Guidelines for
Joint Planning for Nutrition, Food Security and Livelihoods

Agreeing on causes of malnutrition
for joint action

FAO Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division (AGN)

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INTRODUCTION

These guidelines for Joint Planning for Nutrition, Food Security and Livelihoods are designed to assist **professionals involved in emergency and development programmes** who seek to promote integrated planning across sectors for sustainable improvements in nutrition.

The guidelines present a workshop methodology that uses a Problem-Solution Tree approach for:

- **sensitization and training** on nutrition, food security and livelihoods
- **strategic planning** for integrated nutrition programmes
- **designing** nutrition and food security **information and surveillance systems**
- **developing partnerships** for improving nutrition, food security and livelihoods

The methodology provides a powerful way to **strengthen participants' motivation** to engage in joint action for nutrition. The exercise helps to "demystify" nutrition as participants realize that the work they do already contributes to improving nutrition and that the impact of their work can be increased through appropriate linkages and by filling identified gaps.

The workshops provide an opportunity for participants to **learn from each other** and to **identify resource persons and initiatives** that will be instrumental in translating plans into action. The group dynamics that emerge during the workshop can cement working relations for joint interventions.

This type of workshop is called "training-cum-planning" because participants learn about nutrition, food security and livelihoods concepts at the same time as they engage in planning.

The Problem-Solution Tree methodology for integrating nutritional concerns into forestry programmes and projects was developed and tested at a workshop in Thiès, Senegal, in July 1996. The workshop brought together officers from the central, regional and provincial levels of the Senegal Forestry Department and experts from other disciplines (health, sociology, communications, food technology).

The groups identified and prioritized the causes of malnutrition in their zone. From this analysis each group drew up a "problem tree", which was then turned into a "solutions tree". In this way it was possible to clarify and prioritize aims and activities with a view to improving the food and nutrition situation in the zone. This methodology enabled participants to pinpoint concrete interventions that they had not thought of before.

Once the participants had drawn up a strategic framework for improving the food and nutrition situation, they were able to specify first what they could do, and then who could or should do the rest. They also realized the need for an effective coordination framework.

Why joint planning for nutrition, food security and livelihoods

Many different factors shape the nutrition situation of households and individuals nutrition. Food availability and access, health and education have a major impact on nutrition, but social and gender relations, environmental conditions, infrastructure, the local economy and the political situation also affect people's nutrition. These factors interact in unique ways depending on the context and livelihoods of households.

Because the factors affecting nutrition are multiple and diverse, interventions that address malnutrition need to be **multi-sectoral** and **integrated.** This entails **joint action. Common understanding of local causes of malnutrition** is the foundation for sound planning and effective partnerships.

There have been a great many initiatives related to nutrition, food security and livelihoods and a wealth of experiences in the field. But all too often, linkages between interventions and stakeholders are limited and, as a result, the individual and collective impact of programmes on nutrition remains weak. Experience shows that a coordinated approach results in a stronger impact.

There is a need to **strengthen the capacity** of professionals working in development and emergencies **to work together** on nutrition, food security and livelihoods. The workshop methodology presented in these guidelines has been developed in response to this need.

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Scaling up Nutrition (SUN)

Good nutrition is crucial to reach the health, education and economic goals contained in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Good health, cognitive development and productivity cannot be achieved without good nutrition. Nutrition improvement programmes, therefore, have a key role to play in efforts to reach the MDGs and fight poverty. It protects and promotes health; reduces mortality, especially among mothers and children; and encourages and enables children to attend and benefit from school. Comprehensive, mutually supportive policies and interventions on nutrition are required to meet the MDGs.

Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) is a multi-stakeholder global effort that aims to reduce hunger and under-nutrition and contribute to the realization of all the MDGs. Investments in Scaling-up Nutrition will yield immediate returns. They will save lives, enable children - and their mothers – to have a better future, contribute to livelihoods, reduce poverty and contribute to the economic growth of nations.

More than 100 entities from national governments, the United Nations system, civil society organizations, development agencies, academia, philanthropic bodies and the private sector have endorsed a Framework for Action to Scale-Up Nutrition (SUN Framework), released in April 2010. They are committed to supporting its implementation in ways that respond to the needs of people within countries affected by under-nutrition.

The effort to Scale Up Nutrition encourages a better focus on nutrition within development programmes, and stresses that the right investments will save lives, improve economic prospects of countries and increase the prosperity, well-being and potential of all their citizens. A SUN Road Map identifies investments that have been shown to work if implemented within the context of nutrition-focused development policies. This will require multi-stakeholder platforms and joint efforts and a shared responsibility for results.

How to use these guidelines

The guidelines present a workshop methodology that is:

- a flexible tool that can be used to achieve different objectives, depending on the context and local needs;
- adaptable to different audiences and different time frames; and
- based on the elaboration of problem and solution trees

What are problem and solution trees?
Building problem and solution trees is a powerful visualization technique for consensus building and participatory problem solving.

Participants identify the causes of a problem and organize them according to cause-effect relationships.

On the basis of the "problem tree", participants identify solutions by constructing a "solution tree" that constitutes a reverse image of the problem tree.

Problem and solution trees are relatively simple to use, easy to adapt to different needs and situations; they allow for effective participation of people from different technical and socio-cultural backgrounds and are an effective way of synthesizing a wealth of information and experience. Examples of Problem and Solution Trees are given in Annex 1.

The Guidelines are divided into several parts:

Part 1 guides you in:
- **clarifying the objectives** you wish to achieve by organizing and running a workshop;
- **deciding the level** at which to organize it (e.g. regional, national, sub-national); and
- **determining the time** you will need.

Part one also provides examples of how the methodology has been used in a diversity of contexts.

Part 2 provides **step-by-step guidance on how to organize a "training-cum-planning" workshop**, designed to facilitate strategic planning for integrated nutrition programmes at a decentralized level (province or district). Detailed advice is given on how to prepare for the workshop, run it and organize follow-up.

Part 3 explains **how the workshop methodology can be adapted** to suit different objectives, levels of intervention (regional, national, sub-national) and time frames.

I. CLARIFYING THE WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

What am I trying to achieve?

The workshops can be designed and facilitated so as to achieve one or several of the objectives listed below, keeping in mind that participants usually include development and/or emergency professionals working in a diversity of sectors (agriculture, health, rural development, education, social affairs, women's affairs) that contribute to protecting and promoting good nutrition.

Objectives related to sensitization and training

- To develop a better understanding of the local food and nutrition situation and understand the main causes of malnutrition and how this is related to people's livelihoods.
- To clarify basic nutrition, food security and livelihoods concepts and relate them to the local situation.

> **Rwanda**
> In 1997, WFP asked FAO to train their staff and counterpart institutions in Rwanda in food security and nutrition. Other UN agencies, government staff from health, agriculture and education as well as key NGOs also participated. Participants pooled knowledge and information and revisited their activities and programmes. This training was key in evidencing the major impact of HIV/AIDS on people's food security and nutrition and led FAO to initiate normative work in that area.

