

Unit 1:

Finding out about food security



Introduction

When you look at the picture what do you see?

“Many problems remain unsolved because people look for solutions, and not for new ways of viewing problems.”

Some people see a young woman. Others see an old woman. Some see both an old and young woman. If you do not see the young or the old woman, here is a clue: the nose of the old woman is the chin of the young woman. We can look at the same object and see different things. Sometimes we need help to see how other people see situations and issues. Seeing things from another person's perspective helps you to better understand situations and experiences in your personal life and in your work with people in the community.

This well-known picture shows that people see things differently and that it can be enriching to see things from different perspectives. If we want to help address the issue of food security, we have to look at it from different viewpoints or perspectives. Frequently the way we see an issue or problem greatly affects our ability to resolve it. Sometimes we hang onto our initial impression or experience of a situation and are not open to seeing it differently. Then the problem remains a problem.

The first unit of this module introduces you to the meaning of food security. Here you will learn new ideas and words that are very important for your work as a household food security facilitator. At the end of the unit you will start with your practical work. You are expected to arrange a meeting with your employer organization or an organization in the community that you want to work with to negotiate terms of reference. The terms of reference should specify that the organization gives you permission and its support to participate in the programme, attend contact sessions and carry out practical activities with households in the community. Through this activity you make yourself visible to your employer or a community organization as a household food security (HFS) facilitator in training.



Figure 1.3 Looking from different perspectives
(Adapted from Swendsen and Wijetillek, 1988)



Unit 1 sections

- 1.1 What do we mean by food security and insecurity?
- 1.2 Introducing the food security model
- 1.3 The human right to food
- 1.4 Consultation with an employer or chosen organization in the community

Take Action



This section gives you detailed information about the portfolio activities that are linked to Module 1. They focus on the actions with households and are the main assessment activities.

Learning outcomes

The information in this table is like a good road map for your learning journey. It gives you a clear idea of what you are expected to **know** and **do** at the end of Unit 1. The workbook, portfolio and assignments are all **assessment** activities that are linked to the **learning outcomes**. By completing these activities you can show what level of knowledge and skill you have achieved.

The time estimate for doing the activities helps you to manage your study time. Some of you will take longer while others may need less time. You can keep a check on how long the activities actually take by filling in the time you spent in the table below.

Learning outcomes	Assessment Activities	Actual time spent
	Workbook activities	
1. Explain the difference between food security and food insecurity.	1.2 My ideas about food security and food insecurity (20 minutes)	
2. Interpret the food security model and identify each of its components.	1.4 What factors affect food security? (30 minutes)	
3. Describe how the right to food can be promoted?	1.6 How can stakeholders at every level promote the right to food? (45 minutes)	
	Portfolio activities	
4. Provide evidence of Consent and Terms of Reference from a reputable organization to participate in the HFS programme.	Portfolio Activity 1.1 Consultation with employer or chosen organization in the community (5 hours) Log entries Keep a record on the portfolio sheets provided of the activities you were involved in when organizing a consultation meeting with your chosen organization (45 minutes)	



	Assignment tasks	
5. Assignment 1	You can find information on this assignment in Tutorial Letter 101 (3 hours)	

Key words

An important goal of this programme is introduce you to the concepts and words in the food security field. To assist you we present a list of key words that are introduced in each unit. The meanings of these words appear in a glossary at the end of the module.

		
food security food availability food access food utilization food stability	food insecurity natural environment socio-cultural environment household	micro level meso level exo level macro level right to food



1.1 What do we mean by food security and insecurity?

Food security means different things to different people. What does it mean to you?



Activity 1.1: Do this activity in your study guide

How do I see food security and food insecurity?

Read these statements and tick those that affect your life or the lives of people in your community.

Being able to get the food I need: I must...

- be able to get to a place where I can buy or grow food
- not have to worry about whether I have enough to eat
- be able to prepare and cook food
- not be ashamed to go to the soup kitchen or food bank when I need to
- not be ashamed of myself and my children if we are hungry



“...people can afford to grow [food], people can't afford to buy...”

Being able to eat safe and healthy foods, I....

- should be able to afford healthy food
- need access to safe food that I know is good for me
- must be able to give my children the food that I know they need to grow and be healthy
- have to know where my food came from and what is in it
- need access to information so that I can understand how pesticides, preservatives, additives and genetically modified foods can affect my health.



“But, I do suffer nutritionally and I can see it sometimes in my eyes and my face gets sucked in cause I don't have enough fruit and stuff. Because you want to give it to your kids.”

Being able to get enough food: I...

- must be aware that people can earn a living wage by growing, producing, processing, handling, selling, or serving food
- must be able to afford the foods that I want to eat
- can share food with my family and friends
- can celebrate my culture or community with food
- can enjoy the foods of my culture



“If I want to buy good food it is expensive. I need to fill my kid's belly and have to buy food to fill them, not healthy food.”

Having enough food and water for everyone: we need to...

- ensure that growing, producing, processing, storing, and selling food doesn't hurt our environment or our communities
- space, land, water and soil for farms and gardens
- ensure that food can be produced for our children's children
- be aware that our water needs to be clean enough for us to drink and for fish to survive in.





Comments on Activity 1.1

These statements have made you aware of the different issues related to food security. Were you surprised at how many things affect you and the households you will be working with? Understanding food security is about getting a good overall picture of all the elements and factors that determine whether someone is food secure or insecure. As you work through this unit and the other units in the module, this will become clearer to you.

1.1.1 An explanation of food security and insecurity

FOOD SECURITY

Food security means being able to get all the healthy food with enough nutrients you need, and to enjoy it with friends and family. Food security includes being able to make a living by growing, harvesting and processing food in ways that protect and support the land, sea and the people who produce food. This will ensure that there is healthy food for our children's children.

FOOD INSECURITY

Food insecurity means not being able to get enough food or enough healthy food you need, like and enjoy. It means wondering where your food is coming from or worrying about where your next meal will come from. It means wondering whether there will be less food in the future because of the ways we are growing and producing food at present.

Food security is closely linked to the ability of a household to have ongoing access to food. The food security and food insecurity status of households can change when their livelihood circumstances change, for example when the main breadwinner loses his job, or there is a drought, or the price of food increases. Factors such as these influence the household's incoming resources they need to sustain each member. Most households have times when they have access to enough food, when they have just enough food, when they have little food and when they have very little food or sometimes no food at all. You can show these variable food security experiences on a continuum. A continuum is like a scale with two end points: the highest or best on one end and the lowest or worst on the other end. Between these two main points there is a range of good and poor experiences as illustrated in this diagram.





