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► To cite this version:

Christopher Kaan, Andrea Liese. Public private partnerships in global food governance: business engagement and legitimacy in the global fight against hunger and malnutrition. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 2010, 28 (3), pp.385-399. 10.1007/s10460-009-9255-0 . hal-00615359

HAL Id: hal-00615359

<https://hal.science/hal-00615359>

Submitted on 19 Aug 2011

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Public Private Partnerships in Global Food Governance: Business Engagement and Legitimacy in the Global Fight against Hunger and Malnutrition

INTRODUCTION¹

The right to be free from hunger and malnutrition was proclaimed by the United Nations (UN) World Food Conference in 1974 (UN 1975: 2).² Further conferences, such as the World Summit for Children (1990), the International Conference on Nutrition (1992), or the World Food Summit of 1996, recognized food and/or nutrition security as fundamental rights (cf. Shaw 2009: 8). Yet, hunger, malnutrition and their detrimental effects on health and education remain among the most pressing global development problems. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) estimates that the number of undernourished people, i.e. people who do not have access to adequate food at all times, rose to more than 1 billion in 2009 (FAO 2009: 1). 26 per cent of all children in developing countries are malnourished (United Nations 2008: 10), and more than five million children worldwide die each year of undernourishment (UN SCN 2006). Furthermore, approximately two billion people suffer from micronutrient deficiencies as a form of malnutrition, especially from the lack of vitamin A, iodine and iron, (FAO and ILSI 1997; Shaw 2009: 8).

Consequently, the reduction of hunger and malnutrition in the world remains one of the key objectives of the UN, and forms part of the first Millennium Development Goal (MDG).³ More than 30 UN bodies deal already with hunger and malnutrition issues directly (Shaw 2007: 206). Additionally, the UN also seeks to achieve food and nutrition security by

¹ We thank...F

² A fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger had already been recognized in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which was adopted in 1966 and entered into force in 1976,

³ The target to „[r]educe by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger” is part of MDG Number 1.

developing so-called public-private partnerships (PPP) with civil society organizations and business actors.⁴

So far, the success of attempts to involve businesses in PPP to fight hunger has been marginal and only a handful of transnational PPPs have been established. While business actors frequently engage in water and health governance, they rarely enter into food security projects. However, there are a few PPPs against micronutrient deficiencies where business associations and companies are involved in. Why do levels of engagement vary? What types of PPPs can we expect business actors to engage in? And what can we expect from business-led PPPs against hunger or malnutrition in terms of legitimacy?

Our study analyzes two transnational PPPs against hunger and malnutrition in which the involvement of business actors varies considerably. A transnational PPP is a relatively institutionalized transboundary interaction “between public and private actors that formally strive for the provision of collective goods, whereas private actors can be for-profit and/or civil society organizations” (Schäferhoff et al. 2009: 455). We will investigate the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) and the International Alliance Against Hunger (IAAH). Both PPPs claim to contribute to the MDGs and operate on a global as well as on a national level. Nevertheless, they differ greatly in terms of private sector involvement, governance structure and their overall approach to food and nutrition security (cf. Beisheim et al. 2007). Furthermore, while GAIN is most likely to achieve its clear set goals within the next few years, the results of the IAAH, if at all, will only become clear in the long term. Our analysis allows us to identify some initial hypotheses on business actor involvement in global food governance. Based on documents and nine interviews with representatives of the secretariats of GAIN, the IAAH, intergovernmental organizations (FAO, WFP) and non-governmental organizations, we observe that businesses will initiate and actively participate

⁴ MDG 8 calls upon member states and the UN „[t]o develop strong partnerships with the private sector and with civil society organizations in pursuit of development“ (UN General Assembly 2000: 5); see also the World Food Summit Plan for Action (1996), which suggests that governments form partnerships with civil society.

in private governance schemes that offer potential for economic profit, are top-down structured, output- and short-term oriented. Process-oriented, bottom-up initiatives, such as the IAAH, are not found to attract the support of private actors and will require public support for achieving their long-term goal of promoting action in the fight against hunger.

Furthermore, we explore the implications of transnational PPPs against hunger and malnutrition for democratic legitimacy. We combine an analysis of input legitimacy with an analysis of a prominent, albeit contested, concept of output legitimacy to assess the legitimacy of the chosen PPPs. Our analysis has implications for the wider debate on the legitimacy of global governance and the debate on the role of the state in global governance. It shows that public-private food governance schemes, such as GAIN, can achieve market-based solutions to local problems on a global scale and fulfill criteria of output legitimacy. However, these public-private partnerships tend to ignore some of the underlying causes of global hunger: They do not address issues such as limited access to food, uneven distribution of food or the rights of small-scale farmers. In this regard, output-oriented public-private partnerships cannot substitute state intervention, even if they bring in urgently needed financial resources. International organizations (IOs), governments and civil society remain important actors in securing local markets, in empowering small-scale farmers and in building capacity for local solutions. Yet, their efforts to involve the private sector in partnerships with input legitimacy face severe obstacles as they are met by a lack of interest among business actors.

The following section introduces GAIN and the IAAH and describes their goals, partners and governance structures as well as the degree of business involvement. It discusses the interests of the business partners and the institutional set-up of each partnership. Already, we will draw some preliminary conclusions on the factors that influence the degree of business involvement. The third section seeks to establish a link between business involvement and legitimacy. It distinguishes the concepts of input legitimacy and output legitimacy and analyzes the PPPs in terms of legitimacy of their governance structures and measures.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS AGAINST HUNGER AND MALNUTRITION

In the last decade, the number of public-private collaborations related to development issues has risen (Broadwater/Kaul 2005). Private actors are increasingly becoming part of governance processes. In empirical studies, the term “partnership” is used for a variety of different forms of interaction, ranging “from loose forms of cooperation to legally binding contracts for the implementation of projects” (Schäferhoff et al. 2009: 453). We follow a definition which was introduced in a recent review of the literature. Transnational PPP are *institutionalized transboundary interactions between public and private actors which aim at the provision of collective goods* (Schäferhoff et al. 2009: 455).

