

Building engaging and inclusive partnerships for ending hunger

What do evaluations and research say about inclusive partnerships?

Expected takeaways

In today's discussion we will aim at taking stock of lessons learnt from the two cases of evaluative and research work highlighting examples of partnerships, and discussing the role of research and evaluation in helping development actors understand how and under what conditions these partnerships influence development actions.

Session Takeaways:

- Participants will become aware of the strengths and weaknesses of partnership development efforts and gain an understanding of the role that partnerships may play in fostering sustainable and inclusive development. Participants will learn about examples of successful partnerships and lessons learned, and that engagement in mutually beneficial and collaborative partnerships is essential to achieve truly inclusive and sustainable growth.

Background and context

- The **2030 Agenda** calls upon all stakeholders to act in **collaborative partnerships** to address global challenges. This global plan of action implies that the Sustainable Development Goals can only be realized through **inclusive partnerships** built upon **principles and values**, and upon a **shared vision and goals** placing **people and the planet at the centre**
- The achievement of the ambitious 2030 Agenda is based on sustainable interconnections between economy, society and environment, and thus requires an **unprecedented level of cooperation and collaboration** among civil society, businesses, governments, NGOs, foundations and other partners.
- The importance of partnerships has been fully recognized by all development actors, however **more strategic and concerted efforts** are still needed to fully capitalize on the potential for joint global actions for Agenda 2030.
- Development institutions can facilitate partnerships development efforts, stimulate collaboration among various actors, and promote inclusive partnerships that result in **transformative and long-lasting** changes.

Background and context

Types of partnerships:

- **Complementary:** one partner can provide inputs (knowledge, services, skills) that are needed by another partner to achieve its strategic goals.
- **Mutual benefits and shared goals:** A collaboration between two or more organizations where complementary resources are brought together to tackle a common challenge or achieve a shared strategic goal.
- **Transformative/Inclusive:** These partnerships have more ambitious goals, addressing development challenges in an inclusive and multi-faceted way that results in systemic and long-lasting change. Effective and truly inclusive Partnerships require shared objectives, mutual benefits, and trust.

Partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals

“An ongoing collaborative relationship among organizations from different stakeholder types aligning their interests around a common vision, combining their complementary resources and competencies and sharing risk, to maximize value creation towards the Sustainable Development Goals and deliver benefit to each of the partners.”

(from the SDG Partnership Guidebook by the UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs)

Cases to be presented

In the context and in the spirit of 2030 Agenda, various types of partnerships, cooperation and collaboration arrangements are being formed among civil society, academia, businesses, governments, NGOs, foundations, academia and other partners, in support of achieving inclusive sustainable development.

Today we will present and discuss a few examples of such partnerships, focusing on:

- Partnerships with Academia and Research Institutions
- Partnerships with Civil Society and with the Private Sector

Two cases to be presented:

- ❑ The case to be presented by the **Food and Agriculture Organization** of the United Nations: focus on the evaluation of partnerships with the private sector and civil society organizations
- ❑ The Case Study on Child Development Program (CDP) to be presented by **Center for International Development Evaluation (CIDE)** would inform participants on the importance of religious belief and collaborative effort of the community in generating positive and significant influence overarching different sectors of child development.

Case 1: Partnerships of the Food and Agriculture Organization

- The **Food and Agriculture Organization** (FAO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations system, that leads international efforts to defeat hunger. Its goal is to achieve food security for all and make sure that people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy lives.
- Traditionally, partnerships with governments were the basis for the FAO's engagement in responding to countries development needs. Yet, it also had a long tradition of collaboration with various stakeholders and development actors in finding sustainable solutions to development challenges.
- In the context of 2030 Agenda, the UN system has strived for better coordination and collaboration between various development actors. In the same spirit, FAO has intensified its partnership efforts to leverage additional resources, knowledge and innovation, finance and investments, latest technologies towards greater development impact and achieving zero hunger and poverty reduction.

Evaluating partnership development efforts of the Food and Agriculture Organization

- Since 2018 FAO has undertaken series of evaluations to assess organization's contributions towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- In view of the crucial role of partnerships in the achievement of the SDGs, these evaluation series also included 2 evaluations of strategic partnerships with non-state actors: civil society organizations and the private sector.

