



GLOBAL FORUM ON FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION - FSN FORUM

KNOWLEDGE SHARING FOR IMPROVED FOOD SECURITY AND BETTER NUTRITION

TWO YEARS OF ONLINE DISCUSSIONS



GLOBAL FORUM ON FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION - FSN FORUM

KNOWLEDGE SHARING
FOR IMPROVED FOOD SECURITY
AND BETTER NUTRITION

TWO YEARS OF ONLINE DISCUSSIONS

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this information product do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) concerning the legal or development status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The mention of specific companies or products of manufacturers, whether or not these have been patented, does not imply that these have been endorsed or recommended by FAO in preference to others of a similar nature that are not mentioned. The views expressed in this information product are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of FAO.

ISBN

All rights reserved. Reproduction and dissemination of material in this information product for educational or other non-commercial purposes are authorized without any prior written permission from the copyright holders provided the source is fully acknowledged. Reproduction of material in this information product for resale or other commercial purposes is prohibited without written permission of the copyright holders. Applications for such permission should be addressed to:

Chief
Electronic Publishing Policy and Support Branch
Communication Division
FAO
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy

or by e-mail to:
copyright@fao.org

For further information please contact:
fsn-moderator@fao.org
or visit the website:
<http://km.fao.org/fsn/>

© FAO, 2010



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

CONTENTS

THEME 1 FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION POLICIES, ANALYSIS AND INFORMATION	1
Drawing Lessons from Food Security and Nutrition Research, Analysis and Information for Improved Decision-Making and Response	2
Measuring Household Food Security and Nutrition with a Focus on HIV-Affected Households	4
Mainstreaming Food Security and Nutrition in Poverty Reduction Strategies/Policies	5
Closing the Gap – Linking Food Security Information to Effective Decision-Making	6
Training Manuals/Training Resources on Food Security	8
Papers and Data on Food Security in Mountains	8
Draft of the National Agricultural and Food Policy for Uzbekistan	8
Identifying and Addressing Food Insecurity among the Urban Poor	9
Revising the Food Security Component of the Sphere Handbook	10
THEME 2 NUTRITION	11
Nutrition Education – Essential but often Neglected	12
Staple Foods as a Fundamental Solution to Malnutrition	13
Material on Complementary Food Recipes and Cooking Demonstrations	14
Putting People First: Nutrition, a Key to Integrated Programming for Poverty Reduction?	15
Developing and Implementing Food Safety Mechanisms	16
THEME 3 CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES	17
Suggestions for Emerging Topics for the 2nd International Conference on Poverty, Food and Health	18
Topics on Which Research is Most Needed	19
Food Price Rises as a Motive for Action Against Hunger and Malnutrition	20
Impact of Soaring Food Prices and Policy Responses	21
Energy Competition for Food Crops	22
A Web Site on Household Food Production	23
Linking Food Aid and Pro-Poor Growth	24
Food Security and the Human Right to Food – Going on Parallel Tracks or Converging?	25

Responding to the Challenges of Climate Change and its Linkages to Food Security and Nutrition	27
Looking at Things Differently While Addressing Food Security and Nutrition Issues	28
Do Population Dynamics Aggravate Food and Nutrition Insecurity? Monitoring Change in Complex Times	29
Sharing Innovative and Flexible Capacity-Building Practices for Development	30
Food Security and Nutrition Security – What is the Problem and What is the Difference	31
Gender and Cultural Dimensions of Vulnerability to Food Security in the HIV/AIDS Context	32
Food Security in Arid and Semi-Arid Lands: the Challenges of Sustainable Use of Scarce Resources	33
Food Security and Capabilities Approach: From Theory to Practice	35
Agricultural Biodiversity and Food Security and Nutrition	36
Looking Back to Effective Rural Practices ... Did We Miss Something?	37
Recent Thinking on Rural Development	38
How to Feed the World in 2050?	39
Land Grab or Development Opportunity?	41
THEME 4 AGRICULTURE, NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND BIODIVERSITY	43
The Way Forward for Smallholder Farmers	44
Community Forestry and Food Security	45
Genetically Modified Organisms and Food Security	46
Biological Pesticide Research and Extension	47
Improving Rice Production in Africa	48
Organic Agriculture and Climate Change	49
Promoting Collaboration among Stakeholders in Agriculture Development	50
Garden in a Sack	51
Impact of Cassava Development on the Food Security and Nutrition of the Rural Poor	52
List of Participants	54
Design and Photo Credits	56

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

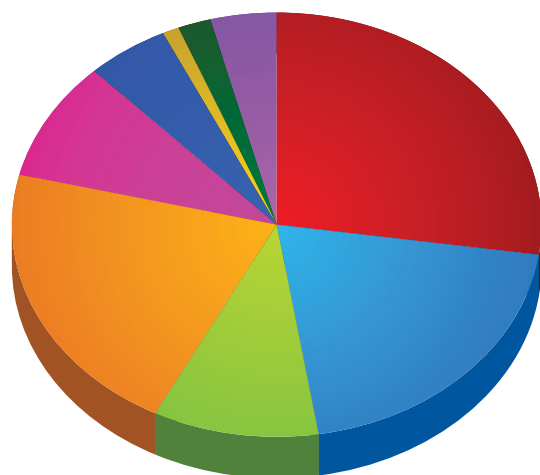
14 topics on food security and nutrition policies, analysis and information

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