



Issue 12 - November 2008

Introduction

Welcome to the latest edition of the Livihoods Resource Centre eBulletin. This edition looks at the food price crisis and the impact of this on food security and sustainable agricultural development. In addition, there is information on various events, including the Sustainable Livihoods Seminar Series and the International Conference on Sustainable Development and Planning.

We continue to welcome your reports, comments, suggestions and letters on any livelihoods subject you think will be of interest to readers. Please email lrc@htspe.com with submissions.

Global Partnership for Agriculture and Food GREEN LIGHT



A Global Partnership for Agriculture and Food (GPAF) was set out by Douglas Alexander at the Rome Food Summit in June and this has been central to DFID's strategy for a comprehensive and coordinated international response to the global food price crisis, which has seen major social, economic and political difficulties in countries around the world this year.

While food prices have declined from their peak in mid-year, they remain high. Crisis in the global financial system and a prospective recession is going to particularly hurt the world's poor, reinforcing the need for tackling hunger and vulnerability.

The consequences of the spike in food prices over the last year woke the international community to the reality that food security and agricultural development have been neglected by many donors and their partner countries in the last decade. Lack of investment combined with poor sectoral policies have resulted in growing numbers of people, particularly women and children going hungry and highly vulnerable to food price rises.

A long-term solution requires coordinated action, with a wide range of stakeholders working closely together – the GPAF is designed to address this challenge. The GPAF will:

- Bring together donors, developing countries, international agencies, civil society and the private sector to drive a long-term response to the food price crisis;
- Use existing financing mechanisms and instruments, not set up another fund;
- Align international responses and actions behind key national and regional plans and policies;
- Help to take forward the UN Comprehensive Framework for Action

The much-talked about GPAF took a major step this month, at the first meeting of a G8 Expert Group on Global Food Security, held in Tokyo.

G8 partners reconfirmed their backing for the establishment of GPAF as the mechanism for an ambitious and sustained international effort to make more

progress in tackling global hunger. The meeting agreed on the key principles of how the GPAF will work and agreed next steps to engage others, working towards a launch as soon as possible.

Following last week's meeting in Tokyo it was agreed the High Level Taskforce formed by the UN Secretary General this year in response to the crisis should form the secretariat of GPAF. The secretariat is likely to be based in Rome alongside the specialised UN agriculture agencies (FAO, IFAD and WFP).

For more information on GPAF please contact [Richard Moberly](#).

Papers

[An untapped resource: how supporting older people with social protection will help achieve the MDGs](#). While East and South Asia have seen progress in reducing levels of poverty since 1991, little progress has been made in other developing regions. Since 2004, an additional 290 million people are believed to have fallen into chronic hunger and economic insecurity, in particular as a result of rising food prices. Those who are less able to escape chronic poverty and suffer most are children and older people. With 96 million people over the age of 60 living on less than \$1 a day, the number of people older people living in poverty will continue to increase as populations age. To reduce chronic poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals social protection mechanisms, including social cash transfers in the form of pensions or child benefits, are essential as not only are they effective poverty reduction mechanisms, they support pro-poor economic growth. This article looks at the intergenerational nature of poverty and the need to include social protection as a key policy in revised strategies for achieving the MDGs.

To support [Plan International's](#) programming and policy advocacy response [Understanding the Impact of Food Prices on Children](#) highlights the impact of rising food prices on poor families and in particular the possible impact of high food prices on children. Although child poverty is linked to household poverty, the distinct features of childhood poverty and vulnerability mean that children are affected in different ways by rising food price crisis, both at household and intra-household level. The paper highlights two major effects of higher food prices on developing countries – the direct effect of increased cost of local food products and the indirect effect of trade deficits leading to unemployment and lower government revenues that could lead to decreased public spending. The food price crisis has a number of potential implications on children's well being – negative as well as positive impacts as discussed in the paper – and policies aimed at alleviating household poverty should be combined with children-focused policies.

[Strengthening our Common Security by Investing in our Common Humanity](#). This document outlines the incoming US administration's foreign policy and highlights a five point strategy to promote development and democracy. Included in the list of priorities is doubling the American spend on aid and increased attention to climate change and agriculture. Recognising that agriculture, which provides a livelihood for the majority of the world's poorest communities, is a sector that will be hard hit by climate change the Obama administration will launch the Add Value to Agriculture Initiative (AVTA). With a commitment to promoting research and innovation aimed at bringing about a Green Revolution for Africa, the Obama administration will partner with land grant institutions, private philanthropies and businesses to support agricultural processing. In addition, to ensure success of poor farmers in the agricultural market, critical investments will be made in providing the package of required tools, including training in regulation and quality control standards, increased finance and financing instruments for rural enterprises in addition to market access.