Hunger and malnutrition are not on the top of PPPs agenda. Hitherto, no more than seven transnational PPPs with a focus hunger and malnutrition have been established with a global outreach: the *Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition* (GAIN), the *Iodine Network* and the *Flour Fortification Initiative* (FFI), *Safe Supply of Affordable Food Everywhere* (SSAFE), the *Farmers Forum*, the *Ending Child Hunger and Under-nutrition Initiative* (now: REACH) and the *International Alliance Against Hunger*. Additionally, there are some regional initiatives related to food security such as the *Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa* that seeks to increase smallholder farm productivity. Even by adding these, the total number remains quite low compared to other issue areas. Consequently, the MDG progress report on hunger refers to the term *public-private partnership* only twice (UN Millennium Project Task Force on Hunger 2005). And the leading UN agency on the right to food, the FAO, is regarded highly separated from the private sector (FAO 2007: 214).

A comparison can be made to the health sector where the level of business involvement is significantly higher, and where some studies have counted up to 100 Global Health partnerships (GHPs) (Carlson 2004; Utting and Zammit 2006: 14). These GHPs cover a wide

range of issues such as the development and advocacy of new medical solutions, the distribution of drugs and vaccines and the provision of mosquito nets. Looking at the budget of these organizations, the divergence to the food sector becomes even more obvious. A study by Buse and Harmer shows that 23 GHPs have obtained a general funding of over \$4.8 billion, more than \$100 million per partnership (Buse and Harmer 2007: 266).⁵ In contrast, GAIN, the best funded PPP in food governance, started with a budget of merely \$70 million.

What are the reasons for the (lack of) involvement of business in the fight against hunger and malnutrition? To answer this question, we will now take a closer look at the chosen partnerships in the field, namely GAIN and the IAAH, and identify reasons for the different degree of business involvement.

1. Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN)

Description of Goals, Partners and Governance Structure

GAIN is a transnational PPP working against vitamin and mineral deficiencies in developing countries. According to its statute, GAIN aims at reducing infant mortality, increasing economic productivity, promoting the physical and scientific potential of people and reducing the costs of public health provision (GAIN 2009). Funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the German and Dutch governments, GAIN was set up in 2002 as an independent non-profit foundation. The initiative gained momentum at the UN General Assembly's Special Session on Children where fortification strategies were recommended. The approach was not new to companies. Fortified food had been available in several industrialized countries for the last decades. Organizations such as Helen Keller

⁵ Buse and Harmer (2006) have a narrower definition of PPP and therefore look at a smaller sample of only 23 GHPs.

International and the Micronutrient Initiative are members of the global alliance. The private sector is represented by companies such as BASF, Coca Cola, Danone, Heinz, Tetra Pak and Unilever (GAIN 2006: 4). As a result of early criticism, GAIN does not enter into partnerships with companies that produce or market tobacco, alcohol or weapons, or companies that do not comply with the *International Code for the Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes* (GAIN 2002: 14; Bekefi 2006: 39; cf. Richter 2003). The PPP is governed by a board of 16 members, mostly consisting of donor organizations, and a small executive secretariat.

GAIN operates on two levels (Cf. GAIN n.d.(a): 10ff). On the *international* level, to which 20 to 30 per cent of its activities are related, GAIN furthers initiatives for cost-effective food fortification. It offers a platform for harmonization of national policies and for exchange of information between IOs, the private sector, development organizations and other public actors. GAIN gets these actors in contact, supports the establishment of regional alliances and program-oriented research, the development of new products and the mobilization of resources. The central aim is to create an enabling environment for food fortification. The majority of activities are, however, related to the *country-level*. GAIN supports national partnerships between governments, business actors and non-governmental actors, especially civil society organizations. 77 per cent of GAIN's budget is reserved for funding objectives. In order to strengthen local capacities for food fortification, the organization co-finances fortification projects and offers technical advice. Along with the local public and private sector actor, GAIN finances technical support and capacity-building in target countries. The national projects seek to implement a long-lasting fortification strategy in the respective countries. To give an example, the National Fortification Project in Morocco provides support for the public and private partners in five ways. It delivers laboratory equipment and trains members of the private Miller's Association in order to strengthen quality assurance and implementation of fortification measures. It provides the public institutions with the necessary

instruments and strategies to overview the fortification process and it enhances the knowledge of fortification in the Ministry of Health. It issues and distributes background and advocacy material for policy-makers and consumer campaigns, and finances the evaluation of the overall project (Cf. World Bank 2004).

To select adequate projects, GAIN relies on a grant system that provides financial support for local projects. In a competitive procedure, interested national alliances must apply for funds, and present a fortification plan. In order to qualify for one of the grants of up to \$3 million, each national alliance has to include national representatives of the government, the food producers and distributors and the civil society.

Business Involvement in GAIN

GAIN has developed a strong partnership with key players in the food industry. Among these are Danone and Unilever, which are the largest food producers in the world, and the Tata Group, India's largest industry conglomerate. All three have held seats in the Governance Board in recent years. Other members and key partners of GAIN include Tetra Pak, one of the largest packaging companies in the world, and Procter & Gamble, another large food and commodity producer (Cf. GAIN n.d.(b)) .

Furthermore, GAIN includes companies in the GAIN Business Alliance. The Business Alliance has three functions. Firstly, it helps to connect business actors from different countries that are active in the nutrition sector, and it assists them in developing new business partnerships. Secondly, the Business Alliance is an active policy-advocate. It has, for example, promoted the fortification approach at important international meetings like the World Economic Forum. At the request of members of the GAIN Business Alliance, the forum devoted its first plenary session in 2009 to the issue of nutrition. Finally, some members of the Business Alliance provide financial support to GAIN (Interview GAIN #1).

Although GAIN has not published a list of all members of the Business Alliance and keeps the structure of its membership secret, a public GAIN report mentions that the business forum was attended by "100 business leaders from across the food supply chain" (GAIN 2008b). Nine companies from the food sector are namely mentioned in the respective report: PepsiCo, Cargill, Tetra Pak, DSM, Danone, Britannia Industries Ltd, Firmenich, Mars and Unilever.