- To sensitize professionals from various sectors and institutions on their role in improving nutrition and on how to integrate nutrition in their projects.
- To strengthen the capacity of local institutions in nutrition programming.

> **Afghanistan**
> In May 2002, FAO, in collaboration with other UN agencies, organized a first workshop in Kabul to raise awareness of key actors on food security and nutrition challenges in the country and generate a better understanding of what could be done. This workshop, which brought together men and women from different sectoral backgrounds, was successful in initiating a dialogue and setting the basis for future collaboration. Similar workshops were organized at provincial level (Bamiyan, Herat, Jalalabad, Kandahar) in the following years as a step for awareness raising and joint capacity building of local institutions. The methodology was also used with different Ministry of Agriculture departments to help staff identify how to design agriculture-related strategies that can address undernutrition. The workshops led to the identification of two principal strategies. The first focused on promoting home-based food production, including food processing for winter consumption. The second focused on marketing and developing market access to sell produce and access food and other basic items.

Objectives related to joint planning and coordination

- To identify ways of working together for alleviating malnutrition in a selected area and lay the foundation for the development of a regional, national, provincial or district level strategy for improving food security, nutrition and livelihoods.
- To lay the foundations for effective inter-agency and multi-sectoral collaboration for improving food security, nutrition and livelihoods.

> **Afghanistan, 2008**. The methodology was used to facilitate the design of a Joint United Nations programme on Children, Food Security and Nutrition (funded through the Spanish MDG Trust Fund) involving the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Agriculture, FAO, UNICEF, WHO, WFP and UNIDO. It allowed the identification of joint actions to be implemented in an integrated manner at the national level and at the community level.

Design of nutrition and food security surveillance systems

- To identify indicators to monitor the food and nutrition situation and data collection methods, and to lay the foundations for a comprehensive analysis.

> **Burundi**
> Within a FAO technical cooperation project to assist the Ministry of Agriculture in setting up a Food Security and Nutrition Information system (June 1998), a two-day food security and nutrition workshop was organized in Kinshasa to set the basis for a provincial information system. Participants from different institutional backgrounds identified the most food insecure, agreed on a typology of the most food insecure households, built a causality model of malnutrition for each group, identified for each cause an appropriate indicator and discussed pragmatic arrangements for collecting, analysing and disseminating the information to inform appropriate decision-making at provincial and national levels.
>
> **Congo DRC**
> A similar approach was adopted in Burundi, at the request of and with financial support from UNICEF/Burundi. FAO assisted in setting up an inter-agency workshop on Nutrition and Household Food Security in October 1998, where government staff and NGOs identified specific indicators for the main food insecure groups and agreed on the requirements and modalities for provincial local food security and nutrition information systems. One of the outcomes of the workshop was the creation of linkages between nationals and international NGO staff.

In most instances, one workshop can fulfil several objectives. Training is usually an inherent component since participants learn about basic concepts of nutrition, food security and livelihoods as they are engaged in planning or designing a surveillance system. This is why these workshops are sometimes referred to as "**training-cum-planning**" workshops.

Regardless of the chosen objectives, the workshop will **strengthen relations** between participants and **establish bridges** across sectors and institutions.

> **In Guatemala** (May 1995) a two-day municipal training-cum-planning workshop on food security and nutrition was organized in Peten. It brought together representatives from governments and NGOs in a post-conflict climate. This was the first time these institutions were brought together following the civil war in which they associated with the different sides. The workshop gave participants an opportunity to identify complementarities and potential partnerships and helped establish dialogue between the Government and NGOs, and between nationals and internationals.

At what level should I hold the workshop?

The workshop methodology can be used at the regional, national, provincial, district and even community level. It is therefore important to define the geographical area to be covered by the planning exercise. This will be determined by the objectives you wish to achieve and the target audience.

Part 2 of these guidelines provides detailed guidance on how to organize a workshop at the **provincial or district level**, as a tool for decentralized planning and alliance building. But the methodology can also be adapted to other levels of action. Part 3 gives advice and examples of how it can be adapted for use at the regional and national levels as well as community-level.

How much time do I need?

The time needed to conduct a workshop will depend on the objectives you wish to achieve, the level and type of experience participants have and the time that is actually available. While a workshop can last up to five days (e.g. in the context of training), it is rare for programme managers and planners to be available for more than two days. Part 2 of these guidelines provides an example of how a workshop can be organized in **two full days.** This is the minimum time required for a thorough planning process. However, an experienced facilitator can adapt the methodology to shorter time frames and use certain shortcuts if circumstances make it difficult to mobilize participants for two full days. Guidance on how to adapt the methodology to different time frames is provided in Part 3.

II. ORGANIZING A TRAINING-CUM-PLANNING WORKSHOP

Preparing for the workshop

Given the variety of tasks required to prepare the workshop adequately, it is advisable to arrange a preliminary visit to the area where the workshop will be conducted, preferably 2 to 3 weeks before the workshop. A locally-based colleague or partner can also supervise all the preparations in the run-up to the event.

Selecting participants

The success of the methodology will ultimately depend on the selection of participants. It is important to involve **professionals from a wide range of sectors and organizations**, with strong commitment and involvement in decision-making and programme management. Participants should also have strong field experience and a good understanding of the local reality (such as monitoring staff, extension workers, community mobilizers).

Representatives of local government working in agriculture, rural development, water management, public health, education, women's affairs, youth affairs and other relevant fields should be invited to the workshop, as should representatives of national and international NGOs and UN agencies active in the area.

Depending on the context and workshop objectives, it could also be appropriate and beneficial to invite community members, such as community leaders, teachers or health workers. The gender balance among participants should be respected, as far as local circumstances permit.

It is important that the workshop setting enables all participants to feel comfortable so they can express themselves freely. The venue should be easily accessible and not too intimidating for participants. Discussions should be held in the main language(s) spoken by participants and/or appropriate translation services must be available.

It is important that efforts be made to ensure that *all institutions implementing or supporting community-level projects and programmes* (development or emergencies) are represented, in order to:
  • identify and capitalize on existing resources, experience and information;
  • provide the basis for an inter-institutional planning and implementation mechanism; and
  • ensure inter-disciplinarity during implementation at the local level.

Local coordination offices that maintain databases of local stakeholders can be of assistance in preparing the participants' list. If you use contact lists provided by local coordination offices, remember to provide these offices with feedback if necessary (outdated contacts, incorrect emails, new stakeholders, etc).

The ideal number of participants is between twenty and thirty. Having too few people limits the wealth of experience and perspectives that can be shared. Having too many makes it difficult for each individual to participate actively and to facilitate joint discussions.

