



## CASE STUDY : SUDAN

### MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PROCESSES: KEY TO EFFECTIVE CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Country: Sudan

Year: 2014

Technical area: Food Security and Nutrition  
Information Systems (FSNIS)

Good Capacity Development practices: Capacity  
Assessment; Multi-Stakeholder Processes

#### SUMMARY

When designing projects, it is important to engage local stakeholders as early as possible to ensure that capacity development (CD) activities are truly relevant to their needs. Multi-Stakeholder processes (MSPs) can also lead to greater ownership of project activities and outcomes. This case study gives an example from Sudan of successful MSPs for developing Food Security and Nutrition Information Systems (FSNIS) in four states.

#### BACKGROUND

Agriculture is responsible for 34% of Sudan's GDP, and its role in the country's economy is expected to increase as oil revenues decline. Despite the large agriculture sector, food security remains a serious issue in the country due to conflict, recurrent droughts and floods, poor rural infrastructure and weak rural markets. In order to improve food security, FAO has been working with the Government of Sudan to develop its food security and nutrition information systems for more effective policy making.

As part of this collaboration, an EU funded<sup>1</sup> programme is being implemented in four states.

Its main goal is to strengthen the capacity of state level government ministries in collecting and analyzing food security information.

In 2013, as part of a Capacity Needs Assessment (CA), the programme team interviewed up to fifty stakeholders in each state. In January 2014, multi-stakeholder workshops were organised to validate the CA and design a workplan for the programme.



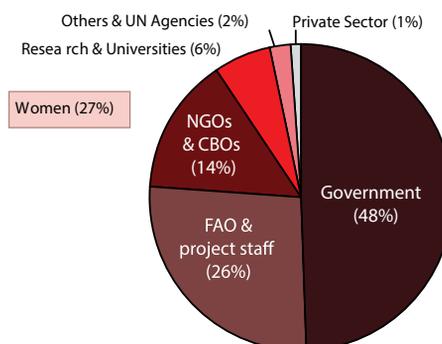
"At the Kassala validation workshop, we had never seen such high quality engagement in discussions among such a diverse group of stakeholders."

- Dr Anwar Mohamad Osman, Agricultural  
Planning Department Manager

#### HOW THE MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PROCESS (MSP) WAS ORGANIZED

Workshop participants included both potential producers and users of food security information. Care was taken to choose a wide range of stakeholders (see chart) and ensure gender balance.

Workshop Participants



<sup>1</sup> The Food Security Policy and Strategy  
Capacity Building (FSPC) Programme



Although many participants had already been individually interviewed during the CA, the workshops gave them an opportunity to discuss the assessment's findings with a larger group of interested stakeholders.

Discussion groups were facilitated by local stakeholders who received informal training in facilitation from the project team. Facilitators made sure that all members of the group – especially women – had the opportunity to speak and express their vision for the FSNIS. Discussions were conducted in the local language (Arabic).

The multi-stakeholder dialogue helped ensure that implementation plans truly reflected local needs and were realistic. It also raised stakeholders' awareness of current food security and nutrition challenges and why FSNIS are important.

The project team's role was limited to arranging logistics, training local facilitators, framing focus questions, and documenting the results of the discussions. High quality facilitation and a structured approach were essential for the success of the MSP.

## FINDINGS FROM THE MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSIONS

New ideas that came up during the validation workshop included:

1. Non-state actors should be included in policy discussions; Improve high level state officials' capacity to involve non-state actors and make more participatory policy decisions.
2. Ministry staff and decision makers should actively engage in fundraising and advocacy.
3. The communications, coordination and networking capacity of ministry staff involved in the FSNIS should be strengthened.

## WHAT DIFFERENCE DID THE MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PROCESS MAKE?

Some positive outcomes of the process included:

- Participants said they now fully understood the importance of setting up the state level Food Security Technical Secretariats (FSTS), Food Security Councils, and other coordination platforms.
- Ownership of the project and commitment to expected outcomes was solidified.
- There was an unprecedented level of high quality engagement and discussion.

The risk of not involving stakeholders is that generic solutions which may be inappropriate for the local context are adopted. Furthermore, projects will have limited impact over time if stakeholders do not own the process and outcomes.

## CONCLUSION

Stakeholders themselves validated and customized the CD workplan to their real needs and local conditions in four states in Sudan. The multi-stakeholder process led to stronger ownership of the Food Security and Nutrition Information Systems (FSNIS). Stronger partnerships were forged as everyone understood how their organizations and individual contribution fit into the FSNIS. Setting up more permanent platforms for multi-stakeholder consultations will ensure that the benefits of MSPs continue beyond the scope of the programme.

To learn more about Multi-Stakeholder Processes, refer to:

[http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/capacity\\_building/LM4\\_v2\\_WEB\\_Light.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/capacity_building/LM4_v2_WEB_Light.pdf)

