Embedding Food Security within Sustainable Livelihood Programmes

Food Security

Oxfam Novib

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Part 1

Background and Concepts

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Summary

In 2005, 815 million people in the developing world were undernourished, consuming less than the minimum amount of calories essential for sound health and growth. Since the 1996 Rome World Food Summit hardly any progress has been made towards meeting the goal that it set itself of halving the number of hungry people in the world by the year 2015. Oxfam Novib considers this to be unacceptable.

Oxfam NOVIB works together with civil society organisations, social movements, governments and the private sector to alleviate poverty and thereby improve the food security status of the very poor. It is also a member of Oxfam International (OI) and co-operates closely on a range of issues with Oxfam organisations from other countries. The activities of Oxfam (Novib and OI) fall into three main areas: directly addressing poverty, building civil society, and lobbying and advocacy work which includes awareness-raising among the general public.

This paper draws on many years of experience of working on food security issues. It sets out our understanding of the multiple layers of issues that give rise to food insecurity. These run from factors at the individual level all the way to the international level. These are discussed in part 1 of this report. Part 2 discusses ways in which organisations can seek to integrate these issues into their project planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation cycles.

Understanding food security

Food security has three key aspects, or pillars: availability, access and utilisation. The first refers to the presence (or absence) of food within a given area, the second refers the ability of individuals or households to make claims on these food supplies and the third to their ability to use food in a way that promotes their health and well-being. Gender differences play a key role in all these stages and need to be fully taken account of when devising and implementing food security programmes.

Oxfam adopts a rights based approach to food security, which is enshrined in resolutions made in several international treaties, including the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Oxfam sees food security as fundamentally linked to questions of livelihood and empowerment. Individual food security can be best understood in terms of health, nutrition, access, sanitation and social services. The relationships between these issues are set out in the conceptual framework on the causes of food insecurity (Figure 2). These issues are set in the context of broader social and economic forces, detailed in the sustainable livelihoods framework (Figure 3). Long term trends that are having significant effects on livelihood options include: migration and remittances, HIV/AIDS and environmental pressures (resource degradation, changing land use patterns and the effects of climate change). Other aspects of the international order (notably the WTO, Free Trade Agreements, Intellectual Property Rights and the role of International Financial Institutions) also impede poor people from building sustainable livelihoods.

In 2005 Oxfam Novib reviewed the food security operations conducted through the organisations which we support. The review identified the following important issues: Food security needs a holistic approach;

- Linking agriculture and health;
- Achieving food security through partnerships;
- Relating food and income security;
- Mainstreaming gender and getting men involved in nutrition;
- Building on people's strengths;
- Establishing monitoring and evaluation systems, and;
- Influencing national policy on food security.

Oxfam Novib's counterparts performed well in relation to most of these issues, but less well on others. Part 2 of this report is intended to strengthen their performance in those areas where improvements could be made. The criteria set out in this section will also influence the selection of future partner organisations and the adaptation of projects and programmes by Oxfam Novib.

Particular attention will be paid to: the food utilisation pillar; to addressing strategic gender issues; to monitoring and evaluation and; to enhancing partner organisations' involvement in lobbying and advocacy work. The practical toolkit sets out an eight stage path of project and programme development, all of which we consider to be of fundamental importance:

- Problem description;
- Analysis of main actors;
- Analysis of the causes of the problem;
- Gender analysis with the target groups;
- HIV/AIDS analysis;
- Formulation of the most appropriate level of intervention;
- Implementation, and;
- Monitoring, evaluation and learning.

Part 2 of the report provides methods for data collection, participatory planning and identifying and selecting appropriate interventions. It suggests a wide ranging list of possible interventions, targeted at different levels: the individual, the household and community and the community, national and international levels. Activities at the first level address the direct causes of under-nutrition. Those at the second level address the underlying causes of under-nutrition and those at the higher levels of aggregation address the structural causes of under-nutrition. By integrating these three approaches more effective solutions to the persistent problem of food insecurity can be developed. The report concludes by presenting a range of indicators that can be used to measure the effectiveness of interventions and discussing the advantages and disadvantages of tehse indicators.

Acronyms

ACP   Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific
AIDS   Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
CAP   Common Agricultural Policy
CBOs   Community Based Organisations
CSOs   Civil Society Organisations
EPA   Economic Partnership Agreement
EU   European Union
FTA   Free Trade Agreement
GMO   Genetically Modified Organism
HIV   Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IFI   International Financial Institute
IMF   International Monetary Fund
IP   Intellectual Property
KIC   Knowledge Infrastructure for and between Counterparts
LDCs   Least Developed Countries
MDGs   Millennium Development Goals
NGOs   Non-Governmental Organisations
PRSP   Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
OI   Oxfam International
RTA   Regional Trade Agreement
SL   Sustainable Livelihood
SPM   Strategic Portfolio Management Plan
TRIPS   Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights
WFS   World Food Summit
WID   Women in Development
WTO   World Trade Organisation

Introduction

The inability of households to meet their basic food requirements is the most blatant and visible sign of poverty. Food insecurity is not just a result of poverty but is also a cause. Breaking the cycle of poverty and hunger demands a structural approach. Thus, food security is a key dimension of Oxfam Novib's mission of alleviating poverty.

Oxfam Novib works with civil society organisations, social movements, governments and the private sector to alleviate poverty. Oxfam Novib is a member of Oxfam International (OI) a confederation of affiliated organisations that work together to increase their international impact in fighting poverty and related injustice around the world.

In 2005, 815 million people in the developing world were undernourished, consuming fewer calories than they need for sound health and growth.[1] Oxfam Novib considers this to be unacceptable. It is essential that more efforts are made to reduce the prevalence of hunger and to achieve the goal, set by the World Food Summit in 1996, of halving the number of under-nourished people by 2015.

For Oxfam Novib and OI this entails promoting peoples' right to sustainable livelihoods, particularly in rural areas which continue to be the areas where poverty and hunger are most prevalent. This involves promoting agriculture, which plays an essential and irreplaceable role in guaranteeing food security and is a source of income for two thirds of the world's poor. Agriculture also plays a key role in influencing the availability of, and access to, a range of social and environmental public goods. No meaningful effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the goals of the World Food Summit can succeed without addressing rural poverty. To this end, Oxfam Novib supports actions that focus on 3 main strategies: directly addressing poverty, building civil society, and lobbying and advocacy work.

Purpose and Structure of this Paper

This position paper highlights the work related to food security that Oxfam Novib has been supporting and the lessons that have been learnt from this. Oxfam Novib's experiences in this field date back many decades to the food and nutrition programmes (VPO programmes) funded by the Dutch government and include many food security programmes implemented by our counterparts. In 2000, we wrote a policy paper documenting our experiences to that time and in 2005 we carried out an evaluation of how our counterparts had implemented this food security policy. On the basis of these findings and the discussions they generated, we have decided to update this work, taking into account the changing context in which these activities are being carried out.

This position paper is intended for Oxfam Novib staff and for our counterparts (donors, organisations that we support, etc.) to better support them in planning and implementing their food security activities. It reflects what we and our counterparts have achieved and learned along the way and sets out our future direction and strategies. This report uses the terms OI and Oxfam interchangeably, to refer to the joint work of Oxfam affiliates.

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[1] *See State of Food Insecurity in the World 1996. Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, 1996.*

This position paper has two parts. Part 1 outlines the background and concepts and is structured as follows:

Section 1: Defining Food Security
Section 2: Food as a Right
Section 3: Oxfam Novib's Support for Food Security Activities
Section 4: Food Security Conceptual Framework
Section 5: Sustainable Livelihood Framework
Section 6: Lobbying, Campaigning and Advocacy
Section 7: Summarising Oxfam Novib's approach to Food Security
Section 8: Evaluation of Oxfam Novib's Food Security Policy
Section 9: Translating Lessons into Action

Part 1 presents the concepts and frameworks that best describe the causes of food insecurity at different levels: from the individual level all the way to the international level. At each level, an attempt is made to illustrate the main factors that affect food security. It also provides an overview of the recommendations contained within and lessons learned from Oxfam Novib's 2005 food security policy evaluation and an overview of how we plan to put these lessons into practice in the future.

The paper is laid out so as to allow people to read the sections that are of interest to them, without needing to read the entire document. The annex provides some facts and figures on the extent of the global problem of food insecurity.

Part 2 of the report is a toolkit that provides tools and resources for practitioners particularly those that we work with and wish to apply for funding in the future. It sets out our future priorities and the criteria that we will apply when assessing funding applications for food security projects in the future.

1 Defining Food Security

Oxfam Novib follows the definition of food security adopted by the World Food Summit in 1996: "Food security, at the individual, household, national, regional and global levels [is achieved] when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life".[2] This definition contains several different aspects, as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1 Definition of Food Security

Everyone has	
At all times	Stability of food availability, access and utilisation throughout the year and over time. Protection against risks affecting people's food security.
Access to	The right to food. People are entitled to enough food. Affordability of food depending on purchasing power and food market prices. Own production depending on land rights, etc.
And control over	The power to take decisions concerning food production, distribution, consumption, etc.
Sufficient quantities	Enough food to meet their daily food requirements and a sufficient stock at household and community level to resist shocks.
Of good quality food	Variety of nutritious, safe and culturally appropriate foods.
For an active and healthy life	Proper consumption and a good biological utilisation of food, resulting in an adequate nutritional status of people.
Equity	Availability	Accessibility	Utilisation

Thus there are three aspects or pillars of food security: those of availability, access and utilisation. All three pillars need to be in place to be able to guarantee food security. These three pillars are individually discussed below.

Availability: In some developing countries, the availability of food (including stability in the availability of food) can be a limiting factor in achieving food security. Households may not be able to grow sufficient food for their own needs or there may be insufficient food available at the local food markets, due to low agricultural productivity or poor infrastructure. Ensuring food availability means ensuring that sufficient food is available for all people through, for example, enhancing local (or national) production or importing food.

Access: Access to food is ensured when all households (and all individuals within those households) are able to obtain sufficient and appropriate food for a nutritious diet. Building the food access pillar involves enabling people to either produce food or to purchase it on the marketplace. It is essential that access is consistent and constant. This is often a problem for poor households that have few opportunities to

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[2]   *FAO. 1996. Rome Declaration on World Food Security and World Food Summit Plan of Action. World Food Summit 13-17 November 1996. Rome.*

build up sufficient stocks of food for 'the hungry season', or to generate a sufficient level of income. Enhancing food access also means recognising that individuals within households may have different levels of access. The distribution of wealth and income within the household, differences in power and prestige connected to age, sex, culture, and religion may all play a role in creating unequal levels of access.

Utilisation: Utilisation refers to consumption and nutrition; i.e. the ability of the human body to transform food into the energy and nutrients needed to undertake daily activities or build reserves. Utilisation involves an adequate and varied diet and a healthy physical environment (to avoid disease) and an understanding of proper food storage and preparation practices. Security of nutrition requires having access to adequate food, being well cared for, and having access to basic social services. Adequate food utilisation entails working at the individual level to ensure nutritional security.

Within each pillar it is important to look at how gender roles affect food security. In most societies women are solely responsible for preparing, cooking, preserving and storing the family's food – and in many societies they have primary responsibility for producing and/or purchasing it. Yet, they often lack decision-making power on how to use the different household resources and how they are distributed within the household. Research shows that as long as women lack control over household resources any increases in household income may not be used to their optimal nutritional benefit. For this reason, gender needs to be fully integrated into food security programmes.

Essentially food security needs to be thought of in terms of individuals: the nutritional status of individual household members is the ultimate focus. Yet many other levels impinge on the individual level, so food security also involves paying attention to different levels of aggregation beyond the individual and household: community, regional, national and international levels. While there is enough food available at the global level, and often at national levels, shortages may arise at the regional, community, household or individual level.

2 The Right to Food

In 2000, Oxfam Novib, in common with OI, adopted a rights-based approach as the framework for all its work.[3] Food security forms part of Oxfam's work on the right to a sustainable livelihood (Aim 1). The right to adequate food and to be free from hunger is firmly established in international law, including the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 25.1), the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Articles 11.1 and 2) and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 24.1).

By ratifying these legal instruments, states recognise their obligation to respect, protect, and fulfil (meaning to facilitate and – as a matter of last recourse – provide for) the progressive realisation of the right to adequate food.

The right to freedom from hunger means that states have an obligation to ensure that, at the very least, people do not starve. This right is intrinsically linked to the right to life and its provision should not interfere with the enjoyment of other human rights.[4] To fully enjoy the right to food, people also need access to health care and education, respect for their cultural values, the right to own property and the right to organise themselves economically and politically. The right to food is intrinsically linked with the entire spectrum of human rights and its fulfilment is essential in the fight against poverty.

A rights based approach to food security emphasises the satisfaction of people's basic needs as a matter of right, rather than of benevolence. A rights based approach also empowers right holders by enabling them to become participants in realising their right to food. Application of the principles of human rights is integral to the process of abolishing hunger and achieving food security. Key principles in a rights based approach are: accountability, non-discrimination, transparency, empowerment and participation.

From a rights-based perspective, governments are ultimately responsible for ensuring that the right to food is met. Through the policies they create and implement, governments may either ensure or undermine people's food security. In 2004, FAO Council adopted Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realisation of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security.[5] The objective of these Voluntary Guidelines is to provide practical guidance to states in implementing the progressive realisation of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security and thereby meet the goals of the World Food Summit Plan of Action.

