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Guidance: How to Measure the Food Security Community Capacity Index (FSCCI)

Africareⁱ

Introduction

Over twelve years ago Africare developed the Food Security Community Capacity Index (FSCCI) to measure the beneficiary community's technical ability and knowledge (capacity) needed to deal successfully with issues related to food security in their community.ⁱⁱ In the most recent revision of the tool in 2004, the FSCCI was revised to better take into account the special capacities needed to cope with cyclical risks and shocks, specifically including HIV/AIDS. This guidance has been prepared to provide staff of Africare and other Cooperating Sponsors, and the communities they serve, with a brief background on the evolution of this tool, a clear set of steps to use in measuring the FSCCI within beneficiary communities, and the different ways this tool can be used.

One important goal of Africare's USAID Title II funded Institutional Capacity Building (ICB) grant was to capitalize on Africare's extensive experience with using the FSCCI to guide program design and routine monitoring and impact assessments. Although food security projects have always included capacity building activities, there was not enough monitoring, evaluation, and documentation of these activities to generate lessons learned and best practices (Gervais 2004). The new USAID Office of Food for Peace's strategic plan for 2005-2010 gives a much higher priority to capacity building activities within projects and cites the Africare FSCCI as an example of best practice (USAID 2005).

Below background information is presented that explains the evolution of the use of this tool. A detailed section follows that presents the steps involved in measuring FSCCI and how to adapt the tool to specific circumstances of a project while maintaining the core structure of the tool. The final two sections present evidence of autonomous uses of FSCCI by the communities and other potential uses of the index. Attached is an example of a blank FSCCI form (Annex A), rankings (Annex B), and a completed FSCCI matrix based on the Excel tool for calculating FSCCI scores (Annex C) (<http://www.africare.org/news/tech/ASFR-intro.php#paper2>).

Background

Over the five-year period of the Institutional Support Assistance (ISA) grant from USAID/DCHA/FFP (FY99-FY03), Africare's Office of Food for Development (OFFD) and the country staff of on-going food security programs worked with a variety of indicators of community capacity began grouping them under broader variables. One of the results of this process was the Food Security Community Capacity Index (FSCCI), which was developed as a means of measuring communities' capacity to address their own food security issues. A broad consensus on eight variables was reached in 2000. Both the 1999 and 2003 versions of the Africare Field Manual on the Design, Implementation, Monitoring, and Evaluation of Food

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Security Activities (Gervais and Schoonmaker-Freudenberger 1999; Gervais et al. 2003) include detailed sections that outline how to use the FSCCI. During FY04 and as stated in Africare's technical proposal for the Institutional Capacity Building grant from USAID/DCHA/FFP (FY04–FY08), two additional variables were developed at field workshops held in Mozambique and Burkina Faso in April and July, respectively, to address risks and shocks, such as HIV/AIDS. During the 2007 Africare food security workshops, the FSCCI was further revised based on experience in implementing it in the field and those recommendations have been included in this guidance.

The following 10 revised variables are now included in the FSCCI (explained in detail in Annex B).

1. Community Organization
2. Community Participation
3. Transparency and Good Management
4. Good Internal Functioning of the Organization
5. Capacity to Analyze and Plan
6. Capacity to Take Action
7. Community Capacity to Analyze and Manage Risks and Shocks
8. Community Capacity to Manage Risks Associated with HIV/AIDS
9. Communication and Exchanges with Outsiders
10. Individual Capacity

Since FY05, most of Africare's Title II PL 480 supported activities have introduced various versions of these variables to evaluate Food Security Committees' (FSC) capacities. It is expected that existing programs will continue to use the forms they have developed with the addition of the two new variables while new programs will start with the revised form. While all 10 of the variables should be used, it is necessary that the indicators be adapted to the circumstances of each program. Therefore, a column has been added to the revised form for noting influential characteristics that should be considered when adapting the indicators. Additional material on training and use of the FSCCI can be found in the revised Africare Field Manual on the Design, Implementation, Monitoring, and Evaluation of Food Security Activities (Gervais et al. 2003).

How to Determine the FSCCI

Step 1: Establishing a Dialogue with the Food Security Committee

During the life of a food security program, Africare field staff interact regularly with members of the food security committee (FSC) to provide technical assistance, advice, and guidance. The method by which the FSCCI is calculated in the beginning of a program includes a "guided discussion" with Africare staff and FSC members with the aim of training the committees on how to complete a self-assessment of the different variables. During the later stages of a food security program, many FSCs are able to provide this self-assessment of their capacity with limited (or no) Africare involvement. Africare has observed, through its experience with the FSCCI in more than a dozen countries during the past five years, that the majority of FSC members who participate in this exercise are honest and realistic about changes in their capacity to address food security problems. Another important aspect of the dialogue with the FSC is to assist community members in identifying constraints to improved food security (or reduced food insecurity) that cannot be directly influenced by improvements in community capacity and for which additional outside resources and/or support must be sought.



Participatory Rural Appraisal exercise in Hangabera village covered under the Goundam Food Security Initiative in Mali. Photo credit: Goumar Aboubacrine

Step 2: Adapting the Indicators to the Community Context

All Africare programs will use (and train FSCs or other groups representing beneficiary communities in the use of) the same 10 variables listed above to appraise community capacity. Variables can have a different number of indicators based on their complexity and relevance to the specific environment (social, economic, and natural) in the community. However, it is important that field programs and the community maintain the same 10 variables. The indicators used by each program should take into account the actual environment of the project and community experience, language, and aptitude, as evidenced during the Rapid Rural Appraisals (RRAs) and Participatory Rural Appraisals (PRAs). Therefore, the indicators for each variable could vary in number and nature compared to the list of indicators in the table below (Annexes A, B, and C), which should be considered a guide and example. Within the framework of the 10 variables of the FSCCI, the community members should undergo a participatory process to first list all the relevant and important factors that affect each variable within their own communities. This could be done by having the group brainstorm a list that is then recorded on paper or chalkboard. The same participatory approach should be used to then narrow the extensive list of potential indicators for each variable to the ones that are most important and representative of the capacity covered by the variable. The participants should keep in mind that they need to be able to assess the level (0-5) of each indicator that is finalized. Initially, this process will take place with Africare field staff; however, it is the intent that the community participants be sufficiently trained in this process that they have the knowledge to conduct this in the future on their own. Africare field staff should make an effort to have community members guide this process as much as possible to facilitate ownership and learning.

