

Food Policy and Local Participation
A Case Study of “Cruzada Nacional Contra el Hambre”
Beatriz Gil, Obed Méndez & Armando Sobrino

Prepared for delivery at the Workshop on the Ostrom Workshop
(WOW5) conference,
Indiana University Bloomington, June 18–21, 2014.

© Copyright 2014 by the authors

INTRODUCTION

This essay is an analysis of the first year of implementation of the “*Cruzada Nacional contra el Hambre (CNCH)*”, main program against hunger in Mexico, in order to provide some ideas to the debate and construction of food policies based on strengthening local governance and active participation of communities protagonists. We remark the usefulness of collective action approach and polycentric governance from the work of Elinor and Vincent Ostrom for design, implementation and adjustment of this kind of public policies.

The first section of this document describes the state of food security in Mexico, the second and third one analyze the institutional design of CNCH through collective action perspective, finally, the fourth section is a collection of recommendation to improve the CNCH.

FOOD SECURITY IN MEXICO

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), food security "exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life". Nevertheless, since the 2008 global food crisis, the food security is understood as a combined problem of quality production and effective demand for food (Gordillo, 2012: 489). The framework that we would use to study the CNCH will consist in analyse food security's four dimensions: availability, access, biological utilization and stability.

Production and availability of food

In 2012 the agricultural land reach 21.9 million hectares, the harvested 20.5 million. Although this represents an increase of only 2.1 and 2.5 millions respectively since 1992, do not reflect the increase in ten times of the yields for the same period. Ten crops cover 80% of the planted area (irrigation and rainfed) maize, grasses, sorghum, beans, oats, sugar cane, coffee cherry, green maize, wheat and alfalfa. Corn remains the main Mexican crop and represents a third of the planted surface irrigation and temporary, and although it has been reduced to 5.4 million hectares in the last twenty years, yields have improved (SIAP, 2012).

In animal foods, most production has contributed to higher protein intake. Between 1990 and 2012, the production of beef and pork grew at a rapid pace, and poultry, increased even more. Its production has increased 272%, to reach 2.8 million tonnes. A key factor in the increased consumption of poultry meat is the price, compared to beef and pork meat. Fish products are another important source of animal protein. Shrimp ranks first and tuna second, according to its value (SIAP, 2012).

Increased domestic production and greater involvement of the external market involves the existence of sufficient food throughout the year for the entire population. The Balance Sheets of the FAO indicates that there is a supply of food energy (BE) of 3,183 kilocalories per person, enough for the estimated 2,357 kcal per person average needs in Mexico; however, despite the importance of the data, it only indicates the national average and shows what happens by population subgroups or regions. The National Survey of Supply, Food and Nutritional Status in Rural Areas(ENAAEN), demonstrates the lack of food availability in rural communities: although, all localities have products like fat, sugar, beverages, cereals and eggs available, the surveys find that 21% of localities did not have fruit regularly and 13% did not have vegetables, there is a 10% shortage in the case of dairy, meat, chicken and sausages and 7.8% in legumes.

Food Access

Food security means that all people have the means to obtain food sufficiency and opportunity to ensure them a proper diet without compromising other basic needs. The main risks that compromise food procurement are price increases or decrease in purchasing power.

In 2008, international food prices reached their highest levels in 30 years. This increase was due to higher prices of cereals and sugar, and to a lesser extent to the oils and fats, prices of meat and dairy products were more stable. The average annual food price in 2013 was the lowest in the past three years. However, many fundamental factors behind the 2008 crisis—including a strong demand for biofuels and extreme weather factors— have a high potential to occur again. Moreover, the global index of food prices do not always reflect reality at country level. A high price level is counterproductive to the most vulnerable groups who uses 50% of their income on food.

Regarding the decrease in purchasing power, 20% of the poorest households have only 5% of total revenue and their real per capita income fell by 16.7 % between 2008 and 2013. This affects 2.3 million people that can not acquire the basic food basket.

Biological utilization and stability.

