

SUMMARY OF THE FSN FORUM DISCUSSION

MEASURING HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY, WITH A FOCUS ON HOUSEHOLDS CONTAINING ADULTS MALNOURISHED WITH HIV/AIDS FROM 5TH FEB TO 14TH MAR 2008

I. RECOMMENDED INDICATORS

1. Household Economy Approach (HEA)

- It is a methodology to conduct a comprehensive analysis of food security and vulnerability through household economy and market information, with an emphasis on livelihood specificities. HEA measures access to food following an economic approach. It is a robust approach in gathering and analysing livelihoods and food security (food access rather than quality of diet). It's been used in the **Horn of Africa and East Africa** (A. Crosskey)
- **Acceptability:** It has been used predominantly by SC UK (Save The Children UK) around the world, but also by other organisations as World Vision, Oxfam, World Food Programme, USAID (A. Crosskey)
- **Advantages:** It is very comprehensive and is a powerful indicator able to predict increasing malnutrition rates (nutrition perspective) at a short- term time and comparable among different zones (M. Pecora).
- **Points to be taken into account when using this indicator:**
 - It requires training
 - It is important to complement it with other data conceptually and empirically. E.g, from a sociological and demographic point of view, complement it with the micro levels of analysis that take into consideration the sub-clans, the kinship systems, the extended households, the families, and the individual do make a difference, particularly in coping capacity, "expandability" and vulnerability, age, sex (C. H. Teller);
 - A calculator spreadsheet (HEA Smart Methodology) (developed by John Seaman and tested in the field by several NGOs), can be used to estimate size and type of social transfers to meet an agency objective (M. Pecora);

2. Individual Household Economy (IHM) - measures access to food. It is a refinement of HEA (M. Pecora)

- It has been developed to analyze shocks such as HIV/AIDS where more disaggregated analysis of household problems to acquire food and goods is needed (M. Pecora)
- **Advantages:**
 - it is designed for HIV contexts
- **Points to be taken into account when using this indicator:**
 - It requires training more disaggregated than HEA.

3. Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) – It assess whether households have experienced problems in food access in the preceding 30 days. This indicator has been applied in different countries such as Kenya, Lesotho, South Africa (examples are given by several participants)

- It measures the severity of food insecurity in the past 30 days, as reported by the households themselves. It also measures food consumption strategies adopted by households when facing a lack of access to food.
- It is a simple tool that measures household food security, with a focus on food

consumption strategies adopted by households when facing a lack of access to food. It can be incorporated into household survey instruments and complements other information to give a comprehensive picture of food and nutrition situations (A. Solal-Céligny).

- It indicates how families eat when have limited resources to acquire food (T. Ballard).
- In many countries HFIAS has correlated closely with wealth, dietary diversity, height-for-age, and sex of head of household. This type of informal validation does provide information that HFIAS is measuring levels of food security and is able to identify as food insecure household that have characteristics usually associated with food insecurity, such as poverty, low dietary diversity and high levels of child stunting and female-headed households (T. Ballard).
- **Advantages:**
 - It is standardised, the result can be compared over time and between different locations (M.C. Dop);
 - It is easy to apply and it does not need special software (M.C. Dop);
 - it is very useful for monitoring detrimental dietary changes that could lead to nutritional problems (T.Ballard);
 - It is useful for households that are already precarious due to illness (T.Ballard);
 - It is a valid tool for measuring food insecurity (S.Mbugua);
 - It is the only tool that measures a household's direct experience of food insecurity (SCN fact sheet);
 - It measures levels of food security and it is able to identify as food insecure household that have characteristics usually associated with food insecurity, such as poverty, low dietary diversity and high levels of child stunting and female-headed households (T.Ballard).
 - It looks at food consumption strategies (A. Solal-Céligny).
- **Points to be taken into account when using this indicator:**
 - It has not been validated yet (A. Solal-Céligny, T. Ballard);
 - it is necessary to adapt them to the local context through focus groups and key informants interviews (M.C. Dop);
 - It does not explore structural grounds of food insecurity (T. Ballard); so that it could not point to the cause/s of food insecurity for intervention purposes (G. Mbera).
 - Not enough evidences so far to correlate to anthropometry (T. Ballard, F. di Bari);
 - Where food assistance is frequent, there can be a respondent bias;
 - The data can be interpreted at community, district and national level; they are not appropriate for individual household targeting (SCN fact sheet).

