

PART 1: FACT SHEET

The fact sheet is the first of four parts contained in this module. It provides an overview of key information relating to livelihoods programming in emergencies. Detailed technical information is covered in Part 2. Words in italics are defined in the glossary.

Introduction

Livelihoods refers to people, their capabilities, their assets, their income and the activities needed to sustain a means of living, including ways of obtaining food. Therefore understanding livelihoods is critical to understanding nutrition in emergencies. It is through livelihoods that people obtain food and income security. Food and income security ensure that nutritional needs can be met. While nutritional status is a key outcome of how we analyse and respond to support livelihoods, adequate nutritional status is a key contributor to successful livelihoods.

A number of phenomena, including globalisation, climate change, urbanization and conflict, can impact on the success or failure of livelihood strategies. These phenomena have the potential to weaken livelihoods making households more vulnerable to food and income insecurity.

A livelihoods framework can be used to analyse situations where some form of intervention may be necessary. The approach entails considering where people are, what they have, and their needs and interests. A common livelihoods framework that is used to determine whether and what type of livelihoods programming is appropriate is the 'sustainable livelihoods framework'.

The main elements of a sustainable livelihoods framework are:

- **Vulnerability context:** the structural and underlying causes of people's vulnerability to food and livelihood insecurity, which can include poverty, chronic food insecurity, a high prevalence of HIV and AIDS and a lack of basic services

- **Policies, institutions and processes:** constitutes the governance environment, including government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the private sector, as well as processes such as laws, policies, culture or customary practices, markets and institutions.
- **Livelihoods assets:** what people have, including social (status in society, extended family) and human (labour) assets, as well as financial (cash, credit, savings, investments) and physical assets (livestock, houses)
- **Livelihoods strategies:** what people do (agriculture, wage labour) and the practical means or activities through which people access food and income
- **Livelihoods outcomes:** the goals that people are pursuing, the 'living' that results from their activities

Objectives of providing livelihood support in emergencies

Programmes or interventions to support livelihoods can have three objectives. These are livelihood:

- Provision, the supply of basic needs
- Protection, preventing the sale of assets or the recovery of lost assets
- Promotion, strengthening institutions and advocating for policy change that supports livelihoods

Depending on the context different programme objectives will apply at a given time, however it is possible for a programme to have more than one objective.

Implementing interventions to support livelihoods in emergencies. There are a large variety of livelihood support interventions that can be implemented in emergencies. These can be divided into four broad groups:

- Food aid
- Income and employment
- Production support
- Market support

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Food security assessments that include a livelihoods analysis are key to determining when, where and how to implement a livelihoods programme in an emergency. Decision-making criteria to guide agencies towards the most appropriate form of livelihoods intervention for a given context are also being developed and refined. However, decision-making criteria must be used flexibly.

i. Food aid interventions to support livelihoods

Food aid can be a form of livelihood support either when provided through a *general food distribution*, which prevents people from selling assets to buy food and other essential commodities, or as a *food-for-work* programme, which creates community assets that promote livelihoods. Food aid can:

- Maintain or improve nutritional status, hence enabling a healthy active life
- Reduce the need for people to sell off assets to obtain food.
- Release income that would otherwise have been spent on food.
- Enable the payment of credit or debt i.e. supports important coping strategies

Food distributions for livelihood support usually start earlier in order to protect assets, and last longer in order to promote recovery.

Food aid alone cannot achieve sustainable livelihoods or even livelihood protection or recovery without other types of livelihoods support interventions as well as policies at national level which will promote the development of marginal groups.

ii. Income and employment support

An increasing number of agencies are supporting and implementing cash transfer interventions in a variety of emergency contexts. Cash distributions are often more cost-efficient when compared to food aid and can also be faster to implement. Furthermore, cash can be easily invested in livelihoods. There is also some evidence to suggest that cash transfers can improve the status of women and marginalized groups.

It is generally accepted that cash is appropriate when food and essential non-food items are available and markets are functioning, when there are reasonable assurances that the intervention does not raise security concerns for staff or recipients and when there is little potential for price distortion (e.g., inflation) within the local market. The safety and effectiveness of cash delivery will in part be determined by the different options available for delivering cash (bank, local money transfer companies, direct distribution by implementing agency), the risk of taxation or diversion by local authorities or elites, as well as the risk of theft before and after delivery. Risks can be minimized by the way in which the programme is designed and implemented. The major types of cash interventions which have been used in emergencies are cash grants, cash-for-work and cash vouchers.

