



International rapid responses to the global food crisis of 2007/08

Three years on: How relevant, effective, and efficient were international responses to food price rises across the world in 2007/08?

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Preface

The bulk of this paper was drafted between late 2010 and early 2011.

Though finalisation was delayed some months, new information does not alter the conclusions or implications of this study.

New information tends to concern disbursement or implementation of responses taken from 2010 onwards, as well as plans for later responses — rather than evaluations or reviews of earlier activities. The focus of this study is on the earliest or most rapid responses various international groups took to the food price crisis of 2007/08, hence the decision has been taken to end the preliminary analysis here. A follow-up look in late 2012 or early 2013 is likely to be instructive.

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The interpretations in this document, however, are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of people who have helped us, or the UK's Department for International Development that funded this study. We are solely responsible for any errors, omissions and imprecisions.

List of Abbreviations & Terms

\$	US dollar, unless otherwise stated
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AfDB	African Development Bank
CFW	Cash for Work
CPA	Comprehensive Performance Assessment
CT	Cash Transfer
DIPECHO	Disaster Preparedness ECHO
ECHO	Humanitarian Aid department of the European Commission
EUFF	European Union Food Facility
EWS	Early Warning Systems
FAC	Food Aid Convention
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FFW	Food for Work
Food price crisis	Refers to the international food (and fuel) price crisis of 2007/08, unless otherwise stated
GAFFSP	Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme
GFRP	Global Food Crisis Response Programme
GIEWS	Global Information and Early Warning Systems

HLTF	High Level Task Force (of the UN, on the Global Food Security Crisis)
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IDB	Islamic Development Bank
ISFP	Initiative on Soaring Food Prices
LIFDC	Low Income Food Deficit Countries
LIC	Low Income Country
LM	Lower Middle Income Country
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
RUTF	Ready to Use Therapeutic Foods
SFP	Supplementary Feeding Programme
Stunting	Low height for age
TCP	Technical Cooperation Programme
TFP	Therapeutic Feeding Programme
TTL	Task Team Leader (World Bank)
UA	Units of Account (African Development Bank)
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
Underweight	Low weight for age
UNRWA	The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UM	Upper Middle Income Country
WB	World Bank (International Bank for Reconstruction & Development)
WFP	World Food Programme of the United Nations

Summary

What can be said about relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of international responses to the global food price crisis of 2007/08, four years on?

To address this question, responses by a selection of international bodies involved in humanitarian and development work, including UN bodies, EU departments, and International Financial Institutions, were reviewed. This paper provides a provisional synthesis of findings from already available documentation including evaluations, completion and results reports, monitoring and progress reports as well as the secondary literature.

Conclusions are tentative, since the review has been relatively brief, relies on published documents, and covers only a sample of the involved agencies or bodies. What is more, the process of review within some major actors, such as the EU, remains incomplete.

Responses to rising food prices

Billions of dollars — perhaps more than US\$5 billion — were approved in 2008 and 2009 by the agencies examined here as a response to the 2007/08 world food crisis, though it is difficult to be sure of the precise amount as many of the figures reported cannot be aggregated. For instance, if a donor government gave an international bank US\$10 million that was channelled through a UN implementing agency, this might be counted two or three times under a simple summing up of agency responses. Furthermore, not all of the pledged funds materialised, and not all budgets were disbursed.

Overall, responses to the food price crisis of 2007/08 fell into three major categories:

1. Collecting and disseminating information internationally, to assess the crisis and its implications, to mobilise and co-ordinate responses;
2. Technical advice to national governments on how to respond, particularly on identifying the vulnerable;
3. Funds and in-kind donations to
 - a) ***Stimulate agricultural production*** — mainly through seed and fertiliser distribution;
 - b) ***Provide food aid, health and nutrition programmes*** — with assistance from UNICEF, WFP and WHO; and,
 - c) ***Expand (support or in some cases implement) other safety nets.***

Evaluating responses

This review focuses on the third response. It asks about the results of these funds and in-kind donations, using three criteria: relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency.

Satisfactory answers were often difficult to find. Just tracking who spent what in response to the food crisis is problematic enough, let alone what it was spent on and to what effect. Most reporting stops at outputs without consideration of impacts or outcomes. Very few evaluations of what was done are available; exceptions being for FAO's TCP responses, and for some WFP and DG ECHO programmes in place at the time of the food crisis. And while these studies made the best out of the limited funds, time, and data available, many questions remain.

Key findings

The international community mounted a response to the food price crisis of 2007/08 that was remarkable and admirable for its size and urgency. But how relevant and effective were these responses? The record is not as clear as it might be, but nevertheless the following points stand out.

First, responses to the crisis of higher world food prices were heavily conditioned by how different agencies perceived the crisis. Humanitarian organisations, for example, tended to see the crisis as exacerbating costs of food aid, undermining cash-transfers, and adding extra demand for safety nets. They responded by securing more funding and expanding safety nets. Development agencies that saw the higher prices emerging from low production and stocks of key staples responded by promoting an agricultural production, and in some cases taking steps to increase (often humanitarian) cereal reserves. Other agencies took the perspective of developing country governments. They saw the crisis eating into the budgets of low income countries attempting to stimulate national production or cushion their vulnerable populations from price rises, so they provided funds to pay for these, and in some cases to compensate for budget losses arising from reduced import taxes, higher fuel bills and the like. When they saw governments struggling for lack of administrative capacity, they helped with technical and financial support.

Were these efforts directed to the right place and people? By location, the agencies seem to have chosen the right countries to focus their efforts. Only nine out of 123 countries seemed to receive more or less attention than might have been expected. It is not clear, however, if the neediest locations within countries were reached, as it is difficult to find information on the extent to which spatial mapping of sub-national vulnerability influenced decisions. It does however seem that rural areas got less attention than urban in many cases. In this respect, targeting was misinformed. The typical expectation was that urban households would be harder hit than rural ones since it was assumed that the latter would not have to buy in food. In fact, many of the rural poor — who were often poorer than their urban counterparts — relied heavily on buying in food and so were hit hard.

Socially, not enough is known about whether or not the right people within selected locations were reached. In some cases, reaching the neediest was too difficult at short-notice.

Were the responses the right ones? Most responses fell into two categories: stimulating production and protecting vulnerable people from high food prices. Broadly, these responses were appropriate, but perhaps not always entirely accurate. In addition to the questionable assumption that problems were more severe in urban areas, it was also often thought that the prime cause for concern was adding to the numbers in poverty, rather than the increased poverty of the already poor. Much of the urgency of the international response was stimulated by the estimate of an extra 100 million or so being added to the numbers of the hungry; rather than the worsening fate of the 850 million who were already hungry, ill-placed to cope with extra strain on their access to food. An earlier review found that not all of the predicted impacts of higher food prices were entirely as expected

As predicted, high food prices increased malnutrition (especially in young children) and poverty. Some findings were less obvious. These included: the depth of the impact in rural areas, the increase in inequality; the widespread use of credit to buy food, and the fact that most poverty impact came from increasing depth of poverty in the already-poor, rather than increased 'poverty headcount.' (Compton et al. 2010)

How effective were these responses? Responses were not as timely as would have been ideal. Inputs were delivered but many arrived after the first half of 2008, when crops were planted in the Northern Hemisphere. Globally, most production response came from developed regions, rather than in developing countries. Some of these, however, did see strong response – particularly in West Africa and in South, South-East and East Asia. Some individual programmes report positive impacts on people’s food security.

Safety nets were similarly delayed: most got going by late 2008 and early 2009, when prices had been high for some months. Less is known about their effectiveness. Some reportedly suffered from implementers’ capacity constraints, overly complex targeting, and insufficient attention to women. There were also not enough attempts to examine relative effectiveness of implementing one type of safety net compared to another. In many cases, school feeding programmes were the focus because, unlike more sophisticated social protection programmes, they already existed in many low income countries and could be scaled-up relatively quickly.

There were furthermore some reports that initiatives to respond to crisis took priority over existing programmes. Higher food and fuel prices meant some programmes already underway had to be scaled back, even as funds were allocated to the new responses.

A final reflection concerns the evaluation deficit. While it may still be early to ask questions about impacts of these responses, not all agencies have made sufficient attempts to evaluate their response. Most reporting stops at outputs without consideration of impacts or outcomes. Very few evaluations of what was done are available; exceptions being for FAO’s TCP responses, and for some WFP and DG ECHO programmes in place at the time of the food crisis. And while these studies did the best they could given limited time and data, they still leave some questions unanswered.

1. Introduction

When prices of cereals on international export markets doubled or more in 2007 and early 2008, the international community promised billions of dollars to tackle hunger. Hundreds of millions were rapidly spent in response: but on what sort of programmes and projects? And three years later, what is the verdict from the evaluators?

This paper was drafted between late 2010 and early 2011; corresponding with the second dramatic rise in some staple cereals prices on international markets in three years.

Several medium-term and longer-term responses by major international agencies to the crisis of 2007/08 were still underway at this time, and some institutions were extending their response to the 2007/08 crisis to cover implications of the crisis emerging in 2010/11. In this context, it is useful to draw lessons from how agencies perceived the 2007/08 crisis and how relevant, effective, and efficient their responses were.

This report reviews responses by the international community, focusing on a selection of international bodies involved in humanitarian and development work. It provides a provisional synthesis of findings from already available documentation including evaluations, completion and results reports, monitoring and progress reports as well as the secondary literature.

It complements and builds on two studies relating to the 2007/08 food crisis published by ODI in 2010: the first a look at country responses using case studies from Bangladesh, Nicaragua, and Sierra Leone (Wiggins et al. 2010); and the second a synthesis of evidence about the impact of the crisis on the poor (Compton et al. 2010).

