No other information was gleaned about how these searches are conducted. Box 3.3 shows that websites of NGOs, academic and research institutions and UN agencies are all widely consulted, but the use of the internet in general is ranked even higher, so it seems likely that browsing with keyword searches is also commonly practiced.

Informal networking and personal connections. Many interviewees stressed that face-to-face interaction – especially interaction with persons with whom one is personally acquainted – is also very important. This is

consistent with the high ranking of both formal and informal networks in the online survey. In a facilitated discussion on knowledge management at an FSN learning event, a key point that came out was that the exercise of collecting knowledge is little more than an exercise if the knowledge does not transfer between individuals. In order for this to happen, those individuals need to have a connection to each other – a reason to seek out the other, to listen to and trust the other as an information source. This is why networking events are such powerful forums – while the knowledge transfer does not necessarily occur at the event itself, the event enables people to make personal connections that build information pathways for future exchange. The following instructive example was given by one interviewee:

Our collaboration with the International Potato Center (CIP) on improving orange-fleshed sweet potato (OFSP) came about because the Chief of Party was at the same parties and circles as the CIP people. Together, they got the idea for the research project and talked to USAID about it, and USAID took it up.

A number of Interviewees stressed that personal connections, as well as personal experience, go a long way to improving the likelihood that the volume of information available on any given topic will be processed and used. The topic introduced by a familiar person, or through one’s own experience, is the one that will receive attention (Box 4.7).

BOX 4.7. IMPORTANCE OF TRUSTED MESSENGERS AND PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

People tend to listen more to internal analysis because it comes from colleagues.

A lot of literature exists on the use of mobile technologies in health and agriculture. However the pathway by which we really start to pay attention to this literature is when we meet someone – say at a conference or meeting – who tells us they have actually used this technology: this is how they did it, these were their results.

Who drives decisions about what research is used? The technical team. I get 10 different journal articles in my inbox and may select one to share. It’s the personal connection – people know me so they know this research is not just something from “urban lore.” If I send it then it’s something they’ll pay more attention to because they know me.

Innovation is difficult. There is a need to get the time with and exposure to the innovation to be able to apply it. Personally, I read a lot but it’s better if I have an experience – if I can visualize, see for myself.

Trusted messengers are often key staff or “champions” within the organization. These can be staff members at any level who are strong advocates for certain approaches, principles, philosophies, and strategies. Their commitments may be borne of their training, experiences, beliefs, and professional standards; they may have a certain vision they would like to see realized in the programming of their organization. These individuals often act as champions for new research findings, and play a critical role in the pick-up of findings of interest by their organizations. Several interviewees named specific individuals in their organizations who were powerful forces in strategic thinking and who brought about change at the corporate or ground level by pushing new ideas through. Without a champion, new research is not likely to be picked up unless the pick-up is imposed by donors. As one interviewee commented:

Political will is at the heart of all of this. It’s not a question of money; there are just not many people in NGOs who champion research and take steps to make it happen.

Conferences and learning events. Conferences and learning events are important venues for sharing and accessing new research. These are highly valued by staff members at all levels. However, resource constraints may limit participation, and attendance by technical and managerial staff is more common than by community-based staff. Interviewees commented that limited education and experience can be a barrier to full participation by field staff in conference events. Some INGOs did indicate support of field staff participation, however, including as presenters at external or internal conferences and workshops.

Participation of a wide range of staff members from different levels expands the organization’s avenues for research access. Nevertheless, in order for the research exposure of any particular staff member to truly enter into the discourse of the organization, several factors are influential. The organization must allocate adequate time for staff members who represent their organizations at conferences and learning events to process their experience, and they must support staff to translate their learning into a suitable format for sharing and provide a venue for that sharing to take place. Some INGOs make sharing of what has been learned a condition of participation. Box 4.8 gives examples provided by interviewees of benefits and challenges of staff participation in conferences and learning events.

BOX 4.8. EXPERIENCES WITH STAFF PARTICIPATION IN CONFERENCES AND LEARNING EVENTS

The challenge with conferences is that they are not very accessible to community-based staff who have just high school or college degrees. The person who goes needs the capacity to absorb and contribute.
We try to make sure that people in the field get the stage, for example, so a field staff member from Malawi can present in one of our Webinars.
Some of the field guys attend external conferences and are involved in the forums of the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP). They let us (in headquarters) know when there are new things they want to try. We see if it fits within the grant funding, and we check with the Agreement Officer Representative (AOR) to see if we can try it. So the information goes two ways – from the technical specialist in headquarters to the field and also from field to headquarters.
We have made a point in the last five years to bring staff to CORE meetings to talk about how to apply research findings like those from the Lancet, and to expose them to the wide range of agencies in CORE.
I get staff to present when they return, and they sometimes do capacity building around the information they learned, but this may not be done well. The information usually stays with the person who went. People need time to [use the information they learned], to plan and to take the lessons back.
We haven’t done much on support for attendance at conferences or workshops because someone needs to express the interest to attend an event in the first place. If this does not come from them, then they tend not to share the info when they come back. So when we do send someone, it is a condition of their participation that they do a training/debriefing on their return. In fact, we add this to their performance review – this is part of the checks and balances.

Knowledge management

The sophistication of the system technical advisors and others use for knowledge sharing varies greatly by organization, and sometimes across different regions or departments of a global organization. In the online survey, 78 percent of the respondents indicated that their organization has some kind of knowledge management system with a dedicated department or staff by which it acquires external knowledge, captures internal knowledge, develops new knowledge, shares all of this knowledge, and/or uses knowledge to achieve its mission and goals (Table A.15). While one commented it is “an essential part of our way of learning,” others wrote in that the system is “not very robust” or “weak.”

Interviewees were also asked what, if any, knowledge management systems are in place in their organizations for information-sharing. Their descriptions of these systems ranged from efforts undertaken without an explicit overarching knowledge management strategy, to systems in incipient stages, to full-blown, very deliberate systems with dedicated staff to oversee them. In general, they were able to list a variety of channels through which information from research and evaluation and about best practices circulates within their organizations, but this was often qualified by describing the challenges of doing this effectively (Box 4.9).

BOX 4.9. WEAKNESS OF INGO KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

We try to do knowledge management, but we don't do it very well.

Knowledge management is seen as part of staff responsibilities, but time is not necessarily set aside for it.

Internal dissemination of research results. When asked whether their organizations disseminate information about new research results on multiple occasions and through multiple channels, 73 percent of the online survey respondents (Table A.26) and most interviewees responded in the affirmative. Many doubted, however, whether sharing information through these multiple channels was an effective means for helping staff keep up-to-date. One of the write-in comments expressed it this way:

We are starting to get better about publicizing our own research studies externally, but it's been an uphill battle to make it happen internally. We don't have good systems for keeping staff up to date on new research from other sources.

BOX 4.10. METHODS OF SHARING INFORMATION ABOUT BEST PRACTICES AND RESULTS OF EVALUATION AND RESEARCH	
Method	Percent (n=44)
Email circulars with links to original research reports, summaries, briefs, PowerPoints, or guidelines	75
Internal training seminars or workshops	64
Email circulars with attachments prepared internally, e.g., summaries, briefs, or PowerPoints	59
Intranet platform for sharing experiences, learning and resources	52
Internal development and circulation of operational guidelines	45
Internal listserv	34
Calls between technical staff at HQ and country office (write-in)	
Websites and intranet Share Point sites (write-in)	
Workshops (write-in)	
Online university (write-in)	
Mostly informally (write-in)	

INGOs disseminate information about research and best practices through a variety of channels, with e-mail circulars and internal training seminars or workshops topping the list reviewed by online survey respondents (Box 4.10 and Table A.25). Interviewees provided more details of how information is disseminated in their organizations, through both informal and formal knowledge management systems.

Informal knowledge management systems. For some, efforts are undertaken without an explicit overarching knowledge management strategy, and are limited to distribution of information (e.g., research, reports, statistics) via email circulars,

internal listservs, or internal communities of practice (COPs) organized and managed by a technical advisor. These email mechanisms may function as simple distribution channels, but some benefit from more active engagement of COP members, e.g., whereby staff post questions and comments on current topics of program interest and there is a moderator role. One interviewee indicated that his organization was making progress in this area by creating an organizational unit for M&E, accountability and learning, which ultimately will have both agriculture and health specialists.

Formal knowledge management systems. Features of more developed knowledge management systems described by interviewees include intranet Web platforms, virtual meetings or trainings, and online resource repositories maintained by the INGO. The more sophisticated systems tend to have dedicated staff responsible for knowledge management, often for all sectors in which the INGO works, not just for agriculture and nutrition. Still, there are certain prerequisites to functionality and effectiveness (Box 4.11).

BOX 4.11. CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVENESS OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT PLATFORMS

The effectiveness of knowledge management platforms depends on how well organized the resources are. It helps to have someone to organize all of this, but if they do not have the expertise in a specific technical field they need guidance and standards on what is worth sharing.

Sharing a common server facilitates management of the body of information maintained by an organization. When different offices at headquarters, country and field levels each have their own servers that are not connected to each other, each individual office may have its own collection of resources.

Dependability of access is also important. Limitations exist where connectivity is spotty.

Even where some form of knowledge management exists, users often find it inadequate, and tend to rely on more traditional ways of knowledge sharing:

We've put knowledge management forward as a need. We do have platforms – headquarters has a common drive with technical documents; we share reports on the Website. We have Intranet out of one of our main offices. But knowledge management is not our mega-strength. Our main channels are old school: phone and Skype, not e-platforms.

This is one reason that TOPS and CORE group are highly valued forums: they provide a learning platform that INGOs on their own cannot easily afford to develop and maintain.

BOX 4.12. FACTORS THAT POSE CHALLENGES FOR ACCESSING AND MAKING EFFECTIVE USE OF RESEARCH RESULTS	
Factor	Very + somewhat challenging
	Percent (n=46)
Funding limitations	72
Time constraints within your organization	70
Lack of practical guidelines to operationalize research results and recommendations	61
Donor-imposed constraints	59
Bureaucratic obstacles inside your organization	57
Presentations of research results not “user-friendly”	57
Lack of awareness of what research is available	52
Lack of internal technical expertise to draw out the significance of new research for your organization	50
Lack of relevance of existing research for the work of your organization	46
Political and/or cultural barriers in the countries where you work	43
Research results not presented in accessible languages	35
'Getting the work done' is prioritized over research) (2 write-ins)	
Research has to be done on the margin of available time (write-in)	
Bureaucratic obstacles, now resolved with new leadership) (write-in)	

Barriers to research pick-up. Online survey respondents were given a list of possible barriers to accessing and using research, and asked to rate them in terms of how challenging they viewed each barrier. Funding limitations and time constraints had the highest frequency of being rated very or somewhat challenging. Lack of operational guidelines, donor-imposed constraints, bureaucratic obstacles, unfriendliness of presentations

of research results and lack of internal technical expertise to draw out the significance of new research for one's organization were also important challenges (Box 4.12 and Table A.8).

Write-in comments for the online survey question on satisfaction with learning incentives (Box 4.13 and Table A.4) also emphasized budget and time constraints as reasons for dissatisfaction. Limited internet connectivity was mentioned as a constraint by one Africa-based respondent.

In Africa, where I am based, internet connectivity is limited, so the Web sites you have to use to get access to journals never permit downloading because they are so 'data-heavy.' Why can't they adopt Google's methods of having a simplified html site for those of us with limited Internet connectivity? I also cannot access so many important professional journals because I am based in Africa and the connection will dictate that it is limited to only US- or European Union (EU)-related IP addresses. No wonder Africa-based students have troubles of publishing – they never can get access to important peer-reviewed literature!