Why might business actors be interested in participation in GAIN? From our analysis of documents and interviews with GAIN officials and other experts, we assume that they gain reputation and possibilities for market access. Furthermore, companies find staff members in the GAIN secretariat they share a working experience in business and similar values such as flexibility of regulations with.

The reputational gains are based on the legitimacy of the overall endeavor: GAIN's approach to the malnutrition problem - the fortification strategy - has been legitimized by several UN forums, and is part of the global strategy to implement the MDGs. The UN expects a sufficient supply of iodine to minimize early childhood development risks. Iodine also reduces the risk of maternal mortality during childbirth by 20 per cent (United Nations Department of Public Information 2002). Thus, participation in such a highly-praised initiative may enhance the reputation of a company in public. Hence, reputational gains form one part of GAIN's member acquisition strategy. In a GAIN business report of 2008 it is stated that "GAIN will ensure that members of the Business Alliance will receive the credit and visibility they deserve for their commitment." (GAIN 2008a: 5).⁶ With regard to market access opportunities, GAIN makes similar promises:

By working with GAIN to fight malnutrition, businesses have a new and unique growth opportunity. Fighting malnutrition is a way to expand existing markets and create and develop new markets. It leads to meaningful engagement with governments, local NGOs, businesses and opinion leaders, and in turn

⁶ Although GAIN does not publicize the list of members in the Business Alliance, companies are free to mention the membership themselves.

facilitates the navigation of local regulations as well as local acceptance. It also results in new product development while promoting corporate values and meeting social responsibility obligations. (GAIN 2008c)

In one of the interviews, a GAIN official stated that business has gained confidence in these opportunities, and that companies are initiating projects via GAIN, because they expect business opportunities. The same official also argued that the major incentive for companies is market access. (Interview GAIN #1) This is in line with critical voices in the FAO which see GAIN as an instrument of the food industry to access new markets:

I am not saying that FAO believes it, but there is a concern expressed by a number of actors that GAIN's approach is to support companies and developing markets under the guise of providing humanitarian support, but in fact is just a business style approach of opening markets under the guise of doing something good. (Interview FAO #2)

Critics further challenge the means by which GAIN seeks to prevent micro-nutrition related malnutrition, i.e. the approach of industrial food production, which might create problems for local producers that lack the adequate technology, and might support access to food which is produced and processed where the technology is available (cf. McMichael 2006).

Business engagement was lower during the first two years of GAIN's existence. At that time, GAIN was strongly cooperating with intergovernmental organizations. It was embedded into the structure of UNDP, and sought the World Bank's support to identify eligible project proposals, to monitor these projects and to administer funds. The secretariat of GAIN was hosted by UNDP and all staff members were paid by the World Bank. A GAIN official recalls that unclear competencies and bureaucratic constraints caused a lot of problems. In 2005, GAIN adopted a much more flexible working style. As one interviewee stated:

They are saying that we have a kind of a start-up culture.[...] we are really driven by efficiencies and doing things and we are not in the job of creating rules and regulation. We are not the UN [...]. (Interview GAIN #1)

For management positions, GAIN recruited businessmen, who shared a working style and were able to communicate to the business partners.

Surprisingly, the work of GAIN is neither in rivalry to any international organization nor does it not compete with other public initiatives. While many IOs (like WFP and UNICEF) and NGOs (like Bread for the World) distribute food and work for better access to food, micronutrients is not the domain issue of any other organization. We assume that this gap is attractive for potential partners:

Nutrition is probably the only public health strategy where the public health system doesn't really have a role. It's really the food industry that delivers improved nutrition. (Interview GAIN #1)

In sum, businesses seem to engage with GAIN, because it uses a familiar approach, a market-based, technical solution, enhances the reputation of a company and is widely regarded as an independent organization that upholds the principles of efficiency and flexibility.

2. International Alliance Against Hunger (IAAH)

Description of Goals, Partners and Governance Structure

The IAAH is a partnership between civil society and international organizations with the aims of increasing public awareness of hunger, mobilizing public campaigns and facilitating local and national initiatives against hunger. As a follow-up to the World Food Summit, in 2003, the FAO, the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and Bioversity International (Bioversity) created the IAAH.⁷ The four founding members were joined by a group of NGOs from the food sector, the Ad Hoc Group of International NGOs having a formal status with FAO (AHGINGO). Further support came from the International NGO/CSO Planning Committee (IPC), which was mandated by the

⁷ Bioversity International is acting in the IAAH on behalf of the Consultative Group of International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).

NGO forum of the summit. Currently, all these groups are represented in the so-called IAAH Working Group which serves as the IAAH Governing Body . Compared to GAIN, the IAAH has not defined clear-cut goals and specific instruments to fight hunger. Instead, its overall objective is to encourage and strengthen initiatives of individuals, groups and organizations:

(...) the Alliance [is] aimed at enhancing political will and commitment against hunger. (...) We must be the motivating force to encourage more people to take action. (Clayton 2003)

The IAAH promotes a twin-track approach that combines long-term and short-term activities (FAO 2003: 2), and focuses on political – not technical – solutions for the problem of global hunger. In the long run, political initiatives shall mobilize further investments in agriculture and rural development, and people at risk shall have direct access to food. Short-term programs are being set up to provide food for those in need, e.g. through school feeding and programs like *Food For Work* (FAO 2003). Projects are to be developed and implemented by national alliances, not on the international level. By enabling the exchange of best practices, the international alliance mainly seeks to mobilize a broad civil society based network on the national level. In all, the IAAH can be seen as a *forum for advocacy* that connects the different national initiatives in a global movement. Thus, any judgment about its effectiveness needs to be based on its overall achievement of awareness raising and network building.

