

SUMMARY OF THE FSN FORUM DISCUSSION
PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST: NUTRITION, A KEY TO INTEGRATED
PROGRAMMING FOR POVERTY REDUCTION?
FROM 1ST DEC. 2008 TO 10TH FEB. 2009

Proceeding available at:

http://km.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/fsn/docs/PROCEEDINGS_Nutrition_Integrated_programming.doc

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	ISSUES RAISED	1
II.	NUTRITION IN NATIONAL AND GLOBAL POLICIES	1
III.	KEYS FOR SUCCESSFUL NUTRITION PROGRAMS	5
IV.	WHAT SHOULD BE THE ROLE OF NUTRITIONISTS AND OTHERS? WHAT NUTRITION TRAINING IS RECOMMENDED?	5
V.	CASE STUDIES	7
VI.	REFERENCES	9
VII.	RELATED FORUM'S DISCUSSIONS	9

I. ISSUES RAISED

The main question raised in this discussion was: "Nutrition can provide a valuable entry point to people-centred development and integrated and multi-sectoral programming for poverty reduction. But why is it so difficult to integrate nutrition in development policies and programmes?"

The discussion focused on three issues, which are inter-related, but are presented here separately for clarity:

- Why is it so difficult to get nutrition on the political agenda? The challenges and opportunities for integrating reduction of malnutrition in national and global policies
- What makes nutrition programs successful? Lessons learnt from successful (and less successful) nutrition interventions at community level
- Who is responsible for nutrition? What is the role of nutritionists? What training do they need?

The discussions were illustrated by several case studies and references listed below.

II. NUTRITION IN NATIONAL AND GLOBAL POLICIES

- **The problem to be addressed:**
 - "Illiteracy, poverty, hunger, malnutrition and unemployment are interrelated. So, we should have **holistic policy** which addresses these issues in village level. (Hegde, India)

- **“Economic progress does not necessarily lead to improved nutritional status, and malnutrition persists even in apparently food secure households (...). Nutrition behaviours and practices are deeply rooted in traditions and cultures and happen within the confines of homes, there is no magic pill that can improve nutrition overnight, sustained and multi-pronged efforts are needed (Geeta Verma, India)**
- **Major challenge to addressing the problem:**
 - “High level policymakers are far more concerned with the commodity (cash) value than the nutritive value of the products of agriculture and fisheries. [...] The powerful don’t care very much about malnutrition. . [...] Where is the serious funding for MDG’s related to nutrition?” (George Kent, Hawaii)
- **Reasons for lack of political commitment for nutrition:**
 - “Low **motivation**: the people who have the power to solve the problem are not the ones who have the problem.” (George Kent)
 - “Farmers produce the **most profitable crops**” not the most nutritious (Harun Yusuf, Bangladesh; Thampan, India, Swamy, India; Angela Kimani, Nigeria)
 - Policy makers and development planners are more concerned with producing enough **staple food**. It is difficult to raise the issue of balanced nutrition under a stressful situation of staple scarcity.” (Harun Yusuf, Bangladesh)
 - “‘Food’ got positioned as only ‘**energy supplier**’, very recently, when the ‘wellness industry’ is taking shape with **nutraceutical products**, albeit targeted to only affluent society. The growth of pharma on industrial scale has further marginalised the therapeutic potential of food”. (Raj Ganguly, India)
 - “**Lack of knowledge and understanding** among politicians and major decision makers (about nutrition problems). Hence, decisions are often taken in favour of immediate, visible and quantifiable (or countable) outputs. [...] There is a **serious gap between policy makers and nutrition promoters/practitioners.**” (Silvia Kauffmann, Afghanistan / Laos)
 - “The **multidisciplinary, intersectoral nature of nutrition** makes it such a challenge in address poverty and hunger reduction”. (Charles Teller, USA)
- **Enhancing commitment through ‘non-policy actions’:**
 - “Interventions targeted at households and families can facilitate effective changes in the attitudes, behaviours and feeding practices”. (Joseph Opio Odongo)
 - Work at central, provincial and local levels, with government officials, provincial staff, NGOs and communities can be mutually reinforcing to increase attention to nutrition (Charlotte Dufour, Afghanistan)
- **Developing economic arguments for improving nutrition and reducing poverty:**
 - With “the growing **interdependence of people - poor and rich** - around the world (c.f. recent food crisis), [...] the big lesson for the rich and powerful is that it is in their self-interest to contribute to the creation of a more equitable world. There is a the need for new **codes of conduct and regulations**” (Andrew MacMillan)...

