

FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION ACTIVITIES FOR HOUSEHOLDS AND CONSUMERS

In 2015-2016, Canada's support helped improve the consumption of nutritious food by children, women and poor households via nutrition-sensitive agriculture, nutrition education, micronutrient supplementation, and school feeding programs. The UN World Food Programme's school meal programs provide safety nets for vulnerable children, often in the hardest-to-reach areas. In 2015, Canada helped these programs reach 16 million children in 64 countries. This assistance allows households to retain income and ensure food availability. It enables children to remain in school and receive sufficient nutrition, so they can develop into healthy and productive adults.

With 2016 declared as the International Year of Pulses, these resilient crops—among them beans, chickpeas, lentils and peas—are now gaining increased global recognition for their nutrient value and soil-boosting properties. Current research supported through Cultivate Africa's Future, a multi-year partnership between Canada's IDRC and the Australian International Food Security Centre, aims to make pulses more accessible. Kenyan and Ugandan researchers have joined forces with the private sector and Canada's Food Development Centre to develop pre-cooked bean products with wide appeal. As of 2015, 47 bean varieties had been tested, with 12 selected for their nutritional value and suitability for pre-cooking. Nearly 24,000 farmers, more than half of whom are women, are now growing these varieties. Two types of products—pre-cooked beans and bean snacks—have been developed, with the snacks tested with consumers in major supermarkets in Kenya and Uganda. The result is convenient and affordable products that improve nutrition, while saving time and cooking fuel for millions of households.

Canada's support for the UN World Food Programme helped over 408,000 food-insecure Palestinians receive food assistance. More than 233,000 of them received in-kind food, such as fortified flour, vegetable oil, chickpeas, lentils and iodized salt, and over 175,000 received electronic vouchers with cash credit value. The vouchers allow households to purchase locally produced food, such as dairy products, eggs, cereals and olive oil. Vouchers empower households to make food choices and they also support the local economy. Whenever possible, vouchers and food entitlement cards are issued in women's names, while voucher shops and food distribution centres are selected on the basis of their easy access for women.

In partnership with Helen Keller International and the International Food Policy Research Institute, Canada helped increase the consumption of nutritious food for children, women and poor households in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and Tanzania. Through this initiative, 13,000 people (11,500 women and 1,500 men) were trained in home-based agricultural production and received inputs to produce their own nutritious foods. They also received counselling on basic health and nutrition, good hygiene and sanitation practices. As a result, the intake of nutritious foods increased by over 40 percent for women and over 50 percent for their children from 2012 to 2015.

PROMOTING FOOD SECURITY

Since 2010, the CARE Canada project PROSADE – Promoting Food Security in Choloteca and Rio Negro Watersheds in Honduras has helped more than 28,000 Hondurans in municipalities of the "dry corridor" increase their average household income by 37 percent. The project has also helped increase access to nutritious food. It developed geotextile bags to store rain water for household use, allowing families to continue using water for personal consumption and agriculture during the dry season. Over 10,000 poor people benefited from improved water access, thanks to the project's rain water harvesting systems in 18 communities. By providing clean water and good hygiene practices, the PROSADE project has directly contributed to a 10 percent reduction in diarrheal diseases in children under the age of five years. As Lexi Rodriguez, one of the participants, indicated: "Before we had to walk one kilometre to wash our clothes, especially during the dry season when springs were dry. Now we have water in our house and that benefit is marvellous." In 2015, more than 2.5 million litres of rain water were harvested.