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Introduction

As global food, fuel and other commodity prices surged, the impact was greatest on the poorest. The World Bank estimates that the rising food prices may have increased total world poverty by 105 million people between 2005 and 2007 alone. The United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs has recently stated that to mitigate the impact of the global food and fuel crisis, an increasing amount of humanitarian assistance is required according to. However, this assistance needs to extend beyond traditional humanitarian boundaries, by encompassing nutrition, agricultural development, health and livelihoods, in addition to food aid.

In this thematic issue of the monthly eBulletin we look at the global food and fuel crisis, its causes and the consequences and explore solutions for poverty reduction and food security. We also include information for DFID livelihoods advisers on this year's retreat.

We continue to welcome your reports, comments, suggestions and letters on any related topics that you think will be of interest to readers. Please email irc@htspe.com or bernadette.hensen@htspe.com with submissions.

Papers

Food – or a lack of it – has been at the root of many of the great moments in human history. The French Revolution. The Peterloo massacre. The Irish famine. China's Great Leap Forward – which turned out to be a great leap to disaster in which millions starved to death.

This year – 2009 – presents us with another great moment in history: a moment to unite and protect the world's poorest from hunger.



So we start 2009 with food prices having stabilised slightly after the last 12 months which have seen us move from a food crisis to a fuel crisis to a financial crisis. The recent report from the [Food and Agriculture Organisation](#) showed the dramatic increase in food prices last year pushed another 40 million people deeper into poverty and hunger across the globe. Those affected rioted as basic commodities – like wheat – doubled in price. Over 30 countries started to restrict food exports. Such was the “silent tsunami” of the food price crisis.

The situation remains that 900 million in the world are still hungry and with population growth set to continue, the world must turn its attention to food security and agricultural development. In this context, the forthcoming [Food Security for All](#) conference in Madrid at the end of January sets the year off with an important message – there is the political will and collective commitment to tackling hunger and food vulnerability. This meeting will review the progress that has been made on the commitments made at the Rome [High Level Conference on World Food Security](#) in June last year. Most importantly the expectation is for this meeting to reach an agreement to take the Global Partnership for Agriculture and Food Security (GPAFS) forward.

The GPAFS is a means for developing countries, exporting and importing countries, donor countries, international institutions, private sector, NGOs and civil society to work together, with renewed commitment and mutual accountability, to achieve a comprehensive and coordinated international response to hunger in today's world.

If agreed, the GPAFS will work at two levels. First it will identify, draw attention to and agree action on global issues that will benefit from international policy coherence and coordination. Second, it will support countries to prepare high quality plans for tackling hunger and supporting agricultural development. Many of the international institutions and country level mechanisms needed for this already exist but what has been missing is the effective collaboration of all stakeholders to work together comprehensively and with renewed political energy.

The international landscape is changing in the wake of these crises. Our interdependence on each other for financial, fuel and most of all food security is becoming increasingly evident. Global attention on the livelihoods and food security of the poorest rural families must and will continue to be a development priority in 2009.

DFID Food Group
January 2009

Papers

[From food crisis to fair trade: livelihood analysis, protection and support in emergencies.](#) This document aims to collect and analyse recent experiences of livelihoods programming in emergencies providing guidance on livelihoods programming and summaries of recent thinking. Although the focus of the document is emergency livelihoods programming it also looks at developmental approaches to livelihoods. In emergencies, livelihoods programmes are generally aimed at protection, with many programmes saving and supporting lives simultaneously – emergency cash transfers provide support to meet immediate needs as well as supporting people to maintain or recover their assets. The document describes different livelihoods programmes and analyses when these are appropriate. The programmes are grouped around the Sphere minimum standards for disaster response in food security – income and employment support, market access and production support. Based on experiences of [OXFAM](#) during emergency responses, the document provides an insight into the practicalities of programme implementation for those agencies with limited experience in livelihoods and provides detailed case studies throughout the text.

[Rising food prices in developing countries: causes, consequences and solutions.](#) Based on contributions from [CIRAD](#) researchers specialising in food crop production and food security, this web-based information portal is updated regularly in accordance with the results of current analyses of the causes and effects of rising prices. The website looks at the causes of the food crisis in developing countries and the role that these have played in the current situation. Analysing the impact rising prices will have on food security and agriculture, CIRAD suggests some solutions and possible means of managing or finding a way out of the crisis.