The organisations or groups with responses reviewed here include UN bodies, EU departments, and International Financial Institutions, as follows:

United Nations:

- Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO),
- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD),
- Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA),
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP),
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF),
- World Food Programme (WFP), and
- World Health Organisation (WHO)

& helping to co-ordinate these efforts

- UN Secretary General's High Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis (HLTF),

International Financial Institutions:

- African Development Bank (AfDB),
- Asian Development Bank (ADB),
- Inter-American Development Bank (IADB),
- Islamic Development Bank (IDB),
- World Bank (IBRD)

European Union:

- European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Department (EU DG ECHO),

■ European Union Food Facility (EUFF)

Other agencies, regional development banks, bilateral donors, and international civil society organisations also responded to the food price crisis of 2007/08. Many made contributions in partnership with the agencies on which this study concentrates. Practically a wider review of all international responses is a task beyond the scope of this paper¹.

Conclusions are tentative, since the review has been relatively brief, relies on published documents, and covers only a sample of the involved agencies or bodies. What is more, the process of review within some major actors, such as the EU remains incomplete.

The type of agency or body under review also influences what type of evaluation might be expected. This review looks at donors, implementing agencies, and facilitating bodies, which have different approaches to reporting on and evaluating actions.

Most reports available at the time of drafting concerned plans and the delivery of inputs — for example, so much fertiliser was distributed, across that many farmers — rather than what effect and impact these had on people's incomes and food security. Formal evaluations or documentations of lessons and implications for future work are even thinner on the ground. Table 1.1 outlines available information by agency or organisation at the time of drafting in early 2011², separated into four categories: *Plan*, *Implementation*, *Results*, and *Evaluation*.

The next section describes the main responses undertaken by each agency; predominantly concerned with the *Plan* and *Implementation* categories in Table A.

For those cases where results were reported or an evaluation carried out, a framework has been devised for considering the emerging findings from these reports.

Finally conclusions are drawn, along with some preliminary implications.

Section summaries appear at the beginning of each section for reader convenience.

¹ For instance, a discussion of the IMF response or responses of bilateral donors is excluded

² To the best of our knowledge this has barely changed to September 2011.

Table 1.1 Level of information on responses available by late 2010/early 2011 by agency

	PLAN	DISBURSEMENT / IMPLEMENTATION	OUTCOMES / RESULTS*	LESSONS / EVALUATION
AfDB	General plans announced. Some country & budget details available	Some information on allocations in 2008. Disbursement largely unknown. Country specifics unknown	No information available	No information available
ADB	General plans announced. Detail on country & budgets available	Specific details available by country programme.	Some results from interim monitoring & completion reports	No publicly available information
EU Food Facility	General intentions and specificity on planned countries and funds, with country fiches outlining plans	Information on spending available	Monitoring underway but not publicly available. Some results from implementing agencies	Evaluations not scheduled to report until 2012
EU DG ECHO	Broad intentions outlined. Country specific plans available, but not specific to the food price crisis	Some information on spending available	No information available	Some evaluations available**
FAO	Focus countries identified. Some country-specific plans available.	General and some country and spend-specific information available	Some estimated results available	Some evaluations available. Some documentation of lessons learned
HLTF	Newly established entity. Mandate outlined. Focus countries identified.	Some cataloguing of member organisation achievements available	Some estimated results of member organisations available	No information available
IADB	General plans and budget outlined. Some specific plans available but no full list.	Some examples available in terms of funds allocated and some disbursements. No full list of responses implemented	No information available	No information available
IFAD	General plans outlined. Some information on budget. No country level detail available	Some examples available. No full list of responses implemented	No information available	No information available
IDB	Broad intentions outlined. Some specificity on timing of funds	Some information on allocation and disbursement of funds available	No information available	No information available
OCHA	Intention to fund outlined. Specifics left to other agencies.	Details of disbursement unknown. Implementation left to other agencies	No information available	No information available
UNI-CEF	General plans outlined. Some information on funds. No country level detail available	General and some examples available. No full list of responses implemented	No information available	No information available
UNDP	General intention outlined. No country or funding specifics available	Some examples of activities. No full list.	No information available	No information available
World Bank	General plans announced. Country and budget specific information available.	Specific details about responses implemented available	Some results documented in <i>Implementation, Completion and Results Reports</i> & interim monitoring reports	Lessons from synthesis of interim reports available. Formal evaluations not yet available
WFP	Broad intentions outlined. Country specific plans available, but not specific to the 'global' food crisis.	General and some country and spend-specific information available	Some estimated results available	Some evaluations available**
WHO	General plan and funds outlined for a country group. No specifics on countries.	Some details on what was implemented	No information available	No information available

Note: * Some information may be available on results from sources other than the agencies or those contracted to evaluate their responses; for example, results on supply response or price dampening may show up on national level databases, although assumptions must be made about causality. ** These evaluations look at agency responses to complex crises, to which the international food price spike was one contributor. This is particularly the case for humanitarian work which higher food & fuel prices made more expensive or hampered in other ways.

2. Early responses by agency & type

2.1 Section summary: rapid responses to the food price crisis

Billions of dollars — perhaps more than US\$5 billion — were approved in 2008 and 2009 by the agencies examined here as a response to the 2007/08 world food crisis³.

There is a further issue of spending compared to pledges. Not all of the pledged funds materialised, and not all allocations were disbursed. Funds approved through the World Bank's Global Food Price Crisis Response Fund (GFRP) in 2008 for instance were only 81% disbursed by late 2009.

Overall, responses can be grouped into three major areas, as follows—

1. ***Collecting and disseminating information internationally, to assess the crisis and its implications, to mobilise and co-ordinate responses.*** These were actions taken by all of the agencies in this review.
2. ***Technical advice to national governments on how to respond, particularly on identifying the vulnerable.*** Almost all agencies reviewed here did this to some extent.
3. ***Funds and in-kind donations to***
 - a) ***Stimulate agricultural production*** — mainly seed and fertiliser distribution.
 - b) ***Provide food aid, health and nutrition programmes*** — with assistance from UNICEF, WFP and WHO.
 - c) ***Expand (support or in some cases implement) other safety nets.***

2.2 Responses by agencies

Agencies responded to the rise in food prices with three broad sets of measures:

- ***Collecting and disseminating information internationally, to assess the crisis and its implications, to mobilise and co-ordinate responses.***
- ***Giving technical advice to national governments on how to respond, particularly on identifying the vulnerable.***
- ***Providing funds and in-kind donations*** to stimulate agricultural production, provide food aid, undertake health and nutrition programmes, and to expand safety nets.

This section outlines the ***rapid food price crisis responses*** of selected agencies or bodies in three clusters:

1. International Financial Institutions;
2. Other UN agencies or bodies; and
3. The European Union.

For each agency, it sets out what they planned to do and what is known about what they did⁴The focus here is on short- to medium-term actions at country level. This report is less concerned with the agencies' activities at international level to raise awareness, consider options, and stimulate debate.

³ *Perhaps*, because it is impossible to aggregate many of the figures as they are. For instance, if a donor gave the World Bank US\$10 million that was channelled through the GFRP, ending up with the WFP running a school feeding programme, this might be counted two or three times under a simple summing up of agency responses

⁴ Where available, more detail appears in Annex A. Note that in some cases, it may be artificial to separate responses by agency: some were funders, some implementers, some both. There was also a great deal of inter-agency collaboration.

2.2.1 Responses of International Financial Institutions

Many of these organisations held or participated in international meetings in the first half of 2008 that mandated them to respond rapidly. For example, the Asian Development Bank and the Islamic Development Bank both announced their intentions to respond to the food crisis at their Annual General Meetings; the ADB's in Madrid in May, while the IDB's was in Jeddah in June. In most cases, agencies moved funds from slow disbursing lines in their loan portfolios to finance rapid action funds. How the funds switched were later replenished is not always clear.

The *African Development Bank* (AfDB) responded by establishing the Africa Food Crisis Response, intended a) to reduce vulnerability of the poor to high or unstable food prices; b) to support broad-based growth by increasing agricultural productivity, market participation and by improving government policies for sustainable agricultural development; and c) to strengthen capacity in governments to ensure enabling environments for sustainable agricultural growth, including by the private sector.

Their response was intended to provide UA 471.97 million (about \$US 765 million) in the short-term and UA 1.4 billion (\$US 2.27 billion) in the medium to long-term. Of the short-term responses to boost production, UA 133 million was to come from realignment of existing agriculture portfolios. A further UA 24 million was for increased dissemination of NERICA rice seeds. UA 304 million was planned for budget support: to help with programmes including improving public financial management systems (particularly strengthening tax revenue mobilisation); strengthening procurement systems; implementing national agricultural production strengthening programmes; and mitigating impacts of high oil and food prices. Early plans outlined 11 countries that could benefit from budget support measures. A final UA 18 million was intended for accelerated disbursement from the Surplus Account, particularly for countries not able or in a position to access or benefit from the other channels.

According to their website⁵, in 2008, five countries (Central African Republic, Comoros, Burundi, Djibouti, and Liberia) benefited from the AfDB's Food Crisis Response Initiative as the bank approved for them in December 2008 a total of UA10.56 million (about \$US 17 million)⁶. Re-aligned funds not included in this category were also used in response, though this review was unable to find a definitive list of amounts or countries in which this happened. For instance HTLF (2009) explained that in mid-2008 the AfDB realigned US\$25M worth of planned support to help mitigate against high food and fuel prices in Ethiopia. Some more isolated reports of AfDB contributions to food security are in HLTF (2009); though these are not necessarily branded 'global food crisis' responses. They include for instance: f CFA1.7 billion (about US\$3.4M) to Benin to purchase fertilisers, motopumps, motocultivators and rice mills; and US\$3M to Eritrea as budget support to 'help stabilise food prices domestically and regionally' (no dates given for either example) (HLTF, 2009).

In May 2008 the *Asian Development Bank* (ADB) announced it would assist member countries hard hit by food price rises ; specifically to protect against nutritional deprivation, erosion in real purchasing power, and asset alienation. They subsequently allocated emergency assistance to Bangladesh, Cambodia, Mongolia, and Pakistan worth a total of about

⁵ <http://www.afdb.org/en/topics-sectors/topics/food-production/>

⁶ All conversions from UA (Units of Account of the AfDB) to US\$ were done at May 2008 exchange rate.