Although in Mexico chronic malnutrition and anemia continue to decline, still represent a major challenge for social development, especially for its high prevalence in rural, underserved areas and among the indigenous population. On other hand, the cases of overweight and obesity among children and adolescents are rapidly expanding, which in the long run affect the incidence of non-communicable diseases such as renal failure or diabetes. According to UNICEF (2013) the diseases related to obesity are the leading causes of death in adults, the leading causes of demand for medical care and the diseases that consume the largest share of expenditure on public institutions. It is clear that obesity has become a new challenge for food security in the world and in the country. According to FAO (2013), the coexistence of ancient evils as malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies, and at the same time, overweight, obesity and noncommunicable diseases, represent a "new challenge" encompassed in a single concept: malnutrition.

Malnutrition leads to health problems, delayed growth, low cognitive, and at worst, in death. Occurs as a result of deficiencies, excesses or imbalances between different nutritional components. Influence malnutrition care to newborns, conservation and food packaging, infections, diseases and hygiene, affecting how people assimilate and use food. FAO recognizes among its causes: insufficient availability of safe, varied food, nutritional, or inadequate access to them; lack of access to clean water, sanitation and health care; and forms of infant feeding inappropriate diets and adults. To eradicate it is important to monitor and maintain "best practices" throughout the food system.

Upon summits on Food held and discuss the basics of Food Safety, has reaffirmed that "*apolitical, social and economic peaceful, stable and enabling environment is the essential foundation which will enable the States to give adequate priority to food security and poverty eradication. Democracy, the promotion of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, and full and equal participation of men and women, are essential to achieving food security*"(FAO, 1998). This fact highlights the need to incorporate vulnerability concept to Food Security to understand the implications of public policy. It highlights three dimensions:"[1]vulnerability as a result of a particular product; [2] as a result of risk factors; [3] due to the inability to manage these risk factors. Vulnerability, then refers to the ability to be free from hunger in the present and increase the capacity to face risks (Gordillo, G. and O. Méndez 2012).

THE POLICY

The Cruzada Nacional contra el Hambre it is the main federal government strategy against the hunger in the country. SINHAMBRE Act defines that the CNCH "is an strategy of inclusion and social welfare to be implemented from a broad participatory process whose purpose is to combine efforts and resources". In turn, also postulate its five objectives:

1. Eliminate hunger in extremely impoverished communities;
2. Eradicate acute malnutrition in children;
3. Increase both food production, and the profit of farmers;
4. Cut down losses of after harvesting, and of food in storage, transportation, distribution, and commercialization; and
5. Promote community participation to achieve the other four objectives.

That is, the CNCH is not a program but a strategy that aims to achieve food security (objectives 1-4) through community participation (objective five). Additionally, the document "Conceptual and Practical Aspects" describes the CNCH as *"a public policy strategy that involves a participatory process aimed at broader joint efforts, energy and resources of the three orders Government, civil society organizations, the private sector, educational institutions and the general public, in order to contribute to the no hunger goal [...] maintains a comprehensive approach [it] recognizes the different dimensions involved in the social welfare. Consider comprehensive care that promotes not only the full realization of the right to food, but seeks to be a vehicle of attention to overcome poverty and promote economic and social development"* (SEDESOL,2013a: 5) and in the subsection b of Chapter I of the Right to Food emphasizes that *"the CNCH is assumed as a public policy strategy of the highest priority aimed at removing structural factors associated with the lack of guarantee to exercise the full right to food, [imposing] the state legal obligations and public policy aimed at creating the conditions that contribute to overcoming the situation [of] hunger and ensure compliance with the Food Safety for the entire population"* (SEDESOL,2013a: 8) which confirms these three characteristics and adds a fourth and fifth. Namely an intergovernmental and an interministerial nature.