Try to ensure that participants are staff members with decision-making and planning responsibilities and programme managers so that they will be in a position to provide feedback to their organizations after the workshop and make sure that agreed decisions are followed-up.

Informing and inviting participants

It is important to inform local government officials about the workshop with sufficient advance notice and to involve them as much as possible in the preparation. These officials should include your organization's main counterparts as well as the provincial or district governor or deputy governor. He or she can play an essential role in emphasizing that nutrition is a concern for *all* development partners and convening all the relevant participants. It is also advisable to invite the governor or main government representative in the area to open the workshop. If this cannot be done, the governor can be replaced by another relevant high-ranking official, preferably from the governor's office or a department of planning with cross-sectoral functions.

In order to enlist the support of other officials, it can be useful to meet them personally and provide them with a written summary in the local language of what the workshop is about.

It is also important to meet representatives of the various organizations that are invited so as to:

- present the workshop objectives;
- listen to any suggestions they may have regarding the agenda, participants and workshop process; and
- ensure that appropriate persons represent the organization during the workshop (e.g. decision-makers, personnel with strong field experience).

After these meetings, an invitation letter should be sent out, presenting the background of the workshop, its objectives, the name and/or profile of participants, the venue, time and date.

Invitations should ideally be sent out from the governor's office and/or be sent out as joint invitations (between the governor's office, a lead government department and your organization, for example).

Selecting the venue

The venue should include a plenary room large enough to accommodate all participants (ideally from 25 to 30 persons), as well as two alternative spaces for working groups composed of 6 to 8 persons. Electricity is not indispensable, but one wall (at least) and protection from wind and rain are indispensable.

Given the multi-sectoral dimension of the workshop, it is advisable that the venue be in a local coordination office, such as the governor's office, or another neutral venue (such as a hotel conference room). Alternatively, the venue can be located in a relevant line ministry or UN office. The choice of venue should be discussed with the local officials.

Preparing supplies

Required supplies are**:**

- ✓ 6 sheets of brown wrapping paper (2m x 1.50 m) or 10-12 large flipchart sheets
- ✓ 3 rolls of white masking tape
- ✓ triangular-tipped paper markers (one per participant)
- ✓ bristol cards preferably of two colours (one for the problem trees, one for the solution trees). These can be cut on order by most stationary shops - an A4 bristol sheet can be divided into three. Plan approximately 5 cards of each colour per participant.
- ✓ a flip chart stand

Check if supplies are available locally. If not, they will have to be brought from the nearest city for the workshop. Wrapping paper can usually be found at the market, while flipchart paper, masking tape, bristol cards and markers can usually be found in stationary stores.

Meals: Plan refreshments and meals according to the local customs (e.g. morning and afternoon tea or coffee, and lunch).

Mobilizing and training facilitators

The workshop should be facilitated by a lead facilitator with experience of nutrition and food security issues who is familiar with the problem/solution tree methodology and has good facilitation skills.

In addition, three group facilitators need to be identified before the workshop and trained during a simulation exercise by the workshop facilitator. It is advisable that the group facilitators have technical expertise related to nutrition and food security and are in a position to keep a neutral role. Should the workshop be held in two languages (e.g. English and local language), the group facilitators should be bilingual in order to allow the different participants to interact in the language that they feel most familiar with, while limiting the need for translation and keeping the process fluid.

During the workshop, the lead facilitator will move from group to group to support each one as needed and make sure all groups are on track.

Communication around the event

Local press and TV should also be contacted because they generally give good coverage to workshops and other local activities. Publicizing the event adequately can also contribute to strengthening political commitment for the workshop conclusions and building interest for nutrition among the local population. In order to effectively communicate about and during the event, it is important to prepare clear and coherent messages that are adapted to the media that you use and the target audience.

Running a training-cum-planning workshop

The workshop agenda combines plenary sessions with group work. The workshop sessions described below can be held over two days or more. *An example of a workshop agenda is presented in Annex 1.*

The plenary sessions provide an opportunity for participants to get to know each other and to share local competencies and experience. They are also an opportunity for providing locally relevant information to participants, especially since they come from a variety of institutional and technical backgrounds. The workshop facilitators can insert the necessary theoretical training inputs on nutrition, food security and livelihoods, when appropriate, throughout the participatory problem-solving process, making extensive use of visualization techniques to encourage participation.

Introductory plenary session

The first plenary session introduces the theme of the workshop and lasts approximately half a day.

- **Step 1: Introduction**

This step includes introductory speeches by relevant local authorities (such as the governor), the introduction of participants, and a presentation of the workshop objectives and agenda by the lead facilitator. The speeches and presentation should explain the rationale for conducting the workshop and state linkages to local events or planning processes.

- **Step 2: Discussion on the nutrition situation in the province/area**

The lead facilitator can start a discussion on the nutrition situation by asking participants: "Is there malnutrition in your area? Who is most affected? (This can refer to age groups, gender, socio-economic or livelihoods groups). What are the consequences? How does it manifest itself?" It is best to avoid discussing causes, in order not to pre-empt or bias the participatory group work.

The main points made should be written on the paperboard for future reference.

The facilitator can also stimulate debate by asking what the major nutritional problems are (wasting or stunting, signs of micro-nutrient deficiencies, etc.) and who is most affected. It is preferable to ask participants what they know about nutrition before providing definitions so as to assess their understanding of the different types of malnutrition and identify local perceptions of malnutrition.

The facilitator can then **clarify key concepts**, should they be unfamiliar to participants, namely:
- chronic and acute undernutrition
- micronutrient deficiencies
- food security
- livelihoods and livelihoods groups
Definitions of key terms are provided in Annex 1

The discussion can then be completed by a brief presentation of available nutritional data for the area (rates of wasting, stunting and micronutrient deficiencies, for example). This can be done by one of the participants or a resource person.

Depending on the context, it may be appropriate to highlight **environmental issues** that affect the food security, nutrition and health of particular livelihoods groups, such as climate change-related patterns, drought, deforestation, soil erosion, water pollution, etc.

Participants should also be invited consider **gender-based differences** that can affect households' and individuals' food security and nutrition situation, such as differences in access to land and productive resources, women's workload and its impact on child care, etc.

• **Step 3: Discussion on feeding practices**
Participants should then be asked to discuss household diets and feeding practices in the province (number and composition of meals, seasonal variation, evolution, child feeding, etc.). This allows the facilitator to bring out basic notions about balanced diets, child feeding, food sources in the area, changes in food patterns, etc. Again, the main points should be written on the flipchart for future reference.

• **Step 4: Identification of most vulnerable livelihoods groups as a basis for the group work**
Finally participants will be asked to identify, based on their experience, the most vulnerable livelihoods groups in the area. The facilitator can ask lead questions such as: "Which population groups are most affected by malnutrition? What are their characteristics? Where do they live? Are their diets different from other groups, and if so, how?" The facilitator can also introduce the notion of vulnerability.

