
HOUSEHOLD FOOD ECONOMY ANALYSIS

AN END-TO-END TRAINING FOR FEWS-NET EAST AFRICA REPRESENTATIVES AND NETWORK PARTNERS

**Nairobi and Makueni, Kenya
March 16 – 30, 2001**

A Short Report

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1 SUMMARY

This report provides a brief account of a training organized for East Africa FEWS-NET representatives and network partners in Kenya. The basic objective of the training was to increase participants' understanding of food economy analysis, the tool adopted by the FEWS-NET project for analyzing current food insecurity and food aid needs. The objective was achieved by encouraging the participants to engage in the methodology hands-on from beginning classroom theoretical session, through the interviews in the field, to the compilation of baseline information and spreadsheet analysis back in Nairobi at the end.

The report also includes a brief summary of the field information obtained through this exercise. The training was not designed specifically to obtain high quality information, and indeed such an objective given the time constraints and the newness of the approach to most of the participants would have been unrealistic. However, enough information was collected to warrant outlining some general impressions and highlighting the potential usefulness of this information for decision-making. In particular, the field work pointed up important links between food security, education and HIV/AIDS which are sketched out towards the end of this report.

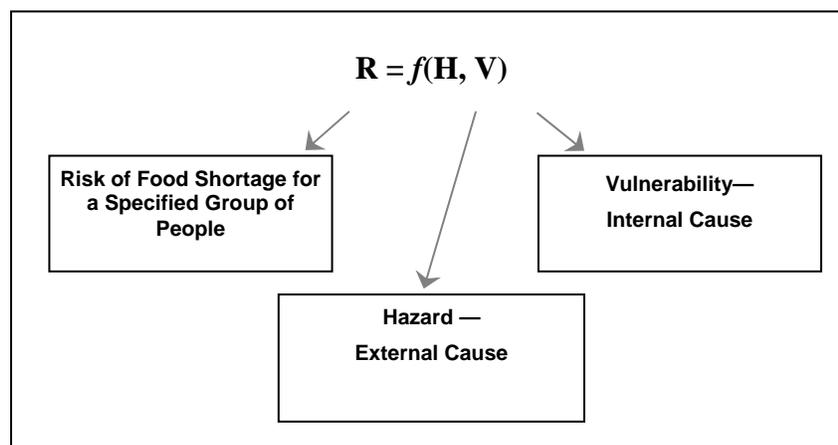
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2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 The Food Economy Analytical Framework

The FEWS-NET project has adopted the food economy analytical framework as a tool for the analysis of current food insecurity and food aid needs. The approach is described in more detail elsewhere, but a core concept is that two types of information must be combined to complete an analysis of food insecurity:



Hazard Information, i.e. information on the nature and magnitude of the problem, typically expressed in terms of its economic consequences (e.g. a 50% reduction in food crop production, complete loss of access to livestock markets due to insecurity, etc.).

Baseline Information. There are two types of baseline information. The first is information on access to food in a baseline year for typical households defined in terms of their economic circumstances (i.e. wealth) and geography (i.e. food economy zone). The second is information on the coping steps utilised by typical households to increase their access to food in response to a problem.

Baseline information provides the context for understanding the likely impact of a problem on access to food at household level (it follows, for example, that crop failure will have different impacts according to the importance of crop production for the household in a baseline year, and the household's access to other sources of food and income in a bad year).

Typically, information on hazards is collected on a regular basis through established monitoring and early warning systems – usually set up by a government. Baseline information, in contrast, is normally collected during a dedicated food economy baseline assessment. In principle, this baseline analysis does not have to be updated on a very regular basis, whereas the hazard information does.

The analysis of hazard information has historically been a strength of the FEWS-NET system. The food economy analytical framework and food economy baselines are new to the FEWS-NET system, however, and three regional trainings were therefore organised to introduce these concepts to FEWS-NET representatives. These trainings took place in east, west and southern Africa, respectively.

2.2 Objectives and Organization of the FEWS-NET East Africa Training

The basic objective of the training was to increase participants' understanding of how food economy baselines are prepared and used. This was not because FEWS-NET representatives are themselves expected to prepare these analyses for their own countries (although they are expected to use them, once they have been prepared). Rather, the role of the FEWS-NET representative is to facilitate the process of baseline preparation, and for them to be able to use existing baseline information in conjunction with their regular monitoring information to provide better analysis and input for response and contingency planning. For these purposes it is important that they have a full understanding of the process. In short, the role of the FEWS-NET representative is:

- To work with network partners to develop their understanding of the approach.
- To use existing baseline work to improve their analysis of the effects of any number of hazards on access to food at the household level.
- To identify country-specific opportunities for undertaking food economy baseline work, perhaps linked to a specific interest or concern of the local USAID office, for example.
- To assist in preparing project proposals, obtaining funding and organizing food economy baseline work in their country (in collaboration with the FEWS-NET Washington office).

