What can we learn from different approaches that Embassies use to achieve food security results?

On Approaches for Food & Nutrition Security Programmes

This is #1 of a series of 3

Focusing on Approaches for FNS Programmes

This brochure contains insights developed by a group of staff from nine Dutch embassies and The Hague, travelling in a bus through Ethiopia in October 2014.

They reflected on Food & Nutrition Security programmes in their countries, shared experiences, and interacted with partners of EKN Addis Ababa.

Example #1   Introduction

KEY INSIGHTS SERIES | #1

Ethiopia: ISSD

"In Ethiopia we found out that the only way that we could create a vibrant, market-oriented and pluralistic seed sector, was to adopt a sector approach. It was evident that action was required on many fronts: quality assurance, access of smallholder farmers to seed, improve marketing through involvement of the private sector.
Not choosing for one seed system, but accept a diversity of seed systems, and strengthen its governance. This implies working on the business side on high-quality seeds, but also with local seed producer cooperatives.
On top of that, we invested at the policy level to create a better seed policies. And we prioritized research, capacity development, and learning platforms. You can imagine that the core business of this sector approach is organising collaboration between a huge number of stakeholders."

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What can we learn from different approaches that Embassies use to achieve food security results? Is one approach better than another? Can they be combined?

Embassies employ a wide array of approaches to tackle food security challenges. Among these we looked at three approaches: Sector approach, Area-based approach, Value chain approach. From each approach, experiences were shared and compared by different embassies.

Each approach is valid, based on the country context, choice of partners and the fit with the overall strategy of the Embassy as laid out in the MASP. Nevertheless we observed some trends:

1. There is renewed interest in sector- and area-based approaches, besides the value chain approach which is still widely used.
2. Although the private sector features prominently in both sector- and area-based approaches, key roles are added for the public sector to provide (1) financial incentives; (2) education/capacity building; (3) public-private coordination.

Example   #1   What is it about?   KEY INSIGHTS SERIES   #1

Example

Mozambique: BAGC

"In Mozambique the area or "corridor" approach is proving its concept. Various value chains such as fruits and maize are developing and scaling up because of the presence within the corridor of transport lines (road and rail), export facilities (ports), border posts and industries.

10 years ago business in the corridor was still impossible and the pioneer businesses perished. Now because of improving transport corridors and business climate they survive and are in business.

The embassy is financing the BAGC Catalytic Fund which provides loans to entrepreneurs that want to invest in the corridor. The embassy promotes the clustering of economic activities and infrastructure projects such as the centrally funded ORIO projects (irrigation) in the area."

What is it about?

Approach	Features	Examples
Sector approach	• Sector or sub-sector, usually national level • Not to be confused with the 'sector-wide approach (SWAP)' of the 90ies: - Not public sector-led, but private sector focused - Not top down designed, but bottom-up in collaboration with stakeholders. • Broader than Value Chain approach: also tackles disablers in enabling environment which limit various value chains. System-wide interventions. • Key activities: Public-private dialogue, B2B networks, capacity building, R&D, Access to Finance.	**Ethiopia:** Dairy, ISSD **Uganda:** ISSD **Great Lakes:** Catalist **The Netherlands:** Top Sectors
Area-based approach	• Takes specific geographical location as a starting point. • Looks at entry points for development in an integral way: economic; social; ecological. - Not to be confused with the 'integrated rural development programmes' of the 80ies: - Not public-sector led, but private sector focused/MSP - PPPs as a main mechanism to drive change. • Includes variations such as: landscape approach; corridors, growth pole models. • Features emphasis of infrastructure and services to make doing business easier.	**Mozambique:** Beira Ag Growth Corridor, Zambezi Valley Devt Agency **Great Lakes:** overall strategy is trans-boundary, aiming for regional stability. This encapsulates specific (value chain) programmes **Mali:** Niger river delta programme, integration Food security & Water **Bangladesh:** polder area in coastal belt integration Food security & Water
Value chain approach	• Focus on value addition for all components in a chain that produce a product or service. • Usually is confined to one commodity (cocoa, potato, etc). • Interventions aim to create value for smallholders/SMEs in the chain, making markets work for the poor. • Programme logic of value chain approach appeals to donors and companies. • Critique: not sufficiently able to incorporate systemic issues in the wider enabling environment where value chain actors operate.	**Benin:** onion, fish **Ethiopia:** Aspire (honey value chain); EDGET (local value chains in the dairy sector) **Bangladesh:** SaFaL (aquaculture, dairy, horticulture); PROOfs (selected products for northern and southern area of the project)

Example

Key Insights

Mali: area-based approach Water-FS

"In Mali we decided to integrate food security and water programmes, and the only way this could be done is by adopting an area-based approach.

We chose the Niger River delta and looked pragmatically for projects and interventions that were in that area, and that could contribute to food and water security. We avoided complicated discussions about Integrated Water Resource Management, but searched for programme synergies as we went along.

