

SAVING
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LIVES



South-South and Triangular Cooperation as Driver for SDG2

A collection of South-South experiences and opportunities for knowledge exchange, peer learning and technology transfer in the context of the development and humanitarian cooperation for SDG2

Introduction

South-South and triangular cooperation is critical to access and mobilize the expertise, technologies and financial resources that already exist in developing countries. In order to reach the remaining 821 million people affected by chronic food deprivation worldwide the knowledge and development solutions from the Global South are indispensable.

WFP is organizing a side event on this topic on 27 November at the margins of its Annual Executive Board Meeting in Rome. The discussion will shed light on country demands, experiences and key opportunities for WFP to support governments on SSTC in the areas of nutrition, rural resilience-building, and social protection – all of which are at the heart of achieving zero hunger.

As background for this discussion, WFP has put together a collection of country experiences to showcase how SSTC is applied in practice.

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South-South Opportunities to Strengthen Resilience of Smallholder Farmers in the Context of Africa

QUICK FACTS

Reducing hunger and malnourishment is at the heart of Africa's socio-economic development strategy.

African Agenda 2063 provides an unique opportunity for **collaboration** between the **54 countries across the continent**.

There is a need for facilitating South-South and triangular cooperation more systematically across the African continent, in order to empower smallholder farmers, link their production to feeding programmes and promote peer learning in nutrition and resilience-building.



CHALLENGE

Increasing food supply and reducing hunger is one of the most pressing needs of the African Continent. Malnourishment is at the core of hunger undermining people's health, ability to study and work. It devastates specially the children while hampering their potential to lead a productive life as adults, which can turn into a vicious cycle of deprivation and poverty for future generations.

To achieve food and nutrition security for all, it is critical to achieve the objectives set by the Agenda 2063, which include increasing **smallholder productivity, connecting smallholders to markets and improving responses to food emergencies**. The Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) provide a roadmap for achieving this goal.

In this scenario, there is a need for more **systematic peer learning** within the region in order to build on Africa's existing experiences and enable **countries to help each other** in order to collectively overcome these challenges.



APPROACH

Tackling the problem of hunger and malnutrition by improving food security and rural livelihoods is crucial to eradicating poverty in Africa.

In practice, more investment and capacities are needed to:

1. **Attain food and nutrition security** in terms of availability and affordability of food. A special focus is on ensuring access of children and the most vulnerable to adequate food and nutrition.
2. **Improve the productivity of smallholder farming** to attain regular average annual growth rates. Supporting female smallholder farmers is a particular concern.
3. **Promote dynamic local agricultural markets** and facilitate exchanges and incentivize trade among countries in the region.

Facilitating **peer learning among African countries**, while helping countries in the region to tap into the **technical assistance from other South-South partners**.

WFP Centre of Excellence in **Brazil** is a partner of choice for promoting linkages of smallholder farming to institutional markets and the WFP Centre in **China** is well placed to assist countries with rural infrastructure support.



OPPORTUNITIES

In partnership with Governments in African countries, WFP can facilitate South-South and triangular cooperation in order to work jointly towards the following objectives:

- **Establish conditions for sustainable development linked to smallholder farming:** FAO, IFAD and WFP have been collaborating in several projects with the New Development Partnership for Africa (NEPAD) that put smallholder farming as a central goal in food assistance initiatives.
- **Encourage policy reforms and increased investments in priority rural sectors:** WFP and the African Union Commission are collaborating in policy dialogues and country capacity strengthening that promote local food procurement from local agriculture and micro-financing for smallholder farming.
- **Support resource mobilisation:** Supporting institutional frameworks for public revenue and expenditure, national funds and budgets for smallholder farming are a priority for all Rome-based UN agencies and partners such as the African Union. For example, Zimbabwe, Benin, Kenya and Côte d'Ivoire have become examples for budget allocation for feeding programmes integrated with smallholder farming with WFP and IFAD support.