Participants will be asked to agree on **three main livelihoods groups** for the purpose of the planning exercise.

The group work sessions

Participants break out into three groups (one for each livelihoods group) of about six to ten participants, each led by one group facilitator. Since the working group process aims to work on a micro-planning process for nutrition, food security and livelihoods, it is important that: 1) participants are familiar with the livelihood group considered; and 2) that the group is interdisciplinary, inter-institutional and gender-balanced. Participants

should choose the group they wish to be part of, but facilitators can also suggest that some individuals change groups to ensure optimal group composition.

Each group should have enough space to discuss without disturbing others and enough wall space to hold at least two large sheets of paper: one for the problem tree, one for the solution tree.

- **First working group session: malnutrition problem trees**

  This session concentrates on building a causality model for malnutrition for each of the livelihood groups identified.

  The facilitators can use the following steps to build a good **problem tree**:

  o Prepare two sheets of paper large enough to host one 'tree' each. (You can prepare one with 5 to 6 flipchart papers).

  o Place one card with "Malnutrition" at the bottom of a large sheet, or at the top, depending on participants' preferences. In any case, make sure all groups put it in the same place!

  o Distribute about 5 Bristol cards (of one colour) and a marker to each participant. Ask the participants to write down on the cards what they think the main causes of malnutrition are for that specific livelihood group. They should write:

    ▪ one cause per card
    ▪ in capital letters
    ▪ using a maximum of 3 to 4 words, in a negative form

  If more than one language is used, participants should be encouraged to write the cards in the two main languages. It is important that the lead facilitator can read the cards.

  The facilitator should make sure participants do not formulate causes of malnutrition as "absent solutions" (e.g. "lack of…"), because the absence of a corrective intervention is not the cause of the problem. For example "lack of nutrition education" should rather be formulated as "inappropriate awareness about feeding practices". Nutrition education can be one solution but not the only one to this problem (e.g. others include strengthening peer support to mothers, for example). This is important to ensure that the solution tree is as comprehensive, locally adapted, and creative as possible.

- When the participants have completed their cards, ask them to gather all the cards and get rid of any duplicates. Sometimes two cards use different words to say practically the same thing. In this case, one card should be removed, or the two reworded as one card.

- Cluster the cards by theme, e.g. health issues, agricultural issues, employment issues, education issues.

- Using participants' suggestions, start placing the cards into a problem tree, The role of the facilitator is to stimulate discussion and debate and not build

the tree by him/herself! Make sure everyone is participating. The group facilitators should assist participants in combining the cards into a well-structured problem tree. Ensuring there is a good logical sequence between causes and effects is essential; otherwise, it makes it very difficult to build a meaningful solution tree (and thus a good strategy).

- Place the cards in the tree starting from the bottom-up (or top-down if the malnutrition card is on top). Causes are placed just above the problem they cause. Make sure the opposite is not done, as it is common for participants to confuse causes and effects. For example:
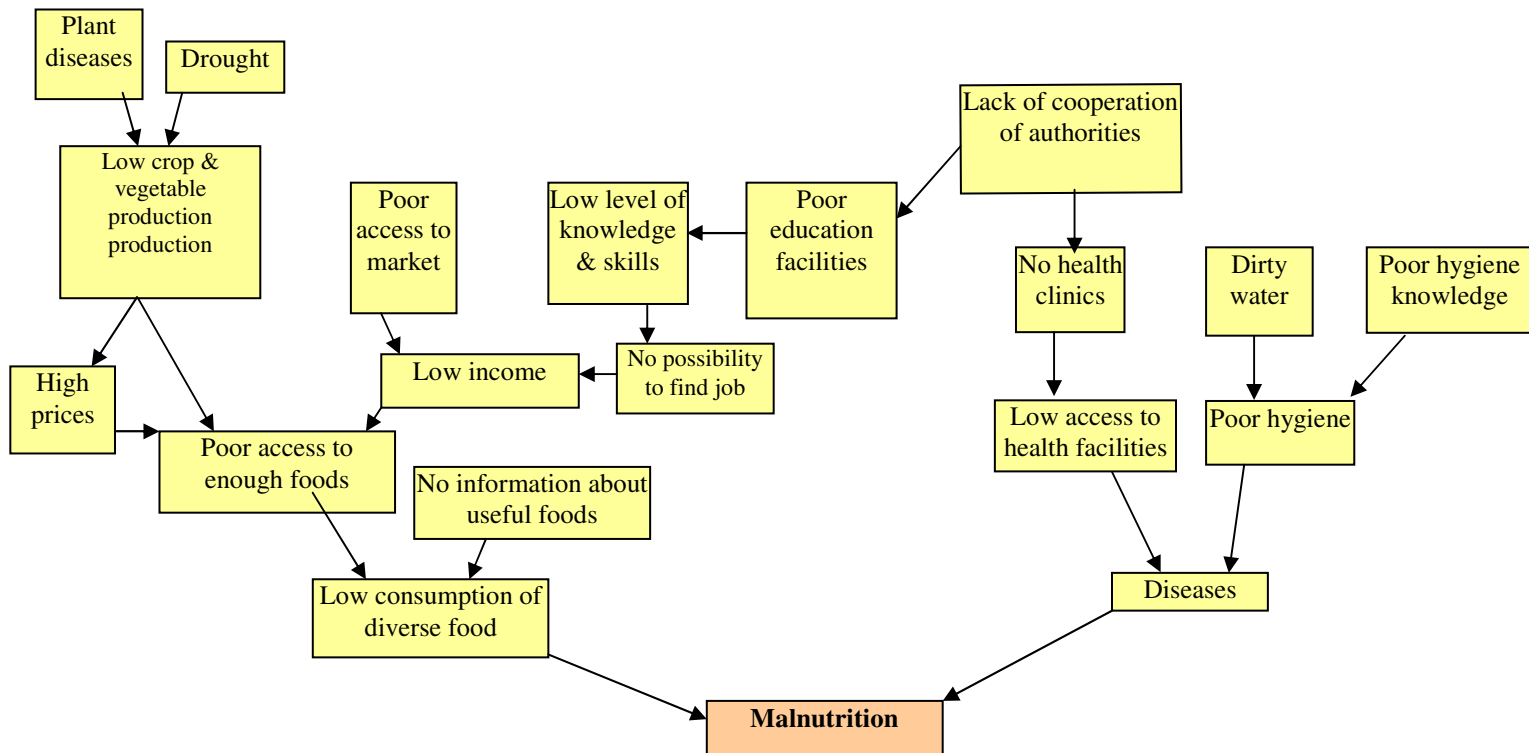
One problem can have several causes. In such cases, the causes should be placed in the same line (same level), above the problem. For example:

High food prices	Low income	Household debt	High living expenses

Cannot buy food
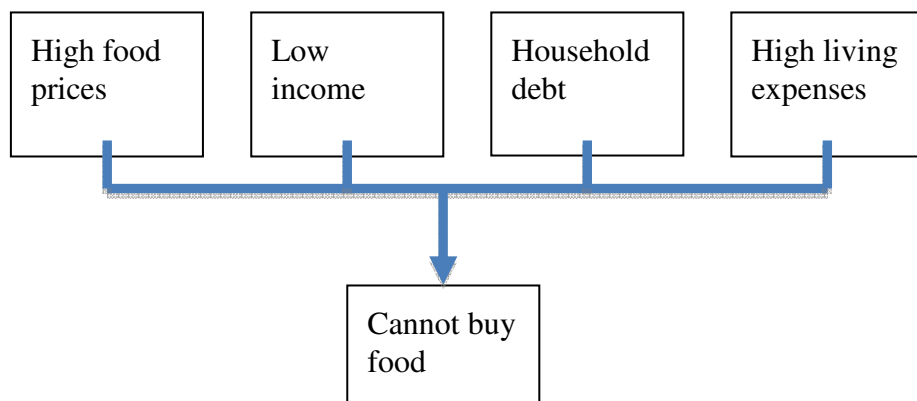
- Make sure there are no missing links in a causal chain. In such cases, you may need to add a card. For example:

Animal diseases

Drought

Poor harvest

?

Loss of livestock

Poor diet diversity
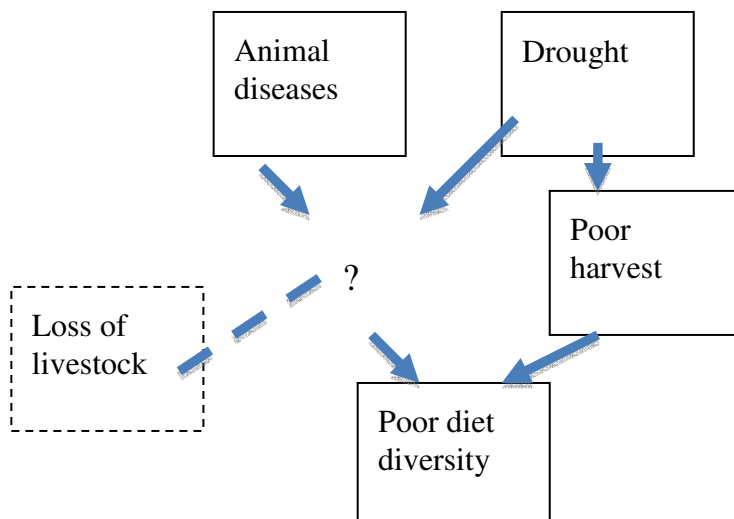
- Once all the cards are placed in the tree, review the tree as a whole to make sure there are no illogical sequences and missing links or cards. You can then draw arrows between the cards to clarify the causal links.

Plant diseases

Drought

Low crop & vegetable production production

Poor access to market

Low level of knowledge & skills

Poor education facilities

Lack of cooperation of authorities

No health clinics

Dirty water

Poor hygiene knowledge

High prices

Low income

No possibility to find job

Poor access to enough foods

No information about useful foods

Low access to health facilities

Poor hygiene

Low consumption of diverse food

Diseases

Malnutrition

Example of a problem tree: peri-urban farmers in Herat province, Afghanistan

Note: there is no *one* correct tree. The position of cards is thus subject to debate and different participants may have different perceptions (the cards can thus be moved in the tree until an agreement is found). The facilitator's role is to help participants come to an agreement, while ensuring the logic of the tree is respected.

The group facilitator, assisted by the workshop facilitator, can highlight important themes that may not have been sufficiently described by the group members, such as environmental issues and gender-specific causes of malnutrition.

This process allows for active discussion, addition of further causes as needed and clarification of logical links between causes and effects. The group selects a presenter for reporting in plenary.

These problem trees are presented and discussed in **plenary,** which allows further technical feedback from the workshop facilitator and further inputs from the other groups.

By the end of this session, participants will have become familiar with the concepts of nutrition and its multiple direct and indirect causes, in particular the role of household food security, health, education, cultural practices, environmental management, and other factors. A common vision of the local nutrition, food security and livelihoods situation will have emerged.

At this stage of the process, **presentations on relevant assessments,** such as food security and livelihoods assessments and vulnerability analyses, can be inserted. They will contribute to validate, complement and expand the thinking process that has been initiated.

Caution: These presentations should by no means be made before the group work in order not to introduce bias in the participatory situation analysis and the group dynamics.

Discussions that follow the presentations of the problem trees and assessment results can be an opportunity to identify information gaps and determine what further information is required to support a thorough planning process.

- **Second working group session: malnutrition solution trees**

At the beginning of the **second working group session**, each group will be allowed to modify its causality model (problem tree) and incorporate the feedback it deems relevant. It will then proceed to build a "solution tree", translating each negative card into a positive solution. The solution tree thus becomes the a reverse image of the problem tree.

In the first stages, the cards in the solution trees are simply the opposite of the cards in the problem tree.
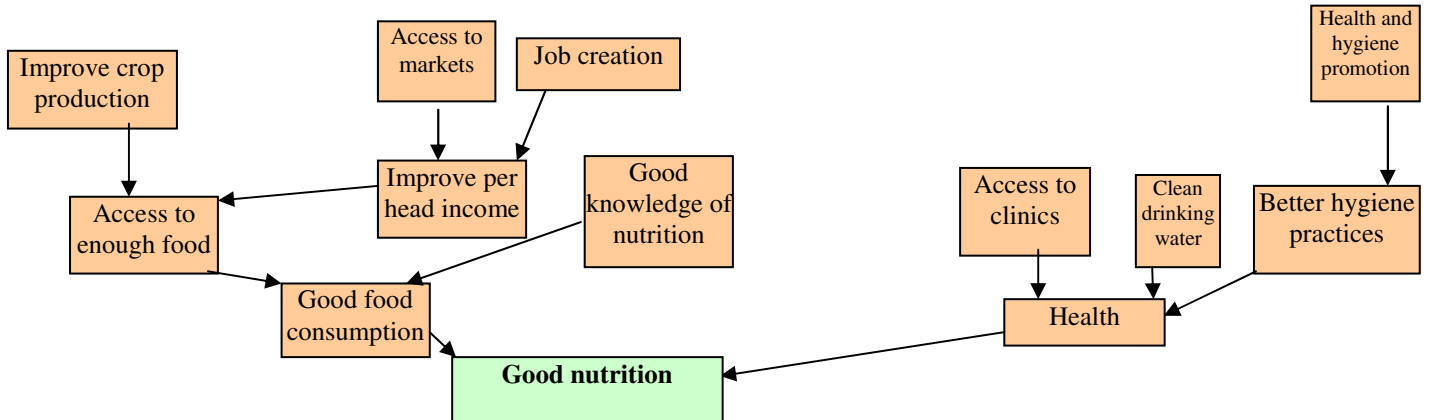

Example of a solution tree: peri-urban farmers in Herat, Afghanistan

Once a solution card has been prepared for each problem card, additional cards must be included specifying more detailed interventions required to achieve the desired solutions and objectives.