Oxfam Novib believes that the private sector also has a role and a responsibility in poverty reduction (see Figure 1). In particular, multinational companies involved in the agricultural and food sector should recognise their social and environmental responsibilities. They should pay remunerative prices that keep farmers out of poverty. They should commit themselves to providing terms of employment and

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[3]   *This includes all of Oxfam's work, which has five aims: the right to a sustainable livelihood (Aim 1); the right to basic social services (Aim 2); the right to life and security (Aim 3); the right to be heard (Aim 4), and; the right to an identity (Aim 5).*

[4]   *The acquisition of sufficient food for an adequate diet should not be so costly as to threaten the satisfaction of other socio-economic rights, or be fulfilled to the detriment of civil and political rights.*

[5]   *The Voluntary Guidelines are not legally binding but draw upon international law and provide guidance on the implementation of existing obligations (see http://www.fao.org/righttofood/index_en.htm).*

working conditions that comply with national law and international standards. Through their business practices and advocacy, they should actively promote sustainable development, social equity and improved working conditions in agricultural production and trade.

Oxfam Novib encourages businesses to give meaning to their corporate social responsibility, through a general debate in society, by engaging in constructive dialogue with them and through different forms of co-operation. Oxfam Novib also draws public attention to businesses that are not taking their responsibility seriously but instead contribute to poverty and food insecurity.

Figure 1 Interacting sectors
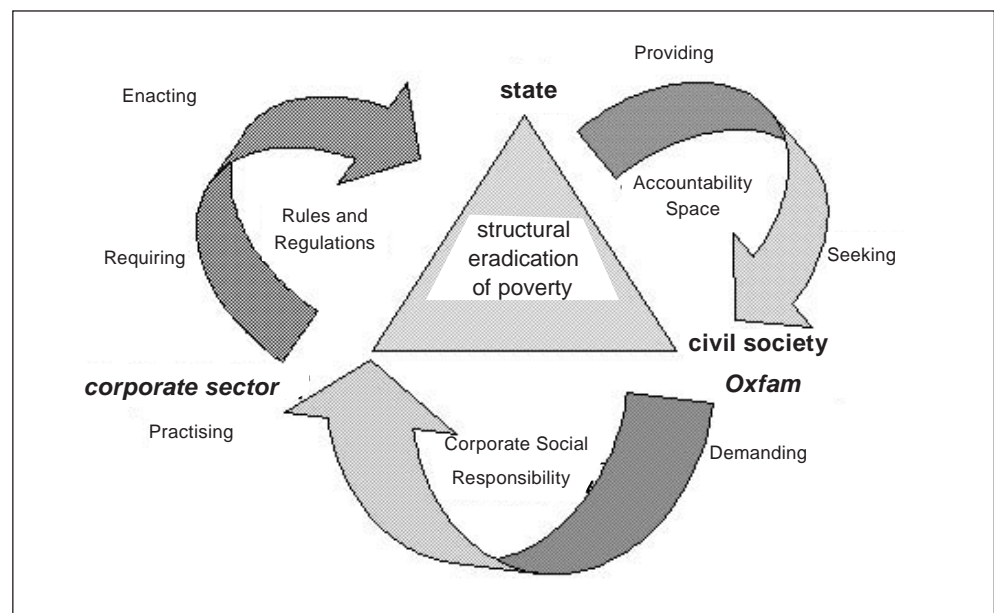
As illustrated in Figure 1, Oxfam Novib views civil society, the state, and the corporate sector as all having a role to play in ensuring food security and sustainable livelihoods. Local experiences can give substance to global debates and encourage people and organisations elsewhere in the world to take up new practices and policies. Equally, global networks can exert pressure on national governments to protect and strengthen livelihood systems so that people do not suffer the injustice of food insecurity.

Oxfam Novib works with many civil society organisations (CSOs) and social movements around the world. Some CSOs and movements see limits in the concept of food security and have started to speak of Food Sovereignty instead. The concept of Food Sovereignty was first launched by Via Campesina at the 1996 World Food Summit in Rome. Food Sovereignty is the right of peoples, communities and countries to define their own agricultural, labour, fishing, food and land policies in a way that is ecologically, socially, economically and culturally appropriate to their unique circumstances. This approach favours small scale family farming, food systems embedded in local food cultures and agro-ecological practices over industrialised agricultural systems, corporate control of food and farming and extended market chains. The International NGO/CSO Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC-FS), a broad-based movement of civil society organisations and social movements, organised the first Global Forum for Food Sovereignty in Rome in 2002. Its aim was to co-ordinate and promote debate among NGOs, CSOs, UN agencies and other

international organisations on all agricultural and food related issues.[6] Oxfam Novib supports some organisations that are involved in the Food Sovereignty movement. We will watch with interest to see how the Food Sovereignty concept is operationalised at the programme and project level and the impact of this at the individual level.

[6]   *The IPC-FS is now recognised by United Nations organisations as a representative body with standing in negotiations on food and nutrition.*

3 Oxfam Novib's Support for Food Security Activities

Oxfam Novib supports many organisations working to achieve food security. These organisations work on Aim 1 – the right to a sustainable livelihood and improved food security is both a goal and an outcome of these projects. Our Aim 1 counterparts are working in 19 core countries and 10 regional clusters, as well as in the Netherlands and at the global level. The ways in which Oxfam Novib and these counterparts work together to achieve income and food security are set out in detail in the 2007-2010 Strategic Portfolio Management Plans (SPMs) for each core country and regional cluster.

Although situations always differ from place to place there are a number of common challenges to achieving food and income security. These can be broadly classified as: unequal distribution of land and other productive resources; inefficient local markets and distortions of national markets by subsidised agricultural exports or dumping, weak extension services, little or no infrastructure, lack of information, lack of non-farm opportunities, little or no research on, or support for, smallholder agriculture, poor access to credit, little or no participation of poor farmers in government policy making, and HIV/AIDS.

Oxfam Novib supports programmes and projects through 3 interlinking strategies:
● Direct poverty reduction- activities designed to improve income and food security, such as increasing agricultural productivity, access to markets or to credit, improving management of natural resources, etc.
● Advocacy – activities focused at changing policies and practices and thus improving the context for agriculture and rural livelihoods (e.g. land rights, grazing rights, etc.)
● Civil society building – activities oriented at building and strengthening the organisational capacities of civil society organisations (NGOs, CBOs, producer organisations, etc.), building and strengthening alliances between civil society actors; strengthening advocacy capacity and strengthening citizenship (both in the North and in the South).

Some Aim 1 organisations also undertake activities under Aim 2 (the right to basic social services). In 2006, OI launched its *Essential Services Campaign* to bring attention to the dismal state of essential services in many countries,[7] with the aim of improving the access of the poor, particularly poor women, to essential services such as education, water and health, all of which contribute to food security.

Our counterpart organisations also work in areas affected by disasters and conflict (Aim 3). The displacement of people and the disruption of agricultural production and food distribution leave millions of people at risk of hunger and famine. Conflicts destroy land, water, biological, and social resources for food production, while military expenditures use resources that could invested in health, education, agriculture, and environmental protection. At the same time food insecurity may exacerbate conflict, particularly when compounded by other shocks and stresses.

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[7]   *See "In the Public Interest; health, education and water and sanitation for all" Oxfam, 2006.*

Normal food security programmes are unable to cope with emergency situations. While food aid is one possible response to such situations it is often not an appropriate or efficient tool for meeting many humanitarian or development needs. In particular, in-kind food aid often fails to improve access to food, due to delays in delivery, monetisation and mismatches between recipients' needs and the commodities donated.[8] Other responses that may be more appropriate and these should be explored more. What is needed is appropriate aid that empowers people affected by crises and responds directly to their priority needs in a dignified manner. For example, Oxfam has been experimenting with cash transfers and believes that cash based interventions are more appropriate in certain contexts.[9] More importantly, food aid and humanitarian responses are not long-term solutions to the problem of hunger. Improving the livelihoods of poor men and women and fostering agricultural growth are essential to reduce hunger.

Whatever the strategy pursued, Oxfam Novib emphasises:
1   The need for a holistic approach
2   Linking agriculture and health
3   Achieving food security through partnerships (multi-sectoral)
4   Relating food and income security
5   Mainstreaming gender and getting men involved in nutrition and care practices
6   Building on people's strengths
7   Influencing national and international policies that affect people's food security.

The following sections outline how this can be done: how to ensure that men, women and children are food secure. To understand the processes involved and how to remedy them, it is useful to start at the individual level and work up towards the international level. The food security conceptual framework (figure 2) helps us to understand the causes of food insecurity and livelihood issues at an individual, household and community level. At higher levels, the livelihoods framework (figure 3) helps us identify the factors that influence sustainable livelihoods at community, national and regional levels. At the international level, it is necessary to look at the distribution of power between developed and developing countries.
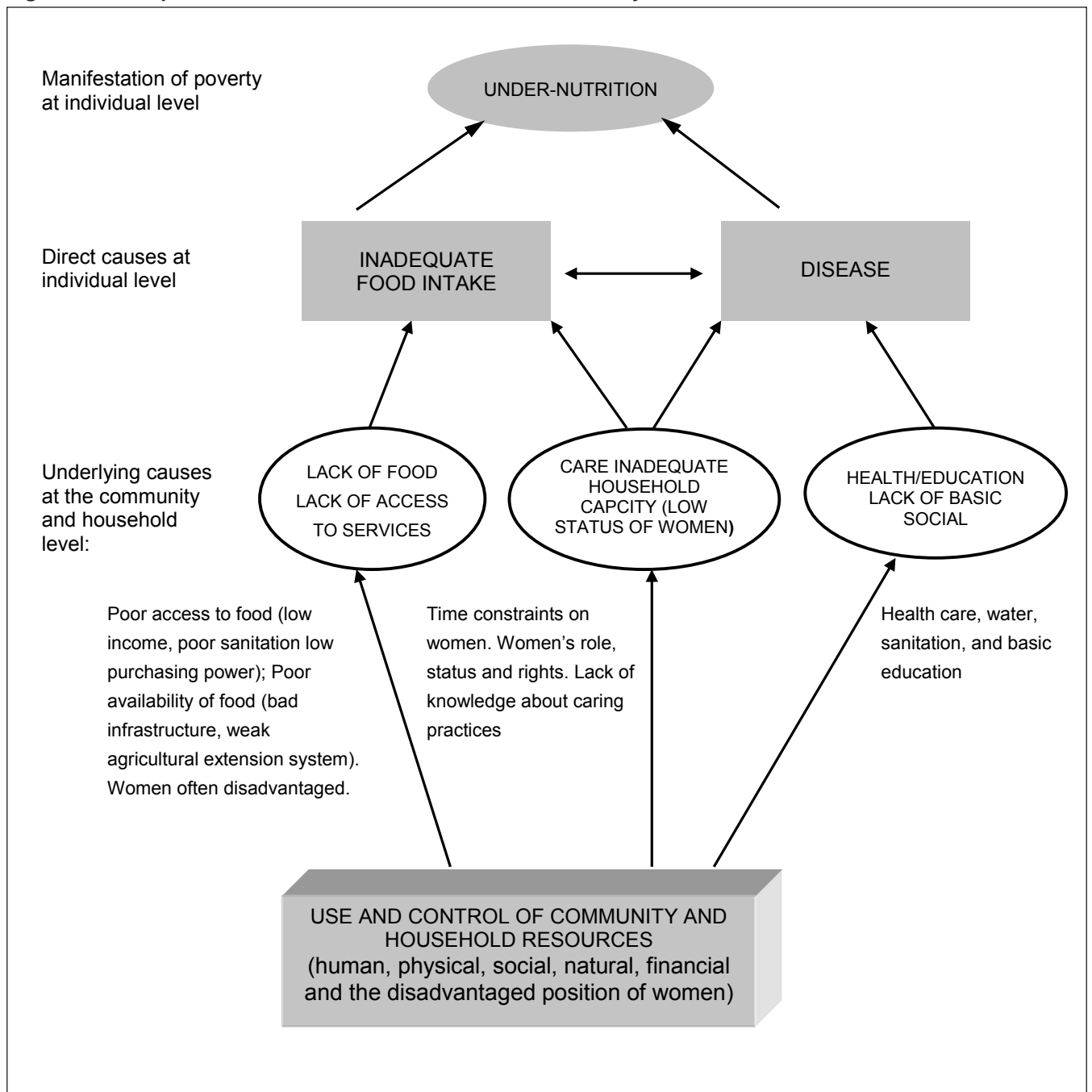
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[8]   *See "Food Aid or Hidden Dumping? Separating wheat from chaff" Oxfam, 2005.*
[9]   *Countries where Oxfam has recently implemented cash programmes include: Kenya, Uganda, Somalia, Haiti, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Philippines, Similar programmes are currently being set up in Indonesia and Sri Lanka.*

4 The Food Security Conceptual Framework

In order to address food insecurity, one must have a clear vision of its causes and then analyse them. Figure 2 provides an overview of the causes of food insecurity at the individual, household, and community levels.

Figure 2 Conceptual framework of the causes of food insecurity

Manifestation of poverty at individual level

UNDER-NUTRITION

Direct causes at individual level

INADEQUATE FOOD INTAKE

DISEASE

Underlying causes at the community and household level:

LACK OF FOOD LACK OF ACCESS TO SERVICES

CARE INADEQUATE HOUSEHOLD CAPCITY (LOW STATUS OF WOMEN)

HEALTH/EDUCATION LACK OF BASIC SOCIAL

Poor access to food (low income, poor sanitation low purchasing power); Poor availability of food (bad infrastructure, weak agricultural extension system). Women often disadvantaged.

