

# **THE PRACTITIONERS' GUIDE TO HEA**

## **Chapter 5: Translating Outcomes into Action**



**5****TRANSLATING OUTCOMES INTO ACTION**

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The following chapter aims to help the practitioner understand important principles and approaches used to translate HEA outcomes into effective action, exploring first how HEA outcomes have been used in a wide range of settings, and second discussing the best approaches for communicating results to decision makers.

The chapter begins with a discussion of the links between HEA outputs and core decision maker information requirements, followed by a general description of the common principles that underlie HEA response analysis. Five case studies are used to demonstrate the specific approach employed in linking HEA outcomes to action in different contexts, including: early warning and scenario development; emergency food and non-food needs; social protection; and poverty analysis

The goal of the second part of the chapter is to increase the effectiveness with which practitioners communicate messages to decision makers. In doing so, it outlines key principles and strategies for reaching decision makers aiming to increase the likelihood that HEA information not only becomes integrated into relevant decision-maker processes, but also that core messages are clearly conveyed – a prerequisite for appropriate response and action.

By the end of this chapter the reader should be able to describe: the link between key decision maker questions and aspects of the HEA Framework; the basic principles employed in HEA response analysis; the main steps involved in HEA's application in early warning systems, needs assessments and poverty analysis; and he/she should be able to demonstrate the principles of communicating effectively to decision makers.

*This chapter was written by Tanya Boudreau, who drew on material written by Penny Holzmann and by Mark Lawrence; Richard Choularton and Stephen Anderson reviewed the draft and provided incisive comments.*

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### **RELATED CD FILES**

The CD that accompanies the **Practitioners' Guide** contains the following files relevant to Chapter 5, found in the **Chapter 5** Directory:

- **Annex A: Response Analysis Guidance**
  - WFP and MSU guides to selecting an appropriate response
  - Oxfam decision map for response planning
- **Annex B: Decision Maker Briefs**
  - Example of a FEWS NET Alert
  - The Limpopo Food Aid Brief
  - The Limpopo Development Brief
- **Annex C: Livelihood Profiles**
  - Guidance Notes for Preparing a Livelihood Profile
  - Example of a Livelihood Profile
- **Annex D: Presentations**
  - Examples of Good Power Point Practice
  - Examples of Bad Power Point Practice

### **RELATED TRAINING MODULE**

**MODULE 5: TRANSLATING OUTCOMES INTO ACTION** in the **HEA Training Guide** contains training material relevant to this chapter.

## BACKGROUND

HEA practitioners share a conviction that their field work is not research for the sake of research but rather an efficient enquiry designed to translate information into action. HEA aims to 'short cut' a process that might otherwise take years of anthropological study, providing the information that decision makers require in the time frame they need it, with sufficient rigor and validity to encourage consensus. As explained in [Chapter 1](#), HEA was developed and refined in response to decision maker demands. **Table 1** summarises the core questions that face most decision-makers in the humanitarian community and shows how HEA contributes to answering these questions. It is important to note, however, that although HEA outputs are tightly linked to decision maker processes, the information itself is not biased to meet specific outside interests. Rather, HEA provides a structured framework for organising local knowledge and realities - information that otherwise framed may be interesting but impenetrable - in a manner that is concise, accessible and pertinent to decision makers.

Table 1. How HEA helps address core decision maker questions	
Core question	How HEA helps answer the question
<b>WHO</b>	<b>Wealth breakdowns</b> help group the population in a way that shows who will be most affected by different shocks.
<b>WHAT</b>	<b>Livelihood strategy identification, description and quantification</b> (Food, income, expenditure) shows what can be done to support existing livelihoods, and, just as important, what might harm them.
<b>HOW MUCH</b>	<b>Outcome analysis</b> determines what kinds of gaps will be left in the event of a shock or multiple shocks. This leads directly to an analysis of how much help is needed.
<b>WHERE</b>	<b>Livelihood zoning</b> helps group people in a way that allows you to see where affected populations are or might be in the future.
<b>WHEN and FOR HOW LONG</b>	<b>Outcome analysis</b> , combined with the use of seasonal calendars, provides a basis for determining when different types of assistance are needed and for how long.

These questions are at the core of decision-makers' information requirements whether the context is one of an emergency, or rehabilitation, or development. An informed discussion about what should be done to help people can only take place if we understand how people normally live, and how they are affected when certain components of their livelihood are destroyed, or alternatively, enhanced. It is HEA's capacity to address these questions in a quantitative, deliberate way that encourages its application in so many areas of humanitarian work.

## HEA AND RESPONSE ANALYSIS

Response analysis is an increasingly important aspect of the work of HEA practitioners and the links between appropriate response and HEA information is a subject of growing work. **Table 2** outlines the steps in the process of linking HEA Outcome Analysis to Response Analysis in the specific case of early warning and needs determinations. In Poverty Analysis or Social Protection, the steps are slightly different, but still centred on the basic premise that a baseline understanding of livelihoods needs to be the starting point for appropriate response analysis. More details on these steps are provided in the case studies in this chapter.

<b>Table 2. Steps in Translating HEA Outcomes into Response Analyses</b>		
<b>PREPARE THE LIVELIHOODS BASELINES</b>		
<i>Step</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Resources</i>
<b>Finalise baselines</b>		
1	Finalise survival non-food and livelihood protection expenditure baskets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Baseline storage spreadsheets</li> </ul>
2	Finalise expandability of food and income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Baseline storage spreadsheets</li> </ul>
<b>Enter baseline data into single zone spreadsheets</b>		
3	Enter baseline data into single zone spreadsheets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Baseline storage spreadsheets</li> <li>Blank single zone spreadsheets</li> </ul>
4	Analyse the baseline data to identify the most important sources of food and cash income for monitoring/problem specification; Record the results on key parameter and problem specification sheets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blank key parameter and problem spec sheets</li> </ul>
<b>PREPARE THE PROBLEM SPECIFICATION – BY DISTRICT</b>		
5	Compile available data and specify problem <i>by district</i> Data will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>district level crop production data</li> <li>market price data</li> <li>relevant field reports</li> <li>data from rapid field assessments</li> </ul> Record assumptions made in compiling problem specification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key parameter and problem specification sheets</li> <li>Data for problem specification</li> </ul>
<b>RUN THE OUTCOME ANALYSIS – BY DISTRICT AND LIVELIHOOD ZONE</b>		
6	Run outcome analysis using single zone spreadsheets Run one analysis for each livelihood zone within each district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Filled key parameter and problem specification sheets</li> <li>Completed single zone spreadsheets</li> </ul>
<b>PLAN THE RESPONSE – BY DISTRICT</b>		
7	Decide upon the most appropriate type of intervention, based upon: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>results of the outcome analysis</li> <li>other information from the livelihoods baselines</li> <li>other information on the district</li> </ul> Depending upon the type of intervention proposed, calculate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>numbers of people in need</li> <li>quantities of assistance required</li> <li>duration and timeframe for intervention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Results of outcome analysis</li> <li>Wealth breakdown by LZ</li> <li>Population by district/LZ</li> <li>Intervention decision tree</li> <li>Food aid/cash assistance calculation sheet</li> </ul>
<b>PLAN FOLLOW-UP FIELD WORK AND MONITORING ACTIVITIES</b>		

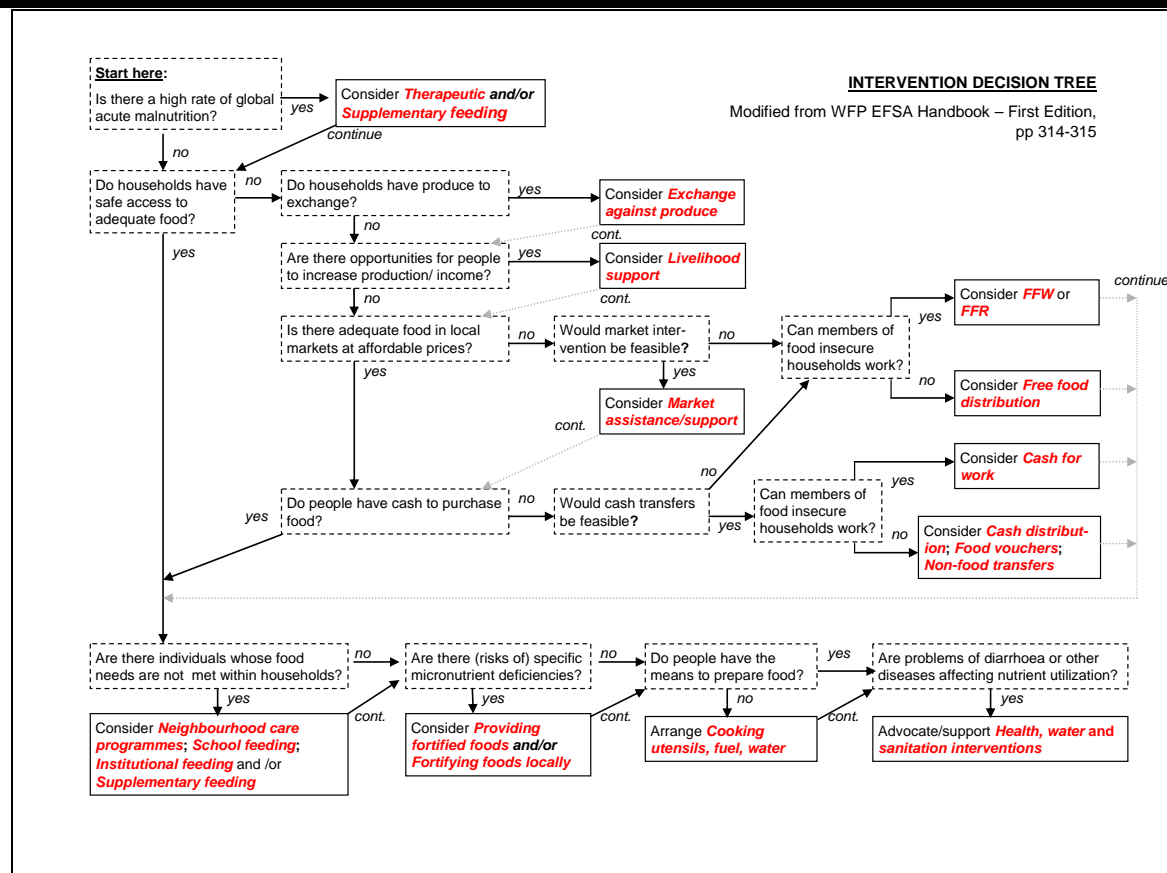


8	Plan follow-up field work to verify the assumptions made in preparing and running the outcome analysis; Prepare plans to update the analysis as new data becomes available (e.g. market price monitoring, seasonal crop production data)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Filled key parameter and problem specification sheets</li> <li>• Field verification format</li> </ul>
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*Source: Mark Lawrence, Ethiopia DPPC Livelihood Integration Unit Training Materials*

HEA practitioners use a number of existing tools to work their way through different response options. A modified version of the WFP Intervention Decision Tree, shown in **Box 1**, is one example of a practical tool used for the purpose of emergency response. Others, such as those produced by Oxfam and MSU, are used as well, and included in Chapter 5, Annex A, Response Analysis Guidance. The questions (on the decision tree below) related to whether household have adequate access to food, cash to purchase food, and the ability to work, etc. are answered through the HEA baseline assessment work and outcome analysis. Questions about levels of malnutrition are answered through nutrition surveys and monitoring.

### Box 1. Intervention Decision Tree



This chapter will not repeat information about how to carry out the steps in the Intervention Decision Tree or how to calculate deficits. That information is covered elsewhere in the Practitioners' and Training Guides (See [Chapter 4, Outcome Analysis](#) in the **Practitioners' Guide**; and [Module 4 - Outcome Analysis](#) - in the **Training Guide**) and in other resources, such as the WFP Emergency Food Security Assessment Handbook. The [Market Supplement](#) also details a number of emergency response options (e.g. cash transfers, vouchers, local purchase, imported food aid, market support) and provides suggestions as to their appropriateness in different circumstances.