US\$777 million. This was to support programmes for: safety nets, food stamps, food- or cash-for-work, school feeding, scholarships, agricultural productivity enhancement, and in the case of Pakistan, funds earmarked broadly for 'food security'. By mid 2010, fund disbursement was complete or on track in all cases except one, where US\$20 million in funding to Mongolia had been delayed for reasons beyond the control of the ADB. In Cambodia and Mongolia, however, programmes did not begin until late 2009, and were ongoing at the time of drafting.

The *Inter-American Development Bank* (IADB) announced in late May of 2008 that it would establish a US\$500 million line of credit to mitigate the impact of rising food prices for member countries. This was to include mechanisms to ensure fast disbursement, and was earmarked for purposes of strengthening social protection networks and improving agricultural productivity. On top of this US\$500 M, they also intended to reassign previously approved loans to mitigate impacts of higher food prices if required. The IADB furthermore set aside US\$20 million of a grants programme for poverty alleviation (the Social Fund) to study ways of improving the efficiency of early childhood nutrition programmes and other government programmes. In some cases, programmes were delayed in starting, such as those in Haiti and Peru that were only approved in late 2009.

The *International Fund for Agricultural Development* (IFAD) which was set up in response to the global food price spike of 1973/74, now hosts the Rome base of the High Level Task Force (HLTF). IFAD responded to the price spike by earmarking US\$200 million in April 2008 to reallocate existing loans upon request of governments. This money was intended to help poor farmers with inputs to boost production in the next cropping season and establish a basis for sustained production increases in seasons to follow. By Oct 2009 they had approved re-allocations in 8 countries.

IFAD saw a record increase in replenishment at the end of 2008, and from September 2008 to September 2009 the IFAD Board approved US\$710 million worth of loans and grants for 38 countries (HLTF, 2009). These were intended to: improve access to credit; help with supply of inputs; develop and apply agricultural technology; manage natural resources; build infrastructure; and develop animal production (ibid).

In May 2008 under the Jeddah Declaration, the *Islamic Development Bank* (IDB) approved a financing package worth US\$1.5 billion over 5 years to strengthen agriculture and food security in member countries. Under the first phase of this programme, the short-term response was to spend US\$20 million in 25 of their least developed member countries. By 2010 about 63% of this last planned amount — US\$12.4 million — had been disbursed across 17 of a total of 23 countries. By September 2010, a total of US\$80 million had been disbursed, out of a total of US\$557 million approved.

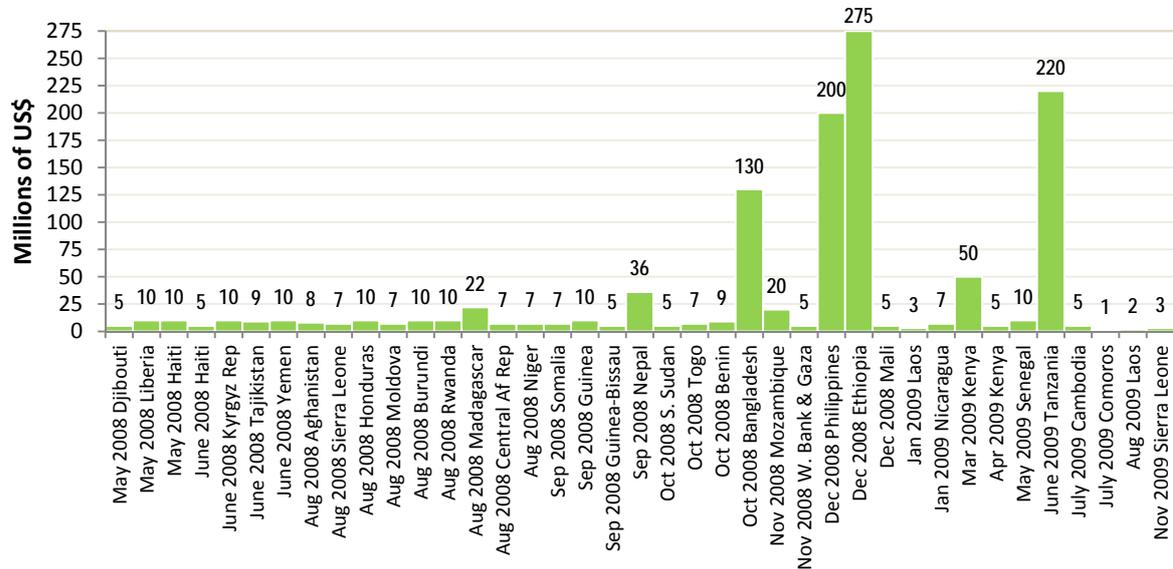
The *World Bank* responded by setting up the Global Food Crisis Response Programme (GFRP) on May 29, 2008. This was intended to mobilise funding from "existing country envelopes, re-programmed funds from prior years, regional IDA funds where appropriate, a new trust fund from IBRD surplus, an even newer Multi-Donor Trust Fund" (Delgado, 2008). Beginning January 2010 this multi-donor trust fund, GAFPS (Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme) was established; however, as this paper deals with rapid responses, GFRP initiatives rather than GAFPS are the focus.

The GFRP was not intended to displace regular lending for longer term measures such as infrastructure or agricultural research and development; nor was it to provide emergency

humanitarian assistance, such as that provided by WFP, UNICEF, or CARE—and was not intended to compete for funding with these agencies (ibid).

Figure 2.1 shows World Bank’s GFRP approvals by country and year for 2008 and 2009. Four countries dominate: Ethiopia, Tanzania, the Philippines, and Bangladesh.

Figure 2.1 GFRP approved funds: 2008 and 2009



Source: Constructed with data from the World Bank

Estimated early outputs—to mid 2009—are available. By this time, support from GFRP short and medium-term food supply response measures had reached an estimated 5.8 million farm households: when implemented completely, these interventions were expected to reach 8.7 million households. About 428,000 tonnes of fertiliser and 2,900 tonnes of seeds had been distributed to farmers in 11 countries, and 29,000 had received farm tools.

Support for social safety net programmes was estimated to have helped 1.5 million people⁷ overall; and was expected to reach 7.5 million in total. People were counted as those: in school feeding programmes; women and children receiving nutritional supplements; and direct and indirect beneficiaries of cash or food for work programmes, as well as cash transfer programmes.

Support was also provided to seven countries which had lost finances through price stabilisation measures, such as reducing import tariffs.

2.2.2 Responses of other UN family agencies

The UN Secretary General set up a special new entity, the *High Level Task Force on the Global Food Crisis* (HLTF), to coordinate efforts to mitigate food crisis impacts across UN agencies concerned with agriculture, food, health and nutrition, plus the IMF and World Bank. It provides the UN family with a central point of contact for other donors and development partners. With partners, the Task Force produced in mid 2008 the first draft of a Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA) to guide responses. The CFA identifies major

⁷ These included via school feeding programmes, women and children receiving nutrition interventions, direct and indirect beneficiaries from cash/food-for-work programmes and from cash transfer programmes.

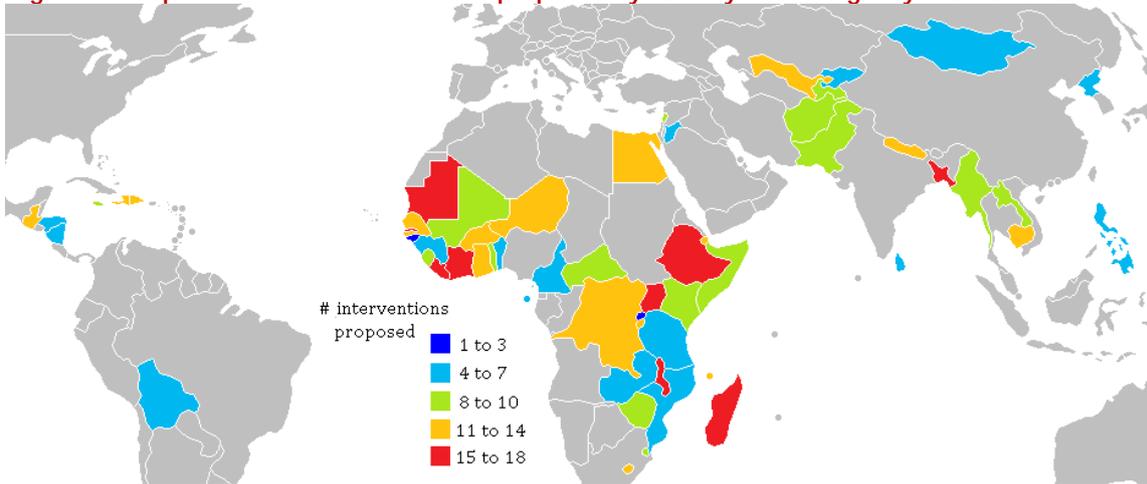
threats and opportunities related to the food crisis; it sets out critical actions that can be taken by governments, CSOs and international organisations to address urgent needs and to build resilience; and proposes practical ways of partnering to achieve CFA outcomes at country, regional, and global levels.

Individual UN agencies responded in their own right to the crisis. The *Food and Agriculture organisation's* (FAO) Global Information and Early Warning System on food and agriculture (**GIEWS**) was one of the first to warn of the crisis in late 2007. GIEWS then expanded monitoring and dissemination activities; for example with regular publically available policy and price monitoring.

At the same time FAO set up the Initiative on Soaring Food Prices (**ISFP**).

Together with partners (IFAD ,WFP and the World Bank), FAO supported national authorities in 58 countries to analyse their food security situations and produced a synthesis of inter-agency assessments suggesting measures that could be taken by country. Figure 2.2 shows these countries and the relative number of recommendations for interventions proposed in these interagency assessments.

