

# MULTI-SECTORAL NUTRITION

Global Learning and Evidence Exchange

Washington, DC



## Sustaining Development: Results from a Study of Sustainability and Exit Strategies among FFP projects

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# Study Rationale

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- Limited systematic knowledge of whether/how project impacts are maintained
- Effectiveness of (FFP) development projects depends on both short-term impact and long-term sustainability
- Closure of FFP development projects in non-priority countries offered a study opportunity

# Study Objectives

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- Determine the extent to which activities, outcomes, and impacts of FFP development projects were sustained post-project
- Identify project characteristics that facilitate sustainability of project activities and effects post-project
- Assess how the exit process affects sustainability
- Provide guidance to future projects on how to exit to increase the likelihood of sustainability

# Study Background

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## Sustainability Plan

- All the elements of project design that promote sustainability and increase the likelihood that project activities, outcomes and impacts will continue post project

## Exit Strategy

- An operational and logistical plan for how a project will withdraw its resources while ensuring that achievement of project goals is not jeopardized and that progress toward these goals will continue

# Study Background

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## Study Locations

*FFP development project implementation areas in:*

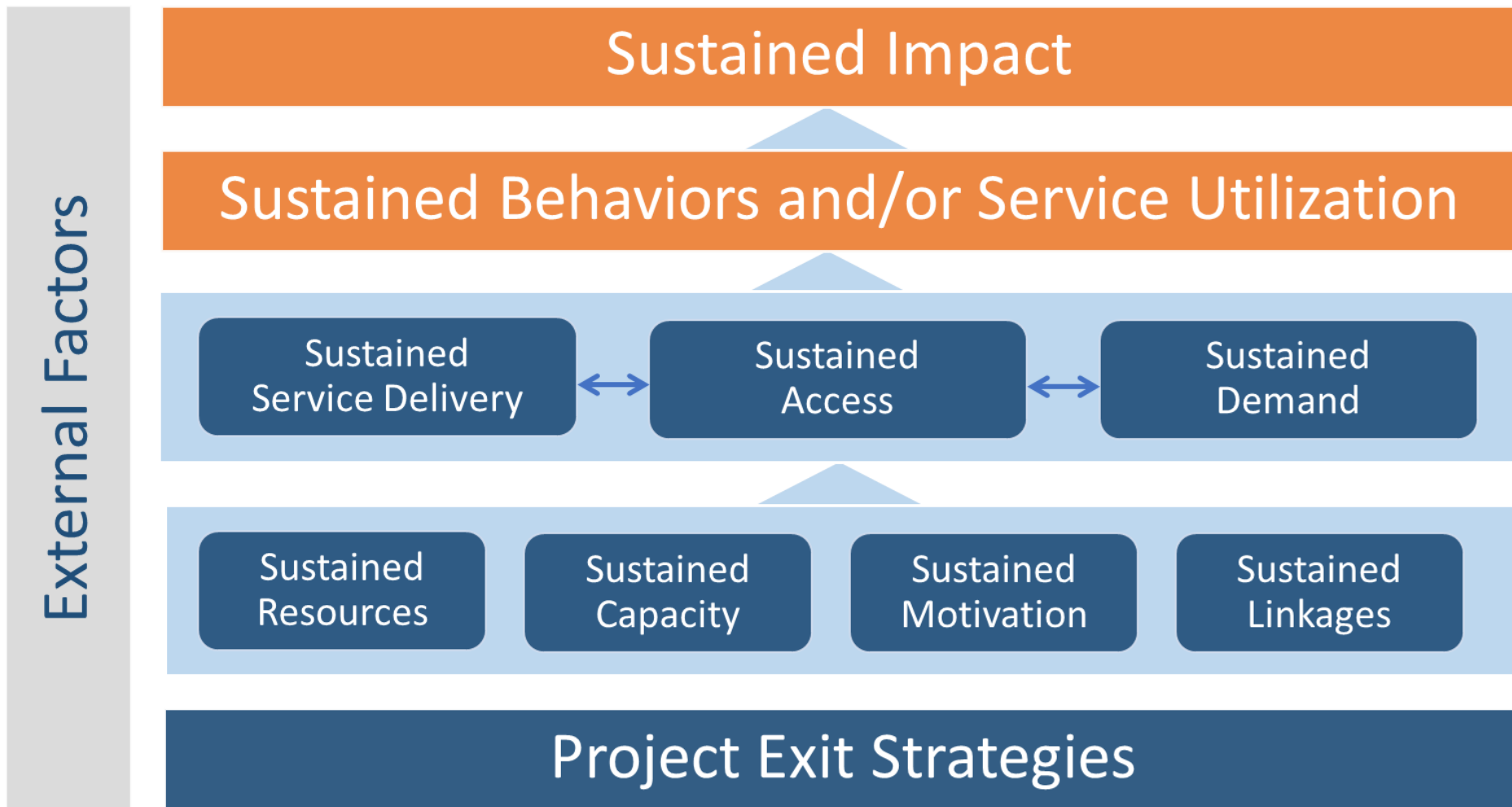
- Kenya
- Bolivia
- Honduras
- India

## Selection Criteria

- Projects achieved key food security and nutrition impacts
- Projects implemented exit strategies
- Project close-out coincided with the study timeframe

# Study Background

## Conceptualizing Sustainability Pathways



# Study Background

Sustainability Strategy	Key Assumptions
Encourage community health workers (CHWs) to continue working after project exit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Satisfaction of providing services and appreciation of the community will motivate CHWs to continue work without material incentives</li></ul>
Establish links between CHWs and government public health system to provide supervision, training, materials, and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Health system has the resources, motivation, and capacity to support CHWs</li><li>● Health system staff recognize the value of CHW services and will work with them</li></ul>

# Study Background

## Sustainability Strategy

Train farmers to adopt new crops for commercialization and improved practices to increase overall productivity

Organize/Strengthen and train associations of producers

## Key Assumptions

- Increased production and income from sales will provide motivation and resources to continue practices
- Improved practices are resilient to shocks
- Producers can meet quality and quantity requirements of contracts
- Producers are motivated by profits to continue participation



