

## PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST: NUTRITION, A KEY TO INTEGRATED PROGRAMMING FOR POVERTY REDUCTION?

Dear Forum members,

My name is Charlotte Dufour and I have been working for several years on nutrition, food security and livelihoods in emergency and development programs, through NGOs and with the UN. I have just returned from Afghanistan, where I worked with FAO for 3 years as Household Food Security, Nutrition and Livelihoods Advisor, based in the Ministry of Agriculture within the German-funded FAO project "Supporting Household Food Security, Nutrition and Livelihoods in Afghanistan". I am now working as a consultant (with FAO and others), focusing on the integration of nutrition in food security, agricultural and livelihoods policies and programs, and the promotion of inter-sectoral linkages for sustainable improvements in nutrition.

The complex causes of malnutrition and **the need to address malnutrition through multi-sectoral interventions** are well recognised. There seems to be considerable interest in such approaches, as illustrated by discussions in the [Standing Committee on Nutrition](#) (SCN), NGOs' motivation to integrate nutrition activities in their work, research promoted by academic institutions (e.g. [IFPRI](#)'s platform on agriculture and health linkages), and donors' interest in coordination and integrated planning.

And yet, the challenges to putting theory into practice remain considerable. Nutritionists struggle to **incorporate nutrition objectives into food security and agricultural policies and programs**. Meanwhile, nutrition is often subsumed in the health sector and food security advocates struggle to **ensure food security interventions are associated with health programs to reduce malnutrition**. Nutrition, which could provide a valuable entry point to people-centred development and integrated programming for poverty reduction, often ends up falling off the agenda all together.

Why is this? What can be done to promote effective linkages and integrated programming, from community level to central level, in a sustainable way?

The FAO project I was working on attempted to address these issues through interventions at household, community, provincial and central level (you can find information on the project on: <http://www.fao.org/world/afghanistan/Projects%202008/Nutraion/Nutrition.htm>), but more efforts are still required. I am therefore very interested to hear forum members' opinions and experiences on these issues, and thus propose to launch a discussion on "*Putting people first: Nutrition, a key to integrated programming for poverty reduction?*"

I would particularly appreciate your feedback regarding the following questions:

- **What experience can you share** regarding the integration of nutrition in agriculture and livelihoods programs and integrated/multi-sectoral programming?
- What **constraints and obstacles** have you faced in doing so (e.g. expertise gap? Funding? No political interest?)? Were you able to overcome them and if so, how?
- What **approaches, activities and tools** do you think successful for integrating nutrition in ongoing programs and for reducing malnutrition and poverty in a sustainable manner?
- Finally, if you have produced or are aware of **relevant publications or tools on this topic**, thank you for sharing them with the forum members.

I look forward to hearing about your experiences and ideas and to receiving any advice and references you may have. These shall be valuable for forum members and can also contribute to the elaboration of guidelines and training materials on these issues.

Thank you very much for your contributions and best regards,

Charlotte Dufour  
Nutrition, Food security, and Livelihoods consultant