



IDENTIFICATION OF PEOPLE MOST AT RISK OF FOOD INSECURITY



PREPAREDNESS



RESPONSE



RECOVERY

This tool will help you to:

- Understand how people in your municipality normally provide food for themselves and for their households
- Determine who is most affected by poverty and hunger in your municipality
- Determine who in the municipality will suffer the most from a pandemic in terms of their ability to meet their households' food needs

Who will implement this tool:

- The mayor
- The **municipal leadership team**, in collaboration with:
 - Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)
 - Hospitals and health centers
 - Community authorities and leaders
 - Food wholesalers and retail markets
 - Public security agencies

A number of existing resources which offer detailed guidance on conducting food and livelihood security assessments are listed in the *Resources* section of this toolkit. This tool was designed to summarize the most basic elements of these assessments to help you understand the level of food and livelihood security for the people living in your municipality before the pandemic arrives, and the factors that could place some people at high risk of food and livelihood insecurity during a pandemic. This information will help you make the best decisions about how to respond to potential food and livelihood security threats.

Food security in a community exists when everyone can grow, buy, or trade for enough nutritious food to ensure a healthy and active life. The alternative condition—*food insecurity*—can apply to individuals, households, particular groups or communities, cities, or regions.

The term **livelihoods** refers to more than simply the way in which people earn money. It refers to the skills, abilities, and assets (both material and social resources) that people have, to their activities, and to the decisions they make, all of which help them to survive each day. **Livelihood security** refers to the ability to continuously maintain or enhance a healthy and secure life.

OVERVIEW

The resources available to people in your municipality will determine how well they are able to get back to normal following a shock like a pandemic. Resources might include money, land, good health, a clean environment, and education, as well as friends, neighbors, or communities that are able to help lessen the impact of such a shock.

People affected by a pandemic will have two priorities with respect to food and livelihood security:

- Maintaining the resources necessary for **food security** during a pandemic, and
- Recovering any lost resources to ensure future secure **livelihoods**

During a pandemic, municipal leadership decisions to protect food and livelihood security must be based on an understanding of the following:

1. How people normally provide food for themselves and for their households

Do they:

 - Grow it?
 - Buy it?
 - Trade for it?
 - Receive it as gifts or through assistance programs?
 - Need to travel to get it? If so, near or far?
2. How people make their living
3. The possible impact of the pandemic on current and future food and livelihood security—which groups are most at risk (most vulnerable)
4. The most appropriate response

Vulnerable groups (those groups most frequently at risk in emergencies such as a pandemic) typically include women, children, older people, disabled people, and people living with HIV/AIDS. In certain contexts, people may also become vulnerable because of ethnic origin, religious or political affiliation, or displacement.

An *in-depth food and livelihood security assessment* identifies the poorest populations and those which will be at greatest risk in a disaster. Typically, these assessments are conducted by governments, nongovernmental organizations, and international aid agencies.

Information on the most vulnerable groups or households in your community or region may be available from your central-level government agencies or from the nongovernmental organizations that work in your area. If you have time before the pandemic hits, contact these organizations and ask if they have access to livelihood or vulnerability studies. (Turn to Handout 1 at the end of this tool for links to the agencies that may have conducted such an assessment in your region.)

WHAT IS A FOOD AND LIVELIHOOD SECURITY ASSESSMENT?

A local food and livelihood security assessment provides information on the levels of hunger and overall well-being of people in the municipality to help the municipal leadership team determine who will need help first and who will need the most help overall during the pandemic.

In-depth food and livelihood security information is sometimes available through central government channels or humanitarian aid groups. You should attempt to access such information if it exists, because it can help identify areas within the municipality where people are most at risk, and provide a preliminary idea of the specific problems that various groups are struggling with.

Regardless of whether in-depth information is available, the municipal leadership team should do a local food and livelihood security assessment. This will help you to evaluate the vulnerability of your municipality as a whole and discover which groups are most vulnerable.

WHEN SHOULD WE CONDUCT A FOOD AND LIVELIHOOD ASSESSMENT?

Ideally you should conduct the assessment long before a pandemic virus arrives in the municipality. Collecting this information beforehand gives you a good idea of the extent of food and livelihood insecurity in your municipality and the factors that are contributing to it. By knowing the extent of food insecurity, you will be better prepared to manage response efforts for any disaster that threatens your region. Handouts 3 through 8 at the end of this tool provide outlines for various types of pre-pandemic interviews which are discussed later in the tool. All questions should be reviewed to make sure they apply to the conditions in the municipality.

WHERE SHOULD WE CONDUCT A FOOD AND LIVELIHOOD ASSESSMENT?

If the municipality consists of many distinct communities and your team is unable to visit all of them, you will need to prioritize where you will collect information first. Tool 8, *Classification of Food Security Risk Locations*, can help you classify municipal communities according to the level of risk of food and livelihood insecurity. This is a good first step to help you estimate the areas that may need help first. The tool will also help you to identify information gaps so that you can effectively design your assessment questionnaires to gather the missing information.

HOW DO WE CONDUCT A LOCAL FOOD AND LIVELIHOOD ASSESSMENT?

To conduct a local assessment, assemble a team to gather information using community interviews, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, community observation, and seasonal calendars. Using multiple methods and sources of information helps make sure that the results accurately reflect the situation in the municipality. Handout 2 provides key questions if you are conducting interviews *during* a pandemic. Handouts 3 through 8 provide key questions if you are conducting interviews *before* the pandemic virus has arrived in your municipality and you have enough time to collect detailed information.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE VARIOUS METHODS OF GATHERING INFORMATION?

