



GLOBAL FORUM ON FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION - FSN FORUM

KNOWLEDGE SHARING FOR IMPROVED FOOD SECURITY AND BETTER NUTRITION

TWO YEARS OF ONLINE DISCUSSIONS



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FOREWORD

Knowledge sharing and communication are key factors in improving the food security and nutrition situation of the food insecure and vulnerable. Increasingly, knowledge, research, development ideas and best practices come from a variety of different sources and FAO decided to strengthen its own outreach, while encouraging others to share their knowledge using informal, uncomplicated and efficient ways of communication.

The Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition (FSN Forum) was established in 2007 to address the need for increased knowledge exchange in the food security and nutrition area. The FSN Forum offers a platform for interaction and learning that is driven by the members, who number more than 1,500 development practitioners and researchers.

Being part of this community means having the opportunity to learn from the responses to the topics raised and also to be informed about emerging issues. This includes concerns on food security and nutrition and on many cross-cutting issues that are part of the global debate. Active contributors to the discussion, as well as silent observers have benefited from the often rich, even at times controversial discussions.

This booklet presents a summary of each of the 44 online discussions held over a two-year period. We believe that many of the discussions have influenced the agenda of conferences, development initiatives, research projects, and individuals, thereby effectively moving from knowledge to action. We have also been very pleased with the way in which the FSN Forum community has evolved and has taken up new challenges.

Keeping participation in the Forum lively and maintaining the interest of participants from around the world has been the task of the moderation team. Special thanks go to the FSN Forum team. We also thank the FSN Forum members and all those who have contributed to its success and Solution Exchange India, in particular, for their invaluable collaboration. The main donor to the Forum has been the Government of the Netherlands, whose generous support has been invaluable in making the FSN Forum a success. We look forward to more valuable contributions, debates and discussions in the future.

Mark Smulders
FSN Forum coordinator
FAO Agricultural Development Economics Division

Huyen Tran
FSN Forum moderator and Focal Point
FAO Agricultural Development Economics Division

Coming from rather diverse cultural backgrounds and often very concrete personal experiences, the points raised in the online discussion went clearly beyond conventional wisdom, and this with regard to the information provided as well as actions or policies recommended.

Hartwig de Haen, Professor Emeritus at the University of Göttingen

I wish to say though I haven't been very active in discussions I have been reading and studying the various issues raised. As a young leader in the field of community nutrition, I now have a new perspective in seeing things from multi-sectoral and pluralistic way.

Ileri Matthew Mbake, Ministry of Health Kenya

Let me take this opportunity to say how much I appreciate the Forum. At first, I was worried by the extra emails in my inbox, but just glancing at some of the contributions has really helped me get ideas for activities here, find good references, and comforted me that we are not alone in tackling some of the challenges we face. It's really fascinating to be sitting in snowed-in Kabul and still learning from people on the other side of the world... All the best in continuing to help us communicate across continents.

Charlotte Dufour, Food Security, Nutrition and Livelihoods Consultant, France

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The Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition (FSN Forum) was created to strengthen FAO's capacity in knowledge sharing. The Forum is an online community where members can share experiences, identify resources, provide peer coaching and find collective solutions to food security and nutrition (FSN) issues, concerns and opportunities.

The FSN Forum was launched on World Food Day, 16 October 2007, with 300 registered participants. After two years of active debate, the Forum has registered over 1500 members from 150 countries. So far, 44 e-discussions have taken place and a large amount of information and resources have been shared on the Forum's Web site. The Forum has been widely recognized by its members and various stakeholders as a unique and successful neutral platform for online discussions on FSN issues.

The Forum is funded by the FAO Multidonor Partnership Programme (FMPP) and by FAO, and its facilitated by the FAO Agricultural Development Economics Division (ESA).

About the booklet

This booklet presents core information about the 44 online discussions held from October 2007 to October 2009. All proceedings and summaries of the discussions in English, French and Spanish can be found on the Forum site: <http://km.fao.org/fsn/>

The booklet has been compiled by Huyen Tran, Forum Moderator and Focal Point; Renata Mirulla, Forum Moderator; and Max Blanck, Forum Research Associate.

FAO's Multi-donor Partnership Programme (FMPP)



The FMPP is an innovative mechanism for pooling donor contributions and channelling these resources in ways that enable FAO to deliver its technical services in a flexible and timely manner.

FMPP actions use relatively small amounts of funds to provide policy guidance and targeted knowledge and information-based interventions. FMPP-supported activities are integrated into larger national, regional and global development plans and budgets or contribute to the development of these plans.

For more information about the FMPP please contact: FMPP-helpdesk@fao.org

44 Forum discussions, from October 2007 to October 2009

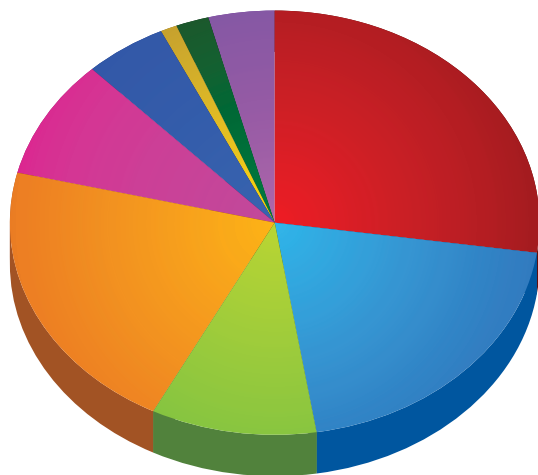
14 topics on food security and nutrition policies, analysis and information

12 topics on agriculture, natural resources management and biodiversity

6 topics on nutrition

12 topics on cross-cutting issues

Affiliation of forum members



- 27% UN or other Intergovernmental Organization
- 20% International or Local NGO/CBO
- 10% Government / Public Service Agency
- 21% Academic Institution
- 9% Research / Policy Institution
- 5% Company / Independent Consultant
- 1% Programme or Project
- 2% Association
- 4% Other

THEME 1

FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION POLICIES, ANALYSIS
AND INFORMATION



DRAWING LESSONS FROM FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION RESEARCH, ANALYSIS AND INFORMATION FOR IMPROVED DECISION-MAKING AND RESPONSE

Topic raiser and facilitator: Mark Smulders, Senior Economist and Coordinator of the FAO-FIVIMS (Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping Systems) Programme.

Purpose: pool lessons learned in knowledge generation in the FSN domain that have resulted in concrete action.

Discussion content

Participants shared information on the approaches/indicators commonly used in FSN research and analysis and discussed gaps in the generation and use of FSN information. They identified lessons learned and best practices for decision-making.

THE RELEVANCE OF FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION INFORMATION IN DECISION-MAKING

Capacity development needs

- FSN analysts must improve reporting and communication skills with active participation of decision-makers
- Local capacity to generate FSN data and information at subnational levels must be strengthened for decentralized decision-making and local ownership of response packages
- Capacity building is needed for local area vulnerability profiles and the strengthening of vulnerability assessment working groups

Linking research and programme/project activities effectively to policy-making

- Ensure that this occurs at each stage of the policy-making process
- Ensure that food security and nutrition are among the policy priorities of decision-makers
- Undertake users' (or decision-making) needs assessments to identify requirements in FSN information
- Facilitate a policy dialogue to settle the question of priorities and goal trade-offs among donors
- Undertake research that actually proposes a particular course of action, recommends the implementation processes and challenges existing assumptions or institutional arrangements
- Reach politicians through various channels and convey similar messages to different stakeholders (NGOs, ministries, universities, public media, the Internet and scientific papers)
- Find, nurture and promote influential support from national leaders committed to the eradication of hunger and political/civil society leaders capable of mobilizing the masses and influencing appropriate politicians
- Ensure availability of funds so that the system remains viable

Multistakeholder workshops to create a common understanding on strengthening FSN and livelihood analysis to reflect the need for a multisectoral approach

ADDRESS THE NEED TO STRENGTHEN CREDIBILITY OF FSN INFORMATION

Participatory process to build joint ownership of information by decision-makers

- Through multisectoral and subnational/local participation, involvement of stakeholders and policy-makers in developing conceptual framework and national vulnerability guidelines
- Through collaboration by ministries and partners on developing FSN, and an analytical nutrition report

Further best practices to enhance the credibility of FSN information products

- Establish a sustainable FSN information system by building up governmental information systems, while satisfying the immediate needs of humanitarian actors
- Document the methods used to collect and analyse information and validate them during technical meetings with stakeholders
- Avoid inconsistencies through good coordination among FSN analysts
- Explain the reasons why information is inconsistent with other sources of information or previous recommendations
- Indicate the degree of confidence in information and explain implications of limited confidence for decision-making
- Indicate systematically the sources of data/information

ADDRESS INADEQUATE ACCESS TO INFORMATION BY TARGET GROUPS

- Ensure that all important information is made available, accessible and user-friendly to target groups by packaging vital information as simply as possible
- Break the usual vertical flow of information, especially with the new technologies, through participatory communication
- Make communication objectives specific, measurable, appropriate, realistic and timely
- Use communication messages that are clear and consistent, communicate benefits, create trust and call for action
- Help fellow scientists to understand the benefits of communication

Some best practices – FSN information that leads to action

Ethiopia. National Vulnerability Guidelines have been developed with multisectoral and subnational/local participation. The guidelines were accepted by the Government, supported by donors and used widely for vulnerability assessments and annual reports.

EC-FAO Food Security Information for Action Programme (in Mozambique, Cape Verde, Cambodia and Burkina Faso) trains FSN analysts in improving reporting and communication skills, with active participation of decision-makers.

Latin America and the Caribbean Hunger Free Initiative (Iniciativa América Latina y Caribe sin Hambre) reaches politicians through several communication channels.

FAO/Netherlands Partnership Programme, United Republic of Tanzania. A multisectoral Food Security Information Team includes government departments, NGOs and United Nations agencies and is responsible for the collection, analysis, reporting and dissemination of FSN information.

Vulnerability Assessment Committees (VACs) in southern Africa have effective extensive participation and broad membership. VAC analysis has been extremely influential in food security programming.

The Food and Agricultural Market Information System (FAMIS) in the Sudan is a government-led important platform for sharing information among various stakeholders.

**32 contributions from ten countries. Key contributors include:**

- Charles Teller, Visiting Scholar, Population Reference Bureau, United States of America
- Alemu Asfaw, Policy Analyst, FAO, the Sudan
- José Luis Vivero Pol, FAO, Chile
- El Fadil Ahmed Ismail, Professor, Food Research Centre, the Sudan

Discussion No. 1, from 16 October to 16 November 2007



MEASURING HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION WITH A FOCUS ON HIV-AFFECTED HOUSEHOLDS

Topic raiser: Filippo di Bari, Nutritionist, Valid International.

Facilitator: Amélie Solal-Celigny, Consultant, FAO Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division.

Purpose: find the most suitable indicators for measuring the food security of households where malnourished adults with HIV are undergoing anti-retroviral therapy.

Discussion content

Participants recommended suitable FSN indicators with deep analysis and field experiences on their advantages and disadvantages. A summary matrix of four main indicators was jointly developed and 20 reference papers were shared.

INDICATORS RECOMMENDED FOR MEASURING THE FSN OF HOUSEHOLDS WHERE THERE ARE MALNOURISHED ADULTS WITH HIV

Household Economy Approach (HEA)

- Main advantage: this is a comprehensive and powerful indicator for predicting increasing malnutrition rates over the short term and comparable in different zones
- Points to be taken into account when using this indicator: training is required; it must be complemented conceptually and empirically with other data; a calculator spreadsheet (HEA Smart Methodology) can be used to estimate the size and type of social transfer to meet agency objectives

Individual Household Economy Approach (IHEA) – measures access to food

- Main advantage: this approach is designed for HIV contexts
- Points to be taken into account when using this indicator: more disaggregated training is required than for HEA

Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS)

Main advantages: it is the only tool to measure a household's direct experience of food insecurity, is standardized, easy to apply, does not need special software and is very useful in monitoring detrimental dietary changes that could lead to nutritional problems.

Points to be taken into account when using this indicator:

- it has not yet been validated, and needs to be adapted to the local context through focus groups and interviews with key informants
- it does not sufficiently explore food insecurity in order to point out its cause/s for intervention purposes
- there is not enough evidence so far to correlate to anthropometry
- where food aid is frequent, there may be a respondent bias
- data are not appropriate for targeting individual households

Dietary Diversity (DD)

DD scores are key elements in any comprehensive analysis of food security situations at the individual, household or community level and are clearly linked to household economic access to food

- Main advantages: DD is standardized, easy to apply and correlates to anthropometry; it provides a good indication of availability of specific foods/food groups in an area; and helps to analyse household nutritional vulnerability/food insecurity
- Points to be taken into account when using this indicator: it needs to be adapted to the local context, does not have a clear cut-off point for categorization and should not be used alone since it reflects only part of the FSN components

25 contributions from 11 countries. Key contributors include:

- Charles Teller, Adjunct Professor, Population Studies and Research Centre, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- Alexandra Crosskey, Livelihoods and Food Security Advisor, PACAPS, Horn of Africa
- Terri Ballard, Nutritionist, Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division, FAO, Italy

Discussion No. 7, from 5 to 22 February 2007

MAINSTREAMING FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION IN POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGIES/POLICIES

Topic raiser: Maarten Immink, Consultant, FAO Agricultural Development Economics Division.

Facilitator: pool country experiences in mainstreaming FSN in overarching policy platforms.

The topic was cross-posted with the Food and Nutrition Security Community, Solution Exchange, India.

Discussion content

Participants suggested how to improve the FSN situation in general and how to mainstream FSN into planning and national policies in particular. They shared nine successful cases and six reference papers.