REACHING THE MOST VULNERABLE

Smallholder farming is at the heart of rural development. Investment in **inclusive rural transformation strengthens social cohesion and promotes urban-rural linkages**, sewing social fabric pieces together. This is especially relevant in rural areas, which are more susceptible to a number of issues including lower opportunities for employment and increased risk of poverty. Difficulties in accessing opportunities for a better future can turn into a source of local hostility, increasing the risk of conflicts and emergencies in the communities.

By focusing on **boosting smallholder agricultural production and rural business development**, developing countries in Africa can become more **resilient to food shortages and natural resource degradation**. This is particularly important in countries that heavily depend on food imports and that have lower food production sovereignty and autonomy. In rural areas already in conflict and emergency situations, these harsh environments often hinder effective humanitarian responses. Conflict and emergencies can then become the major causes of famine and severe hunger scenarios. When conflict erupts, rural development becomes challenging, if not impossible.

By strengthening **smallholder farmers' productivity and access to markets**, rural areas can prosper and become more resilient to both conflict and emergencies, and to hunger. Investment in rural communities, food production, business creation, as well as basic infrastructure and conflict mitigation helps **prevent conflict escalation, promotes stability and reduces food insecurity** that results from massive displacement of farmers.



Photo (header): WFP/Isadora Ferreira — Photo (footer): WFP/Natan Giuliano



China: Empowering a New Generation of Smallholder Entrepreneurs and Fostering Resilience in Rural Areas

QUICK FACTS

Throughout the years, **China has developed expertise** in many different areas including the **development of entrepreneurial skills in smallholder farmers and fostering resilience in rural areas.**

Amongst other initiatives, WFP and China partnership **“Demonstration in Africa/Asia by Africa/Asia” (DAA)** aims to empower young smallholder farmers and members of farmers organizations to become entrepreneurs and link smallholder farmers to markets using a **South-South approach.**

The DAA programme can also be used to **share China’s expertise in disaster risk reduction to strengthen rural resilience** with countries facing similar challenges. China’s strategic model to respond to shocks can be transferred and adapted to other countries.



CHALLENGE

Smallholders in many developing countries face competitiveness challenges due to their lower productivity, and limited access to markets. To address the causes of their vulnerability, an increasing number of countries are looking for **adaptable expertise and technologies from China** acquired through years of experience in this area. China has a range of affordable and applicable agricultural **technologies** for **smallholder farmers** to share that can help to promote food and nutrition security in Africa and Asia.

Smallholder farmers are also **more susceptible to the adverse impacts of climate change and natural disasters.** In this scenario, China has developed a strong **expertise in disaster risk reduction** due to its own experience in responding to shocks. As a result, China has a number of **initiatives that can be shared** with countries facing challenges in preparing and responding to shocks.



APPROACH

One concrete example of South-South cooperation to empower smallholder farmers is the “Demonstrations in Africa/Asia by Africa/Asia” (DAA) programme, which is supported by the **WFP China Centre of Excellence.** The centre is a partnership between the Government of China and WFP set up in 2016.

Through the DAA programme, the WFP China Office is working with partners to **foster leadership among a new generation of smallholder farmers** across Asia and Africa. It aims at extending China’s affordable and applicable agricultural technologies to smallholder farmers in Africa and Asia. Selected lead farmers are being equipped through: 1) **In-field training (on-job coaching)** during one production season in China; 2) Access to necessary **agricultural inputs or seed funds as well as support** to establish their demonstration households back home; and 3) **On-site instruction** through Chinese agricultural experts on family farms in the lead farmer’s home countries. Upon completion of the training, participants are ready to adopt a **“train-the-trainer”** approach to share their learnings with other members of their communities.

The DDA programme also helps smallholders to better deal with shocks and build resilience in rural areas. Lessons from China’s experience in **disaster risk reduction**, can be integrated in the DAA learning programme. China has an evolving **disaster management system, which focused on agriculture, economic development, government and professional capacity building, and disaster governance.**

China’s approach in shock response contributes to national economic development and helps to improve people’s livelihoods in rural areas.