[Platform Policy Brief No. 2: The Future of Smallholder Agriculture](#). In the early stages of development, small farms are more efficient than large farms as argued by the policy brief. Smallholder development promises increased equitability and supports corrections in gender imbalances. As shown by the green revolution in Asia, the potential of smallholder development can be realised. However, conditions have changed - with higher transaction costs and agricultural research biased towards large scale production proving to provide new challenges. Alongside these new challenges, farmers are also presented with opportunities namely with the higher price of staple foods. The brief presents three options for policies in support of smallholders: 'stepping up', 'stepping out' and 'hanging in' and argues that policy for smallholders is as much about facilitation, co-ordination and flexibility as it is about allocation of fund on public goods.

News

[Madagascar fishermen find ways to protect their livelihoods](#) For a fishing community on the southwest coast of Madagascar the octopus has long proven to be of significant economic importance. However, growing populations and increased commercial fishing are making the octopus harder to find for the fishermen of Andavadoaka, known as the Vezo people. The Vezo people used to catch just enough to provide for their families and barter with inland farmers, but since 2003 they have become part of an elaborate supply chain for trade within Europe. With families of up to seventeen children and an estimated 50% of the population aged 14 years or less, population growth is placing extra pressure on resources, leading to reduced populations of the octopus. To ensure conservation of the octopus, village leaders have taken innovative measures that have led to them winning the 2008 Getty Prize for conservation leadership, awarded by [The Wildlife Fund](#).

['Arid Aquaculture' Among Livelihoods Promoted To Relieve Worsening Pressure On World's Drylands](#) To mitigate the human causes of desertification, researchers with the United Nations University, the International Centre on Agricultural Research in Dryland Areas ([ICARDA](#)) and [UNESCO's](#) Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Program recommend that alternatives to traditional crop farming and livestock rearing need to be put in place in drylands. One of several options is 'arid aquaculture' – using ponds filled with salty water, undrinkable water for fish production. Establishing aquaculture in a dry and degraded part of Pakistan introduced a new source of income and also helped improved nutrition through diet diversification. The article highlights additional promising alternative livelihoods, drawing on examples from eight different countries.

[Rebuilding homes and livelihoods a priority after Chinese earthquake](#) Six months on, most survivors of the Chinese earthquake, which killed nearly 70,000 people, are still living in temporary shelters. With winter approaching, [ActionAid](#) is working with communities to help build sustainable homes in time for the cold weather. The article highlights progress towards building sustainable homes and disaster risk reduction work being undertaken by [ActionAid China](#) to ensure communities become more resilient and better prepared for the future.

Events

Sustainable Development 2009 [Fourth International Conference on Sustainable Development and Planning Cyprus, 13-15 May, 2009](#). Following the success of previous meetings, the International Conference on Sustainable Development and Planning will reconvene in 2009. At the conference the subjects of regional development will be addressed in an integrated manner as well as in agreement with the principles of sustainability. The conference would be of interest to planners, environmentalists, engineers, architects, ecologists, economists, policy makers and other governmental officials, researchers and academics involved in the field of sustainability. For additional information regarding topics covered, benefits of attending and details of abstract submission please visit the website.

Sustainable Livelihoods Seminar Series The [Livelihoods Network](#) is convening an [ESRC](#)-funded seminar series bringing together academics, policy-makers and practitioners to explore the lessons learnt from a decade of theoretical development and practical application of Sustainable Livelihoods Approaches (SLAs). The 1st seminar of the series, held at IDS on 13th October 2008, included key speakers from [IDS](#), [DFID](#), [Oxfam GB](#) and [Khanya-aicdd](#), and stimulated a lively debate on the future of livelihoods approaches to development. To participate in online discussions, read outputs from the seminar, and receive automatic email notifications of other events in the series, 'Become a Member' of the [Livelihoods Seminars Group](#).

The 4th Annual Livelihoods Network Workshop was held in East Sussex, UK, 13 -15 October 2008. A Community Space has been created, so if you missed this year's workshop, some notes from the workshop sessions and copies of the presentations and other resources are now available on the [Livelihoods Network Workshop blog](#). This blog has been developed to facilitate online discussions on the content and methodology of the workshop sessions, and provide easy access to information on the workshop logistics and outputs. To contribute to the existing discussions or start your own discussion thread or blog, login or 'Become a member'. Any problems, email livelihoods-connect@ids.ac.uk

Session topics included:

- Sustainable Livelihoods in humanitarian and recovery programmes ([FAO](#) and [British Red Cross](#)' experience)

- Peer Assist: Emergency Markets Assessment Toolkit ([Practical Action](#), [Oxfam](#) and [IRC](#))
- Markets & Livelihoods Group – a chance to input into the [Market Facilitation Initiative](#)
- Peer Assist: Development of a Contextual Analysis Toolkit ([Concern Worldwide](#))

The LRC: The Bigger Picture and Contacts

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 during the Christmas Period

Please note that the LRC will be closed from December 24th until January 5th, 2009. If you require urgent assistance during this period please contact [Matthew Roberts](#).

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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