ISSUES RAISED

Suggested approaches for mainstreaming FSN into planning and national policies

- Show solid evidence that the agriculture sector can indeed contribute to improving FSN
- An integrated view of total livelihood sources and future development on a geographic basis in tribal areas
- Mainstream FSN within disaster risk reduction

Suggestions for improving the FSN situation

- Sustainable agriculture practised by smallholders is a solution for the problem of FSN in India and this should be present in national policies
- Natural resource-based livelihoods should be promoted Sustainable agriculture
- The adoption of joint forest management committees for imparting training and information on land and water conservation could optimize the use of land and water Sustainable agriculture
- Community storages could be used for food grains
- The adoption and promotion of integrated post-harvest management could provide adequate income enhancement for reducing poverty as well as improving FSN

COUNTRY CASES

Some successful initiatives aiming at mainstreaming FSN into national policies

- Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF), India, is a needs-based fund that is essentially used for regional poverty alleviation activities and is designed to redress regional imbalances in development. It provides financial resources for supplementing and converging existing developmental inflows in state plans.
- "Integrated Rural Development of Fishing Villages in Sierra Leone" (West Africa) was a holistic project for the development of 11 fishing villages. Learning experiences from this project and those of a similar nature provide a basis for planning processes in integrating or mainstreaming safety net policies in poverty reduction plans and programmes.
- Joint studies took place in East Africa in the 1980s, e.g. in Zambia, where students at the National Resource Development College shared courses with others aiming for jobs in agriculture and other rural development sectors in growth monitoring, surveillance, supplementation and weaning food preparation. Those with a nutritional focus were employed as district nutritionists and were well placed to institute local initiatives, coordinating with colleagues with whom they shared a training background in health, agriculture and education.



Discussion No. 16, from 15 June to 4 July 2008



CLOSING THE GAP – LINKING FOOD SECURITY INFORMATION TO EFFECTIVE DECISION-MAKING

Topic raiser: Dominique Blariaux, Food Security Officer, European Commission.

Issue: how to close the gaps in food security information systems and link food security information better with decision-making.

Discussion content

Participants gave several insights on existing gaps in FSN information and on factors influencing the use of FSN information by decision-makers. Various suggestions and lessons learned as to how to close the identified gaps were shared.

FACTORS INFLUENCING FSN INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND LINKAGES BETWEEN INFORMATION AND DECISION-MAKING

Factors affecting the generation and communication of information

- The form in which technical information is presented to the various stakeholders
- Important audiences such as the media and civil society organizations

Factors affecting the use of information in decision-making

- Shifts in public awareness brought about by the media and other awareness-raising groups
- Extent to which decision-makers have to justify the rationality of their decisions by using objective information
- Coordination of decision-makers
- Priority given to food security in the development agenda and “competition” with other priorities
- Institutional setting for food security
- Capacity of decision-makers to use information to make their decisions
- Interaction with policy and planning specialists from other sectors

Factors affecting the consensus-building and harmonization processes

- The interface with the national system for disaster prevention and response
- Technical consensus on the diagnostic and response levels among all actors involved
- Those planners and policy-makers who are much closer to decision-makers and have the skills to translate complex messages into budgeted action points by sector

The impact of information on decision-making requires commitment and sustained and durable efforts from government and development partners, and recognition that food security information is only one of the factors influencing decision-makers.



SUGGESTIONS

Improving FSN information systems

- These should be guided by a country's agricultural and food security policies and strategies, and provide a cost-benefit analysis of the most feasible policy options to be presented to government
- Systems should be adequately informed by available scientific and technical knowledge on FSN
- Information should be both data- and evidence-based for action
- Systems should draw upon lessons learned from efforts in dealing with food insecurity in the country
- They should respond directly to the needs of users of the information and national and subnational levels
- Adequate interaction between information providers and users must be ensured
- Basic rules of good communications are (i) specifically identify the primary audience and how it will use information; (ii) package/ repackaging information for various target groups; and (iii) monitor the use of information and, if it is not used, start a dialogue on how to improve it

Building consensus and harmonization

- Information providers should promote capacity-building activities
- Civic competence should be developed, especially in the rural sector, by using the local system as a platform for dialogue with decision-makers
- Collection and analysis of FSN information needs to be implemented through a negotiation process that includes a multipartnership participatory coordination and steering process, a country-specific institutional set-up and regional coordination mechanisms



9 contributions from seven countries. Key contributors include:

- Rene Verduijn, South Africa
- Françoise Trine, Agricultural Development Economics Division, FAO, Italy

Discussion No. 18, from 9 July to 15 August 2008



TRAINING MANUALS/TRAINING RESOURCES ON FOOD SECURITY

Topic raiser: Alejandro Acosta, Agricultural Economist, FAO, Mozambique.

Purpose: pool training resources on food security.

Discussion content

Five participants from four countries shared 14 training resources in food security.

Discussion No. 19, from 5 to 16 August 2008

PAPERS AND DATA ON FOOD SECURITY IN MOUNTAINS

Topic raiser: Claudia Veith, FAO Forestry Department.

Purpose: pool papers on food security in mountains for International Mountain Day 2008.

Discussion content

Four participants shared 15 papers and sources of information on food security in mountains.

Discussion No. 22, from 2 to 9 September 2008

DRAFT OF THE NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD POLICY FOR UZBEKISTAN

Topic raiser: Bakhodur Eshonov, UNDP, Uzbekistan.

Purpose: gather comments on the draft of the national agricultural and food policy for Uzbekistan.

The topic was originally generated on the UNDP Poverty Network and was cross-posted on the FSN Forum.

Discussion content

Six participants made specific suggestions on how to improve the draft policy.

Apart from comments related to specific texts in the draft policy for Uzbekistan, participants made several suggestions that are valid for the formulation of agricultural and food policy in general.

- Engage a food security expert at the project formulation stage
- Issues to be addressed involve not only access to food but also environmental management, transportation, trade issues, health, etc.
- Define/express indicators, objectives, outputs and outcomes in verifiable/measurable terms, which may lead to formulating them differently or to new questions, e.g. on monitoring
- Stress sustainable farming practices

Discussion No. 29, from 11 February to 14 March 2009



IDENTIFYING AND ADDRESSING FOOD INSECURITY AMONG THE URBAN POOR

Topic raiser: Siddharth Agarwal, Urban Health Resource Centre, India.

Issue: what methods have been used to address food insecurity among the urban poor at household and community level and what lessons have been learned?

The discussion was cross-posted with the Food and Nutrition Security Community, Solution Exchange, India.

Discussion content

Participants shared different sources of data on urban food security as well as various methodologies used to evaluate and assess this insecurity. They made several suggestions on how to address food security among the urban poor. Three success stories and 20 reference papers and sources of information were shared.

ISSUES RAISED

How to address urban food insecurity

- Promote urban agriculture
- Strengthen public-private partnerships with increased community involvement for needs assessment, planning to service delivery and its monitoring
- Use of community self-help programmes financed by people rather than by charity
- Make a thorough inventory of existing human resources and administrative capabilities, and avoid multiplicity of agencies and consideration of intra-urban disparities and their origins
- Formation of urban poor community shops as a relief from formal market prices

Lessons learned for better action in tackling urban food insecurity

- Software programmes such as the development of health care services are greatly dependent upon the upgrading of human resources, which cannot be achieved simply by pouring in financial aid
- Even if the community in question seems geared to accept a preventive or educational programme, outreach services such as “barefoot doctors” cannot be effective unless the medical hierarchy is ready to accept them and allow them to practise their assigned roles
- A framework is needed that is simple and robust enough to fit in with local management capabilities
- Planners attempting to set up “people-oriented” health/nutrition projects should study carefully the existing referral systems and hierarchic chains of command and then obtain the full support of administrators
- Urban food insecurity is multidimensional and requires a comprehensive package covering all aspects such as health, nutrition, education and employment for people living in slums

28 contributions from 11 countries. Key contributors include:

- Samir Basta, France
- Sara Granados-Ortiz, FAO, Chile
- D S K Rao, Consultant, Hyderabad, India

Discussion No. 35, from 27 April to 15 June 2009



REVISING THE FOOD SECURITY COMPONENT OF THE SPHERE HANDBOOK

Topic raiser: Devrig Velly, Senior Food Security Advisor, Action Against Hunger, United States of America.

Purpose: collect comments to revise the food security component of the Sphere Handbook.

Discussion content

Participants made several comments on existing indicators and annexes. They proposed many new aspects to be covered by the food security component. Ten reference papers and resource Web sites were shared.

The three annexes concerning the food security component should be strengthened and better linked with the other two components of Chapter 3 (Nutrition and food aid)

- The structure of the handbook needs to be revised since it is complex to read
- The importance of optimizing the use of local foods should be highlighted
- The food safety issue should be addressed

Addition of further aspects to the standards

- Cash transfer programming
- Access to food and markets
- Diet quality and diversity
- Disaster risk reduction
- Response coordination
- Grain banks as a food shortage mitigation tool
- Cultural background and traditional practices
- Sustainability dimension
- Income and employment
- Micronutrients, including food-based approaches

Inclusion of new/updated tools and indicators

- Food consumption
- Measurements of household food insecurity
- HDDS (Household Dietary Diversity Score) and FCS (Food Consumption Score)
- CSI (Coping Strategies Index)
- Household Hunger Scale which will replace HFIAS (Household Food Insecurity Access Scale)
- IDDS (Individual Dietary Diversity Score)

Inclusion of further aspects related to appraisal of the food security situation

- Use of safety nets in emergencies
- Linking emergency response to rehabilitation and recovery
- Analysis of remittances
- Right to food
- Protection of breastfeeding in emergencies
- Community planning
- Sustainability of interventions
- Intersectoral and sectoral coordination
- Food distribution and school feeding in emergencies
- Responses regarding livestock in communities affected should be clearly developed with the recently released Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards (LEGS)



12 contributions from seven countries. Key contributors include:

- Agnes Dhur, Senior Officer, World Food Programme, Italy
- Silvia Kaufmann, FAO, Afghanistan
- Rebecca Kik, Agricultural Development Economics Division, FAO, Italy

Discussion No. 40, from 14 July to 10 September 2009

THEME 2

NUTRITION



NUTRITION EDUCATION – ESSENTIAL BUT OFTEN NEGLECTED

Topic raiser: Jane Sherman, Education Consultant.

Facilitator: Ellen Muehlhoff, Senior Officer, FAO Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division.

Issue: although essential to the public, nutrition education receives little coverage in publications, research and projects.

Discussion content

Participants analysed the causes of the “neglect” in nutrition education. They identified several gaps and challenges in practice, policies, programmes and research. Many good practices and strategies for raising the profile of nutrition education were shared. The discussion pooled nine reference papers and six good practices.

The discussion inputs were developed into the Forum brief “Nutrition education is essential to the public”.

ISSUES RAISED

How to raise the nutrition education profile

- Integrate nutrition objectives into agricultural and food policies and programmes
- Use the FSN Forum for networking and sharing of resources, research results, educational tools, etc.
- Use the Standing Committee on Nutrition (SCN) for lobbying about the importance of nutrition education
- Apply an interdisciplinary approach and strengthen national coordination
- Include nutrition education in all levels of education, from primary to university
- Research and prepare a report on the state of the art in nutrition education

What makes nutrition education effective?

As well as providing information, effective nutrition education programmes and activities should:

- incorporate methods for behaviour change
- communicate in ways that motivate
- emphasize improvement rather than perfection
- speak to people in a language they understand
- create supportive nutrition-friendly environments
- include participation of individuals and the community
- use different settings to reach people at different stages of life
- advocate nutrition-friendly public policies
- strengthen local knowledge and emphasize the value of local food and eating patterns

14 contributions from 11 countries. Key contributors include:

- Teresa Calderon, Independent Nutrition Consultant, Bolivia
- Prema Ramachandran, Director, Nutrition Foundation of India
- Judy McLean, Adjunct Professor of Nutrition, University of British Columbia, Canada

Discussion No. 4, from 19 November to 7 December 2007



STAPLE FOODS AS A FUNDAMENTAL SOLUTION TO MALNUTRITION

Topic raiser: Adetunji Olajide Falana, Federal Ministry of Health, Nigeria.

Issue: what could be the solution to over-reliance on short- to medium-term strategies of supplementation and fortification? What could be done to promote staple foods?

Discussion content

With eight contributions from five countries, participants identified the main causes of the gaps in addressing malnutrition, in particular the inadequate utilization of staple foods. Several suggestions were made on how to promote staple foods and help to solve malnutrition.

ISSUES RAISED

Reasons why some sources of nutrients/staple foods have remained underutilized in Africa

- Gradual yet profound changes in dietary patterns, partly driven by the modernization process and by the advertising media
- Changing food preferences, resulting from factors other than exotic tastes
 - competition of staple crops with alternative crops that meet producers' food and income needs
 - changing cooking habits prompted by the scarcity of fuelwood
 - a weakening intergenerational transfer of knowledge, skills and values related to production, processing, storage and cooking of staples
- Perennial neglect of staple crops by the crop development programmes of research establishments
- Local stigma and taboos that discourage the consumption of some nutritious alternatives such as insects
- National food and nutrition policies that are not adequately anchored to knowledge of local food preferences, cooking habits, weaning practices and traditional methods of supplementation
- Decline in staple food production caused by poor climatic conditions, urbanization, rural/urban migration, HIV/AIDS impact on agriculture

Suggestions for solving malnutrition and promoting staple foods

- Developing intervention strategies based on a review of serious energy deficiencies in particular areas, the patterns of supply of staple foods and the concurrent factors that shape the consumption patterns/habits
- Participatory decision and implementation processes with the participation of all stakeholders, particularly of the concerned community
- Using wild plants for food by helping communities to identify and adapt wild species for human consumption through research and processing
- Using strategies for modifying local food systems, such as home gardens to increase food production
- Dietary diversification by promoting consumption of local underutilized food
- Promoting the production of staple foods by
 - creating markets in rural areas
 - building infrastructures to help farmers produce more
 - subsidizing the prices of fertilizers
 - using compost manure
 - making loans available to farmers
 - improving and increasing yields through biofortification
 - adopting favourable policies



MATERIAL ON COMPLEMENTARY FOOD RECIPES AND COOKING DEMONSTRATIONS

Topic raiser: Silke Pietzsch, Action Against Hunger, United States of America.

