



WELT
HUNGER
HILFE



Orientation Paper

ONE PLANET ZERO HUNGER: PROMOTING EQUITABLE, SUSTAINABLE, AND RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEMS

CONTENT

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ABSTRACT

The world is producing more food than ever. However, the current global food system is failing to provide healthy, sustainable, and affordable choices for everyone, contributing to food insecurity, obesity, and related diseases, environmental problems, and violating the right to adequate food and nutrition. Welthungerhilfe's vision is a world in which everyone has the chance and the right to lead a self-determined life in dignity and justice, free from hunger and poverty. To achieve this, governments must transform current food systems in the public interest, so they connect the well-being of the people to the well-being of our planet. This transition must be centered on the fulfillment of the human right to adequate food and on the understanding that human and planetary health are interdependent.

INTRODUCTION

With less than ten years left, the world is not on track to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Progress on SDG 2, of zero hunger, has declined in recent years. Today, three billion people cannot afford healthy diets. The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed the deep existing inequalities and vulnerabilities of our current food systems and the interdependence between different subsystems such as food, health, the environment, and the political economy. With its global strategy, Welthungerhilfe is placing a focus on food systems and commits to contribute with its work to ensuring that food systems provide access to sustainable, healthy diets for all people, while at the same time minimizing the negative effects on the environment.

This orientation paper formulates Welthungerhilfe's understanding of equitable, sustainable, and resilient food systems. It provides an overview of the related challenges and summarizes political demands as well as concrete options for development support. The paper is based on our long-term experience in the fields of agriculture and environment; water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH); economic development; humanitarian assistance; climate change; and civil society and advocacy. It is steered by a rights-based approach and the principles of participation and empowerment, equity, non-discrimination, and accountability that guide our work.

The key issues described in this paper have been developed based on organization-wide consultations with the consideration of external expert advice. It fulfills three functions:

1. It provides guidance to Welthungerhilfe staff and partners on their program and advocacy work to contribute to the transformation of food systems;
2. Looking outwards, the paper strives to communicate Welthungerhilfe's position and policy direction to decision-makers, development partners, and the interested public in Germany and abroad;
3. It raises demands to political decision-makers and development actors on actions that need to be taken at different levels – local, national, and global – to allow for the transformation towards equitable and inclusive, sustainable and resilient food systems.

FOOD SYSTEMS – WHAT’S AT STAKE?

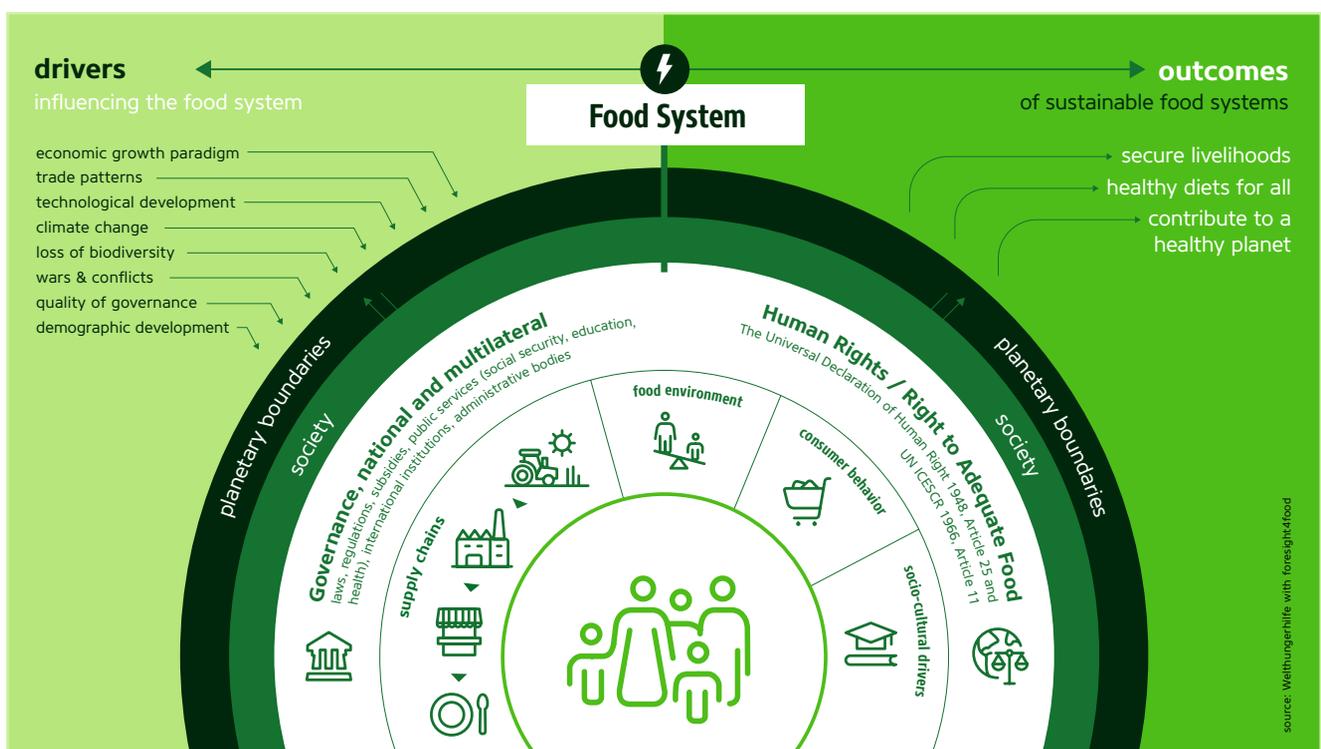
Food systems encompass the various activities, people, and places that relate to the **production, processing, distribution, preparation, and consumption of food**, as well as the output of these activities including **socioeconomic and environmental outcomes**. Sustainable food systems have a **long-term ability to provide food and nutrition security** in a way that does **not compromise the economic, social, and environmental bases** that generate food and nutrition security for future generations.