BOX 4.13. CONSTRAINTS ON LEARNING FOR INGOS STAFF

There are limited resources available so oftentimes it's a hard decision what to use the money for. Unfortunately I had to miss a lot of key meetings related to agriculture and nutrition because of that.
There is no internal budget to pay for journal subscriptions.
It is costly to get access to peer-reviewed journals because the cost money and are expensive.
The quantity of new research is daunting. The question is how to filter the chaff.
Many of the resources are freely accessible online, so the only incentive necessary is to have the time to subscribe and read posts.

Amongst interviewees, lack of time to focus on new research, and to reflect on and process it in a way that would enable staff to apply research-based lessons to their daily work was a salient theme (Box 4.14).

BOX 4.14. CONSTRAINTS IMPOSED BY TIME PRESSURES AND INFORMATION OVERLOAD

We have no systematic function where we look at research. The health and agriculture teams are both under-resourced relative to what we expect from them; they need time to get online and catch up.
The big challenge is really time. Our technical staff are overwhelmed just trying to support ongoing projects, which makes it difficult to invest the time in reading the research and teasing out the relevance to our programs.
Not many people have the time to read the literature – they are focused on their project deliverables.
There is an overabundance of research – we want fewer choices, not more!
Gone are the days when headquarters was the gatekeeper of research. We trip over each other because the articles circulated cross each other.
We tend to use Google as our repository! But it is hard to sort through it all.
Staff are so busy; they have little time to pay attention to research. This is 75 percent of the problem.
There is never enough time carved out for getting the word out about research results. There's no time to write up the last project because you have to be writing the next one.
In the Sahel, there is a lot of learning being shared but there is so much time spent on the day-to-day fires that it is hard to apply.

Several interviewees commented on the inaccessibility of research products, in the sense of readability and comprehensibility (Box 4.15). Research documents and presentations need to be better tailored to their target audiences in terms of these audiences' language capabilities, time availability, and academic and professional preparation. When research findings and recommendations do not address these factors, it is less likely that effective, research-verified models will be taken up, unless they are imposed.

BOX 4.15. INACCESSIBILITY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS FOR INGO PRACTITIONERS

The language of research is not accessible – for many people, English is their second or third language – it’s hard to process that kind of research in one’s non-native language.
There can be a lapse into academic or technical language. I see people shut down all the time because this is intimidating. There is a cloak of rigor around this research but it needs to be understandable and comprehensible.
The field tells us, you guys forward us information, but we can’t read it.
Field staff are not learning by reading or study – these are not effective learning pathways.
Products need to be brief, digestible, and translated to level appropriate to the local and operational level. Theory needs to be converted into digestible format – a two-pager, a glossy powerpoint, Web formats, a two-minute video summary.
Knowledge management is required to make research more digestible – we only need the “Cliff Notes” version.
Someone needs to synthesize the research. This requires a certain background and capacity –someone to look at all the research and tell us what the latest research tells us about the best way to implement.
Content of research presentation needs to be simple, practical messages for our staff.

5. INGO MONITORING, EVALUATION AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Monitoring and evaluation activities

Online survey results indicate that most INGOs engage in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities, both for their own learning and to fulfill donor requirements (Box 5.1 and Table A.17). These activities can vary in terms of structure and level of formality. Regular progress reporting and field visits/trip reports are the most common ways to capture learning from the field, with informal networking among staff and staff meetings that include staff from both headquarters and the field not far behind (Table A.16). Seventy-six percent of survey respondents indicated that their organizations use internal staff to conduct M&E; nearly half also use outside evaluators, both international and local, for specific evaluations (Table A.18).

BOX 5.1. M&E AND INTERNAL RESEARCH ACTIVITIES OF INGOS				
Online survey question	Yes	No	Don't Know/ Not sure	Total
	Percent			
Does your organization require formal monitoring and evaluation of its programs/projects? (n =45)	96	4	---	100
Does your organization conduct its own investigative research to identify innovations and best practices in agriculture and/or nutrition programming? (n=44)	45	32	23	100

Internal research activities

Besides their regular evaluation activities, some INGOs have set research priorities or objectives related to specific projects that they are implementing. In some instances this is because they have been required to include a research component as a condition of funding. In other cases, they have designated internal or unrestricted funds for this purpose. Twenty online survey respondents (45 percent) indicated that their organization conducts its own research to identify innovations and best practices in agriculture and nutrition programming (Box 5.1 and Table A.19). Of these, 14 indicated that they conduct this type of research through their own research department, 11 indicated that they partner with outside research institutions, and 8 indicated that they contract with others to carry out research on their behalf (Table A.20). Write-in comments all made statements to the effect that such research is limited in extent and in quality (Box 5.2).

BOX 5.2. LIMITED EXTENT OF INTERNAL RESEARCH BY INGOS

We cannot do [research by] ourselves. It is not our priority. We would do this through a partnership with a research organization.
Not consistent. [We do research] only when [it is] built into the award agreement. [There is] some capture of best practices during project closeout.
We conduct our own research to a limited extent through pilot projects or as part of larger-funded projects' innovation spaces.
We do conduct our own research, but I would say it is not well done to have its findings feed back to improve the projects.
We do a lot of assessments of field trials and pilots, but I believe they are rarely done by trained research scientists. Though sometimes.
Yes, [we do conduct our own research], but it is the exception, not the rule.
I would like to think so [that we do our own research to identify innovations and best practices].

Nevertheless, respondents were able to list half a dozen examples of evaluative research and a couple of pilot studies which their organizations had undertaken, and some indicated that their organizations were planning to do more (Table A.21).

Importance of operational research

Interviewees often mentioned the importance of operational research to their work. Creation of a research and development arm within their organizations was also mentioned by some interviewees as a new development responding to the increased demand for more rigorous evidence-based evaluation of field activities. Smaller INGOs tend not to be too active in developing research/evaluation protocols or evaluation standards and rely on the policies, procedures, and guidelines of the donor. By contrast, they can and often do undertake operational research on their own. It was fairly prominent in their descriptions of the kind of research their organizations undertake on their own and what they find immediately applicable to their work (Box 5.3).

BOX 5.3. INGO EXPERIENCE WITH OPERATIONAL RESEARCH

Most of our operational research is not about topics like high-yield crops – it’s about tinkering with the behavior change piece.
A question such as ‘How are you running your demonstration plots?’ is easy to randomize and fits into our existing programming.
We do operational research ourselves – this is our own testing.
We do evaluation and operations research to respond to where the Lancet series left off – to see who those interventions work for, and how to scale up.
In terms of our working relationships with outside research institutions, the more operational the research, the more we are involved.
The first time I ever heard of IFPRI was for our Feed the Future project - we needed someone to do operational research.
For our Title II program a university is helping us with operations research. We did not have these kinds of collaborations before.
One of the gaps is for more operational research.
The problem is that you can’t wait till the proposal stage to start looking at what research is out there. You need operations research. We would like to put this into our mainstream work. Institutions need to let us know through organizations like TOPS that the research exists, and to make 30-60 min presentations with slides. They need to market the material, just like pharmacies market to doctors. Let us see how the innovation works, so we can believe it and try it.
Don’t be afraid of operational research. NGOs won’t implement things without that kind of testing. For example, PlumpyDose in the Alive and Thrive program has been tested and shown successful – but in an environment where every day 300 kids come to the clinic to take it. This is not field reality, where attendance is not so consistent – we don’t know what happens with the product, like does it get taken home and shared, or how it is used.

Funding challenges for M&E and internal research

Funding can be a constraint. This is an area for enhanced donor attention, especially in light of growing donor demand for more robust evidence gathering and for evidence-based interventions. Both require a level of capacity and investment that many INGOs are not able to offer without additional support, though some are using creative funding strategies to overcome the constraint (Box 5.4).

BOX 5.4. FUNDING CONSTRAINTS AND SOLUTIONS FOR INGO MONITORING, EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

Access to research would be enhanced if donors encouraged, demanded, and funded activities such as M&E and knowledge sharing. Over time, this would help us build a useful repository of knowledge
We have looked for different donors to help us augment our M&E; and we obtained a foundation grant to automate M&E data collection using mobile phones.
In the past, my organization has allocated funds to do strategic work, which includes assessments to analyze the results of pilot projects.
Country offices in my organization have general funds that come from donations that generally go to vehicles, management, office needs – whether there is extra money for research varies year to year. If we want secure research funding, we need to get it in within a grant, in which case the donor would have a say in how it is used.
Underspending in a project is common, so we can take it from there. But transaction costs for doing research are high: we can only do so many research projects.
There is a need for a detailed needs assessment at the proposal stage, which is separate from any other research. It needs to be part of new business development but there are few funds for that.
Some of our country programs have more sure child sponsorship income than others and thus have more freedom to try things; some are more aggressive in innovating because they see the value that grant funding can add to a project.

INGO collaboration with research institutions

All interviewees indicated experience partnering with research institutions or universities and/or commissioning individual research consultants, whether at the INGO's own initiative or as part of grant-funded projects. Most named numerous entities with which they have had long-standing relationships and recurring collaboration. Research entities fulfill a range of functions in partnership with INGOs, such as advising on project design or measurement; project monitoring and evaluation; and investigative or operational research. Most interviewees provided specific examples of collaborations – and most also emphasized that there is great variability within their organization as to how and why those collaborations come about. This was not stated with any sense of being a weakness – simply, it was to underline the variation in contexts and relationships in different cases.

Benefits of collaboration for researchers. Many interviewees commented on the mutual benefits of collaboration with research institutions. The main benefit to researchers is that NGOs provide an operational context in which to pilot innovations. One interviewee commented:

The CG centers see us as an avenue for innovating and promotion of innovations.

Another interviewee cited USAID-funded operational research in which the INGO was a sub-contractor to a university assigned to test new food products and inform the redesign of quality foods for Food for Peace Title II programs. Overall, the interviews suggest that indeed, there may be a substantial number of innovations in agriculture and nutrition that are being tested through researcher-INGO partnerships. One technical advisor for agriculture provided this example:

We wanted to increase production but farmers were still planting diseased crops, not even knowing or understanding that they were diseased. So we entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with a CG center and they provided us with cassava germplasm and capacity

training around it. We chose cassava because the farmers were already using it and because it is low-cost and easy to multiply. The researchers' interest was whether this variety would work in this geographic location. Our role was to provide them with follow-up information about how the variety was working in the farmers' fields. This was to be done during an ongoing project, so we notified USAID (our donor) about this change and got their agreement to proceed.

Benefits of collaboration for INGOs. Interviewees indicated that, for their part, INGOs benefit from the methodological rigor that researchers bring to the table, from the learning they gain from research and evaluation findings, and also from the capacity building of their staff when staff engage directly with researchers and are afforded opportunities and active roles in research design, implementation, and analysis. Some interviewees indicated awareness of the gaps in the capacity of their organizations to undertake more rigorous monitoring and evaluation activities, and described their efforts to reach out to partners to fill these gaps (Box 5.5).

BOX 5.5. EXAMPLES OF COLLABORATION THAT FILL M&E CAPACITY GAPS OF INGOs

We were attempting to conduct evaluative research to build evidence for the impact of the program model we were implementing, which we felt was important. The research was done internally by country offices and country programs as part of routine baseline and endline data collection, guided for a time by some strong researchers we had who designed and led the research. But we were criticized because our work was not of the highest standard. There were questions around adequacy and plausibility, samples were not randomized but by convenience, the research was not rigorously designed, we were not looking at scientific measures of impact such as retinol levels or other biomarkers, were not looking at child growth. This led us to seek collaboration with a CG center. We were finally able to move forward with the collaboration when we got funding to research on our model, and have been collaborating since.

We collaborate with a university that helps us with project design. We get access to their specialists, and they get the practical information from us. We hire individuals from the university as freelancers – either graduate students or faculty. We can tap in to them fluently.

We have two big long-term research projects– one on social protection, one on nutrition. It's operational research and impact evaluation. Being part of this has engaged the field – academics can ask the questions better and bring an independent view.