Community interviews are conducted with a large group of community members to get general background information on a particular community or group. Use an outline to help guide these interviews (see Handout 3 at the end of this tool for an example) but allow sufficient time for free and open expression by everyone participating. *If social distancing measures have been implemented, community interviews are not appropriate.*

Key informant interviews are typically conducted with people who have specific knowledge about certain characteristics of the community. You will interview these people one at a time. Examples of key informants include:

- Community leaders—government, religious, military
- Shopkeepers and traders
- Healthcare providers
- School teachers
- Agriculture specialists

Key informants may also be individuals noted for their unique perspective and/or high degree of vulnerability, such as widows, elders, orphans, or people with disabilities. The purpose of key informant interviews is to obtain more detail about the strengths and challenges of the community and to cross-check information gained in other interviews and discussions. (For examples of questions that you might ask in a key informant interview, see Handouts 4 and 5.)

Focus group discussions are conducted with groups of 6 to 12 individuals. With groups larger than this, it is unlikely that all participants will contribute to the discussion. During a pandemic, to reduce spread of the disease, focus groups should be limited to four or five people, and all who participate must practice good hygiene and precautionary measures to stay safe and healthy. (See Tool 4, *Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPIs): Actions to Limit the Spread*.) The purpose of the focus group discussion is to get a quick understanding of a key issue. For example, a group of farmers may be gathered to discuss the availability of crops in the area, how much food this could provide for the community during a pandemic, and if harvesting is reliant on migrant workers who may not be available during a pandemic. A group of caregivers may be gathered to discuss the forms of social support that people rely on in the community, how households obtain food, or the nutrition of children in the community.

The people in the focus groups should be representative of the main *livelihood groups* (i.e., according to sources of, and strategies for obtaining, income and/or food) and *wealth ranking categories* (categories distinguishing those considered by community members to be relatively poor and those who are relatively well off) in the community. Holding separate discussions with men and women allows your team to gain a gender perspective on the topic. The discussions are guided by an outline of questions (see Handouts 6 and 7) but should remain flexible.

IMMEDIATE ACTION

Assessing Food and Livelihood Security Quickly When the Pandemic Virus Is Close By

If there is not time to conduct a detailed local assessment because the pandemic is close by, the questionnaire in Handout 2 covers essential information to consider in a food and livelihood security assessment that is taking place in response to a pandemic. These questions should be reviewed to make sure they apply to conditions in your municipality. Other questions may need to be added. Time will be limited, so carefully consider if each question asked will help you make decisions about *whose* food security needs to be protected and *how* you might help them.

Household interviews require a lot of manpower, but may be the best option during a pandemic because they do not require that people gather together. An assessment team member will individually visit households to obtain information on household food security. For example, they will find out how the household puts food on the table, what they do when they don't have enough food, how many wage earners live in the household, how many dependents, etc. (For sample questions, turn to Handout 8.)

Seasonal calendars can help you identify seasonal changes in food availability, food diversity, job availability, and prevalence of disease, all of which will be important factors to consider when protecting the food security of your population. If you are gathering information before the pandemic have people in the community draw the calendars. It can be useful to create calendars with groups of men and women separately as they may have differing views of which times of year are the most difficult. It may also be useful to develop calendars with several different groups who represent various socio-economic groups and livelihood types. A sample calendar is provided on page 10.

Once the disease begins to spread through your municipality do not gather people together to draw the calendar. You can, however, use the template of a seasonal calendar to help you organize information about seasonal differences that you collect during interviews.

Community observation (transect walk) consists of walking through the community with someone who lives there and knows the area well in order to locate important food and livelihood security resources, pockets of poverty and discrimination, environmental assets and hazards, as well as geographic opportunities and constraints. It is a suitable method to use before the pandemic, but must be used very carefully once the disease begins to spread through the municipality. The types of items observed during a community observation include, but are not limited to:

- The range, quantities, and prices of food available in markets
- Wild foods or foods grown on common property
- Water collection and storage
- Community food storage spaces
- The general state of cleanliness/sanitation
- Any obvious signs of malnutrition or widespread poor health
- The general state of roads
- Forms of transport that could be used for moving food supplies if fuel is not available during a pandemic wave (i.e. horse, bicycles, hand carts, etc.)

WHO CAN HELP CONDUCT THE ASSESSMENT?

Many members of the municipality—such as traders, healthcare workers, school teachers, community workers, and agriculture technicians—can participate on the assessment team. Assessment team members should be comfortable interviewing people and should have good interpersonal skills. If various languages are spoken in the municipality, at least one member of the team should be able to speak and understand the language of the people they will interview.

WHAT TYPES OF INFORMATION SHOULD WE COLLECT?

To understand the food and livelihood security situation in a community, you will need to ask specific questions that help you determine how people are making a living and meeting their food needs, which populations are currently most affected by poverty and hunger, and who may suffer the most in terms of their ability to provide food for their household during a pandemic.

You will want to make sure that the information you collect is necessary for making decisions about possible support to protect food and livelihood security. As you design your questionnaires, carefully consider why each piece of information is important. Sample questions and the rationale for asking them are provided on the following page.

Examples of Food Security Assessment Questions		
✓	Necessary Information	Why It Is Important to Know This
	What shocks (including environmental, economic, social or political) have recently affected the municipality or populations within the municipality?	Populations that are currently recovering from a past disaster will be extremely vulnerable. Their assets will already be depleted and residents may be in poor health. Such populations will have a difficult time coping with the effects of a pandemic and may be the first people who will need assistance.
	What are the different ways in which people in the municipality make a living?	The pandemic will affect each group differently, and the effect on each group will have implications for the rest of the population. <i>One example: If many farmers within a municipality become sick or die, the planting and/or harvesting of crops may be disrupted. This will create a hardship, not only for the households of the farmers (resulting from lost income and food), but for others in the community by lessening the availability of farm products in the market and by reducing the income of those who rely on selling these products.</i> <i>What other examples can you think of?</i>
	What are the different ways in which people meet their food needs?	A pandemic will affect each group differently. <i>One example: If market systems are disrupted, people who grow their own food will be less vulnerable to food insecurity than those who purchase most of the food they eat.</i> <i>What other examples can you think of?</i>
	How easy is it for people to get food at a market? Is the market far? Is the distance that must be traveled safe for all groups? Is credit available to all groups?	Distance, security, access to credit, and other factors will affect who is able to easily obtain food that must be purchased.
	What is the availability and price of food and essential goods?	Because towns and cities often rely on modern delivery systems, local markets may have small inventories. During a pandemic, they may not have enough goods for all residents. This may also cause prices to rise, putting available food out of reach for the poor (no food access).
	Which major agricultural crops are produced locally? How are they transported to markets? Which crops might spoil quickly if they are not transported properly?	Information about the area's important crops can help leaders determine what food will be available for local populations. It also helps determine the availability of surplus grain and other farm products that may need to be moved from rural to urban areas as quickly as possible to ensure food security for urban areas.