Purpose: collect new and alternative cooking recipes and material for cooking demonstrations particularly on vegetables and fruits in Africa.

Discussion content

With six contributions from four countries, participants shared several country-specific recipes, manuals and guidelines, as well as relevant information sources. The discussion pooled 11 references.

Discussion No. 24, from 3 to 24 September 2008





PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST: NUTRITION, A KEY TO INTEGRATED PROGRAMMING FOR POVERTY REDUCTION?

Topic raiser and facilitator: Charlotte Dufour, Independent Consultant in Food Security and Nutrition.

Issue: why is it so difficult to integrate nutrition in development policies and programmes and what needs to be done?

Discussion content

Participants shared insights and successful approaches, activities and tools on the integration of nutrition in agriculture and livelihoods programmes and multisectoral programming. As well as a comprehensive analysis of the issue and several recommendations, the discussion pooled nine cases and ten reference papers.

ISSUES RAISED

Major measures to enhance the profile of nutrition

- Enhancing commitment through “non-policy actions”
- Developing economic arguments for improving nutrition and reducing poverty
- Improving the use of information for advocacy

Keys to successful nutrition programmes

- Programmes should be participatory/community-based/community-driven
- Assessment of the complex causes of malnutrition and the context is needed, including structural vulnerabilities, understanding livelihoods strategies, coping strategies and their impact on the severity of food insecurity and malnutrition, etc.
- Assessment of local organizational needs and capacities and support for local organizations is fundamental
- Multisectoral interventions: access to balanced diets, knowledge and resources for good caring and feeding practices, safe environment, drinking-water, health care, etc.
- Integrate learning in project management (e.g. Triple A approach: Assessment, Analysis, Action)
- Involvement of women and youth
- Assistance to families in diversifying their options to access diverse foods and increase their income, e.g. through the introduction of new crops and food species in the local farming system
- Plan interventions adapted to the needs of the landless
- Adapt marketing strategies to ensure farmers’ interest and sustainability
- Integrate educational components and behaviour change (e.g. nutrition, health and hygiene, as well as literacy and numeric skills)
- Encouragement of public-private participation

What individuals working for nutrition/nutrition advocates should do

- Raise global awareness about the extent of nutritional problems worldwide and their cross-sectoral nature, thus enabling more people to work for nutrition in all sectors
- Support capacity building in public nutrition to enhance the ability of all actors to address undernutrition
- Demystify nutrition among other professionals to encourage them to work for nutrition
- Facilitate coordination and create bridges between sectors, and between community, provincial and national levels
- Carry out policy reviews and advise governments on policies that impact positively on nutrition making loans available to farmers
- improving and increasing yields through biofortification
- adopting favourable policies

44 contributions from 20 countries. Key contributors include:

- Urban Jonsson, The Owls Internal Consultancy Group, Sweden, former UNICEF Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa
- Judith Appleton, Food and Nutrition Specialist, United Kingdom
- Joseph Opio-Odongo, Director, Sustainable Development Services (SDS), Uganda
- Cristina Lopriore, Nutritionist, FAO, Italy



DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING FOOD SAFETY MECHANISMS

Topic raiser: Harun K.M. Yusuf and Lalita Bhattacharjee, Nutritionists, National Food Policy Capacity Strengthening Programme, Bangladesh.

Purpose: collect country experiences in developing and implementing food safety mechanisms.

Discussion content

With 21 contributions from 12 countries, participants shared national experiences concerning:

- legislation on food hygiene and implementation of HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point) systems
- implementation of monitoring and information-sharing mechanisms
- strengthening consumer awareness and consumer education
- management of street food vending.

National food safety mechanisms and regulations

Participants shared information on food safety legislation and mechanisms in nine countries: Armenia, Cameroon, Denmark, Ghana, India, Nepal, Nigeria, South Africa and the Syrian Arab Republic.

General suggestions

- Discussions on food safety mechanisms should consider ways to apply human rights to adequate food, since food safety is essential to ensuring adequate nutrition
- It is essential to have a well drawn up and comprehensive Food Safety Policy that evokes national commitment and ownership of those implementing the policy in the various sectors
- An effective way to improve food safety is to provide consumers with a system to recognize safe food items easily, such as the successful NAFDAC (National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control) registration number on packaged food items in Nigeria or the Smiley scheme in Denmark
- Strengthen/introduce personal and community hygienic practices through education, adult literacy missions and via interventions by NGOs and the media
- Accurate data on foodborne illnesses and consumer complaints are important indicators of food safety
- Good agriculture practices should be enforced – the issue of pesticide and drug residues in food requires a joint effort by both the agriculture and the food safety and quality sector



Discussion No. 39, from 30 June to 23 July 2009

THEME 3

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES



SUGGESTIONS FOR EMERGING TOPICS FOR THE 2ND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POVERTY, FOOD AND HEALTH

Topic raiser: Sofia Guiomar, University of Lisbon and Organizer of the 2nd International Conference on Poverty, Food and Health.

Purpose: collect suggestions for emerging topics to be included in the 2nd or 3rd International Conference on Poverty, Food and Health.

Discussion content

Participants identified 26 emerging and relevant topics to be discussed at the International Conference on Poverty, Food and Health.

PARTICIPANTS' SUGGESTIONS

- Economic cost of social inequalities in developing countries
- Scaling up successful anti-hunger and anti-poverty programmes
- Childhood poverty and children's rights
- Monitoring mechanism of the state's commitment towards fulfilling food security as a human right
- Assessing the relationship between land, food and primary health rights
- The impact of climate change on food security and livelihoods
- Detailed diagnosis of poor communities' coping mechanisms – blending proven appropriate technologies with valuable indigenous knowledge systems
- Approaching the feasibility of food production and income generation for sustainable food and nutrition security in particular situations
- Sharing experiences for developing and adopting working models to address multidimensional challenges within sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) countries – i.e. structural, systematic and policy-related
- The role and contribution of different partnerships in the management of food security and nutrition in SSA



14 contributions from 9 countries were pooled.

The outputs of the discussions were used to prepare the programme for the 3rd International Conference on Poverty, Food and Health in 2009.

Discussion No. 2, from 13 to 20 November 2007



TOPICS ON WHICH RESEARCH IS MOST NEEDED

Topic raiser and facilitator: Andrew MacMillan, former Director of the FAO Field Operations Division.

Issue: there is a serious lack of research on what does and does not work in reducing hunger and malnutrition – topics on which research is most needed and evidence to define FSN approaches should be identified.

Discussion content

Participants identified issues relating to lack of research, evaluation and empirical evidence, as well as lesson-learning processes to support FSN actions. They made several suggestions on how to address these gaps, including areas where research is most needed. They shared 14 reference papers and one best practice.

ISSUES RAISED

Topics on which research is most needed

- Improvement of the food production performance of lesser-known crops
- The impact of climate change on FSN and livelihoods, especially in terms of adaptation
- New foundations for truly sustainable agriculture and research on how to equip rural communities to ensure food self-provision in general, e.g. alternative technologies for improved production or water efficiency and subsistence farming
- The importance of nutrition as a mitigation measure in the AIDS pandemic
- Peri-urban agriculture in general and emerging new forms of urban agriculture and their impact on FSN
- The real impact of food aid
- Analysis of both food production and income generation as factors to guarantee food security and sustainability for smallholder farmers
- A better understanding of how political, institutional and governance factors condition incentives and affect the behaviour of the wide diversity of actors involved in development

Other required actions

- Establish evidence of what does and does not work in FSN interventions and build an institutional memory of innovative, credible and successful interventions, by:
 - developing an “experiential monitoring and learning system” for FSN security, which is a systematic and integrated way to monitor field level activities; consolidate, analyse and distil lessons; reformulate and retest under different conditions; and scale accordingly with the factors identified as criteria for success
 - investing more in developing and disseminating results of effective processes that achieve desired results
 - the establishment and sustainable management of community information centres to tackle the lack of community memory and point of reference
- Improving awareness (in FAO in particular) about the importance of research and evaluation in FSN programmes/projects and greater collaboration between researchers and programme officers
- Detailed diagnosis of poor communities’ coping mechanisms should precede any prescription for addressing FSN
- New and proven technologies should blend with valuable indigenous knowledge systems to enhance community resilience and viability
- Interventions should be focused on sustainable development and with multisectoral structural, systematic and policy-related dimensions

25 contributions from 12 countries. Key contributors include:

- Charles Lagu, National Agricultural Research Organization, Uganda
- José Luis Vivero Pol, FAO, Chile

Discussion No. 3, from 12 November to 7 December 2007



FOOD PRICE RISES AS A MOTIVE FOR ACTION AGAINST HUNGER AND MALNUTRITION

Topic raiser: Secretariat of the International Alliance Against Hunger initiative.

Facilitator: Andrew MacMillan, former Director of the FAO Field Operations Division.

Issue: how can individuals, communities and countries use food price rises as a motive for concerted action against chronic hunger and malnutrition?

Discussion content

Participants shared information and made a thorough analysis of the causes of the food price crisis, its effect on population and markets, particularly on farmers, and responses by governments and organizations. They made several suggestions on the way forward and shared 16 reference papers.

The outputs of the discussions were used to update the Web site of the International Alliance Against Hunger.

ISSUES RAISED

- Seek solutions that combine immediate protection of the poor from the impact of food price rises with the maintenance of food price levels that encourage farmers to expand their production to meet growing demand
- Ensure through good market information that producers at all levels can benefit from upward price movements
- Avoid looking too much for agricultural solutions to problems of household food insecurity and to ignore the need for “reverse taxation”
- Improve national agriculture production, for instance by continued and persistent investments in agriculture and rural development in poor countries, with a particular emphasis on small farmers
- Regulate biofuel production from food crops
- Correct market structures and discrimination in pricing that benefit poor producers less than rich ones
- Target the way World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations are conducted so that the agrifood supply systems of developing countries are better protected
- Options for the international community are to turn the tide of war against terrorism to that against poverty, so that war resources are used to help the development of poor countries
- Some short-term measures are to:
 - support and encourage farmers or producers to increase their production
 - support small processing industries
 - avoid or minimize imposed taxes on imported food items and minimize tariffs on local production
 - support the transport and warehouse facility sector
 - release some of the grain from government reserves to the market
 - subsidize selected food items rather than provide food aid (programmes or non-programmed aid)
 - increase transparency of information provided

24 contributions from 13 countries. Key contributors include:

- Alemu Asfaw, Policy Analyst, FAO, the Sudan
- George Kent, Political Science Professor, University of Hawaii, United States of America
- Robert Best, Director, Caribbean Poultry Association, Trinidad and Tobago

Discussion No. 9, from 26 March to 18 April 2008



IMPACT OF SOARING FOOD PRICES AND POLICY RESPONSES

Topic raiser: Materne Maetz, Senior Officer, FAO Initiative on Soaring Food Prices.

Issue: what are the policy responses to the soaring food prices and what are their impacts? What could be the recommended policy measures to address the negative impacts on food security?

Discussion content

Participants shared information on responses to soaring food prices in six countries. They recommended several measures and approaches to deal with food prices. They also commented on the draft FAO “Guide to Country-Level Action”. Seven reference papers were shared.

Outputs from the discussion were used by the FAO Initiative on Soaring Food Prices to revise the draft guide as above.

ISSUES RAISED

- The first step in solving the crisis is to reach a consensus on the underlying causes of soaring food prices and contextualize the confluence of factors at the country level
- Short-term measures should be combined with medium- and long-term ones:
 - rapid interventions by organizations and governments are needed to contain prices, using immediate blanket approach solutions such as humanitarian aid, subsidies, social safety nets and trade policies
 - more needs to be understood about resource-poor consumers, and targeted actions and mid- and long-term measures used to tackle the underlying issues such as weather and climate change and increase in demand from world emerging markets
 - Analytical capacities (especially among NGOs) and a kit of analytical tools should be developed in order to avoid simplistic solutions (reduce tariffs, ban exports) without careful analysis of winners and losers
- When there are rapid increases in food prices, it may be more sensible to provide funds rather than food and although these may be external, control over the manner of their use should be localized to the extent feasible
- Invest in agriculture to improve agricultural production
- Agriculture needs to be more protected in developing countries during the globalization process in order to ensure national food self-sufficiency
- Improve current practices in terms of nutritional or food assistance
- Tackle the issue of “good governance”
- Use of “smart subsidies”, e.g. by raising tariffs on rice but then using them to support schools in hardest hit neighbourhoods, creating work programmes and enhancing local productivity/marketing
- Governments and organizations need to look at food and nutrition from the human rights perspective, not as welfare
- Reinstate a global approach where, without denying legitimate business interests, higher goals, such as the preservation of culture and food self-sufficiency that ensure education and health for all, are established

33 contributions from 16 countries. Key contributors include:

- Charles Lagu, Livestock Production Scientist, National Agricultural Research Organization, Uganda
- Alemu Asfaw, Food Security Analyst, FAO, the Sudan
- Moisés Gómez Porchini, Mexico

Discussion No. 11, from 25 April to 30 May 2008



ENERGY COMPETITION FOR FOOD CROPS

Topic raiser and facilitator: Eltighani Elamin, Professor, Agricultural Economic and Policy Research Centre, the Sudan.

Purpose: revisit pro-biofuel arguments.

Discussion content

With nine contributions from four countries, participants analysed the impacts of biofuel and suggested alternative ways of avoiding its negative effects. Three reference papers were shared.