The term “food system” is generally used in one of three ways:

- **The** food system: the interconnected system of everything and everybody that influences, and is influenced by, the activities involved in bringing food from ‘farm to fork’.
- **A** food system: the food system in a specific locality or context.

- **Food systems:** The totality of different types of food system in different localities and contexts. This idea of multiple food systems acknowledges the huge diversity of food systems at different scales with differing characteristics. For example, industrial systems at a global scale and alternative systems at a local scale.

FOOD SYSTEMS ARE INFLUENCED BY A VARIETY OF DRIVERS AND GENERATE OUTCOMES



FOOD SYSTEM CHALLENGES: FROM A GLOBAL TO A LOCAL PERSPECTIVE

When analyzing and addressing the different interrelated challenges, it is helpful to identify the different drivers shaping the food systems from the global to the local level. These include: i) demographic development such as population growth and urbanization; ii) biophysical and environmental drivers such as the loss of biodiversity, climate change, and soil degradation; iii) technological development; iv) economic drivers such as the economic growth paradigm and unfair trade patterns; v) political drivers such as means of political participation, bad governance, and wars and conflicts; and finally, vi) socio-cultural drivers such as education, health, social norms, and values.

CURRENT FOOD SYSTEMS EXACERBATE INEQUALITIES

The world faces a triple burden of malnutrition (undernutrition, micro-nutrient deficiencies and overweight, and obesity) that has only increased in recent years. Current food systems favour energy-rich staple food production (e.g. through agricultural subsidies), resulting in low availability and affordability of nutrient-rich foods. Increasing inequalities, including socio-economic and gender inequalities, are preventing access to healthy nutrition, especially in the Global South, where smallholders¹ are central to food production. In many cases, smallholders have neither secured access to land nor the capital for seeds, fertilizers, machinery, or irrigation systems. All too often, vulnerable groups suffer subsistence threats such as rural communities losing their land, or the rural and urban poor suffering from price spikes in the food markets. Food insecure and other marginalized groups are poorly represented in policy decision-making and food governance bodies at the local, national, and international level. While women are involved in food systems in a range of roles, they face multiple forms of discrimination, with less access to land and other financial and productive resources, worse working conditions, and less income, and are constrained from engaging in decision-making. Inequality in food systems is often

a matter of access – healthy diets are not equitably accessible for many in terms of e.g. physical access, affordability, and availability of quality of food, and advertising is often skewed towards unhealthy food.