It is essential to ensure that interventions always correspond to an agreed-upon cause of malnutrition, rather than to what participants are used to doing or are already doing.
Note: in some cases, elaborating the solution tree leads to the identification of a gap or incomplete sequence in the problem tree. It is possible to 'fix' the solution tree at any time.
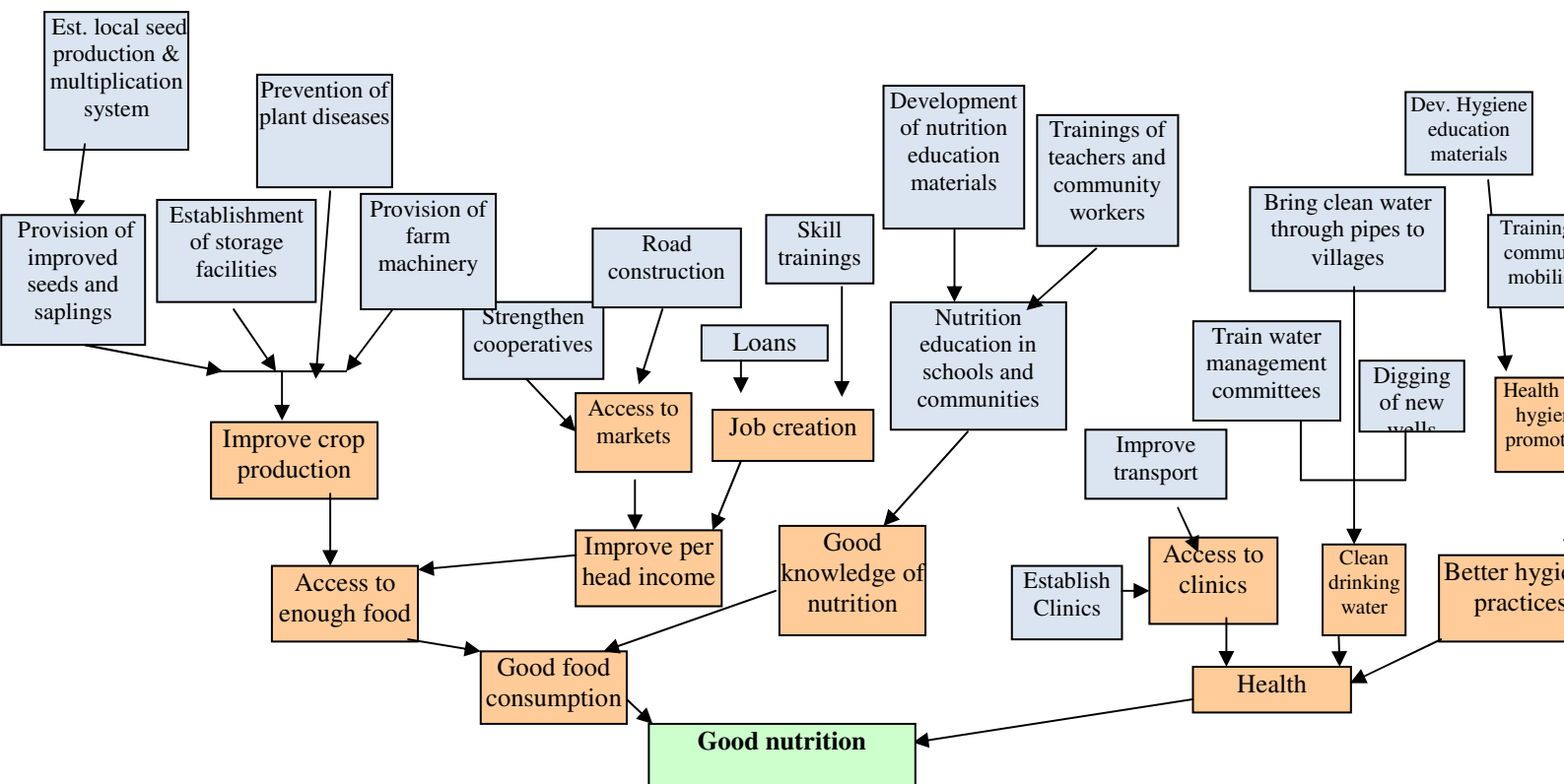
Example of solution tree with interventions (Herat, Afghanistan)

For each of the identified solutions, the group must identify the institution(s) that has(ve) the mandate and/or expertise to implement the proposed intervention:
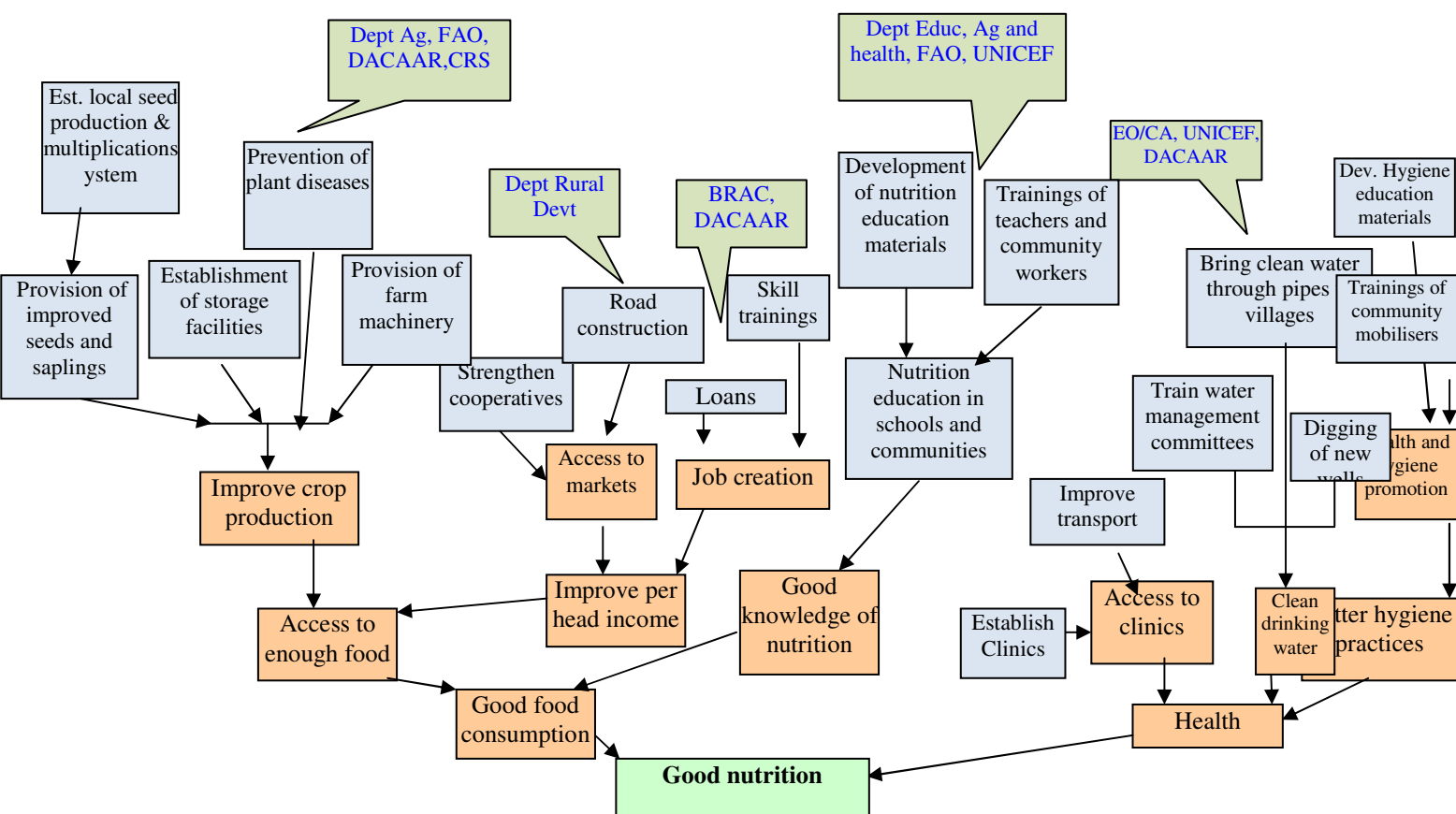
The solution trees are then presented and discussed in **plenary.** At the end of this third plenary session, the basis of a local strategy for food security, nutrition and livelihoods will have been discussed.