High food security	Marginal food security	Low food security	Very low food security	Food insecurity
Consistently able to access an adequate quantity of quality food. There is a variety in the diet and the food is nutritious.	Some problems getting food but usually able to get an adequate quantity of food. The quality and variety of the diet is not severely reduced.	At times during the year the food intake is reduced. The variety of the diet and the quality of food is reduced at such times.	At regular times during the year the food intake is reduced. The variety in the diet and quality of food is substantially reduced.	Constantly worried and anxious about adequate food. Most of the time cannot afford to have a regular diet of varied and nutritious food.

Figure 1.4 Food security and food insecurity continuum

1.1.2 What is the difference between food security and insecurity?

We can summarize the difference between food security and food insecurity as follows.

Food security	Food insecurity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> occurs when everyone can afford to purchase and is able to access nutritious and safe food that they enjoy eating means everyone can access food in a way that does not compromise human dignity means food is grown and accessed in ways that are environmentally sound and socially just means you can feel confident about the food you are eating and that you will have enough is about sharing and celebrating your food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> means you cannot access foods that you enjoy and that are needed for you and your family to be healthy is not having sufficient and safe food for future generations is feeling stressed about whether you have enough food or where your next meal is coming from is worrying about the safety of your food and about what is in it <p>(IFRC & RCS, 2006)</p>

Food security is the goal we are working towards. In your work with households in the community you will discover that some households are more food secure than others. You will also come across households who are food secure at times but not all the time.

Before continuing, stop and write down how you understand food security and food insecurity.





Workbook Activity 1.2: Do this activity in your workbook

My ideas about food security and food insecurity

Your first workbook activity is writing a short paragraph in which you use your own words to describe what you mean by food security and food insecurity. Writing your ideas about what you are learning as you work with people in the community helps you make sense of your experiences. Getting your own ideas sorted out in your mind prepares you to share your ideas with others in the group sessions. The discussions during group sessions can be more stimulating and rewarding if everyone is well prepared and willing to share their ideas and experiences.



Comments on Activity 1.2

People usually describe food security in positive terms, such as:

- *being able to get the food I need*
- *being able to eat safe and healthy food*
- *being able to get food that I like and want to eat*
- *protecting the water, the land and the people who grow and produce food.*

Food insecure people mostly describe their situation in negative terms, such as being ashamed, embarrassed, no control, or helpless. In Hawaii a study was carried out to find ways of measuring food security or food insecurity and hunger. Included in the study was an investigation of how people experienced being food insecure. The study found that the most common views on food insecurity were:

- *the shame and feelings of incompetence and vulnerability of not being able to feed the family or the children;*
- *not knowing where the next meal is coming from; and*
- *how long until the next meal.*

We encourage you to talk about food security to anyone who will listen. Talking about food security is a good way to get others in your community thinking about these issues. Thinking about food security is the first step in doing something about it.

You will build on your understanding of food security and food insecurity as you progress in this unit and the module.



1.2 Introducing the food security model

Food security for all people around the world remains a huge challenge. For years world leaders have been struggling to find solutions to hunger and food security.

1.2.1 How has the concept of food security developed?

The concept of food security has evolved (developed) over time. This brief historical summary shows how the ideas around food security have developed.

The issue of food security was highlighted by the world food crisis experienced in 1972-74. The food crisis was caused by reduced grain supplies that caused adverse (negative) conditions in several parts of the world. The need for grain caused its price to double on the international market and this threatened the food security status of many food-importing countries. As a result the first World Food Conference was held in 1974 and focused on global (worldwide) food production, trade and supplies.

The original food security debate paid close attention to the adequate supply of food as well as ensuring the stability of food supplies by means of food reserves. This is still the situation today. At national level, countries are concerned about the stability of food supplies, as well as their ability to export to or import from other countries.

Figure 1.5 shows the global focus of food security since the 1970's

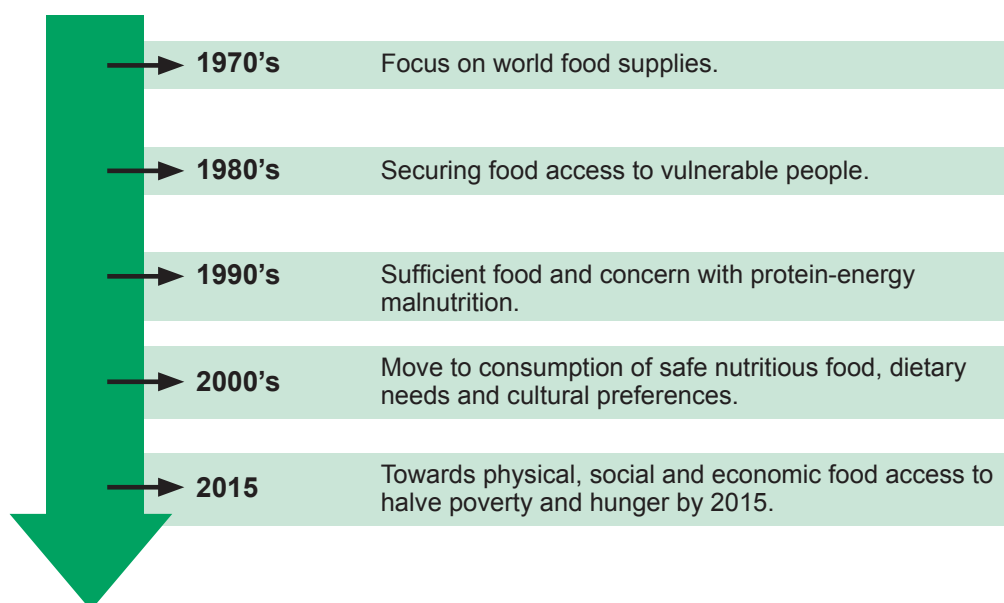


Figure 1.5 Development of the definition of food security over time (FAO)

There are several definitions for *food security*. They have been changing over the years, often focusing on the household and individual. Although the wording is different the meaning of all definitions of *food security* is essentially the same. The definition that has been formally endorsed on a global level is the one developed at the 1996 World Food Summit held in Rome.



Definitions of food security

1. All people at all times have both physical and economic access to the basic food they need (FAO Committee on World Food, 1983).
2. Access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life (World Bank).
3. When all people at all times have access to sufficient food to meet their dietary needs for a productive and healthy life (USAID Bureau for Africa, 1986).
4. **Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life** (World Food Summit definition of Food Security, 1996).
5. A person, household or community, region or nation is food secure when all members at all times have physical and economic access to buy, produce, obtain or consume sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (IFRC & RCS, 2008).

We can use the definitions of food security to develop a food security model. Experts in a specific field such as food security, often use models to help explain what they observe in real life. The food security model shows the big picture of what is involved and this helps us to find ways of approaching food security.

1.2.2 Interpreting a food security model

A critical skill for a household food security facilitator is to see the big picture in order to understand the issues that affect households in real life. Look for Figure 1.9 in the study guide and take a few moments to look at the diagram of the food security model. It may seem quite complex and overwhelming to you now. We will build up the model step by step so that you gain a good understanding of all the parts and how they fit together.