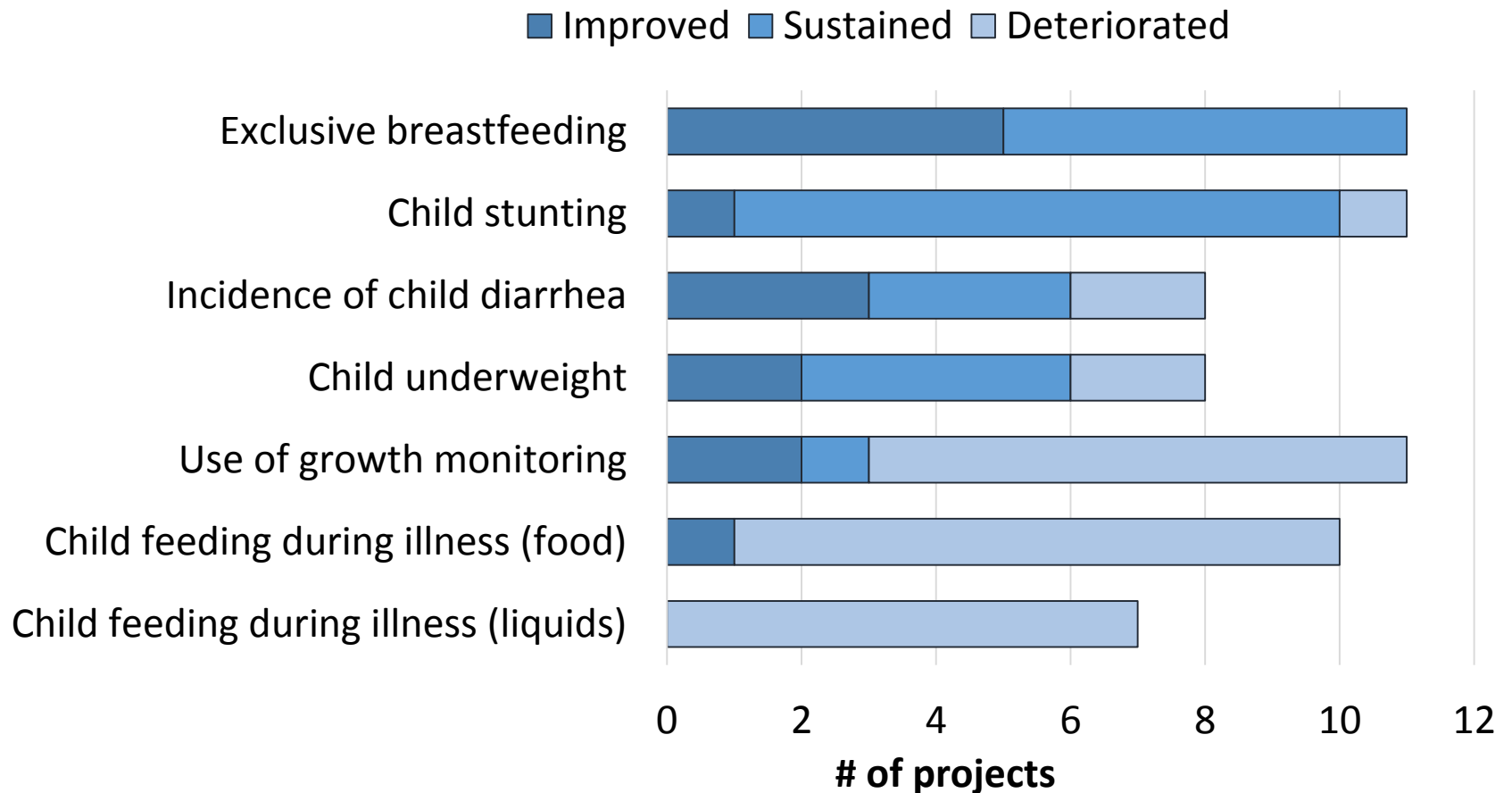
# Summary of Key Study Findings

