



Nourishing the SDGs



The power of innovative partnerships to nourish
SDG2 and other development goals

SDG conference Zero Hunger - August 30th, 2018

Introduction:

The Netherlands Working Group on international Nutrition (NWGN) organized a session "Nourishing the SDGs" at the SDG conference in Wageningen, on August 30th, 2018. The objectives of this session were to discuss lessons learned from innovative partnerships across the so-called "Dutch Diamond" (government, civil society, private sector and knowledge institutes) to advance SDG2, as well as to identify synergies and trade-offs for progress in other development goals.

As an introduction to the session **Dr. Lawrence Haddad**, Executive Director of The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) and 2018 World Food Prize Laureate summarized the main messages from the 2017 Global Nutrition Report, while **Ms. Reina Buijs**, Director General, DGIS, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, introduced the new Dutch development policy on food- and nutrition security and the "Dutch Diamond" approach.

Three case-studies of innovative partnerships between civil society organisations, knowledge institutes, private sector, and UN agencies were then introduced in three pitches:

1. **Zakaria Fusheini** of UNICEF, Nigeria and **Fokko Wientjes**, DSM presented a UNICEF-DSM-Sight and Life partnership to deliver better nutrition to at-risk children and mothers in Nigeria, among others by developing and distributing MNPs to alleviate micronutrient deficiencies. The program was implemented in 3 states in Nigeria and capacity was built at the local government to take over in order to achieve a sustained program.

2. **Musonda Mofu** from the National Food and Nutrition Commission in Zambia presented lessons learned from the partnership between SNV, KIT- Royal Tropical Institute, the Government of Zambia, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Wageningen University and Research (WUR) on the power of multi-sectoral governance in addressing malnutrition and other SDG goals. Because of slow progress of its national multi-sectoral food and nutrition strategy, the Government of Zambia was looking for partners to help implementing the plans in order to reduce malnutrition, thereby also targeting related SDGs. SNV, KIT, and WUR, supported by SDC, worked together to create a multisectoral governance framework for policies and strategies at the sub-national level.

3. **Bärbel Weiligmann** of GAIN the Netherlands presented the Seeds of Prosperity Partnership between Unilever, GAIN and IDH aiming to educate and promote behavior change in dietary diversity and hand-washing among tea supply chain households in Kenya, Tamil Nadu and Assam. An important lesson learned was that using business delivery platforms to deliver an intervention is an important entry point for workplace nutrition of vulnerable supply chain workers and farmers. However, programs cannot be scaled up without local adaptation in each setting in both the messages and the delivery approach.

▼ *f.l.t.r. Musonda Mofu, Fokko Wientjes, Saskia Osendarp, Lawrence Haddad, Zakaria Fusheini, David Nabarro, Bärbel Weiligmann, Annegré de Roos, Mark Wijne, Reina Buijs (absent).*



Take-aways:

- The 2017 Global Nutrition Report clearly showed that most countries make progress on undernutrition, but overnutrition is on the rise and the “Double burden” is becoming the new normal. Adequate implementation of so-called “nutrition-specific” programs can only achieve a 20% reduction in malnutrition, thus progress on complementary “nutrition-sensitive” approaches is required to fill the remaining 80%.
- SDGs need nutrition as 6 out of the 10 risk factors of mortality and disability are diet-related in both developing and developed countries; for example when food prices double, conflicts increase or when children are undernourished this will impact their performance at school and ultimately affect a country’s productivity and GNP.
- Partnerships tackling SDG2 and other development goals need to make deep commitments that are broad and target multiple wins. Commitments should be challenging, concrete and actionable, so that partners can be held accountable. We should aim for the uncomfortable commitments and be specific in delivering, incorporate synergies and tradeoffs in the plans.
- The agenda of the Dutch nutrition and food security policy takes into account the fact that malnutrition is on the rise due to fragility, instability and climate change and thus tackles the root causes of malnutrition. Aligned with this strategy, the Dutch Government recently developed and submitted a Conflict and Hunger resolution, which has been adopted by the UN Security Council, thus strongly embedding food- and nutrition security in the political agenda.
- Traditionally the Dutch government has strongly supported partnerships following the “Dutch Diamond” approach in which academia, private sector, civil society and government collaborate through, a multi-sectorial approach, addressing the entire food system. Examples of these partnerships are the SDG Partnership facility, CGIAR partnership and the Amsterdam Initiative on Malnutrition. These partnerships require an open mindset where new roles and responsibilities are developed that go beyond comfort zones and personal hobbies. A learning attitude is required, as these partnerships are a continuous learning process. This will require innovative ideas and finance systems.