Step 3: Creating the Ranking Criteria

After the list of relevant indicators is finalized for each of the 10 variables, the rankings (levels 0 through 5) must be established. Group members should use the ranking criteria in Annex B as a guide. For example, for the indicator under variable 1, “existence of groups/organizations in the community” the ranking criteria are as follows.

- 0 There are no groups/organizations present in the village/community.
- 1 Nascent group/organization present, even if embryonic.
- 2 Existence of 1 or 2 functional groups/organizations.
- 3 Existence of 3 groups/organizations, two of which are functional.
- 4 Existence of 4 functional groups/organizations.
- 5 Existence of at least 5 functional groups/organizations.

When establishing the ranking criteria, participants should consider the worse-case scenario (which would be ranking of 0) and the best case scenario. Often the best case scenario will be a situation that has not been obtained—more of an ideal for that indicator. The purpose of establishing fixed rankings for each of the values (0-5) is to promote consistency and limit subjectivity for replication of the FSCCI in the future.

Step 4: Ranking Each Variable

When the final table of the FSCCI is adopted by the project it should be included in the project field manual and used by all field agents and communities, who should be trained accordingly. Annex A serves as an example of the FSCCI table with all the community-specific indicators listed. All indicators are valued from 0 to 5 (0=least capacity and 5=most capacity) by the FSC members. Variables will not have the same weight in the final measurement.ⁱⁱⁱ The respective weight, and therefore the impact, of each variable will be proportional to the number of indicators for each variable. This will ensure that the impact of each variable in the final score is proportional to its actual importance in the community’s capacity to address their food security problems. Therefore, when field programs and communities adapt the number and content of the indicators for each variable, if a particular variable is more important it should end up having a larger number of indicators with which to measure it, resulting in a more substantial weight compared to other variables. The total score for the community for all variables will be divided by the total maximum number of points and multiplied by 100. The score will then be expressed as a percentage and be comparable from one program to another and for all Africare programs.

Step 5: Calculating the FSCCI Score

Annex C Part 1 is a practical example of the matrix for entering data and calculating the FSCCI score for the example provided of 33 variables for the 10 constant indicators presented in Annexes A and B. This part of Annex C is an image of an Excel file (the active Excel file is Part 2 of Annex C [<http://www.africare.org/news/tech/ASFR-intro.php#paper2>]). The Excel file has mathematical formulas imbedded to automatically calculate and update scores as data are entered. Users must take care not to delete the formulas once they have downloaded the Excel file. Once field staff download the excel file, it is recommended that the original be maintained as is and that individual assessments be done with a copy of the original excel file. The form of the Excel file differs slightly from the form of the FSCCI table in Annex I due to the way the formula need to be formatted. While it may be easier for some field staff to use an excel file to calculate FSCCI scores, it is also expected that many self-assessments will continue to be done long-hand. In these cases Part 1 of Annex C can be used as an example to verify how calculations are to be done.

Using the FSCCI Global and Variable Scores to Track Impact on Capacity Building and Design Interventions

The overall FSCCI score can be used to observe trends for a particular FSC or all the FSCs in a given country program (which could be more than 100). Observing how community capacity has changed during a program (based on FSCCI scores measured at baseline, mid-term, and final) reduces the level of subjectivity and provides a general idea of whether program beneficiaries are recognizing improvements in their own capacity. An improvement in FSCCI scores over time in one community and worsening of FSCCI scores over time in another community does provide useful information for the program and can be used by external evaluators who have been contracted by Africare to complete mid-term and final evaluations, regardless of whether they have been exposed to this index previously. Furthermore, examination of scores on particular variables can feed into the design of project interventions so that efforts are focused on areas that need the most support.

Autonomous Use of the FSCCI by the Community

Past experience in Africare's programs shows that communities can learn how to do the FSCCI exercise without facilitation by program staff. At this point the program staff must decide how to train key community members in conducting the FSCCI. Recent research by Africare in Uganda showed that many factors contributed to the successful ownership of the FSCCI. Especially important were the high level of involvement of civil authorities at the village, parish, and district levels in the annual updates and consistent use of the tool in the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) exercise that was used to update the village action plans (McMillan et al. 2006b: 52-53; Tushemerirwe and McMillan 2007).

These two factors seem to have encouraged adoption (and retention) despite repeated changes in the format of the tool and the tool's relative complexity (relative to the much simpler Months of Adequate Household Food Provisioning PRA tool that is also described in this series (Africare 2007)). Some of the best evidence of the perceived utility of the tool is the fact that many villages in the Kabale district of Uganda have incorporated the tool into their local government planning process even after the project was no longer active in that area (Box 1).

Other Potential Uses of the FSCCI

To date Africare's use of the FSCCI has focused on the calculation of the average FSCCI for a project. Based on the risk management study, Africare identified three priority areas where the current tool could be strengthened to better build community capacity to identify and manage risk (McMillan et al. 2006 [a]: 54; Tushemerirwe and McMillan 2007):

- The need for better targeting of villages with weak core community capacity and weak capacity to manage risk as part of the routine M&E and planning system and project reporting system;
- The need to better track community-level progress in risk management based on the two variables in the Indicator Performance Tracking Table (IPTT) for risk management (variables seven and eight^{iv}); and
- The need for better tracking of the food security committees' collaboration with various non-Africare actors (both government and private voluntary organizations) active in HIV/AIDS prevention and support to persons living with HIV/AIDS.