- But do codes of conduct and regulations work? Are they followed-up? (George Kent)
- **“Adverse effects of ill-health are greatest for the resource poor** due to frequent illness, exclusive earning through physical work, and lack of savings to cushion the blow”. (Raj Ganguly)
- “Advocacy for large-scale nutrition programming should include reference to the **labour productivity potential** and the importance of good lifelong and adult nutrition also to those outcomes. [...] “Nutrition indicators used by the health and agriculture sectors may need to be supplemented, particularly with regard to measures for adults, and with regard to productivity measures” (Judith Appleton, UK)
- But caution with the “human capital approach, in which there is little room for human dignity. [...] Where a truthful and convincing human capital argument for reducing malnutrition can be made, it should be used, along with the **moral argument.**” (George Kent)
- **Improving use of information for advocacy:**
 - **“Awareness has to be at all levels** starting with the political leaders, administrators, health and agriculture professionals, teachers, NGOs, social scientists and community.” (Jane Sherman, Italy)
 - **“Nutrition promoters** / practitioners need to **build up their capacities**, to become stronger in bringing nutrition higher up on the agenda, in showing progress and to advocate for most successful solutions at all levels” (Silvia Kauffmann)
 - “There should be: **a unified database** that can actually assess the different inputs of the different development initiatives and link them with Nutrition outputs (at micro and macro levels); **a strong M&E system** with access to data from all sectors; and **a dedicated agency for Nutrition** that can look at all aspects and coordinate all”
 - The advocacy first should target the UN and other donor agencies and then we (the concerned) should build a greater alliance by crossing the boundaries. (Purna Chandra)
- **Potential opportunities**
 - “To promote better nutrition: partnerships with the health sector in countries with generalized AIDS epidemics because HIV infection, AIDS and ARVs require improving the nutrition of infected persons.” (Jacques du Guerny)

Food Aid effects on economic growth

- Food aid is part and parcel of the globalization process. It is being a political instrument to initiate economic and trade relations between donors and recipient countries. (Mahgoub, E. A.)
- Food aid has become more and more a tool for pro-poor growth; however it has a higher cost than a normal approach. Food aid costs are much higher than local market prices and moreover food aid destroys all normal community responsibility most of the time. (Leonardi. F)

- Food aid impacts on local markets (Mwasaa, W. M.):
 - Food aid has negative impacts on markets, production and other societal structures and processes, which eventually leads to a poorer community depending on outside assistance as most communities after a stint with food aid cannot go back to own production.
 - When food assistance suppresses production and local market systems, it also reduces labour and other income related opportunities for local populations. This in turn results in crime and lawlessness which then affects the development of other sectors.
 - When food aid becomes an institution, it transforms from humanitarian support to systematized purchase, transport and distribution networks that lead to change in focus and the interests of individual merchants and politicians come to play.
- Food aid depresses national grain market prices, therefore it depresses the Agricultural GDP, and as the lowest wages are adjusted to agricultural prices, it even reduces the GDP in urban areas. (Leonardi, F.)

Food aid effects on nutrition and the implications for economic growth

- It is clear that better nutrition leads to better health and longevity and that cognitive abilities are impaired by undernourishment and malnutrition. When large numbers of people shift from a mal-nourished to an adequately nourished state, there will be a positive impact on economic growth. (MacMillan, A., Mahgoub, E. A.)
- Theoretical models provide guidance on possible transmission mechanisms between nutrition and growth, in particular, nutrition status is far from being exogenous, and **economic growth** has been widely documented to inflict **its positive impact on nutrition status**. (Mahgoub, E. A.)
- **Most food aid interventions do not take care of all the dietary nutrient needs**, which often lead to poor growth, and deteriorated mental and physical capacities for the affected populations. (Mwasaa, W. M.)
- After years of food aid in Ethiopia it doesn't seem to have impacted positively the global nutrition rate of the country but it has certainly saved many lives. (Leonardi, F.)
- Well nourished people are capable of being more productive than poorly nourished people, but that does not necessarily mean they will be more productive. People who are well fed may not be motivated to work hard. Especially when it comes to manual labour, no one works as hard or as cheap as people who are hungry. (Kent, G.)
- Hungry people working for low pay at producing inexpensive goods provide good bargains for people with higher incomes. Affluent countries might be able to consume intensive labour products for a lower price. (Kent, G., Leonardi, F.)
- According to Arcand (2001) inadequate nutrition is causing 0.23 to 4.7 percentage point loss in annual growth rate of GDP per capita worldwide, and 0.16 to 4.0 percentage points' loss for Sub-Saharan Africa in particular. (Maghoub, E. A.)

Food aid effects and implications for nutrition and economic growth in Ethiopia (Leonardi, F.)

