



Strengthening Rural Governance for the Right to Adequate Food Program

BACKGROUND

With a view to the 2030 agenda, there is still a gap in reaching the most marginalized groups to end hunger and malnutrition. The concerns of people living in rural areas are not sufficiently considered in decision-making processes on government policies, programs and budgets that affect their livelihoods. To realize the right to adequate food for all we need to transform our food systems, so they are more sustainable and inclusive. Current food system governance mechanisms tend to be siloed, often with limited participation, transparency, and accountability in decision-making processes.

The pursuit of a rights-based approach to address underlying structural causes and strengthen rural governance for the realization of the right to adequate food is becoming increasingly important.

THE PROGRAM

The four-year long program “Strengthening Rural Governance for the Realization of the Right to Adequate Food”, supported by Welthungerhilfe (WHH) and the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) aims to contribute to the realization of the right to adequate food in rural areas of four countries, namely India, Kenya, Malawi and Burkina Faso, and to bring their perspective into food systems discussions at the national level as well as the level of the African Union. It envisions that ‘administrative, political and traditional duty bearers in the project regions in the countries deliver better on the right to adequate food, guided by the principles of participation, transparency and accountability, non-discrimination, and rule of law’.

OUR APPROACH

The program aims to address common issues related to rural governance through a multi-level rights-based approach, whereby concerns and suggestions identified at the micro level (communities and villages) are channeled to meso level (districts, counties) and macro level (country or state level). They also feed into multi-stakeholder dialogues on rights-based sustainable food systems at a supranational level.

Through advocacy on the Right to Food, the program aims to increase government transparency, strengthen public accountability and make voices of the most marginalized heard in policy processes. To this end, we:

- sensitize and actively engage community members to monitor and provide feedback on the performance of public institutions, policies, and services,
- support community members to hold the state and service providers accountable on their commitments and make them more responsive to the citizens’ needs,
- encourage community members to raise their priorities in local and regional development planning processes,

Duration: 55 months
(March 2020 – September 2024, Phase 2 foreseen)

Budget: 5.4 Mio.EUR (75% BMZ, 25% WHH)

- Partners:**
- Malawi: CISANET, CSAT
 - Kenya: ROA, TISA
 - India: PHIA Foundation
 - Burkina Faso: CPF
 - African Region: AFSA

Image source: Welthungerhilfe



Application of Community Score Cards in Mangochi district, Malawi



Public hearing in Jharkhand, India



Community sensitization in Centre-Sud Region, Burkina Faso

- strengthen civil society networks at national and subnational levels with a focus on the Right to Food,
- facilitate the participation of civil society organizations in policy revisions on food and nutrition security, and in their lobbying for legal frameworks for the Right to Food,
- promote mutual learning between civil society partners from different countries and connect them to global policy processes.

OUR VALUES, CULTURE AND COLLABORATION

As rural governance is a multi-stakeholder process, the program is based on the principles of collaboration (across public and private sectors as well as political boundaries), sustained bottom-up citizen engagement (especially of underrepresented and marginalized population groups) and leveraging on local/regional resources. Our advocacy is evidence-based, delimitable to a specific issue or topic identified by the rights holders, and it refers to commitments made by the duty bearers.

We leverage on pooling the strengths of our partner organizations in different fields of expertise to promote exchange and mutual learning across the countries. To this end, the program enables south to south exchanges. In collaboration with the Civil Society Academy, the program provides capacity strengthening to the partner organizations, drawing on proven methodologies and tools related to social accountability and advocacy, and empowers the civil society partner organizations to be acknowledged as constructive advocates on the right to adequate food in their respective countries or regions of work.

Working on systemic change means navigating complex systems that are constantly changing. We employ adaptive management to allow for flexibility to test approaches, seize -sometimes surprising- opportunities, learn from failures and continuously adjust our strategies.

EXAMPLES OF OUR WORK

In Kenya, the local population is hardly involved in government planning processes. Priorities are often set at national and county levels.

With our local partner Rural Outreach Africa, we helped to establish the Lake Region Food System Network in 2021, involving civil society organizations from five counties along Kenya's Lake Victoria. The project team supported members in raising public and government awareness of the right to food and related participation of citizens in decision-making processes. In March 2022, the network published a manifesto to strengthen regional food and nutrition security and advocated at the county and community levels to actively engage citizens in setting their development priorities.

Finally, at the end of 2022, two of the counties reformed the development planning process to focus on participation of representatives from each village. The resulting development plan now includes priorities brought forward by the citizens: these range from the establishment of a grievance mechanism to strategies for adapting to climate change as well as an expansion of social security systems.

In India's state of Jharkhand, many people eligible for a social security pension could not receive their entitlements, due to the government's quota on beneficiaries determined based on the available budget.

We supported our local partner PHIA and the Jharkhand Right to Food Campaign to undertake an analysis of budgets for major social sectors in order to prioritize areas for budget allocation. The Campaign then engaged in pre-budget consultations in 2021 and shared suggestions and recommendations with state level policy makers. At the same time, the Campaign organized a social media campaign to raise awareness on the issue.

In the 2022-2023 Jharkhand state budget, the government allocated sufficient budget to cover all eligible vulnerable citizens under the scheme (rather than first comes first served basis selection), resulting in inclusion of more than 900,000 new pension holders to the beneficiary list – an increase in 75% in the number of beneficiaries.

Andrea Sonntag
Program Coordinator
andrea.sonntag@welthungerhilfe.de
Tel. +49 (0)228-2288-431

Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.V.
Friedrich-Ebert-Str. 1 | 53173 Bonn | Deutschland
Tel. +49 (0) 228-2288 0 | Fax +49 (0) 228-2288 333

PROJECT-NR.: IND/1374/BCD/1036/NPL1066
STAND: 05/2022