



Community partners at Zuza Epicenter in Mozambique. Credit: Ivan Barros

***“For real men and women to escape from extreme poverty, we must allow them to be dignified agents of their own destiny. Integral human development and the full exercise of human dignity cannot be imposed. They must be built up and allowed to unfold...” - Pope Francis, 2015***

#### ABOUT THE HUNGER PROJECT

The Hunger Project has a 40-year track record of partnering with people living in poverty as they work to end their own chronic hunger. Our approach is based on three fundamental pillars: (1) Mobilize people at the grassroots level, (2) Empower women as key change agents of their own development, and (3) Forge partnerships with local government.



**340+**  
staff Globally



**\$24 million**  
raised worldwide in 2017



**16 million**  
people reached in 13,000  
communities in Africa,  
South Asia and Latin America

## ENDING HUNGER BY 2030: OUR HIGHEST LEVERAGE ROLE

### THE HUNGER PROJECT'S STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2020

In September 2015, world leaders, through the United Nations, adopted the most ambitious agenda in human history: the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Among the 17 goals, which are focused on people, planet and prosperity, is a call for zero hunger by 2030.

Never before has humanity had such an opportunity. The world is now echoing the call that The Hunger Project declared in 1977 — it is time to end hunger, once and for all.

The Hunger Project's vision is a world where every woman, man and child leads a healthy, fulfilling life of self-reliance and dignity. For more than three decades we have been pioneering sustainable, grassroots, women-centered strategies around the world. To achieve our mission of ending hunger and poverty, we must become ever more rigorous in applying our strategic methodology — always asking what's missing, that if provided, would break through to the end of hunger — as well as our deeply held principles that underpin each and every action we take.

Based on these fundamental aspects of our organization, we must seize the opportunity of the SDGs. **We see that our highest-leverage role for the end of hunger by 2030 is to stand on the strength of our programs — the heart of what we do – and build the large-scale partnerships and alliances needed to empower gender-focused community-led rural development everywhere it is needed.**

### How to End Hunger: The Heart of What We Do

The majority of hungry people are small-scale food farmers living in fairly remote rural areas, and most of them are women. They not only lack access to sufficient, nutritious food but also to a full range of basic human services. They live in societies shaped by a prevailing patriarchy, leaving them with a mindset of resignation and powerlessness. Yet, every hungry person is the solution: each has the right and responsibility to be the author of their own development.

Ending hunger requires the empowerment of rural communities to take charge of their own development in all key sectors, by empowering women to be key change agents, mobilizing people for self-reliant development, and building effective partnerships with local-level government. Sustainable progress in all the other sectors depends on these essential pillars.

This process — which we call “gender-focused community-led development” — must become available to all who need it if the world is to end hunger on a sustainable basis.



This might sound simple or even simplistic, but it is short for an exceedingly complex, patient, skillfully executed and phased process involving the following elements:

- **Mindset:** Transforming the mindset of both citizens and government representatives from seeing people living in conditions of hunger as “subjects” or “beneficiaries” to “change agents” and rights-bearing citizens
- **Gender:** Empowering the voice and agency of women and girls and transforming discriminatory attitudes and behaviors that have held them back.
- **Leadership:** Providing opportunities for all citizens to step forward and develop the skills of transformative leadership.
- **Social Cohesion:** Overcoming rivalries and other divisions that thwart progress.
- **Strengths, Confidence and Assets:** Fostering the ability of communities to assess and recognize their strengths, skills and assets as a platform for future progress.
- **Linkages:** Equipping communities with linkages to existing resources (expertise, organizations, funding and public services) to support their development activities.
- **Vision, Goals and Planning:** Facilitating the ability of all citizens to set aspirational goals and plan their own solutions.
- **Social mobilization:** Mobilizing the voluntary efforts of all citizens to take action to achieve goals.
- **Organization:** Building community-owned organizations through which all people can exert collective voice and action.
- **Governance:** Improving the effectiveness, transparency, accountability and participatory decision-making of the level of government closest to the people — to ensure that the community is well-resourced and represented in upper tiers of government.
- **Data for the People:** Supporting communities to access timely data that empowers priority-setting and progress tracking.
- **Graduation:** Identifying a clear, phased process leading communities to be able to sustainably and successfully drive their future development.

## Thinking Big, Being Bold: Our Highest Leverage Role

There is a movement for each sectoral “silo” of ending hunger (e.g. health, education, nutrition). But where is the movement for the heart of our work – what we see as critical for the end of hunger to happen? Some of our most pressing challenges — women’s economic status, maternal and childhood health, or the invisible crisis of malnutrition — can only be solved with integrated strategies at the community level. We must move away from top-down, siloed and short-term projects.

Moreover, the prevailing mindset of most governments, organizations and donor agencies is that people living in hunger and poverty are “beneficiaries.” We must also transform this mindset. Individuals living in hunger and poverty are hard-working and creative human beings and are in the best position to take the leading role.

When people — both women and men equally — are mobilized to participate as active citizens, and when they act in partnership with effective, accountable institutions at the community level, the result is: profound social and political transformation. This is what is required to achieve the end of hunger and poverty.

We see that our highest-leverage role for the end of hunger by 2030 is to stand on the strength of our programs — the heart of what we do – and build the large-scale partnerships and alliances needed to empower gender-focused community-led rural development everywhere it is needed.



## Our Strategic Goals (2016-2020)

1. **Deepen our impact in the communities where we work, forging partnerships wherever possible to leverage our resources, and empower communities to sustainably end hunger while addressing the new challenges of the SDG era.**
  - a. Ensure communities where we work are empowered to successfully complete their program of action.
  - b. Continue to discover ways to have our programs at the cutting edge of gender equality.
  - c. Develop implementation partnerships that leverage our resources in communities where we work.
  - d. Discover ways to strengthen our programs to more deeply engage youth, adapt to climate change, and build inclusive, vibrant rural economies.
  - e. Empower communities and staff to improve program interventions through timely participatory monitoring, evaluation, and learning.
  
2. **Re-establish gender-focused community-led development as a high-profile, mainstream, cross-cutting theme in development.**
  - a. Document and share the empowerment and capacity-building methodologies of The Hunger Project to foster gender-focused community-led development.
  - b. Build policy advocacy alliances for gender-focused community-led development.
  - c. Identify and achieve policy changes that promote gender-focused community-led development.
  - d. Carry out effective advocacy campaigns to have donors establish clear funding windows for gender-focused community-led development.

### 3. **Take gender-focused community-led development to a scale — beyond incremental progress — that truly transforms society.**

- a. Build implementation alliances with the capacity to take gender-focused community-led development to national scale.
- b. Have our holistic, gender-focused community-led methodology implemented in new areas.
- c. Establish formal partnerships with relevant line ministries and the local government system for gender-focused community-led development.

## Our Call to Action

People are extraordinary, and we must continue to invest in them as agents of their own change. The Hunger Project works directly in communities that include 16 million of these extraordinary people. However, our mission compels us to ask ourselves: "How will we reach the other 800 million people living in hunger in the rest of the world?" We know we will not reach them on our own.

The SDGs state "We are determined to mobilize the means required to implement this Agenda through a revitalised Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, based on a spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focused in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable and with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people."

To be true to our mission to end hunger and poverty in the world, we must seize the opportunity of the global goal to end hunger by 2030. We must not only deepen our impact in the communities where we are working, but also invest in learning, documenting and sharing our transformative community-level approaches. It is time to bring gender-focused community-led rural development everywhere it is needed to achieve the end of hunger, once and for all.