In Guinea, a revised version of the FSCCI was used to track community capacity to improve health and nutrition (Pogba et al. 2007; Sidibé et al. 2007). One important impact of this use of the FSCCI was to highlight communities where the core community capacity was below what was needed to sustain the project's community-based health and nutrition programs. Based on this analysis, Africare focused its community capacity building on these activities during the final year of the project. In Rwanda, Africare is in the process of pilot testing the FSCCI as a tool for tracking the impact of its efforts to build the capacity of community organizations working with people living with HIV/AIDS.

Up until 2006, Africare had done very little cross-analysis of the FSCCI with other indicators such as the MAHFP (McMillan et al. 2006a: 58). One recent study (Bryson and Cohen 2008) provides a preliminary overview of a comparison of different indicators used by Africare including MAHFP and FSCCI. More correlation analysis is planned as part of the routine monitoring and evaluation, baseline, and final surveys that the Title II projects are slated to undertake in 2008.

Box 1. Evidence of Successful Autonomous Use of the FSCCI in Uganda

"I head 16 villages. All 16 are using the FSCCI as a planning tool. Only nine of the 16 villages I am responsible for, however, are Africare villages. Currently, there is a community collective action in the whole parish; most communities have their own by-laws that conform to government rules and communities are able to identify solutions to their problems without waiting for local government officials to intervene. Also, sub-county programs target organized groups/farmer organizations for implementation in this parish. All communities are organized in groups that have strong leadership committees. Africare's approaches to community work have made the sub-county work easier to implement."

Source: Chairman, Local Council II (LC II), Tumwesigire Gabriel, Kiziba B. Village in McMillan et al. 2006a: 52).

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Annex A

Africare Food Security Community Capacity Index Form

(Revised and Updated by the September 2007 Workshop in Niamey, Niger)

Capacity Building Variable	Indicators	Nil (0)	Poor (1)	Fair (2)	Satisfactory (3)	Very Good (4)	Excellent (5)	Observations
1. Community Organization (3)	Existence of groups/organizations in the community							
	Synergy between community organizations							
	Frequency of decision making meetings							
2. Community Participation (3)	Participation of the community in decision making							
	Female participation							
	Motivation of community volunteers							
3. Transparency and Good Management (4)	Existence of accounting system and financial documents							
	Verification and control of accounts							
	Transparent management of business							
	Timeliness of debts/credit reimbursement by group/committee							
4. Good Internal Functioning of the Community or Organization (5)	Respect of committee members' role							
	Understanding and respect of FSC's rules by members							
	Documentation of activities and meetings							

Capacity Building Variable	Indicators	Nil (0)	Poor (1)	Fair (2)	Satisfactory (3)	Very Good (4)	Excellent (5)	Observations
	Democratic change in leadership							
	Capacity to manage internal conflict of the committee							
5. Capacity to Analyze and Plan (3)	Capacity to use RRA and PRA techniques							
	Capacity to analyze situations, prioritize problems, and develop solutions							
	Capacity to develop, monitor, and evaluate action plans							
6. Capacity to Take Action (2)	Capacity to implement action plans							
	Capacity to implement action plans without external assistance							
7. Ability to Analyze, Plan, and Manage Risk and Shocks (5)	Existence of a community-based information and identification system of risks and shocks							
	Existence of plans to mitigate risks and shocks							
	Capacity of the community to diversify its activities							
	Existence of an M&E system of the mitigation plan							
	Capacity to request and receive external assistance							

Capacity Building Variable	Indicators	Nil (0)	Poor (1)	Fair (2)	Satisfactory (3)	Very Good (4)	Excellent (5)	Observations
8. Capacity to Manage Risks Associated with HIV/AIDS (3)	Knowledge of committee members on HIV/AIDS in their community							
	Existence of a sub-committee on HIV/AIDS with an action plan							
	Evidence of formal collaboration between the community and the health service providers							
9. Communication and Exchanges with Outsiders (2)	Communication and exchange with outsiders							
	Capacity to negotiate for external resources							
10. Individual Members Capacity (3)	Literacy level of group members for purposes of recording group activities							
	Presence of local expertise							
	Application of learned technologies in group/village							
TOTAL NUMBER OF POINTS								
INDEX ((Total Number of Points /Maximum Number of Points) X 100)								

Annex B

Suggested Rankings for each Indicator of the Africare Food Security Community Capacity Index

(Note: There are 10 variables, 33 indicators, and a maximum score of 165 achievable by a community/group for this example)

VARIABLE 1: COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

Rationale: In its strategic plan, Food for Peace (FFP) places a new emphasis on enhancing the capacity of communities and civil society to deal more effectively with their own food insecurity problems over the medium and longer-term. Variable 1 assesses the existing organizations in a community and their functionality to address a multi-faceted approach to attaining a food secure environment. The indicators for this variable are designed for both the community and the various organizations or sub-groups (Water Committees, Neighborhood Health Committees, etc.). An underlying assumption for this variable is that a community meeting to discuss its food security problems is a positive development. It is also recognized that the way communities “meet” and “record” decisions varies by country and within regions.

Indicators

(a) Existence of groups/organizations in the community

- 0 There are no groups/organizations present in the village/community.
- 1 Nascent group/organization present, even if embryonic.
- 2 Existence of 1 or 2 functional groups/organizations.
- 3 Existence of 3 groups/organizations, two of which are functional.
- 4 Existence of 4 functional groups/organizations.
- 5 Existence of at least 5 functional groups/organizations.

