

Organizing for action

A guide for establishing and developing National
Alliances Against Hunger and Malnutrition

Alliance Against Hunger and Malnutrition





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Hunger
and Malnutrition**

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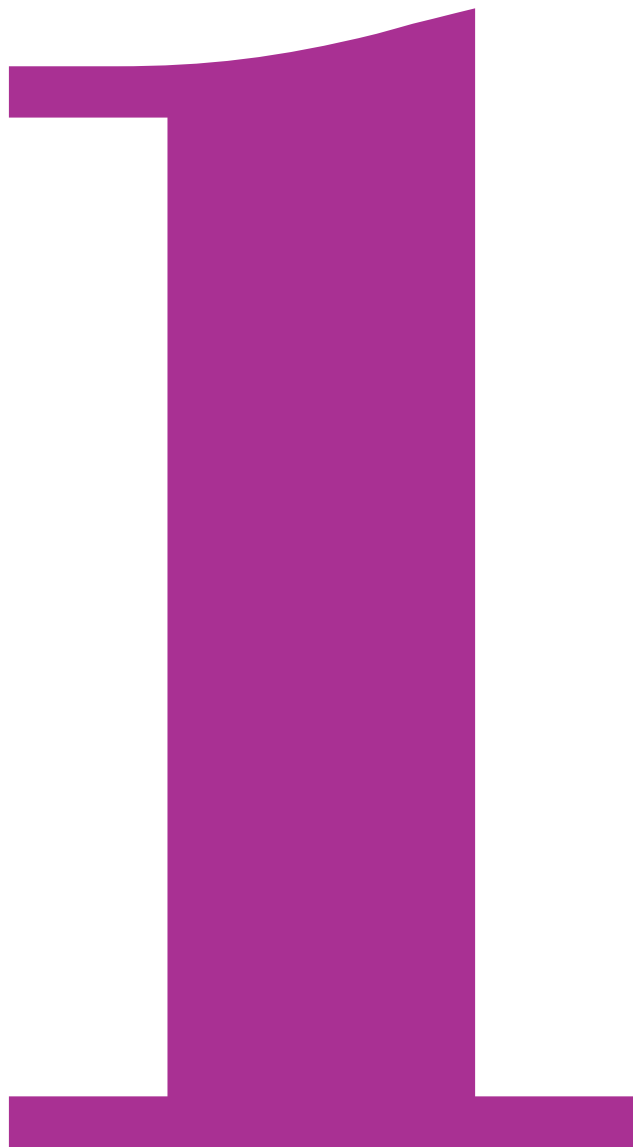
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This guide has been developed to support fledgling National Alliances in their start-up activities as well as established National Alliances that are moving their agendas forward. This is in no way intended to be prescriptive. It is meant to provide guidance and assistance through a series of suggested activities and actions, and practical examples of best practices.





ABOUT
THE ALLIANCE

Global partnership against hunger

The Alliance Against Hunger and Malnutrition (AAHM) was created as the International Alliance Against Hunger (IAAH) on the recommendation of the World Food Summit in 2003 by FAO and three other Rome-based agencies – IFAD, WFP and Bioversity International. A global partnership, the Alliance brings together local, national and international institutions experts and advocates with the aim of promoting national and regional-level policy dialogue in the fight against hunger. Since its inception, the Alliance has facilitated establishment of National and Regional Alliances throughout the world.

While the Alliance Secretariat works at the global level to promote national-level policy dialogue, the National Alliances work within their countries to bring together civil society, the private sector and governments to build political will, all aimed at reducing hunger and malnutrition. The name of the Alliance was changed from IAAH to the Alliance Against Hunger and Malnutrition in 2010, at the request of the National Alliances, so that it would recognize their work in improving nutrition as well as in fighting hunger.

Alliance Statement of Principles

The Alliance's main focus is to bring together existing organizations with a common goal and give them the opportunity to speak with a unified voice, build political will and advocate for policy support in the fight against hunger and malnutrition. National Alliances offer new ways of combining expertise and infrastructure at national and international levels – ranging from highest levels of government to grassroots organizations to the individual beneficiaries themselves – building on what already exists, rather than creating a new entity.