Issues raised

New generation biofuels can provide affluent consumers with the benefits of quality biofuel solutions and serve as a pathway to more sustainable, renewable energy resources. However, for poor countries, the production of biofuels from food crops has a negative impact rather than being positive for land use, cleaning of the environment and improved income.

- **Land use:** in some areas more agricultural land for cultivating biofuel crops may create problems for agricultural sustainability by overutilization of agricultural inputs and natural resources. The poor will ultimately be out of the utility concept “reverse the global demand of agricultural products from being inelastic to elastic”.
- **The environment:** the production of biofuels has serious environmental costs in terms of deforestation, water use and greenhouse gas.
- **Food security:** the availability of food will be reduced, particularly for the poor. Poor farmers who lack sufficient financial support for the appropriate technology that would increase their yields are not expected to benefit from opportunities made by price rises and will see their incomes decrease.

Suggestions for the way forward

- The production of biofuels from food crops should be used as a transition strategy. The long-term sustainable solution would be technology to produce biofuels from non-food feedstock and incentives for conservation and clean energy (solar, wind, etc.).
- Aquatic biofuels should be promoted. Micro algae and fish waste can generate a biofuel suitable for running engines in a sustainable manner without major impacts on food security, land use, biodiversity or markets.
- Continue the progressive replacement of oil by biofuels. Bioenergy exploitation could provide huge benefits despite the drawbacks.
- Agree on sustainability criteria at the international level to prevent bad impact of biofuels.



Discussion No. 14, from 3 to 20 June 2008

A WEB SITE ON HOUSEHOLD FOOD PRODUCTION

Topic raiser and facilitator: George Kent, Political Science Professor, University of Hawaii, United States of America.

Issue: whether and how a Web site should be created to facilitate the sharing of methods for producing basic foods at the household and community levels.

Discussion content

Participants gave detailed suggestions on the establishment of a Web site on household food production.

ISSUES RAISED

Objectives

- Connect people in order to share experience/knowledge on household food production
- Provide hands-on information in a form useful for householders with low incomes who are looking for practical information on how to produce food at home

Target audience/end users

- Rural towns to start, and not capitals of states
- Small and marginal farmers
- Small Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) that can help to make connections between people

Structure

Two-tiered system on the Internet:

- Central (global) level: information on global knowledge used by the NGO and community-based organization (CBO) networks to obtain ideas that are relevant in the local context
- Local level: useful information to be delivered (by the relevant NGO, CBOs) directly to people at the community level, which should be simple with key concepts and hands-on tips, hopefully in the local language and as many simple sketches (pictures) as possible.
- A central operation responsible for coordination, in particular:
- A central global Web site on household food production that would provide links to other computers and to documents with the necessary information
- More decentralized initiatives that could be linked together in a kind of network and channelled into the global Web site

Information content

- Promotion of local foods
- Demotion of commercialized foods
- Proper storing/processing
- Nutritional information
- Attractive pictures related to agriculture together with practical information
- Good practices and indigenous knowledge and technology with regard to organic food production
- Traditional food systems in different parts of the world
- Food security success stories and challenges

Sources of information

- Short documents could be written on specific themes and developing new practical guidance on how to undertake household food production
- Some people could take responsibility for different countries and collect local information, including research on household food production to enrich the quality of the Web site
- Links to selected Web sites and documents that are concerned with livelihood strategies, sociocultural factors in access to food and access to better markets

Suitable technology for low bandwidth users

This activity could be hosted by:

- Interested organizations such as the NGO Integrated Science for African Communities (ISAC), the Governor of the Bugiri district and the State Minister of Agriculture in Uganda
- FAO headquarters and regional offices, or other organizations as part of or complementing other forms of initiative

Possible sources of funding

- Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- National and local governments in Africa
- Organizations at the national and local level in Uganda, such as ISAC, where the Web site could be started, also benefiting from local and national government networking

Proposed names for the Web site

- Pro-poorest household food production
- Food Security Success Story Web Site (FSSSW)
- Household Food Access Web Site (HFAW)

29 contributions from nine countries. Key contributors include:

- Violet Mugalavai, Moi University, Kenya
- Prakash Shrestha, Nepal



LINKING FOOD AID AND PRO-POOR GROWTH

Topic raiser: Mahgoub Emad Ahmed, Agricultural Economic and Policy Research Centre, Agricultural Research Corporation, the Sudan.

Issue: how to make food aid a tool for pro-poor growth.

Discussion content

Participants discussed the advantages and drawbacks of food aid, focusing on how to make it more effective.

ISSUES RAISED

The recommended role of food aid

- Food aid should be seen as a supportive remedial action, allowing the survival of the affected community and thereby achieving the necessary adjustments to get through a short-term shock
- Food aid can be a stopgap measure for reducing the onset of rapid food deficits and should help communities and development agencies look beyond the short term with the aim of reducing the deficits

Suggestions for making food aid interventions more effective

- Put in place different ways of utilizing food aid to address deficits and strengthen a community's resilience
- Accompany food aid with proper and robust nutrition and health interventions to ensure food and nutrition security for affected communities
- Understand global dynamics in agricultural, energy and financial markets in order to position food aid interventions within those dynamics
- Gather open-minded information prior to and during interventions on possible or emerging impacts
 - Identify the merchants and influential persons who stand to gain some benefits from food aid and clearly understand their interests
 - Put beneficiary countries and communities at the centre of the food aid process and make them fully aware of the effects and issues associated with food aid so they have a clear understanding whether to accept it or seek other options
 - Call on governments and authorities supported by independent research to determine the exact location of food aid, adopting stringent regulations on donors and aid agencies to ensure that maximum care is taken to reduce the negative impact of food aid on the target communities
- Carry out more research on the data to be collected and the analytical method to be used for analysing the relationship between food aid, poverty and pro-poor growth
- Target the most needy people – provide food aid in kind in the case of foodgrains and in cash for education, health and other services
- Carry out further investigations on the role of food aid in promoting growth

17 contributions from nine countries. Key contributors include:

- François Leonardi, FAO, Zimbabwe
- Walter M. Mwasaa, CARE International, Kenya

Discussion No. 25, from 18 September to 4 November 2008



FOOD SECURITY AND THE HUMAN RIGHT TO FOOD – GOING ON PARALLEL TRACKS OR CONVERGING?

Topic raiser: Dubravka Bojić Bultrini, Legal Consultant, FAO Right to Food Unit.

Facilitator: Federica Donati, Human Rights Officer, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Switzerland.

Purpose: pool experiences in the practical application of a human rights-based approach to food security at national and local levels and find practical ways to promote the convergence between the right to food, food security and development.

Discussion content

Participants identified several challenges and opportunities in the application of the right to food (RtF) approach to food security (FS). They suggested concrete actions to strengthen the linkages between the RtF movement and FS practitioners. Five country experiences and eight reference papers were shared.

The outputs of the discussion were used in the Right to Food Forum organized by FAO from 1 to 3 October 2008.

PARTICIPANTS' COMMENTS

Main challenges in applying a rights-based approach (RBA) to food security (FS)

- FSN information is not used well for targeting vulnerable groups while undertaking rights-based programmes
- There are missing elements in human rights and FS practice
 - **Accountability mechanisms** to bridge the RtF and FS approach are often extremely costly and time consuming, especially for the poor, even where they do exist
 - **Well-organized planning** based on clear goals for halting malnutrition and a clear vision of how this is to be accomplished to include elements of both RtF and FS
 - **Adequate monitoring mechanisms** – while monitoring of development outcomes has improved considerably during the past ten years, far less progress has been achieved in monitoring the quality of processes
 - **Communication strategies** for raising awareness and educating those with a right to food

Interrelated relationship between RBA and FS

- RtF provides a yardstick for assessing government performance and establishes the rights of persons to challenge and hold governments to account for their actions
- The Food Security Information System (FSIS) is an important means to identify specific vulnerable groups in society to which RBA should be applied
- Government commitment towards the protection of FS is a necessary condition for the achievement of RtF
- RtF provides a more influential strategic possibility of influencing public policy with regard to the development of “joined-up” food policy and the eradication of hunger

PARTICIPANTS' MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

Measures for applying RBA to FS

- Identify the common features of RBA and FS relevant to the reduction of hunger and malnutrition, focusing on how they are mutually supportive
- Improve the RtF and RBA with the FS concept for a more holistic approach that promotes people's civil, political and socio-economic rights
- Make FS assessments and rights-based programmes part of any planning for ending hunger and malnutrition
- Establish accountability mechanisms
- Regular monitoring by government agencies and other entities with a view to improving and/or adjusting policy/law implementation
- Monitoring of compliance of regulation (e.g. labour and food safety inspection)
- Administrative recourse mechanisms (e.g. complaint mechanisms through administrative channel)
- Translate RtF into concrete and understandable entitlements to make accountability mechanisms work Make it incumbent upon the judiciary and the legislature to ensure that actions by the responsible arms of government protect the population's RtF and ensure FS by respecting specific obligations at three levels of jurisdiction: state, subnational and community and household levels
- Empowerment and participation of rights holders may create social demand and mobilization which may, in turn, motivate the relevant power structures to take action
- Educate professionals in the legal profession and the justice system, as well as health care professionals, teachers, social workers, agriculturalists and those managing financial portfolios about the application of RtF strategies for achieving FS
- Promote policy advocacy on RBA and RBA applied to FS

Proposed actions to encourage the relationship between the RtF movement and FS practitioners

- **Assessment and monitoring** – FS practitioners should lend their expertise to the RtF movement in the conduct and analysis of assessments monitoring the socio-economic status of specific vulnerable groups claiming to be victims of human rights violations, in particular RtF. Concrete actions should be taken.
 - A good place to coordinate action worldwide with a programme linking RtF lawyers and FS practitioners would be the FAO RtF Secretariat or even the FAO FIVIMS Secretariat
 - Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) by the Food and Nutrition Technical Assistant (FANTA), currently piloted around the world by FAO, should be viewed as an opportunity to include the opinions of rights holders
 - The hungry and the malnourished should be active participants in monitoring the programme.
- **Capacity building:** FS experts take the RTF/RBA on board to build capacity among national and subnational government staff, e.g. through a forum in which parties from all sectors of society can participate in drafting national legislation on RtF.
- Application of the power tools that enable productive engagements between poor farmers and technocrats in order to mobilize and empower the hungry and the malnourished



32 discussions from 12 countries. Key contributors include:

- René Verduijn, Independent Researcher, South Africa
- Gbolagade Ayoola, Professor of Agricultural Economics, University of Makurdi, Nigeria
- George Kent, Professor, University of Hawaii, United States of America
- Joseph Opio-Odongo, formerly UNDP, Kampala, Uganda

Discussion No. 26, from 23 September to 6 November 2008



RESPONDING TO THE CHALLENGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS LINKAGES TO FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

Topic raiser and facilitator: Stéphane Jost, Liaison Officer, FAO Environment, Climate Change and Bioenergy Division.

Purpose: collect success stories and lessons learned on strategies for communication and awareness raising on the effects of climate change, adaptation to climate change and variability and climate-change mitigation measures at the small-scale farmer level.

Discussion content

Participants discussed the impacts of climate change and agriculture's effects. They shared different successful initiatives and strategies in combating climate change. Thirteen reference papers and sources of information on climate change were shared.

The discussion outputs were used to prepare FAO's participation in the 14th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol.

SUCCESS STORIES, STRATEGIES AND INITIATIVES IN ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE

Biochar in soils: an innovative technique to fight global warming

GoodPlanet/Action Carbone, together with GEO, an Indian NGO, are building knowledge on an innovative measure called Biochar to fight global warming and improve soil fertility and therefore increase crop yields. Action Carbone finances a Biochar project aimed at small-scale farmers in India. Carbonized materials (biochar) obtained from the chemical decomposition of organic matter can maintain high levels of soil organic matter and available nutrients in anthropogenic soils. Biochar has been considered to counteract global warming by sequestering carbon in soils, becoming a carbon-negative strategy, while enhancing agricultural practices and delivering other socio-economic and environmental benefits.

Organic agriculture

This reduces carbon dioxide emissions and helps achieve sustainability in agriculture. Successful organic farming projects in India include those of the NGO Padakhep Manabik Unnayan Kendra: Integrated Rice-Duck Farming in the year 2001; the new Feromon trap technology against insect pests of vegetable crops and producing organic fruits in homestead projects; short duration high temperature-tolerant rice varieties for Kharif II and System of Rice Intensification (SRI) for the Boro season in wide areas under the Disaster Risk Management Programme.

FAO tools for trade in organic agricultural products

- Equitool is a guide to help decision-makers assess whether an organic production and processing standard applicable in one region of the world is equivalent to another organic standard. This tool facilitates trade while also safeguarding organic production according to local socio-economic and agroecological conditions.
- IROCB (International Requirements for Organic Certification Bodies) is a minimum set of performance requirements for organic certification bodies that will enable import of products certified under foreign control systems.

The FAO Livelihood Adaptation to Climate Change (LACC) Project, Bangladesh aims to improve adaptive capacity to climate variability and disaster risk reduction processes and capacities for sustainable food and livelihood security in drought prone and coastal regions of Bangladesh. The project promotes notably "Climate field schools" where farmers learn how to adapt to climate change and also about energy-efficient stoves that save fuel consumption by 30 to 40 percent.

19 contributions from ten countries. Key contributors include:

- Ruy Korscha Anaya de la Rosa, Carbon Offset Project Manager, GoodPlanet/Action Carbone NGO, France
- Joseph Opio-Odongo, formerly UNDP, Uganda
- Shaikh Tanveer Hossain, Padakhep Manabik Unnayan Kendra NGO, Bangladesh

Discussion No. 27, from 16 October to 7 November 2008



LOOKING AT THINGS DIFFERENTLY WHILE ADDRESSING FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION ISSUES

Topic raiser and facilitator: Andrew MacMillan, former Director of the FAO Field Operations Division.