THE CURRENT GLOBAL FOOD SYSTEM IS UNDERMINING ITS OWN RESOURCE BASE

Agriculture and food production contributes to around 30% of global greenhouse-gas emissions with livestock (mainly from industrial livestock farming) alone accounting for 12–19%. Conversion of natural ecosystems to croplands and pastures and unsustainable agricultural practices contribute to the loss of species diversity (number of crop and livestock species), of genetic diversity within crop and livestock species, and soil depletion. Aquatic systems are also affected, with 60% of world fish stocks being fully fished, more than 30% being overfished, and chemical pollution, including the misuse of fertilizers, causing aquatic dead zones. Agriculture and food production is also responsible for 70% of freshwater use, while the widespread use of pesticides has taken a heavy toll on animal and plant diversity. Both meat and dairy products, especially in intensive production systems, require more resources and generate larger emissions of methane than plant-based alternatives. Additionally, non-seasonal fruits and vegetables produce substantial emissions when grown in greenhouses, preserved in a frozen state, or transported by air. Intensive agricultural production systems reward producing larger quantities cheaply without factoring the social and ecological costs on human health, livelihoods, and the environment which are borne by taxpayers, future generations or charged to the most vulnerable households. One third of food produced is lost during production and transport, or wasted by retailers and consumers. Key factors here include the lack of infrastructure facilities and poor storage and transportation facilities.

¹ In this paper the term smallholder refers to the definition by FAO: “Smallholders are small-scale farmers, pastoralists, forest keepers, fishers who manage areas varying from less than one hectare to 10 hectares”. FAO 2013, Smallholders and Family Farmers | FAO.

Population growth, urbanization and shifts in diets increase pressure on already scarce and degraded natural resources. Most of this population growth happens in low- and lower middle-income countries, and particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. Declining youth interest in agriculture, migration from rural areas, changes in consumption patterns, the dependency on external food supplies even by rural producers, and a general shift to capital-intensive and globalized models of agriculture are challenges for the future of food production and rural livelihoods.

FOOD SYSTEMS ARE VULNERABLE TO EXTERNAL SHOCKS

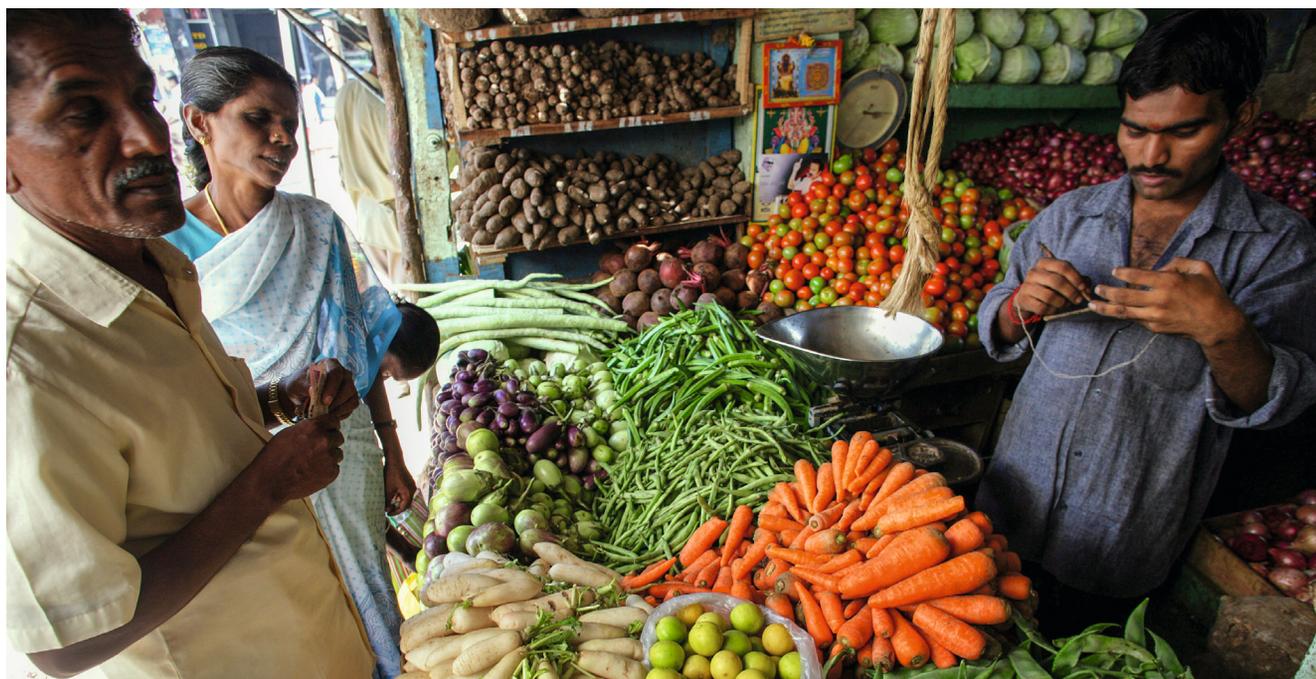
Many food systems lack preventive measures to reduce the impact of external shocks on food and nutrition security and livelihoods. Such shocks include violent conflicts, extreme weather events like drought or floods often exacerbated by climate change, market fluctuations and disruptions, and pandemics. In addition, disruptions in the global food system can have detrimental effects on national and local food systems. Poor people in the Global South are hit hardest, and small-scale farmers and pastoralists especially are at great risk. Regions with an agricultural base already overexploited and degraded are particularly vulnerable to external shocks. In addition, changing environmental conditions and competition for key resources such as land and water have played a significant role in provoking violence