Time constraints on women. Women's role, status and rights. Lack of knowledge about caring practices

Health care, water, sanitation, and basic education

USE AND CONTROL OF COMMUNITY AND HOUSEHOLD RESOURCES
(human, physical, social, natural, financial and the disadvantaged position of women)

Direct causes at the individual level

Figure 2 illustrates that the direct causes of a person's nutritional status are food intake and health status. Interaction between these factors often creates a vicious circle: an under-nourished person whose resistance to illness is compromised more readily falls sick and their under-nutrition worsens. People, especially children, who enter this cycle of under-nutrition and illness can quickly fall into a potentially fatal spiral as one condition feeds off the other. At particular moments in their life cycle, (e.g. pregnancy, lactation, etc.) women also require extra nutritional care.

Underlying causes at the household and community levels

These direct individual causes are in turn influenced by three main underlying ones: lack of household food security, inadequate caring capacity within households and a lack of access to basic social services. These, second-level, underlying causes highlight the multi-sectoral nature of under-nutrition and food insecurity.

Good health and nutrition is determined by the availability of basic social services in the community and the access to, and quality and utilisation of, these services. Communities need curative and preventive health services that are affordable and of good quality. Lack of ready access to water and poor environmental sanitation are important underlying causes of under-nutrition and key factors in the cycle of under-nutrition and illness. Inadequate access to water also indirectly affects nutrition by increasing the workload of women (through the time and energy needed to fetch water). Inadequate or improper education, particularly of women, is often a further underlying cause of under-nutrition as it exacerbates the inability to generate and control resources and make best use of those available to them, in ways that improve the nutritional basis of their families.

Figure 2 enables us to understand the causes of malnutrition at the individual, household and community levels. Yet it is also important to link these levels to higher ones. The Sustainable Livelihood (SL) framework can assist in this and is described in the next section.

5 The Sustainable Livelihoods Conceptual Framework

As previously noted Oxfam Novib sees the right to food as embedded in the right to a sustainable livelihood (SL) (Aim 1). A livelihood refers to the capabilities, assets and activities required to achieve a means of living. The SL framework (Figure 3) builds on Figure 2 and allows us to see the relationships between the different aspects (causes and manifestations) of poverty, allowing for responses to be more effectively prioritised at an operational level.

Figure 3 Sustainable Livelihoods Framework
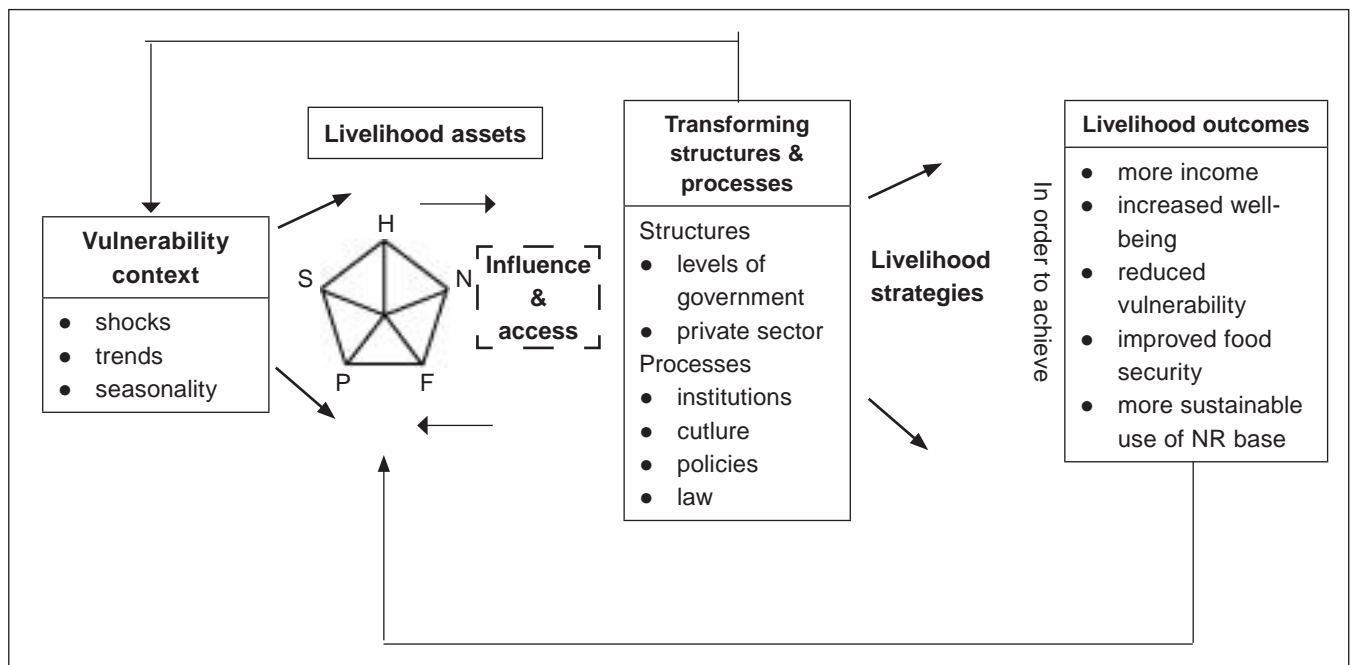
Key   H: Human capital, S: Social capital, N: Natural capital, P: Physical capital, F: Financial capital
Adapted from: http://www.livelihoods.org/info/guidance_sheets_pdfs/section1.pdf

A more detailed explanation of the SL framework is provided below, with each aspect of the framework described and "unpacked" to enhance understanding of the inter-relationships between these different aspects. The explanations follow the order of Figure 3, running from left to right.

5.1 Vulnerability Context

This refers to the ways in which the external environment affects individual households and the people within them, sometimes in different ways. It is important to distinguish between shocks, trends and seasonality.

Shocks

Shocks, such as earthquakes, floods, disease, loss of jobs, violent conflicts, destruction of physical infrastructure (such as roads, bridges), etc. all affect food security. In many cases, regular programmes will cease and be superseded by humanitarian and emergency assistance.

Seasonality

Harmful seasonal fluctuations, such as price fluctuations in crop and livestock markets, fluctuations in food availability due to seasonal climatic changes, pests etc.

Trends

Several trends currently affect people's food security and the sustainability and the resilience of livelihoods to external shocks. Oxfam Novib sees the following trends as important in understanding the causes of food insecurity and responding appropriately. The relative importance of these trends will vary from place to place. Some of these trends are being addressed by Oxfam's programmes and partner organisations, others less so. Oxfam (NOVIB and OI) continues to monitor these trends. For further details, see Oxfam Novib's Business Plan and OI's Strategic Plan.

Migration and Remittances

Migration and remittances are coming to play a larger role in people's livelihoods in many parts of the world. Household members are increasingly more mobile, dividing their time between rural and urban areas. Through migration many individuals and households seek to improve their income and livelihood security. However, migration can also be a result of conflicts, environmental stress or other 'push' factors. Gender influences migration patterns as men and women have different patterns of, and responses to, migration. In Latin America, women who migrated to cities have played a major role in reducing rural poverty by sending money back to their home villages. In parts of sub-Saharan Africa, male migration to urban areas has led to a rapid rise in the number of female-headed rural households. Migration can have both positive and negative effects on food security. It is important to undertake a thorough analysis of the specific effects of migration on household and individual food security levels before designing a food security programme.

Remittances are vital to rural households in many parts of the world. Current evidence suggests that migrant remittances are used primarily for necessities like food and clothing (Crush et. al. 2006; Siddiqui & Abrar 2001), although some money is used to improve agricultural production thereby contributing to longer term improvements in income and food security. In East Africa, rural households with access to remittances are the most productive farmers. Research by Oucho found that 48% of urban remittances are used either to buy or improve productive land (in Crush et al. 2006: 21). Remittances can help to strengthen ties between rural and urban households and this can stimulate the rural economy both at the household and community levels.

However, migration can also deprive areas of labour and so have a negative effect on production and possibly increase the food insecurity of rural households. In some areas of the world, migration is predominantly an adult male phenomenon which leaves women in charge of day-to-day farm management and supporting their families. Micro-studies on the gender division of labour and time use in farming systems generally substantiate that rural women in poor households work longer hours than men and that they have considerable responsibility for domestic and agricultural tasks. Hence, for rural families primarily engaged in farming, male migration (and other factors which result in labour shortages) often drastically change the traditional division of labour. Often the net effect of this change is to increase

women's workload and, in some cases, it leads to lower agricultural productivity because of a shortage of male labour. Women often have to take on new tasks, such as clearing land and ploughing. Women make up for the lack of male labour by organising labour exchanges with other women, working longer hours themselves or, if they have the means from remittances and other income sources, by hiring labour. Other coping strategies can include reducing the area under cultivation or switching to less labour-intensive, but less nutritious crops, both of which may compromise household food security.

While money travels from urban to rural areas, food travels from rural to urban areas. Rural households with access to productive assets send food to urban areas and these food transfers are vital to urban food security.

Migration and remittances have been identified as a new theme in Oxfam's Business Plan (2007-2010). In the coming years, Oxfam Novib will identify opportunities to increase its support for work that will increase the positive effects of these trends and minimise the negative ones.

HIV/AIDS[10]

Oxfam Novib recognises that the HIV/AIDS pandemic is a major threat to food security and development. Because the majority of those falling sick with AIDS are young adults who normally harvest crops, food production has dropped dramatically in countries with high HIV/AIDS prevalence rates (FAO, 2005). In half of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa, per capita economic growth is estimated to be falling by between 0.5 and 1.2 percent each year as a direct result of AIDS. Invaluable knowledge about indigenous farming methods and strategies for coping with food shortages are being lost. HIV/AIDS places a burden on family members, particularly women and girls, who traditionally are responsible for growing most of the household food and caring for the sick and dying. When husbands or fathers fall ill or die, women also have to take on the men's responsibilities. Further consequences of this include: a change in the volume and kinds of crops produced, a decline in educational status (as children are forced to leave school earlier) and changes in household composition to adapt to HIV/AIDS (e.g. break-up of families and a growing incidence of child-headed households).

Biological and social factors make women and girls more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS than men and boys (HIV infection rates in young women are sometimes three to five times higher than they are for young men). So when they fall sick, food production comes under even more stress, HIV positive women are often stigmatised and, in many African countries, women don't have the right to inherit their husbands' properties, which can mean destitution for them.

Coping mechanisms (social capital) seem to weaken in communities with high HIV/AIDS prevalence because of the changes that occur in poor people's lives. There seems to be a decline in social resilience, leading to the demise of cultural norms that are traditionally instrumental in protecting the poor and vulnerable (children, old people and sick people) against food insecurity. Common coping strategies used by rural African households to deal with these effects are: reduced consumption of food; substitution with cheaper food alternatives; increased reliance on wild foods; and income diversification (UNAIDS, 1999). As already mentioned, poor nutrition leads to reduced economic productivity. But with HIV/AIDS the effects are more devastating. Failure to maintain nutritional status weakens immunity and increases susceptibility

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[10] For a fuller understanding of Oxfam Novib's work on HIV/AIDS, see "Good Donorship in Times of AIDS" (Oxfam Novib 2006c), "Linking AIDS with poverty, gender and sexuality (Oxfam Novib, 2001), "Questions and Answers on HIV/AIDS and OI's 5 Strategic Aims (Oxfam Novib 2004).

to opportunistic infections, which in turn undermine nutritional status and hasten the onslaught of full blown AIDS. Vitamin A (yellow fruits and green leafy vegetables) deficiency is also associated with the hastened onset of AIDS and even with increased risk of infection through increased susceptibility to genital ulcers.

Migration has an empirical link with HIV/AIDS and therefore with food security. Migrant communities have higher rates of infection, partly because migration can encourage people to take higher risks. Migration also makes it difficult for people to get access to preventive education, condoms, treatment, etc. This linkage between HIV/AIDS and migration has effects on both rural and urban food security. For example, HIV/AIDS often leads people to return home, which may mean moving from an urban to a rural area or from one country to another in order to take care of a sick relative or else to be taken care of. HIV/AIDS may also create new motives for migrating, as some people with HIV/AIDS may migrate to avoid stigma.

Oxfam Novib supports organisations that are developing HIV/AIDS work place policies and also those seeking to mainstream HIV/AIDS concerns within their projects and programmes. In highly affected areas HIV/AIDS needs to be fully integrated into the work of organisations.

Environmental Pressures

The rural poor are heavily dependent on natural resources and as such are severely affected by their deterioration, which can occur for many reasons. Overuse of water, for example through excessive pumping of groundwater, can lead to the depletion of the water needed for crop and animal production, over fishing fish stocks can affect food security and the loss of trees can mean a loss of fuel wood, construction materials and other services to the poor. Misuse of soil can lead to erosion and loss of fertility and soil moisture thus diminishing crop yields, while the misuse of pesticides can destroy fish and other aquatic resources on which the poor depend and damage the health of agricultural workers and their families. Many of these trends have serious consequences for the food security of the rural poor. The deterioration or mismanagement of natural resources is often due to bad policies at the national level. For example, in large parts of South Asia, groundwater extraction is being driven by fuel subsidies which only benefit farmers who can afford pump sets, who lower the water tables, deplete aquifers and degrade water quality, thereby affecting the entire rural population. There is some evidence that natural resource scarcity or inequitable access and benefit sharing are the cause of many conflicts around the world. These problems may be characterised as the 'resource curse'. The underlying causes of these problems are often found at macro-economic and political levels: low levels of government spending on social services, high spending on the military and internal security, high economic volatility, the readiness of international lenders to finance indebted but resource-rich countries, high levels of corruption, and an emphasis on high external input agriculture for export markets and earnings all contribute to this.