RESULTS

Zimbabwe will be the **first country to implement the DAA programme** in partnership with the WFP China Centre. Smallholder farmers will receive **on-site training** in China and Chinese **experts will then be deployed** to their home countries to help apply China's solutions on the ground. In the case of Zimbabwe, the benefits of the DAA programme for smallholder farmers may include:

- **Multiplier effect for the benefit of whole communities:** The DAA programme targets lead farmers, who have the ability to transfer their acquired knowledge to their surrounding communities. Whole communities can benefit from it and move from subsistence agriculture to **market-oriented agricultural business practices**, lifting them out of poverty and hunger.
- **Leverage of pre-existing partnerships and evolving networks:** For example, the DAA programme in Zimbabwe can build on the existing partnership between the Government of Zimbabwe and the WFP Zimbabwe Country Office. It can complement and build on activities of the WFP-supported P4P programme.
- **Linkages with ongoing operations:** The existing China-Aid Agricultural Technology Demonstration Centre in Zimbabwe and other agricultural investment initiatives can help to enhance the programme's implementation. They can also ensure a greater reach of vulnerable smallholder farmers in Zimbabwe through the programme's activities.

In the **Zimbabwe DAA**, China's **technology and experience against drought** will be **demonstrated and extended** to local communities for climate change resilience building. The programme is expected to have a significant impact on the country's ability to **empower smallholder farmers in their daily activities, and also in their ability to respond to climate change.**



OPPORTUNITY

By the end of August 2017, WFP China received **15 DAA project proposals** that address the needs of 13 developing countries in Africa and Asia. Rolling the DAA programme out on the basis of those proposals can help China and WFP to ensure that the **programme is driven by concrete needs** of its partner countries.

Through the Purchase for Progress (P4P) programme, WFP is already supporting developing countries around the world to empower and connect smallholder farmers to markets. The DAA programme can therefore well complement WFP's existing efforts in this area. Upon successful testing of the programme in Africa, the **programme can be extended** to Asia and Latin America in the future.

The DAA programme can be customized to the needs of participating countries. For example, it can also facilitate the sharing of **China's expertise in resilience building and disaster preparedness**, with a view at **strengthening rural resilience.**



REACHING THE MOST VULNERABLE

China's transfer of expertise to other countries have a huge potential **to reach the vulnerable smallholder farmers and people living in rural areas across Africa/Asia/Latin America.**

Through the DAA programme, food security in and nutrition, as well as resilience building in rural areas can be improved by:

- Systematically targeting **young and entrepreneurial lead farmers;**
- Facilitating the **transfer of much needed technologies** and skills;
- Following a **"train-the-trainer approach"** that can maximize impact when empowering local communities.
- Customizing the training to the specific needs of developing countries and integrating lessons from China's experience in building resilience of the rural population.



Sri Lanka: Peer Learning on Rice Fortification

QUICK FACTS

In Sri Lanka, **fortification of rice** has a **great potential** to reduce anaemia and other micronutrient deficiencies because rice is so widely consumed.

Micronutrient deficiencies impair physical growth and cognitive development and have long-term effects on health, learning abilities and productivity.

South-South **exchanges with Bangladesh and India helped Sri Lanka** to advocate for the inclusion of fortified rice in the national social safety net programmes.



CHALLENGE

Although Sri Lanka's universal health care and free education policies helped the country to achieve most of the related targets of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, **undernutrition including micronutrient deficiencies (MNDs)** have remained obstacles to realizing health and food security goals.

MNDs, also known as **'hidden hunger'**, refer to an inadequate level of vitamins and minerals in the body and **remain widely prevalent across Sri Lanka** as a result of inadequate intake or poor absorption by the body. To overcome MNDs, there is still a need for further investment and development in Sri Lanka.