In theory, cash grants are quicker and can be applied on a larger scale in acute emergencies than other forms of cash transfer. Cash or commodity vouchers can also be exchanged either with traders and retailers in shops or with traders or producers in local markets, distribution outlets, fairs and other events organized specifically for the programme. Voucher programmes are most commonly used for seed or livestock fairs.

Cash grants for livelihood recovery differ from microfinance in that recipients are not expected to pay back the grant and there is no expectation of continued financial support. Both cash grants and microfinance can be accompanied by training to upgrade the recipients' skills although this will not be necessary where the grants are intended to rehabilitate livelihoods. The most suitable candidates for microfinance services are home-based resident populations and returnees, both of whom tend to have at least some assets and an incentive to stay where they are if they can earn a living.

There is a need for more evaluation of cash programming to refine understanding of the impact on food security, nutrition, markets, social relations and security.

Market support

Markets play a crucial role in supplying goods and services to ensure survival and to protect livelihoods. Prior to, during and after a crisis, disaster affected populations depend on markets for employment and income.

Organizations are increasingly realizing that the best opportunities for assisting disaster-affected communities need to consider market function. An analysis of markets is needed in order to ensure sustainable support to livelihoods of disaster-affected populations.

A recent inter-agency tool called Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis (EMMA) has been developed to promote and guide market analysis during emergencies. The toolkit promotes a three-strand approach to understand markets. These are:

- **Gap** analysis: this strand is about understanding the context, priority needs of the most affected in relation to their livelihood strategies.
- **Market** analysis: this strand is about understanding each critical market system in terms of its constraints and capabilities.
- **Response** analysis: this strand explores different options, comparing feasibility, likely outcomes, benefit and risks before leading to a recommendation for action.

Market support interventions can take many forms: cash and voucher programmes as well as programmes that support; market infrastructure; the maintenance of food prices in markets (e.g., through the provision of subsidised foods); and producers to access markets. The aim of market support programmes in emergencies is generally to ensure that people's access to basic goods is maintained. Gaining a sound understanding of the key markets that affect the livelihoods of poor people is a critical first step in developing appropriate market access interventions. Simple market analysis tool are available which can assist in determining whether an increase in demand for basic goods, created by cash distributions, can be met through the market.

Production support

Production support includes crop production, livestock and fishing support. These can take a variety of forms, depending on the stage and type of emergency and the livelihoods affected.

Emergency crop production programmes are generally part of a rehabilitation programme, and most commonly comprise seeds and tool distribution often implemented in conjunction with general food distribution to ensure that seeds are not eaten or sold for food.

In many emergencies, seed is actually available locally or at least in the country, and can be effectively provided through seed fairs. Seed fairs are markets organized so that affected households can access seed through exchange of vouchers. They have been implemented in a variety of emergency contexts, including conflict, drought and floods. Advantageous situations stemming from seed fairs as opposed to direct seed distributions include: farmers can buy the variety and quality that they prefer; seed is adapted to local agro-climatic conditions; farmers can exchange experiences, information and seed among themselves and with seed sellers; and there is a contribution to revitalizing local seed production and trade.

Different types of livestock interventions are appropriate at different stages of a crisis. Livestock interventions include live-stock off-take, fodder distribution, veterinary care, repairing boreholes and other water sources, all of which are often carried out at an early stage of drought-related emergencies. Other interventions include subsidies for transport to market or initiatives to improve access to pasture in neighbouring regions or countries. Restocking is carried out during the recovery or rehabilitation stage of an emergency.

Market transport subsidies may be possible for animals still in fair condition early in an emergency. Purchase for slaughter can be started after the end of any market transport subsidy. Purchase for slaughter targets the animals still in good condition.

