

## 2.13 Activate the activists

### ***Activate the Activists: Ending Food Waste Through a Global Activist Network***

#### What problem is your solution addressing?

Globally, around 1/3 of food is lost or wasted, costing the economy nearly US\$1 trillion each year and causing approx. 8% of total greenhouse gas emissions. It is also a waste of around a quarter of water used in agriculture. Meanwhile, nearly 800 million go to bed hungry each day. Household food waste is known to be a significant percentage of the total in developed countries (70% in UK). There is increasing evidence that it is also a significant problem in developing countries. Halving food waste would significantly increase sustainability of the food system, enormously benefitting families and the environment.

#### How does your solution address the problem?

Establish and **activate a global network of activists** who understand the issue and what needs to be done so they feel empowered to drive **culturally relevant** behaviour change among citizens, reducing household food waste. This will be a cohort of activists leading many local people's movements resulting in the social norming of not wasting food. **The project will support activists** with a toolbox of tried and tested approaches to consumer behaviour change. Specific organisations involved in this effort are Unilever, WWF, Wageningen University, UNEP, WRAP and WRI.

This is a game changer for reducing waste on a global scale as it ensures people understand the value of food, where it comes from and feel greater connection with the planet. It engages and empowers people at a local level to bring about solutions which they own e.g. changing shopping and cooking habits, building culinary skills, growing own food, increasing sharing and redistribution etc.

The network would collaborate and **leverage social media**, sharing best practice and celebrating success and progress. The end goal is to shift the social norm so it is no longer **culturally acceptable** to waste food, as has been the case for most of human history. Food should be a valued resource, not a commodity which can be thrown away at will and replaced.

Recent progress in this regard is demonstrated by the Netherlands where, as of 2019, they achieved a 29% reduction in household food waste from 48kg per capita to 34.3 kg per capita since 2010, and the UK which has reduced edible food waste in the home by 31%.

There is potential for the scope of this activists network to be extended to include other aspects of Action Track 2 including diets and shifting food demand. As such, it would become a cross cutting idea.

#### Is this a new solution or an existing solution that needs scaling?

Existing solution that needs scaling

#### Which organization/s, institution/s or group of individuals are associated with the solution?

WRI (World Resources Institute), WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme), WWF (World Wildlife Fund), Champions 12.3, Wageningen University, UNEP, Unilever

### **If selected as a game-changing solution, how will you leverage the UN Food Systems Summit to scale your solution?**

The UN Food Systems Summit will provide profile and coverage of the idea. It may also help the consortium to identify and secure funders to help implement the game changer around the world. There will also be opportunities to engage the youth network associated with the summit.

We will leverage the Summit to:

- Publicly announce the initiative and early member countries.
- Invite additional countries and/or existing groups to join (the Summit will be a great opportunity for recruiting)
- Showcase successes by “early mover” countries and activists (those that have already demonstrated progress will be able to communicate to Summit audiences that progress can be achieved)

Invite donors to help finance the management and convening of the Initiative as well as supporting local action in specific countries.

### **Is this idea applicable to a particular geography, demography, landscape or other type of setting (e.g. high- or low-income countries, aquaculture)? If so, please specify.**

Our ambition is to have activists and leaders working to reduce food waste in every country.

**A global and connected network of activists** enables locally driven action which meets the needs of the relevant country or location. If these people understand the issue and what needs to happen, they can tailor solutions. A toolbox of interventions ensures people know what works and doesn't work and minimises the need to repeat work. The toolbox will be added to over time as further experience is developed.

We are aware of key activists in many of our target countries, but we require resources to fill the gaps and find the local activists to create a truly global network. The network will grow over time with the approach being adopted and tailored in increasing numbers of countries providing real scale and sustainability of the approach because of local ownership of the issue and solutions.

### **Who are the main actors that would put this action into place?**

Policymakers (government), Civil society organizations, Consumers (individuals)

### **Source and Process**

- Dr. Liz Goodwin, WRI, WS3 Deputy Lead
- Relevant initiative: Mobilizing civil society and lifting youth-led initiatives