Business Involvement in the IAAH

The private sector does not participate in IAAH's activities at the transnational level. Furthermore, although several documents envisage a participation of agribusiness firms (FAO 2003), only a limited number of companies engage in just a few of the national alliances. So far, the IAAH has not been successful in mobilizing the financial and political support of business actors. Two rare exceptions are the involvement of private companies like Cargill in the US alliance or the hotel chain Mercure's funding for small projects in Burkina Faso, which support female farmers who grow vegetables (cf. IAAH 2006b). Hence, cooperation

with companies has been limited to exceptional cases and occurs at a low level of intensity (Interview FAO #4). This is a surprising fact bearing in mind that some of IAAH's intergovernmental members, in particular the WFP, have successfully entered into much more intense partnerships with the private sector, and do have experience in attracting private funds (Interview WFP #1; WFP 2009). Furthermore, as the IAAH is in need of (financial) resources, there is a huge demand for a support of the private sector. Nevertheless, the IAAH has not made a systematic approach to engage business in its operations so far. An official of the WFP claims that "while the important role of the private sector has been recognized, no specific strategies have been set up to reach out to companies or to fully include the private sector in the IAAH" (Interview WFP #1).

On the national level, the composition of the alliances is more diversified. But even here, the overwhelming majority of members represent public and civil society organizations (Cf. IAAH n.d.). The US alliance, in which large companies of the agrifood industry like Cargill and Sodexo participate, is an exception to the rule (Cf. Alliance to End Hunger 2009). In this case, cooperation in a national alliance started as early as the beginning of 2001, two years before the IAAH was established.

Given the absence of business in general, it is difficult to assess its motives for not joining the initiative. We find that possible reputational gains are outweighed by a lack of market access, the perception of a dominant FAO and rivalries between the Rome Agencies. Nevertheless, one would expect reputational gains due to participation in a philanthropic endeavor. Many companies use their membership in other initiatives to signal their positive corporate responsibility to their customers. But an important prerequisite for such a move is that the customer can be convinced of the added value of this membership. Unfortunately, in the case of the IAAH, this is not even clear to its participants.

Another obstacle for participation is related to the institutional setup of the IAAH. The PPP is closely associated with the FAO, which hosts the small and under-equipped secretariat. Interview partners widely share the perception that the FAO is dominating the IAAH (Interviews FAO #1, FAO #4, NGO#1, NGO #2). Two FAO evaluations support the assumption that the close association with the FAO undermines ownership on the transnational level as other UN agencies and programs fear dominance by the FAO (FAO 2006: 49, 44; cf. also UN System Network on Rural Development and Food Security 2004: 31f). Furthermore, negative experiences with industry-cooperation in the FAO, which had threatened its reputation as a neutral organization in the past, have led to an organizational culture in which skepticism towards the private sector prevails (Bekefi 2006: 34; FAO 2006 and 2007).

A second problem is the rivalry between the different Rome-based agencies which have overlapping mandates and battle over their turf (Interview NGO #1). Furthermore, it is not clear how the advocacy work of the IAAH complements the different approaches to hunger alleviation and the different strategies of the three Rome Based Agencies, i.e. FAO, WFP and IFAD. Finally, the international organizations and NGOs participating in the IAAH do compete for resources. Each organization has an interest in increasing its own funds by cooperating with the business sector. Once an organization has developed a partnership with a business partner, it has a strong incentive to keep it exclusive. This creates a subtle but very effective obstacle to the inclusion of businesses in the IAAH: public partners such as the WFP want to keep their exclusive relation to business partners in order to gain more resources for their original mandate (Interview WFP#1). But who if not the core members of the IAAH should motivate business partners to participate in the partnership?

LEGITIMACY AND BUSINESS INVOLVEMENT

How legitimate are the initiatives that attract the interest of the private sectors? And how legitimate are those initiatives that the private sector leaves aside? Before examining the legitimacy of GAIN and the IAAH, we will introduce two perspectives on legitimacy, - input and output legitimacy - which have gained prominence in debates on public policy and regulation (Bäckstrand 2006, Omelicheva 2009; Risse 2006; Scharpf 1999). The perspective of output legitimacy refers to the desirability of the goals and the provision of public goods, while the perspective of input legitimacy focuses on features of the decision-making process, in particular participation and accountability (input legitimacy, cf. Benz 2000; Scharpf 1999).

Input legitimacy, often also termed as democratic legitimacy (Dingwerth 2007), focuses on the process of norm creation and asks if norms are accepted, because the norm addressees perceive the process of norm creation as fair, deliberative and transparent (Beisheim and Dingwerth 2008). In order to measure input legitimacy, we use a framework that has evolved in the last year in international scholarship. Most scholars ask whether the decision-making process conforms to these demands, i.e. whether the relevant stakeholders are represented (participation), whether the decision-makers can be held accountable (accountability) and whether the decision-making process is transparent (transparency) (e.g. Fuchs et. al. forthcoming; Bexell et. al. 2008; Dingwerth 2007).⁸ Output legitimacy, in contrast, describes the acceptance of a political measure by the norm addressees. It asks if norm addressees accept the aims and the results, such as the provision of a public goods (Scharpf 1999), as legitimate. This concept is based on the perception that democracy is not only legitimized by participation, but also by its substantive results, e.g. welfare (Omelicheva 2009). Output legitimacy is always based on normative criteria, and not only based on effectiveness (i.e. the

⁸ We omit another aspect of legitimacy, the deliberative quality of the process of rule-making (cf. Dingwerth 2007).

problem-solving capacity of a measure).⁹ Output legitimacy comprises the whole implementation of a policy process. One may perceive a policy as output-legitimate if the goals, the measures, the implementation methods and the management structures are consistent with ones normative beliefs (cf. Omelicheva 2009). For the purpose of this article, we want to separate these three dimensions, because actors attribute output legitimacy differently along them. The first dimension refers to the goals of an institution and asks if they serve a commonly accepted purpose, while the second dimensions captures whether the measures to achieve these goals are equally regarded as legitimate. Finally, we analyze whether the specific way of implementing these measures is seen as just and equitable by the affected actors. Although the concept of output legitimacy is criticized by scholars (Fuchs and Kalfagianni 2008), we find it useful. It sheds light on considerable variance between our two cases, and highlights different intentions of the different stakeholder groups.