In terms of institutional design, SINHAMBRE establishes three bodies and a legal to implement the strategy:

1. The Intersecretarial Commission for the Implementation of the CNCH. It is integrated by 16 Secretaries or Departments of State and three institutions devoted to the care of women, indigenous and families. Its purpose is "to coordinate and supplement the actions, programs and resources necessary to fulfill the objectives provided by the second article of this Act" It is a space for coordination between agencies at the federal level, with the possibility of creating their own internal rules of organization and operation. This scheme also repeats at the state level and there is the option to integrate their counterparts in local government.
2. The National Council of the CNCH. It is defined as an instance of consensus between the public, private and social sectors, chaired by the Secretary of Social Development and comprising representatives of these sectors, academic institutions and international organizations and institutions. The Governors of States and the Head of Government of the Distrito Federal are permanent guests.
3. Community committees made up of social programs. The Act establishes that the Community committees *"will participate in the implementation process and supervise the actual fulfillment of the objectives and transparency of the implemented actions"*.

4. The Development Agreements are agreements to subscribe joint strategies between the federal government and states or between states and local governments. The main goal of these legal instruments is establish budget agreements.

POLICY ANALYSIS

The CNCH is a strategy whose aim to achieve food security through community participation and intergovernmental-intersecretarial cooperation. More than the mere sum of policies, it's an action's set oriented to achieve this goal. The institutional framework built to promote cooperation between state, federal and municipal governments, the departments of the three levels and communities consists mainly in three new agencies: the Intersecretarial Commission, the National Council, the Communities Councils and the Integral Agreements for the concurrency of actions and budget.

However, is this new strategy and perspective against hunger working? To answer this question we use the approach of collective action and social dilemmas because, ultimately, the CNCH can be addressed as an institution created to solve a social dilemma (the lack of cooperation between society and government, and between government institutions) to produce a good (food security), or several of them (food, income, etc.).

The dilemmas

Major cooperation dilemmas within the CNCH are given in the interaction between levels of government, between departments and between governments and communities.

First, although the CNCH is a proposal by the federal government, its implementation requires the cooperation of the states and municipalities strategy. This is a challenge because although you can assume that everyone is interested in ending hunger (1) do not necessarily agree on the method of cooperation and, above all, for citizen participation; (2) the CNCH does not provide additional resources for this purpose and (3) not being a program does not offer specific solutions, the aim is, in any case, the concurrence of programs, which is not part of the usual dynamics working governments - and implies additional costs in terms of money and human resources. In other words, states and municipalities can be sure that the CNCH increases the costs of government intervention but not that it will have the expected results.

Secondly, the secretariats at the federal level are in a more problematic situation than other government orders because, like them, they have to increase their investment without being sure of the results, without receiving incentives to adhere to the new strategy, but also the secretariats tend to focus on certain social demands, and many of them have no hunger within its scope. In fact, of the sixteen secretaries of state only the Ministry of Social Development (SEDESOL), the Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food (SAGARPA) and the Secretariat of Health (SSA) have a direct interest in ending hunger, what is the incentive for the other thirteen departments to adhere to strategy?

Third, the dilemma between governments and communities departs of an asymmetry. In this case, governments have to give powers or at least hearing requests of organized communities through committees, on implementation and monitoring of the strategy. Again, governments do not see clear incentives to integrate communities in decision-making. Moreover, even if the different orders of government, including municipal, cooperate with communities, the latter would face an additional dilemma: what beneficiaries will integrate the community committees and, therefore, incur the costs of co-producing the

common good (food security, income for the community, increasing community production, etc.)? Clearly this is a scene of tragedy of the commons.

Between cooperation and appearance

The question Did the CNCH has various mechanisms for resolving social dilemmas? Our answer is that in the medium term. The basic mechanisms to solve a social dilemma are (1) to increase individual benefits, or (2) increase the individual costs of not cooperating. Both involve all stakeholders are benefited more by cooperation than by non-cooperation. The design and actions undertaken so far under the CNCH, do not promote any of these situations, as we demonstrate below.