Rather, the first part of this chapter presents the four core principles that underlie thoughtful humanitarian action, followed by some case studies of HEA's application in response analysis. These principles of humanitarian action constitute the shared assumptions that guide response analysis in HEA; and they play a role in the design of the practical applications of HEA presented in the next section, so they are made explicit here before delving into the detailed examples.

## Four Core Principles of Humanitarian Action

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### *First, the response should be **proportional to need**.*

Increasingly skewed income distributions and vast economic inequalities exist in almost every country on earth. With much of the world's population living on under a dollar a day, there are obvious needs everywhere. However, inherent in the above principle is the recognition that humanitarian aid and development resources are limited. Prioritising on the basis of proportional need strives to ensure that those who are worst affected by a hazard will be afforded at least the means of survival. This principle is perhaps the most important driver behind the development of HEA; it has generated the requirement for quantitative outputs and led to the application and refinement of the 'survival' and 'livelihood protection' thresholds. Without common thresholds it is not possible to implement a response based on proportionality to needs, because there is no way to otherwise objectively measure and thus compare needs. Through the development of quantitative outputs and common thresholds, HEA helps determine levels of need in an objective evidence-based manner consistent with international (in relation to food energy) and locally acceptable minimum (in relation to non-food needs) standards. (See **Case Studies 1 and 2**.)

### *Second, the response should provide **maximum benefit** to those who require assistance and **minimum harm** to livelihood systems.*

Household economies are distinct elements in a web of connected economic, social, and political systems. The history of humanitarian aid is littered with the unintended negative consequences associated with disrupting these systems. An outside intervention almost inevitably generates some cost somewhere – whether to a market's efficiency, or to a set of social relationships, or to someone's political gain. The key is to carefully weigh the costs and benefits to different stake holders so that action can be taken conscious of potential outcomes; and ameliorative steps can be taken where possible. Timing is also an essential element of maximising benefit and minimising harm. A food aid response provided too late, for instance, can flood the post-harvest market with unnecessary food, bringing down prices just when farmers are counting on selling their produce. Or a food for work project that interferes with key planting times can force household members to make difficult choices about how to allocate their limited labour reserves. Using HEA's predicted outcomes in scenario building has been particularly useful in this regard. (See **Case Study 1**).

### *Third, the response should **meet short term emergency needs** (where relevant) while **laying the foundation for long term development**.*

Certain kinds of assistance are appropriate at certain times and not others. A short term direct food aid transfer may be the best option immediately following a sudden-onset hazard, such as a flood or earthquake. But over time, the goal is to strengthen local livelihood systems, not replace them. Developing an overall understanding of households' changing resource constraints (in particular their labour constraints) and opportunities from season to season and year to year is critical in getting aid programming right from start to finish. (See **Case Studies 2, 3, 4 and 5**.)

### *Fourth, a **balance** must be found **between the ideal** response and **practical realities**.*

This principle may be controversial to some, who would argue that it is the practitioners' job to identify an appropriate response, and the duty of others to find the resources to meet the needs. While this is an attractive proposition, it is one that is not likely to lead to effective action. For decision-makers, a host of practical and operational considerations – linked for example to cost, resource availability, technical capacity and security - will determine the final decision on how to intervene. It is important therefore for needs assessment staff and decision-makers to interact and strike the best possible balance between the ideal and the feasible.

## MULTIPLE USES OF HEA ANALYSIS

While the need to predict requirements for emergency food and non-food relief in southern Africa remains pressing, governments and development agencies increasingly recognise the need for longer-term approaches to reducing poor people's vulnerability to shocks beyond the short-term emergency funding cycle. To identify realistic interventions requires an appreciation of the constraints faced by the poor and the opportunities open to them to lock into the wider economy. On this basis, HEA offers a form of analysis that provides this contextual understanding and that enables the effects of potential interventions to be modelled.

HEA's relevance has spread beyond its first use in quantifying food needs. This is because the approach is centred on an understanding of how people normally make ends meet, from year to year. It gives us a holistic view of household operations and strategies, including the needs and uses of cash income beyond immediate food purchase. Such a basis is required to understand the effect of shocks; but it is potentially no less important in what it offers on the rehabilitation and development side of the equation. This next section illustrates how a single central core of HEA information can have multiple applications; and it details a few of the particular approaches used to customise its use.

Table 3: Where has HEA been used?	
Agricultural	Mozambique, Malawi, Swaziland, Zambia, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Burundi, DRC, Sudan (north and south), Niger, Mali, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan, Pakistan, Myanmar, Chechnya, Bangladesh, India, Cambodia
Pastoralist / agro-pastoralist	Somalia, Somaliland, south Sudan, north Sudan, Ethiopia, Angola, Djibouti, Tanzania, Kenya, Burkina Faso
Urban	Angola, Zimbabwe (Harare), Djibouti (Djibouti City), Somaliland (Hargeisa), Somalia (Belet Weyne), north Sudan (Khartoum), Palestine, Kosovo, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, DRC (Bunia, Kinshasa)
Coastal (including fishing) communities	India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Puntland/ Somalia
Refugee camps	Kakuma/Kenya, Bangladesh, north Sudan, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Chad, Uganda
Internally Displaced Persons	Burundi, Sierra Leone, southern Sudan, Somalia, Khartoum, Liberia, Ingushetia

The wide range of settings in which HEA has been applied, shown in **Table 3** above, has enabled the approach to be tested in varying circumstances and adapted according to different contexts (agricultural, pastoral, urban), for different purposes and for different stages of the project cycle. The [Guide to HEA](#) contains a comprehensive set of examples of HEA's uses, summarised below in **Table 4**.

**Table 4: Uses of HEA and examples of applications detailed in the Guide to HEA**

<i>Application</i>	<i>Case Study</i>	<i>Which part of the HEA framework is involved?</i>
<b>Disaster preparedness, relief and recovery</b>		
Designing <b>early warning and monitoring systems</b>	Rural Malawi: MVAC Ethiopia	➤ <b>Baseline</b> helps identify what people in a livelihood zone are vulnerable to so that relevant parameters can be monitored
	Urban Harare	➤ <b>Outcome analysis</b> undertaken at key points of year, using monitoring data to define the problem
Developing scenarios for <b>contingency and response planning</b>	Limpopo Basin, Mozambique Serbia	➤ <b>Outcome analysis</b> used to develop scenarios and identify indicators for monitoring and updating of response plans
Assessing <b>emergency food and non-food needs</b>	Mashonaland, Zimbabwe	➤ <b>Outcome analysis</b> used to measure current and projected access against thresholds
Post-emergency <b>rehabilitation</b>	Earthquake recovery, Pakistan	➤ <b>Baseline</b> and <b>outcome analysis</b> used to map out pre-crisis livelihood strategies and post-crisis opportunities
<b>Poverty reduction and social protection</b>		
Identifying appropriate <b>poverty reduction strategies</b>	Thar desert, Pakistan Tigray, Ethiopia	➤ <b>Baseline</b> used to identify key constraints and opportunities for different wealth groups, and strategies for minimising/exploiting them
Determining appropriate <b>safety net levels and other social protection measures</b>	Turkana, Kenya Singida, Tanzania Djibouti	➤ Develop quantified <b>Baseline</b> profile of current access to food and cash income and expenditure patterns ➤ Use <b>Baseline</b> to identify key constraints and opportunities for different wealth groups, and strategies for minimising/exploiting them ➤ Use <b>Baseline</b> to determine gap between current and desired standard of living ➤ Use <b>Scenario Analysis</b> to analyse projected impact of proposed social protection measures
Identifying appropriate <b>market support interventions</b>	Upper Limpopo, Mozambique MLVP, Ethiopia	➤ <b>Baseline</b> used to identify areas of potential for different wealth groups and key market constraints
<b>Monitoring and evaluation</b>		
<b>Monitoring and evaluating the impact of interventions on households</b>	Tigray, Ethiopia MLVP, Ethiopia	➤ <b>Baseline</b> used to establish target thresholds for food and income generation and as starting point against which to measure impact ➤ <b>Outcome analysis</b> used to show which hazards might interfere with reaching targets so these can be factored into evaluation

In this chapter, we will not go into each of these applications, but instead will use five case studies to demonstrate the general steps involved in translating HEA outcomes into response analysis in different circumstances. In particular, the case studies demonstrate HEA's use in:

- Designing early warning and monitoring systems with the use of scenario planning
- Assessing emergency food and non-food needs
- Identifying appropriate rehabilitation activities in sudden-onset disasters
- Considering appropriate social protection measures
- Designing poverty-reduction programmes

## Early Warning, Scenario Planning and Monitoring Systems

The HEA framework has been used as the foundation for food security early warning and monitoring systems in both rural and urban areas. It has been used to design livelihoods-based national food security early warning systems in southern Sudan, Somalia and Malawi. Elsewhere, it has been the means by which livelihoods analysis has been integrated into early warning systems, including in the Sahel where the first multi-country livelihood zoning profiles were developed, taking into account the dynamics of food access at a supra-national level.

Food security early warning systems aim to inform governments and international agencies of impending food crises **before** they occur. The critical distinction between these systems, and general food security assessments, is the requirement for a prediction to be made about how a shock or set of shocks will affect a population in the future. In order for this to happen, the system needs to be able to:

1. predict the shock(s)
2. predict the effects of the shocks on different populations
3. monitor the indicators associated with the prediction

Early warning in much of southern Africa is set in a context of fragile livelihoods, low and deteriorating resources and assets, and shocks. In terms of rain failure, the most common event is not catastrophic drought but the 'bad year' that pushes many poor households over the hunger threshold. In such environments, **early warning efforts require sensitivity to differences which may appear marginal between localities and between households.** There must be an ability to discern whether a small shock might result in a significant food security problem, and conversely whether the market may in some circumstances mitigate the effects of even a relatively large shock. There must be an ability to predict the effect of economic shocks, such as steep rises in the price of grain or the collapse of cash crop prices. And increasingly,

Case Study	General Approach
Malawi: MVAC System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Develop livelihood-specific seasonal monitoring systems using HEA baselines</li> <li>➤ Develop problems specifications for key parameters using monitoring data</li> <li>➤ Create scenarios and run outcome analyses</li> <li>➤ monitor indicators to track the scenarios</li> <li>➤ Adjust response plans</li> </ul>

systems must give early warning not just of hunger, but of acute impoverishment where people cannot cover essential non-food needs. In sum, quite fine distinctions need to be



made between different types of economic effect on different types of household, which will allow more considered choices about intervention to be made.