THE LEGITIMACY OF GAIN

1. Output legitimacy: Goals

GAIN states that its approach contributes to the attainment of eight MDGs, among them fighting hunger and poverty, reducing infant mortality, promoting gender equality and achieving universal primary education. The fortification strategy is part of current discourses on global health and has been legitimized by several UN conferences and meetings. In 1994, the World Bank declared: "Probably no other technology available today offers as large an opportunity to improve lives and accelerate development at such low costs and in such a short time" (World Bank 1994: 1). The Copenhagen Consensus (CC) Rating 2004 declares the

⁹ For example, Scharpf (1999) claims that a measure can only be output-legitimate if it is pareto-optimal, i.e. serves the interests of all participants best.

micronutrient deficit as the second most important challenge after HIV/Aids. In 2008, the expert pane examined several solutions:

(...) micronutrient supplementation (Vitamin A and Zinc), micronutrient fortification (iron and salt iodization), biofortification (agricultural improvements through research and development), de-worming (which also improves education), and nutritional education campaigns. The panel ranked solutions to this challenge very highly, because of the exceptionally high ratio of benefits to costs. Micronutrient supplements were the top-ranked and fortification was the third ranked solution, with tremendously high benefits compared to costs. (Copenhagen Consensus 2008:3)

The United Nations General Assembly's Special Session on Children held in 2002 set the sustainable elimination of vitamin A deficiency by 2010 as one of its goals and referred to micronutrients as one way to achieve it (United Nations 2002: 11). Finally, in its report on the implementation of the MDGs, the UN mentioned four strategies against malnutrition, among them fortification with micronutrients.

One of the major concerns about policy formulation is the re-setting of priorities in Global Health Policy. Several authors warn that private funding gives incentives to specific policies and influences priorities. While the share of overall official development aid (ODA) for health issues and projects increased in the 1990s (Ollila 2005), the creation of the Global Health Program of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) marked an important change. Since 2000, the BMGF roughly donates about \$1 billion per year to global health initiatives (WHO 2009). In this context, critics have argued that the BMGF has helped to shift the priorities of global health policies towards communicable diseases and technical solutions (with GAIN clearly falling into this category) (McCoy et al. 2009a, 2009b). While one could argue that it is unproblematic if private money is spent according to the donor's and not the public's interests, the concept of output legitimacy would argue the opposite. Indeed we can observe that the priorities of a private foundation affect public priorities and ODA spending. The projects GAIN funds and arranges on national level need to be heavily co-funded by domestic actors. To give an example, in a collaborative project GAIN is undertaking with the

government of Morocco to increase amounts of fortified flour and oil, GAIN contributes about \$3 million while the Moroccan government and the Moroccan Miller's Association are investing \$15 million each (Cf. World Bank n.d.; World Bank 2004). In this case, the share of domestic sources is about ten times higher than the share of GAIN. Hence, a small share of the project funding binds a much higher share of public funds. The redirection of public spending for an externally determined goal is thus likely to shorten funds for other urgent problems. Consequently, GAIN has mostly cooperated with developing economies that are able to co-fund the projects, and less with least developed countries where the need to fight hunger and malnutrition is even greater. 70% of GAIN's budget focuses on partnerships in India, Brazil, Indonesia and China (Bekefi 2006: 32).

2. Output legitimacy: Measures

While the overall goal of GAIN to fight micronutrient related malnutrition is rather uncontroversial, its measures are highly contested. Although hidden hunger is widely recognized as one important aspect of nutrition security, experts, politicians and pressure groups differ whether micronutrient supplementation or food diversification is the most promising strategy for problem-solving. GAIN's fortification approach has been criticized for relying on technical solutions which do not tackle the roots of hunger and malnutrition, and which ignore the structural causes of malnutrition, e.g. poverty. In her prominent critique, Marion Nestle, professor at the New York University and author of *Food Politics: How the Food Industry Influences Nutrition and Health*, described GAIN as a "reductionist, single-nutrient techno-fix to a problem that is much more complex" (quoted in Zimmerman 2002).

Another concern is raised in regard to GAIN's market approach (Zimmerman 2002). The Alliance assists companies with market access to developing countries and helps to establish fortification-friendly regulations. By introducing certain fortification targets in country

legislation, the PPP opens markets for large food companies that are able to produce food according to the advocated standards. Beyond doubt, this can possibly supplant local food producers who do not have access to the needed technology. Thus, a possible negative side-effect of GAINs work is the exclusion of small and medium-sized domestic food producers, and companies that lack the knowledge and technology to fortify their products might be forced out of the market (Interview FAO #2). In addition, the emphasis on and promotion of fortified food destroys the (diversity of) local food markets. Fortified food is always processed and carries several disadvantages: It is produced and processed in factories and not in villages all over the world. It may thus destroy local traditions and habit, it involves middle-men, traders and transporters and creates dependencies on long-distance supply routes (McMichael 2004: 2 and 2006: 409). Critics also claim that GAIN provides *quick fixes* that “(...) are often grossly inappropriate, have limited application and success and swamp sustainable community-based programmes“ (Cannon 2003: 229).

3. Output legitimacy: Implementation

One of the key normative arguments in favor of the fortification approach of GAIN is its cost-benefit calculation. GAIN claims to prevent malnutrition by spending only \$ 0.25 a year per person. Accordingly, a small amount of money seems to have a high impact. Another argument focuses on efficiency: GAIN is able to attract high shares of private contributions for its projects. A recent analysis by GAIN has concluded that every single dollar invested by GAIN attracts about one hundred dollars of private investment (Interview GAIN #1).