Figure 2.2 Map of number of interventions proposed by country in inter-agency assessments



Source: Constructed with data from Viatte et al. 2009

FAO followed a twin-track approach (FAO 2003) for reducing chronic hunger, consisting of 1) quick-response agricultural growth, led by small farmers; and 2) targeted programmes ensuring access for hungry people without the capacity to produce or purchase enough food. They provided rapid assistance by launching a new Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) response in 74 countries in 2008, worth US\$ 37 million, 95% of which was to be spent on inputs.

FAO also implemented a number of other (dubbed non-TCP) emergency interventions totalling close to US\$42 million, aimed at rapidly boosting food and agricultural production via a) the distribution of agricultural inputs such as high-yield seeds, fertilisers, and tools; b) the rehabilitation of infrastructure; and c) the provision of extension services to farmers and authorities. About a quarter of the funds for these projects (about US\$10 million) went to Afghanistan, 12% to Tajikistan, about 7% each to Kenya and Burkina Faso, 6% to Haiti and about 5% each to Niger, Somalia, and Liberia. The remaining 27% was allocated amongst the other 13 countries. By region, about 48% was spent in Africa, 43% in Asia, and 9% in Latin America & the Caribbean.

By Oct 2009, FAO had managed, or were managing, US\$440 million worth of programmes in 90 countries.

The **Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs** (OCHA) provided US\$100 million from the Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF) for food assistance and nutrition. About US\$1.2 million of this went to the WHO.

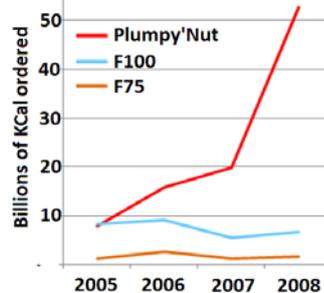
According to FAO (forthcoming), 16 food crisis responses under FAO non-TCP initiatives completed between 2008 and 2010 were funded by OCHA in: Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Djibouti, Eritrea, Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Somalia, Tanzania, Afghanistan, Nepal, Pakistan, Haiti, and Peru. Their combined budget was about US\$19.5 million, of which about 96% or US\$18.7 million was disbursed.

The **United Nations Development Programme** (UNDP) helped countries to identify at-risk communities using household expenditure and dietary surveys. UNDP provided advice, particularly to small islands and disaster-prone communities, on how to set up and adjust social protection programmes. In addition, they supported efforts to establish community seed banks and rehabilitate agricultural infrastructure (HLTF, 2009).

The **United Nations Children's Fund** (UNICEF) allocated US\$52 million worth of emergency funding to help national authorities in 42 countries scale up efforts to improve nutrition of women and children. With WFP they focussed on community-based treatment of over 1 million (of the global estimated 20 million) severely malnourished children, and provided micronutrient supplements to millions more whose nutrition was at risk.

Some indication of the scale-up of community-based treatment of acute malnutrition in 2008 is evidenced by the Plumpy'nut order increases. This peanut-based nutritional therapy for wasted children is part of a community-based treatment regime, whereby guardians administer sachets of Plumpy'nut to sick children, avoiding hospitalisation.

Figure 2.3 Calories of ready to use therapeutic foods (RUTF) ordered by UNICEF 2005-2008



Source: Figures from RUTF Supply Chain Project 2009. **Note:** F100 and F75 are milk-based RUTFs and more expensive.

Though peanut-based supplements like Plumpy'nut have existed for some time, their use in community based treatment of malnutrition only became standard practice relatively recently, accelerating after it was found to perform well during the Niger food crisis of 2005. In 2005, 14 UNICEF country offices ordered Plumpy'nut, compared to about 40 countries in 2008. Total calories from Plumpy'nut orders increased by over one and a half times from 2007 to 2008: See Figure 2.3.

On top of this, UNICEF engaged with national partners to scale up pilot social protection projects in 55 countries.

According to EC (2010), UNICEF had completed contracts with EU Food Facility funding worth about €11.23 million by the end of December 2009.

For the **World Food Programme** (WFP) the food crisis was a twin pincer, cramping food assistance budgets while increasing the number of people requiring its humanitarian and development services. Rapid fundraising was necessary to allow expansion of operations, with

the budget increasing 86% from 2007 to 2008 (US\$2.7 billion in 2007 to US\$5 billion in 2008), and expenditure increasing 28% (from the full US\$2.7 billion in 2007 to US\$3.5 billion in 2008). Some 19% more people received WFP assistance in 2008 (102 million people) than in 2007 (86 million). WFP mounted additional programmes in 26 countries with expanded school feeding programmes, supplementary rations, food assistance in urban and semi-urban areas, and began voucher programmes and cash transfers.

The *World Health Organisation* (WHO) supported 12 countries between July and October 2008 with US\$1.2 million from OCHA's Central Emergency Relief Fund for nutrition surveillance projects to assess short-term nutrition and health impact, model long-term impacts, identify vulnerable groups, and recommend appropriate social protection.

2.2.3 Responses of the European Union

For the humanitarian arm of the EU—*European Commission for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection* (ECHO) — the food crisis increased humanitarian needs, widened vulnerability, undermined cash-based transfer mechanisms, and pushed up costs of food transfers. The Food Aid Budget Line (FABL) was thus raised from €220 million in 2007 to €363 million in 2008, of which €140 million were additional funds secured primarily as a result of the food price crisis. ECHO allocated the extra money against the large increases in requests, while some went to WFP: generally, more than half of FABL funds are channelled through WFP.

In terms of short to medium term development support, the EU (through the Commission) responded to the soaring food prices by setting aside €50 million from the Food security Thematic Programme (FSTP) for 12 target countries and by allocating €200 million from the European Development Fund B-envelope to assist 30 Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries in addressing macro-economic effects of the food price crisis. On top of that the EU set up the EU Food Facility (EUFF): a €1 billion fund to be spent before the end of 2011⁸ for short- to medium-term responses. Fifty countries were selected based mainly on poverty and food insecurity levels, population needs, and agricultural potential and food price impacts (including import dependency). The EUFF Regulation was adopted in December 2008, the first tranche of funding for the EUFF projects was approved at the end of March in 2009, and the earliest implementations began in mid-2009.

In 2009, a total value of Financing Decisions of €837.2 million was reached (compared to the target of €820 million), while disbursements reached €456 million (as planned).

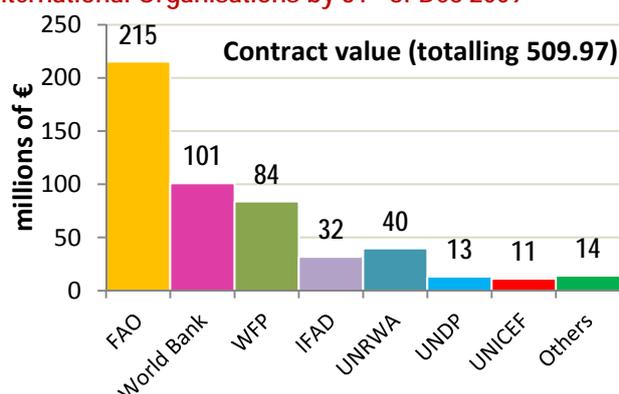
Many of the funds were channelled through international organisations⁹. Figure 2.4 shows the value of EUFF contracts concluded with international organisations by the end of 2009: FAO, the World Bank and WFP were the three main beneficiaries.

⁸ Though if necessary and subject to the authorisation of the Budgetary Authority in each annual budgetary procedure, payments could be made in years following 2011

⁹ Other funds were available to finance proposals by NGOs or aid agencies, or to provide funds directly to developing country governments.

As EUFF financed projects are ongoing, results of EUFF activities are not yet available from the EC, though some details are emerging from the agencies through which the funds were channelled.

Figure 2.4 Value of EUFF contracts concluded with International Organisations by 31st of Dec 2009

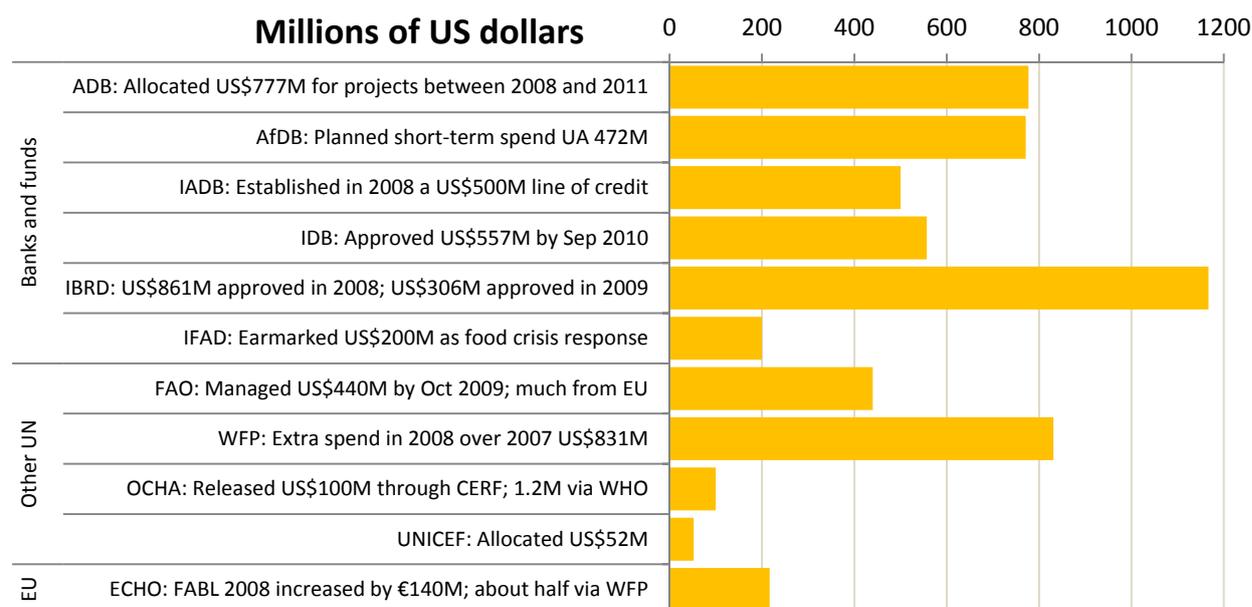


Source: Constructed with data in EC 2010. Note: UNRWA is the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

2.2.4 Overview of responses

Figure 2.5 summarises the value of planned early responses

Figure 2.5 Planned spending on early responses to food price crisis, selected agencies



Sources: Various, see text.

