

The Netherlands is actively pursuing a number of policy themes in the area of development cooperation. For example, we're investing in efforts to advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), reception in the region, access to vaccines, and climate adaptation and mitigation. The Netherlands will continue its efforts in areas where progress is being made and will focus on its strengths, such as linking diplomacy and development. For more information about Dutch development policy, go to www.nlontwikkelingssamenwerking.nl.

7. In your opinion, what are the Netherlands' strengths when it comes to development cooperation? In which policy themes could the Netherlands play a leading role?

Diaspora, a Unique Actor Contributing to the Development of Countries of Origin

The Netherlands is world renowned for technological innovation, particularly in sectors such as water management and agriculture. The ability to utilize this knowledge and innovation should be seen as a great strength and something that the Netherlands should prioritise in terms of advancing the SDGs. Translating these expertise within the sphere of development cooperation however, is not straightforward. Bridging cultural differences to understand local contexts is critical for development cooperation success. Fortunately, the Netherlands has at its disposal a unique stakeholder group ideally placed to aid the transfer of knowledge between countries and aid the advancement of the SDGs. The population of the Netherlands is diverse in its background with many different diaspora communities represented. Diaspora are an excellent agent for development in their countries of origin due the fact that they know the local context, speak the local languages, share two mentalities (Dutch and their country of origin). Furthermore, they also possess the motivation and passion to drive positive development. Combining the traditional Dutch know how with these linking actors can be seen as a huge opportunity within development cooperation.

For example, the Netherlands has the potential of to greatly improve food security by strengthening innovation and business opportunities in developing countries.

It is a harsh reality that despite previous optimism substantial work needs to be done in order to reach the goal of ending food insecurity, hunger and malnutrition by 2030. 2.37 billion people did not have access to adequate food in 2020, a stark reminder that progress towards sustainable development goals 2.1 and 2.2 is limited. Food security, or perhaps more importantly its lack, has many drivers. Climate variability and shocks, economic fluctuations, as well as low productivity and inefficient supply chains are all part of a complex mix of factors that continue to leave many with food insecurity. With numerous compounding impacts, it is therefore important to approach any solution through a food systems lens.

*'Future food systems need to provide decent livelihoods for the people who work within them, in particular for small-scale producers in developing countries – the people who harvest, process, package, transport and market our food'*¹.

¹ [The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021](#), p.9, FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2021

Greater resilience in agricultural supply chains is therefore imperative to address these major drivers, and it is for this reason sustainable solutions should be sought. This is something that can be achieved through local agribusiness development and improved supply chains, something that the expertise within the Netherlands would be ideal to support. Indeed work in this area is already being undertaken by knowledge organisations in the Netherlands, work that has shown that this type of intervention has capacity for long term sustainable solutions. By also combining the Diaspora as part of the solution, it would ensure that the development intervention would have long lasting impact with a better chance of the local context being understood, thus allowing for a smoother and more successful transfer of knowledge. The Netherlands does indeed have numerous strengths, but by working with the diaspora as important actors in development, the country's impact can only be enhanced.