[Rising food prices: implications for children and recommendations.](#) The [World Bank](#) estimates that the rising food prices may have increased total world poverty by 105 million people between 2005 and 2007 alone. In this paper [Save the Children](#) explores how price rises will affect children, providing a basic analysis of the causes of the price rises and proposing both immediate and long term solutions. The price of staple foods has been rising steadily since 2000 and a sharp rise in food prices was seen 12 months before the May 2008 publication date of this paper. According to the World Bank, global commodity prices have risen by 83% over the last three years. With food accounting for 80% of consumer spending in developing countries, such sharp rises in prices can have a significant impact on poor families. In 2007, Save the Children published research that determined how much it would cost families in a number of developing countries to buy a diet that meets their minimum nutritional requirements. Results showed that even prior to recent price rises poor families were generally unable to purchase different types of food necessary for a well-balanced, nutritious diet. With the food price rises, people will either be pushed to eat less or eat cheaper, less nutritious foods that lack the vitamins and minerals required to stay healthy and well nourished. For those whose diets already leave them malnourished, this could prove catastrophic. Malnourishment leaves children susceptible to infection and disease which impacts on their education, mental development and future ability to generate income. Increased food prices also has a knock on effects, for example, they may choose to take their children out of school to save on school fees and provide additional income. This not only affects their level of education but the options available for generating an additional income may prove dangerous, exploitive and unsustainable. The paper highlights that there is no single cause for the rises in food prices but a myriad of factors, including consumption patterns and broader economic and environmental changes. Some of these factors will ease in the short term while others will not. Steps need to be taken to mitigate the

immediate impact of rising food prices. However, investment also needs to be made into longer term strategies that will ensure families are able to afford healthy diets and build sustainable livelihoods to support themselves.

[Rethinking food security in humanitarian response](#). To help frame discussions at the Food Security Forum in Rome in April 2008, this paper was developed to act as a background document. Focusing on policy and institutional reform issues centred on the links between chronic and transitory crises, the paper is presented in three parts – the first provides an overview of trends and future challenges, while the second section considers the effectiveness of the “humanitarian system” in addressing food insecurity and whether the current institutional set up is appropriate. The third part of the paper looks at the links between “chronic” and “transitory” food insecurity and whether current approaches to prevention and response bridge the gap between these two forms of vulnerability. The paper concludes with a section that highlights key issues and raises questions on the gaps in the humanitarian system’s analytical capacity, programmatic practices, and more broadly in our knowledge of food security.

[Challenging Choices: Protection and livelihoods in Darfur](#). Undertaken as part of a programme review for the [Danish Refugee Council](#), this study, the latest from the [Humanitarian Policy Group](#) at the [ODI](#), explores the links between protection and livelihoods for the rural poor in West Darfur and illustrates the challenging choices people affected by conflict face in balancing risks to their lives and livelihoods. Research indicates that communities in the Zalingei region of Darfur have been provided with more options for subsistence and safety as a result of an increased availability of assistance in the region. The study concludes by emphasising the potential for more effective action to link livelihoods and protection.

News

[U.N. Tackles Rising Threat of Urban Hunger in Africa](#). Aid agencies accustomed to tackling food shortages in rural areas are finding themselves developing solutions for complex hunger problems being experienced in urban slums. [The United Nations World Food Program](#), the world’s largest food-aid agency, has extensive experience of trucking food aid across Africa to rural communities in response to food shortages caused by droughts, floods, famine and conflict. However, in urban areas where hunger wasn’t a significant issue until recently, despite widespread poverty, the obstacles are different. In crowded slums, it is challenging to determine who is most in need of support. In rural areas, aid groups rely on communities to identify those most in need. In urban areas, nuanced surveying is required. The WFP has now intensified its efforts to put together a program for African cities. In June 2008, a \$500 million grant from Saudi Arabia allowed the WFP to experiment with cash and voucher systems that would avoid upsetting the local economies of countries with high food prices. Similar programs have been tried before, but on a smaller scale and in rural areas. In addition, the WFP is in discussions with the Liberian government regarding a program that would provide cash in exchange for work in city-improvement projects, targeting unemployed young people. It is estimated that 100,000 young people are in need of support: initially this program will target 10,000 a month. This program and similar programs are a helpful step in responding to the urban food crisis.

[World Bank Unveils New Resource for Supporting Women in Agriculture](#). In October 2008, the [World Bank](#) launched the ***Gender in Agriculture Sourcebook***, the product of a three year collaboration with the UN [Food and Agriculture Organization](#) and the [International Fund for Agricultural Development](#). The Sourcebook addresses the development reality that continued under-investment in women and agriculture coupled with gender disparities in knowledge, technology and access to credit and land results in less food being grown, lower income being generated, increased levels of poverty and greater food insecurity. With evidence that women are most affected by the current food crisis, increased investment in women is imperative. According to Jacques Diouf, FAO Director General, the eradication of hunger and rural poverty cannot be achieved without equal opportunities for men and women and without economic empowerment. The Sourcebook draws on 30 detailed case studies, more than 300 projects sharing gender mainstreaming knowledge and best practices to provide knowledge for practitioners and recommendations for policy makers to increase analytical work on gender in agriculture programmes.

Events and Training

[Food Security Information for Action programme: Distance Learning Courses](#). The Distance Learning Component of the [EC-FAO Food Security for Information Action Programme](#) offers self-paced e-learning that has been developed by international experts to support capacity building and on-the-job Training. The courses are

targeted at mid-level managers, technical staff and field personnel who are involved in the collection, management and analysis and reporting of food security information. In addition the courses are suitable for planners, policy formulators and programme managers who are involved in monitoring progress in poverty reduction and meeting food security goals and targets. For more information regarding the courses and to view a sample lesson, visit the [website](#) and explore the session titled "What is Food Security?"