At the same time, program planners require significant lead time to set up resource and logistical flows, and once established, they need to know how long assistance will be required. The longer the lead time, the less expensive the delivery of goods tends to be, and the more beneficial the effects. HEA establishes a baseline picture of households' food and income, and their cash expenditure requirements, and then, through the use of scenario analysis, allows the analyst to estimate the likely effects of different shocks or multiple shocks on households' access to their basic food and non-food requirements. It is possible to predict with a high degree of certainty, just how big or small food and income deficits will be even if the effects take time to set in. The following case study details the steps employed in developing the early warning system in Malawi

### Case Study 1. Early warning of food crises in Malawi

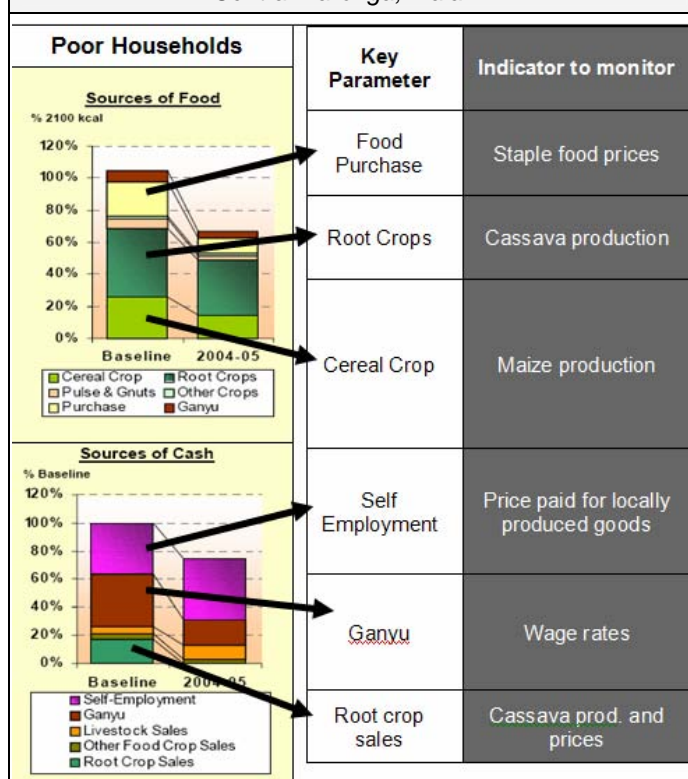
Since 2003 Malawi's Vulnerability Assessment Committee (VAC) has used HEA as the basis for estimating emergency food and/or cash needs. Projections are made in March/April, providing humanitarian agencies with a lead time of eight to nine months before the hunger period starts in December.

#### Step 1. Develop livelihood-specific seasonal monitoring systems using HEA baselines

Baseline livelihoods data was compiled in 2003 for most of the country. This consisted of quantified data on household livelihood strategies in around eighteen livelihood zones. See the 'baseline' bar in **Box 2** for an example of the type of information produced. (Since that time, more baseline data has been collected in additional zones). On the basis of these livelihood-specific pictures it was possible to focus monitoring activities on priority indicators (called 'key parameters' in HEA) within each zone. (You will have a chance to learn about key parameters in more depth in **Module 4 – Outcome Analysis** – in the **Training Guide**.) This helped streamline monitoring activities. Instead of having to re-create the entire food security picture each year, annual assessment activities in March and April could limit their focus on building up the problem specification requirements: cross-checking and refining crop

#### Box 2. Identifying Key Parameters and monitoring indicators

Central Karonga, Malawi

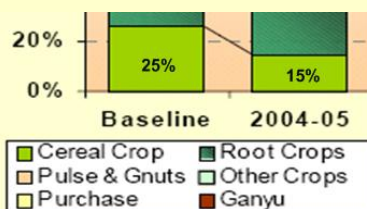


production estimates – of both cereal and cash crops - and other 'hazard' information such as changes in the price of maize, cotton or tobacco, or changes in the availability of *ganyu* employment.

### Step 2. Develop problem specifications for the key parameters

The key parameters were then used to develop a problem specification, based on available monitoring information. In the case of Malawi, these problem specifications are developed in March, just after the third round of crop assessments. The crop production from the March harvest is one of the major determinants of how people will be faring in the consumption year ahead, and especially in the typical hunger period, which starts around December in a normal year. So this information is the one 'known' factor that can be used in developing the problem specification at that point. The other essential information to put together is price information (for cash crop, staple foods and wage rates). Production and price information on the current year is expressed as a percentage of the reference year – which is called the problem specification. See **Box 3**.

#### Box 3. Example of a crop problem specification from Malawi, 2004-05



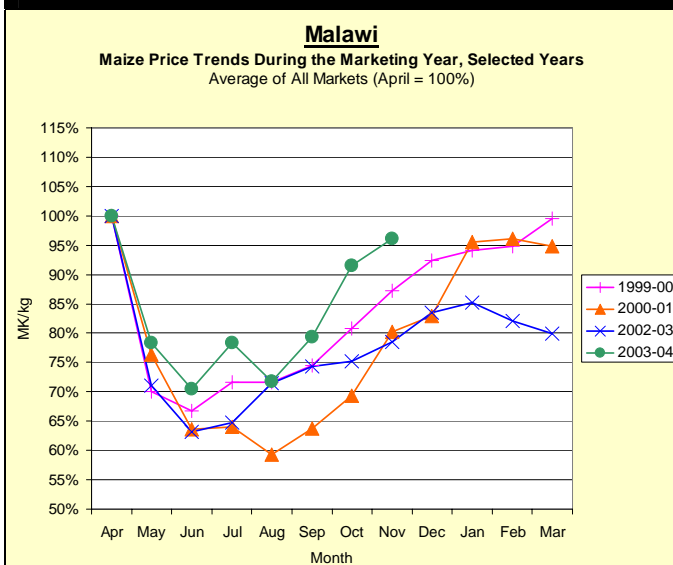
The problem specification for own maize crops in this case is 60% of the reference year. Since, in the reference year, these households obtain 25% of their annual calorie needs from their own maize, with production cut to 60% of the reference year, own maize would cover only 15% of their annual needs in 2004/05.

### Step 3. Create scenarios and run outcome analyses

However, because not all of the problem specification data will remain constant over the year (in particular, prices of staple foods and cash crops and wage rates change over the year as supply and demand rises or falls) it is necessary to make some educated guesses about where prices might be at key points in the year. For instance, in Malawi, staple food prices tend to be highest from December through February, when many people have run out of their own stocks and are depending on the market so supply the household's food. See **Figure 1**. (For more detail on this step refer to **Box 3** in [Chapter 4](#).)

Given that the market is the most important source of food for households at this time of the year, an estimate of staple prices for the December – February period needs to be made in previous March, at the time of the harvest, and then tracked as the year progresses. In Malawi, three scenarios were generated based on assumptions about grain

Figure 1. Seasonality of cereal prices in Malawi





prices in the December to February period.

The assumptions are based on an analysis of how the year compares to previous years, and what happened to prices in those years, factoring in the effect of inflation. Once reasonable scenarios are developed, the outcome analysis is run, using – in Malawi's case – a modified version of the F.E.G. Integrated Spreadsheet. (For more guidance on the integrated spreadsheet, refer to **Module 4** of the *HEA Training Guide, Outcome Analysis*).

The output of this analysis includes the number of people who will require food and/or cash relief in all affected districts for each scenario, and which wealth groups will be affected. It also provides a quantitative estimate of how much food and/or cash would be required to fill the gap.

#### **Step 4. Monitor indicators to track the scenarios & adjust response plans**

The uncertainty associated with the scenarios is gradually reduced as the year progresses. By monitoring staple prices and other key parameters, it soon becomes clear which, if any, of the scenarios is most realistic.

In Malawi, the most important indicator to track as the year moved on was the price of staple foods. As shown in **Box 4**, it was possible to carefully follow the price trend and compare it with each of the scenario projections month by month, enabling response planners to modify their logistical plans a few months in advance.

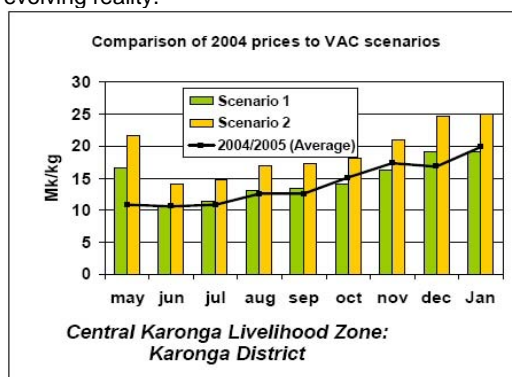
The end result is a projection of food security needs across the country based explicitly on an analysis of households' access to food - that is, taking into account all their sources of food and income, their assets, and their patterns of expenditure - rather than solely their production. See **Figure 2**.

One reason why HEA has been successful in adding value to early warning systems is because the initial investment to obtain the baseline data pays off year after year.

Once established, the baselines become the reference point for each year's analysis, which means that increased focus and time can be spent refining the monitoring systems that produce the

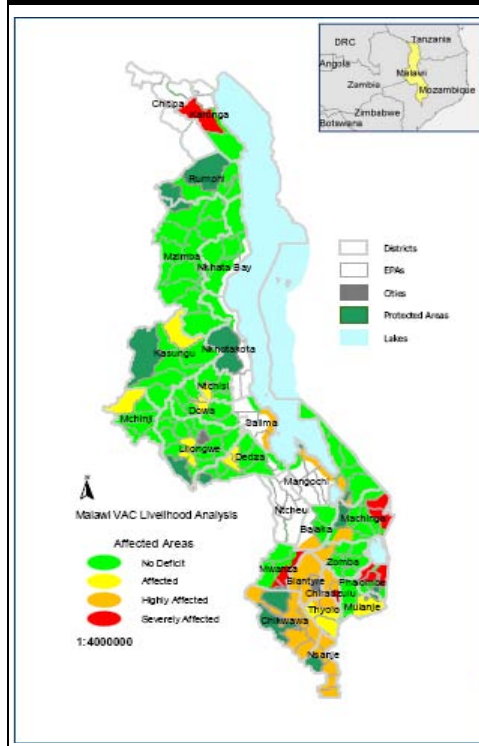
#### **Box 4. Monitoring prices against scenarios**

The graph below shows how maize prices from May through December of 2004/January 2005 (depicted in the black line) compared to the scenario projections made in March of 2004 (shown in the green and yellow bars) in Central Karonga District. In this case the price closely followed the projection made in Scenario 1. In areas where prices were different from the scenarios the outcome analysis and response plans needed to be revised accordingly. Monitoring against vetted and transparent scenarios enables decision makers to quickly revise response plans in line with an evolving reality.



Source: FEWS Malawi

**Figure 2. Food security projection: MVAC 2004 results**



information necessary for the problem specification. This is an important point of distinction between an HEA-based early warning system and other systems, which tend to gather new reference information each year.

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## Assessing Emergency Food and Non-food Needs

Central to the challenge of responding effectively to humanitarian crises is the recognised need to improve assessment practice, to achieve a more consistent and accurate picture of the scale and nature of the problems people in crisis face, and to ensure that decisions about response are properly informed by that understanding. The lack of a systems-wide, transparent method for prioritising responses has been identified as a major problem and a contributing factor to the inequitable allocation of humanitarian resources across different contexts. There is a recognised need for greater consistency in the way problems are framed, in terms of observable symptoms, proximate causes and acute risk factors.<sup>1</sup>

Two other points about food security assessments in particular are relevant here. Firstly, there is a broad consensus that they should provide a basis for determining a broader range of intervention options than is currently the case. This is certainly considered to be the case in southern Africa. RHVP

highlights “the increasing prevalence of chronic vulnerability which is not being effectively addressed by orthodox humanitarian responses... [RHVP] seeks to shift the emphasis of policy from ad hoc emergency responses (primarily food aid) to regular, guaranteed and appropriate social protection measures to meet chronic needs.”<sup>2</sup>

Secondly, it has been suggested that needs assessments should distinguish more clearly between situations where the primary rationale for food assistance is to save lives and situations where the main rationale is to protect assets or livelihoods<sup>3</sup>.

HEA's strengths in needs assessment are that: 1. it is a relatively simple and conceptually clear framework which can be applied across different settings; and 2. it allows for the consistent application of thresholds. The assumptions used in any particular HEA analysis are explicit, and can be challenged and adjusted according to changing circumstances. And because HEA is based on a holistic view of livelihoods – estimating the effect of change on both food and cash income, and on the need to sell assets or forego non-food expenditure – it enables a range of possible interventions to be identified. This is illustrated in the example from Zimbabwe that follows.

<i>Case Study</i>	<i>General Approach</i>
Mashonaland, Zimbabwe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Develop quantified profile of current access to food and cash income and expenditure patterns</li> <li>➤ Compare current and projected access to internationally recognized minimum calorie standards, and locally defined non-food thresholds.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Darcy, J. and Hofmann, C-A. (2003) *According to Need? Needs assessment and decision-making in the humanitarian sector*. Humanitarian Policy Group Report 15, ODI, London.