Examples of Food Security Assessment Questions		
✓	Necessary Information	Why It Is Important to Know This
	How do different sources of food and income vary among seasons in a normal year? Which months are the leanest times in terms of food and income?	If a severe pandemic hits during the hungry season (prior to harvest), rural agricultural households will be extremely vulnerable if they are unable to harvest crops due to illness. Following the pandemic, households that depend on rural food supplies will be vulnerable to food insecurity if the pandemic prevented agricultural households from planting. In addition, if some households depend on seasonal migration for work, and the ability to migrate is limited because of measures intended to reduce the spread of the virus, those households may need extra help during a pandemic.
	What are the migration trends?	An influenza pandemic may occur in up to three waves. Knowing where people migrate to and the seasons in which they migrate will be important to preventing the spread of the disease. Those who rely on migration for income will need assistance to make up for lost income.
	Do households maintain rural-urban ties?	Movements between urban and rural areas can be hazardous during a pandemic. Understanding the rural-urban links in a municipality can help you determine whether additional public education and outreach emphasizing these hazards should be targeted to a specific area.
	Which community-based groups are currently operating in the municipality? What are their activities? Who benefits?	Making full use of existing organizations will speed the process of outreach. Community groups can help identify the people who will need help first. They may be helpful in establishing a process that can be monitored in a fair and transparent manner.
	What types of assets, savings, or other reserves are owned by the different groups? Do savings groups exist in the municipality? Does everyone have access?	Those with minimal assets, wealth, or savings will be particularly vulnerable if labor declines and food prices increase. Further, those with few assets may choose to flee, accelerating the spread of the virus.
	How important are remittances (e.g., money sent from abroad) to household income?	People may not be able to access banking systems and automatic teller machines (ATMs) due to disrupted transportation systems. Even if people can get to banks and ATMs, it is possible that bank systems will not be functioning, and they will not be able to access their money.
	Are disease and illness more frequent in certain seasons?	Communities that regularly face bouts of illness in particular seasons will be more vulnerable if the virus arrives at the same time.
	Which households depend on social support when they run out of food or income?	In times of crisis, these networks are stretched and often break down. Crises in and near urban areas can often pit neighbor against neighbor, or community against community. The food assistance often provided by family and neighbors in the event of a shock may not be available if market and transportation systems shut down, and all households are struggling with food access.

HOW DO WE MAKE SENSE OF ALL THE INFORMATION WE COLLECT?

After conducting the interviews, discussions, and observations, organize the collected information into patterns and categories. Organizing the information helps you see how all the pieces of the puzzle fit together. Sample charts and tables are provided on the pages that follow.

The main purpose of this assessment is to determine which groups will be most vulnerable to food and livelihood insecurity during and after a severe pandemic, so that you can choose the best type of response. Your team should compare and cross-check all the information that was obtained from the various sources. Based on the collected information your team should be able to:

- Sort the population into groups, and describe how each group accesses food and income. What skills and assets does each group have that helps them survive each day? The groups may be defined by occupation, relative well-being (i.e. poor, better-off), gender, or ethnicity. The more sorting you do, the clearer your picture will be for decisionmaking.
- Determine who might need assistance. This includes groups that appear to be the most food insecure right now, and the groups that are at risk of becoming food insecure during a pandemic.
- Determine why each group may need assistance. Could they protect themselves if they were provided with information and/or resources before the pandemic virus arrives?
- Two sample charts follow. In the first chart, the information collected during interviews, discussions, and observations is organized into three main occupational groups. Review this information. Are you able to predict potential food and livelihood security problems that might surface for each group during a pandemic? Who will be at risk and why? What are the strengths of each group? What are challenges?

SAMPLE CHART: ORGANIZING COLLECTED INFORMATION BY GROUP

(Handout 9 contains a blank chart)

Collected Information	Livelihood Groups		
	Farming	Wage Labor/ Service Industry	Fishing
Recent Shocks	Last season's crops did not fully mature due to drought	Global rise in food prices resulted in a much larger amount of monthly income spent on food	Lost numerous boats and equipment during hurricane Tourism surge has reduced available fishing waters
Assets	Food storage space Land to grow food Livestock Water storage Credit with farmer's coop	Small cash savings Access to municipal water	Fish nets Boats Water storage tank Poultry Strong social network
How does this group make or receive money?	Most income comes from cash crops Also sells livestock, poultry and eggs	Tourism Entertainment Restaurants	Sells fish at local markets Handicrafts in off season
How does this group get food? How much food must they purchase?	Eats raised poultry, livestock Depends on markets for 60 % of food purchases because most of land is devoted to cash crop	Purchases almost all food from markets and street vendors	Catches fish Raises poultry Harvests from common property fruit trees Depends on market for 30 % of food purchases
Seasonal variations to money, food, or illness?	Harvest income is not enough to get from one season to the next; Income is lowest during growing season	Income is highest during tourist season; very low 4 months a year (off season)	High tourist season(water sports) reduces fishing yields and income
What does this group do to cope with scarcity or shock?	Uses credit to get by until harvest	Depends on remittances and social safety nets	Migrates