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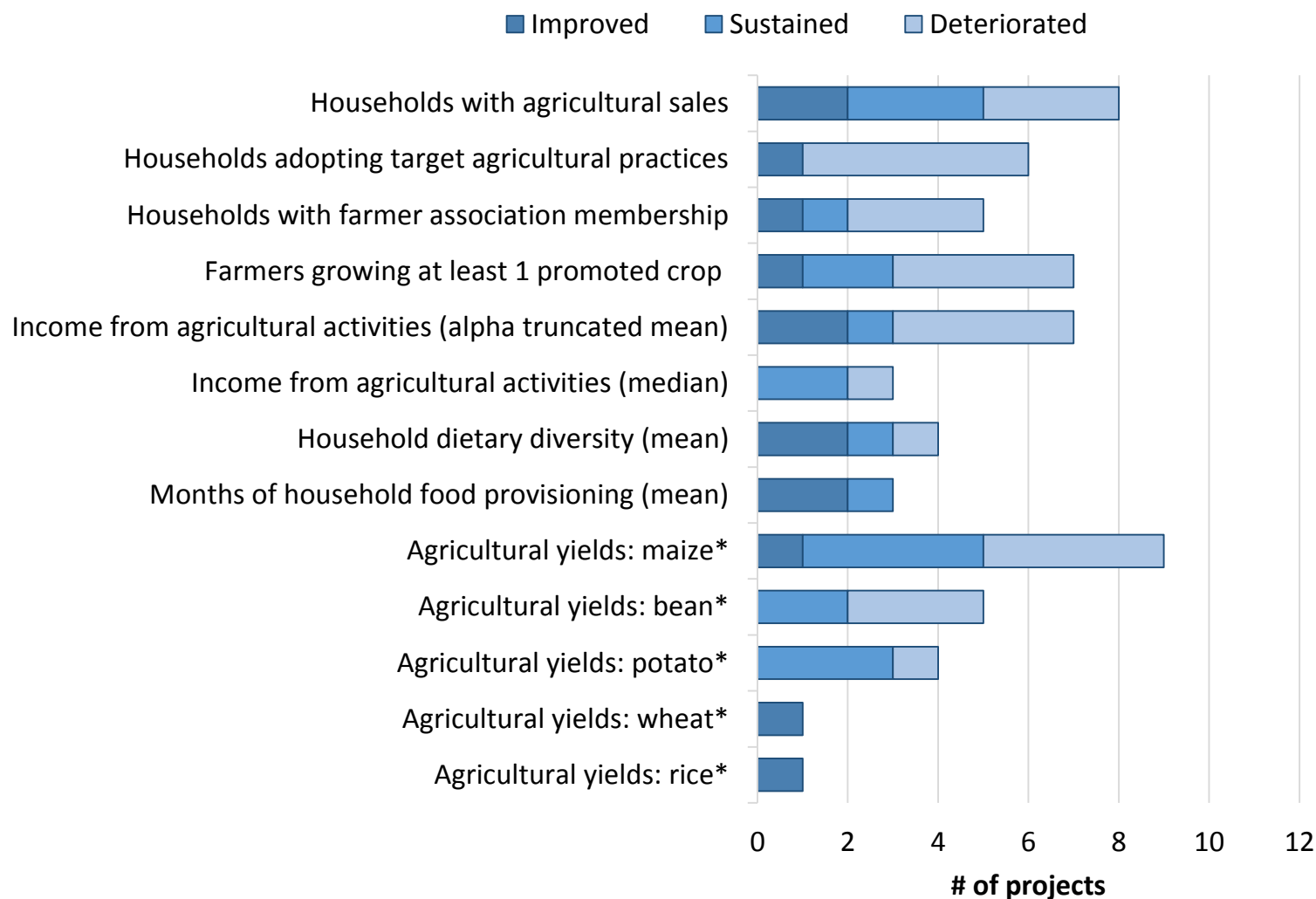