The initial objectives and expected output from the training are outlined below.

Objectives of the Training

To increase participants' understanding of

- The Food Economy Analytical Framework
- How baseline information is collected
- How baseline and monitoring data are combined to analyze current food insecurity using the food economy spreadsheet

3 IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOME OF THE TRAINING

3.1 Location of training and participant list

The East Africa training was held in Kenya from 16 – 30 March. Nairobi was the site of pre- and post-field classroom work; the field work and interviews were conducted in villages throughout Makeni District.

The list of participants follows:

Alemu Asfaw, *FEWS NET food security economist, Ethiopia*

Agnes Atyang, *FEWS NET assistant, Uganda*

Cindy Holleman, *HIV/AIDS consultant*

Alloys Lentoimaga, *Office of the President, Government of Kenya*

Nick Maunder, *FEWS NET East Africa regional representative*

Andrew Mutengu, *FEWS NET representative, Uganda*

Nancy Mutunga, *FEWS NET representative, Kenya*

Epitace Nobera, *FEWS NET representative, Rwanda*

James Oduru, *Ministry of Agriculture in Nairobi, Government of Kenya*

Tafesse Olkeba, *FEWS NET representative, Ethiopia*

Janet Omoro, *FEWS NET representative, Southern Sudan*

Robert Rose, *FEWS NET representative, Ethiopia*

Vedasto Rutachokabizwa, *FEWS NET Representative, Tanzania*

Geofrey Rwiza, *FEWS NET assistant, Tanzania*

A.H. Shirwa, *FEWS NET representative, Somalia*
Ibrahim Addou Sidow, *FEWS NET assistant, Somalia*
Yemane Tekleyohannes, *FEWS NET representative, Eritrea*

Translation and guidance in Makueni District was provided by the Ministry of Agriculture through the capable assistance of the following officers:

Antony Mutiso, *Crops Officer.*
Josiah Makumi, *Agricultural Engineering Assistant.*
Patrick Wahome, *Horticultural Officer.*
Shadrack Mulu, *Livestock Officer.*

3.2 A General Account of the Training

Pre-training activities

Before the initial training started, a number of crucial activities had already taken place. Because of the numbers involved and the limitation on time, it was not feasible to involve all the participants in these activities. The first activity, undertaken by the FEWS NET representative for Kenya, was a selection of the district to be used for the field work compilation of existing secondary source information on the area. The FEWS NET representative, in discussions with the regional representative and the Washington office, selected Makueni District on the basis that it was a marginal agricultural area considered to be relatively food insecure, it was not too far from Nairobi, and previous experience with the district officers suggested that they would be open to the exercise. More information on the district would be useful for future analysis and planning. Relevant background information on the area's geographic features and general economy was copied and provided to each participant.

The second activity was a zoning exercise which took place with the Kenya FEWS NET representative and one of the F.E.G. trainers on the Thursday before the training began. This exercise was essential in order to determine how many livelihood zones were in the district, which livelihood zone would be the focus of the field work, and which villages could be used as representative of this zone. Unfortunately, it was not possible to include all of the FNRs in this activity as it would have meant losing a whole day of field work – field work for which the time was already quite limited. The villages chosen by the district officials as representative of the Makueni Marginal Zone (the name given to the food economy zone under study) were: Mizava, Sekeleni, Kamwenge, Siembene, Kikumi, and Iluoka.

Core training activities

The training was conducted in three stages:

- Stage 1:** Introduction to the analytical framework, the food economy spreadsheet (a tool for storing and manipulating baseline data) and the field methodology (1 ½ days in Nairobi – agenda attached in annex 1)
- Stage 2:** Data collection and preliminary analysis in the field (8 days, Makueni District)
- Stage 3:** Completion of baseline analysis and use of baseline to analyze the impact of various shocks or hazards, e.g. drought or conflict (4 days, Nairobi).

Two preliminary round-up sessions were held in Makueni during the field work to review information gathered to date and re-focus the enquiry. These were held after the first two days of interviews and then on the fifth day of field work, after interviews had been conducted in all six villages. At these sessions, participants were expected to fill in interview templates (see ANNEX III) to ensure standardized information storage, and a review of information and gaps took place.

The final analysis, which included pulling together the baseline information, putting them into the spreadsheet, constructing reasonable problem specifications, and running a number of scenarios, was conducted during the last week in Nairobi.

3.3 Various Aspects of the Training

Although the training had its many positive aspects, there were also some obstacles that constrained the training. These are summarized in the table below.