Notes: Allocations not reported in US\$ (are converted at June 2008 exchange rates: 1UA=US\$1.634; 1€= US\$1.547)

The figures are not strictly comparable, and should not be aggregated, since funds reported by some implementing agencies were those allocated to them by another agency.

3. Evaluating responses for Relevance, Effectiveness & Efficiency

3.2 Evaluation framework

The earlier section established what agencies planned as rapid food crisis responses, and to a certain degree what they implemented. Less is known about what resulted and why. For this study, the criteria used to judge responses are their relevance, effectiveness and efficiency¹⁰.

Relevance is about identifying and diagnosing the problem and identifying what should and can be done about it.

Effectiveness is about outputs and outcomes; how effectively what was planned was implemented; whether or not it was timely; whether or not it reached intended beneficiaries. It also concerns whether or not interventions left participants better placed to prevent or cope with future shocks, that is more resilient to shocks.

Efficiency is about the relation of inputs to outputs, costs to benefits.

This framework is set out in Table 3.1.

¹⁰ To simplify the DAC framework for use in this paper, the five criteria can be condensed into three by including Impact and Sustainability as sub-criteria under Effectiveness. The DAC/ALNAP framework for evaluating humanitarian work includes three additional criteria; coherence, coordination, and complementarity; but given the state of available information and the brevity of this review, a choice was taken to focus the smaller subset, though some findings related to these additional criteria may be presented under Relevance in the simplified framework used here. Table B1 in Annex B sets out the DAC criteria.

Table 3.1 Framework for evaluating responses to the food crisis		
Criteria & sub-criteria	Related questions	
Relevance Including consistency & acceptability	Was the response appropriate? Was it consistent with goals and needs of participants? Was it intended to reach the right people, reach enough of them, and provide enough?	Why?
Effectiveness Timeliness, predictability, reversibility, flexibility, impact & sustainability	Was it done according to plan? If not, were plans sufficiently flexible to adapt to unforeseen realities? Were outputs, effects, and impact achieved? What were the medium- and long-term effects? What was the counter-factual and how did what was done compare to what might have been achieved using other options?	
Efficiency	Was the relation of outputs to inputs reasonable? What were the relative costs and benefits of different types of programmes?	

3.3 Relevance

3.2.1 Section summary

- **Did the agencies get the right countries?** *Yes, most often they did. Anomalies were few: just 9 countries out of 123 seemed to receive more or less attention than predictions demanded.*
- **Did they get the most needy locations within countries?** *It was difficult to find information on the extent to which spatial mapping of sub-national vulnerability influenced decisions. It seems, however, that rural areas got less attention than urban locations.*
- **Were the right people within the selected locations reached?** *Not enough is known. In some cases, reaching the most needy was too demanding of interventions and too time-consuming*
- **Overall, what was the coverage like?** *Looking at aid donors, one section of the spectrum of those providing assistance, which includes government, NGOs etc, it is impossible to say how well coverage relative to need was.*

3.2.2 Did assistance go to the right countries?

To design and target support, international agencies needed accurate predictions of countries most affected by the food crisis. To do so, donors adopted a wide range of indicators including poverty, hunger, reliance on food imports, balance of payments, fiscal policy, and food price inflation. Table 3.2 collates the criteria and indicators used.

Table 3.2 Criteria and indicators used by seven sources to predict country & area vulnerability to the food price crisis

Criteria	Indicators
Poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Populations spending a significant portion of incomes on food • Income poverty & distribution (% of people on <\$1/day, % below national poverty line, share of poorest 10%, Gini coefficient) • Indicator similar to Human Development Index' including GDP/capita, health status, education, and life expectancy • GDP per capita in 2008 purchasing power parity, GNI per capita (WDI 2008) • Population below national poverty line • Developing countries • Relative levels of poverty • Low or lower-middle income (GNI per capita 2006)
Hunger & dietary diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High levels of food insecurity even before food & fuel price hikes • Percent population undernourished according to FAO data • IFPRI Hunger Index (% undernourished in population, under 5 mortality rate, under 5 underweight) • Average per capita calorie consumption from cereals and non-cereals
Vulnerable groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively large urban populations • Child vulnerability as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ % population under 15, ○ % Under-weight children, ○ % adults under-nourished, ○ prevalence of HIV/AIDS
Reliance on food (& fuel) imports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliance on imported food and fuel commodities • Food and fuel import bill as a percent of total imports • Dependence on cereals imports for dietary energy • Cereal imports as a percent of total domestic production • Percent of major grains imported • Percent of petroleum imported
Balance of payment impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of debts, whether receiving debt relief • Dependence on imported food. • Balance of payment impact from IMF report 2008 • Foreign exchange reserves (months of import coverage)
Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic importance of agriculture • Agricultural production index
Government fiscal policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of fiscal policy as judged by Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) ratings
Food price inflation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High inflationary pressures • Headline inflation rates between 2005 and 2008 (IMF) • Food CPI increase from March (Jan) 2007 to March (Jan) 2008
Protracted crises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paying special attention to protracted crises that are neglected or forgotten by other donors

Source: Constructed from Table A, Annex 1 in Compton et al. (2010). Original sources: Sanogo 2009; WFP & Earthscan 2009 p.100; EC 2009; ADB 2008; FAO June 2008; FAO SOFI, Dec 2008. De Janvry & Sadoulet 2008. EC ECHO 2008.

There is clearly a wealth of indicators —and even more have been proposed — from which to decide vulnerability. With so many to choose from, it is not surprising that different assessments led to differing lists of countries. Compton et al. (2010 pp11) wrote:

“Twenty-nine countries were rated vulnerable by at least 3 out of the 7 assessments examined: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, DR Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mongolia, Mozambique, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Timor-Leste, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe. An additional 61 countries were rated vulnerable in at least one of the assessments...

A quick comparison of the three most comprehensive predictions (WFP June 2008, de Janvry and Sadoulet 2008 and EC Food Facility 2009) shows that while 88 countries appear on at least one of these three lists, only 31 appear on all three, and only 6— DR Congo, Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Liberia and Tajikistan — are rated ‘extremely’ or ‘most’ vulnerable to high international food prices by all three. If the analysis is restricted to low-income countries (the main focus for most international agencies), then while 43 low-income countries appear on at least one of the three lists, only 27 appear on all three, and only (the same) six are rated ‘extremely’ or ‘most’ vulnerable by all three. This implies, at minimum, that further investigation and harmonisation of methods would be useful.”

In addition, some agencies added the criterion of the assistance being provided by other organisations. For example, the regulation for establishing the EU Food Facility stated:

Account will also be taken of other sources of financing available to the target country, at short term, from the donor community, to respond to the food price developments. (EC 2008)

When choosing where to respond, international agencies tend to focus on state-level indicators of vulnerability, resulting in independent states being favoured over lagging regions within states. For example, FAO selected 30 small island states out of the 79 countries for its rapid TCP responses. Yet only eleven small islands are Least Developed Countries (LDC) and just eight are Low Income Food Deficit Countries (LIFDC).¹¹

Within some countries that would not meet the criteria for assistance, there can be lagging regions where people are vulnerable to food price increases. Such cases were less likely to be assisted. It could, however, be argued that in such cases there was often national capacity to assist such regions without external assistance.

How well-matched were country allocations to country needs?

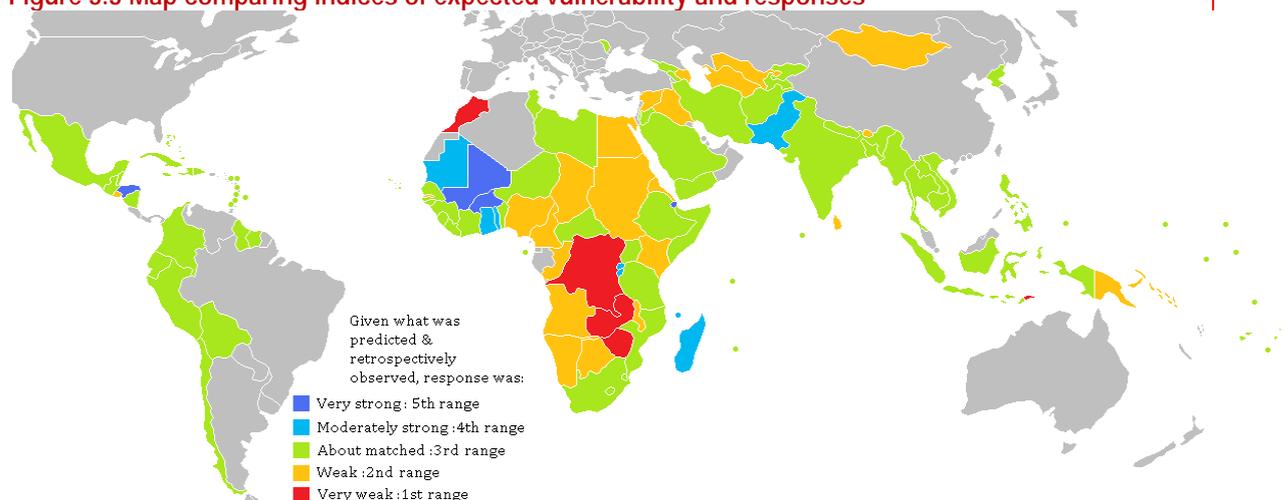
A complete answer to this would require country and in some cases sub-national level studies of needs and responses: well beyond the scope of this study. But some indication is given by looking at where predicted and retrospective assessments of impact were high, and comparing this to where responses were planned or implemented.