4. Input legitimacy: Participation

GAIN's governance structure is composed of a strong secretariat with executive power, an advisory board – mainly representing donor interests – with power to hold the secretariat accountable for its actions, and a stakeholder forum – mainly representing interest of all

stakeholders – which has no power over the advisory board or the secretariat. Donor interests are thus much more taken into consideration than the interests of the food recipients. Board members are representatives of the partners and external experts from scientific community and NGOs. Country constituents are represented by one single delegate, who has the responsibility to share information and consult with the country constituents. New potential board members need to attend several meetings with the chairman in which they have to show real dedication to the issue and the approach of GAIN (Interview GAIN #1). In this context, we would argue that it is difficult for critical or deviant voices to enter the board. For example, the FAO – which has pointed to the flaws of fortification when used as a single-issue approach¹⁰ – was never asked to become a member. Likewise, the selection of partners is problematic. Interestingly, while UNICEF, WHO and WFP are partners within GAIN, the FAO is not. Currently, there are representatives from NGOs in China and companies in India, but there is no LDC representative in GAIN's board (Cf. GAIN n.d.(c)). Thus, the people who are affected (i.e. consumers, farmers, small producers) are hardly represented on the board, a fact that leads us to the conclusion that one of the most important criteria of input legitimacy is not met.

5. Input legitimacy: Accountability and Transparency

Can decision-makers be held accountable? And are there effective measurements to ensure accountability? Both issues are essential features of a democratic system. Accountability implies that some actors are able to judge if policy-makers have fulfilled their responsibilities and to impose sanction if not (Grant/Keohane 2005: 29). One crucial indicator of accountability is transparency (cf. Dingwerth 2007). To hold someone accountable, it is in the

¹⁰ „In terms of micronutrients, there are four strategies, which are not mutually exclusive, and they are: diversification, food fortification, supplementation, and public health measures. [...]. We recognize that the other three [strategies] play an important role, depending on the location, the country, or the time period, the season. All these four strategies may have different roles to play. And we should not have an emphasis on any of those four, which would be to the detriment of the other three. This is my concern about fortification when it is pushed unnaturally“ (Interview FAO #2).

first place necessary to have access to the information about the decisions made by the respective actor and the circumstances of the judgment. We may therefore ask if the management procedures and governance rules of a partnership have been published. In the first years of its existence, GAIN's internal procedures remained quite unclear.¹¹ Transparency might interfere with GAIN's major principles of efficiency and flexibility (Interview GAIN #1, GAIN #2). When questioned about internal rules, a representative of the GAIN secretariat stated:

They [i.e. people observing GAIN] are saying that we have a kind of a start-up culture. (...) [W]e are really driven by efficiencies and doing things and we are not in the job of creating rules and regulation.

We are not the UN, (...) But when we see the need for definitions and clarity, it's happening on a project by project basis. (Interview GAIN #1)

Thus, while GAIN creates some rules for processes or grant proposals, they are either created ad hoc, or kept confidential. The secretariat acknowledges the existence of some *filters*, i.e. rules for choosing possible partners or excluding others from the process (Interview GAIN #2). These filters can be seen as a reaction to the controversy over the involvement of companies that violated the *International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes* and other health regulations during the early years of GAIN's existence (Richter 2003). However, these filters have not yet developed into precise rules for decision making.

The question occurs, how transparent the decision-making process is in fact. In general, compared to other organizations working under the same conditions, e.g. the Global Fund or the GAVI Alliance, the transparency of GAIN is rather poor.¹² The decision-making structures are considerably unclear: The chairman is selecting the remaining members of the board by checking in advance whether they agree with the approach GAIN advocates (Interview GAIN #1). There is no explicit selection mechanism discernible that connects the board with the relevant constituencies. It remains vague, who is responsible for which

¹¹ Since June 2009, GAIN has published its statutes on its website.

¹² Like GAIN, both are transnational PPPs in which the BGMF is strongly involved.

decision. Another typical concern for transparency is the budget: GAIN's budget is published, but only in the annual report and only for the past year.

While information about the governance system remains non-transparent, GAIN has made an effort to improve its communication and evaluation strategy regarding its projects and results (Bekefi 2006: 32f). The secretariat has established a communication program to support social marketing strategies and advocacy campaigns. By establishing internal impact assessment, GAIN is also trying to increase accountability to its donors and the relevant constituencies. Especially the BMGF is interested in a sophisticated impact assessment of their funds (Interview GAIN #1). In order to prove its effectiveness and its success in attaining its own goals, the BMGF appointed a *Senior Manager in Performance Measurement* and developed an evaluation scheme with 17 indicators. This scheme is used to monitor annual progress and allows for a comparative analysis of GAIN's effectiveness. GAIN spends around thirty per cent of their grants on evaluation and impact assessment. The secretariat supports blood testing before and after food fortification to analyze a change in the health status (Interview GAIN #1). But unlike the practice of other public institutions, this data is not available to the public. Instead, it shall be used as a tool for institutional learning (Bekefi 2006: 39). In sum, while internal accountability measures have already been improved, public accountability must still be regarded as rather low.

LEGITIMACY OF THE IAAH

1. Output legitimacy: Goals

The IAAH is the result of the WFS-fyl and therefore builds directly on the goals of this international summit. According to its self description, the goals of the IAAH are to increase the national and global commitment to end hunger, "to give expression to the aspirations of the poor and hungry", "to engage the poor and hungry as partners in finding and

implementing solutions”, “to facilitate dialogue on the most effective measures to reduce hunger” and “to promote mutually supportive action involving governments and other stakeholders in the fight against hunger and malnutrition” (IAAH 2009a). FAO representatives have confirmed that the goals of the IAAH are “to mobilize political will, technical expertise, and financial resources“ (Haen et. al. 2003: 691). These broad goals allow the IAAH to embrace several strategies in fighting hunger and malnutrition: advocacy, capacity-building and service provision. In general, these goals are highly accepted by donors and constituencies alike. Output legitimacy is thus quite high.

Yet, within and beyond the FAO, this broad scope has been criticized for not providing potential members or donors with a clear picture of what the IAAH is actually doing.¹³ FAO officials believe that it is easier to involve private companies in public enterprises if the scope of the program is narrow and goals are clearly defined (Interview FAO #1).