ORGANIZATION OF THE TRAINING	
<p>Positive Aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Good training venue in Nairobi with excellent backstopping provided by the FEWS NET Nairobi office. ▪ A very supportive local administration with extremely helpful participation and interest on the part of the district officers ▪ A rural population that seemed willing to provide clear and straightforward answers to our questions. ▪ An interesting rural context that highlighted the links between rural food security and HIV/AIDS. 	<p>Constraints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Large number of participants meant less opportunity for one-on-one interactions between trainers and trainees and increased challenges at all levels. ▪ Difficulty in obtaining time series data at sub-district level ▪ Too much distance between initial accommodation and villages resulted in time wasted on travel to and from field sites.

Note: the above represents the views of the two trainers. The views of the participants are summarised in a separate evaluation report.

The larger the group, the longer this kind of training takes and the less you tend to accomplish. This is so for most types of training for the obvious reason that it is difficult to cater for the mixed ability, needs and interests of larger groups. But it is particularly so in food economy baseline training because of the particular challenges and requirements of field work.

Based on previous experience, the ideal ratio for field training in food economy work is 1 trainer to 3 trainees. In the East Africa training we were working with a ratio of 1 to 8. As a result, individualized attention was limited. This limitation affected the quality of the training in two ways: 1. Participants did not get a chance to do repeated interviews with the trainers, either as observers or interviewers; and 2. The quality of the overall set of information derived from the field work was not high. To a large extent, a lower quality of information is to be expected in a training. In any participatory information-gathering methodology, the quality of information obtained depends highly on the skill and experience of the interviewer. This skill and experience develops with time after conducting many interviews. Because of the large number of trainees, each participant only did one or two of his/her own interviews, just enough to get his/her feet wet, but not enough to see an improvement in technique.

The poor quality of information would not have mattered as much if the training was intended as a field experience only; however, because this was an end-to-end training, the information collected in the field was a critical input for the training in analysis and spreadsheet work. The poor quality of field information limited the value of the later analysis and led to some confusion about how baseline information is usually compiled and analyzed.

Another constraint on the information side was with the form that the secondary (hazard) information came in. Some of the problem here stemmed from the fact that the MOA officers responsible for compiling this information were integral parts of the team, acting as our translators. We were asking too much to have them

translate for us and put together the data sets required for our later hazard analysis. In addition, the data was aggregated at the district level, rather than sub-district. Because the district is comprised of a high-potential agricultural area in the north and a more marginal area to the south (the area of our focus) this level of aggregation was not useful for the purposes of putting together a problem specification. It is hoped that in the future this information can be compiled and stored at a more appropriate level of aggregation.

3.4 Were the Objectives of the Training Achieved?

It is the impression of the trainers that the basic objective of increasing participants' understanding of how food economy baselines are prepared and used was achieved.

The training provided an excellent opportunity to discuss and explain the various questions and issues raised by the FEWS-NET representatives and other participants. Most of the participants exhibited a lively interest in the subject matter, and many had extensive knowledge and experience upon which they could draw. There was therefore much spirited debate.

Because of the problem with the level at which the secondary data was aggregated, insufficient time was spent discussing questions related to monitoring (e.g. how the food economy baseline analysis helps in the selection of monitoring indicators, how monitoring data is used to specify a problem for analysis, and so on). This time constraint was aggravated by the need to do a presentation for the USAID mission on the findings of the field work. Preparation for and delivery of this presentation cut into the time that would have otherwise been spent training.

It was anticipated that a short report on the food economy of Makueni would be prepared based upon the data collected during the training. However, it is our feeling that the results obtained are not sufficiently reliable to justify the preparation of such a formal report. This is to some extent to be expected. In this type of training the principle is that the participants learn by doing, and learn from their mistakes. It is obvious that data collected by trainees (even though generally knowledgeable and experienced in the subject) will be of a lower quality than data collected by experienced researchers.

Although insufficient data were collected to allow the preparation of a detailed food economy report, notes on some of the more general aspects of the local economy will be written up and distributed to the workshop participants. In particular, enough was learned to allow for a few general principles to be stated and used in preliminary analysis of linkages between HIV/AIDS and rural food security and this understanding has spawned a demand for further work in this area.

3.5 Next Steps to follow up on training

There would seem to be two basic activities that are required as a follow-up to the training:

1. Preparation of written materials to support the work of the FEWS-NET representatives in the field. A field training manual is required to complement the mini-manual and spreadsheet training manual that have already been prepared. A number of specific requests were also made by participants:
 - a) Basic documents on Rapid Rural Appraisal
 - b) A guide to the preparation of food economy baselines (focussing specifically on the analysis process, i.e. how various types of information are put together to complete the baseline)
 - c) A full list of foods and their kilocalorie value
 - d) Reports that describe national food security monitoring systems that are based upon food economy analysis (e.g. Somalia, southern Sudan, Rwanda)

2. A dialogue should be initiated between the Washington-based food economy specialist and individual FEWS-NET country representatives to explore follow-up activities country by country to be linked with the work planning activities scheduled for mid- to late-2001.