# Evidence of project success at exit does not necessarily imply sustained benefit over time

## Number of projects in which select MCHN impact indicators were sustained at follow-up



# Number of projects in which select agriculture and NRM impact indicators were sustained at follow-up



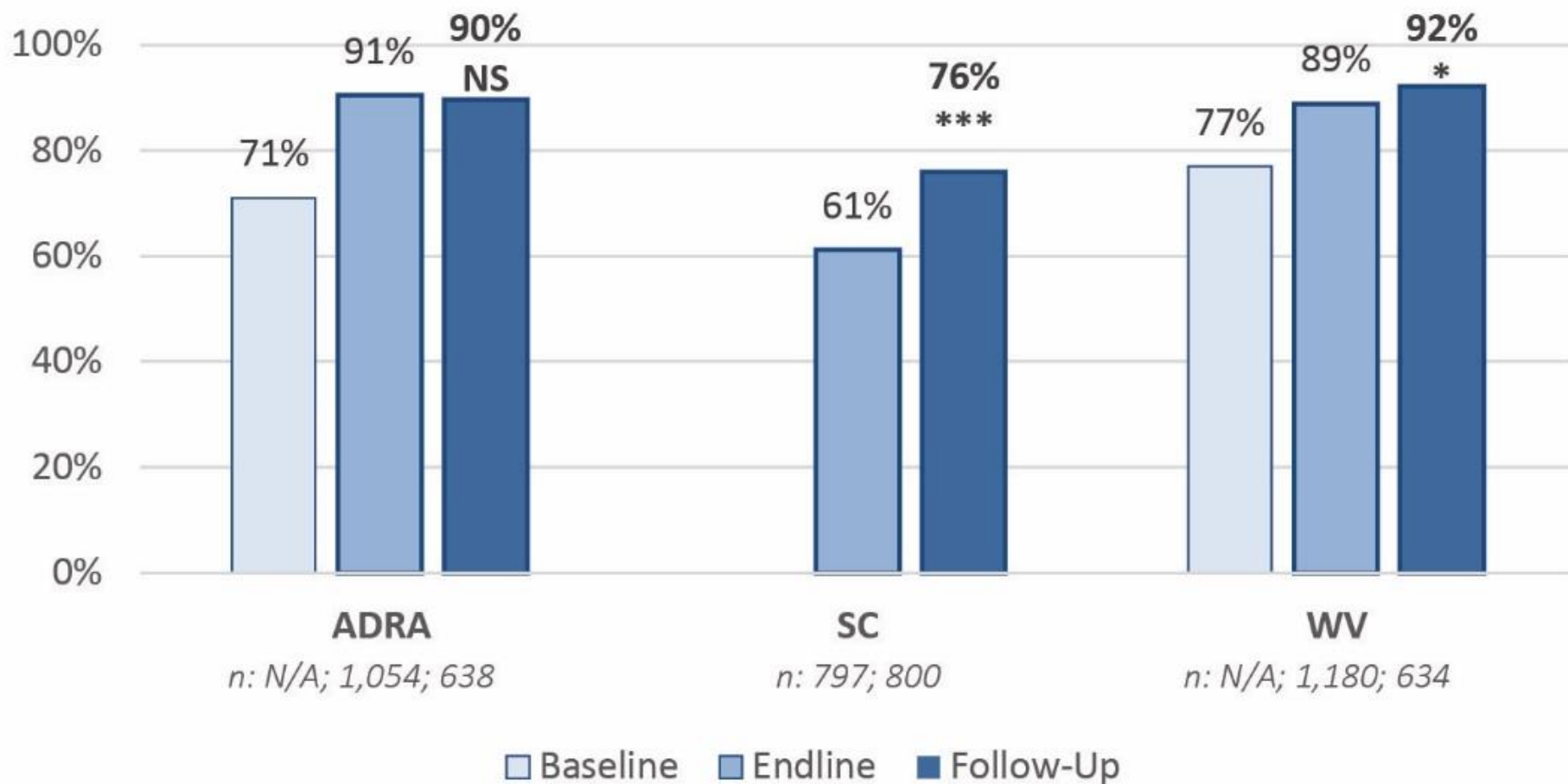
\* Mean truncated at the upper end of the third quartile of the interquartile range.

# Resources, capacity, and motivation are critical; linkages are also important

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- Water and sanitation: Bolivia and Honduras
  - Beneficiaries were **motivated** to pay for piped water
  - User fees provide **resources** to maintain and repair the system
  - Water committees have technical and managerial **capacity**
- Water and sanitation: Kenya
  - Unreliable supply reduced **motivation** to pay, threatening **resources** for system maintenance despite relative **capacity**

# Percentage of households with access to year-round piped water in Honduras



# Linkages are aided by explicit purpose/role and by linkage partner resources, capacity, and motivation

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- **Vertical linkages to health system**
  - Effective in Bolivia with government commitment to decentralized health care and resources to support it
  - Ineffective in Kenya due to lack of capacity and resources
- **Vertical linkages to markets and buyers**
  - Essential to success of commercialization of individual farmers' and producer associations' production
  - Buyers are motivated by a secure supply of quality products; have resources and capacity to provide technical assistance and credit

# The quality of inputs and created infrastructure matters

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- High quality of piped water systems in Bolivia and Honduras sustained motivation to pay
- Stock-water ponds in Bolivia were sustained where they were well positioned to capture water but abandoned elsewhere
- Unreliable water in Kenya reduced motivation and willingness to pay