The role of National Alliances

By providing the forum for government and civil society to work together, National Alliances can contribute significantly to achieving the goals of the Alliance. However, first the National Alliances must build their capacities in advocacy, accountability, resource mobilization and coordination of programmes.

1. ABOUT THE ALLIANCE

The principles of the Alliance Against Hunger and Malnutrition are designed to support the growth of a dynamic voluntary organization.

ALLIANCE PRINCIPLES

The Alliance Against Hunger and Malnutrition is a voluntary association whose members share a common commitment to the rapid eradication of global hunger and malnutrition. Its core work is building partnerships between civil society and government in order to adapt and set strategies, policies and programmes that:

- Facilitate dialogue on the most effective measures to reduce hunger and malnutrition
- Contribute to meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the target of the World Food Summit by strengthening national, regional and global commitment and action to end hunger and malnutrition
- Promote mutually supportive action involving governments and other stakeholders in the fight against hunger and malnutrition
- Engage and empower grassroots organizations and individual beneficiaries as full partners in National Alliances, to participate in finding and implementing solutions that will make a real difference to their lives and the lives of generations to come



GETTING
STARTED

Initiating a National Alliance

The impetus to form a National Alliance can come from a local non-governmental organization (NGO), from an international Alliance partner or from the national government itself. The Alliance Secretariat can provide administrative support in this initial stage, often through local representation of international partners.

Once formed, the National Alliances organize themselves according to their own situations. However, there are certain general objectives that should be recognized and included in planning, in order to ensure that each National Alliance will be able to function at the highest possible level within its country, but also that its objectives and activities will be on par with other National Alliances:

- Define goals and set up annual work plan;
- Examine resource mobilization avenues;
- Set up communication strategy, including development of advocacy campaigns;
- Ensure the regular sharing of information among all National Alliances;

(Note: the Taking Action section below has more detailed information on achieving these National Alliances report to the Alliance Secretariat annually about progress toward achieving this goals). These reports include:

- Review of objectives and expected outcomes with report on major activities and events held in support of those objectives;
- Explanation of ongoing challenges;
- Request for support, as needed goals.

ALIGNING WITH EXISTING NETWORKS

The examples of Brazil and Ireland

The mandate of the National Food and Nutritional Security Council (CONSEA) of Brazil is quite similar to the mandate of the Alliance Against Hunger and Malnutrition. CONSEA, composed of government and civil society organizations, coordinates national “right to food” efforts. Recognizing the potential for collaboration, Brazil joined the Alliance but determined that its National Alliance would keep the recognized name CONSEA. Thus, no new entities were created, the Alliance Against Hunger and Malnutrition benefits from having a National Alliance in Brazil, and Brazil benefits from CONSEA’s association with the Alliance.

It is a similar story in Ireland. The Freedom from Hunger Council of Ireland (Gorta), an Irish NGO working in international development with particular emphasis on food and water security, became the National Alliance of Ireland in 2003, but maintained the name Gorta, which is the Irish word for “extreme hunger”. Gorta has continuously supported the Alliance, both as the National Alliance of Ireland and in supporting the establishment of a Regional Alliance in East Africa.

GOVERNMENT-LED INITIATIVES

The examples of Japan and Indonesia

In September 2009, the Japanese Government led the establishment of the Japanese National Alliance Against Hunger (JNAAH) with the aim of creating strong links and cooperation with the evolving network of National Alliances, especially by “twinning” with established Alliances in developing countries. A JNAAH representative visited the Alliances of Ghana and Burkina Faso in September 2010, to explore possibilities of strengthening partnerships through supporting field projects of the Alliance members. In Burkina Faso, the support materialized through projects that had positive impact on the nutrition, health and livelihoods of women in the project areas. The National Alliance of Indonesia was proposed by the government and established after a meeting with the National Farmers’ Network. With the agreement of the Network and further support from the private sector, the National Alliance of Indonesia is working with other National Alliances in the region, including the dynamic National Alliance of the Philippines (ANGOC), to establish the Asian Alliance Against Hunger and Malnutrition.