Issue: innovative perspectives and the identification of “win-win” opportunities are required for building public support and for more effectiveness in the fight against hunger and malnutrition, especially in the context of the global financial crisis.

Discussion content

Participants shared insights, experiences and concrete cases of innovative perspectives and approaches that have contributed or can potentially contribute effectively to reduce food insecurity and malnutrition. They made a thorough analysis of gaps in the way FSN issues have been addressed and made several recommendations on how to “look and do things” differently. The discussion pooled a set of proposed actions, four case studies and nine reference papers.

ISSUES RAISED

Recommended perspectives in addressing FSN issues

- Enhance multisectoral and multidisciplinary approaches by crossing disciplinary boundaries, using effective multisectoral teams, building bridges and partnerships not only among individuals but also among institutions
- Create opportunities for communities to find their own solutions by themselves
- Mobilize non-traditional partners in development work (e.g. work with grandmothers on child nutrition)
- Make use of the crisis to introduce changes

Potential win-win opportunities for investing in reducing hunger and malnutrition

- People’s need for food can be translated into expanded local demand for small-scale producers and, in turn, generate expanded employment opportunities
- “Homegrown school-based feeding programmes” could be a way of improving child nutrition, school attendance and educational performance, and of stimulating expanded local production of food by small-scale farmers who would benefit by a new source of reliable demand for their products

Cases of innovative approaches

- The Mwanamujimu (healthy child) Nutrition Clinic in Makerere University, Uganda is a successful initiative with strong visionary leadership and effective teamwork
- Working with grandmothers on child malnutrition in India and some parts of Africa



Discussion No. 30, from 2 February to 24 March 2009



DO POPULATION DYNAMICS AGGRAVATE FOOD AND NUTRITION INSECURITY? MONITORING CHANGE IN COMPLEX TIMES

Topic raiser: Charles Teller, Visiting Scholar, Population Reference Bureau, United States of America.

Issue: what are the recent impacts of population dynamics on FSN, who are the most affected and what are the policy and programme responses?

Discussion content

With 11 contributions from three countries, participants shared information and insights on the impact of population dynamics and suggested appropriate programme responses. Nine reference papers were pooled.

ISSUES RAISED

Points to be taken in account when undertaking research/analysis on population issues

- It is difficult for political bodies to take long-term issues, such as those of population, into account
- The traditional geographic divisions of Africa, Asia and Latin America are not adequate when dealing with issues such as food requirements – finer geographic detail would be more helpful in establishing dietary patterns
- The main demographic driving factors for food requirements should be not only population growth but also changes in dietary patterns that might be affected by increases in prices and changes in poverty levels

Suggestions

- To influence policies, an adequate communication of findings/analysis on population and food security is needed
 - Communication through many channels such as the Web, media dissemination, workshops, etc. to “feed” policy-makers with digestive data that correspond to their needs
 - Involving policy-makers in the research process
- To be effective, recommendations/suggestions made by research/projects should be specific about who should undertake the suggested actions, under what authority they operate, what management bodies they use, and with what resources





SHARING INNOVATIVE AND FLEXIBLE CAPACITY-BUILDING PRACTICES FOR DEVELOPMENT

Topic raiser and facilitator: Umesh Chandra Pandey, Knowledge Management Director, School of Good Governance and Policy Analysis, India.

Purpose: collect innovative and flexible capacity-building development practices.

Discussion content

Participants shared several good practices and successful initiatives in capacity development. The definition of capacity development was also revisited.

Twelve reference papers and sources of capacity-building materials were shared.

ISSUES RAISED

Suggested approaches for capacity development

- Adopt a people-centred, flexible and innovative approach
 - Recognize communities' potential for shaping their own destinies and enable them to own, operate and manage an integrated information system that provides essential information for strategic actions to achieve collectively envisioned sustainable livelihood goals
- Tailor capacity development programmes to community priorities, particularly when certain innovative practices are "imported"

Good capacity development methods/practices

- Village Knowledge Centres and Village Resource Centres initiated by the M S Swaminathan Research Foundation in India
- Local-level Integrated Information Systems (LIIS) supported by UNDP's Capacity Development Group in Uganda, Kenya and Ghana, which enable communities to (i) be informed on key issues of interest and concern; (ii) use the information to engage in evidence-based lobbying and advocacy so they can influence local and national policies; and (iii) use the information to initiate development programmes aimed at achieving sustainable livelihoods
- www.infonet-biovision.org is a farmer information platform initiative in Kenya where an awareness campaign to introduce farmer groups to the site through Internet cafés, etc. has been started and invites similar introductions at any Farmer Field School (FFS) within reasonable distance of Internet connectivity
- Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), India, collaborates with NGOs to enhance the reach of its academic programmes in remote and rural areas, largely using community radios, telecasts, video conferencing and other satellite-based delivery mechanisms
- Participatory technology development (PTD) in India builds the capacities of the community to innovate and explore suitable technologies by (i) documentation of indigenous technical knowledge and (ii) initiating the PTD process to find solutions to problems
- Farmer Field Schools (FFS) provide season-long training conducted at the field level, whereby proven technologies can be replicated in any area
- In Rwanda, the Government has formulated an ICT (Information and communication technology) policy framework with the main objective of increased access to agricultural information through various means
 - The info-bus concept where buses traverse rural areas, acting as mobile information centres
 - National radio and television programmes run by the Ministry of Agriculture and focusing mainly on youth, who are advantaged in modern technologies
- Free e-learning courses aimed at professionals in various fields related to food and agriculture are offered by FAO and also contain "resources for trainers" that can be customized to local training needs
- Knowledge networks are particularly recommended for sharing knowledge in homestead food production
- Shared e-learning resources at the international level – the customization and translation of training materials into local languages can enhance the outreach of e-learning programmes

30 contributions from 11 countries. Key contributors include:

- Joseph Opio-Odongo, Director, Sustainable Development Services, Uganda
- Ananya S Guha, IGNOU Institute of Vocational Education and Training, India

Discussion No. 32, from 18 March to 30 April 2009



FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION SECURITY – WHAT IS THE PROBLEM AND WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE

Topic raiser and facilitator: Urban Jonsson, the Owls International Consultancy Group, Sweden.

Issue: what is the difference and what is the relationship between food security and nutrition security? What are the generic causes of child malnutrition, how are they related to each other and to the final nutritional outcome?

Discussion content

Participants shared their understanding of the terms FS and NS, highlighting the relationships between the two and the need to adapt current approaches to address the close linkages between them. The main causes of child malnutrition were also identified and agreed upon.

ISSUES RAISED

Issues in understanding and addressing FS and NS

- In practice, FS is not always understood comprehensively since it sometimes does not give adequate emphasis to the importance of food for better nutrition – policy- and decision-makers often give higher priority to food production, neglecting nutritional objectives
- The definition of FS was changed after its introduction in UNICEF's conceptual framework, including "utilization" (definition of FS by the World Food Summit 1996), which contributed significantly to current confusion about the logical difference between FS and NS
- FS and NS are closely interrelated and may appear to be in a vicious cycle, but at a different magnitude, according to the context

Relationship between FS and NS

- Food insecurity at the household level is one of the three main underlying causes of malnutrition for nutrition security cannot be achieved without food security at this level
- All current acceptable definitions of food security imply nutrition but only in the sense that household FS means that if the household's food is consumed according to the dietary requirements of all members their dietary/nutritional needs will be met
- Nutrition insecurity may increase the risk of food insecurity – there is a short- and long-term feedback from malnutrition to the capacity of providing food, health and care
- Nutritional status can be improved even if food insecurity and poverty continue to exist, through improved "nutrition supportive" decisions and behaviour, or measures such as fortification of certain chosen foods
- Comprehensive FS analyses include nutrition indicators such as the FAO Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping System (FIVIMS) or WFP's Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA)
- Multisectoral programmes with decentralized capacities and decision-making responsibilities might be in the best position to address food insecurity and nutrition problems most effectively

Factors affecting child nutrition

- Food security of the household and household food distribution
- Environment and infrastructures
- Educational level of parents and women's status, and knowledge of care-givers about adequate diets for children
- Dietary diversity
- Food content, which has to be age specific
- Hygiene, disease control, frequent infections
- Maternal malnutrition and ill health
- The UNICEF causal model gives a comprehensive framework of the generic causes of child malnutrition, which should be promoted further to the grassroots level

16 contributions from eight countries. Key contributors include:

- Silvia Kaufmann, FSN Officer, FAO, Afghanistan
- Wenche Barth Eide, Co-director, International Project on the Right to Food in Development (IPRFD), University of Oslo, Norway



GENDER AND CULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF VULNERABILITY TO FOOD SECURITY IN THE HIV/AIDS CONTEXT

Topic raiser: Mariame Maiga, Ph.D. Researcher, Wageningen University and Research Centre, the Netherlands.

Issue: how cultural systems influence gender roles, women's sexuality, rural livelihoods and food and nutrition security in the HIV/AIDS context.

Discussion content

With five contributions from five countries, participants shared insights on the vulnerability of women to food insecurity and HIV/AIDS. They shared three country cases and five reference papers on the influence of cultural systems on women's vulnerability.

ISSUES RAISED

Considerations when assessing the impact of HIV/AIDS on culturally defined gender roles

- The nature of food insecurity and the character of its different impact on the population, especially women
- The nature of cultural vulnerability in the country and how this has been changing over time
- The cultural and structural factors that perpetuate women's vulnerability to both HIV/AIDS and food insecurity and malnutrition
- How the increasing incidence of HIV/AIDS and number of people with full-blown AIDS divert women's productive time from food production to patient care, thereby reducing their labour productivity, yet they still may have disproportionate responsibility for food production as a result of the differential gender roles in society
- The environment-energy relationships for the majority of the population in a country and the manner in which they may turn into an energy crisis compel people to prefer cooking foods that are less energy demanding, which has serious implications for household nutrition
- The increasing distances covered by women in search of biomass energy also reduces the time they would routinely devote to care, food production and food processing

Country cases on the cultural dimensions of women's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS

- **Côte d'Ivoire.** Kinship systems such as matrilinearity and patrilinearity cause and increase women's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and its impacts on food and nutrition security by imposing upon women to have children to protect the sustainability of kingship and chieftaincy, exposing them to sexual freedom (several partners) before marrying. In the patrilineal system, girls and women are not allowed to decide about their sexual life and are most of the time sexually passive. The matrilineal and patrilineal systems both lead to a strong feminization of HIV/AIDS in native and migrant communities.
- **India.** It is generally perceived by patriarchal societies that women are the carriers of HIV/AIDS. Males generally take no precautions such as condoms and women's consent is not taken into account during sexual intercourse. Furthermore, sex education is not considered seriously in mainstream education. Premature childbirth and early marriages together with gender-based norms affect women's overall nutritional status.
- **Sudan.** Woman's vulnerability to AIDS differs from the north to the south Sudan. Women in the north have been relegated to the role of legal minors with the application of Sharia law to govern all aspects of social and political life. Women are not allowed to decide upon their sexual life. Men can have sexual relations with more than one woman, because Islamic law permits men to marry up to four wives, and they are thus the first cause of transfer of HIV/AIDS. In the south, customary practices and denial about the incidence of HIV/AIDS have given rise to a casual approach to the disease and women are more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. Polygamy is widely practised in the southern Sudan, where men tend to have more sexual partners than women. Currently, awareness levels on HIV/AIDS and sexuality are extremely low and communities do not appear to appreciate the seriousness of the disease.



FOOD SECURITY IN ARID AND SEMI-ARID LANDS: THE CHALLENGES OF SUSTAINABLE USE OF SCARCE RESOURCES

Topic raiser and facilitator: Hezekiah G. Muriuki, Consultant, Livestock Development and Policy, Kenya.

Purpose: collect best practices and success stories on how to use the resources in the arid and semi-arid lands in a sustainable manner.

Discussion content

Participants recognized the role of pastoralism in the sustainable development of arid and semi-arid lands. Many suggestions regarding approaches and measures to support pastoralists were put forward. The discussion pooled six success stories and best practices as well as eight references.