Many districts of Ethiopia have been benefiting from food distribution, they are still part of the poorest, and according to many analytical works even poorer than at the start for at least these two reasons:

- A **growing population pressure** on shrinking natural resources -livelihood survey conducted showed that the vulnerable segment of the population is growing in % -SCUK, FEWS. To be extreme, feeding people on a rock or in a desert doesn't create growth in the end. In Ethiopia, populations need to stay in the same place to benefit from Food Aid.
- **People targeted for food aid are supposed to be the most vulnerable.** Food aid may allow relative large scale farmers -3 ha- to pay less to their farm workers who receive food aid -therefore food aid results in a lower income for the poorest.

III. KEYS FOR SUCCESSFUL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

The main lessons from the contributions and case studies (see section IV below) include:

- Programs should be **participatory / community-based / community-driven**
- Carefully assess the **complex causes of malnutrition** and the context (including structural vulnerabilities, understanding livelihoods strategies, coping strategies and their impact on severity of food insecurity and malnutrition, etc.)
- Assess **local organizational needs and capacities** and **support local organisations** (facilitation of group / network formation, capacity-building on management, etc.)
- Integrate learning in the project management (e.g. Triple A approach: Assessment, Analysis, Action)
- Involve **women** and **youth**
- **Multi-sectoral interventions:** access to balanced diet, knowledge and resources for good caring and feeding practices, safe environment, drinking water, health care, etc.
- Assist 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 (trees, poultry, pisciculture in rice fields, etc.)
- Provide appropriate methods of extension education and services for improved farming practices
- Plan interventions adapted to the needs of the landless
- Develop adapted 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 numeracy skills). This may require inputs from different professions (including formal education).
- Encourage public-private participation

IV. WHAT SHOULD BE THE ROLE OF NUTRITIONISTS AND OTHERS? WHAT NUTRITION TRAINING IS RECOMMENDED?

- **The role of nutritionists:** A heated debate was initiated with Urban Jonssons's distinction between the 'science of nutrition' and the 'science of nutrition problems in society' and his comment that "**Nutritionists should play a very limited role in the 'science of nutrition problem in society.'**"

He illustrated his point with the example of the Iringa program in Tanzania, in which program managers found that "advanced knowledge in *human nutrition* simply was not

important. Much more important were knowledge and experience in, for example, anthropological and cultural issues, political analysis, communication and mobilization skills, knowledge of Swahili etc, etc.”

Despite some forum members being uncomfortable with such writing off the role of nutritionists in tackling causes of malnutrition, there was general consensus that:

- **A multi sectoral approach and multi-disciplinarity** are essential to address malnutrition (Wenche Barth Eide, Ignatius Onimawo, Paula Dominguez, Ranjani Harish, Dufour, Appleton, Prevel, etc.)
- This entails **working as a team** (Tonderayi Matsungu, Charlotte Dufour, etc.)

Some contributors agreed that it is difficult (and probably not very useful) to define precisely what a nutritionist is (contributors included a political scientist, an epidemiologist, a veterinarian, a social scientist, agronomist, a demographer, etc.), but rather to emphasize **what individuals working for nutrition / nutrition advocates should do**.

Suggestions included:

- To **raise global awareness** about the extent of nutritional problems worldwide and of their cross-sectoral nature, thus enabling more numerous people to work FOR nutrition in all sectors (Yves-Martin Prevel, Mahtab)
- To **support capacity building in public nutrition** to enhance the ability of all actors to address undernutrition.
- To **demystify nutrition** amongst other professionals to encourage them to work for nutrition (Dufour, Appleton, Mahtab)
- To facilitate coordination and **create bridges between sectors, and between the community, provincial and national levels** (Dufour)
- **Policy review and advise governments** on policies that impact positively on nutrition (Ranjani Harish, Mahtab)

• **Challenges with nutrition training**

The discussion about the role of nutritionists also entailed a discussion on the nutrition trainings available.

- There are noteworthy endeavours to **broaden nutritionists' trainings** to encompass a wider spectrum of issues and disciplines (e.g. social, political...), notably with the introduction of the concept of “**Public Nutrition**” in the mid-1990's. (Barth Eide)
- However, “the focus has been mostly on **Public Health Nutrition**, which continues to **tie nutrition primarily to the health sector**, whereas a broader concept and interpretation of Public Nutrition might have had the chance to open more doors to other sectors”. (Barth Eide)
- Efforts to broaden nutrition training are **still limited** to a small number of universities, as “few university departments were prepared to 'broaden' their nutrition training to include economics, political science, anthropology, social mobilization and communication”. (Urban Jonsson)
- Cristina Lopriore highlights three challenges to nutrition / food security capacity-building:
 - **Limited training on policy and programming** for nutrition and food security
 - **Limited coordination** between training / capacity-building initiatives