STEP 1: Identify the four main dimensions of food security

From the food security definition we can identify the main aspects usually called **dimensions**. They form the backbone of the food security model and are shown here graphically. These dimensions refer to: food access, food availability, food utilization and food stability.



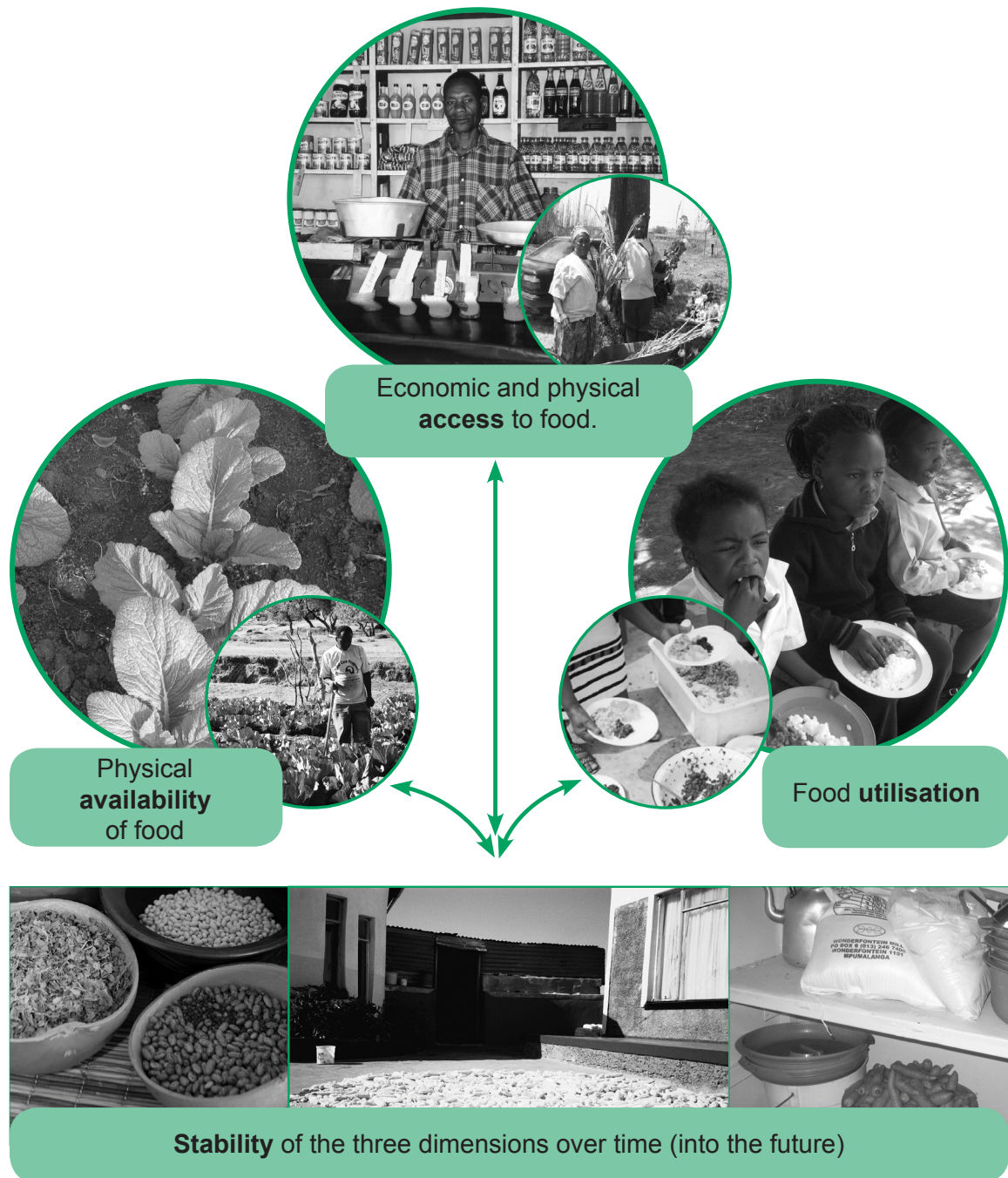


Figure 1.6 The four dimensions of food security



Activity 1.3: Do this activity in your study guide

Interpret the definition of food security

This activity encourages you to stop and think about what you are reading. Look at the definitions of food security in the previous section and find the phrases that answer the questions in column 1. Discuss the questions with members of your group and together find the correct phrases from the food security definitions. Then write the correct phrases in the middle column of this table.



Questions	Phrases from the food security definitions to answer the questions	Dimensions of food security
1. How much food?		Availability
2. How do we get hold of food?		Accessibility
3. What kind of food?		Utilization
4. Who should get food and when?		Stability



Comments on Activity 1.3

Did you manage to find the correct phrases from the food security definitions? Compare them with these.

1. **Access to enough food for a healthy and active life.** The food must not only be available but enough must be available for each person to have a healthy and active life.
2. **Physical and economic access to buy, grow or produce food.** This answers the question of accessibility. Households must have the necessary money or natural resources to obtain food.
3. **Safe and nutritious food.** Food utilization has to do with ensuring that food is safe and meets the dietary needs of each member of the household.
4. **All people at all times.** When all members of the household have adequate food at all times there is food stability.

The summary in the table shows that the four dimensions in food security are based on the food security definitions.



STEP 2: Explain the four dimensions of the food security model

You have some idea of the meaning of the four dimensions. Now find out in more detail what each one means.

Food availability in a country, region or local area means that food is physically present because it has been grown, manufactured, imported and/or transported there. National and international food availability in itself does not ensure food availability at the household level. Food at the household level is available if it is produced on the local farms, on the land or in household gardens, can be purchased at local shops, or because it arrives as food aid. This is food that is visible and available in the area.

Food access is the way different people can obtain the available food through a combination of household production, supplies, purchases, barter, gifts, borrowing, food parcels or grants. Access depends on income available to the household, on the distribution of income within the household and on the price of food. It also depends on the market and the social and institutional rights to which individuals have access. Food access is ensured when communities, households and all individuals within them, have adequate resources. For example, households need money to buy seeds for household production or to obtain the appropriate foods for consumption as part of a nutritious diet.



Food utilization is the way people use the food. It is dependent on the quality of the food, its preparation and storage methods, the nutritional knowledge of the households, as well as the health practices applied. These include nutrition, childcare, sanitation, and the cultural practices that impact on the food consumption of a nutritionally adequate diet by household members. Certain diseases negatively affect the absorption of nutrients, and growth requires the increased intake of nutrients.

The **stability** dimension of food security is evident in the phrase all people at all times, which is explained below.