<sup>2</sup> RHVP leaflet, February 2006, at [www.wahenga.net/index.php/about\\_us/about\\_rhvp/](http://www.wahenga.net/index.php/about_us/about_rhvp/)

<sup>3</sup> Darcy & Hoffman

## Case Study 2: Mashonaland, Zimbabwe: Assessing Needs in the face of Macroeconomic Shocks

As part of a series of food security assessments across southern Africa following the 2001-2002 drought, SC-UK carried out HEA assessments in the Mashonaland Provinces of Zimbabwe in July and August 2002. The assessments focused on communities that were particularly vulnerable to changes in the wider macroeconomic and political climate, such as the land reform programme and rising food prices, as well as to drought. These included informal mining communities, commercial farming/resettlement areas, and normally food secure communal areas that border commercial areas. One of the objectives of the assessment was to determine households' ability to access food, non-food items and services in those communities at that time, and to predict how this might change over the following eight months.

The analysis showed how access to food over the four months prior to the assessment varied between the different communities. It illustrates how HEA provides the facility to provide (i) a quantitative, comparative picture of the immediate needs of communities with very different livelihoods; and (ii) a qualitative analysis of the fundamental problems facing each community and the risks to which they were vulnerable.

In this case, the very high rate of inflation meant that the most appropriate form of relief was food aid, rather than cash or vouchers. In other situations, HEA has - sometimes in conjunction with market assessments - been used to identify which types of interventions are appropriate, and to determine an effective balance of response.

### ***Step 1. Develop baseline profile of current access to food and cash income and expenditure patterns in order to determine appropriate responses***

The first task for the emergency assessment team was to put together HEA baseline information for the groups at risk. This quantified information, presented in **Figure 3**, provided important evidence for determining appropriate emergency food and non-food responses. The descriptions that follow contain a glimpse of that evidence.

#### *The poor in the highveld communal zone*

This is one of the most prosperous areas of communal lands. But the poor have been affected by (i) drought, reducing their own crop production and labouring opportunities; (ii) land reform, reduced labouring opportunities on neighbouring commercial farms; and (iii) high inflation rates for essential items. Appropriate responses: Food aid to close the food gap; improved input provisions to help increase yields.

#### *Unemployed commercial farm workers*

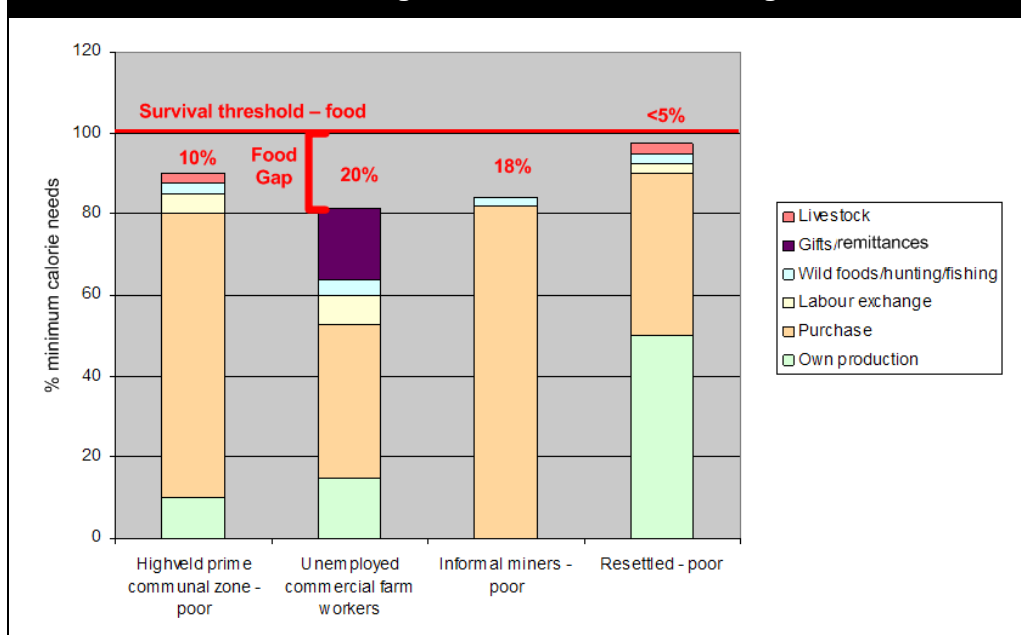
Since losing their jobs on the commercial farms, these households have no formal income, and no access to limited casual work provided by newly-settled farmers, who tend to favour fellow re-settlers. Gifts and remittances from relatives on neighbouring farms will dry up as more farms close. Already their food gap is the highest of all four groups analysed. Appropriate responses: In the near term, food aid will be an important option for these households. Because their livelihoods are entirely income-based and, therefore, vulnerable to inflation, direct food aid provisioning, or appropriate market interventions to keep prices stable, is advisable.

#### *Informal miners*

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inflation is causing the value of income from mining to decline. These households used to depend on seasonal employment on the neighbouring commercial farms to compensate for seasonal dips in mining income. With the closure of so many farms, this source of cash is no longer open to mining families. Appropriate responses: These households are not vulnerable to drought but are very vulnerable to inflation. Given the rising cost of food and other goods in Zimbabwe, appropriate emergency measure would include free food aid, market interventions to keep prices stable, and/or direct provisioning of non-food goods.

**Figure 3. Patterns of food access for poor households in Mashonaland, Zimbabwe following the macro-economic changes**



#### *Resettled farmers*

These households tend to be more food secure than neighbouring farmers in the communal areas. But they lack the inputs to cultivate more than 20-50% of their allocated land.

Appropriate response: There is no need for relief for current consumption, but there is an urgent need for agricultural inputs, credit, and improved infrastructure and service provision.

#### **Step 2. Compare current and projected access to internationally recognised minimum calorie standards and locally defined non-food thresholds in order to determine scale of response**

The food gaps represented in **Figure 3** are the basis for determining absolute levels of food aid required. This is the same as the 'survival food' threshold in other HEA graphs. For instance, the poor unemployed commercial farm workers face an annual deficit of around 20%. This is equivalent to approximately 240 kg of maize for a household of 6. This, along with a population figure for the population at risk would provide response planners with the necessary information to estimate food aid tonnage requirements.

The 'survival non-food needs' threshold was not established in this particular case study. However, if it had been, it would include the cost of items necessary to prepare and consume the food (such as kerosene or firewood, salt and oil) and water, depending on local availability of the latter.

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## Identifying Appropriate Rehabilitation Activities in Sudden-onset Disasters

When sudden shocks, such as floods, tsunamis or earthquakes occur, the tendency for aid agencies is to respond with as much speed as possible, but not always with a great deal of circumspection. Because of the speed with which it can be used, HEA has been an effective assessment tool in sudden-onset disasters, helping provide a framework for determining the most logical and beneficial courses of action. This was the case with an HEA assessment carried out in Pakistan in 2005, which was tasked with considering the impact of the October earthquake on livelihoods in parts of Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

The analysis highlighted the importance of markets to the pre-earthquake rural economy both within and outside the area, which was highly cash-based and strongly linked to urban

centres through employment and remittances. With households purchasing more than 70% of their food needs, and with much of their income earned outside the area, it was clear that an understanding of markets was central to an understanding of livelihoods and of how lives could be saved.

Another important feature of HEA in response planning is its ability to highlight and describe (and quantify) the importance of the links between households of different wealth groups, and the links between households and the wider economy. This, along with the points above, is illustrated in the following case study.

Case Study	Principles of how to do it
Earthquake recovery, Pakistan	➤ Map out pre-crisis livelihood strategies, and post-crisis opportunities using HEA baselines and scenario work.

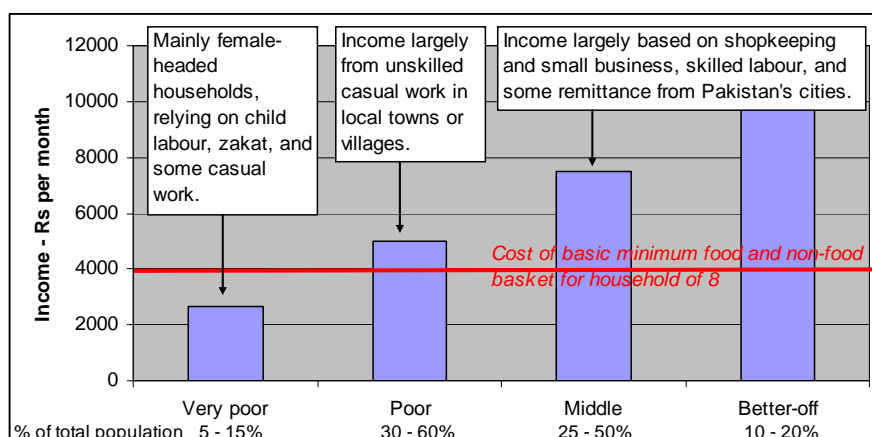
### Case Study 3: Pakistan: Integrating livelihoods analysis into post-earthquake recovery programming

Following the earthquake of October 2005 in Pakistan, humanitarian agencies needed to find out what impact the earthquake had had on the livelihoods of different population groups, and what interventions would be effective in promoting livelihoods recovery.

#### Map out pre-crisis livelihood strategies, and post-crisis opportunities using HEA baselines and scenario work

With its relief effort ongoing, Save the Children UK carried out a rapid (12-day) assessment in Muzaffarabad and Bagh districts. The resulting wealth breakdown and baseline analysis

Figure 4. Income levels of four wealth groups in affected districts pre-earthquake



(Figure 4) showed the different pre-earthquake livelihood patterns of affected wealth groups and enabled a better analysis of ways in which these households' normal modes of living could be restored. It also highlighted just how strikingly poor the poorest group was.

In general the assessment recommended that:

- as markets gradually began to function again, remaining food relief needs should be
- addressed by a gradual substitution of cash for in-kind food aid;

**Table 5. Implications for programming from HEA analysis**

<i>Aspect of analysis</i>	<i>Finding</i>	<i>Implication for interventions</i>
<b>Disaggregated income analysis</b>	<b>Poorer:</b> While the earthquake had damaged homes across all wealth groups, it affected the very poor and the poor worst. These households had relied on employment in towns and villages before the earthquake. But the men needed to stay close to home to rebuild their houses. They were also reluctant to leave wives and daughters in tents, which meant that they could no longer access their most significant source of income.	<b>Poorer:</b> Cash support to families to rebuild their homes to allow men to go back to work.  <b>Better off:</b> Better off are more able to meet their consumption needs.
<b>Looking beyond the village</b>	<b>Better off:</b> In contrast, many of the better off were still receiving foreign remittances or government salaries.  For the poor, the restoration of livelihoods was also dependent on employment becoming available again in villages and local towns, and on food and other goods becoming available locally as before.	<b>Markets should be supported</b> as soon as possible to get back to normal, such as through support for reconstruction and credit to shopkeepers.
<b>Looking at seasonality of income</b>	The poor and very poor earn little or nothing in the winter months (December to February). Normally they rely on credit from local shopkeepers during this time. But shopkeepers were also affected and were not offering credit.	Again, <b>supporting local shopkeepers</b> to re-establish themselves will help the poor survive over the winter.
<b>Use of thresholds to identify the chronically poor</b>	The poorest families were predominantly female-headed households. Women very rarely work outside the home in villages and options for making a living for widows are extremely limited.	<b>Improved long-term social protection programme of regular cash transfer</b> and of support to keep their children in school for these and other chronically poor households

- until families had rebuilt shelters in villages, or been provided with semi-permanent shelter in camps, free relief was more appropriate than 'for-work' interventions. Cash-for-work activities could be considered after shelter had been restored, although more employment was likely to be available by that time;
- if agencies went ahead with food-for-work activities, they should consider both the labour supply in the household plus the need for families to have cash to purchase non-food needs.