At this stage. *and not before then,* **presentations on relevant interventions** illustrating the relationship between agriculture, health and other sectors with nutrition, food security and livelihoods can be made by implementing agencies.

Action-Planning session

The final phase of the workshop will concentrate on joint planning for follow-up work at the provincial, district and community levels. Participants are asked to reconvene in small groups of institutions working in the same geographical area and to discuss the possible implications of this joint planning process on their activities. The solution trees will have highlighted many actions that can be taken. Some of them are probably already implemented, others not. This session is the opportunity to identify gaps as well as opportunities to strengthen existing projects and to integrate new activities that are likely to enhance these projects' impact on nutrition.

A representative from each group should then present to the plenary what the group members would like to do, and where and how they intend to coordinate. They should also define what assistance they think they would need from the provincial/area level.

Note: It is important for the lead facilitator to get participants to think carefully about what is really feasible using existing resources and small start-up funds, if they are available.

The main action points and follow-up that have been agreed upon should be summarized by the lead facilitator (preferably on a paperboard for all to read) and validated by all participants. A "memo" can be prepared outlining:
- the technical areas requiring attention;
- who is taking responsibility for what;
- what resources are required;
- what should be done, by when, and where; and
- next steps.

Follow-up to the workshop

The workshop is a first step to a joint planning process. It is important to maintain the momentum through adequate follow-up.

The first task is to prepare a **workshop report** and disseminate it widely to all relevant stakeholders in the area (and even at central level if appropriate). The report should include a summary of the plenary discussions, the problem and solution trees prepared by each group (preferably typed), and the main conclusions and follow-up points.

In addition to the report, the following steps may be considered:

- Individual meetings with government authorities to assess and strengthen political commitment to follow-up on the proposed actions.
- Meetings with the main institutions / agencies working at community level to clarify their action plans, support them in completing their work plans if necessary, and ensure coordination/harmonization between the various agencies.
- Consultations with local communities in the field to discuss how the main recommendations provided through the workshop can be applied locally and to receive feedback from community representatives.
- Trainings for the relevant agency staff, to support the implementation of identified activities (e.g. on nutrition education; on food production, etc.).
- Contacting donors involved locally to assess their interest in funding some of the identified activities.

An excellent way of ensuring the workshop leads to a genuine joint planning and implementation process is to setup a working group or task force to follow-up on the proposed actions. The task force or working group should convene regular meetings with workshop participants and/or other relevant organizations. This requires considerable capacity (in particular staff time) and commitment. Another means of continuing the joint planning process is to associate it to an existing working group or coordination mechanism.

Follow-up should also include identifying how to evaluate and measure the impact of the joint planning and the activities indentified, especially at local, district and community levels.

Finally, it is important to institutionalize joint planning for nutrition, food security and livelihoods. This can be done through making the joint planning initiatives part of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) initiatives in those countries that are already committed to this and/or using the joint planning as a starting point for SUN.

III. ADAPTING THE WORKSHOP METHODOLOGY

The workshop methodology can be adapted to:
- achieve other objectives
- different levels of intervention
- different time frames

To achieve other objectives

Designing a nutrition and food security surveillance system

This methodology can be adapted to achieve other objectives such as designing a nutrition and food security surveillance system. When used for this purpose, workshop participants will focus on understanding the nutrition situation in a particular context, so as to identify ways to effectively monitor it. Most of the attention will therefore be given to the problem tree, and a solution tree may not be necessary.

The important steps of such a workshop will be to:
- Draw up detailed problem trees for relevant population groups in a given area.
- Identify the main components of the problem tree (i.e. major aspects and causes of food insecurity and malnutrition) that need to be monitored as part of the surveillance system.
- Identify locally relevant indicators for the selected components.
- Identify which institutions (and who within these institutions) can collect the information and how it should be collected.
- Based on the problem tree, agree on a framework and mechanisms for bringing together the different data collected as part of the surveillance system, to ensure a comprehensive analysis is made.

Training

The workshop methodology can be used for various types of training, depending on the local training needs. It could be used, for instance, to train participants on:
- basic concepts of nutrition, food security and livelihoods
- the complex and locally-specific causes of malnutrition
- planning methods for multi-sectoral integrated nutrition programmes
- designing nutrition and food security surveillance systems

During a training workshop, more time may be required for presentations and explanations of key concepts and methods than would be necessary in a simple planning workshop. The content of these presentations will depend on participants' existing knowledge and experience.

Note: Even during a training workshop, it is important to structure the workshop in a way that participants' own experiences and ideas emerge, so as to avoid pre-empting participants' contributions and overlooking locally important issues.