All people can refer to the varying degrees to which people are food secure and will be differently affected by adverse events such as changes in the economy, unemployment, rising food and/or fuel prices, adverse weather conditions such as droughts, floods and conflict and war. We have to assess variations in food security status between different groups. Most commonly humanitarian and development agencies differentiate between the groups of people according to their main livelihood (source of food and income) in addition to other factors such as geographical location and wealth.

All times recognizes that people's food security situation may change. Even if the food intake of people is adequate today, they may still be considered food insecure if they have inadequate access to food on a periodic basis. Adverse weather conditions, droughts and floods, or economic factors such as unemployment or rising food prices may impact on people's food security status.



For a household to attain stability in food security, the members of the household must strive to reduce the risk of adverse geographical and economic effects on food availability, access to food and food utilization. Managing these three dimensions has an impact on the level of stability in food security.

STEP 3: Explore people's concerns relating to food insecurity

Before we examine the levels of the food security model you need to understand the reasons why people are concerned about food insecurity. In this way we can see how food insecurity impacts at the different levels of action in society. We care and are concerned because food insecurity impacts negatively on the socio-cultural environment and on the natural environment.

What is the *socio-cultural* environment?

The socio-cultural environment is made up of ourselves, our children and families, our communities, our society, our cultural heritage, the economic and political structures, the leaders and decision makers.

What is the *natural* environment?

The natural environment provides our natural resources such as soil, water, air and biodiversity, including wild plants and animals.

These two environments include all aspects of our concern about food security namely:

- children and families
- communities
- health
- transport and infrastructure
- economy
- natural environment
- socio-cultural environment



THE EFFECTS OF FOOD INSECURITY

Food insecurity is not only a burden but has severe consequences for members of households. That is why people are so concerned about food security.

We are concerned because of our children and families

Food insecurity can be very stressful. We can be anxious about having enough food for our children and other members of the family as well as being able to give them nutritious food. This kind of stress can be bad for our relationships and health. Feeling stressed and insecure can lead to depression, anger, diabetes, and high blood pressure. It can also make it harder for us to fight off infections like colds and flu.

We are right to be concerned about these issues. Poor nutrition in childhood can affect the development of both the body and the mind. Poor nutrition in childhood has effects that last a lifetime. These problems in the household are very close to us and mostly need our actions to solve them. Not having enough good food can make it harder for children to do well at school and even to stay in school. The household level of action is referred to as the ***micro level***.



We are concerned because of our communities

There is much truth in the proverb that you need “a village to educate children”. The household and community members are linked and have a strong influence on each other. Social groups and social networks act as support mechanisms in the community. A healthy community is one in which all members have access to a safe, culturally acceptable and nutritionally adequate diet. They can get nutritious food through a sustainable local food system that maximizes self-reliance and social justice.

Food insecurity, inequality, poverty and unemployment have a negative effect on communities and can even lead to community breakdown. The disintegration of social structures at the community or *meso level* of action can, in turn, lead to increased crime when people turn to stealing or dealing in drugs. In a healthy community, people care for each other, have good leaders and live in harmony because they are food secure. Good leaders should have sound relationships with stakeholders and local government structures to influence the allocation of resources. Local government is seen as the *exo level* of action.

We are concerned because of our health

The level of food security largely affects our health. We recognize that food insecurity has a major impact on our health and the health of our children, family and the people in the community. The level of personal health and coping skills, community infrastructure, the economy, social networks and political structures are important factors that impact on food insecurity and therefore on health.

We are concerned because of our transport and infrastructure

In South Africa there is a rural and urban divide. Most big businesses are concentrated in large cities and towns. In smaller towns and villages there are smaller businesses whose prices are usually higher as they are influenced by the availability of goods and services and the costs of transport. People travel or migrate over long distances for employment. They also travel for shopping and for general business. Those who cannot afford to travel must buy from local stores or from vendors. This is not always regarded as the best option but it saves on transport costs.

The provision of infrastructure such as roads, transport, housing and electricity is also available to a lesser degree in rural areas and delivery of services is often inadequate. This influences the access to and storage of food. The availability of transport and infrastructure improves food production towards commercialization. Commercial farming is about large-scale production of goods and this could increase profit from sales.

We are concerned because of our economy

Food security has a huge influence on the performance of individuals and communities. Students who are food secure can concentrate and learn better. Increased performance leads to improved competence and ultimately equips people to contribute to the economy. In the workplace workers that are food secure are able to be more attentive and increase their productivity. All of this contributes to economic growth and the creation of more job opportunities for the unemployed. Thus a food secure and healthy nation can create the conditions for further economic growth.



Agricultural land is a valuable resource that is available but currently underutilized in many poor communities. It can be used to improve livelihoods and food security. Optimizing the use of agricultural land can also contribute to economic growth and a better environment for all. South Africa has two agricultural economies, commercial and small emerging. A third economy, smallholding or subsistence agriculture is sometimes added to the other two categories.

We are concerned because of our natural environment

Our natural environment is our biggest asset that can sustain us if we look after it. The way in which some people produce and process food can be harmful to the natural environment. In places with high levels of food insecurity people often engage in the unsustainable harvesting of natural resources and use poor land practices in order to survive. Poor agricultural and land use practices can lead to:

- soil erosion
- water and air pollution
- the loss of natural vegetation
- a decrease in numbers of wild animal species
- fish stocks being depleted.
- land available for growing food being over utilized.
- the traditional food sources of many cultures being destroyed.



To ensure sustainable food security, we need planning and policies that protect our land, water and other natural resources. You will find out more about this in Module 3.

We are concerned because of our socio-cultural environment

The word environment refers not only to the natural environment but also to the social and cultural (socio-cultural) environment, which is made up of different components. The socio-cultural environment includes all aspects that concern us as humans to be healthy and make a sustainable living. If we do not care about our socio-cultural environment it can be destructive to:

- our children and families and their health
- our communities, social, and religious organizations
- our cultural heritage, language, celebrations and traditional food systems
- our local economy, our safety and our properties, and
- our economy, infrastructure, livelihoods and our ability to make a living.

(Adapted from NSNC/AHPRC Food Security Projects, 2005)



You will learn more about the socio-cultural environment in Module 6.

Here is a case study that shows the complex nature of factors that affect food security at different levels. As you read this story note the factors related to health that are the basic and underlying causes affecting Thandi's food security status. Read the case study first and then answer the questions in your workbook.





Thandi's Story

(Case study adapted from NSNC/AHPRC Food Security Projects, 2005)

Thandi's friend had to take her to the hospital because she passed out at work this morning.

Why did she pass out?

Because she has been skipping meals.

FACTORS: personal health practices and coping skills.

But why does she skip meals?

Because she doesn't have much food in her house or she is too tired to cook at night.

FACTORS: social and physical infrastructure.

But why doesn't she get more food to eat?

Because she only has R30 left until her next salary and she cannot get to the spaza shop, which is far from her house. Sometimes she collects food at the soup kitchen at the local church.