A further related issue is the impact of climate change on the livelihoods of the poor. Climate induced changes (e.g. frequency of droughts, floods, etc.) are already eroding the viability of poor people's livelihoods and are likely to continue doing so, in ever more dramatic ways. These effects will be felt most acutely by poor women farmers who are less able to adapt to a changing context because of the barriers they face in accumulating assets. On a broader scale, global warming will alter agro-environmental conditions affecting the suitability and productivity of crops and increasing the risk of pest and disease infestation. Crop yields in sub-Saharan Africa are projected to fall

by 20 percent as a result of global warming[11]. As yields fall and demand rises, Africa will become more dependent on expensive food imports, which will further negatively affect the poor (who spend more than half of their income on food) and the particularly the rural poor (where market infrastructure is less developed). As developed countries have contributed the most to greenhouse gas emissions they need to take the lead in making significant cuts in greenhouse gas emissions. They also need to support adaptation in developing countries, particularly in the poorest countries that have contributed least to causing global warming. Many NGOs, including Oxfam Novib and OI see climate change as an issue of social justice and are calling for both climate adaptation and mitigation. Justice demands that those countries most responsible for climate change, and capable of providing assistance, bear a proportionate burden of the costs.[12]

Oxfam plans to lobby for strong political action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in order to reduce the effects of climate change. It will also call for additional funding for adaptation through national and international frameworks to ensure that poor people get the resources they need to protect their lives and livelihoods from climate-related shocks and stresses and to pro-actively adapt their livelihood strategies to the changing environmental conditions bought about by global warming.

Over the last few years, genetic engineering of food crops has been presented by some as a solution to hunger.[13] Advocates of transgenic crops, most of which have been genetically engineered to be herbicide tolerant or insect resistant, claim they will bring a range of benefits to farmers and consumers, including higher yields and lower pesticide use. But these claims remain disputed, and stand in stark contrast to concerns voiced by a wide range of CSOs, NGOs and members of the scientific community over human health, the environment, biodiversity (natural and agro-ecological) and social and economic issues. Many organisations that Oxfam Novib supports believe that genetic engineering will solve not food insecurity and is more likely to undermine it since GM crops are likely to consolidate the control that a small number of agro-industrial companies have over agriculture. There are widespread concerns that commercial GM crops have not been subject to adequate risk assessment and that their widespread use may contaminate seed stocks with the potential for future adaptation against the effects of climate change. Oxfam Novib believes that it is up to developing countries to decide whether they want GMOs and that they should not be pressurised into accepting them, even in emergency situations.

Another emerging issue that is now attracting considerable attention is growing crops for fuels: agro-fuels, which will have an effect on land use, poverty and food security. Agro-fuels include traditional fuel sources, such as wood and charcoal, as well as newer sources such as ethanol, biodiesel and biogas. These new fuel sources are based on vegetation, crops grown specifically for energy, or agricultural (and other) forms of waste and residues. These agro-fuels are cleaner and more efficient than in the past and, if produced in a way that reduces net carbon emissions, they could contribute to mitigating global climate change. Yet there are real concerns that rainforests will be cut down to make land available to serve at the booming

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[11] Thornton, PK. et al. 2006. Mapping Climate Vulnerability and Poverty in Africa. Report to the Department of International Development, ILRI. Nairobi, Kenya.

[12] See "Africa – Up in Smoke 2": The Second Report on Africa and Global Warming from the Working Group on Climate Change and Development and Adapting to Climate Change (2006) and "How Local Experiences can Shape the Debate", Both ENDS Briefing Paper, Amsterdam August 2007.

[13] Generally, the term genetically modified organisms refers to any living organisms where portions of the original genetic make-up (the DNA) is modified through a process of gene transfer that does not occur naturally or through conventional breeding but only through biotechnology, or molecular biology, methods and tools commonly referred to as "genetic engineering" (GE). Organisms created through these processes are also referred as "transgenic".

European market for biodiesel and that the growth of agro-fuels will have an impact on agricultural land use. It is too early to know the effects that agro-fuels will have on food production and poverty. Increased production might raise the incomes of small farmers and rural labourers in developing countries and thereby improve food security, yet there are also risks in terms of food security, particularly if smallholders shift too much of their land from food production to agro-fuels and thereby become overly dependent on volatile commodity markets. In this respect the effects of agro-fuel expansion on food security will depend heavily on international policies for technology and trade.

In summary, migration, HIV/AIDS, environmental deterioration, changing land use, and climate change all have an impact on poor people's access to and use of livelihood assets and the strategies they use to construct their livelihoods. Those setting up food security programmes need to recognise these trends and incorporate this recognition into their analysis since:

- Failure to understand how these trends affect individual food security will diminish the impact of programmes.
- Such understanding allows for linking micro and macro-levels and identifying appropriate interventions at appropriate levels.
- It assists organisations in better defining those actions that will be needed at different levels: individual, household, community, regional, national, and international.
- It permits organisations to see opportunities that might exist for linking with other organisations.

Part 2 of this report ("The Toolkit") discusses in more detail ways in which these issues can be incorporated within food security programmes, so as to maximise their effectiveness.

5.2 Livelihood assets

The livelihood framework recognises 5 key assets:

- Natural (land, water, trees)
- Social (networks)
- Human (nutrition, knowledge, skills, etc.)
- Physical (roads, storage, etc.)
- Financial (income).

These assets are not evenly distributed between or within households, communities or countries. Class, caste, age, ethnicity, and gender all affect access to assets. The greater and more varied the asset base, the more sustainable and secure the livelihood will be. Food and nutrition are inherent parts of a livelihood and interact with each of the livelihood assets. It is important to recognise the influence and inter-linkages that exist between food, nutrition and these different assets, for example: Food underpins health and allows participation in education. Healthy, educated people are able to work more effectively to produce or obtain food and make better nutritional choices.

- Food production depends on access to natural resources (i.e. land, water and biodiversity) but can also deplete and erode them.
- Well-functioning markets and commodity chains are vital to food producers and consumers.
- Food production, access and quality depend on infrastructure e.g. for irrigation, transport and storage.

● Communities are sustained by local institutions (whether formal or informal) which provide support in times of scarcity and may also engage in collective food production, processing or marketing. Access to, and influence on, institutions (particularly state ones) is crucial for obtaining relevant and timely support.

5.3 Transforming Structures and Processes

This describes the institutions, organisations, policies and legislation that shape peoples' livelihoods. These operate at all levels, from the household to the international arena, and in all spheres, from the most private to the most public. *Structures* include those organisations, both private and public, which set and implement policy and legislation, deliver services, purchase, trade and perform all manner of other functions that affect livelihoods. *Processes* describe the way in which structures and individuals operate and interact. They include macro, sectoral, redistributive and regulatory policies, international agreements, domestic legislation, markets, culture, societal norms and beliefs, and the power relations associated with wealth, education, age, gender, caste or class.

5.4 Livelihood Strategies

Livelihood Strategies are the actual activities that people engage in. These are highly varied, with people making their living from farming, fishing, livestock, trading, collecting forest products, etc. Whatever the context, Oxfam Novib supports organisations that seek to strengthen people's asset base so as to help them earn a decent living wage, participate in society and claim their rights. Oxfam Novib also supports organisations in lobbying and advocacy issues at the local, national, and international levels so as to change the policies and practices that perpetuate poverty and food insecurity.

5.5 Livelihood Outcomes

Livelihood Outcomes are the achievements (or outputs) of livelihood strategies. We should not assume that people are entirely dedicated to maximising their income. It is hard to weigh up the relative value of increased well-being as opposed to increased income, but this is the type of decision that people make every day when deciding which strategies to adopt. There may be conflicts between livelihood outcomes, such as when increased income for a particular group is achieved through practices that damage the natural resource base, or when different family members prioritise different livelihood objectives – some seeking to reduce vulnerability and others seeking to maximise income.

Overall, the SL framework is a helpful way of analysing multi-level processes. It can be used to design activities aimed at improving food security and can also be applied to evaluate existing projects and programmes, even if these were not originally designed from an explicit SL approach. A livelihoods review brings a new perspective, providing an opportunity to stand back and explore how a project or programme is affecting the livelihoods of the poor, and to see how these impacts can be enhanced. Such a review allows an organisation to see:
● The ways in which projects/programme activities are directly and indirectly affecting people's livelihoods and the contexts that shape them.
● Whether people's own livelihood priorities are being addressed.

- How people's livelihood strategies are affecting their participation in and benefits from the project or programme.
- How activities can be adapted to enhance livelihood impacts for target groups while remaining consistent with the overall purpose of the project.

6 Lobbying, Campaigning and Advocacy

Oxfam Novib engages in lobbying, campaigning and advocacy work to change the policies that are perpetuating poverty. It does so through its work with its counterparts and as part of OI. One priority issue in recent years has been the role of international trade in development. We also spend considerable effort in building coalitions – linking counterparts in the north and south that work on agriculture and trade and linking organisations in the south with each other.

6.1 Monitoring the impact of the WTO on food security – The Agreement on Agriculture

International trade can play a large role helping achieve greater and more stable food availability in developing countries. However, it is unlikely that trade alone can solve the food security problems faced by many of these countries. With most food-insecure people living in rural areas and depending (directly or indirectly) on farm incomes, the importance of strong agricultural sectors is beyond dispute. In turn this means that the impact of agricultural trade agreements on developing countries needs close monitoring.

The Uruguay Round Agreement that established the WTO in 1994 was the first multilateral trade agreement to include agriculture. The Agreement on Agriculture committed members to reduce export subsidies and to redefine all import restrictions as tariffs, to be progressively reduced so as to reduce trade-distorting domestic support regimes. Developing countries were subject to less dramatic commitments in their reductions which could be extended over a longer period; The Least Developed Countries (LDCs) were not subject to any reduction commitments.

However, this Agreement did very little to reduce agricultural trade distortions between developing and industrialised countries. Indeed, it is widely acknowledged that developed countries gained disproportionately from the Uruguay Round which greatly enlarged their market access to developing countries. In November 2001 the Doha Round started. These ongoing negotiations cover a wide variety of issue, including agriculture. The negotiations on agriculture have been at the forefront of the political debate during the negotiations and are crucial to the final outcome. Developing countries were promised that these negotiations would rebalance the outcomes of the Uruguay Round, greatly reduce trade-distorting subsidies in developed countries and take development needs, including food security and rural development, into account.

Oxfam Novib and OI are part of a broader movement to make trade fairer. The Make Trade Fair campaign has highlighted the adverse impact of unfair trade rules on the livelihoods of millions of poor farmers in developing countries. At the time of writing, the WTO negotiations are still unresolved and have experienced many delays. Consistent campaigning has helped to change the terms of the global trade debate and has led to some gains, such as the EU's commitment to phase out export subsidies by 2013 and raising the profile of cotton. However many key issues remain unresolved and development objectives come under constant pressure in the talks.

Oxfam has consistently advocated that the negotiations arrive at a fair deal that really delivers on development, rather than pushing for a quick deal for political purposes.

Make Trade Fair has been a persistent advocate of:
- Stopping dumping by ending export subsidies and trade-distorting domestic support so as to prevent the distortion of agricultural markets in developing countries.
- Allowing developing countries to apply sufficient levels of market protection to provide for food security and rural development.
- Increasing the access that developing countries have to OECD agricultural markets by substantially cutting tariffs and quotas in developed countries, permitting tariff free and quota free access for all products from LDCs and addressing non trade barriers, such as cumbersome and inflexible rules of origin.
- A much more democratic and open negotiation process that allows developing countries more opportunity to participate in the negotiations.

While the outcome of the WTO negotiations is still uncertain, a new threat may undermine whatever gains are made in terms of fair trade. Trade relationships between rich and poor countries are now shifting from global trade talks, at the WTO, to regional and country-to-country free trade agreements (see below).

6.2 Free Trade Agreements – Regional and Bilateral Trade Agreements (RTAs)

A free trade agreement (FTA) removes "substantially all" barriers to trade between the parties. This severely limits governments' abilities to use tariffs as a policy tool to develop their growing industries or protect their farmers and agriculture workers. Such arrangements can lead to poor farmers being priced out of the market by cheap imports and fledgling industries to go under because they cannot compete with businesses from rich countries.[14]

The RTAs currently being negotiated between developed countries and groups of developing countries enshrine highly unequal and unfair arrangements. The EU, for example, is forging FTAs (referred to as Economic Partnership Agreements – EPAs) with 75 of its former colonies in Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific (ACP). RTAs generally introduce sweeping liberalisation measures and enforce corporate intellectual property claims and investor protection all of which are often detrimental for development. Furthermore, many of these agreements undermine the multilateral rules-based system and the limited developmental gains made at the WTO where developing countries have together been more able to reject bad agreements and stand firm on their development needs. North-South RTAs also undermine the development potential of South-South regional integration.

Highly unequal power relations within RTA negotiations can lead to agreements that undermine food security and rural development in developing countries through several mechanisms.
- Trade distorting subsidies: RTAs oblige many developing countries make substantial liberalisation commitments that open up their agricultural markets and further expose their producers to unfair competition from highly subsidised imports.

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[14] *See Oxfam Trading Away Our Rights 2004*

- Market access for exports from developing countries: developing countries receive very little increased market access through RTAs because many agreements tend to exclude developed countries' protected and sensitive agricultural sectors from liberalisation.
- Policy space: RTAs can undermine the decision making power of developing countries by limiting the policy options they have available to them to support food security and rural development.