One of the approaches to **overcome this nutrition and health issue in the general population is food fortification.**

This practice refers to the addition of one or more vitamins and/or minerals to food during processing to increase the level of specific nutrient(s) or to restore nutrients lost during food preparation (e.g., milling, washing, and cooking). Due to the **wide consumption of rice** in Sri Lanka, **fortified rice offers great potential to eliminate hidden hunger.**



APPROACH

To **facilitate political discussions around rice fortification** and to provide access to successful experiences from other countries in the region, WFP and the Food Fortification Initiative (FFI), supported the Ministry of Health in holding a **national food fortification workshop in 2017.** Through the **experiences of Bangladesh and India** shared in this workshop, Sri Lanka was inspired to improve rice fortification. Learning from **India's** experience with their standard setting authority and use of fortified rice in schools helped to better understand how to promote voluntary rice fortification, and how to include fortified rice into social safety net programmes.

WFP supported the Government of Sri Lanka in carrying out a rice landscape analysis and an acceptability trial. It also helped organizing the national food fortification workshop and **linking the Government with international experts** from FFI and the region. It facilitated **visits to Bangladesh and India**, and is currently supporting the implementation of the national **roadmap to scale up rice fortification.** WFP is also working with Sri Lanka to conduct a second visit to India.



RESULTS

South-South **exchanges with peers** in the region helped to build political momentum to improve rice fortification in Bangladesh. Sri Lanka's Ministry of Health **request to use fortified rice in the national social safety nets, such as school meal programmes, was approved** by the Cabinet of Ministers of Sri Lanka.



OPPORTUNITIES

In the case of Sri Lanka, conducting a **rice landscape analysis**, and ensuring the **government's interest and commitment to rice fortification** were necessary first steps to build on India's experience. There are opportunities to further leverage **technical assistance and advocacy** from countries with more experience on rice fortification in order to advance progress on rice fortification in Sri Lanka. **Regional peer learning** has been effective for **Sri Lanka to learn from India and at the same time to share its own experience**. Just as Sri Lanka, other countries in the region could benefit from **peer learning on rice fortification**, which would help to promote this practice not only as a national but also as a **regional strategy**.



REACHING THE MOST VULNERABLE

Rice fortification has the greatest potential to public health impact when mandated and well regulated. If this is not feasible, the fortification of rice distributed through social safety nets provides an alternative option to **reach vulnerable groups who can most benefit from increased micronutrient intake**.

This entails fortifying rice distributed for free, or at a subsidized cost through school feeding programmes, emergency distributions, or other programmes that support lower socioeconomic groups.



Photo 1: WFP/Sadhana Mohan / Photo 2: WFP/Nguyen Duc Hoang



Guatemala: Strengthening the Potential of Social Protection

QUICK FACTS

53 percent of the population does not have access to a nutritious diet and more than **half lives in poverty**.

Mi Bono Seguro, the largest social safety net in Guatemala, covers up to 750,000 households.

Knowledge exchanges with peers can help Guatemala to **expand and strengthen** its existing **social protection programmes**.



CHALLENGE

In the last decade, the Government of Guatemala has introduced different non-contributory social assistance schemes for poor and informal workers. These schemes compensate their exclusion from the contributory social security system and aim to reduce poverty. **Mi Bono Seguro**, a conditional cash transfer programme, is the main **social assistance scheme for the poor**.

Mi Bono Seguro was designed to address the adverse impact of droughts and tackle acute malnutrition. Its scope has gradually expanded. Today, it also facilitates access to health and education services. It reached 750,000 households in 2012-2014. However, its **coverage has decreased** to 150,000 households in 2017 due to **financial and administrative resource constraints**. *Mi Bono Seguro* has the **potential** to become a **robust and strong platform** to increase the resilience of the poorest families, including in the face of climate-related shocks such as droughts. However, it requires further strengthening, especially in terms of coverage, targeting and transfer size. **Learning from other middle-income countries' experiences** could be key to success.