EXAMPLE OF A SEASONAL CALENDAR

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rainfall					*	**	**	*	*			
Drought		*	*	**								
Hurricanes						**	*	*				
Agricultural harvest	*	*					*	*	**	**	***	
Fish catch				*	*	*	**	*				
Tourism	*	*	*	*					*	***	***	**
Food availability most difficult				*	**	***						
Highest level of migration				*	**	*				*	*	
High levels of disease						*	**	**				

Using this sample seasonal calendar we can see that if a pandemic were to strike this sample community in June they would be much more vulnerable to its impact than they would be if it struck in November. For example, those who rely on agriculture would be at the end of the lean season and many would be struggling with food availability. If many people became sick during the 2 to 3 month pandemic wave, the harvest that normally takes place in July and August could be delayed, causing further food insecurity for this region as well as others that depend on purchasing the agricultural production. Furthermore, those that rely on service or tourism may be struggling with low income since the tourist season has not yet begun. With the onset of a pandemic, the income they usually rely on from September to April may be greatly reduced due to restricted travel and global economic impact.

The calendar indicates that June is when the community is most likely to experience hurricanes. Following a hurricane, many households could have depleted assets. Additionally, we see that a number of the workers would be returning home from migration and might be carrying the pandemic virus with them. The community probably depends on these migratory workers to return and help with harvest. If they are prevented from returning by disrupted transportation systems or border closures, food may spoil in the fields and overall food availability will suffer.

What other risks and potential problems can you identify by using this sample seasonal calendar?

ONCE WE’VE DETERMINED THOSE MOST AT RISK OF FOOD INSECURITY, WHAT DO WE DO?

CHOOSING THE MOST APPROPRIATE TYPE OF ASSISTANCE

Many of the other tools in this kit will provide suggestions for a wide range of actions to support and protect food security in emergencies. Most of these responses depend on early planning, which is why *preparedness* is so important. Be sure to examine how your municipality’s plan to protect food security fits in with existing national plans.

MUNICIPALITY ASSESSMENT UPDATE— BETWEEN PANDEMIC WAVES AND AFTER THE PANDEMIC

After the first wave of a pandemic passes, updated information should be gathered as soon as possible. You will want to know how the pandemic has affected people’s food security and livelihoods, who has suffered the most, and who has been more resilient to the pandemic’s impact. By finding out how those who have managed fairly well through a pandemic wave have been able to do so, you can better understand and share successful coping strategies with others that have not fared so well. Learning from the experiences of the first wave will better prepare your municipality for a second or third wave.

The table on the next page serves as an example of the type of questions you will want to ask when updating food and livelihood security information. Use the charts in Tool 8, *Classification of Food Security Risk Locations* to review the food security problems that could occur. This will help you to design an updated questionnaire that accurately addresses potential problems specific to your municipality. Because time and human resources will likely be limited following a severe pandemic, you will want to make the updated assessment as efficient as possible. Be sure that every question you ask is necessary for decisionmaking. Try to determine if other groups (governments, international organizations, NGOs, community groups) are collecting similar information and if so coordinate your efforts and share the results with each other.

If social distancing measures are still in place, all who participate in interviews must practice good hygiene precautionary measures to stay safe and healthy.

SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE: UPDATING FOOD AND LIVELIHOOD SECURITY INFORMATION

You will want to determine the following for each livelihood group that you identified in the initial assessment.	✓
Has the pandemic affected overall food availability? How?	
Are nutrient-rich foods available?	
Are crops spoiling in the field because people are too ill to harvest?	
Are they spoiling due to slow transport or poor storage practices?	
Were crops planted at their normal times and in normal quantities? If not, how will this affect future food security (harvests that people usually depend on)?	
Has the pandemic affected food access? How?	
Have food prices increased significantly because of food shortages? Which food items?	
Have people lost their source of income, or is it greatly reduced? Why?	
Is there evidence of hoarding or speculation on the part of markets?	
Are people unable to get to markets because of illness, lack of transportation, or other issues?	
Are certain groups being turned away at markets because of their ethnicity, stigma, or religious or political affiliation?	
What decisions are people making to deal with the effects of the pandemic (coping strategies)? Examples: Urban workers are migrating to rural areas; households are eating smaller portions of food.	
Are any risks associated with these coping strategies? Example: Migration may increase transmission of the virus.	
How have these decisions/coping strategies affected people's health?	
The amount of food their household eats?	
Their income?	
Their safety?	
Their social support?	
Their education?	
Overall, which group or population is most affected?	

RESOURCES FOR EXISTING FOOD AND LIVELIHOOD SECURITY ASSESSMENTS

- National Governments
- Joint U.N. Assessments
- Eldis Food Security Resource Guide (www.eldis.org/food/index.htm)
- COPLA Comercio y Pobreza en Latinoamerica (<http://www.cop-la.net/>)
- Famine Early Warning System Network (www.fews.net)
- FIVIMS—Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information (www.fivims.org)
- Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance (www.fantaproject.org)
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (www.fao.org) (<http://www.rlc.fao.org>)
- United Nations Development Programme Human Development Reports (<http://hdr.undp.org/es/>)
- World Bank Global and National Development Reports (<http://www.bancomundial.org/>)
- United Nations World Food Programme (<http://one.wfp.org/spanish/>)
- World Health Organization (www.who.int/en)
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (<http://www.ifrc.org/sp/>)
- CARE (www.care.org)
- Catholic Relief Services (www.crs.org)
- World Vision (www.worldvision.org)
- Comité Internacional de la Cruz Roja (CICR) (<http://www.icrc.org/spa>)
- Save the Children (<http://www.sclat.org/web/index.php>)

SAMPLE RAPID FOOD AND LIVELIHOOD SECURITY ASSESSMENT

To use in the early-pandemic phase and during pandemic when there is not time to conduct a detailed local assessment.

