

# WFP's Support to Local and National First Responders

Reaffirming our collective commitment to humanity was a key outcome of the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul. It requires us to transform our approach to reach the furthest behind first and to develop stronger partnerships with all constituencies involved in fighting hunger. WFP fully supports the calls in the Agenda for Humanity for greater investments in first responders. Through the Grand Bargain launched at the World Humanitarian Summit, WFP agreed to provide more support and funding to such first responders, including NGOs.

The Grand Bargain includes a commitment to achieve by 2020 a global, aggregated target of at least 25 per cent of humanitarian funding to local and national responders as directly as possible. At the Summit, WFP also presented individual targets to increase support to first responders. These include commitment to promote national NGO projects approved by the Food Security Cluster for grants from country-based pooled funds, and to make strategic investments in the capacity strengthening of national and local NGOs to help communities lead and sustain their own fight against hunger, as also highlighted in the draft 2017-2021 Strategic Plan.

Every year WFP works with a large number of NGOs, including national and international partners as well as national societies of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. These partnerships are essential for the delivery of WFP's programmes. National and local organizations are often the first to respond to crises and remain in the communities they serve, before, after and during emergencies. For WFP working in partnership is increasingly the way to do business, especially in the expansion of resilience-based approaches, innovation and system-wide changes driven by the World Humanitarian Summit, recognizing the need to work better together to achieve collective outcomes.

However, there is a realization that we need to do more. Following a process of external consultation and internal review, WFP has embarked on a process of institutional reform that identifies partnerships as one of the key strengths of the organization. WFP's Strategic Plan (2014-2017) emphasizes that partnerships drive all WFP programmes, policies and activities, and the Corporate Partnership Strategy, adopted in 2014, reinforces the evolution of WFP's culture from "We Deliver" to "We Deliver Better Together".



75 percent of WFP's food and cash-based assistance is provided through NGO partners, allowing beneficiaries to receive assistance at speed and scale, bringing efficiency, strengthening accountability to affected populations and supporting innovative approaches to programming. The opportunities for working together depend on NGO capacities, contextual factors and nature of programmes implemented. Key areas of collaboration include emergency response and preparedness; treating and monitoring malnutrition; cash-based transfers; mapping food insecurity and reporting market trends; the empowerment of smallholder farmers; financial and administrative procedures and supply chain management.

The current drive towards a more 'localized' response to humanitarian needs is already reflected in WFP's capacity strengthening activities with local and national NGOs. More than 850 of WFP's 1,000 NGO partners are national. Strengthening their capacity ensures a more sustainable impact of WFP interventions, by empowering communities to address their own food challenges, which is key to achieving sustainable development. A more locally rooted humanitarian sector that leverages the responsibilities and capacities of states, civil society and affected communities, will be more effective in responding to and mitigating the risk of crises.



Strengthening national capacity will also help address the current reality that the nature, scale and complexity of crises are outpacing the international humanitarian system's ability to cope. As the humanitarian system seeks to be 'local where possible, international where necessary', strategic investments in national capacity are more important than ever. WFP has always relied on the capacity of our operational partners, and especially of national and local NGOs. At times, WFP investment in local capacity has been driven by operational necessity, especially during emergencies, rather than broader aspirations towards building sustainable national civil society capacity as a global public good. The emerging challenge is to take bold steps towards this larger objective – a challenge WFP is already taking on, in collaboration with our partners, as the example below from Pakistan illustrates.

### **Building Strategic Partnerships with national NGOs (NNGO) in Pakistan**

Pakistan faces multiple food security and nutrition challenges, with large-scale and recurrent natural disasters and complex emergencies. Prior to the 2005 earthquake, WFP had only few national NGO partners in Pakistan. The WFP Country Office has since set up an NGO partnership unit and today WFP works with 29 national and 10 international NGO partners in Pakistan.

As the operational context in Pakistan is shifting to a recovery and development focus, the WFP Country Office is increasing their investments in strategic partnerships with national partners. The country office is looking at national capacity enhancement holistically: government, national NGOs, and the private sector. The fact that the country office has articulated a role for national NGOs (NNGOs) in

national capacity enhancement has created opportunities to focus on and invest in NNGOs. This effort has included mapping its existing and potential partnerships to understand where WFP might make additional strategic investments with national NGOs as medium and longer-term partners, and institutionalizing these relationships in longer-term memoranda of understanding (MoUs), rather than short-term field-level agreements (FLAs). To identify the areas for improvement, the Pakistan Country Office has developed a partner 'health check', which has helped WFP strengthen national NGO's administrative as well as financial systems and reporting.

The Food Security Cluster in Pakistan has also played an important role in harmonising the training of NNGO partners, on cash and voucher programmes. WFP used experienced INGO partners to help train national NGOs, and then used national NGOs that had been working on cash to train new NNGO partners. The umbrella of the Food Security Cluster also enabled all members to agree on standards of training and facilitated coordinated training of NNGOs.

To conclude, Istanbul has set aid delivery on a new path; one that calls for greater support to first responders and recognizes the importance of working in partnership. Guided by its Strategic Plan, WFP fully embraced these principles already in 2014 and has since worked closely with NGOs and first responders, seeking to empower local actors. In line with the Istanbul commitments, WFP will continue to advance its partnership agenda with the aim of replicating success stories, as in the case of Pakistan. We know that by doing so, we are further enhancing local capacities, advancing a form of development that is sustainable, and thus overall taking a step closer to Zero Hunger.