2. GETTING STARTED

CIVIL SOCIETY-LED INITIATIVES

The examples of USA and Burkina Faso

The NGO Bread for the World led efforts to establish a National Alliance in the USA. With a focus on advocacy and recognizing the potential power of a National Alliance in lobbying the government to increase development aid, Bread for the World brought together a host of interfaith organizations as well as other groups and individuals involved in the fight against hunger and poverty such as food banks, private foundations and charitable organizations.

In Burkina Faso, Caritas, with support of FAO, used its broad national presence to identify potential grassroots partners and bring existing projects under the National Alliance umbrella. Caritas initially invited its partner organizations, including the Telefood Club of Ouagadougou University, and then expanded to all interested groups including farmers' and women's organizations.

INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATION

The example of Benin, Burkina Faso and Mali

The National Alliances of Benin, Burkina Faso and Mali received a grant to organize capacity-building workshops in communications and resource mobilization through an IFAD-funded project and with the support of FAO. The Alliances developed a joint communication strategy and, from that, expanded to form the Subregional Alliance against Hunger in West Africa (RAFAO).



Planning the initial meeting

No matter who leads the initiative to form a National Alliance, the invitation to attend the first meeting should give participants the idea that they are being invited to join a group of committed, action-oriented professionals who believe that by working together, they will become a stronger presence in the national debate. Thus, the initial meeting should include a guest list that represents a broad cross-section of organizations.

1. Who to invite?

It is important to have as complete a list as possible before scheduling the first meeting in order to avoid the possibility of omitting a potentially important contributor. This may require conducting an initial search to identify and enlist all individuals, organizations, government ministries and programmes already involved in fighting hunger and malnutrition, as well as those whose work can impact poverty and hunger, such as health care organizations. This can include:

- Community-based organizations
- Local and national branches of international NGOs
- Local representation of UN agencies
- Representatives of government ministries
- Local farmers' organizations
- Food producers and agribusinesses
- University and research institutions
- Religious groups
- Social service organizations
- Private sector organizations.

2. Building the invitation list

The international development organizations that work with local and national partners have lists, or access to lists, of organizations and individuals who are working on hunger and malnutrition in the country. These names can serve as a starting point for an invitation list. Once they are identified and contacted, they will be able to provide references to other organizations or individuals. It is essential to seek out local and grass-roots organizations, especially those involving women, farmers, youth and indigenous people. Representatives of the media who cover social issues also can be invited to join. Above all, it is important to invite those who:

- Are truly involved in the hunger malnutrition issues of the country;
- Share the basic principles and aims of the Alliance Against Hunger and Malnutrition;
- Have something to contribute to the Alliance in terms of expertise and resources.

3. Choosing the venue and sending out invitations

The venue for National Alliance meetings should be easily accessible and the invitation should include information such as time and location. However, it should also include information to introduce the Alliance Against Hunger and Malnutrition and a summary of the findings about the country's hunger and poverty situation.

It could also include a list of the other individuals, organizations and government representatives who have been invited and the proposed agenda. In the case of the agenda, the participants could also be asked if they have any suggestions of their own to add to the agenda.

4. Setting first meeting agenda

Agendas for initial meetings should be distributed to participants in advance. Agenda structures vary but they should give an idea of both short and long-term goals of the National Alliance and the types of decisions that will need to be made at the meeting.

SAMPLE AGENDA

Adapted from first meeting of Dominican Republic National Alliance

1. Explain goals and principles of the Alliance Against Hunger and Malnutrition and the envisioned role of a National Alliance
2. Introduce each participant
3. Choose a name for the National Alliance
4. Determine prerequisites for membership
5. Set date, location and agenda for next meeting

5. Roundtable concept

The “roundtable” structure sets up a situation in which all participants are equals in efforts to decide on their Alliance’s future direction. Top-down structures and pre-determined leadership should be avoided. Alliances must be run democratically.

It is important that participants in the first meeting decide immediately about follow-up meetings, how often they will be held, if the venue will be rotated. They also should appoint someone to take responsibility for tasks such as booking the meeting location and sending out reminders of the next meeting.

Start-up phase

Once the initial meeting has been held and participants have recognized the importance of joining together in a National Alliance, the start-up phase will require some fact-finding and administrative activities to ensure that the new Alliance builds a strong foundation on which it can grow.