Few assessments of training needs and employment opportunities, both at the organisational level and individual level

V. CASE STUDIES

- **BAIF Research and Development Foundation, Orchard Development Project in Maharashtra (Gujarat)**, presented by Hedge

Through a multi-disciplinary, participatory community development programme, including horticulture, watershed management, animal husbandry, community health, literacy, skills training, agri-business and support to Self Help Groups, the BAIF significantly impacted on food consumption: the consumption of vegetables, fruits, and milk has increased by 72.63 per cent, 41.87 per cent and 70.77 per cent respectively.

You can read the Ph.D for the study on BAIF's Wadi programme: http://km.fao.org/fsn/resources/fsn-viewresdet/en/?no_cache=1&r=654&nocache=1

- **Peekay Tree crops development Development Foundation (Thampan, India)**

Peekay Tree Crops Development Foundation motivated farmers to adopt intensive integrated farming comprising the cultivation vegetables, root and tuber crops and fruit plants with or without livestock components in coconut holdings. Over 500 farm-households have practised the system. In a field evaluation it was observed that from the cultivation of protective foods alone the participating farmers derived an average additional net income of US\$ 876 per hectare per year. In those holdings where livestock components were also integrated, the average net income was US\$ 2,590 per hectare. The most conspicuous feature was that in all the farm-households covered by the study the **marketable surplus was derived after satisfying the household consumption needs**.

- **Mid-day meal, India (Presented by Prasanta Misra)**

The mid day meal programme can go a long way in spreading nutrition and hygiene awareness. Aspects to be considered include:

1. The mid day meal could be designed on local foods/taste keeping in mind the nutrition content.
2. The meal content -cereals, pulses, vegetables- can be acquired locally.
3. The delivery mechanism need consider employment of local people, or women's self help groups.

In the Tumkur district of Karnataka, a local NGO-TIDE promoted a low cost green house for production of high quality capsicum and tomato. A women's self-help group managed the green house. Part of the produce was used in mid day meal programme. It is understood that few more schools in the area now are interested in using this method to obtain good quality vegetables for the programme. The concerned NGO is already exploring venues for marketing the surplus vegetables.

This case study has been uploaded to the FSN Forum reference section and can be found at: http://km.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/fsn/docs/Success_Stories-GH-B_lore.pdf

- **Promotion of vegetables in mid-day meal programme by the Dangoria Charitable Trust, Hyderabad, Medak district** (presented by Mahtab Bamji)

Local supply of fresh vegetables is being attempted by linking the village-based growers with the cooks who prepare the meal. In three schools, school gardens have been started with some success. This effort is coupled with nutrition, hygiene and health education to the children, the teachers the cooks, the vegetable growers and the community in general. By way of incentive, good quality seeds of nutrient-dense vegetable were given to the farmers. Significant improvement in nutrition knowledge of children was apparent after 7 months. In a questionnaire, children reported higher frequency of weekly consumption of GLV and other vegetables at home after 7 months.

- **Improving Household Food Security and Nutrition through Community Empowerment in the Luapula Valley, Zambia.** (suggested by Cristina Lopriore)

The case study provides an overview on the 7 main lessons learned and calls for a review of our current thinking on project design and implementation (viz. logical framework, quantification, objectively verifiable indicators, etc.) in the context of contributing towards improving people's livelihoods on a sustainable basis: http://km.fao.org/fsn/resources/fsn-viewresdet/en/?no_cache=1&r=657&nocache=1.

- **APFMAGS, India (Presented by Mani)**

APFMAGS is an FAO funded NEX project in Andhra Pradesh, India, working with communities for **implementing demand side groundwater management** (www.apfamgs.org). The project works towards **behavioural change in community facilitated through improved skills, knowledge and understanding**. The project has enabled the communities to monitor various technical parameters related to water availability, food security and nutrition. Annually the **community themselves conduct a food and nutrition survey**, which includes expenditure on food and health as well as the amount of food produced locally. Based on the data collected the farmers alter their cropping plans to ensure food and nutritional security. Based on 3 years of food and nutrition survey the community have identified the various coarse cereals that have been serving the food and nutritional needs and have tried to revive some of them. **Community has carried out inventory of local greens and published them in a book "Nourishing Traditions"**. http://km.fao.org/fsn/resources/fsn-viewresdet/en/?no_cache=1&r=666&nocache=1

- **Integrated Food Security Programme in Northern Laos (MOPH/GTZ)** (presented by Silvia Kauffmann)

"Improved hygiene behaviour, increased access to water supply and the adoption of an improved agriculture production system were statistically the most significant determinants of reduced malnutrition. Significant increases in household's rice production as well as cash income (45% increase) indicated good achievements towards food security and poverty reduction, but did not contribute significantly to improved nutrition. Not the rice consumption, but the variety of side dishes a family consumed was associated to malnutrition as was the food diversity among households obtaining their products through own production or cultivation."

