

# A Sustainability Challenge: Food Security for All



*Incentives and Limitations to Action  
by Civil Society*

Brian Greenberg  
May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2011

## A Diverse Sector, Generalize Cautiously

- NGOs, Civil Society, CSOs, Coops & Associations
- Mission driven ↔ not-for-profit businesses
- Secular and faith based
- All development sectors & services
- Policy, programs and research

# NGOs = A Donor Community?

- \$6-9b annually in private resources
- Significant fraction for FS/Ag
- Steady NGO investment in rural livelihoods & agriculture
- Strategic alignment (?)

# A Spectrum of Motives and Missions



- MDGs
- Human Rights
- 'Third Way': Non-state actors, non-private sector

# Strengths and Capabilities

- Sustained community engagement
- Predominantly local staff
- Partnerships with local civil society, private sector and government
- Productivity & market participation for smallholders
  - Extension, information & skills
- Capacity building for local implementing partners/civil society

# Incentives in Food Security

- Many FS indicators headed the wrong direction
- Food crisis for ~ 1 billion people
  - Pre-‘crisis’ baseline of ~ 750 million hungry
- Environmental degradation and change stress production
- Humility

# Food Security Map

## FOOD SECURITY AID MAP BETA

WHO IS DOING WHAT, WHERE?

In 2010, more than 925 million people around the world went hungry. Hunger is caused by many different factors, including armed conflict, natural disasters, poverty, inefficient agricultural practices, and poor governance. The recent financial and economic crises, as well as rising food prices, threaten to push millions more into poverty and hunger. This site contains information on NGOs' work related to improve agricultural productivity and food security, ensuring that all people have access to enough, safe and nutritious food. [Learn more](#)

SECTORS ▾

COUNTRIES ▾

ORGANIZATIONS ▾

ABOUT

HIGHLIGHTS

Search...



# Important Touchstones

- Aid Effectiveness & Paris Principles
- 'Country Ownership' IF driven by community engagement, alignment, mutual accountability
- Open Forum Principles for NGO engagement
- Greater transparency & accountability
- Centrality of women to development outcomes
- Gender relational approaches to women's disadvantaged status and roles



# Some Major Challenges:

# Organizational

- Human capital
- Technical capacity, back office
- Partnerships
  - Magnitude of development challenge means 'all hands on deck'
  - Partnerships are technical & managerial challenge
  - Better alignment & leverage critical to scale of impacts
- Resources

# Macro Environment



Poverty & powerlessness are root causes of hunger

- Incompletely addressed through many ag & food security interventions (e.g. urban poor, rural landless & sub-economic smallholders)

Food price determinants beyond local production & market

- Energy costs, tariff & trade, bio-fuels, commodity speculation
- Outside purview of most ag/local market interventions

Weak public and political understanding of foreign assistance

- Importance to US nat'l security and diplomatic agendas
- Public estimate of DA investment off by factor of 20-25

Decades of under-investment in agriculture

- Trend reversed by 'food crisis'?
- Flat-line is new budgetary 'success'

# Macro Environment, cont'd

- Emphasis on short-term outcomes vs. long-term transformation or sustainability
- Market constraints (failures) marginalize smallholders, women, remote regions, etc.
  - Markets that work for poor, women, ethnic minorities often require active facilitation – effort & time
- Diseconomies of small-scale production
  - Transaction costs of aggregation
  - Off-farm jobs, migration & remittance strategies appealing to many
- Risks
  - Prices, viability of farm enterprise, weather, etc.

# Strategic/Existential

- Environmental constraints not widely understood or appreciated
- Climate change stresses already-vulnerable regions & producers
- How to catalyze smallholder growth in context of escalating resource scarcities, costs?

# Enabling Environment for civil society



- Disabling regulatory & legal environment – shrinking operational ‘space’
- Insufficient government will to engage with CS in:
  - Setting development strategy;
  - Building capacity on all sides;
  - Implementing and monitoring programs

# Advocacy Agenda



- Increase technical integration, especially environment, gender
- Increase cross-sectoral & institutional coordination, collaboration
- Mobilize civil society more effectively & consistently
- Balance economic & agronomic perspectives with social science, ecology, gender, community mobilization, governance, etc.