FACTORS: economy (income which affects her social status), infrastructure and social support.

But why is the grocery shop so far away?

There used to be a spaza shop nearby but it closed down a few months ago, after a big supermarket opened a distance from her home. But it is too far for her to walk to the supermarket. The vendors are expensive and sell mainly potatoes and cabbages.

FACTORS: physical infrastructure, economy and availability of a few starchy and fibrous foods that provide little variety.

But why doesn't she have more money for food or transportation?

Because she is a single parent and only works part-time.

FACTORS: employment, gender roles.

But why doesn't she work longer hours?

Because she can't find affordable childcare for the whole day. Her mother lives too far away and her pension is too small.

FACTORS: social support and grants, employment conditions.

But why doesn't she have a family member or friend to help her out with childcare?

Because she hasn't lived in the city for very long and doesn't know many people and her family all live in a smaller rural community.

FACTORS: social support networks, rural-urban migration.



But why did she move to the city?

Because there are not many jobs in her home community and the business where she worked closed down. She thought there would be electricity and water in the city, but she can only afford a shack.

FACTORS: social support, employment conditions, economy, infrastructure/local government services.

But why did the local business where she worked close down?

Because there is a global and national recession and food, energy and fuel prices are high. Large companies struggle to make a profit and often close down their branches.

FACTORS: Economic policies, high prices and smaller profit, companies and industries close down.



Thandi's story is one that is familiar to many people who are food insecure. Her situation shows that the issues we are concerned about in food security all interact with each other and cannot be seen as separate concerns.



Workbook Activity 1.4: Do this activity in your workbook

What factors affect food security?

Read Thandi's Story again and show that you understand the factors that affect food security. A household food security facilitator has to build and strengthen skills to observe the situation on the ground and record and interpret information accurately. By engaging critically with the case study you can practice these crucial skills.



Comments on Activity 1.4

*This activity encouraged you to engage critically with a case study and to identify what is currently happening to affect Thandi's food security status at the household or **micro level**, at the community or **meso level**, at the local government or **exo level** and at the national government or **macro level**. You will learn more about these four levels of action in the next section.*



Compare the table you completed in your workbook with Table 1.1

Action levels	Dimensions			
	Availability	Access	Utilisation	Stability
Micro level	Thandi does not grow crops for food	Distance from shop to home. No food in house. Small income – only R30 left. Works part-time. Single parent.	Skipping meals. Too tired to cook at night. Little choice of food sources locally, only starch and fibrous foods	End of the month – monthly insecurity.
Meso level	Spaza shop closed. Vendors few and expensive.	Family is far away in rural community. Her mother lives too far away. No jobs in local community, far away.	Childcare for whole day not affordable. Soup kitchen – meal from local church	Few social networks. Does not know many people. Friend takes her to hospital.
Exo level	Supermarket is far away. Too far to walk. Vendors buy only potatoes and cabbage from commercial farms.	No money for transport. Large businesses closed down or moved. Thandi taken to hospital.	Stays in shack. No clean water or electricity	Lack of employment and services.
Macro level	Agricultural and Marketing policies. Poor economy.	Social policy. Old age pension inadequate.	Health policies. Water and sanitation policies.	Alignment of policies.
Natural and socio-cultural environment				

Table 1.1 The dimensions and levels of action that influence food security status

This table shows that:

- the factors affecting the food security of Thandi and her household are interrelated;
- that the resources are controlled at varying distances from Thandi and members of her household and groups outside her household;
- there are different levels of action needed to improve the food security status of households.

The actions that Thandi and her household can take to improve their food security take place at the *micro level*.

The issues and projects that can be resolved and initiated by community leaders and their structures take place at the *meso level*.



The programmes and initiatives to provide the services needed are based on policies that have to be implemented by local and provincial government leaders and officials. These actions take place at the *exo level*.

The issues linked to the policies and strategies of government for which our political leaders and government officials are responsible are dealt with at the *macro level*.

HOW FOOD INSECURITY CAN BE ADDRESSED AT DIFFERENT LEVELS

The details of actions at different levels in Figure 1.7 below build on what you have done in Activity 1.4. Look closely at the table. It starts with the macro level on the top row and has information about the micro level on the bottom row. This table is a helpful summary of the actions that can be taken at each level with regard to the four food security dimensions.

MACRO level	Agricultural policies and incentive schemes	Marketing and transport policies	Health policies	Food and agricultural policies	Natural and socio cultural environment	
	Food import and export policies	Policies related to social support systems e.g. grants, food banks, school nutrition	Water and sanitation policies	Strategic food reserves and stockpiling		
	Strategic food reserves and storage					
EXO level	Regional markets and transport systems	Marketing and transport infrastructure development and maintenance	Health services and programs	Food and agricultural support programs	Natural and socio cultural environment	
	Agricultural projects and programs	Economic development programs	Water and sanitation services and programs	Strategic food reserves and stockpiling		
MESO level	Local markets	Local markets	Management and control of water and sanitation systems	Community food preservation and storage programs		Natural and socio cultural environment
	Food production at community level	Job and income generation opportunities	Community nutrition, health and sanitation education programs	Community natural resource education and protection programs		
MICRO level	Transport systems	Social systems of exchange e.g. bartering, charity etc.			Natural and socio cultural environment	
MICRO level	Food production	Food production	Food preparation and nutrition practices	Food preservation and storage practices		Natural and socio cultural environment
		Income from employment or business activities	Food preservation and storage practices	Food production stability strategies (sustainable increased production; reduced seasonality)		
			Distribution of food within households			
	Food Availability	Food Access	Food Utilisation	Food Stability		
FOOD SECURITY						

Figure 1.7 Levels of action and the four dimensions of food security





The household at the micro level

A household can be described as a group of people, whether they are related or not, who share resources, sit around one fireplace and eat from one pot. The household environment can also be referred to as a homestead. The head and members of the household can control certain decisions about the resources in this micro-environment. Look at possible actions that households take at the micro level shown in Figure 1.7.