and armed conflicts, exacerbating the vicious circle of hunger and poverty. In many cases, the effects of violent conflict and of climate change intersect with each other to worsen communities' risks and vulnerabilities. Welthungerhilfe focuses especially on the way our food systems are vulnerable to i) conflict and ii) climate change.

HUNGER IS BOTH A CAUSE AND RESULT OF VIOLENT CONFLICT

Violent conflicts, often due to disputes over natural resources, impair food security, and when protracted frequently undermine the resilience of even well-functioning food systems. In 2020, protracted conflict was the main driver of six of the ten recent worst food crises – the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Yemen, Afghanistan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Nigeria, and South Sudan – with the number of internally displaced people increasing in all six countries. People forced to leave their homes cannot cultivate their fields and often lose all their possessions. Likewise, displacement can bring food insecurity to host populations, particularly if humanitarian assistance is lacking or inadequate. With social security and safety nets often misdirected or insufficient, in times of crises like the current global pandemic, people frequently lack access to public services like cash or food transfers, health services or other social insurance.

Insecurity, conflict, and fragile food systems often go hand in hand in many of these contexts. Food crises are acute manifestations of the structural dysfunctions in food systems within and across countries, compounded by low and often inefficient



public spending, local and global market failures, and deficiencies in food systems governance mechanisms at all levels. Against this background, in many contexts, conflict and insecurity are both causes and consequences of food systems' fragility.

CLIMATE CHANGE MULTIPLIES THE THREATS TO FOOD SECURITY

Weather-related shocks are one of the main causes of acute food crises, and the number of disasters caused by extreme weather events such as heat waves, droughts, and floods has doubled since the 1990s. They usually hit the poorest people in the Global South first, and in particular the smallholders and pastoralists. Those groups also suffer most from increased temperatures and lack of rainfall due to a dependence on rainfed agriculture or grazing areas and water points for their livestock. Africa is particularly threatened by climate change, where temperatures could rise faster and more sharply than in other regions, resulting in drastic declines in harvests and fish stocks and the expansion of drylands. Additionally, an international study conducted in 19 countries in Asia, Africa, and South America showed that higher temperatures are an equal or even greater contributor to child malnutrition than the traditional culprits of poverty, inadequate sanitation, and poor education.

SILOED FOOD GOVERNANCE MECHANISMS WITH LIMITED PARTICIPATION, TRANSPARENCY, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Current (food) governance mechanisms tend to be siloed, often with limited participation, transparency and accountability in decision-making processes. Isolated interventions risk to address only the symptoms of the problems rather than their root causes.