(Handouts 2–8 provide outlines for detailed assessments)

Review these questions to make sure they apply to conditions in the municipality. Other questions may need to be added. Time will be limited, so carefully consider if each question asked will help you make decisions about **whose** food security needs to be protected and **how** you might help them.

ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES

- Are there groups or geographic areas in the community that do not have access to piped water? Where do these groups get drinking water? How is water stored?
- Are there groups or geographic areas that do not have access to natural gas or other fuel for cooking and heat (particularly if the pandemic arrives during the cold season)?
- What is the status of community sanitary conditions? Who is responsible for maintenance?
- What forms of transport that do not rely on fuel are available in the community?

FOOD SECURITY

- Which major agricultural crops are produced locally? Livestock?
- How are the crops/livestock transported to markets?
- Which crops might spoil quickly if they are not transported properly?
- What food is processed or packaged locally?
- How easy is it for people to get food at the market? Is the market close by? Is the distance that must be traveled safe for all groups?
- What is the availability and price of food and essential goods? How much food is presently in markets?
- Is credit at the market available to all groups?
- Is this a lean season in terms of food or income? Is the lean season approaching soon?
- What wild foods are available right now?

LIVELIHOODS INFORMATION

- What shocks (economic, health, social, political, or natural disasters) have recently affected the municipality or groups within the municipality?
- What are the main ways in which people in the municipality make a living?
- What types of assets, savings, or other reserves are owned by the different livelihood groups?
- How important are remittances (e.g., money sent from abroad) to household income?
- What are the migration trends? Are people getting ready to migrate? Expected to return soon?
- Do households maintain rural-urban ties?
- Are households suffering from seasonal disease or illness?

SOCIAL INFORMATION

- Which community-based groups are currently operating in the municipality?
- Which households depend on social support when they run out of food or income?
- Does this community support each other in times of need? How?
- What volunteer systems exist?

SAMPLE OUTLINE FOR A COMMUNITY INTERVIEW

(To be used pre-pandemic)

This outline of questions can be used if there is time to do a detailed assessment before a pandemic has arrived. Community Interviews are not appropriate if a pandemic has arrived in the municipality. These questions should be reviewed to make sure they apply to conditions in the municipality.

If the pandemic virus has not yet arrived in the municipality, but is in neighboring regions and you have no time to conduct detailed assessments, use the quick assessment guide (Handout 2)

Next to some questions you will see the letters SC, CO and KI. This indicates that the information could also be gathered using a seasonal calendar (SC), community observation (CO), or a key informant interview (KI). Handouts 4 and 5 offer samples of Key Informant interviews, but any questions that require specific knowledge are good questions to ask a KI. Equal access to resources and discrimination are examples of topics that may not be fully discussed during a large community interview due to fears about speaking up. KI interviews are a good way to follow up. Collecting information using various methods allows you to cross-check and verify your data, which supports better decisionmaking.

Municipality: _____ Village/Neighborhood: _____ Date: _____

This interview is conducted to obtain general background information on a particular community. It involves a relatively large group of community members—25 to 30 is the ideal number—but you should not exclude anyone who decides to come. The interview can be conducted in two groups—one of men and one of women—to capture differing views.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

- What shocks (including environmental, economic, social, health, and political) have affected the community during the last two to three years?

ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES AND LAND

- Does the community have access to electricity? If so, are there groups or geographic areas that do not have access?
- Does the community have access to piped water? If so, are there groups or geographic areas that do not have access? Where do they get drinking water?
 - How is water stored? **CO**
- Does the community have access to natural gas or fuel for cooking and heat? If so, are there groups or geographic areas that do not have access?
- What is the condition of other existing infrastructure? (Note the condition of roads, transportation, irrigation, telephone service, post office, sanitation) **CO**
- What forms of transport that do not rely on fuel are present in the community? **CO**
- Which groups in the community have access to land? Which do not? **KI**

FOOD AVAILABILITY AND ACCESS

- What are the major agricultural crops produced locally (cash crops and food crops)? When are they harvested? **CO SC**
 - How much of harvest is exported? **KI**
 - Is harvest dependent on migrant labor?
- What livestock is produced locally? When is it typically slaughtered or taken to market?
- Are local markets available? How far are they located from the center of the community? **CO**
 - If not, where do people sell and buy products?
- What are the range, quantities, and prices of food available in markets? **CO KI**
- Which months are the leanest times in terms of food? **SC**
- What substitute foods can be used when food is in short supply? **KI**
- What wild foods grow on common property? When are they available? **CO SC**
- Do community food storage spaces exist? Who has access to these? **CO**

LIVELIHOODS INFORMATION

- What are the major ways people currently earn money and/or survive (livelihoods) in the area? What were the major livelihoods five years ago?
- Do the ways people obtain income/trade change across the seasons? Describe. **SC**
 - Which months are the leanest times in terms of income? **SC**
- Are there differences in the types of work men and women can do? Differences in their ability to get work? **KI**
- What types of financial institutions exist to support the economic activities of people? **CO**
- Do people in this community migrate for work? **SC**
 - If so, what do they do and where do they go? Which household members migrate? How long are they gone? **KI**
- Do households maintain rural-urban ties?
 - If yes, to where? Which households? **KI**
- How important are remittances to household income? **KI**
- What are the major risks to livelihoods in the community, and how do people manage these risks? **KI**

EDUCATION

- What types of schools does the community have access to (including public and private, primary, secondary, and vocational)? **CO**
 - What is the distance from the community center for each type of school?
- Does any informal education take place?
- What sorts of skills are found in the community?
 - Where do people go to learn these skills?
- Describe local levels of literacy and dropout rates, noting gender differences. **KI**

HEALTH

- Do people in this community know about the risk of an influenza pandemic?
- Describe the types of diseases experienced by the community over the past year. **KI**
- Describe diseases and illnesses that usually occur and the seasons when they occur. **SC**
- What types of health facilities are available locally (e.g., government hospital, government clinic or health post, private clinic or health post, private pharmacy)?
 - Who has access to these services? What are the costs of seeking care (time included)? **KI**
- What could be done to improve the health situation in your community?