Constraints to effective collaboration between researchers and INGOs

Collaborations are sub-optimal when researchers and INGOs have different interests that are not effectively reconciled in research planning, design, implementation, and reporting. Areas of tension or dissatisfaction repeatedly cited include:

- different cultures of the research and INGO communities,
- cost considerations and budgetary control,
- lack of INGO involvement in the formulation of study questions and the nature and number of indicators for which data will be collected
- irrelevance of research conducted in highly controlled environments
- difficulty of setting up randomized controls for rigorous quantitative research
- timing and duration of the research, and
- data ownership and access.

These and other aspects of feasibility, relevance, and practicality are among a number of areas demanding closer consultation in researcher-INGO collaborations. Such consultations have the potential to bridge

differences between cultures or research approaches and perspectives, but are largely lacking at the moment.

Different cultures. Several interviewees remarked on the difference of “culture” between research institutions and practitioners, and how this has posed a challenge to authentic collaboration. Cultural differences manifested, according to interviewees, in terms of: (i) different perceived interests of researchers and practitioners (publication in peer-reviewed journals versus short-term availability and use of research data, findings, and recommendations), (ii) communication styles (“high-level,” “academic,” and “highly technical” versus “practical,” “easy-to-understand,” and “accessible”), and (iii) the extent to which researchers and INGOs seek consultative relationships for conducting research (little interest in genuine consultation with INGO partners versus strong desire for more consultative relationship with research community).

Interviews and conversations at the TOPS FSN learning event suggest a general feeling that INGOs and research organizations inhabit different and parallel worlds. Box 5.6 illustrates some of the points of tension expressed by interviewees around the difference in culture that they perceive between researchers and INGOs. One representative of a CGIAR institution at the FSN event offered the following comment:

I find it enlightening and enjoyable to interact with INGOs at this event because I get to see how people are thinking about and using the research that my institution generates. I don't get this kind of opportunity very often because researchers have their own conferences and communities of practice.

BOX 5.6. CULTURAL DIVIDE BETWEEN RESEARCHERS AND INGOS

University academics are not client-focused. We have learned by experience that they do not see us as partners or as clients. They see the publication of research as a public good and think we should contribute to that objective without receiving any service in exchange.

We are interested in research use and they are interested in publication.

A lot of the research is self-promotional. A lot of time is spent on things not programmatically relevant.

The high-handed research that the person is conducting because they want to be a lead researcher on something is not useful to us. This kind of product stays on the shelf.

Working with researchers requires patience: NGOs and research institutions have different organizational cultures; this can cause some tensions.

Costs of collaborative research. Several interviewees commented on the push in the donor community for more rigorous research to inform INGO projects, and on donor requirements that INGOs seek partners with the capacity to lend this expertise. Most welcomed this trend, citing the benefits of the potential learning to be gained from these collaborations. However, they also expressed concern over the high cost of engaging with established research institutions, and highlighted that the INGO has a primary responsibility to achieve project outcomes and thus prioritize resources for this, and that project budgets are often not adequate to achieve research objectives as well (Box 5.7).

BOX 5.7. BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS THAT LIMIT INGO POSSIBILITIES FOR COLLABORATION

There is a budget difference between what an NGO can support and what is required for hard-core analysis. There is a trade-off between doing research and “getting food now.” In a US\$50 million project with a research component, maybe only US\$25M goes to actual food aid. There are great opportunities to do research but the budget limitations must be understood.

Working with a university is pricey.

I am a big supporter of CGIAR and their past work. I would really like them to do research here on vitamin-enriched cassava. The problem is if you go to a partner, there is a huge overhead cost. Research with a partner may cost 150k euros, so if we go for 250k euros, we have to hand over most of it to the research partner. I would love for us to do a longitudinal study. UN organizations can afford this but little organizations like ours can't. It's also hard if we have to come up with matching funds. Would love to do more work with CGIAR but it is cost-prohibitive. If you want to set up a research program without a tender, this is OK, it's better – because you could do it as partners.

When we partner with a research institution on a grant, they get only 10-20 percent of the total, and we use 80 percent for implementation, so it is an unequal partnership. The subcontracting/sub-granting relationship creates inequality in decision-making, planning, and outcomes. This is a big issue for me.

A new trend is that USAID, on the health side, is strongly recommending that we partner with local research institutions. We are less likely to win if we go with international ones. However now even the local and regional institutions come to us with full budgets, including their overhead – we can't afford this.

Research is possible but not if it's too expensive. INGO budgets have been very constrained in last five to six years. I'm a big research supporter – there are brilliant researchers out there – but they kill you with overhead; this is hard for a little NGO.

Don't expect rigorous research from NGOs unless you bring your own money. NGOs don't have resources for high-level research.

Inadequacy of consultative processes and risk of irrelevance of research. Because of the cultural divide, researchers often find it difficult to engage with INGOs on issues relating to research design. Questions that researchers find of interest to advance the state of scientific knowledge often do not resonate with the practical issues for which INGOs are seeking more immediate answers. Questions of greatest interest to INGOs, which are often more operational in nature, also need to be addressed with rigorous research methods, yet they are either not heard or are dismissed as trivial by the research community.

Some INGOs commented that while they value the academic, scientific orientation of research from universities and established research institutions and the quality of evidence that is possible through methodological rigor, at the same time, the requirements of this level of investigation sometimes make it less feasible and/or less useable in their operational contexts and not relevant to their practical needs. Also, research studies are often conceived without regard for what is of most concern at the local level (Box 5.8).

BOX 5.8. OBSERVATIONS ON RELEVANCE OF RESEARCH

A lot more consultation can be done. We don't want to be just the end users. I have never been invited to a meeting where the researchers say, “We're thinking of doing this research – what do you think?” Meanwhile TOPS has a nutrition group with a list of research topics; CORE also has a list. But researchers don't sit in these forums. They need to come – to network, to hear our interests, to say “We can help you with that.” We need to float ideas by each other – like speed dating – to find a match between research organizations and NGOs that want to do the same research.

There are lots of locally developed innovations done with the Ministry of Agriculture or local institutions. These are important and relevant. Outside researchers need to consider these local practices – research products need to be appropriate to them.

Every conference I go to there are 15 things on Alive and Thrive: 14 by IFPRI and one by an INGO. It's well-intentioned – but a lot is just not relevant, for example a topic on maternal depression – this is not relevant to our work. However, IFPRI has been open to our feedback on this.

Lots of money is going into random control trials with the idea that these projects will be replicable. For example, research on ready-to-use foods. This may prove a lot but in practice, you can't do it because it's too expensive. You need to use local foods.

There is a difference between what is possible in the laboratory and what is good for the farmer. The main thing, in introducing a different crop, is the color and aesthetics – and especially the taste. Researchers and implementers need to talk from the very beginning about this. Just like you have wine tasting, beer tasting – you need to have food tasting, because if the introduced crop does not taste good, people will not eat it. If the introduced crop takes too long to grow, or needs a lot of vegetative coverage to grow, this will not be picked up. Researchers and implementers need to work together to make sure that the research can be actually used.

Another problem is that, with the increasing demand for a more rigorous approach to evaluative research, INGOs are often faced with the burden of having to organize and oversee the monitoring of indicators selected by external partners for conducting this research. There is usually little or no consultation with the INGO about the selection of these indicators, which often have little relevance for field operations. In some instances, INGOs end up with two data collection systems – one to satisfy the needs of the research, and another to satisfy their own M&E requirements.

While many conversations contained some critique or disappointment in the weak intersection and communication between the two worlds, nevertheless most interviewees recognized that researchers and practitioners need each other and are, over time, improving the quality of their partnerships to mutual benefit (Box 5.9).

BOX 5.9. EXAMPLES OF EMERGING IMPROVEMENTS IN COLLABORATION

There is a more mature understanding now between researchers and practitioners on the value of partnership, e.g., with the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), World Fish, IFPRI.

A positive is that researchers and NGOs are aligned behind common principles and causes – we are all starting to speak the same language.

Good collaboration is not just about having the two principal investigators (one from the institution and one from our side) agree: someone needs to actively manage the relationship, to hold their hands all the way through. As the relationship manager, I will see things the country office won't see; the researchers won't see the dynamics involved; and the country office may not see things because they have the donor breathing down their neck ... I managed our relationship with [name excised] University for nine months. The intentions of the partner were good but it's tricky, because at their research level the questions are too narrow, and the research is not done on our timescale. It's getting better but it's a lot of work. You could easily have a full-time coordinator just to manage that relationship and do all the communications.

Need for contextualization. Some INGO staff expressed frustration with research conducted in controlled environments. In their experience it often has low utility in that the tested approaches are not likely to be replicable in 'real' environments. Interviewees would like to see interesting research results contextualized to their particular environments; research that is not contextually relevant cannot be applied in the field (Box 5.10).

BOX 5.10. NEED FOR CONTEXTUALIZING RESEARCH RESULTS

While one can learn a lot by reading research, applications will still be different in one's own context.

It can be challenging when we're not the only NGO in the area where the research institution wants to work. There may be six NGOs and the research institution introduces the same variety to all – but the NGOs are applying different soil practices. This can affect results.

It would be nice to have a general theory on how to program in all contexts. However, keep in mind that project design is an art: it will not become a science. As time goes on, develop a middle-range theory that shows the program in different contexts – this is where science informs the art of project design.

A lot of impact happens at the community level, but often those staff have only a secondary education. In a multi-sector project, you may have various local, people, each wearing a different hat, to implement one project. This is cost-prohibitive for sustainability.

Can we really formulate a theory of change and get a Ministry to take it on board and design and implement its programs accordingly? This is hard. I feel that the idea of linking agriculture and nutrition is sustained by virtue of the donors and outsiders; the question remains whether it can be done locally.

Contextualization can refer to technical aspects, or it can involve ensuring that research results can be implemented in local political and cultural contexts. Some interviewees pointed out the importance of aligning their approaches with government policies and strategies for agriculture and nutrition. If a proposed approach falls outside of these official frameworks, there will likely be little political will, much less financial support, to support and sustain it. There is also need for new approaches adopted on the basis of research results to find acceptance by the communities and beneficiaries they are intended to reach.

Contextualization also involves addressing constraints to implementation related to organizational capacity, structure, and budget – both within the INGO and in the local institutions that would support and ultimately take up the approach in the long term. While INGOs may play a role in influencing government policies and developing local capacity may be explicit, most INGOs invest the bulk of their resources in program implementation and are more effective in this sphere.

Difficulties in setting up controls for research in project settings. Several people commented that research conducted in highly controlled environments is the exception and not the norm in the typical operational context, and a difficult prerequisite to satisfy or replicate for some of the projects that researchers want to undertake (Box 5.11).

BOX 5.11. DIFFICULTIES FACED BY INGOS IN CREATING CONTROLLED ENVIRONMENTS FOR RESEARCH

In the academic world, a lot of people believe that all they need to know is cause and effect – but the world does not work that way.

With IFPRI, we are doing probability evaluation. This is their gold standard: randomized control, complicated and expensive.

One of the challenges we have now is to select the districts for the research. Choosing treatment versus the controls – this is political.

IFPRI research is very controlled, high-level – we can't do this locally. There is a struggle for research institutions to figure out how to work with NGOs because the NGO does not provide the controlled environment that research demands.

Project design discussions need access to people who have been steeped in research; they also need to consider the controlled versus the non-controlled environment – which is complex, specific, and not replicable.

In the first three years, we've had huge problems implementing a research project with a CGIAR partner. First, there was insufficient funding for the research component. Then, there's the local context. This is a disaster zone. At country level they don't care about research – they just want to give out money and food and do the program; forget about randomized trials. Even the evaluation

priorities are different there because the situation is so desperate. Interview after interview is seen as a waste of time. If the program staff themselves don't see the value of the research, the beneficiaries won't see it. So beneficiaries are not interested and interviews are not convenient for them, and they tell all kinds of lies. For example, when we ask about income level, we get all kinds of numbers, so the data are not reliable.