6.3 Trade-Related Aspects of International Property Rights (TRIPS)

The incorporation of Intellectual Property (IP) rules in the WTO via the agreement on Trade-Related aspects of International Property Rights (TRIPS) is the result of extensive lobbying by companies. TRIPS introduced a one-size-fits-all global system for minimal standards of patent protection and enforcement of intellectual property claims. With 97% of all patents held in industrialised countries, developing countries stand to lose a lot from the TRIPS agreement. Strict patent legislation threatens farmers' practice of saving seeds and limits the possibilities of producing cheap generic medicines and parallel imports. By affecting poor peoples' access to seeds and medicines, the TRIPS agreement is likely to negatively affect food security in developing countries.

Oxfam believes that:
- The current blueprint approach in the WTO rules on TRIPS should be changed so that the interests of developing countries can be taken into account. TRIPS rules should take much more account of countries' level of development.
- The WTO rules should not allow the patenting of life forms and plant genetic resources.
- WTO rules should not impede developing countries from producing and or importing cheap generic medicines.
- Developing countries should retain the right to develop alternative systems for intellectual property protection of traditional seed varieties.
- Developing countries should not seek TRIPS rules as well as other TRIPS agreements such as UPOV 1991.

6.4 International Financial Institutes (IFIs)

The IMF and World Bank have frequently undermined the ability of poor countries and poor people to integrate successfully into the global economy. The loan conditions that they impose often prioritise rapid economic liberalisation without proper consideration of the consequences on short-term poverty and long-term development. This is a major impediment to trade working for the poor.

Oxfam Novib and OI believe that:
- Trade liberalisation conditions should be removed from IMF and World Bank loans.
- Retrospective credit should be provided for the liberalisation programmes undertaken by developing countries in the past under IMF and World Bank auspices.
- Poverty assessments under Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) should include a comprehensive assessment of the implications of trade liberalisation for poverty reduction and income distribution.

7 Summarising Oxfam Novib's Approach to Food Security

Table 2 illustrates the different levels at which organisations can address food security issues. Some organisations work at all levels, others at one or two. When organisations work with others their work can have greater impact than when they work by themselves. Working at different levels can help improve aspects of individual nutritional security– the overall goal of any food security intervention.

Table 2: Different Levels of Actions, Interventions, Focus, Objectives and Outcomes

Levels	Policy level (macro)	Institutional level (meso)	Beneficiary level (micro)
Vision/Objectives	Addressing the structural causes of food insecurity.	Building the capacity of organisations to represent food insecure people.	Addressing the direct causes of food insecurity.
Interventions	Funding and supporting organisations for lobbying and campaign work.	Facilitating the response of civil society to food insecurity.	Funding non-governmental organisations (and others) to directly implement food security activities in communities.
Outcomes/Impact	Changes in pro-poor policy in the fields of trade, basic social services, and the rights of women.	Empowering the poor, especially women. Increased inclusion in community and household management of resources related to food, care and health.	Improved nutrition security.

8 Evaluation of Oxfam Novib's Food Security Policy

In 2005, Oxfam Novib evaluated its food security policy and its implementation via the work of counterparts. This exercise focused on the period 1997 – 2004, with an emphasis on 2001 – 2004. The evaluation had two components: a desk study encompassing 12 countries from three continents and field studies in Ethiopia and Guatemala. The key findings from the evaluation are described below.

Food security needs a holistic approach: most counterparts understand this but vary in the extent to which they apply it in their work. Some organisations understand food security mainly in terms of agriculture and incomes and expect food availability and access to be sufficient for improving food security and thus give insufficient priority to issues of utilisation.

Linking agriculture and health: This was found to a lesser degree then expected, e.g. it is not always standard practice to convey information on good care practices, such as breastfeeding and infant feeding practices, hygiene and food preparation etc.

Achieving food security through partnerships: Counterparts confirmed that food security couldn't be achieved by single organisations working in isolation. Yet, it is not always easy to establish partnerships to address all aspects of food security, as it is sometimes difficult to find partners whose work is complementary, especially at higher levels of intervention.

Relating food and income security: Most counterparts address both on and off farm economic activities.

Mainstreaming gender and getting men involved in nutrition: The evaluation found that women's position was generally improving in the areas where our counterparts were active. Women had increased their economic power and were more involved in community and organisational activities. Generally, counterpart organisations used a WiD (Women in Development) approach, focusing on women's practical needs rather than strategic gender goals. The evaluation also revealed that while gender roles were improving, women continued to be almost entirely responsible for household and caring activities and it was still difficult to involve men in these activities.

Building on people's strengths: All counterpart organisations could illustrate how they use participative methods and build on people's ideas, priorities and experiences, although it was evident that some improvements could be made in involving beneficiaries more in monitoring and evaluation.

Monitoring and Evaluation Systems: The evaluation found that most M&E systems pay insufficient attention to how data is used in strategic decision making. The main focus is on monitoring activities and outputs and less attention is paid to how these combined outputs eventually result in changes in food security. Improved M&E systems will assist our counterparts to be more aware of whether (and how) they need to change their strategies.

Influencing national policy on food security: Some examples of this were found in both studies but influencing national food security policy is not widely applied by most of our counterparts.

Overall, the evaluation concluded that Oxfam Novib's food security policy is relevant and of good quality, although its implementation could have been stronger and more support could have been offered to organisations for their work in lobbying and advocacy work and in strengthening their M&E systems.

Lessons Learned:

Food security activities need to address availability, access and utilisation. Utilisation of food will only be improved through specific interventions, such as information about household decision-making, education on the intra-household distribution of food, and health and nutrition. Addressing all 3 pillars will also help to develop appropriate indicators for measuring changes at the individual level.

Using M&E systems for strategic decision making and learning: It is essential to regularly review strategies and progress to assess whether projects are achieving their intended impact(s).

Gender mainstreaming: achieving food security involves addressing gender inequalities and this in turn makes it easier to address the utilisation pillar. At the household level, it is only by changing gender relations that men will become more involved in nutrition and women will have a more equal say in decisions about food and household resources.

Achieving food security through alliances: single NGOs operating in isolation cannot achieve food security. Different, complementary, actors need to forge alliances and work together towards a common goal; that of improving people's well-being (in terms of their nutritional or health status). Such alliances are crucial for achieving lasting change.

The involvement of counterparts in Oxfam's lobbying, advocacy, and campaigns: Oxfam Novib has not fully tapped into the potential of fostering synergies by involving counterpart organisations in its campaigns, lobbying and advocacy work. Oxfam and its campaigns could benefit by finding ways to do this.

9 Translating Lessons into Action

Oxfam Novib's Business Plan (2007-2010) states that by 2010, Oxfam Novib will be spending 61 million Euro (35 percent of its total spending) on its programme for the basic right to a sustainable livelihood. This will be spent among 495 counterparts and alliances, of which 205 specialise in this area of work. Co-operation with farmers' organisations, trade unions, consumers' women's and human rights organisations will play an important role within this programme as will collaboration with citizens' organisations in Europe that are promoting Fair Trade. In the Netherlands, the main organisation that we work with is the Fair Trade Coalition while at the pan-European level we work closely with Eurostep, an association of fifteen European development organisations.

It is intended that by 2010 Oxfam Novib's programme will assist 6.8 million people (5 million of them women) in reducing their food insecurity and in having greater security over their incomes. This will be achieved through improvements in production, better access to markets, land and water. In addition:

- 4.1 million people (70 percent women) will have access to financial services, such as micro-finance and micro-insurance. Triple Jump will extend more than 112 million Euro in micro-loans and, in partnership with MicroNed, will set up 60 new micro-finance institutions, with 300,000 clients.
- 2.6 million people (70 percent women) will see improvements in their working conditions, including those working in the low-income and bad working conditions of tax-free industrial zones in Central America and on large agricultural processing businesses in Africa.
- Of the 225 institutions that Oxfam Novib works with, 20 will 'graduate' from phase 1 status (starting) to phase 3 (solid enough to qualify for loans from the ASN-Novib Fund).
- Four hundred counterparts of Oxfam will be using the KIC (Knowledge Infrastructure for and between Counterparts) Oxfam's digital knowledge-bank of practical knowledge and skills for use in direct poverty reduction, civil society building and advocacy.
- National policies on agriculture and trade will have improved in at least ten developing countries, in part the result of the effective influence of civil society. Some new trade agreements, including the EPAs, will contain measures to protect and promote the poorest producers.
- At least fifteen international corporations will have committed themselves to the principles of corporate social responsibility. They will recognise their responsibility within the chain from producer to consumer and seek to ensure better labour conditions throughout the chain, especially for female labour. They will also develop products and services to help people escape poverty.
- The Dutch government will apply clear criteria of corporate social responsibility in all public tenders and will establish an import license test for ensuring that labour rights are not violated.

Oxfam Novib's Business Plan (2007-2010), Oxfam International's Strategic Plan (2007-2016) and the results of the evaluation have identified a number of strategies that will be employed to help these objectives.

Oxfam Novib staff will be supported in enhancing their conceptual understanding of food security. Relevant staff will be invited to participate in in-house knowledge

sessions on food security to improve their ability to identify the risks and opportunities in the food security work that counterparts are engaged in. Particular attention will be paid to the utilisation pillar and to addressing strategic gender issues.

In selecting new counterparts for funding, Oxfam Novib is committed to supporting organisations that undertake a thorough analysis of the causes of food insecurity, address all three pillars of food security, use a gender based approach and work in alliances with others to link levels and achieve maximum impact. Failure to address these issues will be regarded as a risk. Oxfam Novib's programme staff will also highlight the importance of these issues in their visits to existing counterparts.

Oxfam Novib's programme staff will support counterparts in improving their M&E systems, particularly so that these include data at the individual level and thus make visible the effects of interventions upon nutritional status.

In countries with a high incidence of HIV/AIDS, Oxfam Novib staff will ensure that HIV/AIDS and its implications are taken into account in livelihood and food security activities and organisations' workplace policies.

Oxfam Novib staff will ensure that counterparts have more opportunity to be involved in its lobbying, advocacy, and campaigning work and more attention will be paid to ensuring that counterparts are kept abreast of activities in these areas. Oxfam Novib now employs strategic campaign staff whose task is to increase the capacity of counterparts to engage in lobbying work. More efforts will be made to ensure that Oxfam Novib's campaigns (Global Call to Action against Poverty, Health and Education for All, etc.), make explicit and clear linkages to food security. OI's new work on trade, agriculture and climate change will provide further opportunities to address food security. Further, by involving counterparts more actively in lobbying and campaigning, Oxfam Novib will contribute to addressing food security issues. The SPMs for the 19 core countries and 10 regional clusters contain specific details for actions to support counterparts in increasing their capacity in lobbying, campaigning and advocacy work. This will be part of a broader effort to assist counterparts in building stronger links between their activities at the micro and macro levels

Counterparts will be supported in improving their knowledge of food security, focusing on the three pillars of availability, access and utilisation and the importance of gender within these. Organisations will need to put appropriate indicators in place.

Oxfam Novib will encourage its counterparts to learn from each other and share their experience of successful intervention strategies, particularly around the utilisation pillar. Oxfam Novib has developed a knowledge sharing tool – KIC- that facilitates counterparts to share knowledge through an internet portal (*www.oxfamkic.org*). The portal allows counterparts to:
- Find out what other food security organisations are doing;
- Share and learn from successful intervention strategies;
- Have access to relevant and recent case studies, evaluation reports, and research on food security;
- Find useful links to research centres with expertise in food security.

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Annex

Facts and figures on the extent of food insecurity

Ten years after the 1996 Rome World Food Summit (WFS) the number of undernourished people in the world remains unacceptably high. The FAO has estimated that in 2001-3 820 million people in the developing world were undernourished. Since 1990-2002 (the baseline period for the WFS target), the undernourished population in developing countries has declined by only 3 million people (or less than 0.5%): from 823 million to 820 million. Virtually no progress has been made towards meeting the WFS target of halving the number of undernourished people by 2015.

Table 3 Actual and Projected Levels of Undernourishment in the Developing World (FAO, 2006)

Region	Actual number of under-nourished people, 1990-92 (in millions)	Projected number of under-nourished people 2015 (in millions)	WFS Target (2015) (in millions)
Developing countries	823	582	412
East Asia	277	123	139
Latin America and the Caribbean	60	41	30
Near East and North Africa	24	36	12
South Asia	291	203	146
Sub-Saharan Africa	170	179	85

Asia and the Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean have seen an overall reduction in both the number and prevalence of undernourished people since the WFS baseline period. But both the Near East and North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa have experienced an increase in the number of undernourished people during the 11 year period following the WFS baseline. In sub-Saharan Africa for the first time in several decades the proportion of undernourished people underwent a significant decline: from 35 percent in 1990-1992 to 32 percent in 2001-2003. But the increase in the total population means that the number of undernourished people is still increasing and the task facing the region is daunting. In the Near East and North Africa both the number and proportion of undernourished has risen since 1990-1992. In transition countries, the number of undernourished people increased slightly from 23 million to 25 million.

The millions of under-nourished people in the world bear daily witness to global problems of poverty and social inequity. According to the UN Millennium Project (2005) the number of people living on $1 or less a day barely dropped from 1990 to 2001, declining from 1.218 billion to 1.089 billion. In sub-Saharan Africa the number of people living on $1 or less a day increased from 227 million in 1990 to 313 million in 2001 (UN Millennium Project 2005). South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa are the core areas of absolute poverty, containing 70% of the world's poor. Under-nutrition is a key indicator of poverty, as is the proportion of income people spend on food. Poor people devote a considerable share of their limited resources to obtaining food: whether in

rural or urban areas, people living in poverty spend as much as 50-70% percent of their income on food.

