



# FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

## Preparing Your Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture Training

### Introduction to the Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture Training Resource Package



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**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**SPRING**  
Strengthening Partnerships, Results,  
and Innovations in Nutrition Globally



# Preparing Your Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture Training

Introduction to the Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture  
Training Resource Package

## **ABOUT SPRING**

The Strengthening Partnerships, Results, and Innovations in Nutrition Globally (SPRING) project is a seven-year USAID-funded cooperative agreement to strengthen global and country efforts to scale up high-impact nutrition practices and policies and improve maternal and child nutrition outcomes. The project is managed by JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc., with partners Helen Keller International, The Manoff Group, Save the Children, and the International Food Policy Research Institute.

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## **DISCLAIMER**

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**COVER PHOTOS:** SPRING

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# Getting Started

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This ***Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture Training Resource Package*** is designed to provide guidance, recommendations, and ideas for individuals charged with training others on nutrition-sensitive agriculture. From 2013 to 2017, SPRING developed a variety of trainings on nutrition-sensitive agriculture. These trainings addressed a multitude of audiences across diverse contexts. However, across trainings there was one common goal: catalyze participants toward improving nutrition outcomes. We hope that these training materials help you to do the same.

We have organized the sessions based on what we have found most effective. For example, over the years we have learned that participants must have a basic understanding of maternal, infant, and young child nutrition to understand the concept of nutrition-sensitive agriculture. We have also learned that building a seasonal calendar is an excellent method for examining the impact that the environment plays on community members' access to food, health, and care. Throughout the training, we will mention lessons learned such as these, as well as provide tips to the facilitator. It is important to remember that although this training package has been molded by SPRING's years of experience implementing similar trainings across contexts, the training is best delivered by someone who is knowledgeable in nutrition and agriculture. It is also best if the facilitator tailors the content of the training to the context in which he or she will be presenting.

The materials here are designed to be used in several ways:

- As a full nutrition-sensitive agriculture training, progressing from Session One through Session Seven. The content can be covered in about three days and is available online at <https://www.spring-nutrition.org/nutrition-sensitive-ag-training>.
- [Session One: Strengthening Agriculture-Nutrition Linkages: Why it Matters](#)
- [Session Two: Essential Nutrition Concepts for Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture Activities](#)
- [Session Three: Essential Concepts in Agriculture and Food Systems](#)
- [Session Four: Agriculture-to-Nutrition Pathways](#)
- [Session Five: Developing a Seasonal Calendar](#)
- [Session Six: Behavior Change Concepts for Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture](#)
- [Session Seven: Designing for Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture](#)
- As stand-alone presentations to brief stakeholders on a specific aspect of nutrition-sensitive agriculture.
- As add-in content for training on another topic—for example, within a general agriculture training, a session or two could be inserted with a nutrition-sensitive agriculture focus.

Each session in this series includes several components to assist the facilitator in delivering an effective session: a session guide, a PowerPoint set, and other materials, along with a list of additional resources for those who desire more background on certain concepts. Session guides also include notes on the lessons learned by the SPRING facilitation teams as they have delivered these sessions in a range of settings with different target audiences.

This introductory guide includes key information for planning the workshop and adapting materials to your audience.

## Crafting the Workshop Goal and Objectives

The first step in adapting these materials to your audience is to reflect on the overall training goal and objectives, keeping in mind the needs of the specific audience who will participate in the workshop. Here are a few questions to consider as you refine your goal and objectives:

- How much exposure has this group already had to agriculture, nutrition, and nutrition-sensitive agriculture? What concepts may be new for them? Which are likely to be a review?
- Is this group of participants accustomed to working together? What approaches will facilitate understanding and cooperation during the workshop and afterward?
- What actions do we want participants to take when the workshop is finished? What do we want individuals to **do** with the information they have learned?
- Are there barriers to action that can be addressed in the workshop? What resources can be leveraged to make it easier for participants to take action?

Below are several sample workshop goals and objectives that SPRING has used.