[Future Agricultures Consortium International Conference on Seasonality](#). The [Future Agricultures Consortium](#) together with the [Centre for Social Protection](#) is convening a 3-day conference on Seasonality to be held at IDS Sussex. The conference will be held from **Wednesday July 8th to Friday July 10th, 2009**. The focus of the conference is on the seasonality of food insecurity and policy responses in the areas of agriculture and social protection. The event aims to think through lessons from the past, examine current research, review good practice and consider policy options for the future. For further information on the conference or to find out how to submit a paper please click [here](#).

[Managing Sustainable Livelihoods for the poor: understanding and applying the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach \(SLA\): 23 - 26 February, 2009 Johannesburg, South Africa](#). [Khanya-aicdd](#) and the [University of the Free State's Center for Development Support \(CDS\)](#) will be hosting a 4 day accredited training course on how the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) can be used to achieve impact in improving people's livelihoods.

The course is targeted at practitioners, consultants and advisers from development agencies, and government departments who want to understand the SLA and how to apply it in their work.

[Agriculture at a crossroad: Implementing the findings of the international agriculture assessment – IAASTD, 30 October 2008](#). This UK Food Group meeting held at the Houses of Parliament on the 30th of October 2008 welcomed the participation of 100 people. The meeting deepened understanding about this important UN/World Bank-sponsored report from the [International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development](#) (IAASTD) and explored ways to implement its findings. Presentations, audio recordings and related papers from the meeting can be found on the website.

Campaigning and Research

[Concern Worldwide](#) focuses on five key programme areas: education, emergencies, health, HIV and AIDS and livelihoods. In addition to programming, Concern focuses on campaigning to raise awareness of pressing social and political issues, gather support and influence policy. As part of their campaigning, Concern launched Unheard Voices, which strives to ensure the voices of marginal farmers are heard. To find out more about Concern, the Unheard Voices campaign and other research, please click [here](#).

DFID Livelihoods Learning Workshop

Pathways out of Vulnerability

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

8-12 February, 2009

This year, instead of organising a Livelihoods Advisers Retreat in the UK, Regional Livelihoods Learning Workshops will be held. These retreats are only open to DFID staff. The workshops will focus on a priority policy area and aim to develop the professional skills of livelihoods advisers and other participants, through a detailed review of policies and operational experience, lesson learning and training. The workshop will seek to identify how to make programmes more effective and to communicate these lessons. It will also provide opportunities to learn from each other, and from key partners, by sharing examples of work that is of wider interest.

The first workshop will be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from February 8th-12th, 2009. This event will focus on how DFID and its partners can support poor and vulnerable households to find pathways out of vulnerability, reviewing experience from Ethiopia and also from other countries, including Kenya, Sudan and Bangladesh.

The aim is to focus on real problems and inspire new thinking and innovation.

Please see below two documents on social protection, which will be one of the areas focused on during the workshop:

[Guidance for Responses from the Human Development Sector to Rising Food and Fuel Prices](#). The Human Development Network and the World Bank have developed this paper which provides, in concise form, guidance on how the social safety net, nutrition, health and education sectors should respond to rising food prices. The paper highlights that rising food prices may have a negative impact on development by influencing four factors – poverty, nutrition, utilisation of health and education services and depletion of productive assets. Through ensuring positive policy response, governments can ameliorate the impacts of increased food and fuel prices. These positive responses include direct income transfers targeted to the poor, reinforcing basic health and nutrition services and maintaining high quality easily accessible education services. Guidance on programming for these responses are summarised in the report.

[For Protection and Promotion: The Design and Implementation of Effective Safety Nets](#). Published by the World Bank, For Protection and Promotion provides practical and informed guidance on the design and implementation of effective safety nets, including information on how defining eligibility and selecting beneficiaries, setting and paying benefits and programme monitoring and evaluation. It also aims to assist those involved in social protection to understand why social assistance is needed, what kind of safety programmes are appropriate and how to develop programmes to ensure maximum effectiveness. For an overview of the book click [here](#) or to order the book please visit the World Bank [Publications](#) page.

LRC: The Bigger Picture

The Livelihoods Resource Centre is managed by HTSPE in association with [IDS](#), [ODG](#) and [Coffey](#). The LRC provides services in two areas: **commissioned services** available to DFID Advisers and **core services**, including resources posted on the website and the monthly eBulletin.

The LRC at Palace Street:

From January 2009, the LRC will have a representative at Palace Street twice a week. [Matthew Roberts](#), LRC Manager, will be based in DFID every **Tuesday** and [Bernadette Hensen](#), Project Manager, will be based in DFID every **Thursday**. If you would like to meet with either Matthew or Bernadette to discuss core or commissioned services, please contact them via email.

We hope that you have found the content of previous eBulletins informative and useful and welcome your comments and suggestions for future editions. Please contact [Matthew Roberts](#) or [Bernadette Hensen](#) with your feedback and ideas for further reading and resources.

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