



# Voices of the Hungry

***Global monitoring of Food Insecurity  
through experience-based indicators***

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# The Voices of the Hungry (VOH) project

## FAO Statistics Division

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*Development of a cross culturally comparable  
measure of food insecurity experiences to be  
used within a common survey methodology*

FAO Multi-disciplinary Fund  
The Government of Belgium  
The Government of the United Kingdom

# The VOH project objectives (No. 1)

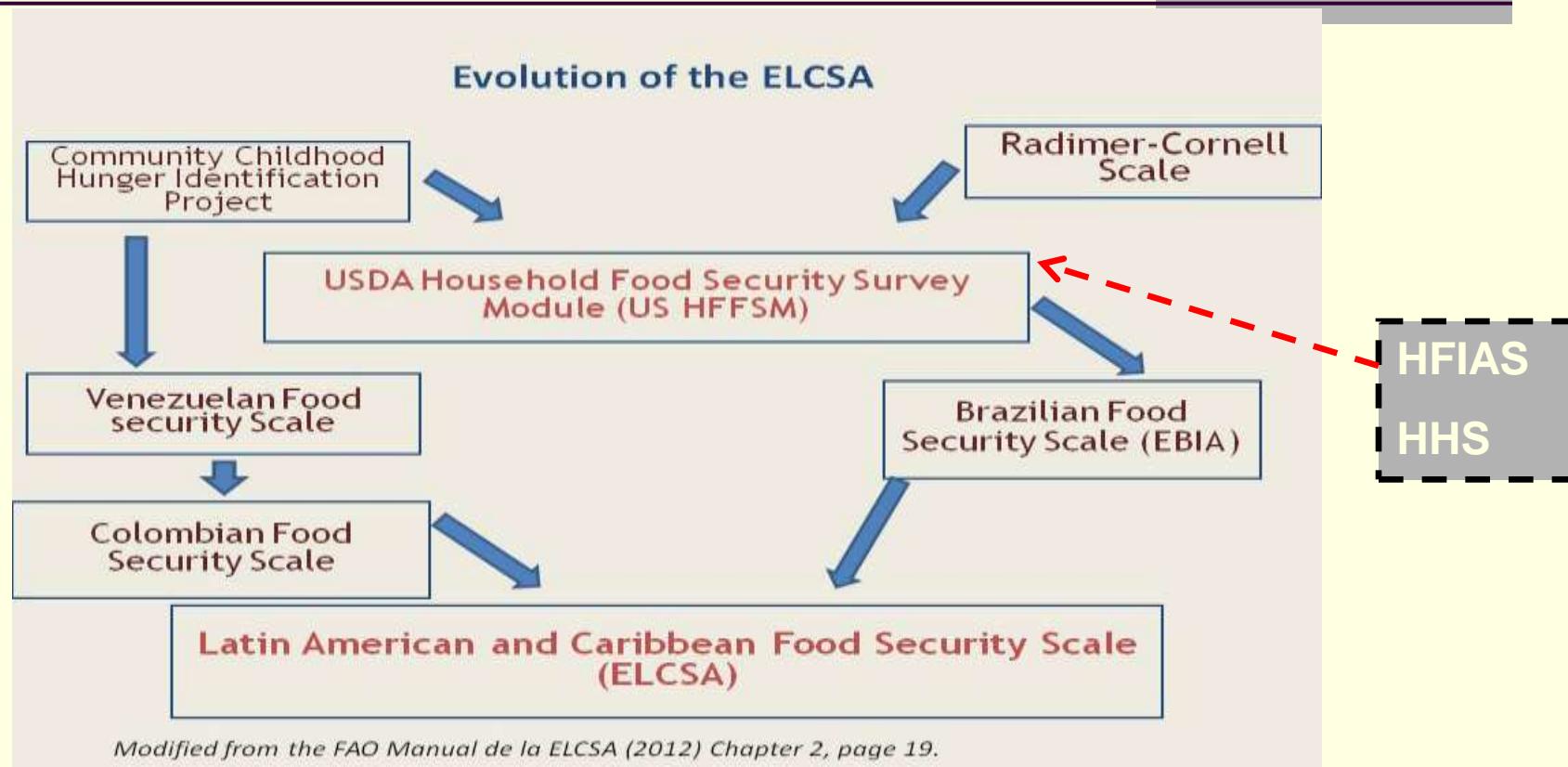
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**Inclusion of the Food Insecurity Experience Scale in the Gallup World Poll (global public opinion poll) covering 140+ countries annually, including all emerging and developing countries**