## Drafting the Agenda

The seven sessions in this *Training Resource Package* are presented in the recommended order, progressing from core concepts to more complex ones. If your group of stakeholders already has a strong background in some areas, you may decide to shorten or remove some sessions. However, in our experience, reviewing essential concepts is worthwhile in creating the common ground needed for successful crossover discussions about nutrition and agriculture.

These sessions may be delivered consecutively over 3 days or delivered in smaller increments of 2–3 hours over 5 days. Participants may benefit from shorter training days, allowing them adequate time to reflect and process what they have learned. The seven sessions include:

1. **Strengthening Agriculture-Nutrition Linkages: Why It Matters (0.5 hours).** This session includes a review of evidence demonstrating that strengthening the linkages between agriculture and nutrition is essential to ensure that every child grows up healthy and productive. The economic effects of malnutrition are discussed, alongside several concrete steps that agriculture programs can take to strengthen their nutritional impact.
2. **Essential Nutrition Concepts for Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture (1.5 hours).** Foundational concepts in nutrition are introduced to ensure that all participants (nutritionists and non-nutritionists alike) can effectively discuss the problem of malnutrition, its forms and the importance of the first 1,000 days. A solid foundation in nutrition is essential before discussing the pathways.
3. **Essential Concepts in Agriculture and Food Systems (2 hours).** This session creates a foundation in agriculture and food systems that helps participants effectively discuss nutrition-agriculture linkages. The content can be used to introduce nutritionists to these ideas or to review essential concepts with agriculturalists. A solid understanding of these concepts is essential before the pathways can be discussed.
4. **Agriculture-to-Nutrition Pathways (1.5 hours).** In this session, participants explore the pathways themselves, looking more closely at the steps along each of the three main pathways and their interconnecting nature. Specific actions that help ensure agriculture activities lead to nutrition outcomes are discussed in detail.

5. **Developing a Seasonal Calendar (1 to 1.5 hours).** This exercise-based session focuses on techniques to deepen participants' understanding of the context in which they are working. As the exercise progresses, participants reflect on the months of the year, key activities that take place, and how these affect the community (e.g., growing seasons, shifting food availability, increased demands on time and labor, weather changes and seasonal illnesses).
6. **Behavior Change Concepts for Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture (2 hours).** This session deepens participants' understanding of how social and behavior change (SBC) can be used to design effective activities and support the desired behavior change.
7. **Designing Effective Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture Activities (7 hours).** This session guides stakeholders through the process of incorporating appropriate nutrition-sensitive outcomes and interventions into their current program activities in such a way that agriculture, economic growth, and nutrition objectives are met. Participants leave this session with clear next steps for ensuring appropriate nutrition-sensitive agriculture outcomes and indicators are added to their results frameworks, work plans, and program monitoring plans (PMPs).

## Sample Workshop Goals and Objectives

### SPRING/Senegal

**Goal:** Prepare and equip SPRING/Senegal staff to engage partners and develop nutrition-sensitive agriculture strategies and action plans.

**Objectives:** By the end of the workshop, participants will be able to—

- i. explain nutrition-sensitive agriculture and the SPRING/Senegal context
- ii. explore tools that apply nutrition-sensitive agriculture and social and behavior change communication (SBCC) messages and practices to the SPRING/Senegal partner context
- iii. use a field-tested tool and offer recommendations for next steps
- iv. develop ideas for nutrition-sensitive agriculture practices that can be implemented with at least two partners.

### SPRING/Bangladesh and local partner Aquaculture for Income and Nutrition (AIN)

**Goal:** Develop participants' understanding of nutrition-sensitive agriculture and behavior change.

**Objectives:** By the end of the workshop, participants will be able to—

- i. identify the nutrition-sensitive aquaculture practices AIN is promoting across all four intermediate results
- ii. identify opportunities to enhance the nutrition-sensitivity of practices through project activities
- iii. introduce behavior change approaches which can help AIN promote the identified nutrition-sensitive aquaculture practices
- iv. identify opportunities to apply behavior change approaches via project activities, and to document AIN's contribution to nutrition-sensitive outcomes.