Despite rapid urbanisation in the developing world, most of the world's poor are rural-based and, when they are not engaged in their own agricultural activities, they rely on non-farm employment and sources of income that, one way or another, depend on agriculture. Even with the diversification of rural livelihoods and increasing urbanisation, an estimated 50% or more of the world's poor will be living in rural areas in 2035, and a significant number of these will be small farmers.

Part 2

A Practical Toolkit

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Part 2

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Introduction

Part 2 of this report is specifically written for Oxfam Novib staff and staff in counterpart organisations who work on food security. It is intended to support food security programmes and in particular for writing project / programme proposals that will meet our criteria and have the best chance of meeting their objectives. It should be read in conjunction with Part 1.

When reviewing funding proposals Oxfam Novib uses an appraisal system known as the Toolbox, which is based on risk management theory and practice. The issues presented here are intended to foster better mutual understanding between Oxfam Novib and its (potential) counterparts in discussing funding applications and the implementation of food security programmes and projects, in order that these follow certain given principles. Readers are cautioned not to interpret these tools as implying that development and improving food security is a simple, linear and manageable process that is solely dependent on the effective interventions of development agencies and NGOs. Rather, it should be recognised that changes in food security are the outcome of multiple and complex processes that involve the struggles and actions of many different groups.

1 Key points in assessing food security projects and programmes

This section provides a list of questions to be asked when making decisions about strategic funding for food security programmes and projects in the South. They relate to both rural and urban areas. These pertain to the *Counterpart and Project Description section of the Toolbox.*

Concept (see Part 1 of Food Security Position Paper)
- What definition of food security does the project use?
- Does the project focus on all three pillars of food security? (Food availability, food access, food utilisation) or does it neglect any of these?
- Does the project distinguish between food security and nutritional security?
- Does the project have a clearly-defined approach for improving the food and nutritional situations?
- At what level(s) does the project work in relation to food security? (individual, household, community, district, national or international)

Analysis (see Part 1 of the Food Security Position Paper and Part 2, Section 2)
- Is the project based on thorough knowledge of the food and nutrition situation, including an analysis of the causes of under-nutrition and a continuous learning process on this subject?
- Which stakeholders are involved in the situation analysis? Are all relevant sectors involved?
- Are the beneficiaries involved in the discussion about the analysis of the causes of food insecurity and under-nutrition? Is a gender analysis applied?
- Are there disagreements on the causes between the different stakeholders? If yes, are they made explicit?
- Is any mechanism in place within the project to manage discussions about the causes of food insecurity and under-nutrition with the target group? Will this carried into a continuous learning process?
- Does the organisation have a conceptual understanding that structures its views on the food insecurity situation?

Project strategy (see Part 2, Section 3)
- Does the project have a clear strategy for improving food and nutritional security? Will the project cycle be used?
- Is the proposed strategy consistent with the results of the above analysis?
- Does the proposed strategy take other local development organisations and actors into consideration?
- Is the strategy integrated, linking interventions at the micro level with those at the macro level?

Project activities (see Part 2, Section 4)
- Is the project multi-sectoral?
- Which sectors are included?
- Are the sectors integrated? How?

- Is food security used as an organising principle to integrate project activities in different sectors?
- Which project activities directly aim to improve nutritional security?
- How are the project activities chosen? What influence do women/men have on the choices made?
- What are the potential benefits of the food security project activities for women, men, children and old people?
- Has consideration been given to the existing gender division of labour?
- Does the project recognise that women's workload must not be excessively increased?
- Does the project assist households to balance work gender divisions?
- Are the men challenged to actively participate in changing the gender division of work?
- Are women's and men's productive, reproductive and community roles all considered?
- Is women's participation in food security project activities possible, given their current workloads?
- Will participation in the food security project increase or decrease the workloads of women and men?
- Is consideration given to questions of who has access to and control of productive resources, including project resources and inputs (e.g. land, forests, waterways, markets, energy, fuel, equipment, technology, capital, credit and education/training)? Will women's or men's access to time and resources be equal?
- Will food security training be equally available to women and men? Have strategies been identified to ensure this?
- Who will control the benefits from food security project activities, such as income earned, food produced, etc.?
- Will the project activities improve women's influence over decision-making processes in the household and their economic position?
- Do extension strategies take account of women's time and mobility constraints?

Project monitoring and evaluation (see Part2, Section 6)
- What indicators are/ will be used to measure food security?

Organisational profile
- Is food security articulated in a policy paper or in the mission statement?
- If the country is heavily affected by HIV/AIDS, does the organisation take this and its implications into account in the analysis and action plan? Are the objectives of the food security programme realistic in view of the effects of HIV/AIDS? Does the organisation have a workplace policy on HIV/AIDS for its staff?
- Do staff have specific knowledge and skills on food and nutrition security and the links between these and HIV/AIDS?
- Does the organisation network with other organisations that are implementing food security projects?
- Does the organisation promote exchange, collaboration and interaction with external sources of expertise on food security, for example through contracting consultants or exchange visits?
- Does the organisation document its own learning in relation to household food security and nutritional security and does it make this available to others?
- What project management mechanisms are in place to facilitate the participation of the target group in the project?

Policy

- If all these key points are taken into consideration, does this provide a consistent policy towards food security?

2 Analysing the food security situation

This section focuses on ways in which the questions relating to the existing food security situation can be addressed.

Part 1 of this report (section 4) described two conceptual frameworks that we consider essential in analysing a food security situation, those outlining the causes of food insecurity and sustainable livelihoods (see also Annex 2). These frameworks are crucial in identifying the causal relationships of food insecurity and should be regarded as starting points for analysing a specific situation. They help in formulating the most important questions about the causes of food insecurity and under-nutrition and can also be used to identify possible interventions that will effectively redress these problems.

The food security situation needs to be analysed at various levels, in order to determine appropriate and feasible interventions. Some constraints, for example, are unique to individual households (e.g. household income), while others affect an entire community (e.g. lack of water). By including the links between the micro- and macro-levels (individual and household access to food and the policies and institutions influencing this) in the analysis, appropriate interventions at the appropriate level can be identified. Some problems cannot be solved by a local community or by households, but need to be brought to the attention of the local government or other institutions.

In any given context, the initial formulation of the conceptual framework and the interventions that it give rise to will change over time and become more focused through reassessment and further analysis.

The use of conceptual frameworks in analysing food security situations has proven to be successful, as it:
- emphasises the multi-sectoral nature of food insecurity;
- relates micro- and macro-level interventions, and;
- provides an excellent tool for generating discussions between different disciplines and sectors. In many instances, people from one sector simply promote their own sector and forget to view the interventions that they make in a larger context; i.e. reducing poverty and enhancing food security.

3 Project strategy

Any project with the main objective of improving the food security and nutritional status of households and individuals within those households needs to go through the following eight steps.

3.1 Problem description

To create a baseline for a project and justify proposed interventions, it is necessary to first collect basic data on food security and nutrition in the project area. Apart from a description of the general context (population, geography, resources, infrastructure, services), the description will focus on issues such as: the level and nature of food insecurity and under-nutrition; the number of food insecure households; the most vulnerable households; the extent to which food insecurity is chronic, temporary or cyclic; any special categories of the population that are most affected (children, women, refugees, cattle-breeders, etc.); etc. It is also useful to compare the area with other areas in the country to show why the project area needs special attention. It is important to do an analysis of national and sub-national trends.

3.2 Analysis of main actors

An analysis of main actors or "stakeholders" involved in issues of food insecurity and under-nutrition should be carried out in order to look for partnerships and collaboration and to avoid duplication of effort. It is important to identify those organisations, institutions and agencies with a mandate to work on issues related to food security; i.e. nutrition, health, water and sanitation, agriculture and general social development. Government departments, research institutions, churches, secular NGOs, CBOs, women's rights organisations or groups, international agencies all have their own vision and activities which might have a bearing on the problem of food insecurity.

3.3 Analysis of the causes of the problem

The next step involves an in-depth analysis of the underlying causes of food insecurity and under-nutrition. This should draw on the food security conceptual framework (see Annex 2 and Section 4 of Part 1) which has been widely used to explore and analyse food insecurity and under-nutrition. The food security conceptual framework should be used in conjunction with the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (see Annex 2 and section 5 of Part 1). These frameworks should be used as tools for asking the right questions: not as blueprints. For each programme area and local situation, the mix and balance of underlying causes will be different.

It is useful to discuss the causes of the problem with the different actors and disciplines working in the same area. Experience shows that most actors readily agree on a problem description, but the process of agreeing about the relative importance of the causes is often more difficult. Only when there is a shared vision about the causes of food insecurity can the appropriate interventions be identified.

At this stage, the locally adapted conceptual framework can be used as a tool for communication between different sectors and actors; to further analyse the most important causes of food insecurity and what interventions can be developed by different sectors or actors.

3.4 Gender analysis with the target groups

The analysis of the context and problem are incomplete without a gender analysis. Questions such as the difference in impacts of the policy/programme on women and men; the advantages and disadvantages; roles and responsibilities; who does what, who has what, who needs what; and the strategies and approaches needed to close the gap between men and women, etc. need to be asked and analysed in order to build a comprehensive picture of the situation. The gender analysis should recognise that:

● women's and men's lives and therefore their experiences, needs, issues and priorities are different;

● women's lives are not all the same; their interests may be determined as much by their social position or their ethnic identity as their gender;

● women's life experiences, needs, issues and priorities differ between different ethnic groups;

● the life experiences, needs, issues, and priorities vary for different groups of women (dependent on age, ethnicity, disability, income levels, employment status, marital status, sexual orientation and whether they have dependants);

● different strategies may be necessary to achieve equitable outcomes for women and men and different groups of women, and;

● the analysis should aim to achieve equity rather than equality.

This analysis should provide the basis for the organisation, together with project participants, to elaborate a set of 'profiles" based on activities and access. These profiles are discussed separately below.

Activity profile

Who does what? What do men and women (adults, children, elders) do? Where and when do these activities take place? The organisation needs to know the tasks of men and women in the project area so as to direct their interventions toward those performing particular tasks. This will involve gathering data about women's and men's involvement in each stage of the work cycle (agriculture, trade, etc.), on shared and unshared tasks and on the degree of rigidity of the gender division of labour. The objective of this is to ensure that women are actively included in the project and are not disadvantaged by it.

The Activity Profile usually considers all categories of activities: productive, reproductive and community-related service. It identifies how much time is spent on each activity, how often this work is done (e.g., daily or seasonally), any periods when there is a high demand for labour and any extra demands that participation in the programme will make on women, men, and children. The Activity Profile also identifies where activities take place, at home or elsewhere (the village, marketplace, fields, or urban centres) and how far these places are from the household. This information gives insights into female and male mobility and allows an assessment of the impact of the programme on mobility, methods of travel, travel time for each activity, and potential ways of saving time.

Access and control profile

This addresses questions such as: who has access to and control of resources, and decision making? The Access and Control Profile considers productive resources such as: land, equipment, labour, capital and credit, and education, and training. It differentiates between access to a resource and control over decisions regarding its allocation and use. It enables planners to consider whether the proposed project could undermine existing access to productive resources or could change the balance of power between men and women regarding control over resources.

The profile also examines the extent to which women might be impeded from participating equitably in projects. For example, if women have limited access to income or land they may be unable to join groups, which provide production inputs and commercial opportunities, or to become independent commercial producers. Some subgroups of men may also suffer similar disadvantages. Interventions (e.g. the creation of water users groups or cooperatives) may determine who has access to and control over productive resources and may change existing patterns of access or control.

3.5 HIV/AIDS analysis[1]

It is necessary to apply a specific HIV/AIDS lens in order to ensure that HIV/AIDS is properly addressed in projects and programmes. This HIV/ADS lens is a conceptual tool intended to help people, from farmers to policy makers, to review situations in the light of HIV/AIDS. It is designed to support reflection on how the existing situation may be increasing or reducing the risks that people face, either in contracting HIV or of suffering the consequences of AIDS related illness and death, and how the projects actions might contribute, positively or negatively, to this.

Details of how to use the lens are described in Loevinshon and Gillespie (2003: 28-34) and can be found on the internet (http://www.isnar.cgiar.org/renewal/pdf/ RENEWALWP2.pdf). Basically, it involves 3 stages:

Stage 1: involves a review of existing policies and programmes in terms of their potential contribution (positive or negative) to HIV/AIDS prevention and mitigation. This can be done in a workshop setting, using participatory tools and involving staff and project participants. Key questions that should be addressed are:
1   How this policy or programme might increase people's susceptibility to HIV?
2   How this policy or programme might increase people's vulnerability to the consequences of AIDS?

Stage 2: involves finding evidence about the policies and programmes that are likely to have the greatest positive or negative effects. Quantitative and qualitative data should be collected, using a variety of participatory tools and involving the people concerned.

Stage 3: entails modifying the programmes and policies, based on the evidence provided in Stage2. It may be that nothing in the programme needs to be changed, but if aspects of it do need changing careful reflection will be required to design a new strategy that does address the issues identified. This may possibly involve forming new alliances with other stakeholders and will also entail developing a new baseline to measure progress over these issues.

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[1]   *See also Part 1, Section 5.*

At every stage, it is important that the issue of gender and other cross-cutting issues are addressed (caste, age, etc.), particularly the effects on women and on those vulnerable to other threats. A number of tools now exist for mainstreaming HIV/AIDS issues into food security programmes. Details of these can be found on the KIC portal (www.oxfamkic.org).