Select conclusions drawn from the analysis and implications for programming are shown in **Table 5**. Perhaps the most important message was that damage to businesses, shops and offices should be considered not as an 'exogenous' factor in relief and reconstruction activities but as central to the successful rehabilitation of livelihoods. Household-level interventions (such as cash transfers) should be complemented with support to the market.

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## Considering Appropriate Social Protection Measures

Social protection initiatives can be broadly described as those that "provide income or consumption transfers to the poor, protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks and enhance the social status and rights of the marginalised."<sup>4</sup> As such, the concept covers a wide range of both economic and rights-based interventions, from emergency relief and supplementary feeding, pensions, disability allowances, health insurance and agricultural input subsidies to campaigns for workers' rights. Targeted transfers to poor households, on which HEA analysis is perhaps most clearly suited to provide guidance, is just one of many possible social protection measures.

Identifying the most appropriate type of intervention in a given situation is recognised as a key challenge for vulnerability assessment methodologies. HEA offers two important perspectives that can support the decision making process. First, decisions on the most appropriate instrument - including those that seek to effect change within political, social or legal structures - must be grounded in an appreciation of the constraints and opportunities of *households* as they relate to the wider economic and political environment. The effectiveness of an intervention must also be judged by results at the *household* level. HEA offers such a form of analysis. Second, HEA can model the potential impact of different interventions on the household economy, especially in terms of asset ownership and households' ability to afford particular expenditures. This enables decision makers to compare the possible effects of different measures. The following case study outlines the general steps used in applying HEA to a social protection problem.

<i>Case Study</i>	<i>General Approach</i>
Singida, Tanzania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Develop quantified <b>Baseline</b> profile of current access to food and cash income and expenditure patterns</li> <li>➤ Use <b>Baseline</b> to identify key constraints and opportunities for different wealth groups, and strategies for minimising/exploiting them</li> <li>➤ Use <b>Baseline</b> to determine gap between current and desired standard of living</li> <li>➤ Use <b>Scenario Analysis</b> to analyse projected impact of proposed social protection measures</li> </ul>

### Case Study 4: Singida, Tanzania: Considering Social Protection Measures

Within Tanzania, there is a national commitment to social protection as an important element of poverty reduction. In 2005, SC-UK undertook a poverty and vulnerability assessment using HEA in Singida, one of the poorest districts in Tanzania. The information was used to

<sup>4</sup> HelpAge Int, Save the Children UK, IDS (2006)

inform a number of different angles on the social protection agenda, including health care provision, guaranteed direct transfers, and land/asset provisioning.

***Develop quantified baseline profile of current access to food and cash income and expenditure patterns***

The first task of the team was to develop a useful description of household livelihoods which could act as a basis for understanding, in this case, expenditure patterns and the extent to which households could afford to pay the CHF enrolment fee. Singida Rural District is located in one of the poorest areas of the country, the semi-arid Central Plateau. The HEA baseline determined that agro-pastoralism is the basis of household livelihoods, and consequently, land holding and animal ownership are the main determinants of household wealth. The better off households generate income by selling their livestock and crop production, and earn upwards of 300,000 Tsh in a typical year. Poorer households face land and labour constraints and rely heavily on working for others, typically earning less than 300,000 Tsh a year, with very poor households only reaching 150,000 Tsh.

***Use baseline to identify key constraints and opportunities for different wealth groups, and strategies for minimising/exploiting them***

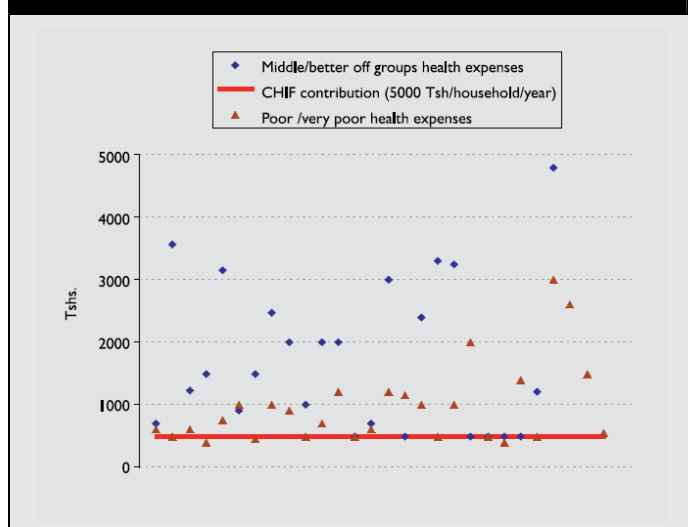
With respect to the national health care debate, the Government of Tanzania set up a health insurance scheme called the Community Health Fund (CHF) which was designed to provide health services on the basis of annual pre-payment of a 5,000 Tsh fee. The idea is to pool the risks of health costs, ensuring that everyone can obtain affordable care when required. However, only 30% of the population in Singida District was enrolled in CHF, and so, at the time of the study, one of the questions was: why? And were economic barriers a factor in the low enrolment? One angle of the HEA enquiry was designed to address this question.

An analysis of household expenditures showed that poorer households spent significantly less money on health care than richer households. This is illustrated in **Figure 5**. Qualitative information from key informants corroborated this, as it was reported that the very poor and poor are more likely to self-treat when they get sick.

However, it was also noted that the poor, when they spent money on health costs, would pay (over the year) at least 5,000 Tsh or more, indicating that it was theoretically possible for these households to afford the CHF contribution most years. So why was there such a low rate of CHF membership among the poor?

The answer to this question has to do with the way that income is earned for the poor: it trickles in incrementally, from daily labour, with households living on very small margins. The main constraint to paying the CHF fee was the fact that it needed to be paid in one instalment. According to the HEA baseline, and the seasonal calendar, there are seasonal constraints to accumulating a single lump of 5,000 Tsh as well. For example, during the period

**Figure 5. Health expenditure by wealth group**





when malaria is highest (which is during the rainy season, when food prices are highest as well), poor households typically earn about 500 Tsh/day, which is just enough to cover 3.5 kg of grain. This is the equivalent of 2100 kilocalories for a household of 6. Additional constraints on very poor households are reflected in the competing demand for their limited income and include:

- Over half their annual income needs to be spent on food in a typical year
- It costs around 10% of annual income to send two children to primary school (again a single outlay expenditure).

Better off households, on the other hand, generate a larger amount of cash at one time by selling livestock, and are in a better position to pay the fee at one time.

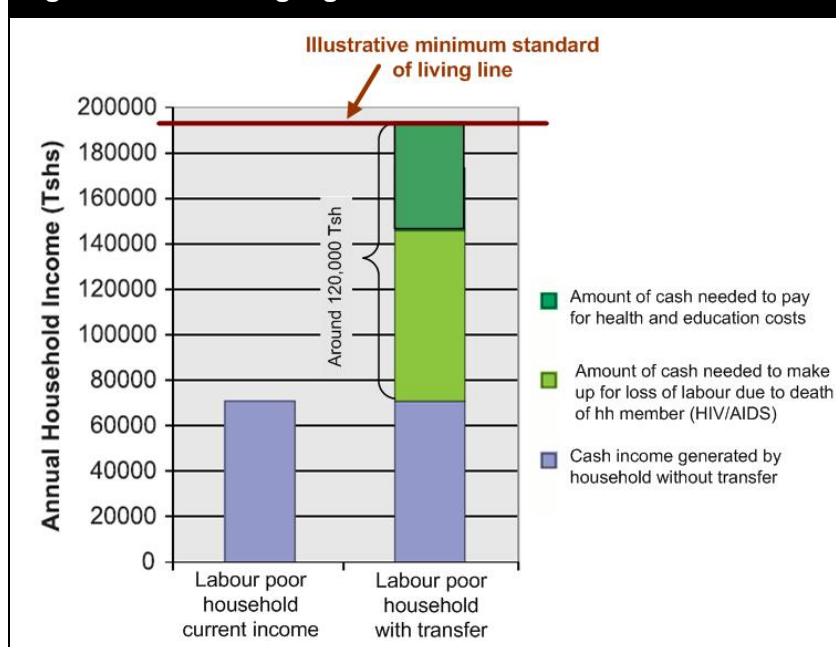
Under the circumstances, it would be difficult for households to pay into a scheme on the basis that it *might* offset costs (but might just as easily be a lost expenditure if no one gets sick) when there are other pressing and certain expenditures to juggle.

So what strategies might be appropriate for minimising the constraints that poor households face to obtaining access to affordable health care? One form of social protection is to institute a policy change that reduces the overall cost of an adequate standard of living by abolishing certain fees. In this case, either a selective waiver for households earning less than 300,000 Tsh, or a universal abolishment of the CHF fee would be appropriate. This would ease the financial burden on poor households while freeing up cash for other pressing needs, such as school, and ensuring they had the same access as better off households to basic and emergency health care.

### ***Use baseline to determine gap between current income and desired standard of living***

Many social protection programmes aim to ensure that a particular minimum standard of living is met by all households. This may be achieved by instituting a policy change that brings down the cost of living for all households (as suggested in the health care cost example above) or it may be achieved through providing a targeted guaranteed transfer to households that fall below a minimum threshold. A quantified HEA baseline can help shape an appropriate policy direction (see above example) and it can also help determine who should receive a targeted transfer, and in what amount. For instance, in the Singida case, one group that deserved special attention was the labour poor households. These households had only one productive member, often due to the death of one of the adults to HIV/AIDS, and were at a particular disadvantage in both growing food and earning sufficient income, since

**Figure 6. Calculating a guaranteed transfer**



both required substantial labour inputs. A transfer of 70-80,000 Tsh would be roughly equivalent to what an active adult could earn in a year, and would compensate for the loss of this labour. However, this is still below a minimum standard of living, which would include the costs of basic health care for the households annually (20,000 Tsh) and the cost of two children attending school (30,000 Tsh). Thus it is possible, using quantified income and expenditure information, to argue that an appropriate total transfer to labour poor households would be around 120,000 Tsh a year.

### ***Use Scenario Analysis to analyse projected impact of proposed social protection measures***

Guaranteed transfers might be one part of a social protection package; but measures that promote livelihood growth and development form a logical additional component. In the case of Singida, the baseline analysis pointed to land being a critical constraint for poor households. As such, the question became, what effect on income would the cultivation of one more acre have? And what crop would be most beneficial?

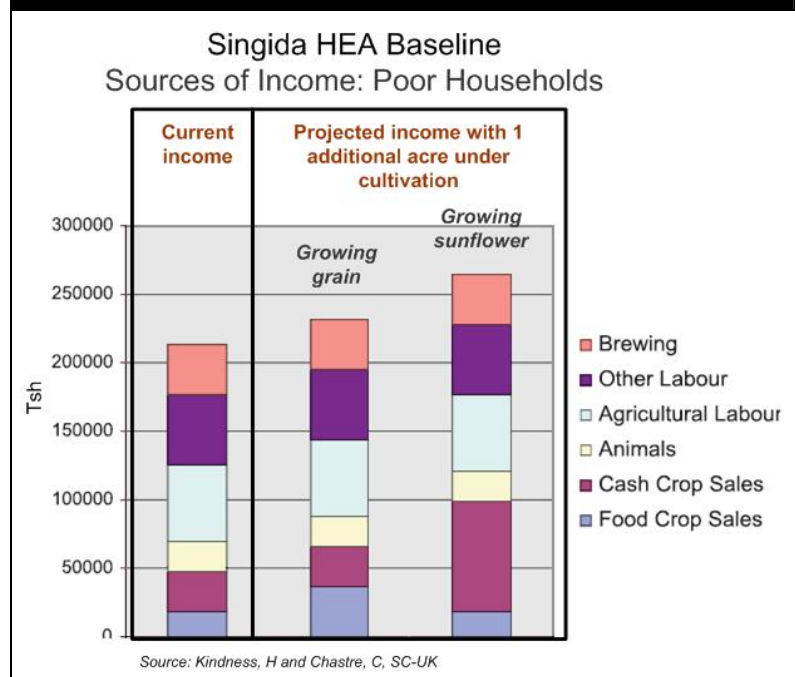
Scenario analysis helped answer these questions, as shown in **Figure 7**.