2. Output legitimacy: Measures

The IAAH seeks to achieve its goals mainly through the work of national alliances. Hitherto, 29 active national alliances have been established. Furthermore, additional alliances are being developed and another 10 states have signaled their interest in building a national alliance (Cf. IAAH n.d.). So far, the growth of national and local alliances has been the greatest success of the IAAH. The parties themselves appreciate the concept of *twinning* and the respective projects (IAAH 2006c). Nevertheless, output legitimacy must not be seen as high, because the secretariat can hardly support the establishment of the national alliances. It simply lacks the resources. Since the international alliance does not provide expertise and funds for capacity building but rather collects and disseminates best practice, the task to support each other is

¹³ A former Secretariat member argued that this problem of a distinct identity and clear vision provides problems for the IAAH, especially when trying to attract potential partners for funding: „If you ask a donor to provide money, to whom is the donor giving the money? This is not clear if you look at the IAAH.” (Interview FAO #4). A NGO interviewee also mentioned the broad mission of the IAAH evolving from the WFS-fyl and the lack of clear goals (NGO #2).

handed back to the national networks . In most cases, an alliance from the North directly supports the activities of an alliance from a southern country. Projects are entirely sponsored by national donors, e.g. aid agencies and governments. A very successful example is the partnership between the Ghanaian and the US American alliances. Here, the US alliance paid a trip for the chairman of the Ghanaian alliance to the United States to coordinate their efforts with the partners of the US Alliance and the Rome agencies. Furthermore, the US alliance supported the transfer of agricultural expertise by sending a North American farmer financed by the farmer-to-farmer program of USAID. One expert said that this form of business-to-business support on a small scale is highly appreciated by the local communities in developing countries.¹⁴ In addition, the US Alliance supported a trip of a representative of *America's Second Harvest*, an NGO consisting of national food banks, to Ghana in order to build a food banking system in the country. Finally, the US alliance also fosters a student exchange, by which US volunteers support the secretariat of the Ghanaian alliance (IAAH 2006a). Generally speaking, these measures can be regarded as providing only low output-legitimacy.

3. Output legitimacy: Implementation

One of the major problems of implementation is the lack of funding, which has led many observers to regard IAAH's overall output as suboptimal (FAO 2006: 49). Notably, the goal to mobilize "financial resources, so that the poor and hungry in every country are enabled to achieve food security on a sustainable basis" (Haen et al. 2003: 691) was not met. The IAAH is lacking funds for its secretariat, for marketing the initiative and for the support of activities on country level. Furthermore, the founding members neglect their role as donors and rather see it as the task of the IAAH to raise funds. The organization is seen as a tool of advocacy

¹⁴ One FAO consultant in the field argued that this kind of level playing field support is highly appreciated by farmers, who prefer it to support by IOs or NGOs. One reason is expertise, another is trust: the farmer trusts the experts because both need to create their income from farming. (Interview FAO #5)

and fundraising, not as a joint effort to channel existing funds. Founding members only provide a small amount of funding to the alliance. Even after acknowledging that there is a need for more funding in order to build a strong alliance, the “(...) [international] organizations are still basically trying to find a middle way to not let the thing [the IAAH] die without truly committing to that [work]” (Interview WFP #1). This highlights an important difference to other partnerships. Many stakeholders expect the IAAH to have and distribute funds while the member organizations expect the IAAH to raise its funds (Interview WFP #3). The lack of resources is seen as one of the major obstacles to the Alliance’s effective functioning (FAO 2006: 49).

4. Input-Legitimacy: Participation

The IAAH is mainly an alliance of intergovernmental organizations with transnational associations of civil society organizations. Membership in the international and national alliance is open to all groups and organizations that disclose their mandate and ongoing activities and commit to the fight against hunger. If these criteria are not met, an organization may become an associate member (IAAH 2004: 2f.).

While the partnership is officially open to all partners who commit to the aims of the organization, and thus grants a high degree of participation, its focus seems to be on alliances with civil society organizations. Furthermore, the international alliance is not as international as its name sounds. The international level of the IAAH could also be seen as the *Rome level*. As the major food-related UN agencies FAO, IFAD and WFP are based in Rome, there has always been some ambivalence as to whether the international alliance is not only a cooperation between these IOs and the NGOs present in the Rome area (Interview WFP #1) where all actors participating at this level are based or have representatives. Inclusion in the alliance was clearly based on a presence in Rome:

If we wouldn't have had a representative at FAO in Rome, [...] *our* organization would never been involved in the IAAH. (Interview NGO #1).

Other relevant partners who are based elsewhere are excluded. It is hard to determine the reasons for this failure. On the one hand, it is not known how hard the partners and the secretariat has tried to attract new partners, but as already pointed out in the section on business involvement, efforts for more outreach have not been systematic and long-lasting (Interview FAO #4). On the other hand, it is not obvious how attractive the IAAH is for organizations outside the Rome area. Since all *international* meetings were held in Rome, we may assume that the alliance was hardly visible elsewhere, and thus, incentives to join were low for those organizations based elsewhere.

5. Input-Legitimacy: Accountability and Transparency

IAAH's internal governance and accountability structures are still underdeveloped. The current structure consists of a small secretariat hosted by the FAO and the IAAH Working Group. The Working Group is made up of representatives of all IO members and the two NGO representatives from IPC and AHGINGO. Companies and business foundations are not included. Apparently, IAAH does not envisage their participation in governance. The IAAH has not developed any mechanism for the selection of new Working Group members and the members have no accountability strains to their respective constituency. Furthermore, accountability strains to the national alliances have been very informal. Sometimes, the IAAH consults all the national alliances, sometimes, only selected national alliances are invited to contribute, and sometimes, the IAAH asks for voluntary feedback from all members:

We have principles, but we do not have continued practice in how to involve the different actors. (...) there is no established procedure for consulting the members. (Interview FAO #4).

As there is no established accountability chain, this unrestricted power at the Working Group level could scare off potential members like companies, especially those wishing to improve reputation by participating in such an initiative.

