In 2018, the Leveraging Agriculture for Nutrition in South Asia (LANSA) project wrapped up, following six years of work. This research consortium made up of six organizations opened a pertinent discursive space for nutrition-sensitive agriculture deliberations among policymakers, practitioners, and academics throughout the region. Evidence from LANSA research has been widely cited in the academic and public discourse, raising awareness around the subject. Capacity-strengthening efforts in communities—with a focus on women under the Research-to-Action (Pakistan) and Community Hunger Fighters (India) initiatives—enjoyed reasonable uptake. LANSA’s well-defined research uptake, communications, and social media strategies were adapted to individual country and study-specific needs. These were successful in demonstrating an effective evidence-to-policy-and-practice interface.

Given the similar nature of problems and contexts, findings in one country often have relevance across the region. LANSA was able to draw together and use these understandings to build partnerships to further the research and development agenda of agriculture for nutrition in South Asia. Bringing a global and regional focus to the evidence on women’s role in agriculture and its implications for their and their children’s nutritional status (based on work in India and Pakistan) was of particular significance. LANSA has made key research contributions to the ongoing debate on the largest food policy initiative in the region: India’s National Food Security Act, including the Public Distribution System. A research focus on pro-nutrition agrifood value chains generated an extensive body of innovative work relevant to the whole region and beyond. Capacity strengthening of researchers from southern partner organizations was another major achievement. Each organization will build on this legacy and continue the work in some form. LANSA’s effectiveness will continue as a result of good networking, particularly with A4NH and other initiatives including SAFANSI, GloPan, FAO-FSN Forum, Transform Nutrition, IMMANA, and UN Women, leaving a positive influence on their decisions and approaches to enhancing the nutrition sensitivity of agriculture at scale.

To summarize the project’s research and findings, a special issue of Food Policy detailed LANSA’s core themes and cross-cutting issues, sharing five key lessons researchers and policymakers can take away. Among those lessons are the need to understand the (enabling) policy and institutional environment and adopt a systems approach; recognize trade-offs and potential unintended consequences; move from words to actions; agree on metrics for defining success; and understand and adapt to context. LANSA has generated and effectively used research-based evidence to inform and inspire action to leverage agriculture for nutrition in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan.

We would like to thank the UK Department for International Development for its support of this research. We also would like to thank all funders who supported this research through their contributions to the CGIAR Trust Fund.