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***The impact of the food and financial  
crisis on nutrition in urban areas***  
*by Florence Egal*

**SCN Networking Event**  
**Rio de Janeiro, 25 March 2010**

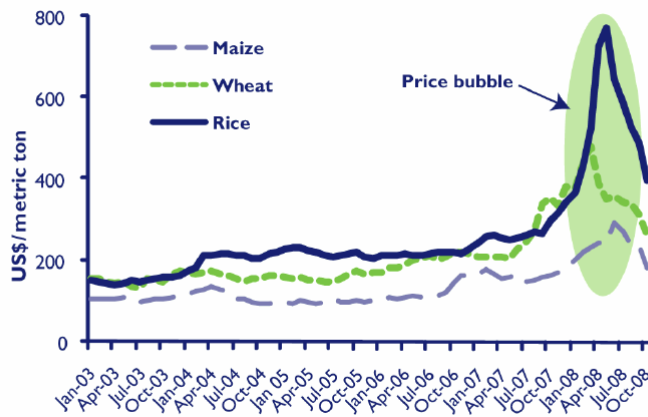
## **The context**

- **Double burden of malnutrition**
- **Food price crisis, compounded by financial and economic crisis**
- **Crises will not disappear**
- **Most of the world's people live in urban areas**
- **70% in 2050**



# The context

Figure 3: Global cereal prices, 2003–2008



Source: Von Braun, 2008c.



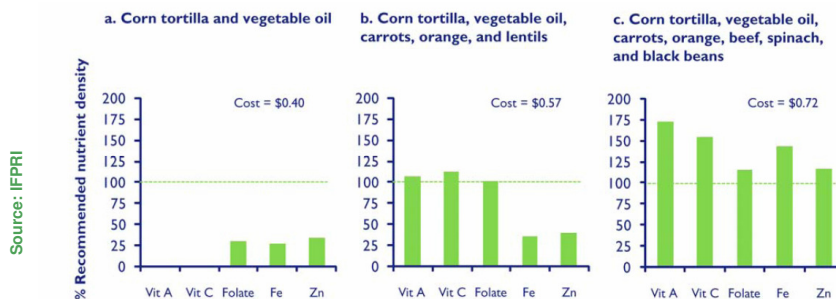
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# The overall impact of the financial and economic crisis

- Food quality decreases

## Cost of Various Diets, Guatemala City, Nov. 2008



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## How do urban people “cope”?

- Reduce non-staple purchases, starting with micro-nutrient rich foods (meat, fish, vegetables)
- When possible substitute staple (return to traditional foods?) and get food from rural areas
- Reduce non-food purchases
- Limit size of portions and eventually skip meals
- Incur debt
- Look for other sources of income
- Sell assets



## Potential impacts and coping strategies



Livelihood	Diversification / change in livelihood activities	Reduced expenditure on non-essential or luxury items  Beginning to sell non-productive / disposable assets	Children drop out of school  Out migration (rural to urban moves)	Increased use of child and women labor  Begin to borrow / purchase on credit, become indebted	Selling of productive assets  Depletion of natural resource base (e.g. cutting trees, etc)	Selling of all assets	Reduce expenditures on essential items (food, water, etc.)	Engage in illegal/ health threatening activities as last resort coping
	Food related - Nutrition	Change to cheaper, lower quality, and less preferred foods  Reduce diversity of food – poor nutrient intake  Favor certain HH members over others for consumption	Reduce size / number of meals	Consume wild foods / immature crops / seed stocks  Send HH members elsewhere to eat (i.e. neighbours)	Begging for food	Skip entire days without eating	Eat items not done so in the past / not part of normal diet (i.e. plants and insects)	Child malnutrition

Source: WFP/Task Force on High Food Price, Adapted from D. Maxwell, R. Caldwell (January 2008)



## The overall impact of the financial and economic crisis

- **Increased** poverty and unemployment
- It aggravates hunger and malnutrition
  - More working hours are needed to feed the family
  - The number of malnourished women and children increases
- **Civil unrest and conflicts are on the rise: hunger riots**



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## Assessing the impact of the crises

- **Who and where are the most vulnerable population groups?**
- **Understand the impact of the crisis for each population group (complex, linked to culture and livelihoods)**
  - Food-based coping strategies
  - Non food-based coping strategies (which eventually affect food, health and care)
- **Participatory and inter-disciplinary appraisal needed**



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## Shaping an urban response

- **Maintain dietary diversity**
- **Reduce harmful coping strategies**

### How?

- **Facilitate access to micro-nutrient rich foods**
- **Preserve incomes and create jobs**
- **Effective health services**
- **Strengthen social protection**
- **Support local institutions, civil society and traditional solidarity networks**



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## In conclusion

- **We won't reach MDG1 (and others) if we don't focus on nutrition**
- **Strategic planning and networking is required at all levels**
- **But local authorities are in the frontline and best able to deal with complexity**
- **“Double strategic planning”**
- **Together, we will know what to do**



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