If households use the additional acre to grow grain, they will no longer need to purchase food in most years. This will decrease their total expenditure by 38,000 Tsh, and at the same time, they could earn some extra cash from selling some of the extra grain (18,000 Tsh), resulting in a cumulative income effect of 56,000 extra Tsh. If they use the extra acre to grow sunflowers, they could increase their direct income by 51,000 Tsh.

Thus, the overall financial gain of growing grain might be greater for the household;

however, the flexibility of more direct cash from sunflowers might be more attractive to poorer households, and afford more benefits to the wider economy. Scenario analysis allows for a measured and thoughtful weighing up of different social protection measures, providing some gauge for their potential effect, as well as an initial view into potential detractions. Testing these measures before they are implemented helps save precious money and time, and increases the likelihood of their success.

**Figure 7. Scenario analysis to show income benefits from cultivating one more acre**



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## Poverty Analysis & Poverty Reduction Strategies

An analysis of poverty clearly has a somewhat different focus than an emergency or post-emergency needs assessment. Its aim is usually to help identify possible poverty reduction programmes or strategies, or to provide input into the design of such programmes and the identification of the target population, or to feed into the design of monitoring and evaluation systems. But, while the information is used in a different way, many of the elements of a poverty analysis are shared by other uses of HEA: a consideration of who the poor actually are and their characteristics; the options they have for economic survival; the seasonal patterns of their survival strategies; and the economic and social constraints they face year on year and the origins of those constraints.

<i>Case Study</i>	<i>General Approach</i>
Thar desert, Pakistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Use HEA baselines in discussions with local informants to identify key constraints and opportunities for different wealth groups.</li> <li>➤ Do causal mapping and analysis to identify how and where (micro and macro levels) the constraints can be minimised and opportunities can be maximized.</li> </ul>

### *Answering important questions about poverty*

HEA has been an effective tool for analysing poverty because it:

- Identifies who the poor are
- Maps out their connection to the wider economy
- Quantifies income and expenditure and compares this to minimum threshold levels
- Helps disentangle how households survive through both expected and unexpected changes that occur seasonally, and year to year

HEA has been found to offer insight into the circumstances of the poor, the obstacles that make and keep them poor; and into the kinds of intervention that might make a sustainable economic difference to different groups. First of all, it provides a contextual understanding of the poor and who they are, of their survival patterns and of their access to goods and services. Developing such an understanding – of what survival actually entails for poor people – is the essential first step in any poverty reduction work. Secondly, by considering the connections by which the poor survive over the year – either with better off households within the community or with sources of capital outside the area – it is able to offer an analysis of the constraints faced by the poor not just in terms of their assets, but in terms of the patterns of dependence and obligation that are perpetuated year after year. Thirdly, because it offers a quantitative picture of assets and of income and expenditure among different wealth groups, it allows poverty to be measured and monitored, and thresholds to be set. And finally, it recognises the dynamic context within which the poor live as they try to recover from shocks – price rises, drought, a cut in local employment opportunities. As a predictive framework, HEA provides a means by which the dynamic nature of poor people's livelihoods, often manifested through asset loss and impoverishment, can not only be understood but can be planned for in programme management.

### **Case Study 5: Thar Desert, Pakistan: Identifying Poverty Reduction Measures**

The following case study from work that Save the Children UK did in the Thar Desert in Pakistan illustrates how an HEA assessment can be used to identify interventions that would

be effective in helping the poor, by looking at the constraints facing them and at the potential for developing the few opportunities open to them for earning income or building assets. It shows the importance of starting with an analysis of asset distribution within the community, especially if this is highly concentrated. Since labour is commonly the poor's only productive asset, local relationships between the poor and the better off are of interest. In southern Africa, this is commonly in relation to employment; in the Thar Desert, these relationships centre around land and credit. But in general, where so many have so little, an understanding of the relationships the majority poor depend on to make ends meet, and of the way in which they use their labour from month to month, must guide the design of any intervention package seeking to raise their standard of living.

This case study does not detail each step in the approach used (the approach is summarised in the box on the previous page) but rather presents the conclusions of this process in **Table 6**, below.

Table 6. Links between HEA findings and poverty reduction interventions	
<i>Assessment finding</i>	<i>Implication for interventions</i>
<p><b>Land:</b> Almost 60% of the population owns no land and cultivates the land of the better off on a sharecropping basis. In exchange for his labour, the sharecropper gets between 50% and 75% of the harvest depending on the arrangement. In practice, loan repayments are often deducted from the harvest, leaving the sharecropper with very little.</p>	<p><i>Ownership of land is the single biggest reason for differences in wealth. Addressing this serious inequity could be very beneficial for poverty reduction. But bringing about changes in land ownership are notoriously difficult to achieve.</i></p>
<p><b>Credit:</b> The giving and taking of loans is a central feature of the economy of the Thar Desert. In an average year, all but the better off take loans – primarily for consumption purposes rather than investment – and spend more than they earn. Money is borrowed in a number of ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landowners provide food or cash to their sharecroppers during the hungry season;</li> <li>• Shopkeepers provide credit; people borrow from moneylenders as a last resort, at very high interest rates.</li> <li>• While the middle group tends to have sustainable levels of debt, the poor and particularly the very poor struggle to repay their constantly accumulating debts, which can be passed from generation to generation.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Programmes aimed at cancelling debts or at least swapping them for lower-interest loans make sense and should be pursued.</i></p>

**Livestock:** As with land, the better off sometimes have more livestock than they can look after themselves. In certain cases, they hire someone for a monthly wage to herd their livestock. But there is also a practice whereby a poorer family takes responsibility for the livestock for a long period in exchange for half of any offspring that are born during that time, and all of the livestock products (milk and butter) that are produced. This is one of the only ways for poorer families to acquire animals for themselves, as saving income is almost impossible.

*Accumulating livestock is one of the few ways poor households manage to acquire capital. This could be promoted through livestock programmes which help poor households attain small livestock that are resilient and low in maintenance costs. The establishment of small cooperatives could be considered, together with support in marketing and business skills.*

**Education:** The very low level of asset ownership among the poor – especially of land and livestock but also human capital in the form of education and skills – severely limits the potential for the very poor and poor to accumulate wealth.

*Investment should be made in skills training in sectors where there is likely to be demand – particularly in the coal mining sector which is expected to be developed in the district. Investment in adequate schooling facilities should also be made, to tackle the lack of literacy and basic education which is a huge economic hindrance.*

HEA in this case helped identify the two central features that defined the household economies of the poor: 1. their lack of assets – in terms of land, livestock, education and skills; and 2. their debt problem. By extension, it was possible to make a strong case that a successful poverty reduction strategy must address both the problem of indebtedness and the lack of assets among the poor. Tackling one problem without the other would not accomplish the goal.

## PRESENTING AND COMMUNICATING RESULTS TO DECISION-MAKERS

The previous section presented a number of ways in which HEA has been used to inform decision making over the years. The application of HEA baselines and outcome analyses span a wide range of contexts. However, unless the information from these analyses can be conveyed to decision makers in a format and through processes that reach them, the information and the valuable time of hundreds of people – especially busy poor household members – is wasted.

This section of the **Practitioners' Guide**, therefore, aims to discuss effective ways to make sure that important HEA outcomes and response analyses are presented and communicated to decision makers in a way that will increase the chances that appropriate actions will be taken.

### Understanding Your Audience

Strategies designed to influence decision makers need to start with an understanding of what decision makers need to know, how decisions are made, and the networks through which decision-makers operate. While, admittedly, there is no single profile of a 'decision maker', there are still common tendencies shared by most decision makers. These are summarised in **Box 5**.

Below each of these characteristics is developed into an appropriate strategy or set of strategies for making sure your points reach decision makers.

#### Box 5. Four common decision maker characteristics

- Decision-makers have busy schedules and limited time.
- Decision-makers in development and aid need to coordinate with others and usually require consensus around their actions.
- Decision-makers have to make their case to others, and need the ammunition to do so.
- Decision-makers need significant lead time to acquire resources and logistical arrangements for responses/projects.

1. **Decision makers have busy schedules and limited time.** A one- or two-page brief, or a presentation, or direct participation in decision-makers' processes, is the best way to convey the minimum set of information with the maximum effect to people who can take action. There is an important function for a comprehensive baseline or assessment report, but this is not the right tool for translating information into action. Given the time constraints of most decision-makers, it is not reasonable to expect anyone with a busy schedule to read a long detailed report.
2. **Decision makers in the humanitarian community need to coordinate with others and usually require consensus around their actions.** It is critical to engage in the processes and meetings that decision makers attend throughout the annual cycle of planning. This engagement allows you to bring information to the table as soon as it is generated and encourages trust and cooperation. In this context, when information that requires action is available, one of the most effective ways to convey it is through a joint presentation to the key decision makers (donors,



NGOs, government, etc) involved in funding, designing and carrying out the required response. Momentum develops when a room full of key people agree an action is necessary. Follow on meetings are quickly planned, and a sense of joint responsibility and ownership is built.

3. **Decision makers, once convinced, have to repeatedly make their case to others and need the ammunition to do so.** Be prepared to put together a series of briefing papers or notes in response to a decision maker's request. Think in terms of a press kit approach, where saying the most in the least amount of time is critical. Try to imagine the kinds of questions a decision maker might need quickly to have responses for, and provide as many of these answers up front as possible. But for those you missed, be prepared to provide responses with minimal turn around time.
4. **Decision makers need significant lead time to acquire resources and to make logistical arrangements for interventions/projects.** Although HEA practitioners are often not in control of determining when an assessment takes place, keeping this principle in mind is still important. In practice it suggests that the time between the end of an assessment or analysis and the issuance of a briefing note or presentation should be kept to a minimum. Sometimes a full baseline report will need to wait until the core messages can be conveyed. In addition, the timeframe for planning annual needs usually revolves around set budget periods. It is important to ensure that your information is provided in a coherent, concise and logical way as early into the needs assessment planning period as possible in order to ensure that decision makers have an opportunity to incorporate it into their overall request to donors. This may require doing interim scenario-based analyses, and then narrowing down the scope and detail as more information becomes available. This can also help 'whet' the appetite of decision makers, and to generate the demand for more focused analyses as the season progresses.

## The Importance of Process

Perhaps the most important principle to keep in mind is that *process is just as important as product*. Without access to decision makers, your messages will never be heard, no matter how true, empirically-based and well-presented. It is through pathways of influence that information reaches those who can make the best use of it. One of the best ways to establish these routes is to build a network of influential partners with intersecting interests in humanitarian issues.

In southern Africa, much effort has gone into building these types of networks. With respect to HEA outcomes, the most important of these are the Regional and National Vulnerability Assessment Committees (R/VACs). These are the forums that guide decisions on how and when to carry out assessments, and they provide a critical link to governments, UN, donors and other NGOs. Building the credibility and capacity of these networks is one important way to solidify the link between high quality information and better response.