1. Mapping the food security situation of the country

Before a National Alliance can begin charting its course, members must first have an understanding of the hunger and poverty situation in their country. It is important to gather sound statistical information as well as anecdotal information that will raise awareness of need and give a realistic basis for setting goals. There are both local sources and international sources for finding this information.

International sources.

International UN or NGO organizations are a great source of statistical information. In fact, governments often base their strategies on statistics compiled by UN organizations, such as the FAO, WFP, IFAD, UNICEF or World Bank country profiles and hunger maps.

Local sources.

National food security policies and national poverty reduction strategies contain well researched background information on the hunger and poverty situation in the country. Public information or policy officers of related government ministries can provide access to documents that contain helpful information.

Researchers or faculty of local academic institutions can provide background information and statistics or can provide guidance on where such information can be found. Many statistics will usually be available on government and national research centre websites.

Online sources. The Internet is a great source of information, but a random Internet search by country name and with the words "hunger statistics" has the potential of locating tens of thousands of sites. Sites of UN organizations are reliable and should provide the kind of statistics that will help present a realistic account of a country's hunger and poverty situation.

- FAO**
 - <http://www.fao.org/countryprofiles/inventory.asp?lang=en> (country profile)
 - <http://www.fao.org/es/ess/faostat/foodsecurity/FSMap/map14.htm> (figures on specific issues with disaggregated data)
 - <http://www.fivims.org/index.jsp?lang=en> (information and mapping systems on food insecurity and vulnerability)
 - <http://faolex.fao.org/faolex/index.htm> (legislative database collection of national laws and regulations on food, agriculture and renewable natural resources)
- WFP** • http://www.wfp.org/country_brief/hunger_map/map/hungermap_popup/map_popup.html (country profile)
- IFAD** • <http://www.ifad.org/operations/projects/regions/country.htm> (field operations)
- UNDP** • <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/> (country profile and statistics)

2. Determining organizational structure

Although the initial meetings will be hosted by an organizer or organizing committee, once participants commit to the task of building and supporting a National Alliance, it is necessary to decide upon the appropriate organizational structure. This will vary from country to country, according to specific situations.

National Alliances should set up organizational structures that will ensure representation of all members in the decision-making process. In some cases, there may be existing organizations or networks that can be expanded and adapted to form the National Alliance. In others, it may be necessary to forge something new. The decision has to be based on local practicalities.

However, all Alliances require some form of secretariat or executive committee to handle administrative duties, support members and have authority for procedures such as fundraising and communication.

Example of Nepal National Alliance

In 1999, the Nepal Alliance was formed with the initiative of organizations such as ActionAid Nepal, the South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE), Pro Public and Green Energy Mission. Since the Nepal Alliance is a member-driven initiative for collective research and advocacy, its work is financed by its Secretariat as well as its members.

In addition, considering that one of the basic aims of the Alliance Against Hunger and Malnutrition is to foster dialogue and joint action between government and civil society, the structure of the National Alliances should always provide for the participation by both the public and private sectors. With this in mind, there are three organizational options that would be consistent with the Alliance aims:

- Government initiative with public sector leadership and private sector participation
- Joint government-civil society initiative with shared leadership and
- Civil society-led initiative with government participation

In addition, as there will be so many different types of organizations represented in the Alliance, the Alliance should ensure that each type of organization is represented in the leadership structure.

3. Registering the National Alliance

Official status might allow the National Alliance to receive and disburse funds, organize events, obtain official recognition for public statements and to represent its membership.

However, when taking the steps for legal recognition, it is important to avoid the appearance of seemingly creating a new structure that could be perceived as a competitor of similar initiatives.

In fact, this is an indication of why it is often preferable to turn an existing organization into a National Alliance by enlarging or adapting its mandate to match the AAHM mandate. Whether the Alliance is a new entity or building on an established entity it can be legally recognized by law or in a formal procedure of registration as an official association.