Timing and duration of research. A few interviewees reported difficulty in introducing research midstream through a project – either a research initiative, or new external research findings. Introducing a research initiative midstream is difficult because the research aims, objectives, and study indicators were not developed at the same time as the project design. Therefore, research being introduced in an ongoing project has to be designed around the existing project design, which imposes constraints on the researchers. Although interviewees generally indicated that their organizations do attempt to adjust programming in response to ongoing M&E and internal operational research, new findings emerging from external investigative research are rarely introduced midstream in a project because of the restructuring needed in order to respond effectively to the recommendations.

Another problem is that, although multi-year research is essential to measuring impact and INGOs are eager for this, INGO programming is dependent on funding cycles that do not easily allow for it. Even when long-term research projects are possible, INGO staff turnover affects continuity and retention of historical knowledge about the project.

Lack of INGO access to data from research studies in which they participate. In the context of research and evaluation to which INGOs are a party, in collaboration with research institutions, several interviewees voiced frustration with their lack of access to the data generated in the course of the project. They point out that they depend on these data to analyze program progress during program life; when the data collected by the research or evaluation entity are not shared in a timely manner (particularly in multi-year projects), this obstructs their ability to modify their program based on the evidence (Box 5.12). From the INGOs' point of view, this challenge stems from fundamental questions about data ownership and control.

BOX 5.12. ISSUES WITH ACCESSIBILITY AND TIMELINESS OF DATA RELEASE FOR INGOS PARTICIPATING IN RESEARCH

NGOs need data from the research in time for it to feed back into an ongoing program. We need to have more regular and timely data sharing for the research to meet operational needs, to allow the NGO to review how things are working and in time to make adjustments in response to data and analysis.

We need to get the data back in a timelier manner. For research in a country where we are working, we are still waiting for endline data from August 2012.

As far as the USAID-funded research we are doing, we want to share this widely. However, we are working with a CGIAR institution, and there are proprietary issues around data mining and data ownership, and this is frustrating.

We need a performance bond with the researcher because in spite of what was agreed ahead of time, we still don't have our own data.

We were given funding to run a program, and funding was given separately to a research institution. The data is collected but the research is not out yet, so we have no secondary analysis, and there are no findings for subjects that would help our own agendas.

The high standards of research require a long timeline but for more immediate use we need to close the loop sooner as far as getting data we need for the current program.

Timeliness is secondary; research should help programming. But if it's for a peer-reviewed journal then timeliness is an issue: we need the data within the lifecycle of the project.

6. OPERATIONALIZING RESEARCH RESULTS

How research results are used

BOX 6.1. PURPOSES FOR WHICH INGOS USE CURRENT INFORMATION ABOUT INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES, BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED FROM FIELD EXPERIENCE				
Purposes	Yes	No	Don't know/ Not sure	Total
	Percent (n=43)			
To identify new and innovative ideas to consider putting into practice	72	7	21	100
To validate the benefit of continuing to do the things you are already doing	70	16	14	100
To reach a decision to terminate a program or project that is not paying off	37	33	30	100
To influence donor strategies (write-in)				

Nearly three-quarters of online survey respondents indicated that they use current information about innovative technologies, best practices, and lessons learned from field experience for identifying innovations they may apply or for validating existing practices (Box 6.1 and Table A.27). This is consistent with interviewee responses, which also indicate that M&E data or more informal forms of information-sharing serve these purposes.

When research results are used

Online survey data show that future program planning and proposal development are the most common times in the program cycle when INGOs consider research, but more than half of the survey respondents also indicated that research results are considered when opportunities to test new technologies or practices arise (Box 6.2 and Table A.30). These data are consistent with the responses of interviewees, and not surprising.

BOX 6.2. TIMES IN THE PROGRAM OR PLANNING CYCLE WHEN INGOS CONSIDER WHETHER OR HOW TO APPLY LATEST RESEARCH RESULTS ABOUT INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES, BEST PRACTICES AND SERVICE DELIVERY METHODS	
Time Period	Percent (n=39)
When considering how to prepare a new large-scale program proposal for funding	77
When considering whether to incorporate results of final evaluations in future programming	74
When considering how to respond to a request from a funding agency to test a new technology, practice, or service delivery method	69
When considering how to prepare follow-up phases of ongoing programs and projects	64
When considering whether to test a new technology, practice or service delivery method developed internally	56
When considering whether to collaborate with an academic organization or research institute to test a new technology, practice, or service delivery method	54
When this will include an added value for future programming (write-in)	

While technical advisors and others who pay attention to research developments and lessons learned from evaluations tend to do so on an ongoing basis, the time for action is when opportunity or necessity call for a decision about what to do next (e.g., a call for proposals, termination of a program, or a request to test an innovation). At such times, implementers must decide whether to continue per existing theories of change and program design, make adjustments based on assessment of past work, and/or test new ideas

and program models. As several interviewees noted, the design stage is a critical time for INGOs to home in on relevant research (Box 6.3). It is also an opportunity for staff learning – though a potentially intensive one.

BOX 6.3. INCORPORATING RESEARCH RESULTS IN PROGRAM PROPOSALS

There is a lot of effort from both headquarters and field sides when there is a proposal opportunity, to get research from the last years into it. During the business development process is a time when we make more effort to get up to speed. A common problem with NGOs is that waiting for the proposal process is too late to be looking at research for the first time – you can’t assimilate all that information in the 28 days of the proposal development period.

RFAs, funding opportunities, and proposal development are times when NGOs pay more attention to research, to justify their proposed approach/intervention. This is when people more actively consult gathered documentation. Technical advisors may go to the field to help teams in project design. This is an opportunity for information exchange and training.

Who decides how to operationalize research results

As discussed in Section 4, technical specialists, especially at headquarters level, are significant access points through which research enters into organizational discourse. Online survey respondents indicated that senior

BOX 6.4. PERSONS INVOLVED IN DECISIONS ABOUT APPLICATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS IN INGOS PROGRAMS	
POSITION	Percent (n=39)
Senior managers	77
Program managers	67
Technical advisors	64
Field office staff	44
Proposal writers	41
Representatives of host country governments, central and local	28
Representatives of funding agencies	28
Representatives of beneficiary groups	26
Representatives of potential research partners (write-in)	

managers are highly likely to be involved in selecting innovations and approaches emerging from research for insertion into program applications, with program managers and technical specialists also playing key roles (Box 6.4 and Table A.28). Program managers, on the other hand, appear to be the ones most frequently involved in operationalizing research. (Box 6.5 and Table A.29).

BOX 6.5. PERSONS INVOLVED IN OPERATIONALIZING NEW RESEARCH RESULTS IN AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION ADOPTED BY INGOS	
POSITION	Percent (n=39)
Program manager	62
Field office managers	49
Senior manager	39
Management committee	26
Technical staff (write-in)	

Interviewees noted that at headquarters, staff members responsible for business development are frequently the ones to insert research findings into project design, though at the ground level it is more likely the technical specialists and program managers that guide the translation of research into operations. Responses of interviewees shed additional light on the role of key staff members as well as other influences on operationalization of research results in practical terms (Box 6.6).

BOX 6.6. HOW INGOS DECIDE TO INSERT NEW RESEARCH INTO PROGRAM DESIGN

How do we decide which research to use? It has to respond to a funding opportunity, though occasionally we have an open-minded donor who lets us propose and implement new ideas: in responding to an RFA, we can propose something. Another factor is our dialogue with national and local government – we are proud of our collaboration here.

I keep up on the nutrition research and try to see where we can overlap with our programming; I’ll take things to the working group. Sometimes it can take a long time to plug something in. My organization is open to our trying new things. When bringing in an idea from research I vet it with the agriculture specialists, and I present it to new business development staff. Some of the barriers to pick-up are that I can’t change the target group of an existing program, e.g., I find research relevant to Ethiopia about working through mother care groups, but in Ethiopia we are working through cooperatives – I can’t change that. Most of our work is focused on the

agriculture side – on market development and value chains; we have to find a way to slide in the nutrition. For example, I try to look at how we can use increases in income to improve nutritional outcomes, like in our poultry project we try to see how we can get people to eat more at home.

The filtering of what research to use happens during our design workshop approach. We make decisions on what research to use based on the broader agriculture and nutrition objectives of the program, e.g., using income for improved nutrition. We match the research against the purpose of the project. The evidence helps us decide what to do. There are not too many funded programs for integrated agriculture and nutrition. In the past, Food for Peace had a silo approach to DFAPs.

Importance of operational guidelines

Several interviewees identified lack of operational guidelines as a significant constraint (Box 6.7). To build the bridge between research and practice, someone must fill the role of translating research findings and recommendations into operational guidelines. This role may or may not be fulfilled by an INGO; this depends on capacity, resources, and how the organization sees this function as aligning with its mission. Some INGOs employ technical specialists in managerial, advisory or programming roles who perform this function as one of their duties. But for those who do not, the gap is significant unless the research institution or the funding entity assumes responsibility for filling it.

BOX 6.7. WHY OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES ARE IMPORTANT

What matters to us are the implications of the findings of partnered research. Personally, I would rather focus our efforts on using the findings to improve implementation in vulnerable populations than on theory.

Academic research is not practical; you need to tease out the key recommendations, to find how to turn findings into practice – we need the “how” because we need to operationalize and translate the research.

We promote integration, and we are trying to consolidate our M&E guidelines to include nutritional impact assessment of integrated programs. But we need guidance on how to do this.

It’s hard to figure out how to present research in a proposal. Being able to draft that – we may use technical specialists, but we need help from researchers with writing about it, with telling donors how to fund it.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations of online survey respondents

Recommendations for improving processes within their own organizations for keeping abreast of and using latest research results. Online survey respondents were asked to provide suggestions for how their organizations could improve processes for keeping abreast of and using latest research results in designing and implementing field programs. A few reported positive experiences, as illustrated by the following write-in comments:

We have a great learning platform internal to us that includes field sites which encourages learning from current projects, access to research, conferences, etc.

Our organization facilitates on-line learning and sends staff to international workshops such as TOPS workshops.

Boxes Box 7.1 through Box 7.7 (Table A.9) organize respondents' suggestions for improvement under the following headings:

1. Improving staff capacity
2. Addressing time constraints
3. Seeking more diverse sources of funding
4. Improving the organizational culture of learning
5. Increasing engagement in collaborative research partnerships
6. Making research results more accessible
7. Making research results more operationally useful

BOX 7.1. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING STAFF CAPACITY

- Hire a research adviser
- Hire a fulltime knowledge management person.
- Create an office to work on research and manage information-sharing with the technical team through presentations and discussions at technical working group meetings.
- Provide incentives for staff to do their homework and understand existing evidence, as opposed to just going out and making things up.
- Increase technical capacity of field staff to use research findings and adapt them to their settings.
- Provide additional opportunities for field staff to be exposed to and develop/implement action plans for utilizing research findings in their work.
- Establish formal "program learning sessions" in which colleagues share their research findings and make recommendations for incorporation into proposal development and programming.
- Make greater use of targeted internal workshops with qualified facilitators and presenters.
- Conduct writeshops or team workshops on scientific writing every half year with the help of experts, and to finalize content of research papers or prepare papers for publication.
- Build the research capacity of technical staff.

BOX 7.2. SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDRESSING TIME CONSTRAINTS

- Raise the priority level for accessing research and create time for it.
- Fewer papers need to be produced and re-produced. There should be less bureaucracy for publishing papers, more internal quality control and greater use of affordable translators.
- Introduce flexi-time.
- Give each person up to 5% of time for research.

BOX 7.3. SUGGESTIONS FOR SEEKING MORE DIVERSE SOURCES OF FUNDING

- Conduct bilateral projects with the EU and its members or with Latin American countries such as Brazil.
- Seek funding from non-traditional sources, e.g., international organizations belonging to the United Nations such as FAO, WHO, UNICEF and others; donors from the food industries such as Nestle , Danone , etc.; other donors such as GAIN.
- If there were a greater variety of funding opportunities to conduct the research, including the hiring of a consultant, then it would proceed more effectively.