PARTICIPANTS' MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

Pastoralism is the most effective livelihood and land-use system in arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs) to help ensure food security and there are several measures and approaches suggested to support pastoralists

- Empower pastoralist communities to influence policy and programming
- Enhance the capacity of pastoralist communities to make informed decisions
- Recognize and protect pastoralists' land and resource rights
- Facilitate the mobility of livestock to cope with ASAL constraints, which means that decision-making should be devolved to institutions that include, and possibly are based on, customary institutions
- Manage transboundary issues and resource-use conflicts, so that the inevitable cross-border movement of pastoralists and their livestock become orderly
- Adapt systems for measuring natural resources and production models according to ASAL conditions – all systems for measuring “natural resources” on the range (e.g. precipitation, biomass, carrying capacity, etc.) rely on the meaningful possibility of average values but in ASALs driven by unpredictable variability, applying such systems/models of agricultural production that rely on uniformity and regularity is problematic
- Improve market access to enable the population in the ASAL to market livestock products and other valuable products that can be obtained from ASAL resources
- Manage vulnerability, especially to both poverty and climate change – vulnerability-proofing of macroeconomic and other policies vis-à-vis the livelihood needs of the pastoralists is essential
- Conserve local livestock breeds with the key role of livestock keepers
- Document and maximize the use of indigenous knowledge in managing resources and production in ASALs

16 contributions from eight countries. Key contributors include:

- Silvia Kaufmann, FSN Officer, FAO, Afghanistan
- Wenche Barth Eide, Co-director, International Project on the Right to Food in Development (IPRFD), University of Oslo, Norway

Discussion No. 36, from 4 to 30 June 2009

SUCCESS STORIES AND BEST PRACTICES

- **The success story of the WoDaaBe herders in the Niger.** The WoDaaBe rear most of the Bororo zebu breed, the most exported cattle breed in the country. The herders' key to success is a complex breeding and management system aimed at minimizing all disturbances in the production environment (including human and other cattle). The highly unpredictable variability of the Sahelian environment is turned by the WoDaaBe into a key resource for production. The production system uses strategic mobility and competent teams of animals for targeting and exploiting the short-lived concentrations of nutrients characteristic of the Sahelian range.
- **SAVES** (Society of Animal, Veterinary and Environmental Scientists) in Pakistan. Created in 2005, SAVES has been organizing livestock keepers, ensuring their rights, helping to maintain a livestock-friendly ecology, working on the characterization and documentation of local livestock breeds and documenting and validating indigenous knowledge about the breeding, feeding and health management of the breeds.
- **Reto-o-Reto Project** (<http://www.reto-o-reto.org/>). The project is designed to impart knowledge and create relationships to enable poor pastoral and agropastoral communities to influence local and national land-use policies affecting their livelihoods (such as access to pasture and water) and the sustainability of biodiversity (wildlife) in the areas in which they live.
- **The market access programme** of the Drylands Development Centre (DDC) in Nairobi has yielded valuable experiences and lessons in market access for pastoralists as well as on the management of transboundary issues and resource-use conflicts.
- **Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards (LEGS) Project.** This project establishes a set of international guidelines and standards to promote a livelihoods-based approach to disaster response that sees livestock as a key livelihood asset.
- **West Timor: permanent raised beds – good practice in land management.** Raised beds greatly enhance the probability of attaining both wet and dry season crops each year. The construction of raised beds prior to the wet season in lowland areas and maintenance of permanent structures thereafter enable crops to be sown at the onset of the wet season and to anticipate the sowing of drought-resistant crops such as sorghum in the dry season, taking advantage of the water stored in the beds. These concepts were further expanded and developed on the island of Lombok, Indonesia between 2001 and 2007 in an ACIAR (Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research) project.



14 contributions from nine countries. Key contributors include:

- Dr Abdul Raziq, President, SAVES NGO, Pakistan
- Ced Hesse, Senior Officer, International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), United Kingdom

Discussion No. 37, from 15 June to 10 July 2009



FOOD SECURITY AND CAPABILITIES APPROACH: FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

Topic raiser: Thais Bassinello, Masters Student, Human Development and Food Security, Roma Tre University, Italy.

Purpose: collect (i) information about organizations or individuals that have used the capabilities approach when designing, implementing or assessing food security interventions and (ii) comments on the capability versus livelihoods approach debate.

Discussion content

With 13 contributions from seven countries, participants shared comments on the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the capability approach and the livelihoods approach. They shared information about projects using the capability approach. Nearly 40 reference papers on this approach were shared.

ISSUES RAISED

Drawbacks of the livelihood approach compared with the capability approach

- The livelihood approach focuses particularly on the availability of commodities, while the way in which individuals can benefit from the resources matters more. Development interventions need to focus on improving adequate standards of living and eventually improving the capability set rather than merely raising income. Shifting the focus from “income poverty” to “capability deprivation” would help to understand this concept and foster the freedom of human lives from poverty.
- The livelihood approach ignores the multidimensional nature of decision-making and neglects the power relations that underpin the livelihood experiences of impoverished people. The human development and capability approach has a clear understanding of power structures.
- India is an example of how gender equality has to be considered when discussing both the capability and livelihood approach: extensive surveys show that Indian women do not have the freedom to earn a livelihood. In such cases, freedom to earn a livelihood is essential to expand women’s capability.
- There is sufficient evidence that a person earning a livelihood may not have any other freedom, thereby missing out on the chance of capability development. Food security is a basic capability for everyone, which may be the outcome of livelihood or, in some cases, a social security measure.
- With the capability approach to agency-oriented development, it is possible to supplement a focus on food with an emphasis on agency and capability as the means and ends of development as freedom.

Criticism of the capability approach

Based on the idea that the poor have deficits of some kind, which need to be redressed, the capability approach deflects attention from the role of the limiting social system in which the victim is embedded. In viewing hunger as primarily a matter of deficits among its victims, it is viewed mainly as a technical problem rather than a political one.



Discussion No. 38, from 25 June to 24 July 2009



AGRICULTURAL BIODIVERSITY AND FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

Topic raiser: Luigi Guarino, Senior Officer, Global Crop Diversity Trust.

Issue: agricultural biodiversity is not given the consideration it deserves when addressing FSN issues.

Discussion content

Participants identified gaps related to the lack of attention to agricultural biodiversity. They made several suggestions for the way forward. They also shared three good practices and 12 reference papers.

ISSUES RAISED

- Agrobiodiversity should be addressed much more in FSN programmes, including:
 - incorporating landscape issues where plants and animals are integrated into mixed systems, plus stronger participation of local knowledge-holders in both these areas
 - looking at non-timber forest products (in forest communities)
 - biodiversity from aquatic resources (e.g. rice systems, mangroves)
 - looking at greater use of local varieties and plants
- Broaden the scope of biodiversity to encompass both the macro and global policy levels that address relations between the environment and development
- Apply a multistakeholder approach to agrobiodiversity – the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, as well as other government ministries, particularly the Ministry of Education, and NGO agencies should be involved
- Make information accessible and affordable at the local level
- Produce and disseminate informative documents written in a simple language that outline best practices and information about biodiversity and its importance in achieving FSN security
- Promote organic farming and traditional agricultural methods
- Promote the use of traditional leafy vegetables, cereals and pulses
- Consider food consumption patterns as a starting-point to link agriculture, health and nutrition, and focus on biodiversity and sustainability
- Investigate the scientific basis for local perceptions, to set the agenda for agricultural biodiversity, and include these points in the curricula and training of agricultural extension and health workers in order to have a mind-set and focus at field level favouring agricultural biodiversity and FSN
- Develop indigenous small and medium enterprise- (SME) oriented food industry

Good practices

- Promotion of African traditional leafy green vegetables in Kenya
- Creating compensation for ecosystem services by the PESAL (payments for environmental services from agricultural landscapes) project led by FAO
- Organic farming in India

14 contributions from five countries. Key contributors include:

- Kevin Gallagher, FAO, Sierra Leone
- El Fadil Ismail, Professor, Agricultural Research Corporation, the Sudan

Discussion No. 5, from 7 January to 5 February 2008



LOOKING BACK TO EFFECTIVE RURAL PRACTICES... DID WE MISS SOMETHING?

Topic raiser and facilitator: Walter Mwasaa, CARE International, Sierra Leone.

Issue: why development policies have not had the desired effect in reducing the number of malnourished/poor – have we overlooked something?

Discussion content

Participants discussed the reasons leading to the often disappointing results of development projects. They shared evidence of traditional rural practices that could prove useful and the ways to integrate them with modern techniques. Six main reasons were identified during the discussion and 23 reference papers were pooled.

PARTICIPANTS' MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

Good rural practices that have been discarded

- Traditional practices in post-harvest crop management, livestock disease management, crop husbandry. Examples include: use of maize cob powder in storing maize harvest, use of ash in storing sweet potatoes, use of tephrosia to control ticks in livestock, use of traditional knowledge to preserve wetlands, forests etc
- Food banks
- Traditional nomadic pastoralist livelihood systems in drylands
- Diversification of cultivation and loss of nutritional orientation of agriculture in favour of monocultures and high input agriculture

What is missing towards the goal of sustainable rural livelihoods

- Lack of proper planning and thinking ahead for future challenges, including a need for continuous capacity building on the use of modern equipment by farmers
- Wrong models applied in wrong contexts, such as agricultural extension system encouraging specialisation rather than diversity, heavy dependence on purchased inputs and ample use of farm machinery, based on the assumption that what is good for the large farmer must be good for small holders
- Lack of flexible thinking: often only one course of action or one model for solving the problem have been pursued
- Lack of values, customs and traditions
- Ineffective evaluation systems in donor and investor projects
- Limitations posed by environmental and development agencies

Opportunities and good practices

- Organic and sustainable agriculture represents reclaiming and updating older practices and features by combining traditional and scientific knowledge
- Modern practices blended with traditional customs
- “While looking back can be instructive, we need to avoid being nostalgic about it”

14 contributions from 12 countries. Key contributors include:

- Kevin Gallagher, FAO, Sierra Leone
- George Kent, Political Science Professor, University of Hawaii, United States of America
- Edward Mutandwa, Rwanda Development Agency, Rwanda
- Falana Adetunji, Federal Ministry of Health, Nigeria
- Muhammad Shoaib Ahmedani, PMAS Arid Agriculture University, Pakistan

Discussion No. 41, from 1 to 21 September 2009



RECENT THINKING ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Topic raiser and facilitator: Jan Michiels, FAO, Rome.

Issue: what are the necessary components of a modern rural development strategy and is there a universally valid recipe for success?

Discussion content

Participants expressed consensus on the need for a holistic multidimensional rural development strategy and discussed the impediments still in place, such as lack of coordination and a focus on merely technical issues. Anything short of a true paradigm change was deemed insufficient to improve the future impact of rural development projects. The discussion pooled three country cases and six reference papers.

ISSUES RAISED

Essential components of a modern rural development strategy

- Rural development approaches need to be comprehensive
- A three-dimensional approach is needed, including a “structural”, “behavioural” and “time” dimension
- A modern rural development strategy needs to shift from intensive agricultural production to ecofriendly development
- Adequate staffing with a sufficient number of people on the ground is vital
- The quality of the facilitating agency is of paramount importance
- It is important to protect the characteristics of rural areas and avoid converting them to urban settings

Evidence of impact and lessons learned

- Evidence of the impact of the paradigm change in rural development is hard to find since the majority of past rural development programmes were focused only on technical aspects
- Thinking has not evolved and continues to promote rural development from a strictly agricultural approach
- Rural areas still have serious problems of self-sustainability such as migration
- Each rural area has diverse socio-economic and territorial characteristics and problems, making the creation of a universally valid rural development strategy impossible
- Integration and coordination of the efforts of various agencies and actors in a framework is essential
- The administration of funding needs streamlining since there are too many funds responding to too many administrations

12 contributions from seven countries. Key contributors include:

- Anura Widana, New Zealand
- Zeidy Chunga Liu, University of Córdoba, Spain

Discussion No. 42, from 4 September to 9 October 2009



HOW TO FEED THE WORLD IN 2050?

Topic raiser and facilitator: Hartwig de Haen, former Assistant Director-General of FAO Economic and Social Department.

Issue: how can we ensure that enough food is available for and accessible to a growing world population? What needs to be done and what needs to be changed in order to feed a population of 9 billion in 2050?

Discussion content

Participants expressed a wide range of observations on the current global situation of food and agriculture and the ways to move forward.

Contributions ranged from technical solutions to broader cross-cutting views on the food system as a whole, including global challenges such as climate change and biofuels. Many participants advocate a shift in paradigms in looking at the next 40 years, yet also urgently call for immediate action recognizing that business as usual is not an option.

ISSUES RAISED

Food is not feeding the poor now

- Hunger is an immediate urgent problem whose causes have not to do as much with availability as with access
- Access to food cannot be guaranteed simply through technical approaches to increasing global production
- No hunger is a precondition of development and this still needs to be fully understood by governments

Failures of the global food system and paradigm shifts needed

- Business as usual is not an option
- The core trends in the food system that dominates today have been driven by developments in OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries, with saturated markets and industrialized farming
- Hunger is being caused by fractures in the structure of our global society, free trade, fossil-fuelled agriculture, farm subsidies, unfair pricing policies and tariffs
- Using a multisectoral approach and understanding “from field to fork” as well as “from undernourished to overnourish” are mandatory
- Minimize competition between food and fuel through biofuel production based on crops that do not compete with food supply

Proposed approaches to production

- Need to shift away from large-scale, high-input, monoculture, conventional agriculture based on fossil fuel
- Alternative ways of production such as sustainable and organic systems need to be explored

Role of policy, governance and investments

- A more effective mobilization of governments to take action to eradicate hunger and malnutrition and ensure sustainable supply growth is necessary
- Governments should be accountable for engagements taken on food security issues
- In the direction of accountability, some steps are recognized within the right to food framework, as the Voluntary Guidelines not only remind governments of their obligations but also give them guidance and support on how to realize their obligations
- There is a clear need to spend more of the budget share on agricultural development for more and safe food production, given that investment in agriculture has been steadily declining in the percentage of national budgets since the 1970s



Role of stakeholders

- For formulating any convention, policy and strategy massive interactions are required among extended numbers of stakeholders
- The importance of poor farmers in the development (or lack of development) of developing countries has been too much neglected
- Women play a central role in providing food security among the poor and need to be extensively targeted and included in projects
- The private sector should be compelled to make its own contribution to development from its profits
- Individuals should stop waiting for government action and take their destiny into their own hands, forming pressure groups in the form of cooperative societies and prioritizing their needs

Nutrition is a key component

- Agricultural development programmes that aim to address food security solely via increased production of staple crops are insufficient for alleviating malnutrition: the importance of diet quality and diversity has to be recognized
- "Hidden hunger" or lack of micronutrient intake is a huge problem in disease-ridden areas, where people require food that is able to meet both their nutritional and micronutrient needs in order to withstand diseases

Role of consumption and dietary patterns

- Consumers are key actors and may be the most important drivers in the future
- The preference for foods of animal origin in developed countries causes large amounts of foodgrains to be used to feed cattle, thereby causing considerable wastage of grains
- There is a need to popularize locally important minor crops to ensure a more diversified and sustainable food supply
- Interest in local and organic foods and growing concerns about climate change are increasingly affecting local policies in affluent countries

Research and development, and extension

- There is a need to manage funds in an effective and efficient way and direct them towards research
- Post-harvest losses can be reduced via improved handling, preservation, storage, preparation and processing techniques
- Benefits of micro-organisms in agriculture and alternative fertilizer strategies
- Intellectual rights and patents should not be barriers to innovation, and the diffusion and exclusionary elements of patents affecting food security and climate change technologies should be removed to promote innovation beyond the control of a few players

Communication, information and education

- No programme to feed the world will succeed without education as the basis to empower consumers, smallholders, farmers and especially women
- To generate genuine political commitment, there is a need for a massive campaign aimed at raising popular awareness

Proposals for action

- Innovative use of information and communication technologies
- Enhancing the role of agriculture in other global debates, positioning it as a solution provider
- Strengthening agricultural education
- Measuring food production per capita
- Establishing a multistakeholder forum

The High-Level Expert Forum on How to Feed the World in 2050 took place at FAO headquarters on the 12-13 October 2009 with the aim to examine policy options that governments should consider adopting to ensure that the world population can be fed when it nears its peak of nearly 9.2 billion people in the middle of this century. The FSN Forum discussion was held in parallel to the organisation of this event and served as an input to the documents for the High-Level Expert Forum; these documents in turn provided an output to the November 2009 World Summit on Food Security.