This area-based programme includes interventions on several particular value chains. We also believe that area-based approaches are the entry point if stability in conflict sensitive areas is a (co-)objective".
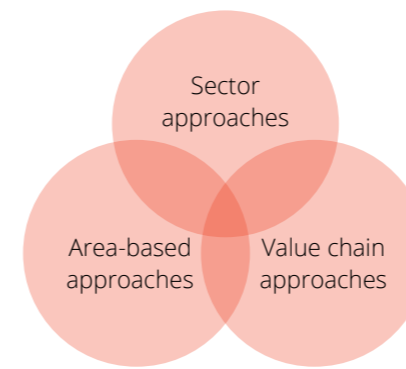
- Sector approaches should not be confused with 'sectoral approach' of the 90's. Area-based approaches should not be confused with 'integrated rural development programmes of the '80s. Both approaches are fundamentally different in how they see the roles of governments (enabling; not managing) and private sector and the market (driving inclusive development; not an outside actor).

- There is heated debate about which approach is the best. However, it is more important to agree that each approach has benefits in specific contexts. Emerging questions are: what are preconditions for each approach to be successful? How can approaches be combined (increasing the overlapping area in middle of the figure)? Do we see evidence that one approach follows after and builds upon another approach?

- We see blends of approaches developing: a corridor which chooses several value chains as spearheads for economic development, or value chain approaches that 'widen out' to include whole sector interventions. It is clear from various contributions from eg. Mozambique and Mali that value chains are incorporated in the area-based approach.

- Area-based approaches may have different starting points. There appear to be two major categories: those with environmental starting points, such as landscape management, integrated water management, and those with economic starting points such as economic corridors, hot spots, growth poles. The environmentally induced area-based approaches have to ensure that they link up to the wider economy in order to be effective.

- Sector approaches and area-based approaches will have more impact if they fit in strong national government policies and strategies. A sector approach e.g. in the seed sector will have more impact if it can feed into a large scale national governmental agricultural growth programme (Ethiopia); a corridor approach has a great chance of success if it is firmly embedded in national government policy (Mozambique). If the government has a strong vision coming close to a Sector Wide Approach for the entire agricultural sector, and delegates tasks to donors, then one can even safely work on certain aspects of the enabling

environment as it is part of that sector-wide approach (Rwanda). Value chain development on the other hand appears to be a viable stand-alone option which can still achieve much in cases where government policies are only loosely integrated but basic conditions for VCD are met (Bangladesh).

- Area-based approaches take time. We have to look beyond 4-year horizons to reach impacts. Also, we better start slow and get it right, than have a fast start with repairs needed along the way. Case: Mali

- We should not forget why area-based approaches failed in the past. Lessons we learned: a) link between sector - area = impact; b) don't focus only on the big institutions.

- As a principle, any approach should not replace existing structures and practices. In Gaza, a market-led approach to water supply worked, because it built on existing practices.

- For any approach, essential ingredients are Trust, Craftsmanship, and Relations. During Herfkens' professionalization agenda, these ingredients received less attention. We need to put them back in our practice.

- The role of EKNs in shaping and steering FNS programmes is important. Embassies add value through contextual intelligence, and their ability to broker partnerships and shift gears ('makelen & schakelen'). Embassies can zoom out to get the big picture of an approach, but are also able to zoom in to see what is and isn't working on the ground. Decentralised expertise is essential to make this work, but under threat of budget cuts and "efficiency" operations.

- Experience from Great Lakes region suggests that an area-based approach in combination with stabilization objectives is appropriate in conflict-sensitive regions. Likewise, an area-based approach in Timbuktu and Gao helps stability, but uses market drive as an organising principle.

Melle Leenstra:

"We have disinvested our own Dutch technical capacity for food security. We hardly have people who can connect social, economic, technological aspects of development in an interdisciplinary way"

Laurent Umans:

"What is required in Bangladesh is a combination of a Delta Plan, an economic agricultural corridor, and a landscape level sustainability plan"

What are preconditions for success of any approach?

What does performance measurement for a sector approach or an area-based approach look like?

What do these various approaches exactly do to improve the availability of food, access to food, and the use of food (the three dimensions of food security)?

And what do they do for nutritional status of women, men and children?

Which approaches are best suitable to deliver climate resilient outcomes?

The Learning Journey

The Learning Journey in Ethiopia took place from 29-31 October 2014. Staff responsible for Food Security programmes from nine embassies and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs took part.

During three days, a bus took the group to different places in Ethiopia to interact with partners. The bus itself was used as means of transport, reflection, debate and exchange.

This brochure is part of a series of three on the following topics:
(1) Approaches to FNS programming,
(2) Scaling of FNS programmes,
(3) Aid and Trade agenda.

All these brochures have been written by teams of embassy staff and CDI Wageningen UR, based on discussions and presentations during the Learning Journey.

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