

## *Partnership between the WFP Centre of Excellence Against Hunger in Brazil and Bangladesh*

South-South and Triangular Cooperation in the context of the Post-2015 Global  
Partnership for Sustainable Development



### **1. Background and Framework**

Despite the fact that 38 countries have achieved the MDG hunger target to date, over 805 million people remain undernourished around the world. Approximately two billion people suffer from micronutrient deficiencies, impeding human and socio-economic development. More than 66 million primary school-age children attend classes hungry across the developing world, with 23 million in Africa alone.

The discussions in the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development in the run-up to 2015 reflect that countries are prioritizing ending hunger, and promoting food security and nutrition. This includes ensuring that all people have dependable access to adequate food and nutrition; working to eliminate malnutrition; helping to ensure that food systems are sustainable and resilient; and supporting livelihoods for the poorest and most vulnerable food insecure populations.

Without tapping into the expertise, skills, capacities and solutions, existing in developing countries, it will not be possible to scale up impact of food security and nutrition programmes and reach the remaining 805 million people who continue to suffer from hunger and under-nutrition.

Therefore, South-South Cooperation is critical for achieving progress in food security. It is at the core of advancing nationally-owned efforts to realize a world without hunger.

A renewed Global Partnership for Sustainable Development needs to provide a framework and concrete vehicles to redouble efforts to harness the wealth of expertise, skills and innovative practices in developing countries. For this Partnership it will be necessary to

- a. address the social, economic and environmental dimensions of access to food, nutrition and social safety nets in an integrated manner;
- b. build on existing commitments and governance structures, to ensure that new initiatives capitalize on previous successes;
- c. leverage resources across diverse funding mechanisms; and
- d. build on multi-stakeholder engagement, including for financing, technology innovation and diffusion, and capacity building for people and institutions to implement Sustainable Development Goal 2 and related goals (e.g. goals 1 to 5, as well as goals 8 and 10).

## ***2. Framework of the WFP Centre of Excellence Against Hunger in Brazil***

Profile: The Centre of Excellence against Hunger embodies a partnership between WFP and the Government of Brazil, combining both partners' strengths towards a world without hunger. It makes the Brazilian and other successful experiences in zero hunger strategies available for other developing countries to learn, adapt and share within the framework of the South-South Cooperation. The Centre advocates for the transition to nationally-owned, sustainable programmes and policies on school feeding, social protection, food security and nutrition.

Vision: The Centre of Excellence against Hunger supports South-South and Triangular cooperation on the basis of solidarity among developing countries. It promotes horizontal relations and a South-South methodology which can contribute to the joint achievements of specific targets, like the Millennium Development Goals and the new Sustainable Development Goals. The work of the Centre respects the limits and competencies of each country in an effort to provide an effective exchange of knowledge in a shared solutions platform.

Results: Over 25 developing countries are actively tapping into Brazil's expertise. 13 countries currently are building the necessary political support, capacities and country systems, to develop their own home grown school feeding systems and to integrate them into broader social protection and Zero Hunger strategies, in order to nationally take over WFP programmes.

Methodology: The WFP Centre of Excellence against Hunger has developed its own methodology framework, adapted to the specific area of school feeding in the context of social protection and zero hunger strategies. The Advanced Centre's Tools and Technologies (ACTT), are based on the five policy goals of the SABER<sup>1</sup> which are used to discuss with the governments and support them to prepare an action plan: 1) the legal and political framework, 2) institutional capacity and

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<sup>1</sup> SABER: Systems Approach for Better Education Results

coordination, 3) ability to design and implementation of the program, 4) funding capacity and, 5) the extent of participation of the local community and civil society,.

The Centre uses a set of tools that can facilitate policy dialogue, planning and capacity development processes. These tools include study visits, national workshops, technical and high-level missions and the deployment of technical assistance and expertise. They are aimed at improving policy dialogue through the exchange of knowledge, expertise and mutual learning.

### ***3. South-South opportunity with Bangladesh***

While Bangladesh has made significant economic and social progress over the past decade, the rates of under-nutrition - despite overall impressive reductions - remain among the highest in the world and pose a serious economic and public health concern.