73 contributions from 23 countries. Key contributors include:

- Andrew MacMillan, former Director of the FAO Field Operations Division, Italy
- Moleka Mosisi, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
- Charlotte Dufour, France
- Julien Custot, FAO, Italy
- Geoff Tansey, United Kingdom
- Daniel Zimmer, France
- Peter Steele, FAO, Egypt
- Brian Thompson & others, Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division, FAO, Italy



LAND GRAB OR DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY?

Topic raiser and facilitator: Denis Drechsler, FAO, Italy.

Issue: what risks and potentials does the practice of foreign direct investment in agriculture carry and what are its implications for food security?

Discussion content

Participants expressed their concern over foreign direct investment (FDI) in agriculture and argued in favour of a tight regulation of such practices because of the potential negative repercussions on land tenure and food security. However, development opportunities were also identified as the structural lack of capital in many developing countries limits investment in agriculture and these countries could, in such cases, benefit from foreign capital injection.

ISSUES RAISED

Land grab or development opportunity

- It is necessary to distinguish between FDI in agriculture aimed at the domestic or regional markets and FDI in agriculture aimed at exports.
- Whether FDI in agriculture is perceived as a “land grab” depends largely upon pre-existing local conditions.
- FDI in agriculture can provide tangible benefits and steps can be taken to ensure that they do.
- Scarcity of land creates potentially positive economic opportunities that can be positive for all, as well as risks, mostly for the rural poor.
- FDI in agriculture can raise sensitive sovereignty, social impact and environmental issues.

Issues and concerns

- Small farmers – not foreign entities – are the real and most strategic investors that governments should encourage and support.
- Large-scale and long-term displacement of small farmers from their land through FDI in agriculture because of insecurity of land tenure.
- Special accommodations given to overseas farmland investments often contradict domestic policies and are biased towards the foreign investor.
- Large-scale plantations employ intensive cultivation practices that could cause agricultural damage.
- Welfare increase of small farmers and landowners having leased their land to foreign agribusiness enterprises is often limited.

Should investments be regulated and how?

- Sound overall agricultural policy is required.
- It is necessary to ensure that the rights to land, or at least land tenure, are protected.
- It is the responsibility of the state to maximize the positive opportunities for the global benefit.
- Informed and well-balanced contracts between governments and investors and between investors and communities are key to the outcome.
- Formulation and implementation of international codes of conduct/guidelines for FDI in agriculture.
- Mitigation measures need to be factored in the FDI project.
- Investments need to be protected over time. If the risk of a wash-out is high, high returns will be required.

12 contributions from nine countries. Key contributors include:

- David Hallam, FAO, Italy
- Raul Q. Montemayor, Federation of Free Farmers Cooperative, the Philippines
- Patrick Chatenay, United Kingdom

THEME 4

AGRICULTURE, NATURAL RESOURCES
MANAGEMENT AND BIODIVERSITY

THE WAY FORWARD FOR SMALLHOLDER FARMERS

Topic raisers and facilitators: OP Rupela, Principal Scientist, International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) and Subhash Mehta, Devarao Shivaram Trust, India.

Issue: smallholder farmers represent a major part of the population and have been facing numerous problems. What is the way forward for these farmers and what are the implications, particularly for policy-making?

Discussion content

Participants identified the problems faced by small-scale farmers and made several suggestions for the way forward for these farmers. The discussion pooled several good practices, country cases and 19 reference papers.

ISSUES RAISED

Participants' main recommendations

- Empower farmers and mainstream their interests into policy-making
 - Engage farmers in finding and applying location-specific and affordable ways of improving their family FSN, based on an understanding of local food consumption patterns, deficiencies and the available options
 - Enable small farmers' participation throughout the policy cycle with a rights-based approach
 - Effectively link research and programme/project activities to policy-making (ref. Discussion No. 1)
 - Inform planning with farmers' viewpoint on their malnutrition/food security situation
 - Prioritize interventions and outcomes that can have most impact on FSN, based on an understanding of the causal process that can lead from improved agricultural production to improved FSN
- Offer a wide range of alternatives on and off the farm for small farmers
- Look at solutions that lie beyond farming system improvements (e.g. by broadening access of poor families to land and protecting widows' and children's land rights) and sensitize stakeholders on what is needed to impact positively on household FSN
- Learn from small farmers' success stories
- Promote sustainable agricultural practices, e.g. organic agriculture
- Organize smallholder farmers into groups, associations and cooperatives in order to improve their low economies of scale and their inability to meet market requirements
- Use custom-hiring, contract labour and contract farming to make small farming fast, time-saving and profitable
- Ensure access to a regular and predictable cash transfer for the hungry. Well-targeted and managed social security programmes, for instance, help translate need into effective demand and hence stimulate local markets

Good practices and success stories

- Effective methods to inform planning with farmers' viewpoint
 - problem trees that help community people identify the varied interlinked issues and how many different actions contribute to food and nutrition
 - compare the varying stakeholder views from various administrative levels using the UNICEF framework, giving equal weight to the voices of the different stakeholders
- The Producer Company (PC) concept has been adopted by farmer groups in India and consists in organizing small farmers as a business group but staffed by professionals, facilitated by interested government agencies
- The bio-intensive farming systems in Nepal and India have shown positive impacts on food security and household incomes of the farmers concerned
- In Andhra Pradesh, India, numerous organic villages have been developed with a women's leadership role through self-help groups
- Rice-duck farming in Bangladesh, particularly in the project "Integrated Rice-Duck Farming for Resource-Poor Farm Households" showed numerous benefits
- China has been successful in supporting smallholder farmers

33 contributions from 12 countries. Key contributors include:

- Charles Lagu, Livestock Production Scientist, National Agricultural Research Organization, Uganda
- George Kent, Political Science Professor, University of Hawaii, United States of America

Discussion No. 6, from 15 January to 22 February 2008



COMMUNITY FORESTRY AND FOOD SECURITY

Topic raiser: Denis Mahonghol, Forestry Engineer, FAO, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Issue: what would be the best mechanisms to anchor agricultural activities in a community forestry process?

Discussion content

With eight contributions from four countries, participants shared different experiences on community forestry. The discussion pooled 12 reference papers.

ISSUES RAISED

Market Analysis and Development (MA&D) approach

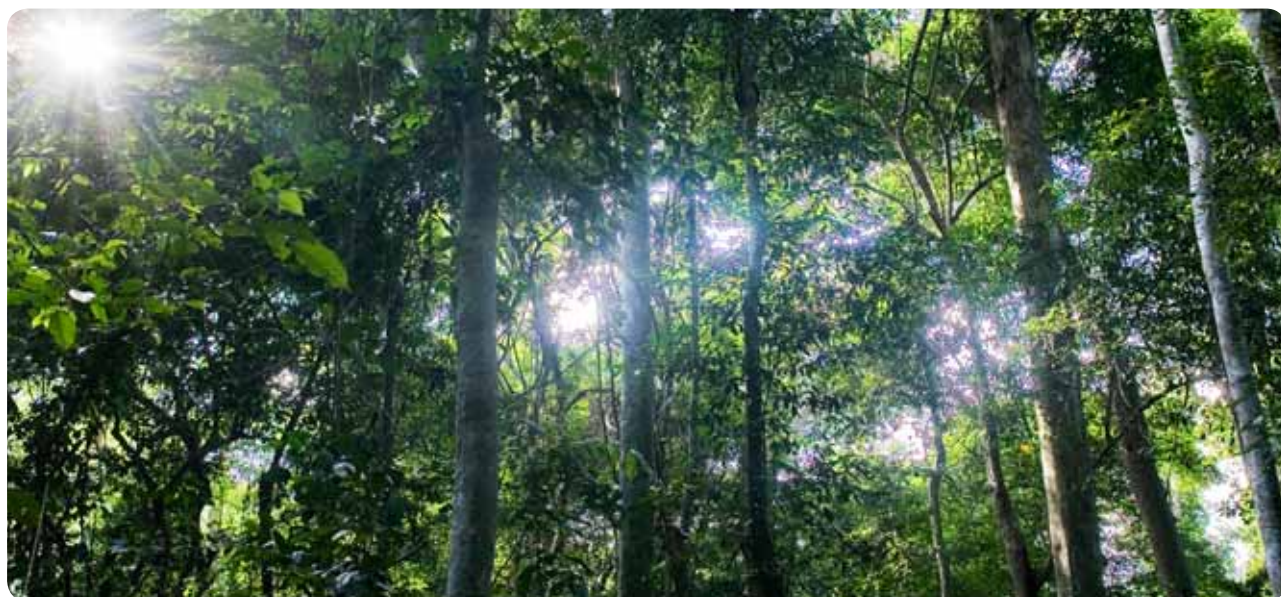
Identify and select viable enterprises that improve livelihoods and contribute to the conservation of forest biodiversity

Local forest management and small and medium forest enterprises (SMFEs)

These provide a viable and sustainable alternative to poverty reduction and forest conservation

Examples of Farmers' Forest Management Schools (FFMSs) and the MA&D approach applied to community forestry

- **Nigeria:** the National Programme for Food Security (NPFS) includes a subcomponent on agroforestry (modules, community forestry, development funds) with a special emphasis on the extension and training approach of the Farmer Field School (FFS)
- Dinder National Park in the **Sudan** integrates agroforestry into NPFS, giving support to enterprises based on alternative resources and/or services provided by the park, such as community-based tourism, and protecting park resources and conservation
- Farmer Field School in community forest management in Nepal is an approach to group learning and experimentation by forest user groups
- Community forestry in the **Gambia**
- Community-based forest enterprise development for improved livelihoods and biodiversity conservation at the Bwindi World Heritage site, Uganda



Discussion No. 8, from 17 March to 17 April 2008



GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS AND FOOD SECURITY

Topic raiser and facilitator: Kathryn James, Ph.D. candidate, Lancaster University, United Kingdom.

Purpose: collect (i) examples of the use of genetically modified (GM) crops by smallholder farmers and the advantages and disadvantages they have noticed in relation to conventional crops; (ii) examples of promotion of GM crops by multinational companies/ governments and others to small-scale farmers, specifically thinking of promises of higher yields and greater access to new markets; (iii) contact details of organizations or people who are aware or engaged in studies on the reach and rhetoric of multinational companies in relation to the slow spread of genetic crops.

Discussion content

Participants discussed and shared information and insights on the benefits and disadvantages of genetically modified (GM) crops for small-scale farmers. Seven country examples and ten reference papers were shared.

ISSUES RAISED

Benefits of GM food crops

- Potential to raise agricultural productivity
- Operational advantages, including timing and efficacy of weed control
- Genetically engineered (GE) crops could deliver benefits to small-scale farmers, but there was a large variance across cases, including exceptions where they were not effective

Criticisms of GM crops

- Most GM crops belong to just two traits – herbicide tolerance (HT) and insect resistance (Bt), which causes plants to synthesize their own insecticide, but there is no quality trait
- Risks of loss of markets, higher seed costs and lawsuits
- Various risks in growing the first generation GM crops, especially for the control of agriculture and food by few, powerful and uncontrollable companies
- Serious difficulties in evaluating and controlling risks associated with GM crops
- GM plants, especially Bt cotton, caused the apparition of resistant insects and the substitution of targeted pests by secondary and more serious pests
- Even when GM technologies generate benefits, there is a steady concentration of profits in fewer hands and the share of the overall benefits for small farmers is steadily reduced
- GM technology can lead to bad environmental and economic consequences

Related studies on GM crops

- International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) comprehensive review of the literature on the economic impact of GM crops in developing countries
- Workshop by Oxfam America and International Development Research Centre (IDRC) Canada with economic and social experts who have conducted case studies on the impact of particular GE crops on small-scale farmers in developing countries

Examples of the use of GM crops by smallholder farmers in seven countries

- Bolivia, China, Colombia, Honduras, India, the Philippines and South Africa

13 contributions from seven countries. Key contributors include:

- Michel Ferry, Institut national de la recherche agronomique, France
- Guillaume Gruere, International Food Policy Research Institute, United States of America

Discussion No. 10, from 31 March to 9 May 2008



BIOLOGICAL PESTICIDE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION

Topic raiser: Aude Viviane Goulivas, Biopesticide Project Team Leader, Côte d'Ivoire.

Purpose: collect advice, experiences and information regarding biopesticides.

Discussion content

With five contributions, participants shared relevant experiences, useful contacts and reference papers regarding biopesticides.