APPROACH

The Ministry of Social Development (MIDES), which manages *Mi Bono Seguro*, is one of Guatemala's ministries that are mandated to respond to emergencies, such as droughts. MIDES can scale up its social safety net programmes, including the *Mi Bono Seguro*, in case of emergencies.

Before this is possible in practice, more **investment and capacity** are needed to make the social safety nets—and by extension the whole social protection system—**more robust, reliable, targeted, and nutrition- and gender-sensitive**.

With a focus on food and nutrition security, WFP works with government institutions, including MIDES, to strengthen their capacities for emergency preparedness and social protection.



OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to providing technical assistance to the government, **WFP can broker South-South and triangular cooperation upon demand of Guatemala**, in order to enable peer learning on social safety nets and social protection between countries in the region and worldwide.

For example, WFP can facilitate **knowledge exchange** on social protection with countries such as **Brazil** (*Bolsa Família*), **Chile** (*Chile Solidario*) or **Colombia** (*Familias en Acción*), as well as countries from other regions such as **India** (Targeted Public Distribution System). These experiences can inform and expand Guatemala's options to strengthen the *Mi Bono Seguro*.



REACHING THE MOST VULNERABLE

Guatemala's social safety nets have the potential to reduce the high levels of income inequality and stunting in the country. They can strengthen the **resilience of the poor in the face of shocks, contribute to lasting peace, and reduce migration**. To achieve this potential, the safety nets need to be **adequately resourced and strengthened**.



India: Digitizing Food-based Safety Nets

QUICK FACTS

India's experience with the **digitization of its food-based safety net** can serve as a **source of inspiration for other countries**.

India put in place a **National Food Security Act** in 2013 which turned the access to subsidized food into a legal right for 800 million Indians.

The Targeted Public Distribution System is India's largest **food subsidy scheme** distributing 60 million tons of food grains every year.



CHALLENGES

India's food-based safety net (targeted public distribution system) currently serves around **800 million of India's poorest households**. It distributes about 60 million tons of food grains per year. When the access to subsidized food grains became a legal right in 2013 with the introduction of the National Food Security Act (NFSA), India's **manual system** that was used for grain delivery and distribution needed enhancement. A particular challenge was the identification of **the rightful beneficiaries**. A number of studies identified key areas for **improvements to reduce inclusion and exclusion errors**, including targeting of beneficiaries, transparency and accountability initiatives, as well as improving grievances redressal and monitoring mechanisms.



APPROACH

India's food-based safety net has been **automated** using **technology-based solutions**. Three platforms were interlinked: bank accounts (Jan Dhan), user biometrical identification (Aadhaar), and mobile accounts. This linkage is known as 'JAM trinity'. WFP supported India's national and state governments in this effort by:

- defining beneficiary selection criteria for improved targeting;
- digitizing beneficiary records and linking them to Aadhaar;
- automating the entire supply chain;
- setting up transparency portals and online grievance redressal systems;
- supporting policy development.



RESULTS

By automating the safety net, there is a positive impact on the food security of the local population. By **identifying the right beneficiary**, the government can **improve the efficiency** of its programme while **saving costs and time**. It can ensure that the needs of the **most vulnerable populations are targeted and covered**.



OPPORTUNITIES

- There is an opportunity for other countries to learn from India's **success and lessons learnt** on social protection policies;
- There is an opportunity for **technology transfer** and to **incentivize reform processes** that help to reach more vulnerable people in need by digitizing food-based safety nets.
- Showcasing the benefits of **financial inclusion** and unique beneficiary identity through mobile technology.



REACHING THE MOST VULNERABLE

The Government of India's premise of conceptualising NFSA was a key step to ensure **access to food as a right**. Many more vulnerable people in India can be reached through India's decision to digitize its food-based safety net.