4. Dietary Diversity (DD) – measures the diversity of food consumption; it is an indicator of adequacy of the diet (A. Solal-Céligny). This indicator has been applied in different countries such as South Africa, Burkina Faso, Malawi, Somalia, West Bank Gaza Strip, Tajikistan, Mozambique, Mali (examples are given by several participants)

- DD is thought to reflect the adequate intake of essential nutrients either at the household level (HDD), in which case it can be measured by a HDD score (HDDS) or by a Food Consumption Score (FCS), or at the individual level (IDD), in which case it can be measured by an IDD score (IDDS) (SCN fact sheet)
- Both HDDS and FCS, but not IDDS, are used to identify food access and consumption problems at the population's level (SCN fact sheet)
- **Advantages:**

- As HFIAS it is standardised and therefore the results can be compared over time and between different locations (M.C. Dop);
- It is easy to apply and it does not need special software (M.C. Dop);
- It is a powerful food insecurity indicator able to predict increasing malnutrition rates (nutrition perspective) at a short- term time and comparable among different zones (M. Pecora);
- DD scores are key elements to any comprehensive analysis of the food security situation at the individual, household or community level;
- It has correlation with anthropometry
- It provides a good indication of availability of specific foods/ food groups in an area and helps to analyse nutritional vulnerability of the households / food insecurity (G.Kennedy).
- Household economic access to food is very clearly linked to DD - this relationship has been found in many studies with increasing dietary diversity being related to higher household SES (G.Kennedy).
- o **Points to be taken into account when using this indicator:**
 - As HFIAS it is necessary to adapt them to the local context (M.C. Dop);
 - It has not a clear cut-off points for categorization;
 - Reflect only part of the food and nutrition security components (i.e. food consumption), it shouldn't be used alone (SCN fact sheet)

5. Other indicators (quoted in the discussion):

- o Dietary Diversity and Food Consumption Score;
- o Coping Strategy Index;
- o Individual Household Economy.

II. ADVICES

- Nutrition information is the key to any comprehensive analysis of the food security situation at household level. It is important to have simple indicators to provide timely and useful information on food security from a nutrition perspective. The use of such methods or tools depends widely on the objective of the survey and the context in which they will be applied (A. Solal-Céligny).
- Data on household FSN may already be collected either by governments through regular monitoring systems and/or by specialized agencies through surveys in order to get specific information (A. Solal-Céligny).
- For the planning of the study in several countries, it is suggested to use standardized tools and locally adapted them to monitor regularly food consumption (M.C. Dop, M. Pecora);
- It's advisable to use the fact sheets developed by the SCN Task Force. They are meant to provide basic information, simple and clear guidance on a number of key AME indicators.

Summary matrix of indicators discussed (available at http://km.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/fsn/docs/FilippoTable.doc)