During the second half of 2013, the National Council for the Evaluation of Social Policy (CONEVAL) developed a design diagnosis of CNCH. The study is an exploration of the first stage of strategy implementation and uses three methods of data collection: semi-structured interviews and focus groups with federal, state and municipal officials interviews; case studies in participating municipalities and documentary review on the implementation process of the strategy (CONEVAL 2013). Among the main findings, highlights the following:

- We have signed agreements and covenants with state and municipal governments, civil society organizations and academic institutions. However, clarity is needed on the contributions and interactions with important concertation parts as the National Council of the Crusade and the Committee of Experts.
- Lack of formality and transparency in the actions of the CNCH. There is not a place where you can see the individual actions beyond legal documents, results and projections of the strategy.
- Evaluation mechanisms are unclear. In fact, according to the CONEVAL report, it speaks of a disparity of objectives in various conceptual and normative documents of the Crusade. It is noted that in the indicators performance matrix, the dimensions established by the General Law of Social Development (which includes six deficiencies, including food) are taken up, linking directly this strategy with the combat poverty; on the other hand, in the Decree in which the CNCH is established the objectives are aimed only at reducing hunger.
- The CONEVAL study reported a relative success in pilot municipalities studied, which however was characterized by the hard work of senior management of SEDESOL in implementing the strategy, including their continuous presence in the field for the coordination and monitoring of progress, as well as in management of increased budgetary spending of municipalities oriented to the Crusade actions. A high degree of political will of local actors such as mayors, which could be partly due to the constant presence of federal officials in their territory, and partly a result of media projection that was acquired by be pioneering municipalities. According to the study, this characteristics will repeat hardly in the rest of 397 selected municipalities.

In sum, the report notes that the success achieved in the pilot municipalities of the program are due to the constant monitoring and initiative of senior management (federal, state and local) but in the medium term, as this is as impossible to replicate in all towns, lies in the design, which does not encourage cooperation and have disparate goals. Moreover, in relation to social participation are unclear the mechanisms of actual intervention of

organized communities in community committees, to define public policy strategies in the Crusade.

The organization and operation guidelines of the community committees of the CNCH and the Federal Social Programs establish the necessary elements for its integration and its functions, among which are: the detection of problems in the community and approval of diagnostics and community plans; constitution of working committees for the implementation of federal programs or tasks agreed by the General Assembly and the Committee; and manage and administer projects, works and actions of the Crusade and federal social programs. The validity of these Committees will be provided by the General Assembly, and in the case of municipalities and communities with predominantly indigenous populations "will seek to integrate the views of the traditional community authorities in the appointment of the Board of the Committee" (SEDESOL , 2013).

According to the fourth Informative without Hunger (SEDESOL, 2014), in February this year had already constituted 59, 249 Community Committees of the Crusade. The third informative, published in January, indicates the presence of 9196 brigade in the Crusade communities, and the issue of 29,613 attendance certificates, which are signed by members of the Community Committee to ratify the provision of goods and services by federal agencies included in the strategy. Note that the brigade are trainees recruited through SEDESOL agreements with Universities and Institutions of Higher Education, they do not have permanency in their functions in the community, because it has thought in the rotation as a convenient system to prevent the development of corruption in these groups. Delaying payments to brigade has been, according to the Mexican press, a recurring problem several states of the country. Furthermore, to date there are no mechanisms for evaluating the work performed by the brigade in communities.

The social participation theme is of particular importance for the effectiveness of the government response in local contexts, as has been demonstrated in rural development studies (Anderson, Gordillo and Van Laheroven, 2009) but in the case of the CNCH is not clear exactly what it is consistent and if it is useful.

So far, everything seems to indicate that the main achievement of the CNCH is to articulate governments, ministries and communities around of a speech: ending hunger through coordination and social participation. However, without a proper design, cooperation has been limited to the appearance. The concurrence of programs does not result in bonding and synergy, but in overlapping, while social participation is limited to small stocks without a big impact. Moreover, given the confusion between hunger and poverty in the objectives and measurements, actions do not seem to be aimed at the same goal.

CHANGE THE ROAD?