This can be done by allowing ample time for group discussion and brainstorming before *technical presentations are made.*

To different levels of intervention

Part 2 of these guidelines provided an example of how the methodology can be used at the provincial or district level. It can also be adapted for use at the **regional and national levels**. In such cases, discussions on the nutrition situation may be more general than what is possible at a more localized level because these geographical areas encompass a much broader range of population groups and socio-economic and agro-ecological contexts. It is nevertheless possible to identify major livelihoods groups that are vulnerable to food insecurity and malnutrition in a given country or region (e.g. pastoralists; urban poor; landless households in rural areas). It is important to select livelihoods groups that most participants are familiar with, so that a thorough analysis of problems and potential solutions can be made.

The methodology can also be adapted for use at the **community level**, as a participatory planning tool (for example, as a follow-up to the provincial or district-level planning workshop). However, in areas where illiteracy rates are high, the methodology should be adapted to allow illiterate members to participate (e.g. use of drawings and pictures to illustrate causes of malnutrition). The exercise should be led by a facilitator with solid experience of participatory approaches at community level.

To different time frames

It is relatively simple to expand the time allocated to running the workshop, but the challenge is more often on how to run the workshop in *less* time.

Possible **short-cuts** to reduce the time required include:

- Cutting down on the amount and length of presentations that are made (for example, not presenting the results of food security and nutrition assessments and not asking implementing agencies to present existing interventions).
- In the case of planning workshops, conduct the more detailed action planning. as described in Part 2 as a plenary discussion where major common action points are identified. More detailed planning meetings can eventually be organized later on (but not too long after to avoid losing the momentum generated by the workshop).
- With a relatively experienced group of participants (for example, professionals who are already familiar with concepts of nutrition, food security and livelihoods), the problem tree and solution trees can be built in one day: a morning session for the problem tree, and an afternoon session for the solution tree.

The **"express" problem-solution tree**
When the methodology is used for very specific joint planning purposes, it is possible to reduce the exercise to a few hours (e.g. around four hours). This "express" version can be useful when several agencies are working on the design

of a joint programme and programme planners are too busy to attend a two-day workshop, or even a one-day working session.

This adaptation requires an experienced facilitator with strong synthesis skills and is most easily done with *one set of problem and solution trees* (either for one livelihood group, or a "generic" tree presenting common causes of malnutrition in a given population).

The following short-cuts can be used:
- A few days before the workshop, the facilitator asks participants to send him/her the lists of major causes of malnutrition they can think of (e.g. by email).
- Before the workshop, the facilitator writes the causes on coloured cards (eliminating any duplicates) and groups them by theme.
- On the day of the workshop, the facilitator puts up the cards on a board, grouped by theme, and facilitates the building of a problem tree through a plenary session with all the participants.
- To build the solution tree, the participants break up in smaller groups, each group dealing with one main branch of the tree (e.g. one on health related causes, one on food security related causes, etc.) and prepares the "solution branches".
- The participants then group into a plenary session and compile their branches into one common solution tree.
- Participants then agree on the priority interventions presented in the solution tree, fill any gaps in terms of necessary actions that should be described in the tree, and agree on who will do what.

Running an "express workshop" is not ideal, but better than not doing a problem-solution tree exercise together. This methodology makes it possible to build consensus among stakeholders and ensure that a programme is designed on the basis of actual needs, rather than determined by organizational mandates and agendas.

Annex 1 : Example of a workshop agenda

DAY 1:

8:30-9:00 Introduction of participants;
Introductory speech by local authority;
Presentation of workshop objectives and agenda by lead facilitator.

9:00-10:15 Plenary discussion on nutritional situation in the selected area; presentation of nutritional data; discussion of feeding practices.

10:15-10:30 Selection of most vulnerable livelihoods groups; explanation of group work and break-out into groups.

10:30-11:00 Tea break

11:00-12:30 Group work: Identification of causes and preparation of problem tree.

12:30-1:30 Lunch break

1:30 – 2:30 Group work: Finalization of problem trees.

2:30 – 3:30 Plenary: Presentation of problem trees prepared by each group.

3:30 – 4:30 Incorporation of feedback by each group into their problem tree *and/or* presentations on the nutrition and food security situation of specific livelihoods groups-

DAY 2

8:30–10:30 Group work: Preparation of solution trees.

10:30–11:00 Tea break

11:00–12:00 Plenary: Presentation of solution trees by each group and discussion of the solution trees.

12:00-12:30 Presentations by participants of relevant activities implemented by their organization and of potential new orientation / discussion in view of workshop exercise.

12:30-1:30 Lunch break

1:30-3:00 Group work (preferably organized by geographical area): Discussions on potential strategies and actions that can be implemented to apply identified solutions.

3:00-4:00 Plenary: Sharing of recommendations prepared by each group. Agreement on common direction and main action points, including linkages / follow-up points. Identification of responsibilities.

4:00-4:30 Workshop conclusions: Summary of lessons learned and action points.

Annexe 2: Definitions of key terms

Acute malnutrition (or wasting): Individuals who suffer from acute malnutrition lose weight as a result of acute lack of food or disease. The main symptom of this is wasting – a loss of weight compared to individuals of the same height. This is measured with 'weight-for-height' (W/H) among children under five.

Chronic malnutrition (or stunting): Individuals who suffer from chronic malnutrition fail to grow to their full genetic potential, both mentally and physically. The main symptom of this is stunting - shortness in height compared to others of the same age group. It is measured with 'height-for-age' (H/A) among children under five years of age.

Food security: 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, 1996)

Micronutrient deficiencies: Micronutrients are essential vitamins and minerals that everyone needs – in minute quantities – for good health. These essential vitamins and minerals include vitamin A, iodine, iron, and folic acid. Without micronutrients, the human body does not grow and function properly. The consequences of not getting enough micronutrients can range from birth defects and mental impairment to child deaths due to lowered immune system and susceptibility to diseases.

Livelihoods: A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base (Chambers and Conway, 1992).

Underweight: underweight refers to children who have a low weight compared to others of the same age and is measured by 'weight-for-age' (W/A). Underweight can either be a sign of stunting or wasting, or a combination of both.

Vulnerability: Refers to the full range of factors that place people at risk of becoming food-insecure. The degree of vulnerability of individuals, households or groups of people is determined by their exposure to the risk factors and their ability to cope with or withstand stressful situations.

Vulnerability to food insecurity and malnutrition occur at the level of population groups and households as well as individuals, for different reasons:

- *Households* that are at risk of not meeting their minimum food needs. These are socio-economically vulnerable and often include female-headed households, the poor, the landless or the homeless. The vulnerable may not necessarily be the poorest of the poor; in the case of complex political emergencies the vulnerable often comprise groups that are marginalized or oppressed on the basis of ethnicity, religion or political affiliation.
- *Individuals* who are at high risk of deteriorating nutritional status because they have special nutritional needs for physiological reasons (e.g. pregnancy, growth) and/or a low capability to satisfy their needs without help from others. These are the physiologically vulnerable. They include infants, growing children and adolescents, pregnant and lactating women, the malnourished, the elderly, orphans, the terminally ill, and the mentally and physically disabled.