3.6 Formulation of the most appropriate level of intervention

There are many considerations that partner organisations should take into account at this stage: the capacity of each organisation; the risks and costs of the planned interventions; how men and women beneficiaries perceive the interventions; how the interventions will meet the different priorities and needs of men and women; etc. At this stage one needs to plan through all the steps of the intervention – from the objectives through to the activities and resources needed (budget). At this stage key indicators, which can later be used to measure the progress and success of the interventions need to be identified (see Part 2, Section 6 – below – for more information on indicators for food security programmes). Given that conditions change rapidly and often vary markedly from place to place, a simple analysis, even involving a broad range of actors, may not be adequate to identify the most appropriate intervention(s). It is therefore important to experiment and be open to testing new ideas in a manner that is appropriate to the context and the partners. It can be useful to have a number of plausible interventions that can be tested by different organisations, villages, individuals, or sequentially.

3.7 Implementation

Implementing the project activities, with the active participation of project beneficiaries. Putting the project or programme into practice.

3.8 Monitoring, evaluation and learning

Once the organisation embarks on implementing the programme, it is crucial to systematically and regularly collect key data for monitoring. Systematic collection of data helps keep the interventions on track, adapt them whenever necessary and to see whether activities are running according to schedule.

Monitoring involves the systematic and regular collection of data by programme staff and management. Evaluation is a more in-depth process of finding out the broader and lasting impacts of the project on the situation of the beneficiaries. In a food security project the evaluation needs to address whether and the extent to which the project has led to improvements in the nutritional status of individual household members and whether these improvements are likely to last beyond the lifetime of the programme.

The learning system is based on a series of feedback, or learning loops, between stakeholders at various levels. This provides stakeholders with adequate and timely information to underpin their management, investment, or other decisions. With a learning-system approach, the research, evaluation, and monitoring teams are responsible for providing feedback to all stakeholders, especially those involved in management at the local and national-programme levels, and for channelling the

demands and needs of project participants. Projects need to include a learning system that can facilitate learning among the people in the project communities, project managers, project partners, as well as among national and international level policymakers who can apply the results to further projects and programmes. Oxfam Novib's KIC portal (www.oxfamkic.org) helps counterparts share their ideas and experiences and have access to the knowledge of others working on the same issue.

All these steps need to be taken in close cooperation with the major actors involved. First and foremost, the beneficiaries of a project, or their representatives, need to participate as much as possible in each step. The advantages of such participation are many and include:

- A more complete problem analysis and less risk of overlooking important issues or aspects. A wider range of opinions, ideas and experiences helps avoid bias. The nutritionist, the agriculturist, the sociologist, informal and formal leaders, government and non-government, women and men should all have a chance to provide input into the process.
- Reducing the chances of duplication and "re-inventing the wheel". By inviting other organisations and institutions into the process one gets to know what others are doing, what has already been tried out, what interventions have be successful, etc.
- Enhancing the feeling of commitment and "ownership", with more people being aware of what is going on.
- The beneficiaries' participation in implementation, monitoring and evaluation provides the necessary feedback to the programme management about the perceptions, feelings and changes that occur at the beneficiary level.

4 Methods

4.1 Data collection

Collection of primary data

Project staff and community leaders should use their local knowledge to assess and analyse the situation. There are two main approaches for collecting primary data. One is to organise a standardised (sampled) household survey, making use of questionnaires and trained enumerators. Such a household survey can address a range of questions related to income, food production, nutritional status, health, etc., and can be combined with observations and measurements of nutritional status. One can also use a number of qualitative techniques, which can be grouped under the term Participatory Rapid Assessment (PRA), although care should be taken to explicitly integrate a gender analysis into this, since PRA does not explicitly include this issue. PRA approaches are more flexible, faster and are particularly suitable for obtaining information about the opinions and perceptions of the underlying causes of food and nutritional problems. Most methodologists recommend a combination of qualitative participatory techniques and (small) surveys, to obtain optimal results in data collection.

Collection of secondary data

A food security project should investigate what data already exist with regard to food and nutrition security at the national and local levels. Possible sources of data will include websites, government statistics, special studies by international organisations (World Bank, FAO, UNICEF, WHO, WFP) and project reports from other organisations working in the same area.

4.2 Participatory planning

The most widely used methods for participatory planning are various forms of informal group meetings (in which community members rank problems, priorities and necessary actions) and more formal planning sessions, known as OOPP (Objective Oriented Project Planning). In both approaches it is necessary to guarantee the participation of women's and ethnic groups. Informal group meetings at the target group level can be used for small projects. OOPP sessions are more suitable for larger, more complex and costly programmes in which various actors have a stake. These meetings will entail more detailed and thorough analysis of objectives, strategies, activities and resources. OOPP sessions are based on the programme's logic. During the sessions, the various stakeholders analyse the problems, the actors define objectives and activities and discuss the risks and assumptions surrounding various interventions.

4.3 Identifying and selecting appropriate Interventions

The following criteria should be employed when selecting the interventions to be adopted by a food security programme or project:

- Interventions appropriate to the given context should be identified through a participatory situation analysis, rather than being selected from a blueprint or predetermined set of interventions.
- There should be an awareness of the links between direct and structural causes of food insecurity and the importance of selecting interventions that connect the micro (target group) and macro levels (policy and advocacy).
- The selection of interventions should be informed by the analysis of the different potentials of households and communities. Successful interventions will strengthen the household resource base and enhance target groups' control and management of community natural resources (land, water, forests, etc). They should reduce the vulnerability of households and increase their ability to cope with external changes and shocks.
- The outcomes of interventions should be amenable to monitoring and evaluation, with specific sex-disaggregated data and other gender dimensions, to assess their impact in terms of specific target groups.

Appropriate food security interventions should be selected on the basis of the assessment and analysis of the situation, they should be tested and if necessary adapted to local conditions and needs. The interventions may occur within a variety of sectors: agriculture, health, education, water and sanitation, income generation and others. They should address the three core pillars of food security: availability, access and utilisation, all of which are required to promote food security. Food availability means ensuring that sufficient food is available for all people through self-production or purchase. This may require investment in agriculture or distribution systems. Food access means ensuring better incomes for people and more control for women over household resources. This may require investment in income generation. Food utilisation means ensuring good nutritional outcomes and nutritional security. This may mean investing in nutritional education, health care, safe water provision, and sanitation.

5 Possible interventions in a food security programme

There are three possible levels on intervention, specific examples of which are provided below:

5.1 Individual level: addressing the direct causes of under-nutrition

5.1.1 Inadequate food intake
● Free distribution of food, food supplements, vitamins (esp. Vitamin A) or micro-nutrients (Iron and iodine).
● Communal kitchens.
● Emergency food aid.
● Food-for-work projects.

5.1.2 Diseases
● Health care.

5.2 Household level and community level, addressing underlying causes of under-nutrition

5.2.1 Food
● Activities which improve access to land (land tenure), especially for women.
● Activities which improve access to agricultural resources, especially for women.
● Income-generating activities e.g. through provision of credit, improved commercialisation of products, especially targeted at women.
● Food production activities; irrigation, soil and water-conservation techniques, extension, research, promotion of gardening and livestock- raising, training, supply of inputs, seed banks, animal health care services, etc.
● Activities aimed at controlling food prices for consumers: cereal banks, communal shops, collective food purchases and sales and marketing arrangements.
● Food storage and conservation activities.
● Interventions to improve rural infrastructure (roads) to reduce transport costs.
● Management of common property resources (forests, freshwater lakes, grazing land, capture fishery).
● Activities to strengthen farmers' associations, food producers and food consumers.
● Provision of agricultural extension services (skills training).
● Supporting the development of participatory local institutions that can sustain and build on the organisation's efforts.
● Access to information and broadening a community's links with various actors.

5.2.2 Care

- Activities that challenge existing gender roles within families: e.g. better sharing of childcare tasks within families; more support for parents (usually mothers) to care for their children.
- Activities that assist women to control their workload (grain mills, improved cooking stoves etc.).
- Educational activities that assist households with childcare (feeding, health care, guiding of children) and care for pregnant and lactating mothers (giving them time to rest and healthy, high quality, food).
- Childcare centres that can reduce women's burden of providing continual care for small children and make it possible for mothers to engage in economic activities. Children may also receive nutritious food in the centre.
- Educational activities that engage men in a discussion about intra-household decision-making over food and other household resources.

5.2.3 Health

- Education about health, hygiene and nutrition
- Access to reproductive health services (maternal health care, family planning, AIDS, STD, contraceptives, etc.)
- Provision of safe water and sanitation
- Provision of essential drugs, vaccinations, and vitamins
- Activities that improving access to and the affordability of health and education services
- Training health workers and teachers
- De-worming campaigns

5.3 Community, national and international levels: addressing the structural causes of under-nutrition

- Lobbying on national policies such as agricultural policy, food prices and land rights. The effectiveness of any national food security policy and the adequacy and targeting of investments to ensure food access and availability could be scrutinised.
- Provision of equitable access to productive resources, such as land, technology, water and credit (securing property rights for small farmers).
- Paying particular attention to the needs of women farmers who grow much of the food for home consumption.
- Ensuring the sustainability of food production and making use of appropriate crop varieties, including those tolerant to drought and salt and pest-resistant varieties, improved livestock and affordable and environmentally-friendly production technologies that increase productivity.
- Reduce the dependency of food production on external inputs. Provision of reliable, timely, and reasonably priced access to appropriate inputs such as tools, seeds, fertilisers, and when needed, pesticides, as well as the credit often needed to purchase them.
- Provision of extension services and technical assistance to communicate timely information and developments in technology and sustainable resource management to farmers and to relay farmer's concerns to researchers and policy makers.
- Improving rural infrastructure and effective markets.
- Providing primary education, health care, clean water, safe sanitation and facilitating good nutritional standards.

- Provision of on-the-spot, participative farmer training. Particular emphasis should be placed on environmentally-friendly technologies and on involving women, through addressing the specific restraints that they face in participating in activities traditionally considered as male activities.
- Lobbying on international policies, such as those of the WTO
- Lobbying for the rights of small-scale farmers and agricultural workers
- Lobbying for women's and children's rights.

The objective of food security cannot be achieved through one single intervention but requires a set of interventions, which are carefully identified, interconnected and subject to evaluation. Food security provides an organising principle for drawing together interventions from, and within, different sectoral which, together improve peoples' food security.

6 Indicators for measuring changes

Specific indicators should be used for monitoring and evaluating food security programmes and quantifying their impact. It is important to take baseline measures at the start of a project to monitor changes throughout the project period (thereby measuring both the initial level of food insecurity and changes over the course of time).

This section provides some examples of some internationally recognised indicators that are considered to be good measures of food insecurity and that have proven to be practically applicable. These indicators can also be applied to integrated multi-sectoral programmes which include the aims of improving food security and nutrition. All these indicators measure food security at an individual level, the ultimate goal of all food security programmes.

6.1 Indicator (outcome): dietary diversity

This is the sum of the different foods consumed by an individual over a specified time period. It may be the sum of the number of different food groups consumed, of the number of different foods within a food group, or a weighted sum – where additional weight is given to the frequency with which different foods are consumed.

Method for generating these data

One or more members of a household are asked about different food items that they have consumed within a specified time period. If intra-household differences in food consumption are suspected these questions should be put to different members of the same household. Experience in implementing this method has shown that comprehensive lists, containing 100-120 different food items, are more useful than shorter lists and help differentiate between the better-off and poorer households. Determining the items that should appear on these lists can be done through rapid appraisal exercises, discussions with key informants and references to previous survey work.

Advantages and disadvantages

The use of this measure stems from the observation made in many parts of the developing world that households consume a wider variety of foods as they become better off. It is easy to train enumerators to ask these questions and individuals generally find them easy to answer. Asking these questions typically takes about 10 minutes per respondent. Field testing indicates that: food security correlates with levels of calorific acquisition; that it helps track seasonal changes in food security (measures of dietary diversity are highest just after harvest time and lowest during the hungry season) and to identify intra-household differences in consumption. In northern Mali, for example, women reported that they were more likely than their husbands to reduce their own food consumption during periods of stress, which was reflected in women having lower scores in terms of dietary diversity than men. A diverse diet is also a valid welfare outcome in its own right. The disadvantage of this measure is that it does not record quantities of food consumed.

6.2 Indicator (outcome): household coping strategies

This is an indicator based on how households adapt to the presence or threat of food shortages. The person within the household with primary responsibility for preparing and serving meals is asked a series of questions regarding how their household is responding to food shortages.

Method for generating these data
The most knowledgeable person in the household regarding food preparation and distribution is asked a series of questions. These could include:

In the last seven days:
1   Has the household consumed less preferred foods? (Circle the best response.)
    A. Never B. Rarely (once) C. From time to time (2 or 3 times) D. Often (5 or more times).

2   Have you reduced the quantity of food served to men in this household?
    A. Never B. Rarely (once) C. From time to time (2 or 3 times) D. Often (5 or more times).

3   Have you reduced your own consumption of food?
    A. Never B. Rarely (once) C. From time to time (2 or 3 times) D. Often (5 or more times).

4. Have you reduced the quantity of food served to children (boys and girls) in this household?
    A. Never B. Rarely (once) C. From time to time (2 or 3 times) D. Often (5 or more times).

5. Have members of this household skipped meals?
    A. Never B. Rarely (once) C. From time to time (2 or 3 times) D. Often (5 or more times).