SANITATION

- Describe the status of community sanitary conditions **CO**
- Have community sanitary conditions become better or worse in the past five years? Why? **KI**

SOCIAL SUPPORT AND NETWORKING

- What are the different types of organizations and community-based groups that work in the community? **KI**
- Do people get social support when they run out of food or income? **KI**
 - If so, from whom and in what form?
- Do some groups have more social support than others? **KI**
- Are any groups discriminated against due to ethnicity, stigma, or religious or political affiliation? Other? **KI**

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW

Key informant interviews are typically conducted with people who have specific knowledge about certain characteristics of the community. You will interview these people one at a time. The purpose of key informant interviews is to obtain more detail about the strengths and challenges of the community and to cross-check information gained in other interviews and discussions.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR A HEALTHCARE PROVIDER

Municipality: _____ Village/Neighborhood: _____ Date: _____

TOPICS AND QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Most common diseases and health-related problems (causes, seasonality, and frequency)
- Available health services (fill in the following table)

	Distance (km) from center of village/area	Time (hrs) from center of village/area	Type of transportation available and cost
Hospital			
Healthcare Center			
Traditional Healer			
Community Health Worker			
Pharmacy			
NGOs			
Others (specify) _____			

- Availability and qualification of health personnel
- Constraints faced in recruiting and training health personnel
- Operational capacity of health service delivery systems
- Capacity to provide psychosocial support to respond to increased public anxiety
- Method of sharing information about health, hygiene, and nutrition to households and communities
- What proportion of people in the community use health services?
- Which groups use health services? Which ones do not?
- Where and how do people get medications?
- Which diseases cause the greatest number of deaths in this community?
- What would improve quality and access to health services?

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW

Key informant interviews are typically conducted with people who have specific knowledge about certain characteristics of the community. You will interview these people one at a time. The purpose of key informant interviews is to obtain more detail about the strengths and challenges of the community and to cross check information gained in other interviews and discussions.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR A STOREKEEPER

Municipality: _____ Village/Neighborhood: _____ Date: _____

TOPICS AND QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- What role does the private sector play in the marketing and distribution of food?
- What is the storage capacity of food in this area (e.g., the average size of trader stores, percentage of traders in the market with storage capacity)?
- What proportion of households does not have enough money or trading ability to meet basic food needs?
- What proportion of households has secure access to markets?
- What are the terms of credit for households or individuals?
- What is the credit being used for (loans to purchase food or investment)?
- What is the price in the main markets of the items in the following table?

FOOD PRICES

This list is an example. Fill in the blanks with the local foods that are necessary to meet nutritional needs. (For more information on foods that meet nutritional needs, see Tool 11, *Distribution of Emergency Food during an Influenza Pandemic*, and Tool 10, *Household Food Security Preparedness*.)

Food Items	Retail unit	Price per retail unit (local currency)	Price per unit six months ago	Price per unit one year ago
Maize	90 kg sack	600	500	450
Beans	90 kg sack	400	300	300
Cooking Oil	1 liter	30	25	23
Cassava	2 kg	50	45	40
Sugar	2 kg	15	12	10
Others		Current price	Price at this time last year	
Firewood (small)				
Firewood (large)				
Charcoal (small)				
Charcoal (large)				

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION—RURAL AREAS

(To be used pre-pandemic)

Focus group discussions are conducted with groups of six to eight individuals. With groups larger than this, it is unlikely that all will contribute to the discussion. During a pandemic, to reduce the spread of the disease, focus groups should be limited to four or five people, and all who participate must practice good hygiene precautionary measures to stay safe and healthy. If you are conducting focus group discussions during a pandemic, use the quick assessment guide in Handout 2.

The purpose of the focus group discussion is to get a quick understanding of a key issue. Depending on your information needs before the pandemic, you may ask some or all of these questions.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS—RURAL AREAS

Municipality: _____ Village/Neighborhood: _____ Date: _____

Historical Information on Shocks

- What shocks—environmental (including climate change), economic, social, and political—have affected the community during the last five years? (Include both shocks that have affected individual households and shocks that have affected entire communities and regions.)
- How have people coped with these shocks (in the short term and in the long term)? Did the decisions people made to cope with the shocks have a negative or positive impact on their household? The community?
- Has the community, as a whole, helped households to manage these shocks? How?
- Have external organizations (e.g., a nongovernmental organization, the government, or private groups) helped the community manage these shocks? How?

Food Security

- How many months can households meet their consumption needs from their own food production or from their own cash?
- How do people plan for eventual food shortages? How and where is food stored? Who is responsible for food storage in the home?
- Which months are the leanest times in terms of food and income?
- How do people cope when their income or agricultural and livestock production is not enough? Do men and women apply the same coping strategies or different ones? If they are different, how so?
- Do people rely on other households to help them cope with income and food shortages? What type of support?
- How do households obtain food in times of scarcity? What are the major food sources?
- What substitute foods are available when food is in short supply?
- When food is in short supply, are some household members fed before others? Who and why?
- What are the priorities for your community to improve food security? Does the community get together to talk about these priorities? Who participates in these meetings? Who leads these discussions?

Economic Information

- Describe differences in wages and labor by gender and age.
- From whom can people borrow money? (List sources of credit, savings, loans, insurance, welfare funds, scholarship programs, or revolving funds for the poor.) Who can access these sources (e.g., men, women, particular social groups)? Describe the terms of borrowing and repayment.