To assess this, two indices were prepared for 123 countries¹². The first to show where agencies and analysts thought impacts would fall, and the second to show where responses were planned or implemented. For each country, the former index of expected vulnerability was subtracted from the index for responses, so that any negative scores would indicate a gap between need and response. Figure 3.3 shows the results.

¹¹ The 11 SIDS (some low-lying coastal countries with small populations are included among the SIDS) that are also LDCs are: Cape Verde, Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Kiribati, Maldives, Samoa, Sao Tome & Principe, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, & Vanuatu. The 8 that are also LIFDCs (and also LDCs) are italicised.

¹² It uses and builds upon a database constructed by Compton et al. (2010). Full country details for some of the agencies reviewed here, for example UNICEF, were not available at the time of drafting and are not included in the database of responses. Certain country-level details for UNICEF responses were available in the HLTF (2009) country fiches, but since these cover a sample of 32 countries already flagged as a priority by the HLTF, they were not included again. Some of the agency responses listed are incomplete—particularly IFAD, the IADB, and the AfDB.

Figure 3.3 Map comparing indices of expected vulnerability and responses



Source: Authors' construction. See Annex C for more detail. **Notes:** Dots represent island nations. Very strong response = greater than expected need. Very weak response = smaller than expected need.

This exercise shows that in most cases there was good match between expected impact and international response: 82 out of 123, two-thirds of the countries showed a good match. A dozen countries, out of the 123 total, had a stronger response than the predicted impacts would indicate; with four very strong, compared to what was predicted—Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Mali, and Honduras¹³.

This contrasts to five countries where there was a very weak response compared to expected impacts: Timor Leste, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Congo DR and Morocco. Finally, there were 24 countries where the responses were somewhat weak compared to predicted impacts.

3.2.3 Targeting within countries: delivering to the right places

Sub-national vulnerability is sometimes routinely assessed¹⁴, and increasingly, sub-national spatial assessments of food insecurity are conducted by agencies like WFP, IFPRI, GIEWS, FEWS and partners (see for example Rogers et al. 2007; Menon et al. 2008; WFP & Indonesian Department of Agriculture 2009), and can be used in targeting.

For instance, a US\$4 million World Bank GFRP cash-for-work programme in Sierra Leone approved in August of 2008 was implemented in seven districts which were selected based on WFP Livelihoods and Vulnerability Mapping (VAM).

Despite their potential, use of these methods, particularly in rapid response to unexpected shocks, remains limited. Some have also been criticised for neglecting important criteria. For instance, Poulsen et al. (2009) emphasised the lack of nutrition data in monitoring and early warning systems (EWS), contending they focus too strongly on agricultural production using climate forecasts, and neglect forecasts of health aspects of food security linked to nutrition.

Haddad (2009) wrote:

“The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Food Programme (WFP) systems have strengths, but also weaknesses. The FAO system is more about food production capacity than consumption capacity. The WFP Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping system has 120

¹³ The 8 with a moderately strong result were: Pakistan, Burundi, Comoros, Togo, Ghana, Mauritania, Rwanda, & Madagascar.

¹⁴ For example, in Southern Sudan (prior to independence) or the Occupied Palestinian Territories

people covering 50 countries – its capacity to track fast-changing situations is not sufficient. These systems should be strengthened, but we need new complementary ideas for monitoring hunger outcomes. We need greater responsiveness of systems – we need to know changes from week to week so people can react to hunger in real time. We need more transparent methods – the FAO and WFP numbers are processed and channelled via the UN agencies. The methods need to be more empowering and less remote and extractive.”

In practice, mapping methods like VAM are not always the first criteria used to target responses, particularly where governments make decisions based on political factors, such as the extent of public concern and protest over shocks. Since most of the protests and riots over food prices in 2008 took place in cities, it is not surprising that most governments tended to focus on measures to mitigate price increases or their impacts in urban areas. In Bangladesh, for example, Open Market Sales (OMS) of subsidised rice were conducted from 210 locations; most in towns and cities, and no less than 100 in Dhaka — home to 4.3% of Bangladesh’s population. Participants in focus groups thought that subsidised sales were not attempted on a large enough scale outside the capital, particularly in rural areas (Wiggins *et al.* 2010).

Reviews of the impacts of the food crisis conclude that while urban people suffered, so too did people in rural areas — where, contrary to some thinking, most people are net buyers of staple foods, and where poverty tends to be most widespread and severe.

While most of the high-profile protests about food prices came from urban areas, many of the poorest and worst-affected people live in rural areas. Existing social protection and financial systems often do not reach this group. (Compton *et al.* 2010)

3.2.4 Targeting: delivering to the right persons

Most programmes tried to benefit groups seen as poor and vulnerable to the effects of higher food prices. But there were problems that arose, including:

Using farm inputs for maximum effect, or to relieve poverty?

In some cases, targeting encountered competing objectives and criteria, above all with farm inputs. Should these be given to the most vulnerable farmers, or to those with potential to make full use of them? Those implementing the FAO TCP in Southern Africa found it difficult to combine people’s vulnerability with agricultural potential. (FAO 2010). Similarly, implementers of the TCP in Armenia faced difficult decisions over need against effective use of inputs:

The inputs were given to those who were involved in farming and were poor, either living in temporary shelters/cabins, or with many children... mainly to those who have land and are specialized in that...”, “we know who the poorest in the village are and who has arable land. We tried to give it to those in need, who have no working hands, who need that wheat [seed]...”, “we didn’t give it to the poorest, as they intended to use it as animal feed...in order for the project to be efficient we gave it to those who cultivate land.” (FAO 2010)

Food and cash for work omitted those incapable of working

Often a key safety net was a food-for-work or cash-for-work scheme that by definition cannot be used by those who cannot work. For example, safety nets in Bangladesh were reported (Ahmed *et al.* 2010) to ignore vulnerable people unable to participate in labour-intensive public works—such as children, the elderly, the disabled and the chronically ill who: “need more than a short-term safety net; rather, a broader social protection system is required for them.” (Ibid)

Protecting children: which age group?

Children are clearly at high risk of malnutrition when price rises affect household food security: especially the very young. Compton et al., (2010) reported:

“Young children appeared to be the hardest hit in nearly all cases, as predicted. Under-twos were often the worst affected, but not in every case. The Cambodia Anthropometrics Survey (2009) pointed out that the 2–5 age group was also badly affected, and that “the improvements for [younger] groups ... will be erased if we do not react to the worsening nutrition status of older children”.

Both nutrition programmes for under-fives and primary school feeding programmes were scaled up in response to the food price crisis, supported by agencies including the WFP, UNICEF, the EU, the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank.

Despite the popularity of school meals programmes — since they potentially contribute to both nutrition and education goals,¹⁵ evidence of their impact on school participation and nutritional status is mixed (Buttenheim et al., 2010; Greenhalgh et al. 2007). Some argue that not enough thought has gone into comparing their effectiveness to alternatives (Bundy et al. 2009).

Within the under-five demographic, targeting is sometimes further refined. For example, because under-twos are considered the most vulnerable to acute malnutrition, in some cases treatment is restricted to them¹⁶.

Debates over which child age group to protect are dogged by lack of evidence of nutrition impacts. For example, changes to WHO baseline measures of severe wasting from 2005 to 2008 over the food crisis showed that in Sierra Leone increases in severe acute malnutrition were greatest in children between 3 and 4, while in Egypt they were greatest for children between 4 and 5¹⁷.

This emphasises the need for improved and sustained nutrition monitoring and surveillance. In many developing countries, national nutrition surveys are carried out only every five years or so, and in some cases much less frequently — see the databases kept by UNICEF and WHO. It was thus good to see that WHO used US\$1.2 million in funding from CERF to start up nutrition surveillance in 12 countries. That noted, systems set up in crises are not always maintained. For instance, detailed nutrition surveillance set up in Niger after the 2005 food crisis was suspended in 2009 for lack of funding, the year before the Niger food crisis of 2010.

Attention to gender: reaching women and girls

Though data on gender impacts of the food price spike from 2007/08 is limited, studies from Bangladesh indicate the following:

Raihan (2009) reported a higher proportion of girls dropping out of school than boys, and Sulaiman, Parveen, and Das (2009) reported slightly higher increases in wasting in girls than in boys (although in their urban sample, this was from a lower baseline than boys). A national

¹⁵ These are the main objectives of school feeding (SF), but other benefits may include: helping to provide jobs, i.e. for cooks; improving children’s learning; and where take-home rations are involved, boosting nutrition of younger siblings. School feeding is also integrated with WFP’s pilot Purchase for Progress (P4P) initiative, being used as a source of demand under the P4P models, building in deliberate links to small farmers and helping connect farmers to markets (Bundy et al. 2009).

¹⁶ For example, in Niger in 2010, WFP vulnerability analysis deemed children under two to be most at risk, and WFP focused on providing nutritional supplements to under twos, as well as general rations for their families (WFP July 2010).