Policy coherence and coordination is lacking at national and international levels, and global food governance is skewed against low-income countries. This applies both to trade distortions and to issues such as intellectual property rights. The ability of multilateral institutions to find solutions to global problems has been eroded in the past decade, with country leaders putting their nation's interests first and withdrawing resources and participation from those international bodies. Lack of accountability of governments is preventing the establishment and implementation of overarching strategies for food

systems transformation. In particular, this concerns the respect and protection of human rights and environmental standards in supply chains. Although there is some progress (e.g. through supply chain acts in some countries) there is a lack of enforceable accountability mechanisms which make it mandatory for the private sector to prevent human rights violations and environmental degradation.

In many countries, basic public services such as health and social security are still not recognized as legal entitlements on which citizens could hold their governments accountable. Funding of food and nutrition programs by governments is frequently inadequate, while corruption often adversely affects planning and implementation of supporting programs. Land-grabbing is rampant especially where governance regarding land rights is weak.

TRANSFORMATION IS KEY: TOWARDS EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE, SUSTAINABLE, RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEMS

Humans have made the rules governing our food systems (e.g. incentives and disincentives for certain modes of production or consumption preferences), so they can also be changed by humans.

Current and future generations can only eat healthy diets in the long term if they are provided by food systems that protect and regenerate the natural resource base rather than undermine it. Governments must transform food systems in the public interest, so they connect the well-being of the people – which is reflected in their ability to provide for sustainable healthy diets – to the well-being of our planet. **This transition must therefore be centered on the fulfilment of the human right to adequate food and on the understanding that human and planetary health are interdependent.**

The development of rural areas and small-scale farming, which are the backbone of food production in the Global South, must be given much higher priority in government policies and investments. With secure access to land and other productive resources, smallholder farmers would be in a better position to generate a regular income. The creation of better conditions in agriculture as well as decent jobs in the local and regional food economy could provide livelihood opportunities for the rural youth and create value for local communities. The food systems of smallholders also can and must serve the large and growing urban populations. Increasing public investments in social security and poverty reduction, and legally protecting households with basic social protection programs, would allow vulnerable groups to absorb external shocks and avoid falling into a food crisis due to additional sources of income and access to nutritious foods.

To make sure that food policies and programs benefit the food and nutrition insecure groups, these groups need to have a voice in decision-making at the local, national, and global levels. With access to relevant information and mechanisms, they can hold

authorities accountable for designing food policies that respect and protect their right to food. If all consumers have adequate information on how to have a healthy diet and how the food is produced, they are more likely to value and buy healthy food from sustainable production.



Lang/Welthungerhilfe

The following examples illustrate how some of these aims are pursued in a holistic food systems approach.

INDIA: BHOOMIKA – “GREEN, CLEAN, FAIR” FOOD

The marketing platform “BhoomiKa” (“earth-connected”) was founded by Welthungerhilfe and partners in India in 2017 to give a growing urban population the opportunity to obtain organic food from smallholder farmers in the region. Food safety is a major issue in India with many foods heavily contaminated with pesticides. Normally, it is mainly middlemen who take the highest cut of the profit in food markets, but the products grown in BhoomiKa are sold via start-ups directly to consumers in large cities. This helps the agricultural producers earn a significantly higher income. Therefore, “green, clean, fair” food is the trademark of BhoomiKa.

To make these newly emerging regional and local food systems more resilient, participating actors are supported through various measures:

- Smallholder farmers receive training in agroecological farming methods. In addition, they are trained to certify each other within the framework of a “Participatory Guarantee System (PGS)”. The main benefit is that smallholder families have access to higher quality food and can feed themselves better.
- For marketing purposes, food entrepreneurs are trained and educated in the areas of food safety, environmentally friendly packaging, and product marketing. They typically operate as independent start-ups, and are linked to farmers and larger networks, and to consumer markets.
- At the consumer level, urban families gain access to safe organic food.

After a successful pilot phase, BhoomiKa now works with 7,000 farmers. Women are encouraged to become board members of farmer-owned producer groups. A network of 50 entrepreneurs has been created, half of whom are women. New value chains have been developed for 15 organic agricultural products. This benefits 800,000 consumers. BhoomiKa has already convinced several Indian states to choose healthier options for school meals.