BOX 7.4. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE OF LEARNING

- Promote better internal collaboration, starting at senior management level.
- Provide better country support for learning at both policy level and at lower administrative levels - province, region, district.
- Emphasize internally the importance of drawing on evidence for design of new programs and strategies.
- Learn from external studies and apply lessons learned in programming.

BOX 7.5. SUGGESTIONS FOR INCREASING ENGAGEMENT IN COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

- Cultivate partnerships with research institutions.
- Develop more strategic partnerships with research organizations
- Open up field projects to research organizations for rigorous analysis
- Involve field programs in the design/conception of the research projects, and in presentations and implementation of the research results and allocation of resources.

BOX 7.6. SUGGESTIONS FOR MAKING RESEARCH RESULTS MORE ACCESSIBLE

- Create a CGIAR peer reviewed journal that could publish data that is quite important but doesn't quite meet the standards for university-based peer-reviewed journals.
- Use knowledge from peer reviewed publications more effectively.
- Disseminate current research internally in a more systematic and accessible way.
- Develop a more user friendly research repository.
- Strengthen the knowledge management unit to share research results and promising practices to a wider audience outside of the organization itself.
- Offer seminars that bring together practitioners from both developed and developing countries.
- Offer international seminars for graduate students so that they can get a broader perspective of what is currently being researched in their fields.

BOX 7.7. SUGGESTIONS FOR MAKING RESEARCH RESULTS MORE OPERATIONALLY USEFUL

- Give systematic warning to officials concerned at the international level of the existence or release of new documents.
- Make sure that the Evidence & Learning Unit comes up with strategic research themes and works with research and academic institutions; and make available funding.
- There is need for deliberate guidance on how research can be incorporated in ongoing development work and how the results can be applied.
- Have someone regularly reviewing and presenting current evidence, by sector (or for integrated programming), in a user-friendly way, with suggestions for programmatic implications.
- Encourage more internal communication among practice area managers, field staff and M&E staff.
- Present the resource materials in more languages, give more opportunity to the people for the countries they are working, involve more field staff.
- Provide directories to documents and materials in French that Anglophone staff members can easily share with their francophone colleagues.

Recommendations for increasing the utility of research. Online survey respondents were asked to rate each entry in a list of possible areas for increasing the utility of academic research as very much needed, somewhat needed, not very needed, not needed at all or not applicable. Topping the list are increased dialogue between researchers and practitioners during design, analysis, and follow-up stages; better information for operationalizing research recommendations; and embedding research in program design (Box 7.8 and Table A.10).

BOX 7.8. AREAS NEEDING IMPROVEMENT IN ORDER TO MAKE ACADEMIC RESEARCH MORE USEFUL FOR DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONERS	
Recommendation	Very much needed
	Percent (n=44)
More dialogue/collaboration between researchers and practitioners during the design stage	83
Better information on how to operationalize research recommendations	75
More dialogue/collaboration between researchers and practitioners during the follow-up stage	70
Embedding of the research within the design of program interventions	70
More dialogue/collaboration between researchers and practitioners during the analysis stage	70
More opportunities for discussion and processing of research findings in a group setting	55
Easier access to published research results	52
More “live” presentations of research findings (face-to-face, Webinar, etc.)	43
Availability of research documents in various languages	39
Clearer identification of the target audience for the research	36
More context-specific research	27

Recommendations of interviewees

Interviewees focused mainly on areas where they felt the research community could improve its outreach to and interaction with field practitioners from the INGO community. Their recommendations are summarized below:

1. Increase engagement of INGOs in collaborative research partnerships
 - Increase dialogue between researchers and practitioners during design, analysis, and follow-up stages of collaborative research
 - Define roles and terms from the start.
 - Engage INGOs early in research processes and ensure systematic and regular communication, especially at critical junctures: planning/calendar, budget, tailoring research questions, study design, indicator selection, data sharing decisions, design/presentation of research products.
 - Lighten up the research methodologies, make them more nimble.
 - Understand INGO limitations and follow a working approach that is appropriate in timing and finances.
 - Involve INGOs in developing research methodology and design and involve implementation teams in the research.
 - Be clearer in prioritizing what to collect data on, and use it in a more focused way.
 - Seek opportunities for research initiatives to serve as capacity development for INGO staff.

- Establish guidelines for authorship and get staff names (including names of national staff) on the publication.
2. Make research results more accessible
 - Create demand for the supply of research by marketing research products aggressively. A public announcement that the research exists is not enough. Target the audience and SELL the research.
 - Create more opportunities for researcher-NGO exposure and exchange, e.g., researcher participation in NGO forums as attendees and presenters.
 - Deploy researchers who can present their research with enthusiasm. Local audiences do not have near the knowledge level of the researcher, so the presentations must be non-technical and simple to follow.
 - Make research amenable to NGOs. Too often, it is too technical, especially when presented to locals.
 - Produce more literature reviews and syntheses of research that examine the latest research and summarize implications for programming and implementation.
 - Maintain a “one-stop-shop” online, a “go-to” site where literature on agriculture and nutrition is curated: collected, categorized, and easily searchable for practitioners looking for information on specific topics.
 3. Make research results more operationally useful
 - Tailor research scope and methodology to align with the INGO’s operational context and capacity. This will require close consultation with the INGO to ensure a balance between researcher and INGO interests.
 - Develop a knowledge management strategy where the utility and utilization of a report is clearly laid out; protocols need to be defined.
 - Reach out to people behind successful learning collaborations and engage them at a strategic level, at a high level, so that they understand why the research is significant. By the time research gets ‘productized’ it often becomes bland, reads like common sense (“yes, of course”), so it doesn’t get picked up.
 - Go beyond general findings, things people already know. People want to hear something fresh and different.
 - Short briefs are very useful, so staff can understand. For example, some research on home gardens has shown that these have had an impact on diet diversity but not on child nutrition; however, there is no explanation as to why not. Short briefs need to include the explanation as to why there was NO impact in order for us to take action. Is it a matter of there being no evidence because we did not have the right indicators? Blanket statements like “this had an impact, this did not”) could deter us from using the information.
 - Indicate at least in broad terms how much the innovation/practice will cost to implement.
 - Provide information on the cost of implementing an innovation, even in ballpark terms: this is what you can do for this amount; this is what you can do for that amount.
 4. Increase engagement with INGO’s donors

- Encourage donors to separate funding for research from funding for implementation
- Educate donors about the need for more time for research in order to be able to show impact.
- Look at the calls for project and program proposals in RFAs and the RFPs to see what research should be there and to be sure it's there from the beginning.
- Target INGO fundraisers with information about research you want to incorporate in a project proposal.
- Provide INGOs with writing and a reference they can use for “pre-canned” material, so they can easily reference the research, the best practice, etc., in their proposals.

Interviewees noted that donors could also help bring about better collaboration:

A positive thing in a relationship between research institution and an NGO is when the donor brings us together in a unified management structure as a condition of getting resources – these need to be collectively managed.

They also cited several models which could serve as guides for improving researcher-INGO collaboration.

An example of something that worked well was in Alive and Thrive, where IFPRI was a quasi-independent collaborator. They seconded staff to the project, and there was open dialogue with all. We pushed getting powerpoints from it, and timely processing of information.

The Gender, Agriculture, and Assets Project (GAAP) was a valuable contribution from IFPRI. It has a useful toolkit for measuring impact that can be adapted for non-researchers: a package of simplified versions of tools for baseline and endline surveys and operations research. The tools themselves can be built into our own implementation and used more routinely for program monitoring; they include simple information about randomizing. The gender toolkit is useful because it's about how to assess empowerment and think about impact.

A lot of making research work has to do with the way you engage the audience – it requires flexibility of the research partner to do that. IFPRI's Gender, Agriculture, and Assets Project (GAAP) is a good institutional model for this.

The SPRING project did a great job with knowledge management. They had Webinars, updates, and newsletters.

Recommendations of survey team for A4NH

1. Develop and implement an A4NH communications strategy for the INGO audience
 - Develop research products that go beyond findings to describe research implications and practical applications. Analytical findings are not enough.
 - In the longer studies, build in smaller studies along the way, whose results can be shared more immediately, to feed out information
 - Consult with INGO technical advisors to define how all parties can work together to develop operational guidelines based on research.
 - Use plain language.
 - Supplement journal- or academic-style papers with briefs, powerpoints, and simplified summaries with key points, for circulation among INGO practitioners.
 - Expand access to research by offering it in languages other than English.
2. Encourage participation of researchers in practitioner forums
 - Attend conferences, learning events, and networking events of INGO practitioners working in agriculture, nutrition, and gender.
 - Make brief, user-friendly presentations to introduce new research.
 - Attend presentations of others and interact with participants informally to expand understanding of INGOs' current interests, activities, opportunities and constraints, and to discover potential areas of collaboration.
 - Participate in online communities of practice for agriculture and nutrition, and contribute actively to the online discussions.
3. Address funding constraints for operational research.
 - Communicate regularly with donors who support agriculture and nutrition programming to apprise them of new findings from investigative and evaluative research, in order to engage their support to researchers and INGOs alike for funding research on how to operationalize the findings.
 - Develop a small grants program for INGOs that offers both financial and technical support to them to design and implement methodologically rigorous studies relevant to the INGO context and self-defined need.

A. ANNEX – DATA TABLES

TABLE A.1. WHAT FUNCTIONS DO YOU TYPICALLY PERFORM? (MULTIPLE RESPONSE) (N=62, 0 SKIPS)		
Functions performed by respondents	Response count (number)	Count/n (proportion)
Technical support in a specific programming area	48	0.77
Program management	37	0.60
Monitoring and evaluation or research	35	0.56
Knowledge management	28	0.45
Field operations	16	0.26
Central management	8	0.13
Other (country support as HQ-level advisor) (1)		
Other (policy research) (1)		
Other (coordinator, household nutrition security) (1)		
Other (insect and disease pest management) (1)		
Other (project design) (1)		
Other (partner management) (1)		
Other (capacity building and advocacy) (1)		
Other (development of resources, training materials) (1)		

TABLE A.2. WHAT IS YOUR LEVEL OF INTEREST IN SMALLHOLDER AGRICULTURE? IN NUTRITION? (N=62, 0 SKIPS)										
Level of interest in smallholder agriculture and nutrition	Response count (number)					Count/n (proportion)				
	Very high	High	Some-what high	Not very high	No interest	Very high	High	Some-what high	Not very high	No interest
Smallholder agriculture	40	11	5	6	0	0.65	0.18	0.08	0.09	0
Nutrition	47	10	5	0	0	0.76	0.16	0.08	0	0

TABLE A.3. WHAT CHANNELS TO YOU USE TO KEEP UP TO DATE WITH DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELDS OF SMALLHOLDER AGRICULTURE AND/OR NUTRITION? (N=55, 0 SKIPS)								
Channels used for keeping up to date with new developments	Very important		Somewhat important		Not very important		Not at all important	
	Count	Count/n	Count	Count/n	Count	Count/n	Count	Count/n
Professional association membership	17	0.31	20	0.36	14	0.25	4	0.07
Development community networks	33	0.60	22	0.40	0	0	0	0
Informal personal networks	28	0.51	24	0.44	3	0.05	0	0
Social media (e.g., Facebook, Google+, Twitter)	13	0.24	16	0.29	18	0.33	8	0.15
Technical literature	41	0.75	13	0.24	1	0.02	0	0
Internet searches	34	0.62	19	0.35	1	0.02	1	0.02
Web sites of academia	14	0.25	29	0.53	10	0.18	2	0.04
Web sites of UN agencies	19	0.35	23	0.42	10	0.18	3	0.05
Web sites of NGO networks	18	0.33	26	0.47	9	0.16	2	0.04
Web sites of donors	16	0.29	21	0.38	17	0.31	1	0.02
Web sites providing humanitarian/development news	13	0.24	18	0.33	21	0.38	3	0.05
Online fora or webinars	18	0.33	27	0.49	7	0.13	3	0.05
Internal listservs	13	0.24	25	0.45	13	0.24	4	0.07
External listservs	24	0.44	16	0.29	12	0.22	3	0.05
Internal conferences, workshops, seminars	24	0.44	11	0.20	16	0.29	4	0.07
External conferences, workshops, seminars	31	0.56	16	0.29	8	0.15	0	0
Intranet Web platform for information-sharing	14	0.25	19	0.35	17	0.31	5	0.09
Staff meetings	18	0.33	20	0.36	11	0.20	6	0.11
Thematic working groups in the field	22	0.40	22	0.40	10	0.18	1	0.02
TV, radio and print media	9	0.16	21	0.38	17	0.31	8	0.15
Other (research national program has done) (1)								
Other (conversations with smallholder farming families) (1)								