(b) Synergy between community organizations

- 0 There is no collaboration.
- 1 The collaboration is limited to selective actions initiated by one community leader.
- 2 The collaboration concerns selective actions initiated by community organizations operating in the same field of activity or same sex.
- 3 The collaboration concerns selective actions initiated by community organizations operating in different fields of activity and include members of both sexes.
- 4 The collaborative actions are planned, coordinated, and implemented by community organizations operating in the same field or same sex.
- 5 The collaborative actions are planned, coordinated, and implemented by community organizations operating in different fields of activity and include member of both sexes.

(c) Decision making meetings frequency

- 0 Group/organization members never meet at all.
- 1 Group/organization meets once a year or once a semester.
- 2 Group/organization meets every 2 or 3 months on specific agenda.
- 3 Group/organization meets once a month on specific agenda.
- 4 Group/organization meets twice a month on specific agenda.
- 5 All the scheduled meetings are agreed upon by the members and are always held.

VARIABLE 2: COMMUNITY PARTICIATION

Rationale: This variable assesses four factors:

- 1) The FSC is not only in the hands of a few influential members of the community,
- 2) The turn out of the population to general meetings is acceptable enough to indicate their interest and involvement,
- 3) The distribution of roles and responsibilities is not exclusively male-dominated, and
- 4) There exists a system to motivate community volunteers.

Indicators

(a) Community participation in decision-making

- 0 No community, religious, or traditional organizations participate in decision-making meetings.
- 1 Less than 50% of community, religious, or traditional organizations participate in decision-making meetings.
- 2 At least 50% of community, religious, or traditional organizations participate in decision-making meetings, but do not actively participate to the actual decision making process.
- 3 At least 50% of community, religious, or traditional organizations participate in decision-making meetings, and actively participate in the actual decision-making process.
- 4 At least 50% of community, religious, or traditional organizations participate in decision-making meetings, actively participate in the actual decision-making process, and control implementation.
- 5 The decision-making meetings are initiated by community organizations, the majority of which participate actively and control the implementation of decisions made.

(b) Female participation

- 0 No women accepted/represented on any committees.
- 1 Both genders are represented, but there is dominance in discussions by men and suppression of women during discussions.
- 2 All members have opportunity to communicate, but the majority of those speaking are men.
- 3 Equal opportunity given for women to communicate, but only after facilitators highlight imbalances.
- 4 There is free interaction and communication in the group from any member of both genders.
- 5 Women represent at least 25% of leadership and all women participate actively.

(c) Motivation of community volunteers

- 0 No motivation exists.
- 1 Selective actions are done by the leaders to motivate volunteers and to maintain and replace their working tools and equipment.
- 2 Selective actions are done by the community to motivate volunteers and to maintain and replace their working tools and equipment.
- 3 Basic agreement exists to put in place a system while only selective actions are done to motivate community volunteers and to maintain and replace their working tools and equipment.
- 4 A community-based motivation system exists, but the community cannot fulfill its commitments.
- 5 A community-based motivation system exists and is operational.

VARIABLE 3: TRANSPARENCY OF MANAGEMENT OF THE FSC

Rationale: This variable assesses the knowledge of the population on how the FSC is doing business and how the members of the FSC understand their roles and responsibilities. This variable is applicable to both FSC members, specific interest groups, and the community at large.

Indicators

- (a) **Existence of accounting system and financial documents**
- 0 There is no accounting system and financial documentation.
 - 1 There is no accounting system, but a few documents exist and are kept by various members.
 - 2 An accounting and recording system exists, but it is not applied.
 - 3 An accounting and recording system exists, but is not regularly updated.
 - 4 An accounting and recording system exists, is regularly updated, but is not used in decision-making.
 - 5 An accounting and recording system exists, is regularly updated and is used in decision-making.
- (b) **Verification and control of accounts**
- 0 No verification is done.
 - 1 Occasional verification by committee members.
 - 2 A system of verification and control exists, but is not functional.
 - 3 A system of verification and control exists, but no report is made to the assembly.
 - 4 A functional system of verification and control exists, but reporting is not regular.
 - 5 A functional system of verification and control exists and regular reporting is done.
- (c) **Transparent management of business**
- 0 Running of activities is non-transparent and carried out by only one individual or a very small group. Almost no knowledge of how business is run by majority of village members.
 - 1 Some information on running of business is shared or known, but only by a few people. This is restricted to a few committee members and not all transactions are known.
 - 2 Most of the group/village members are informed of the business through verbal and informal discussions.
 - 3 50% of group/village members know about how business is run through information during scheduled meetings.
 - 4 60% of group/village members know about how the group business/activities are planned and run through scheduled meetings.
 - 5 80% of group/village members know about how the group business/activities are planned and run through scheduled meetings. Documents and information are accessible to anyone.
- (d) **Timeliness of debts/credit reimbursement by group/committee**
- 0 Never paid debt.
 - 1 Paid back a portion of debt.
 - 2 Paid debt back, but after harsh external enforcement.
 - 3 Paid back debt, but in small, staggered, and irregular amounts.
 - 4 Debts paid, but always delayed.
 - 5 Group pays its debts immediately according to repayment schedule,

VARIABLE 4: GOOD INTERNAL FUNCTIONING OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION
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Rationale: This variable is mainly designed to assess how FSC members or members of the various sub-committees within the FSC understand their roles and responsibilities with respect to their by-laws.^v

Indicators

(a) Respect of committee members' roles

- 0 No defined roles. No one knows his/her role or the roles of others.
- 1 Roles exist, but are not very clear to either committee members or the other members of the group/village.
- 2 Roles exist and are defined, but not respected.
- 3 At least 40% of committee members understand and execute their roles.
- 4 100% of the committee members understand and execute their roles.
- 5 100% of committee members understand and execute their roles AND at least 90% of village understands the members' roles.

(b) Understanding and respect of the FSC's rules by members

- 0 No rules or by-laws exist.
- 1 Rules/by-laws exist, but not adhered to or respected.
- 2 Rules/by-laws exist, but known and respected just by 2 or 3 people.
- 3 Rules exist, known by most people, but respected by only a few people.
- 4 More than 50% of members know and respect the rules/by-laws.
- 5 Rules/by-laws exist, are known by all group members, and respected by all members.