Social Information

- In most communities, some people are more vulnerable to food shortages than others. What are the characteristics of the most vulnerable groups and individuals in this community? Ask for details.
- Are these vulnerable groups being assisted? How? Do some groups have more social support than others?
- Do poorer people belong to different ethnic groups? Do they live in different parts of the community?
- Does this community support each other in times of need? How?
- What volunteer systems exist?
- For important messages, which media source do you find most reliable (e.g., newspapers, TV, radio, NGOs, government)?

Access to Resources

Natural Resource Information

- Describe any constraints to accessing drinking water.
- Describe the land type, soil fertility, and hazards (e.g., flooding and drought).
- How many people are landless?
- Is common property or government land available to the community? What is the nature of this land and how is it used? How do people get access to it? Are there any conflicts over use of this land?

Participation in Nongovernmental Organization or Government Programs

- Do households participate in government assistance programs? If so, please describe these (e.g., cash-based, food-based, combined, or other complementary programs).
- Do households participate in any programs run by nongovernmental organizations? Can you describe these activities?

Health

- Are disease and illness more frequent in certain seasons? Describe. Does this affect the ability to work?
- What do most people die from?
- What types of health facilities are available locally? Who can use these services?
- Are community health workers available? What services do they offer?
- What could be done to improve the health situation in your community?
- How long does it take to walk to the health center?
- Are community meetings held on healthcare, hygiene, and sanitation? If so, please explain.
- Do most households have soap and water? Is handwashing customary?

Community Strengths and Challenges

- What are the greatest strengths of this community as a whole?
- What are the major challenges to the well-being of people in this community? How will these challenges be managed?

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION—URBAN AND PERI-URBAN AREAS

(To be used pre-pandemic)

Focus group discussions are conducted with groups of six to eight individuals. With groups larger than this, it is unlikely that all will contribute to the discussion. During a pandemic, to limit the spread of the disease focus groups should be limited to four or five people, and all who participate must practice good hygiene precautionary measures to stay safe and healthy. If you are conducting focus group discussions during a pandemic, use the quick assessment guide in Handout 2.

The purpose of the focus group discussion is to get a quick understanding of a key issue. Depending on your information needs before the pandemic, you may ask some or all of these questions.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS—URBAN AND PERI-URBAN AREAS

Municipality: _____ Village/Neighborhood: _____ Date: _____

Historical Information on Shocks

- What shocks—environmental, economic, social, and political—have affected this area during the last five years? (Include both shocks that have affected individual households and shocks that have affected entire communities and regions.)
- How have people coped with these shocks (in the short term and in the long term)? Did the decisions people made to cope with the shocks have a negative or positive impact on their household? The community?
- Has the community, as a whole, helped households to manage these shocks? How?
- Have external organizations (e.g., a nongovernmental organization, the government, or private groups) helped the community manage these shocks? How?

Infrastructure

- What is the condition of existing infrastructure (e.g., roads, schools, housing, water and sanitation, electricity, natural gas, transportation, and public safety)?
- Who is responsible for maintaining local infrastructure?
- Does everyone have access to piped water? If not, where do these people get water?
 - Is the water source clean? If not, do people purify their drinking water? How?

Food Security

- How many months of the year can households meet their consumption needs from the money they earn or foods grown in gardens?
- Which months are the leanest times in terms of food and income?
- Do people plan for eventual food shortages? How and where is food stored? Who is responsible for food storage in the home?
- Do people rely on other households to help them cope with income and food shortages? What type of support?
- What are the main foods that are preferred by households? What substitute foods are available when food is in short supply?
- Do people have problems accessing markets (e.g., in terms of time, distance, transportation available, or shopkeeper discrimination)? Describe.
- Do people have problems purchasing food or basic necessities? (Are items available in stores? Affordable?) Describe.
- When food is in short supply, are some household members fed before others? Who and why?
- Is common property or government land available to use for urban gardening or other purposes? How do people get access to it? Do any conflicts occur over the use of this land?

- Do households in this area grow urban gardens?
 - Describe constraints to production, access to support services, and the quality of service.
 - What percentage of households will have some harvest from urban gardens?
- What are the priorities for your community to improve food security? Do people get together to talk about these priorities? Who participates in these meetings? Who leads these discussions?

Economic Information

- What do most people do for income and work in this area of the city?
- What opportunities exist for earning additional income?
- Estimate the proportion of people that rely on public transportation to get to work.
- Are there differences in the types of jobs people can obtain due to gender, ethnicity, religion, or political affiliation? Differences in wages?
- Do people leave the city to find work? Has this changed recently?
 - What type of work do people migrate for? Where do they go?
 - Which household members migrate? Why? How long are they gone?
 - Do migrants remit? How important are remittances to household income?
- What are the major expenses for households? Rent? Food? Transportation?
- Have people had to use their savings to meet these expenses? If so, where did these savings come from?
- From whom can people borrow money? (List sources of credit, savings, loans, insurance, welfare funds, scholarship programs, or revolving funds for the poor.) Who can access these sources (e.g., men, women, particular social groups)? Describe the terms of borrowing and repayment.
- How is credit used? To meet everyday needs? Investment?

Social Information

- In most communities, some people are more vulnerable to food shortages than others. What are the characteristics of the most vulnerable people in this community? (Describe these characteristics in detail.)
- Are there different ethnic, religious, or political groups in this neighborhood? Are some groups more vulnerable? How? Why? Do they live in different parts of the neighborhood?
- What are the different types of organizations (e.g., nongovernmental organizations, religious groups, government groups) that work in this community? What are their activities? Who benefits? Describe any positive or negative change that has resulted from these activities.
- What community-based groups are currently operating in this area? What are their activities? Who benefits? Describe any positive or negative change that has resulted from these activities.
- Do social or cultural conflicts occur in this community? What is the cause of conflict?
- Do households rely on other households when they run out of food or income?
- Do some groups have more social support than others? If so, who? Why?
- What volunteer systems exist?
- How does local decisionmaking occur? Do certain groups or bodies influence local-level decisionmaking? How?
- For important messages, which media source do you find most reliable (e.g., newspapers, TV, radio, NGOs, government)?