What have we learned from evaluations of partnership arrangements?

- Organization **has established relevant strategies** and mechanisms for partnering with the non-state actors, which **have stimulated a more open collaboration**
- Since 2015 there has been a trend towards increasing number and variety of non-state actor's engagement across all thematic areas of FAO's work. However, the number of partnerships that were formalized, continued to be limited.
- Besides engagement in programmatic activities, FAO supports the engagement of partners in **policy dialogue** with Member States and global decision-makers through a range of **multi-stakeholder platforms** and international forums.
- These partnerships have contributed towards FAO's **Strategic Objectives** and remained relevant in the context of **global commitments**, emerging development priorities and the 2030 Agenda

Examples of successful partnerships

Providing platforms for civil society voices in global policy discussions

- ▶ FAO supports the engagement of partners in policy dialogue with Member States and global decision makers through a range of multi-stakeholder platforms and international forums.
- ▶ The **International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements** (IFOAM-Organics International) contributes to policy dialogue on topics related to sustainable agriculture through the CFS, focusing on advocacy for agroecology and nutrition and taking part in negotiations and discussions with FAO Member delegates. It has contributed to normative activities, such as the drafting of the Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Soil Management (FAO, 2017b) and the International Code of Conduct on Sustainable Use and Management of Fertilizers (FAO, 2019), and provided inputs to global statistical data on organic agriculture.
- ▶ **La Via Campesina** is an international movement, representing more than 200 million smallholders and farmers, comprised of about 150 organizations in 70 countries. It has a long track record of working with the United Nations System, particularly FAO, to defend policies and positions that support smallholder-based sustainable agriculture and fisheries. La Via Campesina developed and promoted the agroecological production model as a way of coping with sustainable development. La Via Campesina, the World Farmers' Organization and the World Rural Forum were also engaged in consultations to develop the Global Action Plan to implement the United Nations Decade of Family Farming, a joint initiative by FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

Building global alliances

Since its proclamation in 2017, **the UN Decade on Family Farming** has constituted a global partnership aiming at stimulating the development of policies and investments in favor of family farming. It places family farmers at the centre of food systems, ensuring food security, improving livelihoods, better managing natural resources, protecting the environment, and achieving inclusive and sustainable rural development.

The **World Rural Forum (WRF)**, **FAO** and **International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)** have been working together to advocate for and raise public awareness on family farming to enhance sustainable agriculture, ensure food security and nutrition and advance rural development. The World Rural Forum (WRF) is a global network composed of family farming federations and organizations, rural development organizations, agriculture cooperatives and research centers, representing more than 35 million family farmers across the five continents.

Working in 50 countries through National Committees for Family Farming (NCFFs) and regional family farmers networks, WRF, FAO and IFAD have been promoting policy dialogue under the umbrella of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming 2019–2028 (UNDIFF) and its Global Action Plan.

Building global alliances

- ▶ The **Pastoralist Knowledge Hub** created with support from FAO, brings together pastoralists and international actors to ensure that pastoralists' concerns are integrated into the international policy dialogue. Several hundred million pastoralists worldwide rely on a rich legacy of traditional knowledge and mobility to survive in some of the harshest environments on the planet. Yet they are often misunderstood, marginalized and excluded from decisions that affect them. The Hub gives them a voice and empowerment. Partners: World Bank Group, CFS, European Union, IFAD, UNESCO, UN Environment, IIED, Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock, ICPALD, ICARDA, ILRI, Slow Food, Mountain Partnership, Norwegian University of Life Sciences, International Land Coalition
- ▶ In **Viet Nam**, FAO supported the government in organizing consultations to establish an alliance for climate-smart agriculture in the Asia-Pacific region. These have attracted more than 100 participants, including representatives from farmers' organizations, unions and civil society. Consequently, the Global Alliance for Climate-Smart Agriculture was launched as a voluntary and action-oriented multi-stakeholder platform – a coalition of 14 governments and 32 organizations.