### SPRING/Guinea and local partners *Institut Supérieur Agronomique et Vétérinaire de Faranah*, Winrock International, and other local NGOs

**Goal:** Build understanding of nutrition-sensitive agriculture concepts and strategies.

**Objectives:** By the end of the workshop, participants will be able to—

- i. explain nutrition-sensitive agriculture within the context of Faranah, Guinea
- ii. develop skills in identifying nutrition-sensitive agriculture practices relevant to Faranah, Guinea
- iii. examine current activities and identify strategies for making them more nutrition-sensitive.

## Sample Agenda:

DAY 1		
Session #	Content	Duration
	<i>Arrival and introductions</i>	45 minutes
Session 1	Strengthening Agriculture-Nutrition Linkages: Why it Matters	30 minutes
Tea Break		15 minutes
Session 2	Essential Nutrition Concepts for Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture	90 minutes
Lunch Break		60 minutes
Session 3	Essential Concepts in Agriculture and Food System	120 minutes
Tea Break		15 minutes
Session 4	Agriculture-to-Nutrition Pathways	90 minutes
	<i>Closing</i>	15 minutes
DAY 2		
	<i>Arrival and review</i>	30 minutes
Session 5	Developing a Seasonal Calendar	60 minutes
Tea Break		15 minutes
Session 5	Developing a Seasonal Calendar <i>Continued</i>	30 minutes
Lunch Break		60 minutes
Session 6	Behavior Change Concepts for Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture	120 minutes
Tea Break		15 minutes

Session 7	Designing Effective Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture Activities	120 minutes
	<i>Closing</i>	
<b>DAY 3</b>		
	<i>Arrival and review</i>	30 minutes
Session 7	Designing Effective Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture Activities <i>Continued</i>	60 minutes
Tea Break		15 minutes
Session 7	Designing Effective Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture Activities <i>Continued</i>	120 minutes
Lunch Break		60 minutes
Session 7	Designing Effective Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture Activities <i>Continued</i>	120 minutes
Tea Break		15 minutes
Session 7	Designing Effective Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture Activities <i>Continued</i>	60 minutes
	<i>Making a Plan</i>	30 minutes
	<i>Closing</i>	30 minutes

## Adapting Exercises and Session Content

Exercises are an essential component of the workshop that will need to be tailored to the specific audience and purpose of the workshop. Effective training includes exercises that promote participation, analysis, reflection, and application of the concepts discussed.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> All elements of this training package may be adapted for non-commercial use to suit local needs. Adapted materials should acknowledge the original source with the following language: Adapted from the *Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture Training Resource Package* developed by the USAID-funded [Strengthening Partnerships, Results, and Innovations in Nutrition Globally \(SPRING\)](#) project.

In each session guide, there are recommended discussion questions and exercises throughout the session. As you review the proposed approaches, reflect on the following questions:

- Will the audience have enough knowledge and background to complete the exercise successfully?
- What local examples can be used to make the exercise more directly applicable to the local context?
- Will participants find the exercise engaging and challenging enough to hold their attention? Can any part of the exercise be deepened to create more opportunities for analysis and reflection?
- Is the time allocated sufficient to allow for discussion and decision-making?

While planning and adapting session content, ensure that you take the time to reflect and consider:

- What is the specific perspective that participants bring? What are their biases?
- What terms are they accustomed to using? What are they least familiar with?
- What challenges regarding attitude and perspective might exist for this group?
- What are their unique advantages? How can I leverage what they know during this training? [or, how can I leverage what they know to persuade others?]
- What do they know already about nutrition-sensitive agriculture? Where are their blind spots?
- What kinds of programs do they work on? What activities are they used to doing? What may be new to them?
- How can I open their minds to a new way of doing things?

In addition to adapting exercises, it is also helpful to review the session content in-depth, looking for opportunities to cite local examples, use local photographs and illustrations and prompt participants to reflect on the places where they live and work. The facilitator should work toward making the concepts specific to the local context and appropriate to the background of participants. Adapting materials to the context where stakeholders are working will help ensure that the workshop is meaningful and drives participants to action.