A good example of this is provided by the effectiveness of the Malawi VAC in helping to avert a humanitarian crisis in Malawi just a year after the country's 2001/2002 food crisis. As presented in **Case Study 1** above, since 2003, the Malawi VAC has used HEA as the basis for estimating food and cash 'entitlement gaps'<sup>5</sup>. This estimate – because it forms the

<sup>5</sup> An entitlement gap represents the difference between minimum household food and cash requirements and what the analysis project that people will be able to acquire, given certain stated assumptions about market prices. By leaving open the question of how to respond specifically to the gap, the Malawi VAC invites dialogue and planning amongst the donors and program planners, thus building buy-in, coordination and ownership in the process.

consensus view in Malawi and because it is based on a solid and defensible series of analyses – has been included, almost verbatim, by WFP/FAO in their annual CFSAM, providing the basis for annual food needs appeals. By most analysts' accounts, the Malawi VAC was instrumental in linking an accurate early warning with an appropriate and effective response in 2003/4. Not least of the reasons for this was the process of awareness, ownership and consensus building, and capacity development that took place before and during the release of the results of the HEA outcome analysis. Numerous network members took part in the field work to obtain the information on which the projections were based; government staff were trained in the analytical framework used to reach the conclusions; VAC meetings were used as a mechanism for keeping members up to date on findings and conclusions; and the results were circulated before a final draft was issued so that consensus could be achieved.

Four important principles, demonstrated by the example above, underlie most successful processes of engagement in effective networks.

**1. Build relationships and trust.** It is easy to forget – after five weeks in the field, dusty and tired – that people listen most carefully when they trust you. And trust is a product not just of the integrity of your information, but the quality of your relationships. Take opportunities when you can to strengthen bonds with decision makers and people who have access to them, including their technical advisors who should form part of your network.

**2. Stay involved.** People move institutions. With the relatively rapid rates of turnover in the humanitarian world, the people of power today may be gone tomorrow, and as they go a new landscape emerges. Opportunities for engagement and influence are constantly changing. It is therefore important to exercise patience, persistence, and a willingness to stay involved, even when the environment seems less than ideal. A seat at the table ensures that when conditions are right, you can move quickly to influence outcomes more positively.

**3. Anticipate needs.** It is important to keep ahead of the annual planning cycle, staying prepared for the surge in requests for information that comes every year just after the harvest, and mobilizing others to do the same. Working with others to establish a clear planning cycle, with roles and responsibilities outlined and assigned, is a good way to make sure that decision makers get the information they need when they need it.

**4. Go the extra mile.** There are those who do and those who do more. In the long run, doing more usually means you have more influence – directly or indirectly – on decisions. If you've written more, presented more, gone to more meetings, your influence is stronger by default.

## **Design Products that Reach Your Audience**

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Effective processes and high quality information products are mutually reinforcing; hand in hand they are the recipe for translating HEA outcomes into action. A network of dedicated people with no message to gather around soon loses focus and disintegrates. An excellent set of briefing papers with no mechanism for delivery sits on a shelf gathering dust.

The previous section focused on the principles for building an effective network and set of processes. The following section sets out some core principles for generating targeted information products. Three products are given special attention:

1. Decision-maker Briefs;
2. Livelihood Profiles; and
3. Presentations.



## Decision-maker briefs

As discussed above, decision makers have limited time, and few read lengthy reports. One- to two-page briefing papers are most effective when trying to convey an important message. You can always provide back up documentation if requested. The principle for designing a good decision maker brief is opposite to that of writing a good academic paper. In academic papers, a case tends to be built slowly by introducing sequential pieces of evidence, and the conclusion comes last, after the case is made.

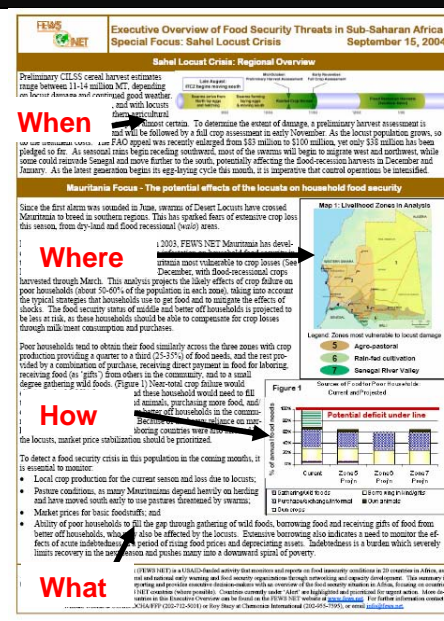
In writing a decision maker brief, you need to start with the conclusion and then support it with relevant evidence. FEWS NET Alerts and Executive Overview Briefs are good examples of effective products – short, concise, and designed to deliver only necessary information. See **Box 6. Chapter 5, Annex A** (on the CD) contains an example of a FEWS NET Alert.

### Box 6: FEWS NET Executive Overview Brief

A one-page brief can be a powerful means of communicating to decision makers. This example, from the back of a FEWS NET Executive Overview Brief in September 2004, details the likely effects of locusts on households in three livelihood zones of Mauritania. On just one page the most pressing questions facing decision makers at that time were addressed. These included:

- When will the locust damage occur?
- Where will the effects be worst?
- How will households in these areas be affected?
- What needs to be done now?

By focusing just on what the decision maker needs to know it is possible to make your point, include pertinent details, and draw conclusions in a short space. If you hook someone's interest, he or she can always request more information, which puts you in a good position to develop a more fruitful relationship.



A few common elements are included in most FEWS NET Alerts and Executive Overview Briefs. These form a general basis for what should be included in any one-page brief for decision makers:

1. A *visual timeline*: this can be an excellent way to convey a lot of information in a small amount of space. Use this tool to show a whole range of information, such as: when the hunger season sets in, when deliveries should start (and stop), when monitoring of certain indicators needs to take place, when revisions to contingency plans should take place, etc.

2. A *map*: Maps are essential devices for orienting decision makers. Most will not have access to livelihood zone information, so it is essential to provide this information in visual form, highlighting where people will be suffering most from particular shocks, or where they are most likely to be resilient. Keep the maps simple and direct, but use them to maximum effect, annotating with text boxes or arrows where appropriate.

3. A section in which *core messages* are communicated. This section answers the questions: who has been affected; how have they been affected; where are they; what needs to be done? When, and for how long?

Slightly longer thematic briefs on particular subjects customised for specific audiences are also effective. These can be drawn from a baseline report, and are best developed just after an assessment, when information is still fresh. A good example of this kind of product is the Limpopo Development Brief or the Limpopo Food Aid Brief, both of which drew on information obtained during a baseline assessment in Mozambique's Limpopo Basin in 2001. (These can both be found in [Chapter 5, Annex A](#) on the CD that accompanies this guide.) Whereas the Baseline Report was written to provide a repository of information about households in the livelihood zone, including standard categories like food and income sources, expenditure patterns, and market access, the Briefs were written to address the concerns of unique target audiences. **Box 7** shows just how different the conclusions from one HEA baseline can be if they are targeted to different audiences.

It is unlikely that you would include this kind of detailed and specific guidance in a general baseline report. But to expect a decision maker to sift through the baseline to pull out

<b>Box 7. Limpopo Basin, Mozambique: Targeted conclusions from decision-maker briefs</b>	
<i>Food Aid Brief Conclusions</i>	<i>Development Brief Conclusions</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Non-emergency food aid is not likely to be an appropriate resource in the Limpopo River Basin Complex. Risk-minimizing agricultural practices and highly fertile soils along the river basin guarantee that sufficient food from households' own crop production is obtained every year, and in most years, stocks are more than adequate to last throughout the year. Significant involvement in mining employment in South Africa ensures access to cash income even in years when crop production in the Limpopo Basin Zone is not optimal.</li> <li>2. Food for work may not be an appropriate distribution mechanism because labor is the biggest constraint to production in this area, not land. With at least two cropping seasons, labor crunch times occur throughout the year.</li> <li>3. Food aid after a flood in the Limpopo Basin Complex should be carefully targeted. With specific reference to floods, food should be targeted to the 20% of households living along the river basin itself (the <i>baixo</i> areas) and only while markets are being restored. Once food is available in markets, households should be able to purchase food with remittance money from South Africa</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Development planners need to take into account that the Limpopo River Basin Complex is a high risk, high return area. Efforts of development planners to maximize returns without consideration of the risk-minimizing strategies employed by resident households may increase households' vulnerability to floods.</li> <li>2. Cassava sales in the <i>alto</i> areas and tomato sales in the <i>baixo</i> areas are the most important sources of cash income for households with more than ½ ha. Improved marketing of these cash crops would increase incomes for rural households.</li> <li>3. Animal traction fills an important labor gap in the Limpopo River Basin Complex. Continued efforts at restocking and improved animal health are well-placed.</li> <li>4. Cashew trees were once an important source of cash income in the Limpopo Basin Complex. Replanting and maintenance of this resource could bring additional income to rural households.</li> </ol>
Source: FEWS NET/FEG, 2001, <i>Limpopo Basin Decision Maker Briefs</i>	

relevant information and design these conclusions him/herself is unreasonable. You need to make the logical links explicit, and put them together in a format that is easily readable. Doing so greatly increases the chances that the information will be used and converted into action.

Principles for designing a good decision maker brief include:

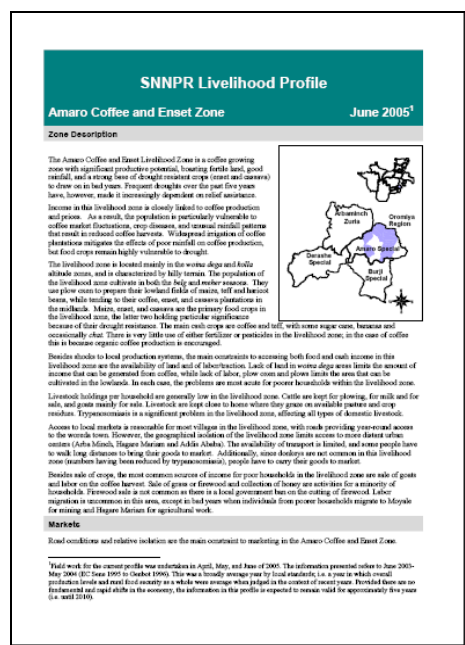
1. Anticipate the questions to which decision makers in different sectors need answers (do informal surveys or read papers related to that sector if necessary)
2. Organise the outline of your brief around these questions
3. Respond to the questions concisely. Use only information relevant to the answers in your response.
4. Pull together supporting graphics and evidence.
5. Keep the brief short – anything over five pages is probably too long. Appearances matter. A two-page, double-sided brief does not look as daunting as a four page report, so print double-sided.

## Livelihood profiles

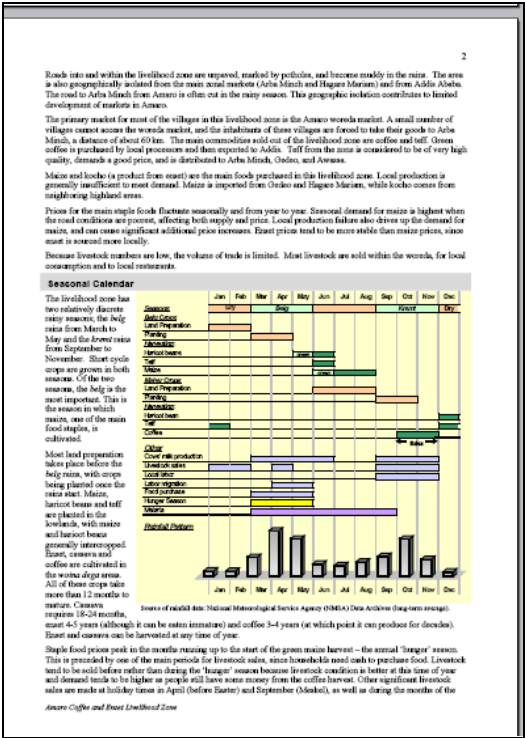
The products discussed above – targeted briefs and presentations – are highly digested and audience-specific outputs. They do not capture all the relevant information gathered in a baseline assessment. Livelihood profiles are designed to do just that, but in five pages rather than fifty. The principle, again, is to say as much as possible in as little space necessary.

**Box 8** illustrates how this is done. Detailed guidance on how to construct a livelihood profile is provided on the CD that accompanies the *Practitioners' Guide* in *Annex B, Guidance Notes on Preparing a Livelihood Profile*. An example of a set of Livelihood Profiles from SNNP Region in Ethiopia can be found there as well.