| Indicator and what it evaluates | Diffusion | Advantages | Crucial Aspects (T. Ballard, F. di Bari) | Context(s) in which each indicator can be used / target group | Possible FSN contact person for further info. |
|--|---|---|--|--|---|
| Household Economy Approach (HEA) – measures access to food- Economic approach http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/54_2331.htm http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/54_4200.htm | Quite a few UN agencies employed it | Very comprehensive | It requires training (7 days?) | | Alexandra Crosskey alexandracrosskey@yahoo.co.uk Alemu Asfaw alemu.asfaw@fao.org Michele Pecora michelepecora@inwind.it |
| Individual Household Economy (IHM) - measures access to food, more disaggregated than HEA http://www.evidencefordevelopment.com/how/work-we-have-done.html | To be validated | Designed for HIV contexts | | HIV contexts | Michele Pecora michelepecora@inwind.it |
| Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) – assess whether households have experienced problems in food access in the preceding 30 days -> It measures the severity of food insecurity in the past 30 days, as reported by the households themselves. It also measures food consumption strategies adopted by households when facing a lack of access to food. http://www.foodsec.org/tools_nut.htm | Promoted by FAO Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division To be validated (A. Solal- Celigny)* | Easy to apply No need for special software It indicates how families eat when have limited resources to acquire food -> very useful for monitoring detrimental dietary changes that could lead to nutritional problems -> useful for households that are already | Require adaptation through focus groups and key informants interviews It doesn't explain the causes of FS Not enough evidences so far to correlate to anthropometry (T. Ballard, F. di Bari) Where food assistance is frequent, there can be a respondent bias The data are | Households, no specific target group The information arising from HFIAS can be interpreted at community, district and national level. It is not appropriate for interpretation at individual or household level, in the sense that it cannot be used for targeting of specific households/individual s (SCN fact sheet) Relevant in slow- onset crises, | Terri Ballard terri.ballard@fao.org , Amelie Solal-Celigny amelie.solaceligny@fao.org , Marie Claude Dop, Michele Pecora, Gloria Mbera |

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| | | <p>precarious due to illness. (T.Ballard)</p> <p>valid tool for measuring food insecurity (S.Mbugua)</p> <p>only tool that measures a household's direct experience of food insecurity (SCN fact sheet)</p> | <p>relevant at community level, not for individual household targeting (SCN fact sheet)</p> | <p>protracted crises, chronic food insecurity and for monitoring at decentralized levels.</p> <p>Most of the research work on HFIAS has been done in stable situations and in rural settings-> the relevance and usefulness in emergency situations and in urban settings need to be further explored (SCN fact sheet)</p> | |
| <p>Dietary Diversity (DD) – measures the diversity of food consumption - indicator of adequacy of the diet (A. Solal-Celigny)</p> <p>DD is thought to reflect the adequate intake of essential nutrients either at the household level (HDD), in which case it can be measured by a HDD score (HDDS) or by a Food Consumption Score (FCS), or at the individual level (IDD), in which case it can be measured by an IDD score (IDDS) (SCN fact sheet)</p> <p>Use:</p> <p>DD scores are key elements to any comprehensive analysis of the food security situation at the individual, household or community level.</p> <p>Both HDDS and FCS, but not IDDS, are used to identify food access and consumption problems at the population's level (SCN fact sheet)</p> | <p>Quite a few UN agencies employed it</p> | <p>Easy to apply</p> <p>No need for special software</p> <p>Correlation with anthropometry* provide a good indication of availability of specific foods/ food groups in an area & help analyse nutritional vulnerability of the households / food insecurity (G.Kennedy)</p> | <p>Requires adaptation (A.Solal-Celigny)</p> <p>Not clear cut-off points for categorization</p> <p>Reflect only part of the food and nutrition security components (i.e. food consumption) -> shouldn't be used alone (SCN fact sheet)</p> | <p>HDDS or FCS are relevant in any population group.</p> <p>IDD scores target more specifically young children and women of childbearing age (SCN fact sheet)</p> <p>It has been used in HIV high prevalence area. E.g. high prevalence transportation corridor in Mozambique (T.Ballard), urban setting in Kenya with</p> | |

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| http://www.foodsec.org/tools_nut.htm http://www.measuredhs.com/pubs/browse_type.cfm). http://vam.wfp.org/cfsva and http://odan.wfp.org | | | | <p>high prevalence HIV (S.Mbugua)</p> <p>A lot of the research work on DD indicators has been done in stable situations and in rural settings.</p> <p>The FCS has been mainly applied in emergency and crisis-prone contexts (SCN fact sheet)</p> | |
| | | http://vam.wfp.org/cfsva | http://vam.wfp.org/cfsva | amelie.solaceligny@fao.org | |

III. REFERENCES

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