## Establishing Local Support

In many places, opening words from a dignitary are expected at the beginning of any workshop. This opening can be an opportunity to establish a sense of commitment to nutrition-sensitive agriculture at the highest levels. At their best, these opening remarks acknowledge the country's economic and nutrition challenges, while highlighting the ambitions of the coming several years. The dignitary can play an important role in breaking down sector-specific approaches that can lead to limited progress and create an openness for new approaches.

Ultimately, the purpose of this training is to bring people together, inspire them to improve nutrition outcomes, and empower them with tangible actions to improve nutrition in their context by acting as a catalyst for positive change.

## Creating the Right Atmosphere

A nutrition-sensitive agriculture workshop can bring together individuals from different sectors. Participant introductions are the first opportunity that participants have to know meet each other and understand the unique background and perspective that their colleagues bring to the workshop. Effective introductions create a foundation for understanding that is essential later in the course. These introductions can also facilitate strong

relationships that motivate participants to encourage one another to affect nutrition outcomes long after this training course.

Aside from sharing a bit about their role and background, participants may also be asked to reflect on:

- Successes and challenges related to malnutrition (especially as they relate to national trends)
- What they are most interested to learn from the training
- What they could learn that would make their work more effective.

As the training begins, it can be helpful to share some background about the planning process. Consider including details such as:

- How did nutrition-sensitive agriculture come up in early discussions?
- Who were the strongest supporters of this training and why?
- What is the larger context for our discussions and what actions are expected of participants afterward?

As you highlight the context in which the training was created, mention that as important issues are discussed, there may be disagreement among members of the group. Disagreement is expected as part of discussions, so long as everyone agrees to listen and respect the views of others.

# Effectively Training Groups in Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture

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## Lessons Learned from Previous Trainings

Over the past five years, various stakeholders interested in strengthening links between agriculture and nutrition have requested technical assistance from SPRING. In response to these requests, we have started discussions, contributed to debates, and shared our unique mix of agriculture-nutrition-SBC expertise with groups of donors, government ministries, implementing partners, and other stakeholders in countries where we work.

As you develop your nutrition-sensitive agriculture training strategy, we have included some reflections on the lessons we have learned in a range of contexts.

- There is something inherent in nutrition-sensitive agriculture that asks practitioners to change the way they work—in any sector. This change has provoked rich discussions, debates and reflections as development experts grapple with the challenges of integrated programming. As your workshop strategy takes shape, build in time for rich discussions that allow participants to explore their plans and concerns about nutrition-sensitive agriculture.
- Diverse stakeholders (working in food security, livelihoods, agriculture, nutrition, and other fields) need to develop a common understanding of nutrition-sensitive agriculture before they can begin discussing issues related to program design and implementation. Stakeholders come from very different perspectives and often have difficulty understanding the priorities, terms, and approaches of others.
- Agriculture and nutrition experts are different in their approaches, thinking, and vocabulary. Building a shared understanding of essential nutrition-sensitive agriculture concepts, including underlying causes and the pathways, helps the two groups find common ground and discuss potential solutions more effectively. It can be challenging to break down those sector-specific siloes because often there is little incentive to collaborate. To address this issue, the SPRING Training Resource Package was designed with a strong emphasis on why nutrition-sensitive agriculture matters, followed by orientation sessions that cover the basics of nutrition and agriculture. This structure was a strategic decision to create a shared understanding and emphasize that **we each have a responsibility to address malnutrition if we want to see real change.**
- We experimented with the length and level of detail that would be appropriate for a given audience—with some of our workshops lasting five days (Senegal) and others two days (Kyrgyz Republic). It was clear that almost every group needed a foundation in agriculture, nutrition or both to really understand nutrition-sensitive agriculture. We found that providing a solid foundation for everyone created more fruitful discussions and analysis later in the workshop.
- For trainings with national-level participants (government, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) leaders, and managers), two days provided just enough time to achieve the requisite depth. In rare cases, three days were allocated. Given that one cannot cover all topics, prioritizing content according to what participants can apply immediately made the workshop more effective.



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