(c) Documentation of activities and meetings

- 0 No form of documentation of activities and meetings done by the group.
- 1 A few activities and meetings are documented, but not properly recorded or written.
- 2 Activity records and meetings documented, but a few are skipped or misplaced.
- 3 Activities and meetings are documented, but with external help.
- 4 Activities and meeting records are well documented, but documentation is with different people.
- 5 All group activities are well documented and archived in one place.

(d) Democratic change in leadership

Rationale: Africare's experience when establishing food security committees in "new" communities is that traditional leaders are usually made members of the committee when it is first established. Rotating leadership within a FSC is often viewed as challenging the traditional structure of the community and Africare's field staff must address this issue on a case by case basis. In many cases, the traditional leadership within a FSC has been a positive experience, and often leads to a voluntary decision to rotate membership within the community. What has also been learned is that in certain cases, when the traditional leadership is placed in the newly-established FSC and there are limited activities of benefit to the community during the following year, requests from different community members to change the composition of the FSC have been made. Africare's role in this process focuses on supporting overall program objectives, and to not become overly involved in local political decision-making. For the purposes of the FSCCI, it is assumed that rotating leadership within a FSC is a positive indication of increased participation.

- 0 Committee leadership has never changed and elections have never been held.
- 1 Elected leadership has existed since inception with group/village's consent.
- 2 Group is pleased with the current leadership in spite of more than 5 years in office.
- 3 Only one leadership change in 4 years.
- 4 Only one leadership change in 3 years.
- 5 Leadership in place as per provisions in the by-laws.

(e) Capacity to manage internal conflict of the committee

- 0 Never manage/resolve emerging conflicts or disagreements between group members.
- 1 Existence of elders who contribute to resolving emerging or open conflicts.
- 2 A few cases of conflicts are resolved by group members, but others are pending or deferred indefinitely.
- 3 Conflicts are resolved, but after external mitigation (e.g., by village traditional mitigation structure or Africare staff).
- 4 Conflicts are resolved, but are often delayed until general assembly takes a ruling.
- 5 The group members themselves immediately resolve any conflicts that emerge.

VARIABLE 5: CAPACITY TO ANALYZE AND PLAN

Rationale: A recent assessment of Title II development programs identified the need for a number of major changes that have resulted in new FFP policy. This includes requirements for strengthening food aid partner capacity, such as the capacity to assess problems, analyze them, and make plans to address issues related to recurrent shock or emergency situations.

Indicators

(a) Capacity to use Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques (e.g., food security calendars, action plans, resource maps)

- 0 The group doesn't know any of the RRA and PRA techniques.
- 1 The group can list some RRA and PRA techniques, but does not use them.
- 2 The group can use some RRA and PRA techniques with external assistance, but has no or little understanding of the process.
- 3 The group uses at least 1 RRA/PRA technique.
- 4 The group uses at least 2 RRA/PRA techniques.
- 5 The group knows many RRA/PRA tools and uses at least 3.

(b) Capacity to analyze situations, prioritize problems, and develop solutions

- 0 Group has no concept of this type of process.
- 1 Group is aware of this type of exercise, but cannot analyze situations, prioritize problems, or develop solutions.
- 2 The group can only assess their present situation, but finds difficulty in prioritizing problems and/or developing solutions.
- 3 The group can assess their present situation and prioritize problems, but always needs strong external support from outside in developing solutions.
- 4 The group can assess their present situation, prioritize problems, and develop some solutions.
- 5 The group can analyze their present situation, prioritizing problems, and develops many solutions.

(c) Capacity to develop, monitor, and evaluate action plans

- 0 No action plan.
- 1 An action plan has been developed with external assistance.
- 2 Action plans have been developed and monitored with external assistance.
- 3 Action plans have been developed and monitored without external assistance, but no documentation is available regarding evolution of the plans.
- 4 Action plans have been developed and monitored without external assistance and limited documentation of development of the plan exists, but is not widely known.
- 5 The action plans developed are regularly monitored, evaluated, and updated by the community without external assistance and relevant documents are available and widely known.

VARIABLE 6: CAPACITY TO TAKE ACTION

Rationale: This variable is derived from the preceding one. It measures action or an activity. The FSC may be able to identify and analyze the problems plaguing the community, but may be unable to take action.

Indicators

(a) Capacity to implement action plans

- 0 No action plan implemented.
- 1 Community is organized and a maximum of 30% of the action plan has been implemented.
- 2 Community is organized and 30 to 60% of the action plan has been implemented.
- 3 Community is organized and 60% to 90% of the action plan has been implemented.
- 4 Community is organized and at least 90% of the action plan has been implemented.
- 5 Community is organized to regularly implement its entire action plan and evaluate achievements.

(b) Capacity to implement action plans without external assistance

- 0 No action is taken.
- 1 A maximum of 30% of planned actions have been implemented without external support.
- 2 At least 50% of planned actions have been implemented without external support.
- 3 All the planned actions have been implemented without external support.
- 4 All the planned actions have been implemented without external support and the community regularly undertakes other actions without external support.
- 5 The community regularly undertakes actions with no external assistance and has a financial mechanism to fund the actions.

VARIABLE 7: ABILITY TO ANALYZE, PLAN AND MANAGE RISK AND SHOCKS

Rationale: Vulnerability is defined as the ability to manage risks. FFP's formula is based on the following: *Vulnerability = Hazard (Risks) – Coping Mechanisms*. When an entity (i.e., community) is unable to cope effectively with a shock or hazard, it is vulnerable. The larger the shock is in relationship to the inability to cope, the greater the degree of vulnerability. This formula applies to both the community and the FSC. This variable assesses the functionality of any existing warning system (modern or traditional) to reduce exposure to risks and to increase the community's ability to manage such risks, such as shocks that affect many people (e.g., droughts, bush fire, or floods). For example some floods occur on an annual or decade basis; some wise men can predict the severity of the rain or the drought from the migration of certain species of birds or the color of leaves from specific species of trees. The committee in collaboration with the community should capitalize on this type of local knowledge and coping mechanisms.