Image source: Desmarwitz/Welthungerhilfe

PERU: QALI WARMA – LOCAL, FRESH, AND HEALTHY SCHOOL MEALS

School feeding programs are considered as one of the most important measures worldwide for ensuring sufficient, diverse, and nutritious food for children from vulnerable groups and hence combating food insecurity and malnutrition.² This was made even more evident during the Covid-19 pandemic, when the programs were suspended in many countries due to the closing down of schools, leaving millions of children without their one daily nutritious meal.³

In Peru, the Qali Warma National School Feeding Program seeks to provide a quality food service to children in public educational institutions up to the age of 13. So-doing, “Qali warma”, which in Quechua means “vigorous child,” contributes to improving the attention of children in classes, improving their attendance and permanence. The program has, however, been criticized for public procurement procedures favoring larger transnational food corporations that promote ultra-processed products, instead of purchasing fresh goods from local smallholder farmers which would also contribute to strengthening local markets.⁴

In order to improve procurement of food from local resources, through its local partner IDMA⁵, Welthungerhilfe has promoted **diversified and sustainable family and small-scale farming** (in particular agroecology) in Huánuco for over 15 years. Huánuco is one of the regions with the highest number of malnutrition and anemia of children in the country. With the support of the recent Welthungerhilfe project on sustainable food systems, IDMA, together with local authorities and civil society, worked directly with agroecological producers, certified under the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS), to gradually **introduce fresh food products** in the school feeding program in Huánuco, which reaches approximately 150,000 children. This was done through State purchase directly from the producers of one of the districts of Huánuco.

As a result of the tireless work of organizations such as IDMA, a new law on State purchase of food from family farmers was adopted in Peru in November 2020. The law establishes that public entities acquire a minimum of 30% of the food products from family farming, thus improving the economy of family farmers and contributing to a healthier diet.

² According to the FAO, these programs before COVID benefited 85 million children in Latin America and the Caribbean. For about 10 million, they constitute one of the most reliable daily sources of food. FAO, March 2020.

³ During COVID, 9 million children were left without the support of the WFP feeding programs. FAO, March 2020.

⁴ In Peru, the company Gloria controls 71.7% of the milk market. Although they develop other products, the milk industry is the biggest one, especially with its evaporated milk, which generated 57.4% of their income in 2017. This includes state purchases. 80% of the milk in Qali Warma is from Gloria. Gloria is also the principle producer of sugar, through the company Coazucar, which in 2018 had sales of US\$390 million, and has investments in the food sectors of six countries in the region. See article “La Poderosa Industria que sirve la mesa en Peru” by the research magazine Ojo Publico, 2019. Available at: <https://ojo-publico.com/1474/la-poderosa-industria-que-sirve-la-mesa-en-peru>.

⁵ Instituto de Desarrollo y Media Ambiente, www.idmaperu.org.

ZIMBABWE: MARKET SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT FOR AN IMPROVED LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM

Welthungerhilfe has empowered local farmers to become more autonomous and thus having a better standing within the local food system. Less than 15 years ago they were passive recipients of food supplies (food aid), but since then smallholders have formed farmers' associations and savings and credit cooperatives. Still, they were often dependent on 'middlemen' buying their produces at low prices and selling agriculture inputs at high prices. In 2018, under the joint leadership of the farmers' association, the local government and Welthungerhilfe, the Agricultural Business Center (ABC), a private limited social enterprise, was registered with the idea to pool small-holder farmers' commercial activities. It aims at overcoming obstacles for smallholder farmers, e.g. lack of transport options for produces and agricultural inputs (seeds, etc.), hence making it easier for them to reach aggregation hubs where they can sell their harvest and buy inputs. The business model is an up- and downstream market linker for smallholder farmers. Through contract farming on a cost-recovery basis, the ABC is enhancing production means and sales opportunities.

Welthungerhilfe recently conducted a comprehensive analysis of the complex food system of Gokwe South district. The study revealed that transportation of agriculture goods (inputs as well as outputs) is indeed one of the biggest challenges for the farmers and has prevented them in the past from running their farms as profitable family businesses as they lack means of bringing their products to the market themselves but depend on third parties ('middlemen'). Because the local farmers' association is a direct shareholder in the ABC, they are involved in the identification and tailor-made design of services (like the transport service) to the farmers.