ISSUES RAISED

Recommendations

- Biopesticides are effective in managing pests only if farmers adopt proper preventive steps in the form of surveillance and management practices
- An input internalization model is most effective in helping farmers to gain control over resources as well as local knowledge and resources
- The institutional base of community-based organizations (grassroots extension systems managed by the community) such as the federations of women's self-help groups provides a good platform for scaling-up ecological farming practices such as the use of biopesticides
- The Indian model of neem kernel aqueous extract (NKAE) provides low-cost technology that could be adopted in West African countries, especially for resource-poor farmers, in the widescale application of neem-based pesticides in plant protection programmes

Experiences in researching and using biopesticides

- The Sustainable Agriculture Information Network (Sustainet) (<http://www.sustainet.org/index-en.html>) is working on the use of biopesticides in organic agriculture and providing related training
- The Non-Pesticidal Management (NPV) movement in Andhra Pradesh, India has been led by the Centre for Sustainable Agriculture (CSA) (<http://www.csa-india.org/index.htm>) for more than 15 years – biopesticides are made from neem and other plant species, and animal dung, urine and other products



Discussion No. 12, from 22 May to 14 June 2008



IMPROVING RICE PRODUCTION IN AFRICA

Topic raiser: Glenn Ashton, Ecogaia NGO, South Africa.

Purpose: gather views on new varieties and techniques to improve rice production in Africa.

Discussion content

With five contributions, participants commented on the role of rice in Africa and approaches to improve food security through improving production productivity.

Participants' main comments

- An increase in rice production does not automatically improve people's consumption and nutrition since their intake of rice/food/calories depends on their purchasing capacity (their access to food), not on supply
- Criticism on the use of rice in Africa
 - In Africa, traditional foods could bring more ensured food security to people so that a return to traditional staples is advisable
 - Rice is the most costly cereal crop and needs maximum water, endangering the environment
- Rice is only one of the staple foods and should not be considered to be the only choice for local production and consumption
- Distribution of food and facilitating access to production technologies by the poor are as important as the issue of improving food production
- The focus should not be limited to methods of food production, as opportunities for improving food security might be found outside agriculture

New varieties and technology enabling improved rice production

- NERICA (new rice for Africa) was devised by crossing Asian and African native rice strains and is successful in several West African nations, where most of the continent's rice is grown
 - Agronomic advantages: higher yield, better control of weeds, etc.
 - Agronomic disadvantages: the neglect or sidelining of other crop varieties or practices of agronomy that may also offer future advantages for feeding Africa
- SRI (System of Rice Intensification) was devised in Madagascar in the 1970s and 1980s and has many agronomic advantages such as increase in rice yield and reduction of water demand although water management is the main challenge in its application



Discussion No. 13, from 3 to 16 June 2008



ORGANIC AGRICULTURE AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Topic raiser: Poonam Pande, Senior Technical Expert, German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) Sustainet Project.

Purpose: collect experiences on organic agriculture. How do organic agriculture systems utilize traditional skills and knowledge, manage with weather extremes and enhance productivity and resilience?

Discussion content

With five contributions, participants gave insights into the opportunities and challenges for organic agriculture. They shared country cases of organic farming development and related initiatives. Ten reference papers were pooled.

PARTICIPANTS' MAIN COMMENTS

Opportunities for organic agriculture

- Organic farming could be one of the coping mechanisms and adaptations to climate change
- Organic farming provides safe and secure food and enhances the health status of the majority, particularly pastoral people

Challenges for organic agriculture

- Organic farming practised by rural farmers has a very low productivity and relatively high cost per unit produced
- Indigenous knowledge, including that on organic practices, would be difficult to transfer to other climatic conditions
- Absence of an organizing body to oversee the whole range of issues along the supply chain for organic farming development
- Lack of awareness about biofoods on the part of farmers for international markets – high demand limits trading opportunities with local markets

RELATED CASE STUDIES AND INITIATIVES

Organic agriculture in Sudan

The emphasis on organic farming by the Arab Authority for Agricultural Development in 2001 relates to the production of food commodities free from agricultural pollutants, mainly for export. Almost all food crops produced in traditional and mechanized rainfed agriculture can be considered to be pollutant free. The Sudan has a good opportunity for trading biofoods (organic products).

Suleiman mountainous region, Balochistan, Pakistan

This area has been famous for organic agriculture and livestock production in pastoral systems for centuries and the majority of pastoral people depend upon them. All flood-irrigated agriculture is practised without using chemical fertilizers or pesticides. Most farmers follow their indigenous star calendar for their crop cultivation and animal breeding programmes.

Farmers' Research Endogenous Institute, Bangladesh

The Institute promotes organic farming with unique methods such as no project culture, no compromise, open for all (no groups), practising with schoolchildren in play mode, news boards, continuous discussion in public places such as tea stalls and marketplaces, all of which have resulted in positive outcomes.

Sustainet (Sustainable Agriculture Information Network)

Sustainet (<http://www.sustainet.org/index-en.html>) is a German network with three other networks in the pilot regions of India, Kenya/ United Republic of Tanzania and Peru/Bolivia. In India, Sustainet works on issues based on organic farming, creating linkages between farmers and markets, advocating public/private partnerships and tackling issues of dryland agriculture by a watershed approach, bearing in mind the protection of biodiversity.



PROMOTING COLLABORATION AMONG STAKEHOLDERS IN AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT

Topic raiser: Chris Ramezanpour, member of the Global Farmer Field School (FFS) Network.

Issue: how to promote collaboration among stakeholders in agriculture development, in particular within an FFS programme.

The topic was initiatively raised on the Global Farmer Field School Network and was cross-posted on the FSN Forum.

Discussion content

With seven contributions, participants made practical suggestions on improving collaboration among stakeholders in agriculture, with emphasis on FFS programmes.

ISSUES RAISED

How to promote collaboration among stakeholders in agriculture development

- The new technologies might encourage collaboration and strengthen connections with farmers on the ground, e.g. through handheld cellular devices, and there will be an opportunity for more organizations and stakeholders to access and share information
- It might be useful to create a Web-based network of communication among stakeholders, sharing educational audio and video files (for local radio and television use), contact links to important agriculture-related services, relevant papers, news and market linkages
- Field education models can better serve their target audience when the message taught is supported by secondary tools that will help to apply that message
- Experts (World Bank, Care, Plan, K-Rep, etc.) could assist field education models such as FFS in the provision of services to supplement the agriculture training, such as credit access, irrigation support and health training

FFS – A recommended approach

- **Features of the FFS Programme**
 - FFS is an ongoing, if not lifelong, education process, if farmers can sustain the group
 - The FFS group is a social network that often connects numerous groups across villages for benefits beyond farming and the power of the group, or of many groups, is the best way for many small-scale farmers to access high-value contract farming opportunities
 - Post-FFS activities are extremely important for continued learning as a group and undertaking activities with mutual support, which makes a distinction between the real FFS and the farmer group that continues to stay together
- **Advantages of integrating the FFS methodology in FS programmes**
 - FFS can be used as an entry to creating or strengthening self-sustained groups in FS programmes
 - FFS should be used within a strategy linking to the overall direction of development and helping to move forward
 - The real value of the FFS programme is to put continued learning into cash crops
- **Challenges/suggestions for improving the FFS approach**
 - The success of the FFS programme in the near future depends on support for agriculture extension officers who can help relay feedback from farmers
 - The effectiveness and potentiality for application of learning in FFS could be enhanced by linking FFS participatory learning and experimentation efforts with other stakeholders
 - FFS should remain as clear budgetable items with start and finish dates and with the release of their facilitators (or transfer of facilitator responsibility) so that new FFS may be established



GARDEN IN A SACK

Topic raiser: Peggy Pascal, Food Security Adviser, Solidarités NGO.

Purpose: share experiences about mini-garden techniques and projects.

Discussion content

With 16 contributions from eight countries, participants shared different experiences on mini-garden techniques and projects in the urban context and explored the possibilities of collaboration across countries.

PARTICIPANTS' MAIN COMMENTS

Advantages of sack gardens

- Sack gardens are mobile and require little land and water and, because they have low physical requirements, are a potentially appropriate option for households with low adult labour ratios, i.e. child- and female-headed households, elderly-headed households and those with chronically ill adults
- Sack gardens have an immediate impact and are extremely appropriate for grassroots groups
- Sack garden techniques are most effective for
 - vulnerability interventions
 - complementing school garden initiatives, improving household income and addressing gender issues
 - complementing any community development initiative and/or emergency programme

Suggestions for promoting urban agriculture and sack garden techniques

- Link sack gardens in schools to school feeding programmes
- Carry out systematic research on sack gardens, especially to analyse their advantages and disadvantages compared with conventional gardens, possibly with the help of aid agencies to document sack garden experiences.
- Carry out advocacy activities to promote sack garden techniques, e.g. by creating a Web site to distribute information

SACK GARDENS IN PRACTICE

- **Solidarités Sack Garden Project in the two largest slums in Kenya**
 - Each family has been given one to three sacks filled with earth and 6 000 families are now cropping tomatoes, onions, kale or spinach. A nursery has been established where one group is in charge of management while another group trains the beneficiaries. Each sack is 1 m³ wide and represents 5 m². A single sack can contain 50 seedlings of kale or spinach and 20 tomato plants. Vegetables are used directly and indirectly by households to obtain food, access cash when needed and educate children. On average, each household has increased its weekly income of USD5.
- **Small-scale homestead vegetable initiative in Gaza, Mozambique**
 - Under the FAO/Netherlands Partnership Programme, the initiative was tested in Gaza with tomatoes, lettuces, green peppers, spinach, cabbage, beets, parsley, turnips, onions, etc.
- **The CL4 group in South Africa** has used sack gardens for households with family members suffering from HIV/AIDS.
- **Philippine initiative on food production**
 - Used cans or trash plastic containers are utilized to grow plants/vegetables to supplement household food intake.
- **WFP multistorey gardens in two Kenyan refugee camps in Kakuma and Dadaab**
 - Several thousand refugees participated in the programme. It should be noted that this type of programme is suitable for areas with similar challenges but will scarcely compete with conventional kitchen gardens in areas where these are feasible.
- **Action Against Hunger-USA promotion of micro gardening in small bed, tyre and sack form in IDP camps in northern Uganda**
 - Production has been extremely significant in contributing to household food and consumption, as well as to household income through sales in the internally displaced person (IDP) camps.



IMPACT OF CASSAVA DEVELOPMENT ON THE FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION OF THE RURAL POOR

Topic raiser: Michael Carbon, Evaluation Officer, Office of Evaluation, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

Issue: what has been the impact on the rural poor of projects and programmes focusing on cassava? What lessons have been learned from cassava development projects/programmes?

Discussion content

Participants discussed the impact of cassava development on the rural poor, focusing on the nutritional implications. They shared lessons learned on how to make cassava development more effective and pro-poor. Five reference papers were shared.

ISSUES RAISED

Impact of cassava development on the income and food security of the rural poor

- Dissemination of new high-yielding cassava varieties and the consequent impact on processing and marketing is slow, typically felt after 10–15 years
- Improvement in the quality of local products derived from cassava and the development of new derivatives, which in turn have contributed to an increase in the income of the rural poor

Impact on the environment

- The biggest impact is on the soil via water erosion when grown as a single crop but in Southeast Asia and Latin America this problem has been controlled by various agronomic practices, including the use of live hedgerows, terrace ploughing and zero tillage

Nutritional value of cassava and implications

- Cassava is a main staple food in Africa and a good source of energy but because it lacks protein and amino acids and provides mainly carbohydrates it needs to be supplemented with other food sources especially vegetables, legumes and cereal grains
- Cassava leaves contain carbohydrates as well as proteins and vitamin A and are suitable even for children's diets yet, even though the leaves are nutrient dense, there are issues of bioavailability and acceptability
- New genetically modified nutrient-dense cassava varieties being developed under a Gates Foundation project (BC+ varieties) are very rich in protein and vitamins compared with cassava varieties currently grown
- Shifting from a maize/beans-based diet to a cassava diet can be problematic, since it may increase protein deficiency, which is of particular consequence for children who are in need of nutrient-dense and not only nutrient-rich diets
- Cassava has some toxic compounds that can be reduced by means of particular preparation methods

Lessons learned from cassava development projects/programmes

- Nutrition issues
 - Agricultural changes, such as reliance on cassava as a single crop, need to be accompanied by adequate nutrition information and education to avoid negative consequences
 - Where cassava replaces grains and beans, it is important to provide the lacking protein and essential amino acids
 - If cassava is grown as an income-generating crop, families could theoretically purchase more nutrient-dense foods with the additional income
- Market issues
 - There are huge price swings in fresh roots over the year for processing and marketing reasons, but also for the seasonality of the cassava harvest, long growth cycle of the crop and relatively low productivity by farmers
 - The success of any cassava development project will have to be evaluated by price stability and accessibility of cassava products all year – an organized processing and marketing supply chain will lessen wide price swings

- Targeting the poor
 - Work with first-, second- and third-order community-based organizations and involvement of local governments is important, while participatory needs assessment should be key to targeting intended project beneficiaries
- Key issues to be addressed by root and tuber (R&T) development projects
 - Provision of adequate information to mothers about the nutrition value of R&T products as compared with grains and about the need to complement their children's diet (or their own when breastfeeding) with protein, fats and vitamin- rich foodstuffs
 - Extent to which additional income generated by R&T products is used to improve the household diet
 - Sensitization of R&T processors and consumers on food safety issues (hygiene, toxins, etc.)
 - Promotion of safety nets for R&T producers and processors to cope in years of low prices
 - Organization of R&T value chains in order to reduce price swings for producers and processors, and promotion of access for all population group to high-quality products
 - Viability of support to the seed production system



12 contributions from eight countries. Key contributors include:

- Judy McLean, Nutritionist, University of British Columbia, Canada
- Martin Fregene, Donald Danforth Plant Science Center, United States of America

Discussion No. 33, from 15 April to 18 May 2009

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