



Agriculture to Nutrition

Improving Nutrition Outcomes through Optimized Agricultural Investments

Who/What is ATONU?

ATONU stands for **Agriculture to Nutrition**. It is an African initiative focusing on how agriculture can deliver positive nutrition outcomes to smallholder farm families through the implementation of robust, evidence-based nutrition-sensitive interventions. ATONU is implemented by the Food, Agriculture, Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) and its partners, and is currently focusing on three countries, namely Ethiopia, Nigeria and Tanzania.

What does ATONU do and why?

ATONU provides technical assistance to integrate tailored nutrition-sensitive interventions into planned and ongoing agricultural investments through;

- i. Generating tools and frameworks for diagnosing the opportunities to incorporate tailored nutrition-sensitive interventions into agriculture investments;
- ii. Offering technical assistance for designing, testing, and rigorously monitoring and evaluating the impact of the tailored nutrition-sensitive interventions;
- iii. Documenting best practices and evidence and adding to the agriculture for nutrition knowledge base;
- iv. Advocating for evidence-based decision making at all levels; and
- v. Strengthening African capacity and building a community of practice in agriculture for improved nutrition.

What is the rationale for the ATONU initiative?

In general terms, the rationale for ATONU and related initiatives is to help Africa broaden its agricultural focus from aiming to attain food security, to incorporating nutritional security. Africans must gravitate from “**eating for hunger**” to “**eating for health**”. Poor nutrition is the single most important threat to the world’s health and development, with overall undernutrition representing the single largest killer of under-five children and costing the global economy up to USD\$2.1 trillion per year. Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is most affected and represents the world’s highest rate of stunting among children, which is a common result of malnutrition during pregnancy. The paradox of malnutrition in SSA, is that three-quarters of all hungry people live in rural areas where they are overwhelmingly dependent on agriculture for their food. Of these, women are the primary food producers, yet are among the most malnourished.

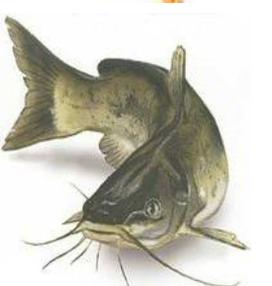
Hunger, malnutrition and stunting, cost the sub-Saharan African economy at least US\$25 billion annually. Although the African continent is at a time when agricultural investments and productivity of food staples are finally increasing, the rate of stunting is also on the increase - from 47 million in 1990 to 59 million by 2016. Africa is the only region that has seen an *increase* in the number of children stunted despite a decrease in global prevalence. It is estimated that African economies lose values equivalent to between 1.9 and 16.5% of GDP annually to undernutrition due to increased mortality, chronic illnesses and associated costs, and lost productivity. To ensure that the continent benefits from the positive trends in agricultural investment and productivity, the disconnect between agriculture and nutrition must end, thus the intervention – ATONU. ATONU, and related agricultural development initiatives that incorporate nutrition-sensitive interventions, and ensure consumption of diverse diets with essential proteins, minerals and vitamins and sufficient caloric intake are an integral part of the continent’s solution to reducing poverty, hunger and malnutrition.

How does ATONU work to achieve its objectives?

To achieve its objectives, ATONU has a deliberate focus on society’s most vulnerable in terms of nutrition. To this end, the initiative has a specific focus on women of child-bearing age and young children where the high nutritional demands of pregnancy, development and early childhood must largely be met through own farm food production. ATONU promotes women’s empowerment and their access to income and knowledge on the need to purchase nutrient-dense foods and the consumption of a diversified diet.

From a project implementation perspective, ATONU explores five pathways, discussed briefly below;

1. Food production for household consumption
2. Income-oriented production for purchase of food, health and other non-food items
3. Empowerment of women to increase their participation in household and community decision-making and time use, thereby positively impacting household food security and health outcomes
4. Reduction in real food prices associated with increased agricultural production, and



ATONU Delivery Mechanisms

ATONU will accomplish its objectives through following main work streams:

- **DIMELT** – This work stream focusses on design, intervention, monitoring, evaluation and learning tools. It guides the selection of agriculture investments and determines best-bet interventions through rigorous impact assessment
- **POCTA** provides technical assistance for the implementation and evaluation of context-specific tailored nutrition interventions, and proof of concept.
- **PACK** – The work stream focusses on policy advocacy, communication and knowledge management and dissemination of ATONU's research evidence,
- **CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT** work stream focusses on the capacity development of participating individuals and African institutions, with the objective of building a Community of Practice (CoP) in agriculture for improved nutrition.

What is ATONU doing in Tanzania and Ethiopia?

The ATONU project is conducting tests with around 800 households in 20 villages from different regions and agro-ecological zones per country, in Tanzania and Ethiopia. Each participating household receives 25 chickens from the ACGG project as a nutrition-sensitive intervention to their existing agricultural system, and further benefits from a Behavioral Change and Communication (BCC) package that is administered by the project's field personnel and focuses on nurturing the following;

- (i) Nutrition and hygiene behaviour change to improve consumption of diverse foods, including chickens and eggs at household level.
- (ii) Influencing expenditure behaviour of income generated from sale of chickens and eggs to ensure purchase of other/complementary nutritious foods to improve household diets;
- (iii) Women empowerment and gender equity in chicken value chains to improve women's participation in joint household production and women's time use.
- (iv) Establishment of household vegetable production to improve consumption of vegetables and dietary diversity.

Who does ATONU work with?

The Food, Agriculture, Natural Resources and Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) is the lead organization for the ATONU project. FANRPAN works with partners that include Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA); Harvard School of Public Health, the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI); and the Country Implementing Partner (CIP), the Tanzania Livestock Research Institute (TALIRI).

The partners bring distinct expertise in agriculture and nutrition in areas and collaborate to harmonize approaches, developing tried-and-tested tools to facilitate the identification, design, implementation and evaluation of nutrition-sensitive agricultural programs.

ATONU is available to provide technical assistance

ATONU is available to provide technical assistance to existing and pipeline projects that would like to deliver positive nutrition outcomes. ATONU has developed frameworks that may be used to do the following:

1. Assess country readiness for nutrition-sensitive agriculture
2. Assess project/program suitability for integrating nutrition-sensitive interventions
3. Selection and design of nutrition-sensitive interventions
4. Impact evaluation of nutrition-sensitive interventions



Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN)
Physical address: 141 Cresswell Road, Weavind Park 0184 Pretoria, South Africa
Postal address: Private Bag X2087, Silverton 0127 Pretoria, South Africa
Tel: +27 (0) 12 804 2966 / 3186; Fax: +27 (0) 12 804 0600
Email: fanrpan-atonu@fanrpan.org
Url: www.fanrpan.org

Sponsored by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation