# Governance, Agriculture & Food Security

## CATALYZING INTEGRATION SERIES

Efforts to reduce extreme poverty and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) require an in-depth understanding and reflection of the interconnected nature of people's lives. Development solutions need to be as multifaceted as the challenges they are designed to address. FHI 360 believes that an intentional, integrated approach to the design, delivery, and evaluation of programs has the potential to make an enduring difference in the lives we are dedicated to serve.
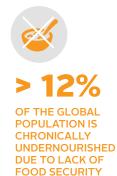
At its core, integration refers to activities in which actors from different sectors deliberately coordinate their work to maximize impact and progress toward common or complementary goals. Integration is most effective when it purposefully leverages opportunities to reach more people, offer better services, reduce inequality, or reduce costs.

FHI 360 has developed a **suite of resources** designed to advance integrated development approaches. Many of these resources also synthesize lessons learned and recommendations from integration across a diverse array of sectors. The *Catalyzing Integration Series* offers a closer look at integration between specific development sectors — including the rationale, evidence of impact, promising practices, key tools, and other technical guidance resources.

## BACKGROUND

A lack of food security results in chronic undernourishment for over 12 percent of the global population.[1] At the same time, a third of the world's food supply goes to waste every year.[2] To make matters worse, people who live with chronic hunger and extreme poverty are often excluded from political representation, government services, and government benefits.[3]

The relationship between chronic hunger and governance is implicit in the Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) definition of food security as "all people, at all times, having physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life."[1]

**> 12%**
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**1/3**
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fhi360
THE SCIENCE OF IMPROVING LIVES

INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT

# Governance, Agriculture & Food Security

Governments are the primary actors in the physical, social, and economic aspects of a nation's food security, so any attempts to improve agriculture and food security outcomes must also consider the role of governance.[4] It is a two-way relationship — stable agriculture and food security systems can help to establish stable and transparent governments, which contribute to more inclusive and effective agriculture and food security systems.

The intricate connections between agriculture, food security, and governance suggest that attempts to reduce chronic hunger must integrate all three elements. In particular, certain principles of governance — participation, accountability, transparency, effectiveness, and the rule of law[i] — should be integral parts of programs for agriculture and food security. Such efforts could work across multi-sector actors and food systems, empowering all stakeholders to make changes to increase food security and reduce malnutrition. Explicit attention to governance and public policies pertaining to agriculture can also help governments realize their food security goals.

Efforts to integrate governance within food security work have recently gained traction as traditional approaches have failed to prevent the occurrence of global food crises. Such integration efforts have found support in instances where food security work coincides with other efforts to improve governance. After the food crisis of 2007 and 2008, it became apparent that food security required good governance at international, national, and local levels.[5] Indeed, some analyses indicate that certain trends affecting governance on all levels — including globalization, the power of transnational corporations, and weak public regulation — are major drivers of food insecurity in the world.[6, 7] The challenges are exacerbated by rising food demands across the globe, which have put further pressure on already-strained political systems.[6] The effective coordination of governance, food security, and agriculture work is the key to addressing some of these large problems.

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i.  Some of these principles are part of the Food and Agriculture Organizations (FAO)'s PANTHER Principles. http://www.fao.org/righttofood/about-right-to-food/human-right-principles-panther/en/

# The Importance and Impact of Integrating Governance and Agriculture

## Poor Governance

Poor governance can be a major driver of food insecurity[8, 9] — indeed, most of the armed conflicts in the world take place in low-income, food-deficit countries that depend on domestic agricultural production.[10] Current policies and programs that address agriculture and food security are hindered by complex political processes and interactions between stakeholders — government, private sectors, and farmers — who have unequal power and access to resources. Agricultural systems are often harmed by conflict, poor institutional capacity, and the bad design and implementation of government policies.[4] And countries that do not adequately invest in agriculture are more likely to experience chronic food insecurity.[11]

## Good Governance

Good governance, on the other hand, supports the aims of agriculture and food security through multiple pathways. And a good system of governance must be able to respond to a food crisis and address the complex problems of food insecurity in order to eliminate hunger.[12,13] The integration of governance allows programs to formulate food security strategies that respond to diverse and ever-changing needs by aligning objectives and actions across all levels of the government. In Brazil, for example, a new ministry coordinated food and nutrition goals as a national priority, which helped to improve food security throughout the country.[14] At the local level, civil society organizations that work with the government can make valuable contributions to food security — by forging better links between decision-makers and the affected population, by facilitating the efforts of multi-sector actors with different levels of government, and by providing resources and knowledge that may be lacking in government agencies.[15-18] In this respect, integrated programs can address political and socio-economic obstacles that prevent improvements to nutrition and food security. These programs can also incorporate the ideas of marginalized groups — including poor farmers and women — who are otherwise excluded from decision-making processes.

## Integration

Integrating principles of good governance programming (e.g., accountability, citizens' participation) to agriculture and nutrition interventions can also improve service delivery and enhance positive development outcomes. For example, the participation of farmers in the design of agricultural policies in a number of developing countries — such as Senegal, Bolivia, Brazil, and Niger — has led to inclusive agricultural policies that improved farmers' access to agricultural and food value chains.[19] In Niger, the Nigeriens Feed Nigeriens 3N initiative has invested in the infrastructure and services at 255 sites across the country to help agricultural producers improve their business performance. The services — which are tailored to the local agricultural and ecological contexts and to meet the needs of local populations — have successfully supported the decentralization of authority associated with food and nutritional security.[20]

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### Food Security's Impact on Governance

Stable and effective agricultural systems and populations that have food security can also support the aims of governance, including greater civic participation and effective rule of law. Food-secure populations[21] are more likely to participate in political processes, whereas food insecurity can increase grievances against institutions, hinder political participation, and contribute to outbreaks of armed conflict.[21, 22] Removing socio-political obstacles and enhancing food security improves the government's responsiveness to its citizens — which increases the government's legitimacy and stability[10]— and strengthens the social contract between local stakeholders and their government. In turn, the empowerment of local stakeholders allows them to participate in policy development and to identify and implement local priorities.

Such exchanges have seen positive outcomes in several parts of the world. For example, food security programs in Nepal have improved community relationships with the government[23] and short-term jobs in agricultural programs promoted peace in Liberia.[24] The relationship between food security and governance can be supportive or destructive — a food-secure population can bolster stable governance, whereas a food-insecure population can destabilize governance.[22]

# Challenges and Entry Points

**TENSIONS AND CHALLENGES**

Agricultural and food security interventions in rural areas are often faced with a suite of challenges — including the need to improve the coordination of these programs, social and economic power imbalances, the need to include local stakeholders, and a general lack of accountability. Overcoming these barriers and moving toward inclusion, transparency, and accountability in government is further challenged by those in power who are likely to resist changes that threaten the status quo. The difficulties are evident in places like Cambodia, where sub-national policies are small in scale and narrow in scope. Small farmers are often excluded from decision-making processes, including budgets, agriculture inputs, land reforms and food distribution. Attempts to reallocate policy-making decisions closer to provincial areas have been hampered by a lack of capacity and inadequate resources. As a result, decision-making is still largely centralized and does not involve sub-national stakeholders.

To meet these challenges, implementers require policies and programs that support and promote effective rule of law, transparency, public access to information, public participation, and accountability to others.[25] In some respects, the integration of governance addresses these issues by its very nature because it promotes participation, transparency, and stakeholder accountability. Integration also helps to ensure that future policies and programs are closely linked, which prevents fragmentation and the duplication of efforts.[26]

The successful integration of these policies and programs into agricultural and nutrition interventions depends on two complementary aspects of governance:

→ **SUPPLY-SIDE GOVERNANCE refers to the ability of a government to implement policies and services that effectively respond to the needs of stakeholders — especially women and vulnerable populations who farm — within agricultural and nutrition value chains.**

→ **DEMAND-SIDE GOVERNANCE refers to the institutions and mechanisms through which agriculture and nutrition value chains — including farmers and groups living with chronic hunger — frame and articulate their concerns to government representatives, exercise their legal rights, participate in political processes, and hold governments accountable.**

The interactions between the two sides determine the most basic aspects of a government's activities. These include the ways that priorities and strategies are identified and achieved, how resources are managed, and how services are designed and delivered. In this respect, it is noteworthy that the integration of governance with agriculture and nutrition engages the supply side and the demand side. As a result, the voices of the poor and most

vulnerable can be heard and government representatives can respond by developing sound policies and allocating resources that respond to their needs.

Morocco's Green Plan shows how the two sides of governance can be successfully engaged through integration. The Green Plan integrates governance, agriculture, and nutrition through a contractual agricultural system, which focuses on expanding large-scale commercial farms and transforming smallholder farms into family enterprises. As a result, the development of smallholder farms has diversified the income of rural areas and enhanced farmers' access to agricultural inputs (e.g., modern farm production techniques), credit, technologies, and markets. Enhancing the capabilities and skills of rural people has broadened their awareness and participation. So local farmers now have greater autonomy and responsibility; and the villages are involved in all phases of the planning process.

The Green Plan has also contributed to a 48% increase in the agricultural gross domestic product per capita in rural areas, a 4.9% reduction in malnutrition, and the effective eradication of hunger (only 0.5%) in rural areas.

This success has prompted the Moroccan government to work toward further reductions in poverty through a stronger emphasis on "solidarity agriculture" — or the engagement of government with civil society — and a greater focus on marginal areas.[26] Future integration activities should plan development efforts with all key stakeholders to reduce rural poverty and contribute to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

### ENTRY POINTS AND MODELS FOR INTEGRATION

Existing global policies and initiatives — such as the GFSA, Feed the Future 2030, and the Milan Food Policy Pact — can serve as platforms for integrated approaches. They offer potential entry points to multi-sectoral approaches that foster inclusive rural transformations and better rural-urban linkages to support balanced development. These initiatives can be part of a paradigm shift that embraces multi-sectoral, bottom-up, localized interventions to address food security that include a focus on governance issues.

Opportunities to advocate for the integration of governance with agriculture are also emerging. For example, the FAO, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) have recently launched an initiative to assess, scale-up, and pilot policies and governance to improve food security in emerging and developing countries. These organizations have analyzed the territorial policies and governance systems for food security in Cambodia, Colombia, Cote D'Ivoire, Mali, Morocco, Niger, and Peru with the support of their governments.[26]

Decentralization can also enable citizens (including women and other vulnerable populations who are small farmers in rural areas) to collaborate with policymakers and the private sector to assess and design solutions to local food security issues. Such initiatives eschew top-down approaches, where policymakers and government officials own all the solutions and resources, and emphasize collaboration and shared accountability at all levels. For example, through a USAID-funded project, citizens in Yene, Senegal were involved in a multi-party

stakeholder dialogue on governance in land management. As a result, the local government created a land tenure board of appeals, which provided local stakeholders with a mechanism for recourse. This collaborative approach improved the documentation of meeting minutes, affected the decisions of the Land Commission, and allowed citizens to access this information at the town hall. The actions helped to improve the management of arable land and reduced tensions among farmers.[ii]

The examples in this brief show that development actors, the private sector, and citizens must be involved in the design and implementation of agriculture and nutrition programs that fully integrate the principles of governance. Programs must also promote stakeholder accountability, inclusive agricultural value chains, and effective nutrition interventions. Thus, the integration of governance with agriculture and nutrition can effectively address poverty and hunger in developing countries across the globe.

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ii.    Peace and Governance Program (PGP) in Senegal. Program funded by USAID from 2010 to 2015 and implemented by FHI 360.
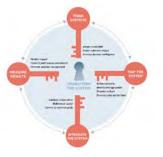
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# Key Tools and Resources



**Good Governance Barometer**



**SCALE+**



**Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance (FANTA) Project materials**

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