The Nutritional Impact Assessment Tool

Focusing agriculture on nutritional outcomes

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Tom Schaetzel, Technical Director
Infant & Young Child Nutrition (IYCN) Project
The Manoff Group
The Infant & Young Child Nutrition Project

- USAID’s flagship project on infant and young child nutrition.
- Aims to prevent malnutrition in mothers and children during the critical 1,000 days (from pregnancy through two years of age).
- Led by PATH in collaboration with CARE, The Manoff Group, and University Research Co., LLC.

Photo: Evelyn Hockstein
The problem

• Agricultural development has produced mixed results for nutrition.
• “There are trade offs…between production/employment goals and… nutritional goals.” (USAID, 1982)
• Agriculture and nutrition speak different languages and seek different objectives.
The solution

- Always want to orient agriculture toward better nutritional outcomes.
- If not possible, can we at least avoid harm?
- “Do no harm” approach.
Nutritional Impact Assessment Tool

- Methodology from environmental and gender impact assessments.
- Assessment of likely outcomes from planned and alternative approaches.
- Modification of project design only if negative impacts expected.
What are the innovations?

- Prompts consideration of nutritional outcomes in a non-threatening way.
- Does not require agriculture to “take on nutrition”.
- Uses a familiar methodology for a new subject.
1. Situation analysis.
2. Compilation of evidence base on nutritional impacts of agriculture approaches.
4. Production of beta tool with detailed guidance.
5. Dissemination for testing.
6. Follow-up.
7. Create and release final version.
Compiling the evidence base

• *Review of Nutrition and Food Security Impacts of Agriculture Projects* has become a useful product in its own right.

• Examples and recommendations condensed into a “fact sheet”.

*Review of Nutrition and Food Security Impacts of Agriculture Projects*
Creating the tool

- Automated and paper-based versions.
- Introduced review to ensure due diligence.
- Obtaining data is a major constraint.
• Interest has been very high.
• Primarily used for small-scale (< $1m) agriculture projects or for integrated development projects.
• Planned survey to collect feedback.
• Workshop in August 2011.
• Release of final version in September.
• Offers a novel way of dealing with an established problem.
• Offers a practical solution to a problem that is widely recognized and a significant barrier to progress.
• Adopted and adapted by others (innovation on the innovation).
How to support innovation?

- Keep mandates flexible.
- Encourage risk-taking (i.e., accept failure).
- Allow time for testing and development.
Thank You