Indicators

(a) Existence of a community-based information and identification system of risks and shocks

- 0 No evidence of a village information system (VIS).
- 1 Unstructured assessments are done on an irregular basis that do not lend themselves to analysis and action.
- 2 Existence of a formal committee, which meets annually to assess village's food security, risks, and vulnerabilities. However, no structured VIS is in place.
- 3 Formal committee, which meets quarterly, uses data collection tools for analysis.
- 4 Formal committee meets monthly, which collects and analyzes data with accuracy.
- 5 Formal functional village information system created and operated independently by the village with monthly meetings to analyze the situation. The system documents a dynamic food security situation for all groups in the village on a continuous basis. Effective preventive actions to mitigate shocks, risks, and vulnerabilities are identified that result in enhanced food security for the whole village.

(b) Existence of plans to mitigate risks and shocks

- 0 No plan.
- 1 Oral plan without capacity to implement.
- 2 Written plan without capacity to implement or make preparations.
- 3 Written plan exists with capacity to implement, but no preparations in place.
- 4 Written plan exists with capacity and preparations in place.
- 5 Annual review of all aspects of the plan is done and communicated to village.

(c) Capacity of community to diversify their activities

Diversification of productive activities is defined as planting one new crop, breeding one new animal, or starting a new processing technique or other income generating activity not completed during the previous agricultural cycle.

- 0 No understanding about diversification of productive activities.
- 1 At least 10% of households have diversified their productive activities.
- 2 At least 25% of households have diversified their productive activities.
- 3 At least 50% of households have diversified their productive activities.
- 4 At least 75% of households have diversified their productive activities.
- 5 At least 90% of households have diversified their productive activities.

(d) Existence of a monitoring and evaluation system of the mitigation plan

- 0 No indicators in place.
- 1 Committee members have started putting some indicators and guidelines together.
- 2 Indicators have been developed by some members, but are not yet understood very well by all members and, therefore, not yet applied in any evaluation.
- 3 Indicators have been developed and all members are aware of them, but have not yet used them in any evaluation.
- 4 Members have own well-developed indicators that are well understood by all. Indicators have been periodically used by the committee members with the help of Africare and other organizations.
- 5 Members have own well-developed indicators that are well understood by all. The indicators have been periodically used by the committee members without the help of Africare or any other organization staff.

(e) Capacity to request and receive external assistance (for assistance needed to avoid risk and/or respond to emergencies or shocks)

- 0 No mechanism exists for negotiating for external resources/assurances when required.
- 1 Community has thought about negotiating for external resources/assistance, but no action has been taken.
- 2 Information on community risks has been formulated into a proposal.
- 3 The formulated proposal has been submitted to higher local leadership levels.
- 4 Community proposal and negotiation skills were sufficient for a response from outside resources to be received.
- 5 Community has a highly effective system in place for proposal development and negotiation recognized by outside resource sources and has resulted in the receipt of resources.

VARIABLE 8: CAPACITY TO MANAGE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH HIV/AIDS

Rationale: This variable is specifically related to HIV/AIDS because FFP made the determination that HIV/AIDS will pose an increasing challenge as it undermines household food security in a variety of ways, including eroding the capacity of households to attain food security and/or to withstand shocks. AIDS morbidity and mortality in the most productive 15 to 45 year age group reduce households' ability to

produce and buy food and depletes savings and assets. This variable assesses the capacity of members of the FSC and the community to identify and manage risks that grow as the number of HIV/AIDS affected households increase.

Indicators

(a) Knowledge of committee members on HIV/AIDS in their community

- 0 No committee members have ever received HIV/AIDS awareness training.
- 1 Less than 20% of members have received basic HIV/AIDS awareness training.
- 2 Between 20-50% of members have received basic HIV/AIDS awareness training.
- 3 At least 50% of members have received basic HIV/AIDS awareness training.
- 4 The committee knows where to access up-to-date HIV/AIDS technical information at an organization or facility in their area.
- 5 The committee can name a person or organization for each technical area of HIV/AIDS (e.g., voluntary counseling and testing, home-based care, peer education, and treatment [if applicable]).

(b) Existence of a HIV/AIDS sub-committee with an action plan

- 0 No such committee exists.
- 1 A committee exists, but has no work plan.
- 2 A committee exists and has informally discussed a work plan.
- 3 A committee exists and has a formal work plan.
- 4 A committee exists and has a formal work plan in which less than 50% of the planned activities have taken place.
- 5 A committee exists and has a formal work plan and has implemented 80% or more of the planned activities.

(c) Evidence of formal collaboration between the community and health service providers

- 0 The committee does not know of the health and HIV/AIDS services available in their area.
- 1 The committee knows of the services, but has not made any contact with any health service providers in their area.
- 2 The committee has identified key services* and has made contact with at least 50% of the service providers for HIV/AIDS in the area.
- 3 The committee has created formal linkages with the health system to provide committee/community sensitization and prevention education efforts.
- 4 The committee has identified key services in their area for HIV/AIDS and has established a formal mechanism for referral of community members to these services.
- 5 A referral system is documented.

*Services:

- Awareness creation & sensitization
- HBC (Home-based care)
- VCT (voluntary counseling and testing)
- IGA (Income generating activities)
- Establishment of linkages with HS (health services)

VARIABLE 9: COMMUNICATION AND EXCHANGES WITH OUTSIDERS

Rationale: This variable is essential to maintaining the positive changes initiated by Title II programs specifically focused on exit strategies and sustainability. This measurement is concerned primarily with FSC members who are expected to take on increasing responsibility for implementation of Title II activities at the community level during the final phase of Africare's outreach. This transfer of functions is essential

if the activities initiated under the Title II program are to continue to have an impact after the program ends. The ability of the FSC to effectively communicate with other potential donors (government or foreign institutions) is a key component within the capacity building approach.