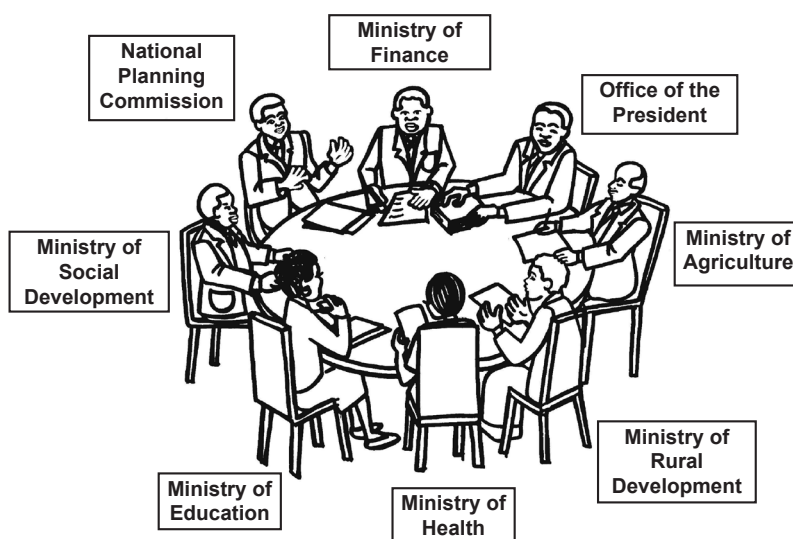
The community at the meso level

The community can be associated with a geo-graphical location or area (natural environment and people who share the same resources and interact with each other to promote their well-being and development. The groups on the meso level may be linked to the church, schools, farmer and women's groups, social committees and support networks (socio-cultural environment). Education takes place on this level. Households can work together and take actions to improve food security of households in the community. Look at possible actions that can take place on the meso level shown in Figure 1.7.

The local government and stakeholders at the exo level

Local government provides services such as health clinics, schools, water and sanitation, markets, roads and transport, and energy such as electricity or coal. The local government (municipalities) and districts of provinces implement services through structures and programmes and make decisions to control resources. Thandi and other households in the communities living in municipal areas should be able to receive adequate services. People vote for local government and in this way they can have some influence on policy but they have very little control over the policies and plans that are implemented at the exo level. Look at possible actions that can take place on the exo level shown in Figure 1.7.

National government structures at the macro level



National government makes decisions about issues such as political, economic, social and welfare, the physical environment and education for the country as a whole. We trust those who represent the political structures to make decisions, policies and strategic plans on our behalf. Decisions, policies and strategic plans are made on the macro level. This is the level that Thandi and other people in communities vote for in a general election.



Ordinary people can voice their opinions about government policies but they have little control over what happens in reality. Look at possible actions that can take place on the macro level shown in Figure 1.7.

Are you starting to see how the actions carried out by people at the different levels are interrelated? The table below helps to capture concisely the types of actions, the structures and the people responsible for the actions, also referred to as stakeholders. Did you know that the word stakeholder literally means someone who holds a stake or has a claim of land or mining area? Today the word is commonly used for anyone who is directly or indirectly linked to and affected by the success of a project, initiative or plan.

Levels of action	Actions	Structures	Stakeholders
Micro level	Household	Household decisions and action	Household members and family
Meso level	Project	Community development projects, education and training	Community leaders and groups / Community-based -organizations (CBOs)
Exo level	Programme	Provincial and local government: Implementation of programmes	Local government officials and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs)
Macro level	Policy	National government	Politicians and government officials

Table 1.2 Actions, structures and stakeholders linked to levels of action

Have you noticed that different terms are used to describe the actions by the household, the community, the local government and national government?

Figure 1.8 shows the interrelationship between the household decisions and actions, community projects, local government programmes and national policies.



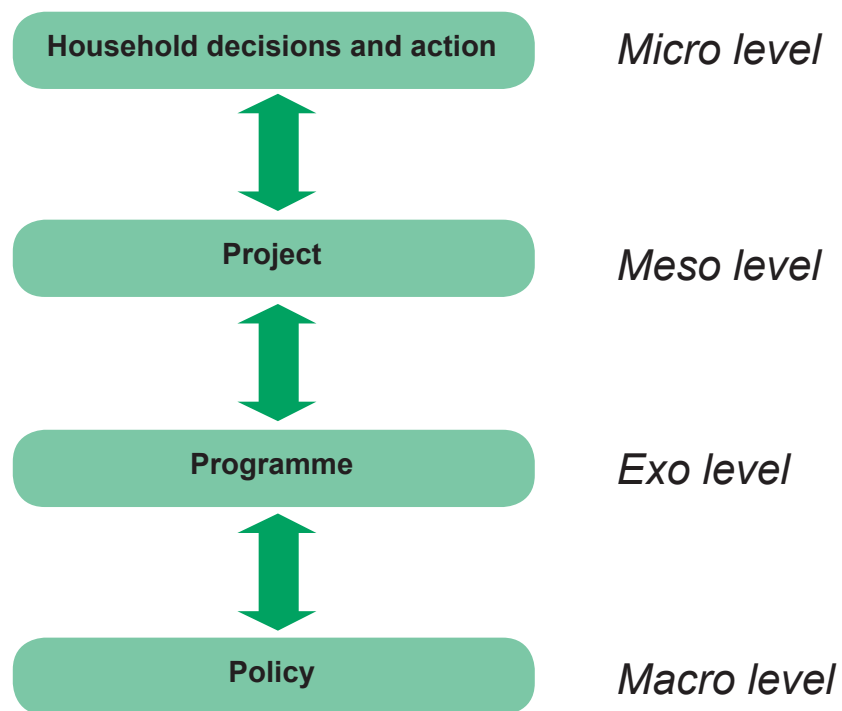


Figure 1.8 The flow and linkage of actions between different levels

This marks the end of Step 3. The aim was to introduce you to the four levels of the food security model. Do you have a clear idea of what is meant by the micro, meso, exo and macro levels? Can you identify the actions that are possible at each level? Do you realize that the actions are all interrelated?

STEP 4: Identify the building blocks of each level of action of our food security model

In the previous three steps you were introduced to the building blocks or parts of the model. In this step all the parts you learned about come together. What does our food security model look like at this stage?