Together with the Regional District Council, the ABC addresses administrative challenges that impose larger barriers especially to youth entrepreneurs. E.g. they discuss how (legal) frameworks need to be adapted to make it more attractive for smallholders to found their own business and thus enable them to sell on the nearby markets and ultimately boost production overall. Through ABC's capacity building programs, the Regional District Council was able to improve services which benefit the local economy, including facilitating young people's access to land. Thus, the market system was strengthened, contributing towards a functioning local food system. The aim is now to make the district and its products known nationwide, and to take an exemplary position in how a local food system can be transformed.



WHO NEEDS TO TAKE ACTION?

Governments and continental unions such as the European and the African Union have the prime responsibility of putting policies and legal frameworks in place to lead the transformation towards equitable, sustainable, and resilient food systems. Other actors, such as donors, the private sector, and civil society, should support processes according to their respective roles.

Governments need to respect, protect, and fulfill the obligations of the existing human rights frameworks and international standards⁶, as well as actively promoting new ones when needed. They must ensure policy coherence between the agriculture, trade, health, development, environmental and climate policies.

WELTHUNGERHILFE'S DEMANDS IN RELATION TO FOOD SYSTEMS

The following actions need to be taken at distinct levels – local, national, regional/continental, and global – to allow for the transformation towards equitable and inclusive, sustainable, and resilient food systems, and to make food systems work to ensure access to healthy diets for all people.

PROMOTING FOOD SYSTEMS THAT PLACE VULNERABLE PEOPLE AT THE CENTER

- Governments, the private sector, and donors should **promote locally and regionally anchored food systems more strongly that place a focus on the needs of both local small-scale farmers and poor consumers**. By creating local spaces of commercialization and promoting regional trade for rural small-scale farmers, such as “peasants or farmers markets”, the producers can sell their products at a fairer price, and poor consumers have improved access to healthy and affordable food. Local markets and regional trade not only contribute to adding value to the food produced by

local communities, but they also create agricultural and non-agricultural job opportunities for **youth in rural areas**. Governments and donors should support **SMEs and farmer-based organizations**, who are key actors and agents of change. Public procurement focusing on local and regional supply contributes to these multiple goals.

- Governments must ensure **fair prices for producers and at least living wages** that provide a decent life for food systems workers at all stages. Food prices must also reflect the social and environmental costs of food production, distribution, retailing and consumption and should, on the other hand, not deter poor people from opting for healthy food. Governments should use instruments such as the verification of compliance with international human rights standards, taxes on businesses that pollute the environment, and use of subsidies to **encourage sustainable and responsible production and consumption**.
- Governments, donors, and the private sector must support **smallholder farmers** in becoming economically and ecologically **sustainable and diversified producers** and secure their access to land, water and seeds, information, agricultural inputs, financing, extension services, transport, and markets. They should also back the organizational strengthening of smallholders.
- Governments, donors, and the private sector actors need to explicitly recognize and respond to the specific constraints faced by **women and girls** and their roles in food systems, particularly in rural settings. Governments must ensure their participation in policy decision-making processes and that their rights are secured and protected in terms of land tenure and access to knowledge, inputs, financing, dignified work, natural resources, and markets.

⁶ These include, among others, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the UN Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Adequate Food as well as on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT), the UN Declarations on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and on the Rights of Peasants and other people living in Rural Areas (UNDROP), ILO Conventions, and others.

SUPPORTING FOOD SYSTEMS THAT REGENERATE THEIR NATURAL RESOURCE BASE

- Governments, donors, the private sector, and civil society must drive the **transformation towards sustainable site-specific farming strategies** such as Sustainable Integrated Farming Systems, agroecology, climate-smart agriculture and landscape approaches. These have positive impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems, and are adapted to the sociocultural context.
- Governments must reorient public investments such as agricultural subsidies so that they **promote diversified agricultural systems** which mitigate climate change, and regenerate and conserve the natural resource base.
- Governments need to **strengthen the implementation of circular food economies** which are based on the continuous reuse of materials and products and the elimination of waste. Urban and peri-urban food systems need to be part of the overall food system transformations and innovations.
- Both **research and education** addressing agriculture and food processing need to be strengthened. Research and innovation in sustainable agriculture requires more public investment. Technological (digital), social, and policy **innovations** must be developed with the local communities respecting their traditional knowledge systems.