Harnessing technologies for sustainable management of resources

► **Google Inc.**, through its Earth Outreach program, agreed to partner to make geospatial surveillance tools and maps more accessible to FAO and its partners, helping countries tackle climate change with the latest technology. FAO uses Google Earth Engine to provide free access to more than 170 countries in support of forest resources assessment. Google technology is used to develop systems estimating global forest cover, monitoring changes in land management, and even measuring fishing effort through automatic identification systems.

► **UNILEVER**, the global consumer goods company, is joining forces with USAID, FAO, the World Resources Institute and Google, Inc. to create a shared data ecosystem that will focus on key regions, including the Amazon Basin, South-East Asia and West Africa. This data platform will offer a more uniform way to monitor, verify and disclose progress in reducing deforestation and restoring degraded lands. In the past, UNILEVER has also supported FAO's efforts in various countries in reducing food loss and waste.

Food and Nutrition Security and Safety

- ▶ FAO and the **Global Pulse Confederation (GPC)** partner to promote the sustainable production, consumption and international trade of pulses for improving food and nutrition security and sustainability of agricultural systems. FAO and GPC jointly run public awareness initiatives; support joint assessments and case studies to foster investments on pulses; and promote multi-stakeholder dialogues. Through the partnership, FAO and GPC have also agreed to collaborate on knowledge development and improving understanding of the impact of antimicrobial use and anti-microbial resistance (AMR) in crop production on food safety and human health.
- ▶ Global food company **Danone** and FAO work together to improve global nutrition and food safety knowledge and promote responsible agricultural value chains for more sustainable food system. The partners have identified areas of collaboration to strengthen food safety in order to enhance food security, to address interconnectivity of humans, animals and the environment via One Health and to improve public-private capacities in delivering climate goals with respect to agriculture and land use sector
- ▶ Partnership between FAO and the **Mars Inc.** company focused on food safety and reduction of risks related to contamination by mycotoxins. Mycotoxins, toxic substances for humans and animals, can be produced by certain fungi and may be found in all staple crops, such as maize, wheat and sorghum. Limiting the intake of mycotoxins is a critical factor to improve public health and animal health globally. The data and knowledge related to mycotoxin contamination developed by Mars Inc. contributed to expanding the functionalities of the FAO's mycotoxin sampling tool, which has already drawn the interest of a number of member countries as well as other UN agencies.

Bringing services to the communities in need

- ▶ FAO in partnership with **Rabobank**, a Dutch cooperative bank, is helping targeted rural communities in Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania benefit from more inclusive, sustainable food systems. This collaboration assists local Microfinance Institutions (MFIs) in bringing innovative financial instruments to smallholder farmers. As a result, farmers have better opportunities to form cooperatives and participate in value-addition activities, e.g. grading and processing of agricultural products. The initiative pays special attention in ensuring the **inclusion of poor, vulnerable and marginalized groups**, including women and youth.
- ▶ The **IKEA Foundation** is a strategic philanthropy that focuses its grant making efforts on tackling poverty and climate change. This foundation in partnership with FAO and UNHCR helps 17 000 refugees in **Eastern Africa** in using agriculture as a means to create sustainable livelihoods, grow high-quality crops using sustainable farming methods that protect environments, while linking them to local companies who can sell their produce.
- ▶ FAO and **Kühne-Stiftung** (Swiss-based non-profit foundation) collaborate in improving logistics of crisis response programmes in emergency and protracted crises contexts. This partnership helps strengthening and promoting joint actions to assess food value chains, building FAO's capacity in optimizing logistics procedures, and increasing effectiveness of emergency responses

Protecting the environment, conserving biodiversity

- ▶ Partnership with the **International Fertilizer Association (IFA)** (not-for-profit organization based in France) promotes sustainable food and agriculture and address related topics such as assessment of soil fertility and the sustainable use of fertilizers. Together, FAO and IFA encourage the continuous improvement of fertilizer statistics to inform agriculture policy and evidence-based decision making; support increased agricultural productivity while minimizing the impact of fertilizers on the environment through integrated approaches to plant nutrition, including efficiency in use of fertilizers and promotion of bio fertilizers and biostimulants.
- ▶ Collaboration between FAO and **Biodiversity Partnership Mesoamerica** (multisectoral association based in Costa-Rica) aim at contributing towards conserving the biological wealth of Mesoamerica region through supporting the private sector in the integration of aspects of biodiversity in business activity. This collaboration promotes joint, coordinated actions that directly support rural small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), producer organizations, cooperatives and associations to increase their economic opportunities through sustainable and resilient value chains that are based on biodiversity products and services.
- ▶ In **Viet Nam**, FAO and **IKEA** (Swedish multinational company) collaborated on a forestry certification initiative aimed at promoting the sustainable management of forest plantations and empowering forest-reliant communities.