6   Have members of this household skipped meals for a whole day?
    A. Never B. Rarely (once) C. From time to time (2 or 3 times) D. Often (5 or more times).

Advantages and disadvantages of this measure
This measure has three attractive features. First, it is easy to implement, typically taking less than three minutes per household. Second, it directly captures notions of adequacy and vulnerability – is there currently enough food to eat in this household? – and the vulnerability of households – those households using a larger number of coping strategies, or using more severe strategies are more likely to be poor and more vulnerable to destitution. Third, the questions asked are easy to understand both by respondents and by analysts and project designers.

There are also several disadvantages. As it is a subjective measure – different people have different ideas as to what is meant by "eating smaller portions" – comparison between households or localities is problematic as different groups have different perceptions of what constitutes a "food secure" diet. Field tests have shown differences in men's and women's responses and poorer households tend to report smaller quantities of food than richer households do. As a result this measure can be somewhat misleading – a richer and poorer household may both report eating smaller quantities, but this does not imply an equal increase in food insecurity. As a result

evaluating the impact of an intervention solely in terms of this measure may risk lower targets being set for poorer households than for richer ones.

Another disadvantage is that it makes it relatively easy to misreport a household's circumstances. For example, households might perceive that they are more likely to receive assistance if they report greater use of these coping strategies so might be tempted to exaggerate them. Finally, it is necessary to decide what weight should be applied to the different questions and different levels of response. Rapid appraisal techniques could be used to obtain this information.

6.3 Indicator (impact): nutritional status

Nutritional assessment can be an extremely valuable element of the monitoring and evaluation process in poverty alleviation programmes. This is for a number of different reasons:

- Nutritional measurements provide a measure of human welfare that is sensitive to changes in food supply, as well as to other community development processes.
- Nutritional measurements provide a non-subjective, quantitative assessment of progress towards a fixed goal (the elimination of under-nutrition).
- Individuals with vested interests in the outcome of the interventions (including the subjects themselves) cannot easily falsify nutritional measurements.
- Nutritional measurements are relatively easy to obtain either in sentinel sites for the purpose of ongoing monitoring, or in a sample of the entire study area for the purpose of evaluation.

To assess whether project interventions have improved the nutritional security of the beneficiaries, it is necessary first of all to identify which nutritional indicators could plausibly have been altered by project interventions, and which subgroups of the population are most likely to have benefited. Table 1 summarises some of the most commonly used indicators.

Table 1 Commonly used indicators of nutritional status

Indicators	Interpretation
Prevalence of low height-for-age (stunting) in pre-school or school-age children.	Children's skeletal (linear) growth compromised by to constraints in one or more of the following: nutrition, health, or mother-infant interactions.
Prevalence of low weight-for- height (wasting) in pre-school or school-age children.	Children suffer thinness resulting from an energy deficit and/or disease-induced poor appetite, mal-absorption, or loss of nutrients. This energy deficit may be due to lack of food in household or feeding of low energy density foods that satiate before the child meets its energy requirements.
Prevalence of low weight-for-age (underweight) in pre-school or school-age children.	This indicator confuses the two processes described above and is therefore not a good indicator for assessing needs.
Prevalence of low body mass Index in adults or adolescents.	Adults suffer thinness as a result of inadequate energy intake, an uncompensated increase in physical activity, or (severe) illness.
Prevalence of low mid-upper arm circumference in adults/adolescents.	As above. Restricting analysis to the arm has the advantage of reflecting the mass of just three tissues – bone, muscle, and fat – the last two of which are particularly sensitive to body weight gain/loss.

Other indicators that can be used to assess changes in food security over time in one location or differences between locations or social groups include: measures of asset ownership, food consumption and expenditure. The Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance (FANTA) Project has published a guide that provides useful advice on the use of all the indicators discussed in this section (see Swindale & Punam 2005).

Annexes

Annex 1 Food security information and data resources on the Internet*

Organisation Name	Internet address
Bread for the World Institute (English and Spanish).	www.bread.org
FAO: Agriculture and food security HIV/AIDS and food security Gender and food security (Spanish, English, French, Chinese and Arabic).	www.fao.org http://www.fao.org/sd/hivaids/ http://www.fao.org/gender/
FIVIMS: Notes on data collection and aggregation on food security.	www.fao.org/waicent/fivims
Freedom House: indicators of civil and political rights.	www.freedomhouse.org/survey99
IFPRI: Food consumption and nutrition division. Papers on poverty, food consumption, HIV/AIDS, and nutrition (French, English and Spanish).	www.ifpri.org
UNDP: Human development indicators (French, English, Spanish and Chinese).	www.undp.org/hdro/indicators/html
UNEP/World Resources Institute: environmental data tables (French, English, Spanish and Chinese).	www.wri.org/wri/facts/data-tables.html
UNICEF: data on the state of world's children (French, English, Spanish and Chinese).	www.unicef.org/sowd98/stats.htm
World Bank (French, English, Spanish and Chinese).	www.worldbank.org/data
WHO: Global database on child growth and nutrition Disasters (French, English, Spanish, Arabic and Chinese).	www.who.int/nutgrowthdb www.who.int/disasters
IDRC: International Development Research Centre (French, English and Spanish)	www.idrc.ca
Eldis Information feeds on: HIV/AIDS, Food Security, Poverty, Climate (English)	www.eldis.org
Resource Centres on Urban Agriculture and Food Security (RUAF) (most only in English – some in French and Spanish)	www.ruaf.org
Oxfam KIC portal (English, Spanish, French and Portuguese. More links on organisations working on food security can also be found here)	www.oxfamkic.org

* *An attempt has been made to specify the languages that information is available. Please note that this does not mean that all material will be available in those languages.*

For a list of sources cited please see Part 1 Putting Food Security in a Livelihood Context: An Oxfam Novib Position Paper

Annex 2 Conceptual frameworks

Figure 1 Conceptual framework of the causes of food insecurity

Manifestation of poverty at individual level

UNDER-NUTRITION

Direct causes at individual level

INADEQUATE FOOD INTAKE

DISEASE

Underlying causes at the community and household level:

LACK OF FOOD LACK OF ACCESS TO SERVICES

CARE INADEQUATE HOUSEHOLD CAPCITY (LOW STATUS OF WOMEN)

HEALTH/EDUCATION LACK OF BASIC SOCIAL

Poor access to food (low income, poor sanitation low purchasing power); Poor availability of food (bad infrastructure, weak agricultural extension system). Women often disadvantaged.

Time constraints on women. Women's role, status and rights. Lack of knowledge about caring practices

Health care, water, sanitation, and basic education

USE AND CONTROL OF COMMUNITY AND HOUSEHOLD RESOURCES
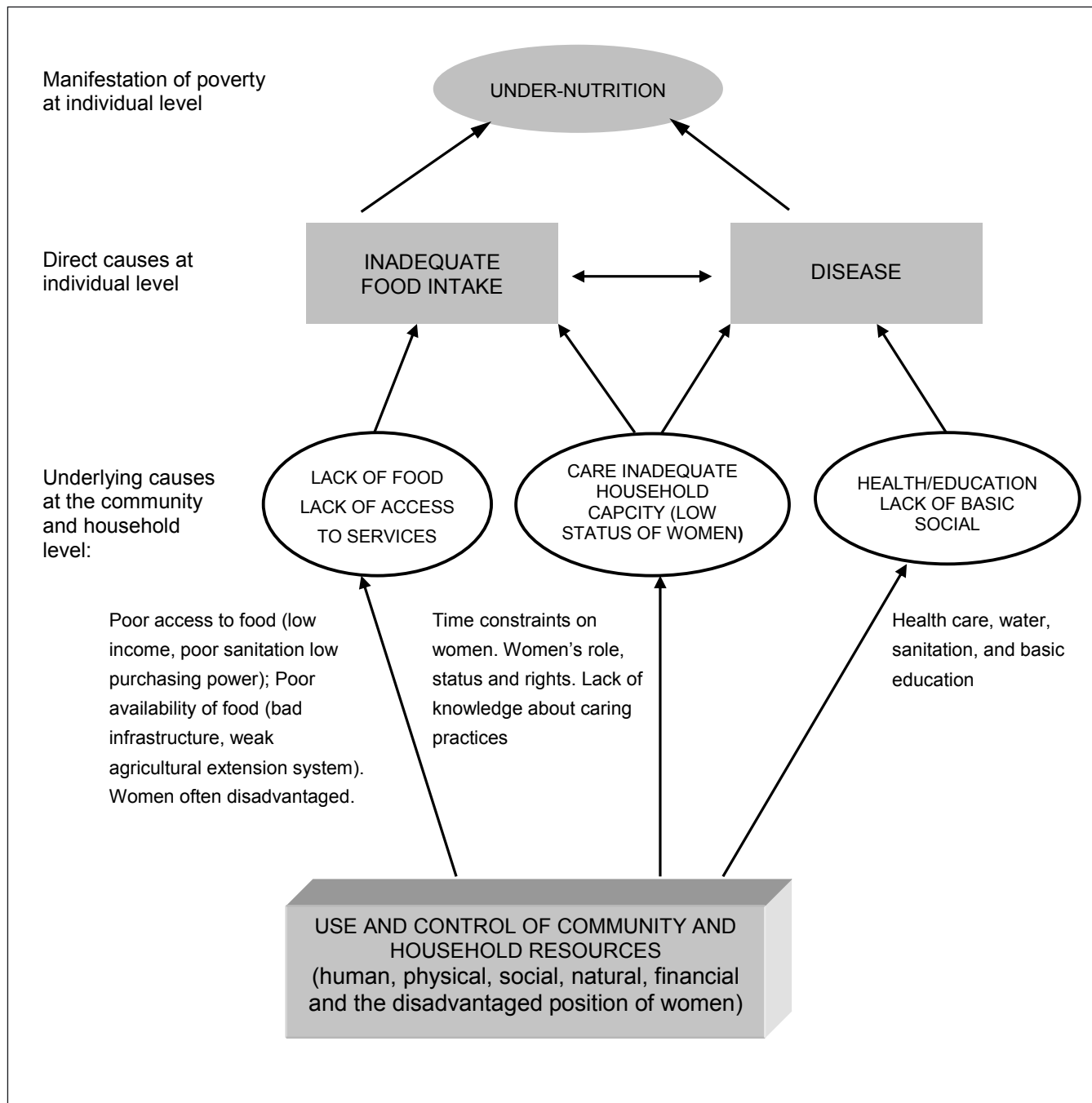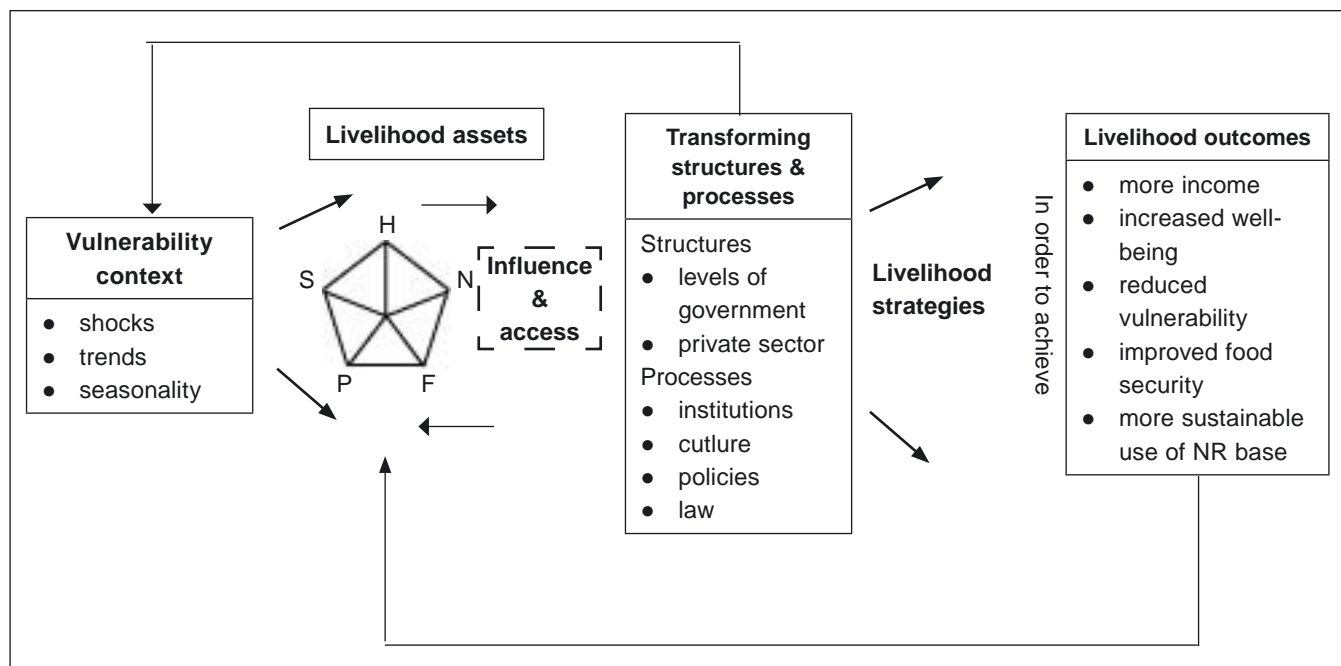(human, physical, social, natural, financial and the disadvantaged position of women)

Figure 2 Sustainable livelihoods framework

Key   H: Human capital, S: Social capital, N: Natural capital, P: Physical capital, F: Financial capital
Adapted from: http://www.livelihoods.org/info/guidance_sheets_pdfs/section1.pdf

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