



KEY MESSAGES ON PARTNERSHIP AND COORDINATION FROM FSC PARTNERS IN BANGLADESH, IRAQ AND MALI

In 2016, the global Food Security Cluster, in collaboration with its partners 18frames, the German Federal Foreign Office and Welthungerhilfe, initiated a video project to raise awareness on partnership and coordination. We conducted interviews with national and international FSC partners in Bangladesh, Iraq and Mali to better understand their views and needs towards strengthening local partnership and collaboration for improved coordination of humanitarian response. Despite the different contexts in all three countries, partners shared similar experience and stressed similar needs. And they all agreed that local actors do better understand the needs and aspirations of the affected communities.

International partners know the mechanisms, the donors and institutions. We know the local realities, the needs and the people (CSPEEDA, Mali).

While governments are involved in coordination on national level, local partners are based on the ground and have access and acceptance to both, the community and local administration. When disaster strikes, they are the first responders, and when disaster ends, they stay behind. Local actors are important to bridge the gap between humanitarian and development action.

It's all about trust building and accountability, to ensure that we are reaching the right people at the right time and at the same time and with the right package (ChristianAid, Bangladesh).

- Partnership is about investment and decision-making on local, decentralised levels.
- Partnership is built on mutual respect and strength, trust, complementarity and understanding. It does not happen in isolation and in time of need.
- Partnership and relationships have to be viewed in a sustainable, longer term. Building partnerships is a process during which local priorities, specific issues and nuances need to be acknowledged, understood, and acted upon.
- Partnership is not only about finance. Local available resources need to be also acknowledged, e.g. community mobilisation or funds from local influential entities.
- Partnership needs to be strategic to catalyse processes, to be accountable, and to interact as unifying voice with local structures.
- Partnership is required to minimise the duplication and to make harmonised effort.

Disaster is a combination of the phenomenon and the capability to respond. It only becomes a disaster if the human institutions are not capable to respond (FAO, Bangladesh).

- Preparedness considers humanitarian and development action, i.e. humanitarian crisis often exist in parallel with an ongoing developmental framework.
- Preparedness constantly relooks and reevaluates what are people's coping capacities, and understands these in a chronicle cyclical nature of emergencies.
- Preparedness is based on long-standing, development relationships with local communities to inform and act immediately after disaster strikes. Baseline data and information of the affected community are at hand.

We often forget that people have different vulnerabilities or different needs. These are all things which we would like to learn from the communities to give us a conscious thought, so that we are conscious about these differences in the community (FSC, Iraq).



FOOD SECURITY CLUSTER
Strengthening Humanitarian Response



From a donor, agency-led response to a more government and people-led response (ACF, Bangladesh).

- Preparedness includes strong systems and process in place with local officials, local communities and actors as well as strong contingency planning, i.e. local actors have strong element of humanitarian imperatives, binaries are preselected, local actors and communities are well connected with the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies or civil society organisation, or cash and non/food items are prepositioned, and available stocks at warehouses are discussed and assured.
- Food security is one of the first needs after disasters strikes, so procedures need to be ready to allow that the community has access to the food at the right time and at the right quantity.

Coordination is very important in case of disaster, the response and rescue. If there are any gaps in coordination, it effects. If we want to perfectly respond, it needs better coordination among local partners, INGO, NGO, Government, development partners and whatever stakeholders (Ministry of Disaster Management & Relief, Bangladesh).

- When disaster strikes, assessments need to be coordinated, so that organisations use the same kind of approach, same methods and same agreed responses.
- Build capacities with the support of clusters that work with line ministries and with the support of partners who implement activities with local partners.
- Strengthen local representation at national level to ensure a more systematic response.
- Train and capacitate all but especially local actors, community workers and volunteers, in generic as well as technical terms, e.g. coordination, needs assessments, international standards, digital data gathering, cash based interventions.

Working with national partners is the backbone of humanitarian operation. They speak the language, they understand the context much better than internationals, they have the networks, and they know the people (WFP, Iraq).

- Decentralise coordination mechanisms to allow localised, civil society organisations and authorities to engage in coordination. Involve local actors in data collection, analysis, evaluation and decision-making. A better integration in the coordination mechanisms gives access to information, provides visibility and opens new funding opportunity in the long run.
- Acknowledge local potentials and consider local priorities to avoid parallel coordination structures. Involve national coordination mechanisms and fora.
- Provide better preparedness and strengthen local partners in advocacy, so that in case of political priority changes, they remain operational.
- Clusters are enriched by memberships. The more partners are actively engaged and support, it improves the quality.

The doors are open, the cluster is an inclusive structure (FSC, Mali).

Reinforce, do not replace, national and local systems
(Agenda for Humanity, World Humanitarian Summit 2016)

For further information, see <http://fscluster.org/page/reinforce-national-and-local-systems>

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