Indicators

(a) Communication and exchanges with outsiders

- 0 Committee is unable to speak to outsiders about themselves and what they do.
- 1 Committee rarely speaks to outsiders about themselves and what they do.
- 2 Committee often speaks to outsiders about themselves and what they do, but with reservations unless with the presence of a facilitator.
- 3 Committee can speak to outsiders and has visited another group once to share what they do.
- 4 Committee can speak to outsiders and has visited and invited other groups to share what they do.
- 5 Most members of the group can perfectly and explicitly communicate and exchange information with outsiders.

(b) Capacity to negotiate for external resources (for general food security activities)

- 0 No form / idea of negotiation for external resources exist within the group.
- 1 Group has developed an idea for seeking or negotiating for external resources, but no action has been taken.
- 2 Group has already set up a task force for negotiating for external resources, the specific sources of resources are known, but only informal contacts have been made so far.
- 3 Group has developed one project from the action plan and has submitted to outside partners for funding.
- 4 Group has developed 2 projects from the plan of action and funding has been obtained for at least one.
- 5 Good linkage with external resources. The group is benefiting from self-initiated and negotiated external resources.

VARIABLE 10: INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY

Rationale: This variable is for both individuals in the community and FSC members. It is essential to assess the individual capacity of the community members to determine the existing strengths, expertise, and skills within the community. The skill level of community members will impact the community and committee members' ability to use information and make decisions.

Indicators

(a) Literacy level of group members for purposes of recording group activities

- 0 No adult in the group is literate.
- 1 One to three people in the group can read and write and record keeping is weak and problematic.
- 2 15% of the group members can read and write and keep records of group activities.
- 3 20% of the group members can read and write and keep record of group activities.
- 4 25% of the group members can read and write and keep record of group activities.
- 5 30% of the group members can read and write and keep accurate record of group activities and individuals are present who can handle financial records.

(b) Presence of local expertise

- 0 No adult member in the group has ever been trained.
- 1 Less than 5% of adults in the group have received training in a skill needed by the group.
- 2 At least 5% of adults in the group have some training in a skill area needed to carry out the activities.

- 3 At least 10% of adults in the group have some training in a skill area needed to carry out the activities.
- 4 At least 25% of adults in the group have some training in a skill area needed to carry out the activities.
- 5 At least 50% of adults in the group have some training in a skill area needed to carry out the activities.

(c) Application of learned technologies in the group/village

- 0 No adoption or initiation of any practices or technologies by community members.
- 1 5% of community members have adopted or initiated a practice or technology.
- 2 25% of the members in the community adopted or initiated a practice or technology introduced in the group/village.
- 3 50% of community members have adopted or initiated any practice or technology introduced in the group/village.
- 4 75% of community members have adopted or initiated any practice or technology introduced in the group/village.
- 5 All the participating members in the community have adopted or initiated one or all of the practices or technologies introduced in the group/village.

Annex C. Tool for Entering Rankings and Calculating Scores for the FSCCI

The table below (Part 1) is an image of the excel file (Part 2: <http://www.africare.org/news/tech/ASFR-intro.php#paper2>) that accompanies this guidance that can be used by Africare field staff for entering FSCCI rankings and automatically calculating the score. The Excel file has the necessary mathematical formulas imbedded that will automatically update the score as data are entered. The image below is not active and numbers will not change; it is only meant to be an illustration of the way the example above (33 variables for the 10 indicators, a maximum possible score of 165 for this example) could be ranked to result in the total raw score of 90 and an adjusted score of 55 percent.

Part 1.

Capacity Building Variable (10 total)	*Number of Indicators	Indicators (number varies)	**Rank (0=Nil, 1=Poor, 2=Fair, 3=Satisfactory, 4=Good, 5=Excellent)	Observations
1. Community Organization	3	Existence of groups/organizations in the community	3	
		Synergy between community organizations	3	
		Frequency of decision making meetings	2	
		<i>For additional indicators, add rows by clicking on this cell and moving mouse to top menu to "insert" and selecting "row" from the pull-down menu; update "number of indicators" cell to the left.</i>		
2. Community Participation	3	Participation of the community in decision making	2	
		Female participation	4	
		Motivation of community volunteers	3	
		<i>For additional indicators, add rows by clicking on this cell and moving mouse to top menu to "insert" and selecting "row" from the pull-down menu; update "number of indicators" cell to the left.</i>		
3. Transparency and Good Management	4	Existence of accounting system and financial documents	2	
		Verification and control of accounts	2	
		Transparent management of business	2	
		Timeliness of debts/credit reimbursement by group/committee	2	
		<i>For additional indicators, add rows by clicking on this cell and moving mouse to top menu to "insert" and selecting "row" from the pull-down menu; update "number of indicators" cell to the left.</i>		
4. Good Internal Functioning of the Community or Organization	5	Respect of committee members' role	3	
		Understanding and respect of the association rules by members	4	
		Documentation of activities and meetings	4	
		Democratic change in leadership	3	
		Capacity to manage internal conflict of the committee	5	
		<i>For additional indicators, add rows by clicking on this cell and moving mouse to top menu to "insert" and selecting "row" from the pull-down menu; update "number of indicators" cell to the left.</i>		

