

# Assessment of Coping Strategies as Food Insecurity Indicator among Farming households in Africa: Result of Analysis from Nigeria

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**WHAT DID WE DO**  
**WHY DID WE DO IT**  
**HOW DID WE DO IT**  
**WHAT DID WE GET**

# WHAT DID WE DO

## Study Objective:

Measure coping strategies as a food insecurity indicator

- i) Identify coping strategies that are employed by the households in times of food insufficiency
- ii) Measure food insecurity status of the households
- iii) Identify causes of food insecurity in the study area

# WHY DID WE DO IT

## Problem statement :

- Traditional income and poverty measures do not provide clear information about food Insecurity (Frankenberger and Coyle, 1993)

- Poor people balance competing needs for asset preservation, income generation, and present and future food supplies in complex ways and may go hungry up to a point to meet other objectives.

## Justification for the study

Food insecurity measure provides independent more specific information on the dimension of well being that can not be inferred from income data alone. (Andrews *et al.* 1998)

The process of identifying the food insecure as a target group and having a better understanding of determinants of food insecurity as a policy instrument is crucial for development planners

# HOW DID WE DO IT

- **Conceptual framework**
- *Definitions of food insecurity*
- “Food insecurity is the inability of a household or nation to meet target consumption levels in the face of fluctuating production, prices and incomes”. Reutlinger *et al.*, (1986),

■ Food insecurity refers to “Limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways” (USDA 2000).

■ Hunger is the uneasy or painful sensation caused by a lack of food, the recurrent and involuntary lack of access to food. (USDA 2000)

Coping strategies refer to fallback mechanisms to deal with a short-term food insufficiency (Davies, 1993).

Coping strategies imply that people somehow “get by” but in actual fact, they are an indication that things are getting worse.

## *Measuring Coping Strategies as a Food Insecurity Indicator*

- Coping strategies were identified and incorporated into “Food Security Scale” developed by 1995-CPS food security supplement (USDA 2000)

## *Food Security Scale:*

- This is a continuous linear scale, which measures the degree of severity of food insecurity/hunger experienced by a household in terms of single numerical value (ranging from 0 to 10)

*Four kinds of situation can be identified through the response to the questions:*

- i) Anxiety or perception that the household food budget or food supply is inadequate.
- ii) Perception that the food eaten by adults or children is inadequate in quality.
- iii) Instances of reduced food intake or consequences of reduced intake for adults.
- iv) Instances of reduced food intake or its consequences for children.

Table 2: Coding Survey Responses for the Food Security Scale  
Question No Question

Question No	Question	Negative Responses (Code =0)	Affirmative Responses (Code =1)
Q1	Worried food would run out	Never true	Often true
Q2	Food budget just didn't last	Never true	Sometime true Often true
Q3	Couldn't afford to eat balanced diet	Never true	Sometimes true Often true
Q4	Few kinds of low-cost food for children	Never true	Sometimes true Often true
Q5	Couldn't feed children a balanced meal	Never true	Sometimes true Often true
Q6	Children were not eating enough	Never true	Sometimes true Often true
Q7	Adult (s) cut or skipped meals 3+ weeks	Only 1 or 2 weeks skipped, no	Sometimes true Almost every week, some weeks but not every week
Q8	You ate less than you feel you should	No	Yes
Q9	You were hungry but didn't eat	No	Yes
Q10	You lost weight because there wasn't enough food	No	Yes
Q11	Adult(s) not eat for whole day	No	Yes
Q11a	Adult(s) not eat for whole day	Only 1 or 2 weeks, No	Almost every week, some weeks but not every week
Q12	Cut size of children's meals	No	Yes
Q13	Children ever skip meals	No	Yes
Q13a	Children skip meals, 3 + weeks	Only 1 or 2 weeks, No	Almost every week, some weeks but not every week
Q14	Children ever hungry	No	Yes
Q15	Children not eat for whole day	No	Yes

# Result

Table 3: Prevalence of food insecurity coping strategies

Coping Strategies	1x	2x	3-6x	Everyday	Never	Total
	/week %	/week %	/week %	%	%	%
Rely on less preferred and less expensive foods	9	29	26	9	27	100
Borrow food or money to buy food?	18	6	20	0	56	100
Purchase food on credit	9	20	13	0	58	100
Rely on help from relatives or friends outside household	20	9	11	0	60	100
Limit portions at meal times	13	11	23	4	49	100
Ration money to Household members to buy street foods	6	6	16	27	45	100
Limit intake to ensure that children get enough	7	16	9	13	55	100
Skip meals	13	18	18	4	47	100
Not eat for whole day	6	2	0	0	92	100
Children skip meals	0	4	2	0	94	100

Source: Computed from field survey, 2007

Table 4: Percentage of households by food insecurity raw score

Raw score (number of food insecurity questions affirmed)	Frequency	% of households	Cumulative % of households	Food insecurity status
0	26	8	8	Food secure (FS)
1	29	9	17	
2	29	9	26	
3	49	15	41	
4	61	19	60	
5	29	9	69	Food insecure without hunger (FIOH)
6	39	12	81	
7	36	11	92	
8	20	6	98	
9	7	2	100	Food insecure with hunger

(FIWH) Source: Computed from field survey, 2007

Table5: Household food insecurity risks frequency distribution

<u>Food insecurity risk</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Food shortages prior to harvest	189	58
Wastage due to inadequate storage facilities	172	53
Seasonal or unforeseen		
Unemployment	231	71
Exceptional increases in prices	179	55
Low production levels	179	55
<u>Lack of cash to buy food</u>	<u>211</u>	<u>65</u>

Source: Computed from field survey, 2007

Table 6: Other measures taken by households to ensure food availability

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Collect wild fruits	231	71
Sell livestock to buy food	159	49
Work in exchange food	46	14
Work in exchange for cash	182	56
Sale of assets	39	12
Eat seed retained for planting	98	30
<u>Short-term labour migration</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>9</u>

Source: Computed from field survey, 2007

# Conclusion

- Coping strategies reveal high level of food insecurity
- efforts should be made to protect vulnerable groups by investing in information generation and building capacity to design and implement food security and nutrition policies and programmes

Thank You