TAKING
ACTION

Develop consensus on goals and objectives

One of the major decisions that must be made by a new National Alliance is the definition of its goals and objectives. There are examples abound throughout the Alliance of the types of goals that National Alliances have set. For example, Cameroon, Benin and Sierra Leone have chosen to pursue educational and capacity-building activities in their efforts to overcome hunger and malnutrition in their countries. Nepal, the USA and Brazil elected to work toward strengthening and empowering national organizations that have established food security goals, while RAFAO and the Philippines have spread their messages through workshops and training. These are the decisions that must be made according to the national context in which each National Alliances are working, and also must consider the level and type of expertise of the National Alliance members.

The key advantage of forming a National Alliances is the strength of speaking with a common voice to advocate for change. This strength can be applied in many ways, such as:

- **Raising awareness of national hunger and malnutrition situations through the media;**
- **Building political will to eradicate hunger and malnutrition;**
- **Lobbying the government for increased funding of hunger and malnutrition reduction programmes;**
- **Setting up fora for debate and exchange of information;**
- **Mobilizing resources to finance the Alliance activities.**

Partnerships

Once National Alliances are established, it is important that they continue their outreach activities, looking for ways to develop partnerships outside the Alliance and bring more organizations under the Alliance umbrella. In addition, there is the possibility of coordinating activities with other international organizations, such as NGOs and UN agencies.

TWINNING

The example of USA and Ghana

The twinning of the USA and Ghana began as an effort for resource mobilization for the start-up of the Ghana National Alliance. The USA financed a Ghanaian delegation to travel to the USA and Rome. In the USA, they met with the USA National Alliance, members of the Millennium Project Hunger task force and others. In Rome, they met with representatives of IFAD, FAO, WFP and Bioversity International. These contacts were crucial for positioning the National Alliance within Ghana's development community and for strengthening their Alliance's operational capacity. As follow-up, periodic visits have continued between the two countries.

The example of Brazil and Haiti

In 2006, under an exchange protocol signed by the Ministries of Agriculture of Brazil and Haiti, Haitian ministers visited Brazil and attended a seminar on small-scale farming, and Brazilian ministers visited Haiti and agreed to support a rural development project proposed by civil society and supported by the Haitian Ministry of Agriculture. Later, a Brazilian government and civil society delegation visited Haiti to explore logistical arrangements for a pilot project in which Brazilian agronomists will work with Haitian colleagues to increase agricultural output. The increased production will be purchased by the local school feeding program.

Twinning

The Alliance twinning programme is set up for matching two National Alliances that have the potential to support each other. In this way, more developed countries can give advice and financial support to less developed countries and, at the same time, they learn about each other's needs and goals and can expand into other areas for building partnerships.

Resource mobilization avenues can include:

- Fundraising campaigns;
- UN agencies and their donors' activities; implemented under World Bank poverty reduction strategies;
- organization of special events;
- activities financed by private sector or cooperation agencies;
- twinning/bilateral/multilateral support.

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CREATING REGIONAL
ALLIANCES

4. CREATING REGIONAL ALLIANCES

CFS and rationale for Regional Alliances

In June 2010, the Alliance organized its first International Consultation, “The Way Forward”, which brought representatives of the National Alliances together in Rome for their first ever in-person meeting. At that time, two Regional Alliances already existed - the Regional Alliance for Hunger Free Latin America and Caribbean (HFLAC) and the Subregional Alliance Against Hunger in West Africa (RAFAO). Since this consultation, many of our National Alliances were inspired to forge partnerships with other National Alliances in their region, resulting in a number of new Regional Alliances Against Hunger and Malnutrition. These Regional Alliances are supported by global mechanisms such as: the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), Right to Food (RtF), Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) and the High Level Task Force (HLTF).

The reform undertaken by the CFS in 2009 to make it more inclusive has brought it into closer contact with the Alliance whose National Alliances are well positioned to provide the CFS access to the grassroots as well as NGO, CSOs, private sector and other organizations that comprise its memberships.

Initial contact

It is usually the case that one National Alliance will approach the Secretariat with the idea of establishing a Regional Alliance. The Secretariat can provide support first by contacting the leadership of the other National Alliances in the region that might be interested and then by facilitating a meeting to bring the appropriate Alliances together for discussions. From this point, the establishment of a Regional Alliance would follow the same steps as establishing a National Alliance.

This guide has been developed to support fledgling National Alliances in their start-up activities as well as established National Alliances that are moving their agendas forward.





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