The number of people who are food insecure and live in poverty remains high: 47 million people are poor and 26 million people are extremely poor. Over 80% of the population live in rural areas with persistent food insecurity, and have limited access to land, markets and basic services. While Bangladesh has made significant progress with regards to access to education and gender parity at the primary and lower secondary school levels, a number of education challenges remain: an estimated 12 million children still go to school hungry and 4 million primary-aged children are hungry and out of school. Low school attendance rates prevail and only 70 percent of children complete the full five-year cycle of primary education.

In response and as part of its national poverty reduction plans, the Government's priorities are to strengthen both its education and social safety net systems. Capacity strengthening and technical assistance are at the heart of this effort.

In 2012, the Government of Bangladesh started with the establishment of a government-run national school feeding programme. Bangladesh wanted to explore various options in order to choose the best fit.

### ***4. Partnership building with the WFP Centre of Excellence Against Hunger:***

A partnership between the Government of Bangladesh and the WFP Centre of Excellence against Hunger in Brazil, which started in 2012, provided the basis to explore a possible transfer of expertise from Brazil's "Zero Fome" strategy.

In 2012, approximately one year after the Government of Bangladesh launched its School Feeding in Poverty Prone Areas project, Brazil, via the WFP Centre of Excellence, received a request to organize a South-South learning visit. The delegation from Bangladesh included the Minister of Primary and Mass Education. The overall objective of the visit was to explore options for the design and implementation of an innovative school feeding approach.

The programme should be linked to local agriculture and contribute to the improvement of the quality of education and the nutritional status of schoolchildren. The outcome of the learning exchange was the Ministry's decision to develop a hot meal school feeding initiative linked to local agriculture in Bangladesh. The initiative should benefit smallholders and marginalized cultivators, especially women. An action plan was prepared by the visiting delegation which included

- ***Piloting of a school meals initiative*** which was launched in 2013 and is now assisting 20,000 children in 100 schools. The pilot involves purchasing vegetables from community women growers and providing hot meals instead of fortified biscuits.
- ***Considerations for the formulation of a national school feeding policy and strategy:*** The results of this initiative will inform Bangladesh's decision on whether school meals with linkages to local producers and larger benefits for the communities could form part of a longer term vision and transition.

#### 5. Reflections:

Tailor the South-South knowledge transfer needs to the specific food security challenge and build on win-win opportunities for all partners;

- For Bangladesh, the partnership with the WFP Centre of Excellence was a vehicle to advance progress on various thematic issues and contribute to strengthening foreign relations with Brazil.
- For Brazil, the WFP Centre of Excellence contributes to deepening relations with Bangladesh. Partnering with WFP provides an opportunity to operationalize South-South Cooperation for food security and nutrition through its extensive network in over 75 countries.
- For WFP, this partnership offered room for learning how to best support countries to end hunger and promote food security and nutrition in line with global and national targets, through South-South and Triangular Cooperation.
- For traditional donors, such as DFID, who contributed to funding this partnership, the Centre of Excellence was a mechanism to cooperate with Brazil, Bangladesh and WFP at the same time.

Combine political momentum for transition, with knowledge sharing of effective implementation:

- Political capital needs to be channelled through strong implementation mechanisms and “safe spaces” for testing out new approaches.
- South-South initiatives can inspire the adoption of specific food security solutions. However, as in the case of Bangladesh, achievements can never be attributed to one single factor.

Ensure that South-South and Triangular Cooperation strengthen national implementation capacities.

- By taking an approach which is focused on the early engagement of stakeholders throughout the different stages of the South-South learning process, the Centre contributes to the development of national capacities.
- These can contribute to greater sustainability and scaling up of food security measures.

Advance progress towards multiple Sustainable Development Goals through a holistic approach to value chains and the pillars of the Zero Hunger Challenge

- For South-South initiatives to address hunger in all its facets, with a focus on the most vulnerable, it is necessary to capture cross-linkages to other thematic areas, such as health, education, agriculture and employment.
- The model of the WFP Centre of Excellence has allowed for streamlining and systematizing South-South learning on topics which are interlinked and at the core of the Zero Hunger Challenge.

## 6. What can be learned from this example with regards to a renewed Post-2015 Global Partnership for Sustainable Development?

Three key messages emerge from this example:

1. The Global Partnership must put South-South and Triangular Cooperation at the core of Post-2015 implementation modalities.
2. The Partnership can benefit from stable structures, which bring together political support and expertise on practical implementation in cross-cutting thematic domains.
3. More resources should be devoted to facilitating the scale-up of country-owned efforts to advance food security through South-South Cooperation.

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