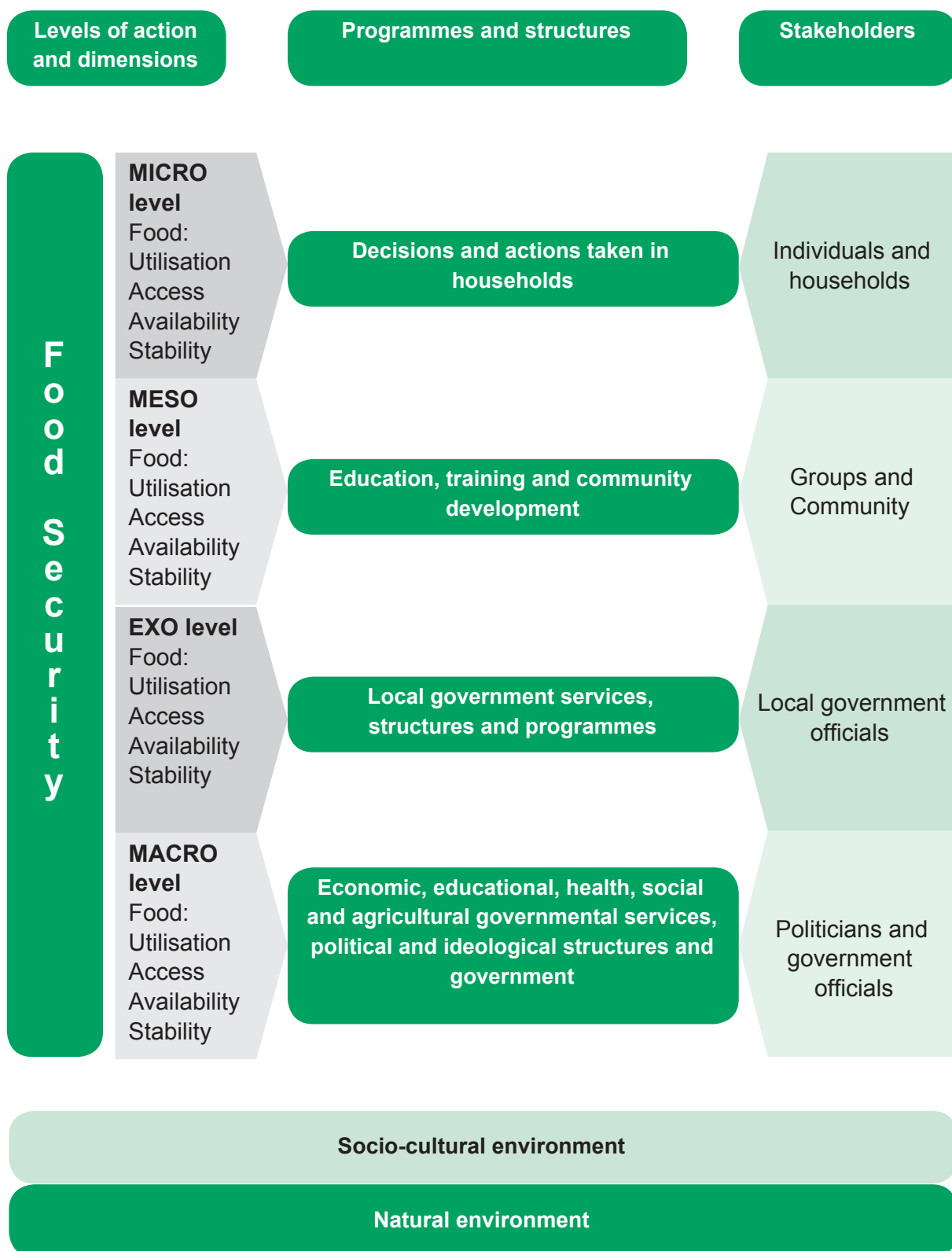


Figure 1.9 The programmes, structures and stakeholders on each level of action

The food security model is a valuable tool to use for working with the households. You will learn more about the model in Units 2 and 3. Stop and check how well you understand some of the key ideas and terms of the food security model.





Activity 1.5: Do this activity in your study guide

Test your understanding of the dimensions and levels of the food security model

Here are 5 multiple-choice questions. One of the statements does not fit. Read all the statements and tick the one that does not fit.

Food access has to do with:

- growing your own food
- the way people use food
- the ability of a household to earn an income
- buying food from local shops

Food utilization means:

- the ability of the household to produce its own food
- the ways in which a household prepares and stores food
- understanding what foods are nutritious
- giving children the food they need to grow strong and healthy

Stability in food security for households is influenced by:

- initiatives in the community for people to make crafts
- the global economic downturn
- a community cooperative that sells basic food items
- members of the household enjoying a celebration meal

Actions at the meso level include:

- food production activities by a group of households
- water and sanitation services
- nutritious food at the school for school children
- bus and taxi transport services

The services households should expect from structures at the exo level are:

- ambulances to take sick people to the hospital
- agriculture field workers who give support to smallholder farmers
- school nutrition programme policy
- vaccination of children at health clinics



Comments on Activity 1.5

Access to food has to do with the different ways in which people get available food. The statement that does not fit is: the way people use food.



Food utilization is about the way people use food and includes preparation and storage methods as well as knowledge about nutrition and health practices. The statement that does not fit is: the ability of the household to produce its own food.

Stability in food security highlights the importance of having access to food on an ongoing basis. The threats to food stability can come from local, national and global conditions such as climate and weather, the economy and social practices. The statement that does not fit is: members of the household enjoying a celebration meal.

The meso level refers to community actions. The statement that does not fit is: water and sanitation services as these are provided by local government at the exo level.

The actions and services provided by local government structures or municipalities include agricultural projects, water, sanitation, and health services. The statement that does not fit is: school nutrition programme policy. This policy is developed by national government at the macro level and provincial education departments develop nutrition programmes that are implemented at local schools.

Learning the language of food security is an important skill for a household food security facilitator. It enables you to engage with the issues, read current articles, and become involved in local discussions with others who work in the field of food security. A well-informed facilitator is able to see clearly what support households need to help themselves.



1.3 The human right to food

Does Thandi have a right to food? Do you? We hear people talking about the right to food and especially the right of children to food. Is it not the role of government to make sure every person has access to food?

1.3.1 The right to food in the South African Constitution

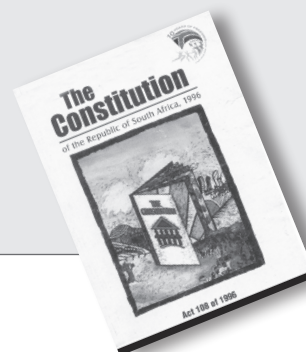
The right to food is written into the South African Constitution. Our Constitution is based on the Declaration on the Right to Food by the United Nations (RSA, 1996). This international undertaking demands that governments be accountable, in the governance of people, to the rights of the people. What are the human rights of every person in South Africa?

The South African Government undertook in its Constitution to safeguard the human rights of its citizens. The Constitution is the most important act of the country and is intended to guide policies and decision-making. Chapter 8 of the Constitution sets out the Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights includes the following economic and social rights: the right to a basic education, the right to access social security, the right to health services, the right to water, the right to housing, the right to a healthy environment and the right to adequate food. Human rights and the right to food cannot be separated from each other. The economic and social right to food is not the responsibility of one single government department but rather is an interdepartmental issue. The right to food is embedded in the human rights of each person.

The Constitution includes three references to the right to food.

References from the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996

- Section 27** (1) Everyone has the right to have access to:
- (a) **health care services**, including reproductive health care;
 - (b) **sufficient food and water**; and
 - (c) social security, including, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependants, appropriate **social assistance**.
- Section 28** (1) Every child has the right to-
- (a) a name and a nationality from birth;
 - (b) **family care or parental care**, or to appropriate **alternative care** when removed from the family environment;
 - (c) to **basic nutrition, shelter, basic health care services and social services**;
- Section 35** (2) Persons in detention have the right to:
- (e) conditions of detention that are consistent with **human dignity**, including at least exercise and the provision, at state expense, of adequate accommodation, **nutrition**, reading material and **medical treatment**.



THE MEANING OF A RIGHTS BASED APPROACH TO FOOD SECURITY

A rights-based approach to food requires that food is accessible to all. Even those who are most food insecure should be identified and then plans or programmes must be put in place to address their inability to access adequate food.