4. Next Steps in the Region

Already, in Kenya, a proposal to study the linkages between HIV/AIDS and food security has been prepared and is in the process of being submitted to USAID. In addition, collaborative efforts between FEWS NET, the Office of the President, and Save the Children promise to yield positive effects in terms of a shared framework for food security analysis and monitoring – a framework which starts with an understanding of rural livelihoods and fits into that understanding ongoing monitoring of traditional indicators.

In other countries in the region, work towards integrating food economy or livelihood baselines into ongoing analysis is at various stages of development. Eritrea spearheaded a capacity building exercise in February of this year, intended to help local officials incorporate techniques for understanding rural livelihoods into their planning processes. The FSAU in Somalia incorporated food economy spreadsheets into its analytical process as a means of storing baseline information, facilitating multi-variable hazard specifications, and speeding the process of collaborative food security analysis. Because the spreadsheets clearly define standard information requirements, they have also been an aid to identifying gaps in baseline information and the monitoring system.

The FEWS NET 2001 work plan process will provide an opportunity to review progress in other countries, helping to highlight opportunities to pursue as well as persistent constraints that we will aim to remove. The ultimate goal, to improve our collective analysis of household food security through the inclusion of more appropriate field based information about rural livelihoods, will be met in all the countries, but to varying degrees and through various manifestations.

**ANNEX 1. Agenda for FEWS NET Regional End-to-End Food Economy Training
Session #1 – initial classroom session
March 16 – 17, 2001
Landmark Hotel Conference Room**

Saturday, March 16, 2001

9:00 – 9:30	Introductions & Discussion of Agenda
9:30 - 10:30	Overview presentation
10:30 – 11:00	Participatory pie chart
11:00	Tea break
11:15 – 1:00	Spreadsheet overview and exercises
1:00 – 2:00	Lunch
2:00 – 5:00	Spreadsheet overview and exercises continued

Sunday, March 17, 2001

12:00 – 1:00	Calculation exercise
1:00 – 2:00	Information Gathering Process
2:00 – 3:30	Field Ground Rules

ANNEX II. Schedule for Training

MARCH

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				15 preparatory meeting with district officials in Makueni	16 FNRs arrive in NBI	17 classroom session in NBI
18 classroom session in NBI in am pm travel to field	19 wealth breakdowns in first two villages in Makueni	20 focus group interviews in first two villages	21 initial round up session in morning travel to southern Makueni in pm	22 wealth breakdowns in southern villages	23 focus group interviews in southern villages	24 mid-term round up session and travel for some back to NBI
25 day off for FNRs	26 compilation of interviews into computer	27 baseline analysis session in NBI	28 analysis session in NBI – baseline input into computer	29 USAID presentation & debriefing for Makueni district officers	30 Final analysis session running scenarios on spreadsheet.	31 Travel back to home countries

ANNEX IV: SELECTED NOTES FROM THE FLIP CHARTS: KENYA

THINGS TO BRING WITH YOU TO THE FIELD

1. A keen interest and curiosity
2. Your knowledge (but not your pre-conceptions)
3. Patience
4. A sense of humor

TOPICS for mid-fieldwork analysis day (in Makueni, after first two days of interviews)

1. fill forms for pie interviews
2. first impression questions (see below)
3. compile wealth breakdown information
4. identifying gaps in information and follow-up tasks for remaining field time

FIRST IMPRESSION QUESTIONS (written up by individuals and then fed back to plenary)

1. how do households get 'richer'?
2. what makes poor households poor and why do they stay poor?

CROSS CHECKING (from the NBI analysis session)

1. *Yields: MoA data*
 - Question: do our yields pass the test of 'reasonableness' given areas cultivated?
2. *Across income groups*
 - does total production go up with acreage group?
 - does income to up with acreage group?
 - does % off-farm vs on-farm income decrease as wealth group goes up?
 - does expenditure on staple food decrease as wealth group goes up?
 - is there enough labor demand to meet labor supply? gift supply?
3. *Internal consistency cross-checks*
 - from food pie to income pie – production that gets sold needs to get transferred directly to income (crops, milk, etc)
 - from food pie to expenditure pie – purchased food needs to get counted in staple food expenditure
 - income and actual expenditure should be roughly equal
4. *Household size cross check*
 - census figures
 - age distribution cross check

FINAL ANALYSIS SESSIONS ACTIVITIES

1. Household size discussion
2. Food, income, expenditure for poor households (full group analysis of baseline)
3. Food, income, expenditure for poor households (full group analysis of baseline)
4. Group work on food, income, expenditure for different wealth groups (break out sessions)
5. Feedback and cross-checking
6. USAID presentation
7. Food equivalent conversions – using spreadsheets to summarize information for each group
8. Putting baseline information into spreadsheets
9. Coming up with 3 problem specifications and running them
10. Evaluations