“Take lead – take off” Approach to Capacity Development for Sustainability and Impact: A success story of the Agricultural and Rural Management Training Institute in Nigeria

The Agricultural and Rural Management Training Institute (ARMTI) is a parastatal organization under the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Federal Government of Nigeria. ARMTI is situated in Ilorin Kwara State of North Central Nigeria. It is a center of excellence for agricultural and rural development (ARD) management training and ARD manpower development in Nigeria in general. The work of ARMTI serves very well to demonstrate emerging impact and sustainability of the foundation laid by the Reaching Agents of Change (RAC) project’s capacity development efforts.

Between 2011 and 2014, the International Potato Center (CIP) and Helen Keller International (HKI) implemented the RAC initiative that advocated for increased investment in orange-fleshed sweetpotato (OFSP), to combat vitamin A deficiency among young children and women of reproductive age and to develop institutional and community capabilities to produce and consume OFSP. To ensure sustainability, RAC strengthened the capacity of national institutions like ARMTI, Sokoine University of Agriculture (Tanzania) and Eduardo Mondlane University (Mozambique), and that of individual change agents. The aim was to enable them self-organize, drive their own agenda, mainstream the OFSP training program into their activities, and pass down the skills acquired to the end-users – the small-scale farmers.

The RAC project worked closely with ARMTI in planning and delivering the Training of Trainers (ToT) courses on “Everything you ever wanted to know about sweetpotato” using adult learning methodologies. This was achieved through a collaborative agreement that was successfully implemented between December 2012 and July 2014. The ToT course is a hands-on course that comprises of fourteen topics on sweetpotato knowledge along the value chain, including production, utilization and investment in sweetpotato.

To reach a critical mass producing and consuming OFSP, RAC applied a “cascading” model for capacity development, where experts (agriculturalists, nutritionists, health, marketing and...
ARMTI’s capital project and cost-recovery basis
*conducted under RAC funding, **conducted on cost-recovery basis, ***conducted under 2016 ARMTI’s capital project and cost-recovery basis

ARMTI plans to continue with this sustainable capacity development initiative and to attract more funding from the Federal Government of Nigeria; this way reaching more agents of change; impacting on local institutions and farmers to produce and consume the vitamin A-rich OFSP. Catalyzing demand and investment for OFSP while strengthening institutional and community capacities, is critical to addressing hidden hunger by reaching more households in Nigeria to produce and consume biofortified crops.

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