The role of government

A constitutional court case referred to as Grootboom (FAO 2004a) ruled that the government is accountable for creating an environment for each person to access his or her rights. This means that the government has a role to play in respecting each person's right to food.

Empowering stakeholders to play an active role in food security

A rights-based approach promotes individuals, households, communities and other stakeholders to share obligations and responsibilities related to the right to food. Poor and food-insecure individuals in the society must participate and be empowered to take action. More and more people are becoming aware of their own responsibility to be food secure. The capacity of all stakeholders must be built and strengthened to achieve food security for all.

Integration of actions on all levels

The most successful food security interventions make use of actions on all four levels. Programmes on the micro level can have successful results if people in the community and those working at the local and district levels work together with the households. Well-organized social mobilization initiatives require an adequate number of community mobilizers and volunteers who are trained for the task.

1.3.2 Promoting the right to food at the four levels of action

You have a right to food just like everyone else in South Africa. What are you doing to be food secure? Do you earn an income to provide food for yourself and your family? Is the food you eat nutritious? Does it help you to stay healthy? These questions do not only apply to you as a person but also to you as a household food security facilitator. You started this programme because you are interested in working with households to support and enable them to find ways of becoming and staying food secure. From Thandi's story you have seen what happens to people when they are food insecure. The list of actions on the micro and meso levels have shown you what individuals can do for themselves and what people can do by working together in their communities.





Workbook Activity 1.6: Do this activity in your workbook

How can the right to food be supported at every level of action?

Think of Thandi's story and the right to food as specified in the Constitution. Discuss in your groups how the right to food can be promoted at each level of action. Write down practical ideas of what you think can be done to improve the chances of households and communities to be food secure. As you progress it will be interesting to look at the ideas you had at the start of the programme.



Comments on Activity 1.6

In this activity you were asked to make the link with the case study you examined, the right to food as specified in the constitution and the actions that can be taken at the four levels to promote food security. Has this activity helped you to get a clearer understanding that actions need to be taken at each level to improve food security for all people? Do you realize that you cannot have rights without responsibilities? It is true that government has to fulfill its obligation to create policies and implement suitable programmes, projects and services that make it possible for people everywhere to gain access to quality and nutritious food at all times. It is also true that is the responsibility of individuals and households to do what they can to improve their food security. When all the stakeholders at each level act responsibly it increases the likelihood that the human right to food is supported and promoted.



1.4 Consultation with an employer or chosen organization in the community

Many of you are already working as community facilitators and understand how important it is to enter the community you aim to work in through identified leaders and leading organizations. Throughout the programme you will learn how to work with households by using tried and tested community development methods. An important first task is to identify an organization in the community that you will work with for the duration of the HFS programme. It may be your employer or another organization of your choice. Your first portfolio activity requires that you set up a meeting with the organization to introduce yourself and negotiate terms of reference.

1.4.1 What terms of reference must you negotiate?

As you may know Terms of Reference (or ToR's) are commonly used to describe a negotiated set of conditions for working together, that are agreed upon by partners involved in a specific project or programme to achieve a common goal. The ToR's set out the actions and responsibilities for each partner. This is to ensure that there is a clear understanding about what each partner has to contribute.

What kind of Terms of Reference do you have to negotiate with your chosen organization? You will have to meet with an appointed person in the organization to confirm that you are registered for the Programme in Household Food Security. You can introduce the programme to this person and give a short description of what it aims to achieve and how it does so. It might be helpful for you to explain why you are particularly interested in participating in the programme. You will inform the organization representative that your participation in the programme requires that you spend time studying, attending regular group sessions, and carrying out practical activities with selected households in the community. As the programme requires intensive time input you probably have to negotiate using working time to do the main activities with the households. The organization may be agreeable to this idea as they may realize that your work with households can support their own community development interventions.

This is also an ideal opportunity to ask for help from the organization to get permission from appointed leaders in the community to work with households as a household food security facilitator.

1.4.2 Keeping a log

Planning a consultation meeting with a representative of your employer or chosen organization is the first entry in your log. A log is like a journal in which you can write your reflections on actions and ideas and insights you have gained. You can also use your log to plan activities. This is very useful as you can keep track of what is working and what not, and where you must make changes to your plan.

Throughout the programme you are expected to record reflections on key activities in your log. Pages will be provided for this purpose in the portfolio of evidence sheets. Get into the habit of regularly writing down your ideas and reflections as a household food security facilitator. The log can contribute 5% to your total marks. Not only are you learning good practice but you are also rewarded for it.





Portfolio Activity 1.1: Do this activity in your portfolio sheets

Consultation with employer or chosen organization in the community

In this activity you have to consult with your employer or chosen organization to obtain Consent and Terms of Reference to guide your participation in the HFS programme. You have to make an appointment for a meeting with a representative, write a letter of invitation, set an agenda, write the minutes, and sign a Consent and Terms of Reference with your employer or organization. (Find details in the **Take Action** Section).

Good planning is essential for Portfolio Activity 1.1, as you have to do a number of tasks. You can keep a record of what you do to organize the consultation meeting and reflect on how you progress. The Log Activity is a planning and reflection activity linked to your first portfolio activity.



Log

Keep a record in your log of the activities you planned or carried to organize a consultation meeting with your employer or chosen organization

This is your first set of entries in your log. You will find the log section in your portfolio evidence sheet for Portfolio Activity 1.1. You are encouraged to keep a record of your planning and monitoring activities to organize a consultation meeting with a representative of your employer or chosen organization. A reflective log helps you to develop a critical approach to working in the community and you will learn what works and what not.





Concluding Comments

In this first Unit you were introduced to some key ideas about food security. Do you realize how important it is to gain a good understanding of these issues? What you are learning in Modules 1 and 2 provides the foundation for your work with the households.

The levels of most intense participation in food security issues are the micro and meso levels. These are the areas in which people come together in groups and learn through facilitation and from each other to find solutions to their food security problems. As a household food security facilitator you will work with households in the community. You will learn more about your facilitation role and how you can empower individuals and households in Module 2. Individuals, households and communities who are empowered can initiate changes on the micro or meso levels.

It is not always possible to communicate with stakeholders in national and local government structures even though it is vitally important to do so. People operating on the macro level should have the capacity to design well-informed policies and programmes. People working at the exo level must have the capacity to roll out the programmes in local communities and provide the necessary services. The people or stakeholders from the different structures who have to implement programmes and who control the resources can be contacted through local and community leaders by using the correct channels. This will be discussed at length in Unit 3.

Unit 2 introduces you to nutrition and sustainable livelihoods. Having access to nutritious food for healthy living is closely linked to a person's ability to have enough income resources. There are many ways of generating income and this is part of a vital concept called sustainable livelihoods.