TABLE A.4. ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH THE INCENTIVES YOUR ORGANIZATION PROVIDES TO ENCOURAGE STAFF TO KEEP UP TO DATE WITH LATEST RESEARCH RESULTS RELEVANT TO ITS WORK? (N=55, 3 SKIPS)			TABLE A.5. ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH HOW YOUR ORGANIZATION FEEDS INFORMATION ABOUT LATEST RESEARCH INTO ITS PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING PROCESSES? (N=55, 3 SKIPS)		
Degree of Satisfaction	Count	Count/n	Degree of Satisfaction	Count	Count/n
Very satisfied	4	0.07	Very satisfied	4	0.07
Satisfied	15	0.27	Satisfied	18	0.33
Somewhat satisfied	10	0.18	Somewhat satisfied	15	0.27
Not very satisfied	13	0.24	Not very satisfied	10	0.18
Not at all satisfied	8	0.15	Not at all satisfied	4	0.07
No opinion	2	0.04	No opinion	1	0.02
Chose not to reply	3	0.05	Chose not to reply	3	0.05
TOTAL		1.00	TOTAL		0.99
Comments (8)			Comments (8)		

TABLE A.6. ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH HOW YOUR ORGANIZATION LEARNS FROM ITS OWN EXPERIENCE AND SHARES THE FINDINGS INTERNALLY? (N=55, 6 SKIPS)			TABLE A.7. ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH HOW YOUR ORGANIZATION LEARNS FROM ITS OWN EXPERIENCE AND SHARES THE FINDINGS EXTERNALLY? (N=55, 5 SKIPS)		
Degree of satisfaction	Count	Count/n	Degree of satisfaction	Count	Count/n
Very satisfied	10	0.18	Very satisfied	6	0.11
Satisfied	11	0.20	Satisfied	12	0.22
Somewhat satisfied	10	0.18	Somewhat satisfied	14	0.25
Not very satisfied	12	0.22	Not very satisfied	12	0.22
Not at all satisfied	6	0.11	Not at all satisfied	6	0.11
No opinion	0	0	No opinion	0	0
Chose not to reply	6	0.11	Chose not to reply	5	0.09
TOTAL		1.00	TOTAL		1.00
Comments (5)			Comments (7)		

TABLE A.8. WHAT FACTORS DO YOU THINK MAY POSE CHALLENGES FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION IN ACCESSING AND MAKING EFFECTIVE USE OF RESEARCH RESULTS RELEVANT FOR ITS WORK? (N=46, 1 SKIP FOR SOME RESPONSES)

Challenges in accessing and using research	Very challenging		Somewhat challenging		Not very challenging		Not a challenge		Chose not to reply	
	Count	Count/n	Count	Count/n	Count	Count/n	Count	Count/n	Count	Count/n
Lack of awareness of what research is available	8	0.17	16	0.35	14	0.30	7	0.15	1	0.02
Lack of relevance of existing research for the work of your organization	4	0.09	17	0.37	16	0.35	9	0.20	0	0
Lack of internal technical expertise to draw out significance of new research	13	0.28	10	0.22	14	0.30	9	0.20	0	0
Presentations of research results not "user-friendly"	6	0.13	20	0.43	11	0.24	9	0.20	0	0
Research results not presented in accessible languages	8	0.17	8	0.17	15	0.33	15	0.33	0	0
Lack of guidelines to operationalize research results and recommendations	14	0.30	14	0.30	11	0.24	6	0.13	1	0.02
Donor-imposed constraints	11	0.24	16	0.35	12	0.26	6	0.13	1	0.02
Bureaucratic obstacles inside your organization	9	0.20	17	0.37	14	0.30	5	0.11	1	0.02
Political and/or cultural barriers in the countries where you work	9	0.20	11	0.24	15	0.33	10	0.22	1	0.02
Time constraints within your organization	16	0.35	16	0.35	8	0.17	6	0.13	0	0
Funding limitations	12	0.26	21	0.46	8	0.17	4	0.09	1	0.02
Other ('getting the work done' is prioritized over research) (2)										
Other (research has to be done on the margin of available time) (1)										
Other (bureaucratic obstacles, now resolved with new leadership) (1)										

TABLE A.9. PLEASE PROVIDE SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW YOUR ORGANIZATION COULD IMPROVE ITS PROCESSES FOR KEEPING ABREAST OF AND USING LATEST RESEARCH RESULTS IN DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING ITS FIELD PROGRAMS. (N=45, 30 REPLIES)
Link with international research bodies (think tanks, universities); these partnerships provide mutual benefit - access/ insights into up to date research vs provision of the programmatic 'playground' for conducting new research.
Hire a research advisor.
Raise priority level by creating time, promoting better internal collaboration, using targeted internal workshops with qualified facilitator and presenters, partnering with research institutions. These are all responsibilities of senior management.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct bilateral projects within European Union (EU) or Latin American countries such as Brazil. 2. Take advantage of funding by international organizations belonging to the United Nations such as FAO, WHO, UNICEF and others, by donors from the food industries such as Nestle or Danone, by other donors such as the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN).
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase technical capacity of field staff to use research findings and adopt them to their settings. 2. Provide additional opportunities for field staff to be exposed to and develop/implement action plans for utilizing research findings in their work.
Provide better country support, working at both policy level and lower administrative levels - province, region and district.
Produce or reproduce fewer but higher quality papers. Reduce bureaucracy for publishing papers, but introduce QUALITY control. We don't have any internal quality control, affordable translators, or ethical officers.
Enter into more strategic partnerships with research organizations; open up field projects to research organizations for rigorous analysis.
Hire a fulltime knowledge management person.
Bring on board an officer to work on research and manage information sharing with the technical team through discussion/ presentation at technical working meetings.
Introduce flexi-time.
Involve field programs in the design/conception of the research projects, presentations and implementation of the research results and allowing resources.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Publish a CG journal to provide access to data that is quite important but doesn't quite meet the standards of the university-based peer-reviewed journals that we are privy to. 2. Run more seminars that combine "developed" and "developing" countries. 3. Run more international-based seminars for Masters of Science or PhD students so that they can get a wider exposure to what is currently being researched in their fields.
Facilitate on-line learning and second staff to international workshops such as TOPS workshops.
Conduct a write-shop or team workshop on scientific writing every half year with the help of experts, and complete the task of finalizing content for publication internally. (Recommended to be done by every project engaged in research).
Give systematic alerts to officials at the international level of the existence or release of new documents.
Learn from external studies and apply lessons in programming.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthen the knowledge management unit to share research results and promising practices with a wider audience outside of the organization itself. 2. Make sure that the evidence & learning unit comes up with strategic research themes and works with research and academic institutions; build the research capacity of technical staff and make available funding.
Develop deliberate guidance on how research can be incorporated in ongoing development work and how the results can be applied.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Find a way to overcome the biggest challenge, which is really time. Our technical staff are overwhelmed just trying to support ongoing projects, which makes it difficult to invest the time in reading the research and teasing out the relevance to our programs. 2. For those of us from anglophone countries, it's hard to know where to find documents etc in French that can easily be shared with our francophone colleagues.
Do a better job of disseminating current research internally. Develop a more user friendly research repository.
Give incentives for doing one's homework and understanding existing evidence, as opposed to just going out and making things up.

Emphasize internally the importance of drawing on evidence for design of new programs and strategies. Have someone reviewing and presenting current evidence regularly, by sector (or for integrated programming), in a user-friendly way with suggestions for programmatic implications.
Facilitate more internal communication among practice area managers, field staff and M&E staff.
Present the resources in more languages, give more opportunity to the people for the countries they are working , involved more field staff
Two approaches that ideally would be used in tandem: (1) Give each person up to 5% of time for research. (2) Create formal "program learning sessions" in which colleagues share their research findings and make recommendations for incorporation into proposal development and programming.
Look for funding opportunities to conduct the research, including the hiring of a consultant, then it would proceed more effectively.
Improve knowledge management through peer reviewed publications.
Our processes are ok.
Our internal learning platform is working just great. It includes field sites and encourages learning from current projects, as well as giving access to research, conferences, etc.

TABLE A.10. IN YOUR OPINION, IS THERE A NEED FOR IMPROVEMENT IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS TO MAKE ACADEMIC RESEARCH MORE USEFUL FOR DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONERS? (N=46, 2 SKIPS FOR ALL RESPONSES, 3 SKIPS FOR SOME RESPONSES)												
Areas needing improvement	Very much needed		Some-what needed		Not very needed		Not needed at all		No opinion		Chose not to reply	
	Count	Count /n	Count	Count /n	Count	Count /n	Count	Count /n	Count	Count /n	Count	Count /n
Clearer identification of the target audience for the research	16	0.35	21	0.46	4	0.09	1	0.02	2	0.04	2	0.04
More context-specific research	12	0.26	21	0.46	7	0.15	1	0.02	3	0.07	2	0.04
Embedding of the research within the design of program interventions	30	0.65	10	0.22	1	0.02	0	0	2	0.04	3	0.07
More dialogue between researchers and practitioners during the design stage	36	0.78	6	0.13	0	0	1	0.02	1	0.02	2	0.04
More dialogue between researchers and practitioners during the analysis stage	30	0.65	11	0.24	0	0	1	0.02	1	0.02	3	0.07
More dialogue between researchers and practitioners during the follow-up stage	31	0.67	9	0.20	2	0.04	1	0.02	1	0.02	2	0.04
More "live" presentations of research findings (face-to-face, Webinar, etc.)	19	0.41	11	0.24	11	0.24	1	0.02	2	0.04	2	0.04
Easier access to published research results	23	0.50	15	0.33	2	0.04	2	0.04	2	0.04	2	0.04
More discussion and processing of research findings in a group setting	24	0.52	15	0.33	3	0.07	1	0.02	1	0.02	2	0.04

Better information on how to operationalize research recommendations	33	0.72	9	0.20	0	0	1	0.02	1	0.02	2	0.04
Availability of research documents in various languages	17	0.37	14	0.30	10	0.22	1	0.02	2	0.04	2	0.04
Other (simpler communication of findings, more researcher/user collaboration) (1)												
Other (translate knowledge in formats with more visuals, smaller information bits) (1)												
Other (research should be market-driven, with practical applicability) (1)												
Other (publish 'how-to' guidelines for operationalizing research findings) (1)												
Other (more attention to feasibility and cost of scaling up of good interventions) (1)												

TABLE A.11. ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH ANY AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, OR INTEGRATED AGRICULTURE-NUTRITION ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED BY YOUR ORGANIZATION? (N=45, 0 SKIPS)

Whether familiar with agriculture and/or nutrition activities of organization	Response count (number)	Count/n (proportion)
Yes	45	1.00
No	0	0

TABLE A.12. TO YOUR KNOWLEDGE, UNDER WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING PROJECT CATEGORIES DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION IMPLEMENT (OR PLAN TO IMPLEMENT) AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION OR INTEGRATED AGRICULTURE-NUTRITION ACTIVITIES? (MULTIPLE RESPONSE) (N=45, 1 SKIP)

Project categories	Response count (number)	Count/n (proportion)
Nutrition	40	0.89
Agriculture	37	0.82
Food security	35	0.78
Livelihoods	33	0.73
Resilience	31	0.69
Gender	27	0.60
Poverty reduction	26	0.58
Community health	25	0.56
Emergency, disaster or post-conflict relief and rehabilitation	10	0.42
Other (WASH or sanitation) (3)		
Other (HIV and AIDS) (1)		
Other (bio-fortified foods; integration of nutrition with agriculture and markets) (1)		
Chose not to reply (1)		

TABLE A.13. AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, OR INTEGRATED AGRICULTURE-NUTRITION ACTIVITIES THAT ORGANIZATION IS CURRENTLY IMPLEMENTING OR PLANS TO IMPLEMENT SOON (N=45, 33 REPLIES)

<p>1. Overall, we try and engage with SUN processes to promote the development of a more enabling environment for agriculture-nutrition programming and prevention of chronic malnutrition during first 1000 days of life; This also includes specific activities to facilitate sector coordination and alignment at district level. We try to implement agriculture and nutrition activities with the SAME beneficiaries. We USUALLY use a cascading trainings approach for groups that were formed considering 1000 days and extreme poverty criteria.</p> <p>2. Agriculture activities often revolve around kitchen gardening and small animals (promoting production for a variety of food groups to provide minimum dietary diversity), sometimes using a modified farmer field school approach or model farmer for nutrition gardens, We also work on post-harvest handling/ food preservation.</p> <p>3. Nutrition activities often involve behavior change approaches for promoting optimal infant and young child feeding (IYCF), maternal nutrition and other related practices.</p> <p>4. Gender activities are often related to women's decision-making and to engaging men and their role in nutrition (IYCF etc.) (This is still a little bit less clear and advanced in the programs).</p>
<p>Community gardens, distribution of small ruminants, training of ag extension workers on dietary diversity, PD hearth, improvement of livestock products preservation and storage.</p>
<p>Small-holder production and marketing, supported via producer groups; grants to local service providers to train farm groups; development of umbrella producer associations and industry groups; integration of nutrition information into production trainings; integration of environmental best practices into production trainings; HH decision making integrated into production and marketing trainings; distribution of productive assets (livestock).</p>
<p>Assessments of prevalence of low birth weight, vitamin A status and Hemoglobin level among neonates and follow up studies to estimate mortality and growth velocities among those with low birth weights and with poor biochemical vitamin A status. Assessment of the prevalence of vitamin A deficiencies among preschool children from the rural areas, and the effectiveness of dietary sources of vitamin A versus capsules. Assessment of the food diversity score among preschool children in selected urban areas. Assessment of effectiveness of phytochemical-containing fruits, juices, vegetables or fermented food products on modulation of colonic microbiota and on different biomarkers of health status among adolescents.</p>
<p>Integrating agriculture and nutrition activities (including care groups, etc.) through food security projects in various countries in Africa.</p>
<p>A number - but this information is not available.</p>
<p>Mainstreaming nutrition in selected projects; drafting a one-semester curriculum for extension training; training of UN-system professionals in nutrition-sensitive agriculture.</p>
<p>Nutrition-sensitive agriculture; sanitation and nutrition; behavior change for nutrition and dietary change; school gardens; school feeding; food fortification and value chains; climate-smart agriculture and food security; agricultural commodity value chains.</p>
<p>Marketplace for nutritious foods; climate-smart agriculture for better nutrition; intensive food systems for urban and displaced populations; nutrition in the agricultural workforce.</p>
<p>School gardens and school farms in project schools.</p>
<p>Seed fairs, improved crop husbandry practices, conservation farming, crop diversification, improved monitoring and evaluation and data management, care groups, community complementary feeding and learning sessions, capacity building of nutrition/health staff.</p>
<p>Micronutrient supplements and lipid-based nutrition supplement (LNS) in a number of counties in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and South East Asia (private sector and social franchise delivery channels).</p>
<p>Emergency food aid projects; development food assistance programs.</p>
<p>Integrated agriculture-nutrition-marketing approaches.</p>
<p>Amalima development food assistance program.</p>
<p>Alleviating poverty and malnutrition in agro-biodiversity hotspots; leveraging agriculture and nutrition in South Asia (LANSA) project.</p>
<p>Nutrition education based on Essential Nutrition Shares approach, to bring about behavior change of pregnant women and lactating mothers; support for the construction of water-related infrastructure, sanitation and hygiene; supporting farming systems and practices that encourage use of new technologies for improved crop yields and increased farm income per household; developing income generating activities; supporting farmer' organizations for easy access to factors of production; extension of Village Saving and Loans Association.</p>

Conservation agriculture; dietary diversification through health education, cooking demonstrations, home gardens, PD hearth; watershed management and natural resource management; small-scale irrigation.
Six field-based agriculture development projects.
Multi-year assistance programs (MYAPS) and nutrition programs (both small-scale and large projects) in several African countries.
Kitchen gardens among the PD Hearth groups; promotion of bio-fortified foods such as the orange fleshed sweet potato (OFSP) and the high-iron (Fe/Zn enriched) beans with Harvest Plus as partner.
Working with women's groups; promoting production diversity (vegetables, small livestock, fruits); promotion of bio-fortified foods (OFSP, Fe/Zn enriched beans) and indigenous vegetables; linking women's groups with community health volunteers in order to ensure integration of nutrition and agriculture at the grass roots level; promoting multisector coordination and alignment at community and district level, with the main aim to reduce stunting; working with national government to develop nutrition sensitive agricultural biotechnology (BCC) materials (mainly for extension workers).
The list is far too long to detail here.
Gender and nutrition study in selected villages participating in larger study on village dynamics in South Asia (VDSA).
Home fortification; promotion of exclusive breastfeeding and appropriate IYCF practices.
Various IYCF and community-based management of acute malnutrition (CMAM) projects; emergency nutrition programming; large integrated nutrition-agriculture program (in a consortium); capacity building project for other partners in nutrition-sensitive food security and livelihoods programming.
Working with women's groups to plant nutritious crops for household consumption and income generation; kitchen gardens as part of a community health/child survival program; demonstration farm and vegetables production; agribusiness development in poultry, vegetables and rice; food security (agriculture, savings groups; pastoralism in drought-prone areas).
Food for Progress project working with rice and cassava farmers to improve productivity and use of cassava in making more nutritious bakery products (e.g. bread) and in working with women and children on family gardens and better family nutritional practices and diets.
DFAPs for one, but also many others.
Wide variety of agriculture, nutrition and nutrition-sensitive or integrated programming activities - too many to list all here - depends on the target participants as to what the activity might be for any of the 3 listed categories.
Many different ones- nutrition education, agricultural productivity, gender equality.
Value chains.
Women in nutrition; conditional cash transfer grants to improve maternal and newborn outcomes.

TABLE A.14. IN WHICH PARTS OF THE WORLD DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION HAVE A FIELD PRESENCE WITH AGRICULTURE AND/OR NUTRITION-RELATED ACTIVITIES? (MULTIPLE RESPONSE) (N=45, 4 SKIPS)		
Regions with INGO field presence in agriculture and nutrition	Response count (number)	Count/n (proportion)
East Africa	29	0.64
Southern Africa	28	0.62
West Africa	26	0.58
Central America and Caribbean	21	0.47
Southeast Asia	21	0.47
Central Africa	20	0.44
Central Asia	15	0.33
South Asia	15	0.33
South America	12	0.27
Eastern Asia	11	0.24
North Africa	10	0.22
Western Asia	10	0.22
Eastern Europe	8	0.18
Don't have current, recent, or past projects linking ag and nutrition	1	0.02
Other (Middle East) (3)		
Other (Pacific Islands) (1)		
Other (presence in about 35 countries) (1)		
Other (don't know) (1)		
Chose not to reply (4)		

TABLE A.15. DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION HAVE SOME KIND OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM, WITH A DEDICATED DEPARTMENT OR STAFF, BY WHICH IT ACQUIRES EXTERNAL KNOWLEDGE, CAPTURES INTERNAL KNOWLEDGE, DEVELOPS NEW KNOWLEDGE, SHARES ALL OF THIS KNOWLEDGE, AND/OR USES KNOWLEDGE TO ACHIEVE ITS MISSION AND GOALS? (N=45, 0 SKIPS)		
Whether organization has knowledge management system	Response count (number)	Count/n (proportion)
Yes	35	0.78
No	6	0.13
Don't know/not sure	4	0.09

TABLE A.16. HOW DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION CAPTURE FIELD EXPERIENCES OF STAFF AND PARTNERS THAT ARE RELEVANT FOR YOUR WORK? (MULTIPLE RESPONSE) (N=45, 0 SKIPS)		
Mechanisms for capturing field experience	Response count (number)	Count/n (proportion)
Regular progress reporting	37	0.82
Field visits and resulting trip reports	37	0.82
Informal networking among staff	35	0.78
Staff meetings that bring together HQ and field personnel	32	0.71
Intranet platform for sharing experiences, learning, resources	26	0.58
Internal listserv	12	0.27
Other (writing case studies, developing approaches and tools) (1)		
Other (nutrition integration working group) (1)		

TABLE A.17. DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION REQUIRE FORMAL MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF ITS PROGRAMS/PROJECTS? (N=45, 0 SKIPS)		
Whether organization requires formal M&E	Response count (number)	Count/n (proportion)
Yes	43	0.96
No	2	0.04
TOTAL	45	1.00
Comments (4)		

TABLE A.18. WHO TYPICALLY CONDUCTS MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E) ACTIVITIES FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION? (MULTIPLE RESPONSE) (N=45, 4 SKIPS)		
Who conducts M&E activities	Response count (number)	Count/n (proportion)
Internal M&E staff	34	76
International firms/consultants contracted for specific evaluations	20	44
Local firms/consultants contracted for specific evaluations	18	40
Combination of internal and external M&E	18	40
Host country M&E personnel	10	22
Local firms/consultants with standing contracts/agreements	9	20
International firms/consultants with standing contracts/agreements	7	16
M&E personnel of funding agency	6	13
Other (program or project staff; HQ technical advisors) (2)		
Chose to skip this question (4)		

TABLE A.19. DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION CONDUCT ITS OWN INVESTIGATIVE RESEARCH TO IDENTIFY RELEVANT INNOVATIONS AND BEST PRACTICES? (N=44, 0 SKIPS)		
Whether organization conducts investigative research	Response count (number)	Count/n (proportion)
Yes	20	0.45
No	14	0.32
Don't know/Not sure	10	0.23
TOTAL	44	1.00
Comments (7)		

TABLE A.20. WHAT MECHANISMS DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION USE TO CONDUCT INVESTIGATIVE RESEARCH FOR AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION PROGRAMMING? (MULTIPLE RESPONSE) (N=20, 2 SKIPS)		
Mechanisms used for investigative research	Response count (number)	Count/n (proportion)
Uses its own research department	14	0.75
Partners with external research institutions	11	0.55
Contracts with others to conduct research on its behalf	8	0.40
Other (central technical team) (1)		
Other (seeks out research partners) (1)		
Chose to skip this question (2)		

TABLE A.21. PLEASE PROVIDE AN EXAMPLE OF INVESTIGATIVE RESEARCH YOUR ORGANIZATION HAS CONDUCTED (ON ITS OWN OR WITH OTHERS) ON BEST PRACTICES AND INNOVATIONS IN AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION PROGRAMMING (N=20, 8 SKIPS) [LIST SHOWS RESEARCH TOPICS IDENTIFIED BY RESPONDENTS, AND WHETHER OR NOT PARTNERED]
Evaluation of project activities and household decision-making, partnered.
Evaluation of impact of ultra-rice in school feeding programs on hemoglobin levels of school-aged children, no partner mentioned.
Piloting development of community diagnostic tools for nutrition analysis, and opportunities for dietary diversity improvement through agricultural diversification, partnered.
Piloting methods to control aflatoxins in the peanut value chain, no partner mentioned; investigating nutrient retention in dehydrated vegetables, no partner mentioned; impact of Fe/Zn-fortified rice on nutrition, no partner mentioned.
SIPS and TIPS
Evaluations of impact of (i) establishing structured, large-scale nutrition gardens on food diversity among tribal families in agrobiodiversity hotspots, no partner mentioned; (ii) community initiative (men's and women's groups) on use of underutilized ponds for growing freshwater fish, no partner mentioned; (iii) intercropping of nutritional underutilized species (NUS) and vegetable crops with mono-cropped cassava (cash crop) for food and nutritional security, no partner mentioned; Development of theory of change for constrains and solutions in implementing agriculture and nutrition intervention activities among the smallholder farmers in agrobiodiversity hotspots, no partner mentioned.
Evaluations of: (i) impact on nutrition of approach to behavior change for pregnant women, no partner mentioned; (ii) impact of community-led total sanitation activities, no partner mentioned; (iii) impact on livelihoods of efforts to promote village savings and loans associations, self-managed by members, no partner mentioned; (iv) impact of popularization of micro-irrigation system for vegetables cultivation, no partner mentioned.
Review of major programs in 3 countries to document promising practices on the link between agriculture and nutrition.
Evaluations of effectiveness of child nutrition programs, no partner mentioned.
Our organization is just starting to do this.
Our Agriculture staff are better suited to answer this question.