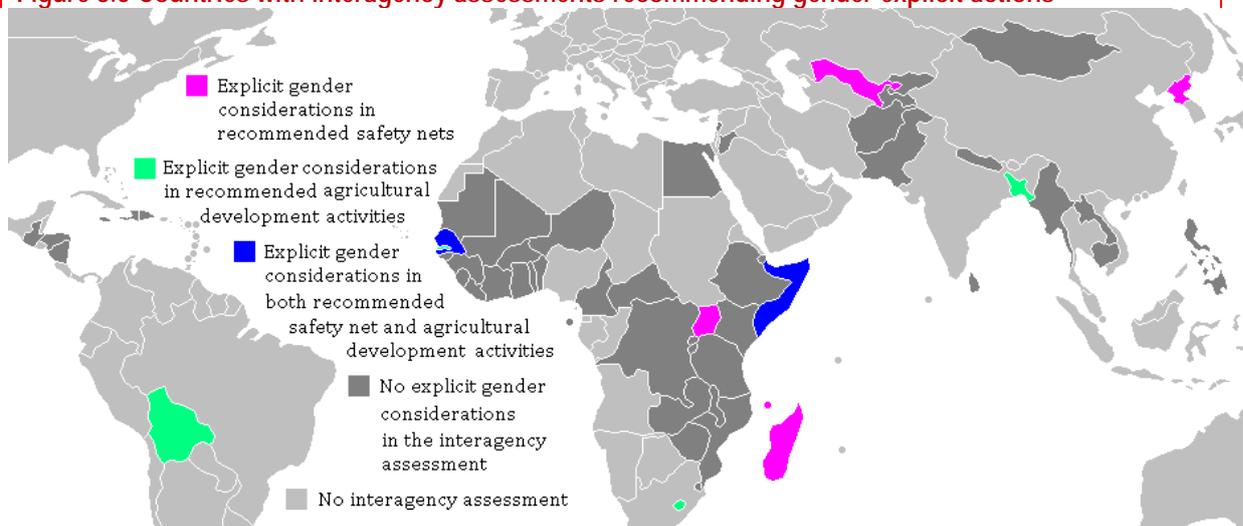
¹⁷ See figures in Annex D. Interpretation of this type of data is problematical for a number of reasons, including: a) Nutrition baselines from three years ago do not provide the best basis for interpreting short term nutritional shocks, b) Responses that were implemented may have altered the outcomes.

survey by WFP/ UNICEF/ IPHN (2009) reported that female headed households were over represented amongst food insecure households with 38% of them falling into the poor or marginal food consumption groups vs. a significantly lower 23% for male headed households". They noted that female rural day labour rates were often under half those of men, and that "female-headed households sought more alternative jobs (17%) and borrowed less from financial institutions (18%) than male-headed households (15% and 34%, respectively). This could have been related to negative discrimination in lending practices." (Compton et al. 2010)

The importance of gender was emphasised by several agencies: for example, safety nets supported by HLTF members¹⁸ were intended to emphasise children and women (HLTF 2009).

These good intentions did not always translate in practice. For example, of the 58 countries with medium-term measures proposed by interagency assessments (Viatte et al. 2009), only 8 had explicit reference to gender in safety net recommendations, and only 6 in agricultural development interventions—see Figure 3.6.

Figure 3.6 Countries with interagency assessments recommending gender explicit actions



Source: Constructed with data from Viatte et al. 2009.

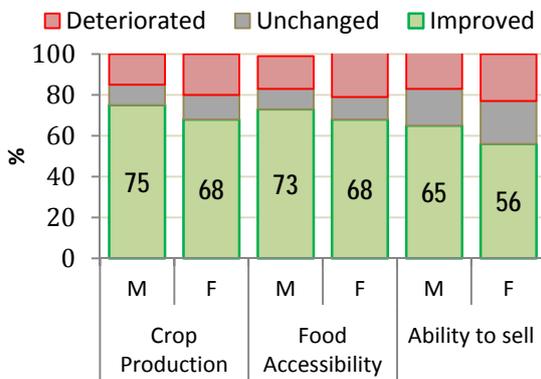
Evidence suggests women were more successfully targeted by nutritional interventions such as supplements for pregnant and lactating women (PLW) and similar direct transfers, and less by public works programmes. For example, for nutrition, World Bank GFRP programmes resulted in 133,503 PLW receiving nutritional supplements and education in Tajikistan and Moldova by mid 2009, while in the Kyrgyz Republic, a GFRP was scheduled to provide Vitamin A supplements to 154,000 postpartum women.

For public works and agricultural development, women were not singled out. For example, An ADB cash-for-work (CFW) programme in Cambodia had benefited 2,790 households, 12% headed by women by June 2010. In Liberia, a GFRP Cash-for-work (CFW) programme in Liberia providing about 40 days of work at US\$3 per day had benefited 11,000 households, about 37% of beneficiaries being women, by August 2009. In Sierra Leone, none of the GFRP CFW projects visited by a World Bank team employed the requisite 30% of women.

¹⁸ The Task Force has 22 members, mainly UN agencies concerned with agriculture, food, nutrition and health, as well as the IMF and World Bank.

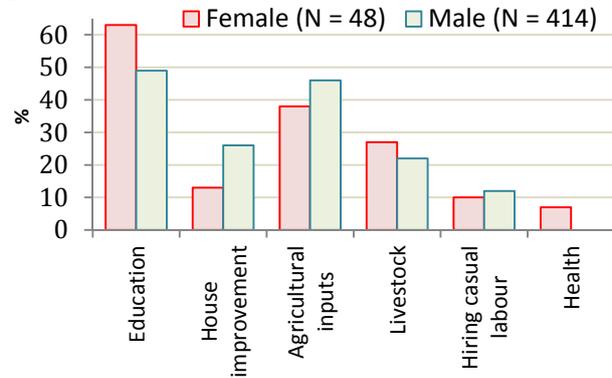
It was thus not surprising that FAO reported that for its TCP projects in Asia, women saw less improvement in crop production, food accessibility, and ability to sell than men — see Figure 3.7a. This was all the more a pity, since FAO also reported that more women spent income from crop sales on education, livestock, and health than did men, see Figure 3.7b.

Figure 3.7a Perceived impacts of FAO ISFP TCP projects in Asia by gender



Source: Constructed from Table 12 in FAO 2010.
Notes: M= Male, F= Female. Asia = Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, DPR Korea, Mongolia, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste

Figure 3.7b Use of income from sale of crops by gender in Southern Africa



Source: Constructed from Table 13 in FAO 2010. **Notes:** Southern Africa = Angola, Lesotho, Malawi, Swaziland, Tanzania, and Zambia. "...includes only beneficiaries that responded positively to at least one of the expenses. Beneficiaries that said that they did not spend income on any of the sectors were excluded from the analyses" (FAO 2010).

In Sierra Leone there were complaints that it was hard to reach women with CFW: a World Bank team was told that women were difficult to recruit because "they did not want to work, preferring instead to focus on household duties and/or claiming that the work was difficult for women." This was perhaps not surprising, since a separate account of these schemes in the Western Rural area reported that women enrolled in the CFW programme were receiving less than half the daily wages of men; resulting in 13 of the 15 women employed abandoning the work (Wiggins et al., 2010).

Not surprisingly, one of the key lessons identified by World Bank (2009c) was: "Greater efforts are needed to ensure female participation in cash-for-work activities" (ibid). Concrete proposals include using piece rates to allow women to work shorter hours and designing appropriate work. In the Yemen, the Bank recommended: "As women play an important role in salt production projects, these program may be scaled-up to ensure greater female participation." (ibid)

3.2.5 Targeting: appropriate interventions

Most funding went to safety nets and to provision of farm inputs and accompanying agricultural support. Both seem suitable responses.

Nevertheless, some concern has been expressed that supplying farm inputs may have led to neglect of other aspects of agricultural development. Indeed, in Ethiopia, Mousseau (2010) reported that spending on inputs may have been at expense of infrastructure: citing for

instance a World Bank GFRP programme of over US\$240 million to buy fertiliser, taken out of budgets originally meant for infrastructure development. Not only were funds diverted but also fertiliser shipments apparently delayed food aid in the crowded port of Djibouti. (Mousseau 2010). The same author also wondered at dependence on imports of inputs, at the lack of any corresponding investment made in improved seed varieties.

Such criticisms are not new or limited to the 2007/08 food crisis. For instance, when looking at humanitarian responses in the Great Lakes region of Africa, Levine & Chastre (2004) were critical of supply-driven targeting for both input and nutrition interventions:

“Seed distributions and nutrition interventions in particular were implemented widely even though they are based on a series of questionable assumptions that remain largely untested.

Responses focused narrowly on food production, despite the fact that market factors play a large role in determining food security.”

Compton et al. (2010) reported:

The worst-affected groups were casual wage labourers (both rural and urban), land-poor farmers, petty traders, and producers of commodities whose terms of trade declined against food grains: for example pastoralists in Kenya, cotton farmers in Benin and tea workers in Bangladesh. Salaried workers in the formal sector generally fared better than others.

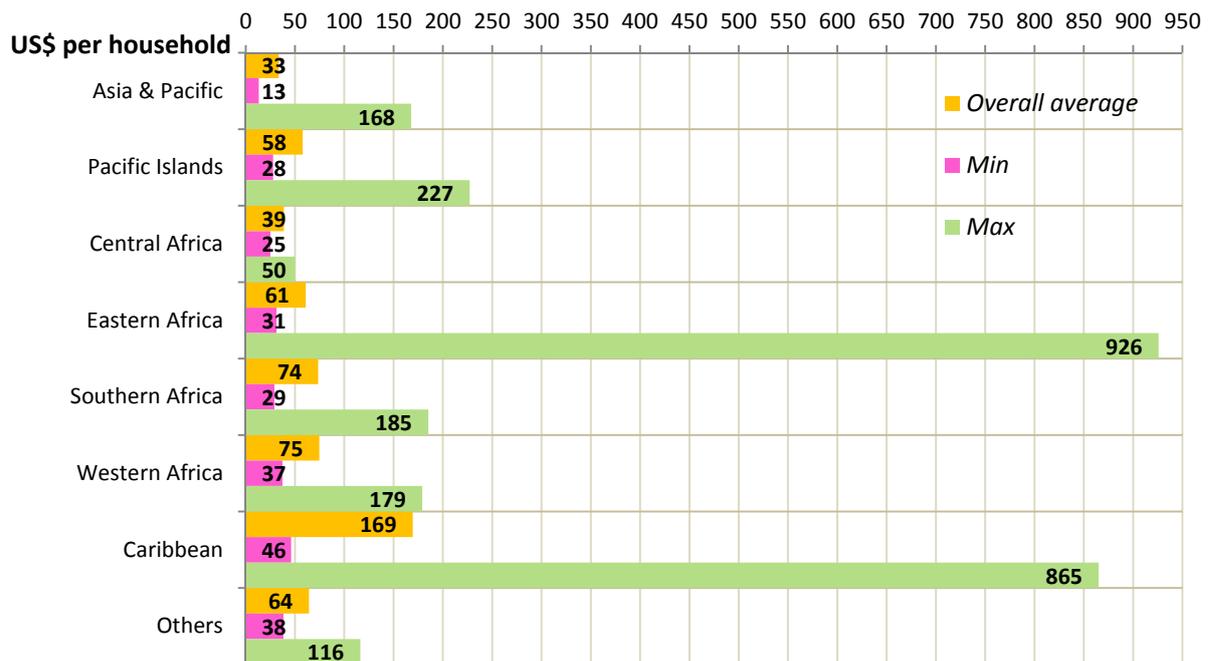
Certain interventions then, such as increasing salaries of civil servants, which may have benefited from general budget support of international financial institutions, while politically popular, would not necessarily have reached the most vulnerable.