Education and Health Services

- What sources of education exist in your community (public and private)? Who has access to education? What are the literacy and dropout trends (including gender differences)?
- What types of health facilities are available locally? Who has access to health services?
- What are the costs to seeking care (including time)?
- What do most people die from?
- Are community meetings held on healthcare, hygiene, and sanitation? If so, please explain.
- Do most people have soap and water? Is handwashing customary?

Community Strengths and Challenges

- What are the greatest strengths of this community as a whole?
- What are the major challenges to the well-being of people in this community? How will these challenges be managed?

HOUSEHOLD INTERVIEW

Household Interviews require a lot of manpower, but may be the best option during a pandemic. An assessment team member will individually visit households to obtain information on household food security. All who participate in household interviews must practice good hygiene and precautionary measures to stay safe and healthy. (See Tool 4, Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPIs): Actions to Limit the Spread of the Pandemic in Your Municipality.)

URBAN AND RURAL HOUSEHOLDS

- How many people live in this household? Get gender and ages.
- How many people work in this household? Get gender and ages.

FOOD SECURITY

- How many months of the year can you provide enough food to eat for the entire household, using your own sources (income, food production, remittances, barter, other sources)?
 - What proportion of household income is spent on food?
- What is the main source of food (markets, garden, relatives/neighbors, food aid)?
 - What proportion of the food your household eats each month is purchased?
 - How close is the nearest market?
 - What foods are you growing?
 - What is the source of food aid, if received?
- What do you do when you cannot meet your household's food needs? Probe for coping strategies.
- What is the main source of drinking water? How do you store it?
- Do you need to treat this water for it to be drinkable?
- What is the main source of water for other household needs?
- What is the main source of cooking fuel?
- How many months/weeks of cooking fuel do you currently have on hand?
- Are there other sources of fuel that you could use if necessary?

Rural Households:

- How much land is currently cultivated?
- How much labor is required to work this land?
- Have any shocks impacted agriculture in the past year? What type(s)? How did you cope with the shock(s)?

HEALTH

- Is anyone in this household suffering from long-term illness (greater than three months)? Provide details.
- Is anyone in the household suffering from a short-term illness (less than three months)? Provide details.
- Are any household members disabled? Are any household members pregnant?
- Do you have access to healthcare?
- Do you have access to a toilet? What type?
 - Is there a place where you can wash your hands as you come out of the toilet?

SHOCKS

- Has your household been affected by any shocks (environmental, economic, social, other) recently? Probe for details.
- How did the shock affect your household? How did you attempt to manage the shock? Probe for what the household does to reduce risk before a shock occurs, and what they do after the shock occurs to cope.
- What are the major threats and challenges facing the well-being of your household?
 - How do you respond to these threats and challenges?

MIGRATION

- Have any members of your household left this area?
 - If yes, why did they leave? Where did they go?
 - Who migrated? How often do they return?
- Do they send goods or cash? What type?
 - What proportion of household income is made up by these gifts and cash?

INCOME

- What are the main sources of income for this household? (Describe for all members, including children.)
- How are you paid for labor? What are currently the three largest expenses for your household? (i.e. food, healthcare, education, rent, transportation, etc.)
- Do people in this household have skills and talents that they are unable to use at this time?
- Have any changes occurred in your ability to obtain (purchase, barter) items?
- Have you had to use savings to meet household expenses?
- Have you had to sell any assets to meet household expenses? Which assets?

TRANSPORTATION

- What types of transportation do you use to get to work, to markets, and to access services?
 - If you did not have this form of transportation, how would you get to work, market, school, health clinics?

SOCIAL SUPPORT

- How do members of the community act together to solve problems affecting the community? What community events or meetings do you participate in?
- Have there been any recent conflicts in this community?
 - What is the cause of these conflicts? How have they affected people?
- Are there conflict resolution mechanisms working to solve these problems?

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

- How do you access most health information (radio, television, health clinic, etc.)?
- How do you access most market information?
- For important messages, which media source do you find most reliable (e.g., newspapers, TV, radio, NGOs, government)?

MATRIX TO ORGANIZE COLLECTED INFORMATION

(A sample is provided on page 9 of this tool)

Collected Information	Livelihood Groups		
	#1	#2	#3
Recent Shocks			
Assets			
How does this group make or receive money?			
How does this group get food? How much food must they purchase?			
Seasonal variations to money, food, or illness?			
What does this group do to cope with scarcity or shock?			

SOURCES

- TANGO International. 2008. *Sustainable livelihoods manual*. Prepared for Heifer International Africa Area Program. Tucson, AZ: TANGO International.
- TANGO International. 2008. *IHD training manual*. Prepared for Catholic Relief Services. Tucson, AZ: TANGO International.
- TANGO International. 2007. *Monitoring and evaluation manual*. Prepared for ADRA International Food Security Department. Tucson, AZ: TANGO International.
- TANGO International. 2005. *Conceptual approach to food security assessments*. Prepared for ACDI/VOCA. Tucson, AZ: TANGO International.
- TANGO International. 2004. *Emergency food security assessment handbook*. Prepared for the U.N. World Food Programme. Rome: World Food Programme.
- TANGO International. 2004. *Development relief program guidance—part III, analytical framework, methods, and tools*. Prepared for the U.S. Agency for International Development, Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance, Office of Food for Peace. Tucson, AZ: TANGO International.
- TANGO International. 2002. *Household livelihood security assessments—A toolkit for practitioners*. Prepared for CARE USA, Partnership and Household Livelihood Security Unit. Tucson, AZ: TANGO International.
- The Sphere Project. 2004. *Humanitarian charter and minimum standards in disaster response*. Geneva: The Sphere Project.
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. 2007. *Global food security assessment guidelines*. Geneva.