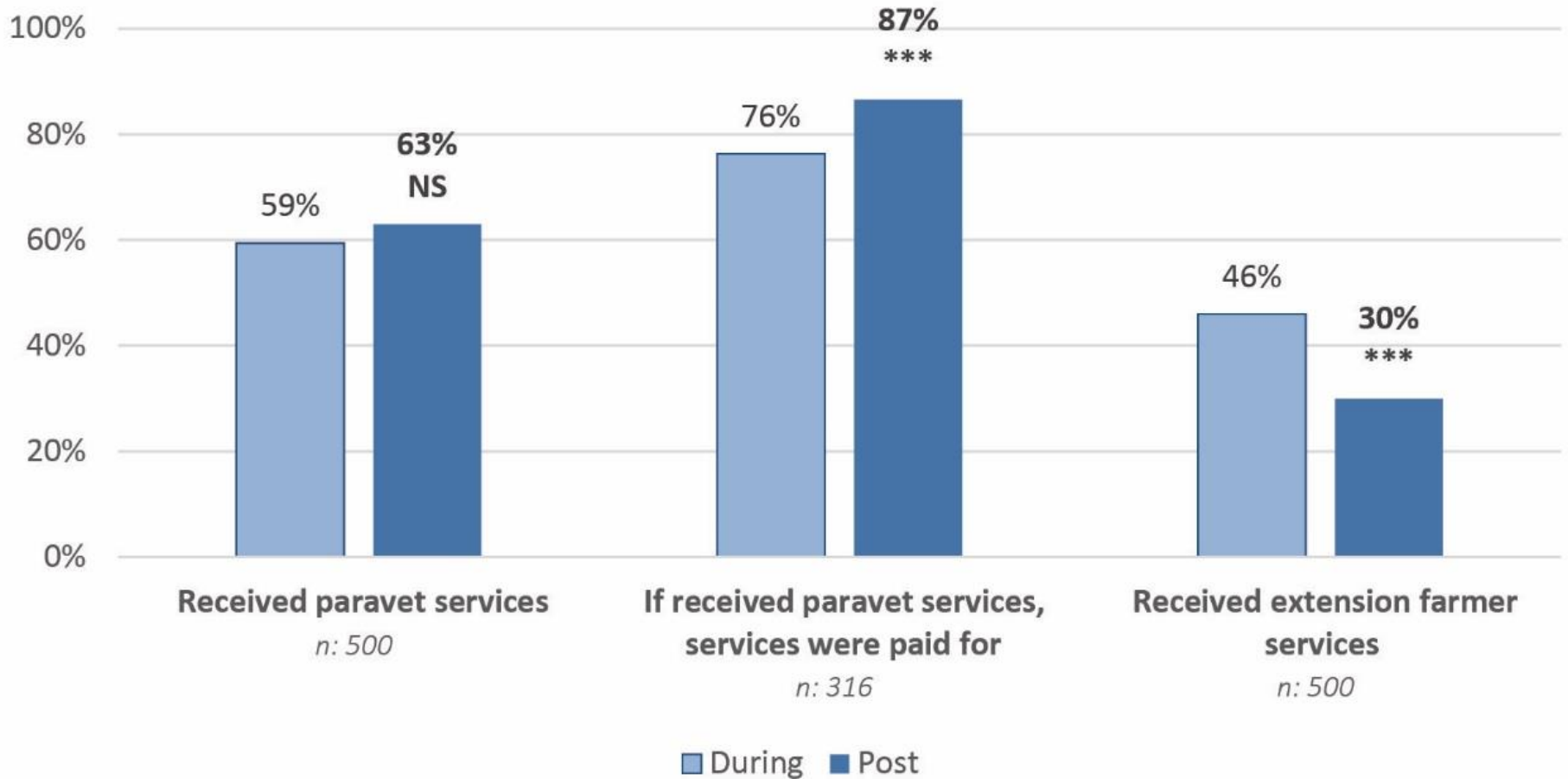
# Profit models can assist in generating sustained resources, however...