Several attempts have been made to move from this exclusive structure to a more inclusive model. The most recent attempt is mirrored in the Resource Mobilization Strategy, a roadmap for the next actions of the IAAH. The strategy makes use of the typical model of stakeholder inclusion: a secretariat, a small advisory board taking the decisions and a larger stakeholder forum serving as a sounding board (IAAH 2007: 14). Despite the adoption of this strategy in 2006, its implementation is still pending. The missing accountability strains to current and potential members might discourage participation of groups not represented in the steering committee. Even if the IAAH is open to all potential members, neglecting their voices in the governance of the partnerships is a motivational problem. Without representation, potential members lack ownership and will not increase their commitment:(Interview FAO #4).

Due to the *bottom-up* approach of the IAAH, which seeks to encourage domestic initiatives, the IAAH secretariat refrains from a strong process management and relies on a rather low level of intervention in the activities of the national alliances. The members of the alliance commit themselves to the very broad aims of the IAAH. However, these principles lack legal obligation. Consequently, there is no conditionality and there are no sanctions in the event of noncompliance applicable (Interview NGO #2). Beside their common commitment to fight hunger, the partners do not commit to any specific actions. Projects are not monitored by the international alliance, the national alliances evaluate their activities independently.

Regarding its transparency, the IAAH is relatively open to external observers. It has published the names and contact details of all member organizations (IAAH 2009b). It reports on national projects in its newsletter *Allied Against Hunger* and it shares examples of best practice on the homepage of the network. In sum, accountability to the constituencies is quite low, although the projects are rather transparent.

CONCLUSIONS

Our article described two different types of partnerships against hunger and malnutrition. Furthermore, we evaluated the legitimacy of both initiatives, and took the input as well as the output legitimacy of the partnerships into account. For input legitimacy, we focused on the criteria of participation, accountability and transparency. For output legitimacy, we measured the aims and results of each partnership by focusing on the goals, measures and the implementation of the PPP. We found significant differences as to how legitimate these governance schemes are.

GAIN, a partnership with considerable business involvement, is well supported by universal norms and the mainstream discourse on solutions for malnutrition. It is also very likely that GAIN will successfully provide global goods, i.e. decrease mineral and vitamin deficiencies and thus contribute to a decrease in infant mortality. Yet, its measures are highly contested and are seen by critics as contributing to a re-shifting of priorities in health and food governance. In particular, it is worrisome that GAIN mainly supports emerging economies and neglects the least developed countries. This focus is clearly at odds with the general vision of the MDGs. In order to reach out to those in need, GAIN will have to invest more resources in capacity building on the one hand, and commit a higher share of its funds to developing countries who do not have the means of co-financing fortification projects. We observe that GAIN has made considerable efforts in this direction in the last two years, but it would need to foster these to reach the people with the highest need of their products. Furthermore, in order to strengthen input legitimacy, the alliance should include representatives from LDCs and affected communities on its board and increase the transparency regarding its members and decisions. While GAIN is well on the way to increase its transparency, especially the inclusion of local expertise could increase its acceptance.

Additionally, GAIN needs to address the concerns of its critics and reflect on potential negative side-effects. This could be achieved through impact assessments that take the concerns of small and medium-sized food producers and critical voices into consideration.

The IAAH, a partnership that has been largely ignored by business actors, has a broader record of participation than GAIN, i.e. it includes southern governments and civil society representatives in the development of projects. However, participation also has its limits, due to the fact that global activities of the IAAH seem to be dominated by the Rome agencies, notably the FAO. In addition, the accountability of its governance structure is still underdeveloped. There are no stringent accountability strains between the representatives in the Working Group and their constituencies. While a representative board needs to be established, we would further suggest to implement a voice for the national alliances, e.g. as part of a yearly stakeholder meeting or as a second chamber.

The low output legitimacy is of particular concern, and highly contrasts GAIN. By carrying out mainly small-scale projects, the aim to build a global network of alliances for the improvement of food security has surely not been met. The IAAH will have to clarify its position towards the Rome based agencies and should amend its sole focus on bottom-up measures and business-unfriendly governance structures in order to attract more funds.

Judged by their legitimacy concerns, both partnerships represent an ideal type of transnational PPP: GAIN is an example of a partnership that works in a small niche of the food sector, attracts considerable business attention and legitimizes its existence and engagement by contributing to MDG1 (output legitimacy). The IAAH is an example of a partnership that tackles broader problems, does not attract the funds of private donors and places an emphasis on participation and local ownership (input legitimacy). While we cannot generalize from the analysis of these two cases, we can nevertheless argue that there is a correlation between the difference in business involvement and the difference in the overall approach that was chosen by the founders of each partnership. The IAAH emerged during an international conference

attended by government representatives and civil society. Its overall goal was to create awareness and to promote a global process for the fight against hunger. Thus, concrete measures were purposely left out. Funds were not a priority, nor were precise rules on how the money should be spent and how projects should be implemented. The IAAH is seen as dominated by the FAO, does not focus on efficient, market-based, technical solutions and has, hence, hardly attracted the interest of business actors.

GAIN's approach of food fortification was legitimized by several international conferences. Nevertheless, GAIN was not established until western donors, companies and private foundations decided to cooperate on the issue and provide significant funds. As a consequence, the partnership pays considerable attention to business plans and seeks to achieve a high degree of efficiency. The private sector is attracted by this approach, which enables them to combine reputational interests and market interest. The participation of a diverse group of stakeholders and more space for deliberation would constitute obstacles to the achievement of its goals.

As we have shown, both partnerships pay attention to their legitimacy, thus focusing on entirely different aspects. Future research needs to pay greater attention to the different legitimacy shortcomings in different partnerships. It also needs to develop a better understanding of the obstacles in overcoming particular legitimacy shortcomings such as competing rationales of action among public and private partners. Although public-private partnerships have emerged in the global fight against hunger and malnutrition, we do still lack a governance scheme that combines a high input legitimacy with high output legitimacy.

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