An interactive panel discussion with all speakers, on pre-defined propositions and questions raised by the audience resulted in a lively interactive debate. In the closing remarks of the session, **Dr. David Nabarro**, Director of 4SD, and 2018 World Food Prize laureate reflected on the main lessons learned.

This report summarizes the main takeaways from the session and panel discussion. More detailed information on the case-studies and questions raised during the plenary discussion can be found on the NWGN website: www.the-nwgn.org

Proposition 1:

Effective partnerships addressing SDG2 can only work if all partners have reducing malnutrition as their primary objective.

Conflicting agendas of public and private sector partners will remain an important barrier for success. Effective partnerships rely on trust and personal relationships between partners.

The audience opinion:

agree  17%

disagree  83%

Any effort that only focuses on one SDG is doomed to fail. We should not only think in the direction of farm to fork, but also the other way around, so from fork to farm. The focus should be broader than only SDG#2 as illustrated by the case studies.

Proposition 2:

Trying to address multiple SDGs in one partnership program goes at the expense of quick and effective progress on SDG2.

For instance can we promote local SMEs and ensure that they can produce enough good quality supplementary foods and food supplements to fulfill the needs in situations of famine or extreme food insecurity?

The audience’s opinion:

agree  17%

disagree  83%

While programs will have to target multiple SDGs it is important to realize that one cannot address all SDGs, too many SDGs will let your program collapse. Programs need to select a few SDGs, including of course SDG17 on partnerships, that are relevant and achievable.

Proposition 3:

Only the local government can ensure that partners contribute to integrated programs addressing multiple SDGs.

Good governance is a pre-requisite to ensure progress of integrated programs. Donors, local and international private sector, and local and international NGOs each have too many conflicting goals and objectives.

The audience's opinion:

agree  10%

disagree  90%

It is difficult to agree with this proposition because of the word 'only'. The local government may not be always necessary, but the more sustainable approaches do require local government involvement, not to add more bureaucracy but to ensure innovative approaches are adopted at the community level. You cannot go to scale without addressing the individual differences within a country, so go national, but district by district. Keep focusing on contextual factors. The Dutch government can stimulate good practices, but cannot control private companies who market foods abroad.

Proposition 4:

Successfully addressing SDG2 (ZeroHunger) will not be possible without addressing (gender) inequalities (SDG 5).

Impacting these inequalities and understanding how it contributes to malnutrition, is an essential aspect of all nutrition related programs.

The audience's opinion:

agree  94%

disagree  6%

Gender disparities exist at impact measurement level as well. Often, current food security indicators are applied only for men, while nutrition indicators are used only for children and women.

Proposition 5:

Recognition of auxiliary benefits of programs is an opportunity to target multiple SDGs.

Programs can have unforeseen benefits targeting other SDGs, recognizing them and making use of existing infrastructures can be an effective way to achieve targets of multiple SDGs.

The audience's opinion:

agree  100%

disagree 0%

Proposition 6:

Sustainable solutions at scale require collective action.

For programs to work at scale, multiple companies and organizations in a region should invest and therefore it should be made attractive (cost and time efficient, using existing delivery mechanisms) for them to join forces.

The audience's opinion:

agree  100%

disagree 0%

A shared vision and common narrative is important.

Conclusion of the session "Nourishing the SDGs":

Effective partnerships need to have a common narrative to develop coherence and commitment and need to build in mutual accountability, so all partners will take responsibility. In addition, successful partnerships have due diligence from the start, partners that have complementary skills, design for big impact, and if you fail, fail fast.

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