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- Fee-for-service approaches must be introduced early
- Solid business acumen and effective demand is required
- Feasibility is governed by context (e.g., health)



# Fee-for-service models in Kenya: Paravet and extension farmer service use during and post-project



# Gradual transition to independent operation is important

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- Successful producer associations had established market linkages and had experience with value chains prior to exit
- Microfinance groups were functioning independently and creating new ones prior to exit (Kenya)
- Water quality testing was not sustained (Bolivia and Honduras); Projects transferred responsibility for testing only at exit

# Providing free resources can threaten sustainability

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- Attendance at community growth monitoring sessions declined when rations were withdrawn, reducing CHW motivation
- Model farmers stopped providing training when project inputs were no longer given
- Farmers resisted paying for training and marketing services formerly provided for free (but paid for services that had not been free before exit)

# External context and conditions affect success and sustainability

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- Recurrent drought in Kenya
- Political crisis in Honduras
- Supreme Court decision on the Right to Food in India



# Recommendations

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# Recommendations to FFP and Partners

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## **1. FFP should adjust the application solicitation and review processes to account for sustainability**

- Sustainability plans should clearly articulate the sustainability theory of change as part of project design
- The critical factors for sustainability should be incorporated into all project sustainability plans and exit strategies
- Proposed linkages should be carefully assessed
- Projects should be incentivized to seek innovative and successful sustainability models for challenging sectors and contexts

# Recommendations to FFP and Partners

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**2. Project assessment (monitoring and evaluation) should include indicators to measure not only impact but also sustainability of change**

**3. FFP should consider extending projects beyond the 5-year cycle when there is evidence of progress toward sustainable impacts**

**4. FFP and its partners should strengthen their capacities, as necessary, to institutionalize sustainability within programming**

# Recommendations to FFP and Partners

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**5. Projects should be designed with local context in mind**

**6. Projects should develop resilience to predictable shocks that could undermine sustainable progress**

**7. Project design should incorporate strategies for sustaining beneficiary demand as well as supply of services**

**8. Project exit should be gradual, with a phased transfer of responsibility to the appropriate stakeholders; exit should follow incrementally independent operation**



# Recommendations to FFP and Partners

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**9. Project beneficiaries and beneficiary communities should be engaged in plans for sustainability and exit from the beginning of the project cycle**

**10. FFP should conduct post-project assessments of some projects, as long as 5 or 10 years after exit**

**11. FFP should ensure that awardees consistently archive all baseline and evaluation reports, including accessible and documented original data**

# Key Takeaways

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- When considering the sustainability potential of project activities, outcomes, and impacts, **remember the critical factors:** resources, capacity, and motivation (and sometimes linkages)
- **Start considering sustainability early** (at the project design phase) and work to **implement gradual transition** to exit wherever possible

# Questions?

Study findings are available at:

<http://www.fantaproject.org/research/exit-strategies-ffp>



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# Discussion Questions

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- How does the study finding that resources, capacity, and motivation are critical to the sustainability of activities, outcomes, and impacts post-project, and that linkages are often also important, resonate with your own implementation experiences?

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# Discussion Questions

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- One of the key study findings notes that efforts to achieve maximum results during the life of a project can sometimes undermine sustainability. What are your thoughts on the implications of this finding? Should the development community be willing to accept more modest results in the near term if they can be delivered in a way that will yield more sustainable gains over time?

# Activity – Unpacking Sustainability Strategies

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- Break into small groups, read the sustainability strategy in the envelope at your table, and discuss:
  - 1) Key assumptions that underlie this strategy (5 min)
  - 2) Design elements that can be included in a project to address these assumptions (5 min)
- Select a group member to report out on highlights of the group's discussion