- **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), India** (presented by Geeta Verma) <http://www.wcd.nic.in/>

"ICDS has emerged as the largest direct nutrition programme in the country. ICDS services are delivered through community-based centres called "Anganwadis" and workers are drawn from the community itself. ICDS targets children aged 0-6 years, pregnant and lactating. The programme outlay has also seen substantial increases. The most recent has been the increase in allocation for supplementary food in response to escalating food prices. Some operational challenges include - ensuring nutrition services at the most critical times e.g. advanced stage of pregnancy, newly delivered mothers, children 6-18 months old. An optimally functioning ICDS, can provide the platform to support and empower communities on Nutrition related issues, but unless inputs of ICDS are complemented with the other poverty reduction / development schemes the programme will not have the desired impact on Nutrition and Health status of women and children. This approach works only when there is a reasonable availability of and access to food."

- **Earth Trust's Children Project** (presented by Vanya Orr)

VI. REFERENCES

- Poverty-III-Health Linkage: How Best Indian Health Policies Address it? (R. Ganguly): http://km.fao.org/fsn/resources/fsn-viewresdet/en/?no_cache=1&r=670&nocache=1
- Ph.D. for the Study on BAIF's Wadi Programme (R. N. Hegde): http://km.fao.org/fsn/resources/fsn-viewresdet/en/?no_cache=1&r=654&nocache=1
- Empowering Communities & Governments to make nutrition changes happen - Lessons Learnt from Afghanistan (C. Dufour): http://km.fao.org/fsn/resources/fsn-viewresdet/en/?no_cache=1&r=650&nocache=1
- "ICDS and Right to Food", *Economic and Political Weekly* (Mumbai, India). Vol. 41, No. 45, November 11, 2006 (G. Kent): http://km.fao.org/fsn/resources/fsn-viewresdet/en/?no_cache=1&r=655&nocache=1
- The Tsunami Evaluation Coalition website (thematic evaluation of the role of needs assessment in the tsunami response) (C. Lopriore): http://km.fao.org/fsn/resources/fsn-viewresdet/en/?no_cache=1&r=659&nocache=1
- Improving Household Food Security and Nutrition through Community Empowerment in the Luapula Valley, Zambia (C. Lopriore): http://km.fao.org/fsn/resources/fsn-viewresdet/en/?no_cache=1&r=657&nocache=1
- Participation in development website: Lessons learned (C. Lopriore): http://km.fao.org/fsn/resources/fsn-viewresdet/en/?no_cache=1&r=658&nocache=1
- Distance learning courses of the EC/FAO Food Security "Information for Action" Programme (C. Lopriore): http://km.fao.org/fsn/resources/fsn-viewresdet/en/?no_cache=1&r=656&nocache=1
- Success story on Greenhouse Technology - A case study on School & Community Horticulture Project in Karnataka, India (P. Misra): http://km.fao.org/fsn/resources/fsn-viewresdet/en/?no_cache=1&r=664
- "Nourishing Traditions – Local Greens", Andhra Pradesh Farmer Managed Groundwater Systems Project, India (K.A.S. Mani): http://km.fao.org/fsn/resources/fsn-viewresdet/en/?no_cache=1&r=666&nocache=1

VII. RELATED FORUM'S DISCUSSIONS

Linking Food Aid and Pro-Poor Growth - 18.09 to 4.11.2008

Summary:

http://km.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/fsn/docs/SUMMARY_FoodAidProPoorGrowth.doc

Proceedings:

http://km.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/fsn/docs/PROCEEDINGS_FoodAidandProPoorGrowth.doc

Staple Food as a Fundamental Solution to Malnutrition - 27.05 to 27.06.08

Summary:

http://km.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/fsn/docs/SUMMARY-Staplefood_solution_to_malnutrition.doc

Proceedings:

http://km.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/fsn/docs/PROCEEDINGS_Staple_food_as_a_fundamental_solution_to_malnutrition.doc

Nutrition education - essential but often neglected- 19th November to 7th December 2007

Summary:

http://km.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/fsn/docs/Summary_on_Nutrition_Education_2.doc

Proceedings:

http://km.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/fsn/docs/PROCEEDINGS - Nutrition education 2.doc