Destocking (also referred to as livestock off-take) involves buying (or exchanging) livestock for immediate slaughter with the meat distributed dry or fresh. The main aim of destocking is to provide a value to animals that would otherwise die. Destocking has become one of the most widely used emergency interventions in pastoralist areas. Destocking can be run alongside a veterinary or feed supplement programme, where the money from livestock sales can be used to buy veterinary drugs or fodder for the remaining stock. Most emergency fodder distribution programmes involve the transportation of fodder from areas relatively less affected by the disaster to badly affected areas. It is generally recommended that fodder distribution is only done for core breeding stock or pack animals and that it is accompanied by veterinary inputs.

Emergency animal health and vaccination campaigns are important because of increased risk of exposure to disease in some emergencies. Most emergency veterinary interventions revolve around external and internal parasite control campaigns in disaster-affected herds.

Restocking is a method of asset building aimed at families who have recently lost most of their stock. In food insecure environments, beneficiaries may need to be supported with additional food or cash so that they do not have to sell their herds to meet basic needs

i. Linking relief and development livelihoods programming

All types of livelihood support programming discussed in this module can be applied both in emergency and development contexts. Therefore, there are opportunities for linkage. However, the intervention designs may differ making it difficult to link relief and development interventions. For example, in an emergency, income support may be provided in the form of cash grants, whereas in a more stable context, microfinance initiatives may be preferable.

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In addition Governments and aid agencies are showing increasing interest in social protection programmes to reduce the vulnerability of those that suffer from chronic livelihood crises and to build resilience to future shocks. **“Social protection** involves policies and programs that **protect people against risk and vulnerability**, mitigate the impacts of shocks, and **support people who suffer from chronic incapacities to secure basic livelihoods**. It can also build assets, reducing both short-term and intergenerational transmission of poverty.”*

Working in conflict: livelihoods security and protection linkages

Poorly designed and analysed livelihoods interventions can increase security risks to beneficiaries. At the same time insecurity and lack of access will inevitably hinder the implementation of livelihoods programmes while any distribution of resources (food or livelihoods) may be subject to manipulation and abuse. Livelihoods work in conflict situations may also create dilemmas about humanitarian principles, in particular *neutrality* and *impartiality*. Where there

is a weak government, which is common in situations of chronic conflict, there is a risk that livelihoods support involving capacity building of local institutions will be perceived as favouring certain groups. There is a fine balance between saving lives and livelihoods and compromising neutrality.

Mainstreaming treatment for HIV and AIDS

Most agencies are still struggling with ùmainstreamingù treatment for HIV and AIDS into their livelihoods programmes. Examples include: ensuring that cash-for-work programmes make arrangements for those who cannot work; and using public gatherings, such as in vouchers and fairs, to educate people about HIV and AIDS. The value of such initiatives has yet to be properly explored or evaluated. Another emerging challenge is that as ARTs are rolled out, formerly bedridden and often destitute patients recover speedily and soon require some means of income support or livelihoods activity. Linking IGA/livelihoods activities with ART roll out programmes is therefore becoming an increasing priority and one that raises important institutional issues.

Key messages

1. Understanding livelihoods is critical to understanding how an emergency will affect nutrition. Nutritional status is a key outcome of the success or failure of livelihoods as well as being a key contributor to successful livelihoods.
2. Organizations are increasingly programming to support livelihoods during emergencies. The Sphere handbook contains standards, indicators and guidance on livelihoods programming.
3. The sustainable livelihoods framework forms the basis of all livelihoods programming. The main elements are:
 - Vulnerability context (causes of people’s vulnerability)
 - Policies, institutions and processes (governance environment)
 - Livelihoods assets (what people have)
 - Livelihoods strategies (what people do)
 - Livelihoods outcomes (goals that people pursue)
4. A wide variety of livelihoods interventions can be implemented during emergencies including:
 - Food aid (general food distribution, food for work)
 - Income and employment (cash distribution, cash for work, micro-finance)
 - Market support (vouchers, monetization and destocking)
 - Production support (agricultural, livestock and fishing)
5. Outstanding challenges in the area of livelihoods programming include:
 - Difficulty of linking livelihoods relief interventions with longer term livelihood interventions
 - Challenges of livelihoods programming in conflict
 - Livelihoods programming in the context of HIV and AIDS

* Social Protection, opportunities for Africa, IFPRI, M. Adato and J. Hoddinott