5. Capacity to Analyze and Plan	3	Capacity to use RRA and PRA techniques	3	
		Capacity to analyze situations, prioritize problems, and develop solutions	3	
		Capacity to develop, monitor and evaluate action plans	3	
		<i>For additional indicators, add rows by clicking on this cell and moving mouse to top menu to "insert" and selecting "row" from the pull-down menu; update "number of indicators" cell to the left.</i>		
6. Capacity to Take Action	2	Capacity to implement action plans.	3	
		Capacity to implement action plans without external assistance	2	
		<i>For additional indicators, add rows by clicking on this cell and moving mouse to top menu to "insert" and selecting "row" from the pull-down menu; update "number of indicators" cell to the left.</i>		
7. Ability to Analyze, Plan, and Manage Risk and Shocks	5	Existence of a community-based information and identification system of risks and shocks	3	
		Existence of plans to mitigate risks and shocks	2	
		Capacity of the community to diversify its activities	4	
		Existence of an M&E system of the mitigation plan	2	
		Capacity to request and receive external assistance	2	
		<i>For additional indicators, add rows by clicking on this cell and moving mouse to top menu to "insert" and selecting "row" from the pull-down menu; update "number of indicators" cell to the left.</i>		
8. Capacity to Manage Risks Associated with HIV/AIDS	3	Knowledge of committee members on HIV/AIDS in their community	4	
		Existence of a sub-committee on HIV/AIDS with an action plan	0	
		Evidence of formal collaboration between the community and the health service providers	0	
		<i>For additional indicators, add rows by clicking on this cell and moving mouse to top menu to "insert" and selecting "row" from the pull-down menu; update "number of indicators" cell to the left.</i>		

9. Communication and Exchanges with Outsiders	2	Communication and exchange with outsiders	3	
		Capacity to negotiate for external resources	2	
		<i>For additional indicators, add rows by clicking on this cell and moving mouse to top menu to "insert" and selecting "row" from the pull-down menu; update "number of indicators" cell to the left.</i>		
10. Individual Members Capacity	3	Literacy level of group members for purposes of recording group activities	4	
		Presence of local expertise	3	
		Application of learned technologies by the community	3	
		<i>For additional indicators, add rows by clicking on this cell and moving mouse to top menu to "insert" and selecting "row" from the pull-down menu; update "number of indicators" cell to the left.</i>		
Total number of indicators	33	Total number of points scored	90	
Total possible raw score	165	ADJUSTED INDEX SCORE (Percentage) ((Total Number of Points /Maximum Number of Points) X 100)	55	

**Note: Number of indicators to be updated based on community application. If indicators are added or subtracted this number must be updated to maintain accuracy of formulas imbedded below.*

***Note: Rank is based on criteria outlined in Annex B of FSCCI Guidance. Ranking criteria vary based on community context.*

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ⁱ This revision of the FSCCI was conducted by a sub-group of the Africare monitoring and evaluation working group during a USAID/FFP workshop in Niamey, Republic of Niger, September 2007. The members of the working group were Ismael Diallo (Africare/Burkina), Edward W. Baxter (Africare/Mali), Bonaventure B. Traoré (Africare/Senegal), Aboubacar Rili (Africare/Niger), and Bai K. Rogers (Africare/Liberia). The Africare food security M&E working group is co-chaired by Bonaventure Traoré (Africare/Senegal) and Della E. McMillan (Consultant, Africare/Headquarters). It is this team that is overseeing the final revisions, as well as monitoring staff feedback on the tool. For additional information contact OFFD, Africare/Headquarters, offd@africare.org. The current guidance is the fourth major revision of Africare's FSCCI guidance since 1999. The original version of the guidance was developed by **Susan Gervais** and **Karen Schoonmaker Freudenberger** and produced as part of the Africare Manual for the Design, Execution, and Evaluation of Food Security Activities. A revised version of the guidance was prepared by **Judy C.**

Bryson in 2005—based on input from two Africare workshops in Mozambique and Burkina Faso in 2004 concerning the need for better harmonization between programs and better incorporation of the concept of risk.

ⁱⁱ Africare is currently developing guidance on the Food Security Program Capacity Index (FSPCI), which will appear in this series, and will cover the technical abilities and knowledge of program staff needed to implement food security programs.

ⁱⁱⁱ In the past Africare programs experienced two different scenarios for weighing variables in the final score: (i) variables were given different weight based on the number of indicators; (ii) variables were later given the same weight (10 points) according to the methods adopted in 2004. Based on the lessons learned from using the two methodologies, it was decided during September 2007 workshop to give different weight to variables based on their respective number of indicators, each indicator being ranked from 0-5.

^{iv} Variable 7: Ability to analyze, plan and manage risk and shocks; Variable 8: Capacity to manage risks associated with HIV/AIDS.

^v N.B. Field offices should help FSCs draft their by-laws following these steps:

1. Explain the role of the FSC.
2. Explain the necessity of knowing the responsibilities of each member of the FSC or any organization in general, (take hierarchy within the village, government structures, soccer teams, and clubs as examples).
3. Help the group articulate its by-laws and articles. For example, the field agent would ask, “do you want the committee to exist forever?” The answer might be, “No.” Then, “How long do you want the committee to stay in place?” Many suggestions might come up: 2, 3, 5, 10 years; it’s up to the field agent to facilitate the discussion for a “reasonable term.” If accepted by all or the majority of the attendees, the provision will be written as an article to indicate that the group has accepted the constitution of a committee for 2, 3, 4 years renewable.
4. Another question might be, “How often do you want the committee to meet during its existence?” Again, many suggestions will be presented. The field agent or project coordinator will coach the discussion to have a monthly, quarterly, or semi-annually meeting. The result will be an article to determine the frequency of the meetings for the group.
5. Other questions will be posed to trigger relevant answers and suggestions meant to manage any organized group (i.e., criteria of selection of key players, reporting, and absence to meetings). Local conditions are factors to take into consideration.
6. The articles will be written either in the official language (French, English, or Portuguese) or in the local language if appropriate. The process is instrumental in showing the group that the approach is participatory and the by-laws have not been imposed on them, but emanate from the community.