The data will be used to compile a comparable set of indicators at country level by severity of food insecurity

We expect to collect global data from 2014 through 2018

# Origins of the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)



**Food Insecurity Experience Scale**

# The Food insecurity Experience Scale within the Gallup World Poll

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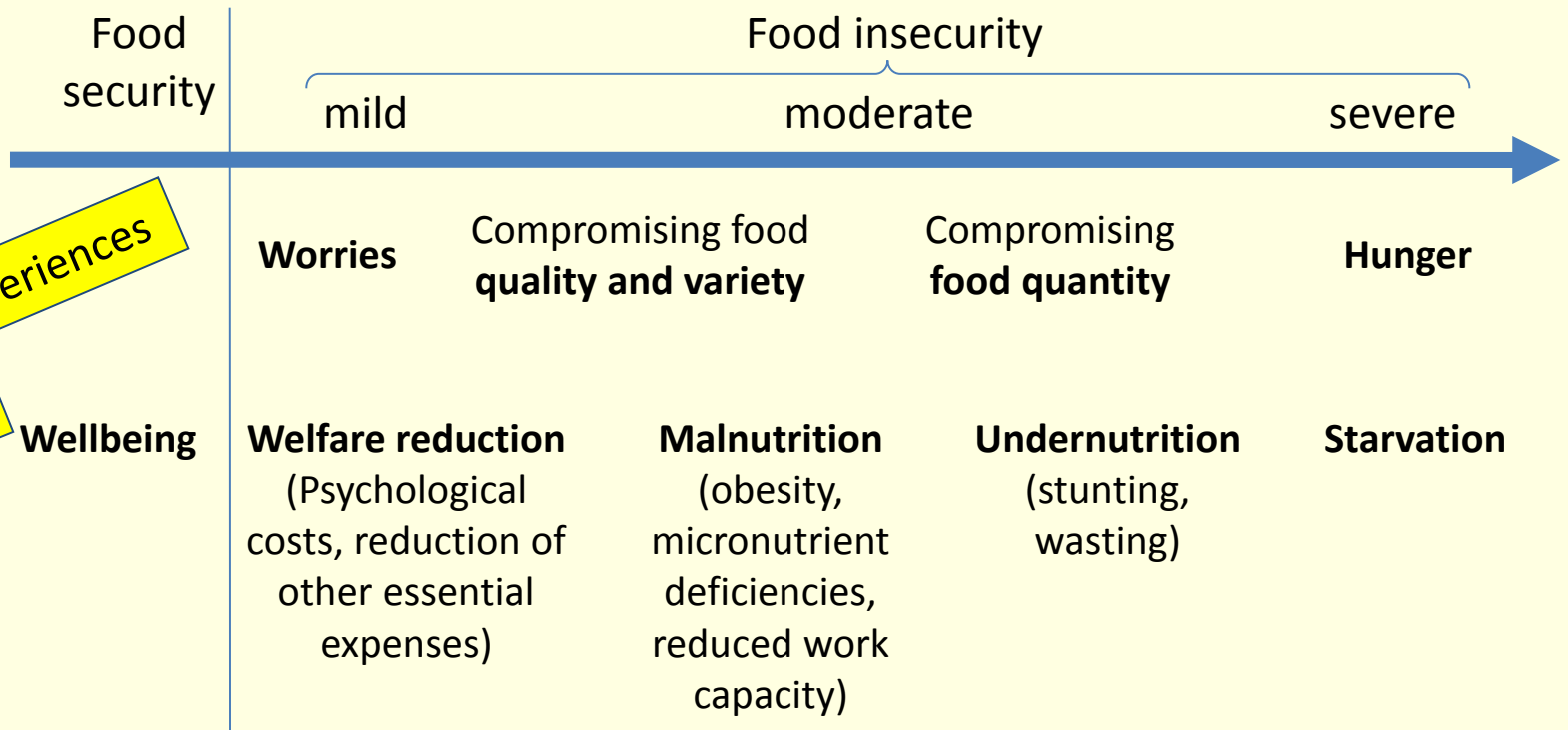
The following questions will be included in the 2014 Gallup World Poll, addressed to randomly selected adults 15+:

*“During the last 12 months, was there a time when, because of lack of money or other resources:*

- 1. You were worried you would not have enough food to eat?*
- 2. You were unable to eat healthy and nutritious food?*
- 3. You ate only a few kinds of foods?*
- 4. You had to skip a meal?*
- 5. You ate less than you thought you should?*
- 6. Your household ran out of food?*
- 7. You were hungry but did not eat?*
- 8. You went without eating for a whole day?”*

# The concept (latent trait) of experienced food insecurity

The FIES: a set of questions spanning the range of experiences



# The VOH project Objectives (No. 2)

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**Provide public access to VOH products**  
*through web based Food Security portals*

- **FIES Questionnaires in local and national languages**
- **Annually produced datasets on FIES + demographic variables** from 140 + countries
- **Country-level indicators on the severity of food insecurity**

# The VOH project Objectives (No. 3)

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**Create opportunities to collaborate with countries that have developed and use their own food security measurement tools**

- Identify **similarities and differences** in approach
- **Harmonize** different prevalence figures derived from different tools/methods
- **Foster mutual learning** and stimulate further research to refine our methodologies



# The VOH project Objectives (No. 4)

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**Promote research on food insecurity using variables collected on the same individuals to study causal and outcome factors**

(e.g. from nationally and sub-nationally representative surveys on nutrition, welfare, income and budget, living standards etc.)

**Develop a research network to identify important areas for further research**

# Where are we thus far...

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2012: very preliminary pilots in 4 countries

2013 : piloting in four countries

- Four pilots conducted in Ethiopia, Angola, Niger and Malawi through the GWP, using an 8 item module directed to individual adults + 2 questions about any child <5 yrs living in the household.
- Data from these studies being examined
- Development of analytics and software (R) for cross cultural comparability of severity categories of food insecurity

# 2014 – begin global data collection

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## Methodology

- N ranges from 1 000 - 5 000 randomly selected adults 15 years or more
- Country surveys will take place between March and November, 2014
- Face to face interviews in 112 countries of the approximately 150 surveyed countries, otherwise by telephone
- Food insecurity prevalence refers to individuals, not to households

**First data batch to be received in August**

# CHALLENGES - comparing food insecurity severity across cultures: language

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Inadequate linguistic adaptation and translation of the scale questions may cause their meaning and how they are understood by respondents to differ across cultural and linguistic groups.

Carried out extensive linguistic adaptations in the 4 pilot countries.

- ❖ *Focus on terms such as “lack of resources”, “healthy and nutritious foods”*

Developed an explanatory manual to be translated into main language groups for use in the GWP

# CHALLENGES - comparing food insecurity severity across cultures : Equalization

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- Using the information provided by the answers to the FIES questionnaires to classify cases into food insecurity classes in a way that is **meaningful and comparable** over time and across countries and socioeconomic contexts.
- Doing so requires:
  - (a) establishing the metric equivalence of the scale and
  - (b) classifying cases into food insecurity categories, taking into account possible differences in the severity of some items in some of the countries.
- Classifying respondents' food security status using the raw score may not be the most appropriate analytic approach
- We are working with Mark Nord (USDA/ERS) on statistical methods for equating severity classifications across cultures.

# We will keep you informed....

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<http://www.fao.org/economic/ess/ess-fs/voices/en/>

*Thank you for your attention*

*The VOH team*