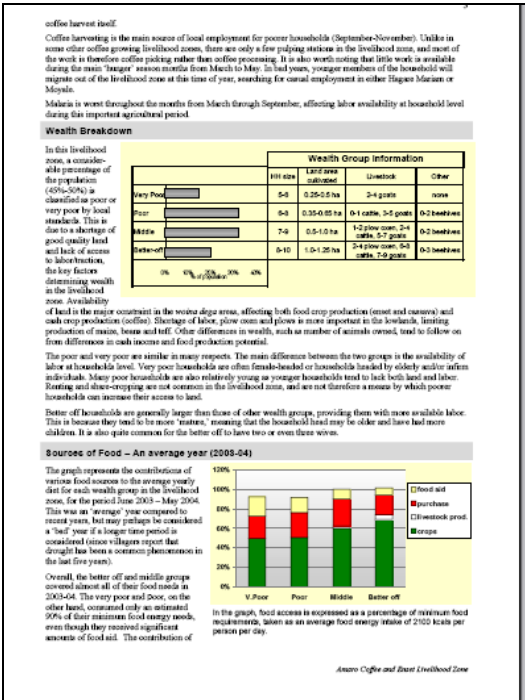
### Box 8. Livelihood Profiles: Content and Design



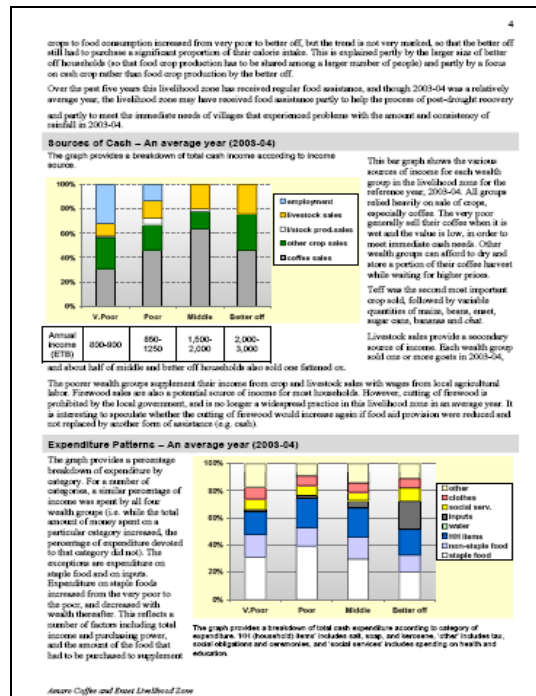
**PAGE 1:** The first page of the Profile normally contains a map showing where the zone is within the country and in relation to administrative boundaries. It also includes a basic introduction to the livelihood zone, including geography, climate vegetation, natural resources, population density etc. A section on markets typically falls on this page, describing patterns of food crop, cash crop, livestock and labour sale within and outside the zone.



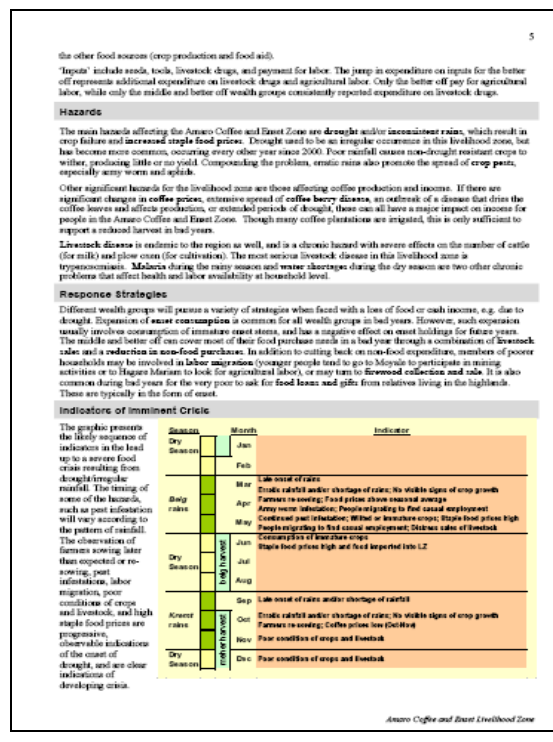
**PAGE 2:** The second page includes a seasonal calendar, providing details on the timing of the main agricultural and other seasonal activities during the year; showing at which times of year households have access to different sources of food and income; indicating how the market price of staple foods varies seasonally; and highlighting how the timing of a hazard will affect seasonal food security.



**PAGE 3:** A bar chart showing the percentage of community households in each wealth group is provided on page 3, with details on household size and composition, area planted and type of cultivation, livestock holdings/other assets (ploughs, fishing boats, etc.). This page also includes a bar chart with information on food access for the main wealth groups along with descriptive text, either in relative or absolute terms, depending on the quality of the data.



PAGE 4: The fourth page includes bar chart analyses of both cash income and expenditure for the main wealth groups. A proportional breakdown is given where quantitative data are unavailable. Otherwise, the results are expressed in cash terms, illustrating the difference between wealth groups in absolute terms. The text provides a description of the reasons for differences between wealth groups.



PAGE 5: The last page provides information on hazards that affect the livelihood zone, typical responses of households in the zone, and indicators of imminent crisis. These sections attempt to summarize how chronic and periodic hazards affect access to food and income for different wealth groups and how these households cope. Information here also helps provide better monitoring guidance, by suggesting what events precede a food crisis.



## **Presentations: Principles of good design and delivery**

Presentations can be an effective way for you to get your message across to a large group of people. The critical mass required for turning a solitary conviction into a collective response is easiest to achieve in a room full of people. A report delivered on the desk of twice as many people may interest a few, but it is consensus that builds the pressure that leads to action.

However, presentations can backfire, depending on how they are conceived, designed and delivered. According to a survey of over 600 PowerPoint audience members, the most annoying aspects of PowerPoint presentations are<sup>6</sup>:

- The speaker reading the slides to the audience
- Text so small the audience couldn't read it
- Slides that were hard to see because of colour choice
- Full sentences used for text instead of bullet points

Putting together an effective presentation requires a set of skills that are different from writing a technical report. You need to construct a compelling story line and find the shortest possible path for delivering your core messages while at the same time providing enough empirical evidence to be convincing.

The guidance points below are provided to help ensure that in presenting important HEA outcomes you hook your audience, convince them of the quality of your analysis and results, and help translate your information into action.

### *Content*

As with other targeted products, the key to providing information in a way that leads to results is to limit your content to the 'need to know' category. Start by deciding what core messages you want the audience to take away from the presentation. Then reverse your angle to see just what information is required to provide convincing evidence to support that message. Sketch out your presentation based on the logic of these messages and the supporting evidence. Leave out any extraneous details or tangential findings. Cut to the chase. Don't start with the slide on methodology or background, for instance. Consider leaving those types of details in a set of slides that you have available if someone in the audience asks a question on a specific subject. Focus instead on the conclusions and recommendations that came out of your analysis. Build your case, but only after you've made your messages clear.

### *Design*

#### *Content Tips*

- Don't pack too much information onto a slide. As a rule, one idea per slide.
- Limit yourself to no more than 6 lines per slide, and 6 words per line.
- Don't put your talking points on the slide.
- Start with an outline of the presentation. If necessary, come back to it occasionally to re-orient the audience.
- Do not count on people to remember details – keep the messages simple and concrete.
- Start with the big picture and narrow down to the details – but only the details you need to make your point.

<sup>6</sup> David Paradi, [www.communicateusingtechnology.com](http://www.communicateusingtechnology.com)

The design of your slide has a lot to do with the ease and effectiveness with which you convey your messages. Three aspects of design are particularly important in presentations: the use of colour, animation, and fonts. Tips related to each of these are provided below.

<i>Colour</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be smart in your use of colours. Colour can be an effective way to convey information (through colour-coding different pieces of information), but misusing, or overusing colour can cause your audience to tune out or become agitated.</li> <li>• The background of your slides should be consistent throughout the presentation. If you choose to use a colour for the background, keep in mind that it will constrain your choice of colours in charts and other graphics, since only contrasting colours will show up. Stay away entirely from dark green and reds, as they do not project well.</li> <li>• Remember: contrasting colours – if your background is dark, make sure to use white or light-coloured text. If your background is light, use dark text colours.</li> </ul>
<i>Animation</i>
<p>Animation can help you do two things more effectively:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. introduce a list of items one by one, so your audience has time to digest each;</li> <li>2. connect a series of related ideas, or describe the evolution of an event or system</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not use animation for its own sake. It can be distracting to the audience, and does not convey the seriousness of tone that the subject matter requires.</li> <li>• If you plan to print out the presentation, and your animation layers text or graphics on top of each other such that the slide is unreadable, consider an alternative means of animation which can be achieved by inserting a series of duplicate slides that add each piece of information (or remove pieces of information) in sequence. The 'animation', then is achieved by moving from slide to slide.</li> </ul>
<i>Fonts</i>
<p>There are three basic categories of fonts: Serif, Sans-Serif and Script.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serif fonts have an extra tail on the end of each letter. Times Roman, Bookman, Garamond and Century are examples of Serif fonts. It takes the eye longer to read a serif font, so it can be a good choice for a title font on a slide so that the viewer takes his time to understand the topic of the slide.</li> <li>• Sans-serif fonts do not have the tails at the end of letters. Examples of sans-serif fonts include Arial, Century Gothic, Helvetica, Lucida Sans, Tahoma and Verdana. These fonts are easier to read, so it is best used for body text on a slide so that the viewer can quickly read the point and return their attention to the speaker.</li> <li>• A script font is one that tries to emulate handwriting, such as Brush Script, Edwardian Script, Freestyle Script, French Script, Papyrus and Vivaldi. A script font is difficult to read and should not be used on a slide.</li> <li>• Use a combination of upper and lower case. The combination generally makes it easier to read than all upper case.</li> <li>• For title fonts, use between 36 and 44 point</li> <li>• For main body font, use between 28 and 32 point</li> <li>• For sub-point fonts, use between 24 and 28 point</li> <li>• The minimum font size on a slide should be 24 point. Any smaller and your audience will have difficulty reading the slide. You should try to use as large a font as possible so that it is easy to read.</li> </ul>

### Graphics

Graphics can be a particularly effective way to convey HEA information and to support your arguments. It is very important, however, to design your charts and graphics with clarity in mind. Keep them simple, and make sure to explain them to the audience. Don't assume that the audience will be able to immediately digest your charts. Use them as an opportunity to go into some of the detail that is necessary to convince your audience of the empirical nature of the field information, and to support your main messages. Too many graphics, however, can lead to presentation overload. So choose carefully and strategically, making sure to vary your slides, inserting text slides between graphics, and photos between text.

#### *Graphics Tips*

- To test if your audience will be able to read the fonts on your chart, stand at least 12 feet from your monitor. If you can still read the chart, keep it. If not, modify it or do not use it.
- Label axes clearly with large fonts.
- Explain your graphics – use them to their full advantage. Take the time to make sure your audience understands the significance of the information contained in the graphic.

#### *Presenting*

Make sure to practise your presentation. Stumbling from slide to slide makes you look unprofessional. It is particularly important to know what is coming in the next slide, and to practise the transitions between slides. Memorise key phrases to help you make good segues. Most importantly, NEVER read from your slides. The slides are meant to provide a visual aid for your audience, not a cheat sheet for the presenter.

#### *Public Speaking Tips*

- Stand up and keep eye contact with the audience.
- Be aware of any nervous ticks you have (such as constant fidgeting, pacing or rocking) and contain these during the presentation
- Make your movements count. Move to the screen only when you want to emphasize a detail on a slide, otherwise keeping it clear of your presence.
- Keep the lights on. Using a white background will help ensure the slides are visible in a well lit room.