Lessons learned

- There have been positive contributions from partnerships, yet these achievements have been **limited in scope**, geographical spread and **magnitude**. Many of engagements with the non-state actors have **not been sustained** beyond an initial period of engagement, demonstrating limited replicability and sustainability of results
- Partnerships were **not strategically planned**, with limited efforts towards proactive mapping of opportunities and reaching out to potential partners
- Modes of partnership arrangements were **limited to a few instruments** of collaboration that place partners in a broad category of ‘service providers’ as opposed to “development partners”

Lessons learned (continued)

- **Risk management and due diligence** mechanisms have been effective in protecting the Organization from potential risks. At the same time, these have been perceived by partners as cumbersome and **restrictive**
- Effective implementation of partnership strategies requires commitment, **strategic, dedicated and coherent approaches** that integrate partnerships into core areas of organization's work
- Concerted efforts needed to forge demand-based partnerships and engage with non-state actors as **equal** and long-term **development partners**

Constraints and challenges

- Local context and enabling legal and institutional environment
- FAO's traditional role and positioning as a primarily government-oriented organization
- Administrative burden, the lack of clear procedures and the lengthy processes involved in formalizing partnership arrangements.
- The procedures for partnership development are still risk-averse and restrictive
- Partnership development efforts are not underpinned by an effective guidance, capacity development and knowledge management system
- Partnerships have transaction costs. Dedicated resources and capacities are needed for initiating partnerships (“seed funding”), and for further development and management of partnership arrangements

What did we recommend?

FAO should develop a new long-term vision for partnerships, enhancing focus on strategic partnerships to fully utilize potential for joint global actions towards the SDG Agenda.

In the context of the 2030 Agenda, FAO should consider expanding its engagement in effective multi-stakeholder partnership networks and mechanisms, moving beyond bilateral partnership agreements.

Procedures for entering into partnerships need to be improved by expanding range of agreements and partnership instruments to facilitate collaborative and mutually beneficial cooperation.

The **partnership processes** and instruments need to be **streamlined** to ensure that safeguards are commensurate with the level and scope of the engagements, without imposing undue rigidity in partnering with external actors

Each partnership requires due attention and effective management, taking necessary steps in nurturing a truly collaborative environment

FAO should improve its **assessment of the value and impact** of ongoing and past partnerships and draw on lessons learned to develop updated guidance and collaboration approaches

Evaluation impact and benefits

- Evaluation Impact: Change of an overall approach to partnerships. FAO Governing bodies have demanded that a new vision for partnerships is developed, the Strategy and its implementation approaches are revised to foster proactive engagements, and due diligence and risk management procedures are improved and simplified.
- Benefits to FAO stakeholders and beneficiaries:
 - ❖ New Strategy and approaches laying out more conducive environment for partnering
 - ❖ Improved culture of working with non-state actors
 - ❖ Dedicated efforts in mapping potential partners and identifying areas for collaboration
 - ❖ Transparency and accessible information on partnership opportunities
 - ❖ Less restrictive risk management procedures, ensuring protection of the organizational image, principles and values without imposing undue rigidity on external partnerships
 - ❖ Expanded variety of instruments for cooperation offering better opportunities for engagement with non-state actors

Reference documents

- Evaluation of the FAO Strategy for Partnerships with the Private Sector

<https://www.fao.org/publications/card/en/c/CA6678EN/>

The management response to an evaluation:

<https://www.fao.org/3/mz849en/mz849en.pdf>

- Evaluation of the FAO Strategy for Partnerships with Civil Society Organizations

<https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/CB1636EN/>

The management response to an evaluation:

<https://www.fao.org/3/ne011en/ne011en.pdf>

- Partnerships with Non-State Actors at FAO: Progress Report 2020–2021

<https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cc2246en/>

Thank you!