TABLE A.22. IS YOUR ORGANIZATION A MEMBER OF ANY NETWORKS OR ALLIANCES FOR EXCHANGING IDEAS AND INFORMATION IN AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION? (N=44, 0 SKIPS)		
Whether organization belongs to networks or alliances	Response count (number)	Count/n (proportion)
Yes	34	0.77
No	2	0.05
Don't know/Not sure	8	0.18
TOTAL	44	1.00
Comments (none)		

TABLE A.23. PLEASE LIST, TO THE BEST OF YOUR KNOWLEDGE, THE AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION NETWORKS/ALLIANCES IN WHICH YOUR ORGANIZATION PARTICIPATES (N=34, 6 SKIPS)

SUN, Alliance 2015 (Food & Nutrition Working Group), Secure Nutrition
FSN Network, Ag2Nut Community of Practice
TOPS
International Union of Nutritional Sciences
TOPS, FSN Network, CORE
Ag2Nut Community of Practice; Grow Africa, CAADP, CSO alliances in a number of different countries
Cocoa Sustainability Partnership
SUN, GAIN, AGRIPROFOCUS
Community Nutrition and Climate Change eGroup, Agrilinks, UNSCN, Eldis
FSN Network, GAIN
CGIAR, Rice Research Network, IFPRI
CG centers, University-based institutions (Michigan State University, University of Wisconsin-Madison), Africa Rising, Hellen Keller International
Food security, nutrition and disaster risk reduction clusters at country and regional levels
TOPS, FSN Network, SUN
USAID learning networks (various), Ag2Nut Community of Practice, World Bank
TOPS, CORE, SUN
FSN Network, SID, DevEx, Feed the Future
Ministry of Agriculture-housed agriculture and nutrition platform
i am not sure whether you can be an official member, but many individual staff are members of various networks such as Secure Nutrition
TOPS
AVRDC-ASEAN Regional Network for Vegetable Research and Development (AARNET)
CORE, Integral Alliance, InsideNGO, Ag2Nut Community of Practice, Agrilinks, FSN
Ag2Nut Community of Practice
TOPS, Ag2Nut Community of Practice
FSN Network
USG Working Groups on Agriculture and Nutrition, TOPS Working Group on Gender
Ag2Nut Community of Practice, FSN, SCN, TOPS, CORE
GAIN, FSN, ICCM

TABLE A.24. WHAT KINDS OF INCENTIVES DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION PROVIDE TO ENCOURAGE STAFF MEMBERS TO KEEP UP TO DATE ON INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES AND BEST PRACTICES IN AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION? (MULTIPLE RESPONSE) (N=44, 0 SKIPS)

Incentives for keeping up to date	Yes		No		Don't know /not sure	
	Count	Count/n	Count	Count/n	Count	Count/n
Encourages staff to subscribe to listservs or institutional mailing lists	34	0.77	3	0.07	7	0.16
Subsidizes attendance at conferences and workshops	33	0.75	7	0.16	4	0.09
Pays for staff memberships in professional associations	29	0.66	9	0.20	6	0.14
Encourages staff participation in online fora or webinars	18	0.41	14	0.32	12	0.27
Pays for subscription to online resources, e.g., journals, libraries, databases	14	0.32	14	0.32	16	0.36
Other (there is encouragement, but no time - it is a lower priority) (1)						

TABLE A.25. METHODS USED TO SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT BEST PRACTICES AND/OR EVALUATION AND RESEARCH RESULTS WITH STAFF AND PARTNERS (MULTIPLE RESPONSE) (N=44, 0 SKIPS)

Methods for sharing information	Response count (number)	Count/n (proportion)
Email circulars with links to original research reports, summaries, briefs, Powerpoints, or guidelines	33	0.75
Internal training seminars or workshops	28	0.64
Email circulars with attachments prepared internally, e.g., summaries, briefs, or Powerpoints	26	0.59
Intranet platform for sharing experiences, learning and resources	23	0.52
Internal development and circulation of operational guidelines	20	0.45
Internal listserv	15	0.34
Other (calls between technical staff at HQ and in-country) (1)		
Other (organization websites and internal sharepoint sites) (1)		
Other (workshops with stakeholders/partners) (1)		
Other (online university) (1)		
Other (mostly informally) (1)		

TABLE A.26. DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION DISSEMINATE INFORMATION ABOUT NEW RESEARCH RESULTS ON MULTIPLE OCCASIONS OR THROUGH MULTIPLE CHANNELS? (N=44, 0 SKIPS)

Whether information distributed in multiple ways	Response count (number)	Count/n (proportion)
Yes	32	0.73
No	4	0.09
Don't know/not sure	8	0.18
TOTAL	44	1.00
Comments (2)		

TABLE A.27. DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION USE CURRENT INFORMATION ABOUT INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES, BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED FROM FIELD EXPERIENCE FOR ANY OF THE PURPOSES LISTED? (N=43, 0 SKIPS)

Purposes for which information is used	Yes		No		Don't know/ not sure	
	Count	Count/n	Count	Count/n	Count	Count/n
To identify new and innovative ideas to consider putting into practice	31	0.72	3	0.07	9	0.21
To validate the benefit of continuing to do the things you are already doing	30	0.70	7	0.16	6	0.14
To reach a decision to terminate a program or project that is not paying off	16	0.37	14	0.33	13	0.30
Other (to influence donor strategies) (1)		.				

TABLE A.28. WHO IS INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS LEADING UP TO A FINAL DECISION ABOUT THE APPLICATION OF A PARTICULAR SET OF RESEARCH RESULTS TO THE PROGRAMS OF YOUR ORGANIZATION? (MULTIPLE RESPONSE) (N=39, 0 SKIPS)

Who is involved in deciding to apply research results	Response count (number)	Count/n (proportion)
Senior managers in your organization	30	0.77
Program managers in your organization	26	0.67
Technical advisors in your organization	25	0.64
Proposal writers in your organization	16	0.41
Field office staff in your organization	16	0.41
Representatives of funding agencies	11	0.28
Representatives of host country governments, central and local	11	0.28
Representatives of beneficiary groups	10	0.26
Other (potential research partners, if known) (1)		
Other (project managers, Chiefs of Party) (1)		
Other (don't know – I have never seen it in action) (1)		

TABLE A.29. WHO IS INVOLVED IN OPERATIONALIZING NEW RESEARCH RESULTS IN AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION THAT YOUR ORGANIZATION HAD DECIDED TO APPLY? (MULTIPLE RESPONSE) (N=39, 0 SKIPS)

Who is involved in operationalizing research results	Response count (number)	Count/n (proportion)
A program manager	24	0.62
A field office manager	19	0.49
A senior corporate manager	15	0.39
A management committee	10	0.26
Other (technical advisors/staff) (3)		
Other (Technical Learning and Application Group) (1)		
Other (not sure) (1)		

TABLE A.30. AT WHAT TIMES IN THE PROGRAM OR PLANNING CYCLE DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION CONSIDER WHETHER OR HOW TO APPLY LATEST RESEARCH RESULTS ABOUT INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES, BEST PRACTICES, AND SERVICE DELIVERY METHODS? (MULTIPLE RESPONSE) (N=39, 0 SKIPS)

When research results are applied	Response count (number)	Count/n (proportion)
When considering how to prepare a new large-scale program proposal for funding	30	0.77
When considering whether to incorporate results of final evaluations in future programming	29	0.74
When considering how to respond to a request by a funding agency to field test a new technology, practice or service delivery method	27	0.69
When considering how to prepare follow-up phases of ongoing programs and projects	25	0.64
When considering whether to field test a new technology, practice or service delivery method developed internally	22	0.56
When considering whether to collaborate with an academic organization or research institute to field test a new technology, practice or service delivery method	21	0.54
Other (when this will add value for future programming)	1	
Other (not sure)	1	

TABLE A.31. PLEASE PROVIDE AN EXAMPLE OF WHEN YOUR ORGANIZATION USED RESULTS OF EXTERNAL RESEARCH OR IMPACT EVALUATIONS IN ITS PROGRAM PLANNING (N=39, 18 SKIPS)

Findings of the two Lancet series have been used to influence the content of our programs.
Recommendations from our study on household decision making were integrated into all new proposals/programs.
We are processing fish surimi to formulate surimi-derived school recipes. Surimi powder adds to the nutritional value of fish snack products and offers good opportunity to serve as school meal with high nutritional quality and properties. We are also manufacturing dry sausages that have been subjected to probiotic bacterial fermentation. We promote thermal solar drying of vegetables and fruits for preservation because dried food is easy and drying of in-season fresh fruits and vegetables is a great way to avoid waste, is inexpensive and does well for the environment. We are experimenting with linear programming mathematical models to find out food combinations with ideal nutrient contents at lowest cost.
In designing our new DFAP submissions we used mid-term and final results from previous programs.
A large signature program that we implement is based on evaluative research results.
We are currently integrating all kinds of results from nutrition and agriculture as well as sanitation results into a new approach on Sustainable Nutrition 4 All.
We are implementing and integrating Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILC) approach into all our development programs.
I cannot provide such information because it is databased with the corporate headquarters.
We incorporate research and evaluation results when developing our strategies.
We use research results when designing new proposals to be submitted to European Development Fund, USAID and World Bank.
Results of external research and impact evaluations are drawn upon when developing new approaches for training in the use of new technology.
Research results are incorporated in grant writing, in designing new projects and programs, in technical approach designs.
Research on benefits of consuming bio-fortified foods by Harvest Plus has been shared with our organization in order to promote adoption of the practice.
A current program with an external impact evaluation is getting positive results, so we have planned a similar project with some new ideas based on the research results.
No good examples come to mind, unfortunately.
Don't know of one, although this does not mean that it hasn't happened.
We tried Answer Plot demonstration farms as learning platforms in one country, where we demonstrated sound farm management practices and new technology and linked that with vegetable production for improved nutrition for rural families and/or communities (2010-2012). Based on the success of this internally-funded pilot project, we are now rolling out Answer Plot demonstration farms elsewhere.
We use research and evaluation results in designing technical materials and trainings to be used by the field.
When writing a program with a heavy livestock component we relied heavily on "milk matters" studies.
We use research and evaluation results for improving cash transfer programs and designing baseline studies
We incorporate evaluation results in reports for the funder.