Despite their problems and the enormous challenges it faces, there are indications that the CNCH points, but not necessarily walk in the correct direction: cooperation among governments and society to combat hunger. The main problem facing this kind of initiative, is not having a framework for effective designing of institutions that promote cooperation. In this context, the concept of polycentric governance by Vincent Ostrom, as well as Elinor Ostrom's studies on collective action, can provide guidance for the future.

Polycentric governance

During the late seventies, Vincent Ostrom began to study the metropolitan governments. In this work, emerged the concept of polycentric governance (V. Ostrom, Tiebout, and Warren 1961: 831-32):

'Polycentric' connotes many centers of decision making that are formally independent of each other. Whether they actually function independently, or instead constitute an interdependent system of relations, is an empirical question in particular cases. to the extent that they take each other into account in competitive relationships, enter into various contractual and cooperative undertakings or have recourse to central mechanisms to resolve conflicts, the various political jurisdictions in a metropolitan area may function in a coherent manner with consistent and predictable patterns of interacting behavior. to the extent that this is so, they may be said to function as a 'system'.

This concept is useful for CNCH to emphasize the existence of several "centers" of decision making. In addition, the Polycentric order implies that no government is above the other but these coexist and overlap in different areas, so requires well-defined rules for the job. One of the most important ideas that takes V. Ostrom from J. Madison is: *"this policy of supplying by opposite and rival interests, the defects of better motives, might be traced through the whole system of human affairs, private as well as public"* (quoted by V. Ostrom, 1991:224), assertion that remarks the conflictual element of human relationships as the very source of institutional creativity. From this perspective, one power center that provides coherence to the system in its entirety is not necessary when you can have a variety of arrangements that allow multiple solutions for multiple problems. The key to achieving this is the ability of deliberation.

In this regard, it is necessary to analyze what Vincent Ostrom called the "computational logic" that directs development of institutional structures in Mexico, where it prevails a political culture more oriented towards centralization than to source diversification of power. A clear example of this are the trends reflected by recent proposals such as the political and electoral reform that turns the Federal Electoral Institute into National Electoral Institute, or the propose of a Single Police Command. The central argument of these measures is the weakness of local governments, and the prescription is the central control.

Another important theoretical element for CNCH analysis is the idea of V. Ostrom on "competitive economies" requiring organized groups as collective consumption units to put pressure on the quality of goods produced and provided in a context of competition in the supply of the same. The author argued that the more federalized a political system was, the opportunity to tie the supply of goods and services with the demand was higher. The overlapping between consumption and production, on the other hand, allow consumers to have a clearer idea about effective institutional arrangements to obtain the necessary public goods and services, and with this, making more convenient calculations.

Overcoming social dilemmas

Faced with the problem posed by the prisoner's dilemma where there is no communication between participants and always seeks to maximize the personal benefit, Elinor Ostrom noted the possibility of cooperative games, feasible thanks to twists in the expectations of stakeholders, resulting in process of communication between players. Thus, a game that could ultimately be beneficial for a few in the short term and harmful to everyone in the long

run by overuse of a good, can become one where everyone gets a partial benefit in the short term and retain such a possibility in the future.

One of the keys to this rotation is trust. That is, an actor decides to change its individualistic strategy to a cooperative one by the expectation that the other players will follow the same strategy. Trust is built through two mechanisms: 1) Communication between actors, where it manifests their intent to adopt a cooperative behavior; and 2) Material verification of behavior manifested. These elements give rise to processes of reputation, reciprocity and trust, marked by constant adjustment of expectations and the strategies themselves against other players. Information plays a very important role, so the areas of concertation are indispensable. The collective establishment of general rules that guide the negotiation processes and conflict solutions is also fundamental.

It should be noted that the creating process of collective action institutions involves dilemmas in which people assess the potential benefits of devoting effort to participate in the discussion and the establishment of agreements. "As Bates (1988) points out, the presence of collective benefits as a result of the design of new institutions is itself a collective dilemma of second order. The proposal of a new institution 'is subject to the same incentive problems it is supposed to solve." (Ostrom, 2011).