BUILDING RESILIENCE INTO OUR FOOD SYSTEMS

- Governments, donors, the private sector, and civil society must support **climate resilience** and **adaptation** among the vulnerable communities such as small-scale farmers in the Global South, considering local needs and indigenous and traditional knowledge.
- Governments, donors, and the private sector must increase **investments in disaster prevention** and disaster risk reduction, especially in vulnerable regions prone to extreme weather events, and enable communities to manage and mitigate disasters.
- Governments should step up their support for sustainable farming systems that improve climate resilience through the **promotion of biodiversity, healthy soil and co-creation of knowledge** and traditions. These systems also contribute to making inputs more cost-effective, reducing dependency of farmers on external inputs, and supporting the production of local, safe, and nutrient-rich foods.
- The UN system, governments, and donors must increase efforts and support for the **prevention and resolution of violent conflicts** and contribute with humanitarian assistance to improving the long-term food security and resilience of vulnerable communities.
- Governments and donors should strengthen and **support inclusive and legally enshrined social protection systems** that strengthen the resilience of vulnerable groups. Governments should promote the purchase of food from local and environmentally sustainable farm production for the provision of school meals.



PLACING HUMAN RIGHTS, JUSTICE, AND THE RULE OF LAW AT THE CENTER OF FOOD SYSTEMS GOVERNANCE

- Governments should put in place and enforce legal **frameworks to ensure that private businesses respect human rights** and apply environmental due diligence throughout their value chains. They should also promote sustainability certification of agricultural production that includes the Food Security Standard (FSS), which contributes to the realization of the right to food of farmers, workers, and nearby communities.
- Governments should step up their **engagement with existing multilateral food governance systems** anchored in human rights and the agencies of food producers such as the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)⁷. Governments should promote the CFS in such a way that it can live up to its expectations and they should see its policy recommendations as clearly informing policy actions in their respective countries.
- Governments should **promote more inclusive multi-actor platforms at the local and national level**, taking into consideration existing power imbalances and the need to ensure the voice and participation of vulnerable groups. Inclusive food governance bodies such as food policy councils should be supported to a greater extent.
- Governments should continue promoting an enabling environment which includes free and **democratic civic spaces**, allowing for civil society actors to shape decision-making processes and hold relevant parties accountable. This also includes oversight institutions to monitor and report on the right to adequate food, avenues for inclusive and participatory legal reform, capacity development, safeguards against rights violations, and inclusive and effective political, economic, and social institutions.

OUR WAY FORWARD

Welthungerhilfe is committed to the goal of zero hunger and reducing malnutrition in all its forms, and acknowledges that this can only be done by tackling the system holistically. Thus, transforming food systems to be more equitable and inclusive, sustainable, and resilient is at the core of Welthungerhilfe's current strategy. This transformation must happen from the local up to the global level, be tailored to different contexts, and be centered around human rights.

A food systems approach recognizes the interactions between production systems, planetary boundaries, socio-economic conditions, and governance as well as the interactions of actors involved and underlying power relations. While there will be trade-offs that have to be managed between the key priorities of inclusive poverty reduction, increased agricultural productivity, improved nutrition, and enhanced environmental sustainability, there will also be opportunities to simultaneously accomplish multiple objectives. Achieving sustainable nutrition outcomes for the most vulnerable groups – including pregnant and lactating women and children under five in particular – remains at the center of our food systems work. In further developing its food systems approach, Welthungerhilfe will build on its long-term engagement and expertise in agriculture and nutrition as well as WASH, natural resource management, economic development, and civil society empowerment to support the transformation pathways to equitable, sustainable, and resilient food systems. We are doing so both by implementing pilot initiatives that take up a food systems approach (see project examples), and by advocating for the creation of necessary framework conditions, e.g. coherent national policies, which require strategic alliances with other civil society organizations focusing on peace, governance, trade, and other relevant sectors.

People are at the center of Welthungerhilfe's work, and the needs and rights of those most affected by hunger and poverty must be addressed to ensure that food systems benefit even the most vulnerable communities.

⁷ Established in 1974 and reformed in 2009, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) is the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform within the United Nations system to work together to ensure food security and nutrition for all. Using a multi-stakeholder, inclusive approach, CFS develops and endorses policy recommendations and guidance on a wide range of food security and nutrition topics.

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