This topic is relevant when cases are contrasted, in which creations of collective action institutions are successful, face those where it is not. Ostrom argued that in a context of constant interaction, where there is communication between participants, "it is possible that they learn who to trust, what effects their actions have on others and on the RUC, and how to organize to get benefits and avoid damage. When individuals have lived in this kind of situations for a considerable time and they have developed shared norms and reciprocity patterns, have a capital social which they can build institutional agreements to resolve the RUC dilemmas" (Ostrom, 2011). The author stresses in the "incremental and autotransformer" character of these learning processes.

National Surveys show the lag in that Mexico is found in capacity terms to build institutional agreements: in the National Political Culture Survey 2012, 44% of respondents expressed that they see "difficult or very difficult organize themselves with other citizens"; in the National Capital Social Survey 2011, 80% of population aged 18 or more said share the state that "it is not possible trust in others". The Latinobarómetro of 2011 showed that only 31% of respondents claimed to have "some confidence in government".

Face this panorama Ante este panorama, it is essential to raise the possibility of a great decentralized strategy of institutional reconstruction, accompanied in turn by a training effort for deliberation and consultation. Hunger is one of the phenomenon that demonstrate the absence strong institutions throughout much of the country. Solutions tested so far have started from the idea that the central government is the only one able to fix the problem, however, it has not been sufficiently studied the possibility to channel the anger and energy of local people to create their own solutions; these processes these processes would take time, and the immediate results, translated into electoral support, are still among the most important incentives for government action at all levels. The CONEVAL it also mentions in its report: "*it is important to note that is perceptible some urgency to obtain results in the very short term, which while it is important to solve the historical problems of extreme poverty and access to food, in immediately way could affect the quality of diagnosis, design and results of medium and long term and lose the attention of the central objectives pursued*".

CONCLUSIONS

Hunger in Mexico is a problem that requires urgent attention. The Cruzada Nacional contra el Hambre is the main strategy of the Federal Government in the matter and, although interagency coordination and social participation were established as its two main axes, the results obtained in the first year of operation indicate that these objectives were achieved only partially.

The urgency of an effective solution to hunger requires the substitution of the centralized model to one based on polycentric governance, which may allow communities to have most appropriate solutions to their particular contexts. This also requires strengthening the capacities of both deliberation and organization of local populations.

It is also essential the integration of communities in the production and provision of goods and services needed to achieve the three components of food security. This means a shift from the conception of the communities as people waiting for help to the empowerment of communities to solve their own problems.

V. BIBLIOGRAFÍA

GORDILLO, G., et. al. (2009): *Local governments and rural development*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press.

GORDILLO, G. y O. Méndez. (2012). “*Reporte Final sobre el Debate entre los Conceptos Seguridad y Soberanía Alimentarias*”, FAO-LAC, Junio-Septiembre.

GORDILLO, G., 2012. “*Una política alimentaria para tiempos de crisis*”, en *El Trimestre Económico* Vol. LXXIX (3); México, DF; Fondo de Cultura Económica, Julio-Septiembre

FAO, (2013). “*Estado Mundial de la Agricultura y la Alimentación*”. Roma

JAVED, S., et. al. (1999): *Más allá del centro. La descentralización del estado*. Washington, DC: Banco Mundial.

OSTROM, E. (2011). *El gobierno de los bienes comunes. La evolución de las instituciones de acción colectiva*. 2ª ed., México: FCE, UNAM, IIS.

OSTROM, V. (1991). *The meaning of American Federalism*. San Francisco: ICS Press.

SEDESOL, (2013). “*Cruzada Nacional Contra el Hambre: Aspectos Conceptuales y Prácticos*”, Versión para discusión V.140513; México, DF 14 de mayo.

SEDESOL, (2013a), “*Aspectos conceptuales y Prácticos de la Cruzada Nacional contra el Hambre*”. México, Secretaría de Desarrollo Social.