3.2.6 Coverage versus depth of assistance

Depth and breadth of coverage trade off. The FAO TCP responses provide a good example. In planning them, FAO budgeted around the same amount of money, half a million US dollars, for every country. Differences in programme design across countries meant some had higher coverage than others, as reflected in Figure 3.8 that compares spend per household for different country level programmes within regions. For example, in the Asia & Pacific category, about US\$168 was available for each of 2,980 households in Afghanistan for certified wheat seed and fertilisers, while in Nepal, seeds, animal feed, and vaccines were distributed to 37,464 households, with average benefits of about US\$13 per household.

In many instances coverage was low relative to need — a finding confirmed by other studies (Wiggins et al, 2010; Mousseau 2010). Take for example safety nets in Bangladesh. Though poverty levels in Bangladesh are very high — 40% headcount ratio at the national poverty line in 2005 — it was arguably among the better equipped of the low income countries to respond, by virtue of already existing safety nets which could be scaled up. Yet only 13% of the poor population of Bangladesh however were reached by any form of safety net in 2008 (World Bank 2009b). In Malawi, where 52% live below the poverty line (HLTF 2009), safety nets cover just 4% of those in need (McCord, 2009).

Figure 3.8 FAO TCP programme: highest, lowest, and average spending by region



Source: Constructed with data from FAO 2010.

Notes: **Asia & Pacific** = Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, DPR Korea, Mongolia, Nepal, Sri Lanka & Timor-Leste. **Pacific Islands** = Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, & Vanuatu. **Central Africa** = Cameroon, Chad, CAR, DRC. **Eastern Africa** = Burundi, Djibouti, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan. **Southern Africa** = Angola, Lesotho, Malawi, Swaziland, Tanzania, & Zambia. **West Africa** = Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Togo. **Caribbean** = Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Kitts & Nevis, St Lucia, & St. Vincent & the Grenadines. **Other countries** = Armenia, Haiti, Honduras, Kyrgyzstan, Mauritania, Moldova, Nicaragua, and Yemen [regions are divided by FAO office rather than strict geography]

Ethiopia is another example. IFRC (2008) reported that UN estimates for September 2008 put the affected population needing humanitarian assistance at 6.5 million people, up from 4.6 million three months earlier, on top of the 5.7 million people being helped under Ethiopia's ongoing Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP). Although Ethiopia received assistance from many sources—donors committed US\$772 million in assistance related to the food crisis from March 2008 to Oct 2009 (HLTF 2009)—not enough was in the form of food:

“...the amount of *food resources* obtained by both the government and donors last year could not cover nation-wide emergency food requirements. According to UNDP, only 60 percent of the total food requirement for 2008 was secured from donor sources. The total relief food requirements for 2008 stood at 845,2396mt ... of which approximately 508,657mt valued at approximately \$339,479,650, was met through the appeal process. The government used some carryover stocks from 2007 and purchased wheat to supplement the food dispatched by official and humanitarian agencies.”

HTLF, 2009

Judgments about coverage and depth are difficult when resources are limited. It seems that in many cases the responses funded tended to give relatively small benefits — US\$50 or less per household — and try to cover as many as they could with limited depth. Even then, programmes left out many who would have qualified on need.

Was it the right choice to go for coverage over depth? Perhaps it was: other studies (Wiggins et al. 2010) report that most people affected by higher food prices got no public assistance at all, so that their coping strategies were all they had to cushion the blow. Given that so many were using their personal resources to cope, small additions from the state may be all that is needed to prevent disaster, rather than comprehensive assistance — that in any case would be unaffordable in low income countries.

3.3 Effectiveness

3.3.1 Section summary: Effectiveness

- **How timely were the responses?** *Inputs were delivered but many arrived after the first half of 2008, when crops were planted in the Northern Hemisphere. Safety net programmes got going by late 2008, early 2009, when prices had been high for some months.*
- **What did higher food and fuel prices mean for safety net programmes already underway?** *Higher costs meant some existing programmes had to be scaled back, since fuel and food cost more.*
- **Were supply-boosting initiatives effective?** *Globally, most response came from developed regions, though some developing countries also responded strongly — particularly in South Asia, South East Asia, East Asia, and West Africa. Evidence of positive responses at a programme level also exist, with reports of positive impacts on people's food security.*

The next two subsections look at what is known about effectiveness of interventions to a) stimulate production in a price spike, and b) protect vulnerable people from the effects of high food prices.

3.3.2 Effectiveness of stimulating domestic production in a price spike

Considerable emphasis went towards boosting agricultural production in developing countries, mostly through distribution of inputs like seeds and fertilisers.

For example, provisional allocations to December 2009 of the EU Food Facility intended 40% of funds for “measures to improve access to agricultural inputs and services” and another 23% of funds for small scale measures aimed at increasing production—via for example microcredit, infrastructure, storage, and vocational training¹⁹ (EC 2010).

The World Bank (2009c) estimated that by mid 2009, the GFRP had distributed 428,000 tonnes of fertilizer and almost 3,000 tonnes of seeds to farmers in Rwanda, Tajikistan, Togo, Somalia, Benin, Kenya, Guinea, Ethiopia, Niger, Southern Sudan, and the Kyrgyz Republic. ‘Out of 40 countries assisted under its Global Food Crisis Response Program (GFRP), the World Bank assisted 20 with the provision of agricultural inputs. For several of them, such as Ethiopia, Benin, Niger, Rwanda, and Nicaragua, inputs represented 90 to 100 percent of the funding.’ (Mousseau 2010)

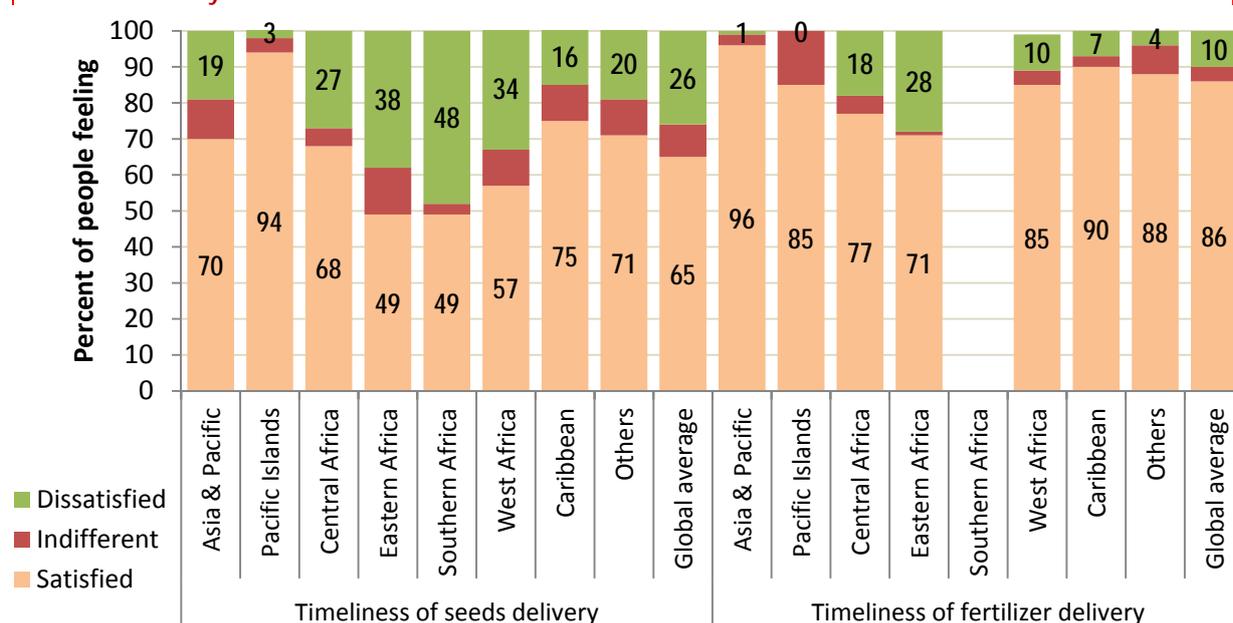
FAO TCP initiatives were required to spend 95% of their budgets on inputs. ‘Through the IFSP, FAO distributed agricultural inputs to some 370,000 smallholders in more than 80 countries.’ (Mousseau 2010)

¹⁹ The remaining 36% was intended for safety nets (EC 2010)

What about the *timing* of these responses?

Since harvest schedules are inflexible, timeliness is crucial when delivering inputs to boost supply. The evidence suggests many of the input distribution projects were not quick enough to take effect at the height of domestic price spikes. For example, programmes financed under the EUFF did not begin until early 2009, as the necessary regulation was only adopted in December 2008. An evaluation of FAO’s rapid TCP responses reported mixed participant satisfaction on timeliness: on average, about a third of recipients were not satisfied with timeliness of seed delivery—see Figure 3.9. African recipients in particular scored timeliness poorly, with less than half in Eastern and Southern Africa satisfied. Other areas, however, scored very highly on timeliness, particularly the Pacific Islands for seed delivery and the Asia & Pacific region for fertilizer delivery.

Figure 3.9 Percent of people satisfied, indifferent, and dissatisfied with timing of FAO TCP seeds and fertiliser delivery

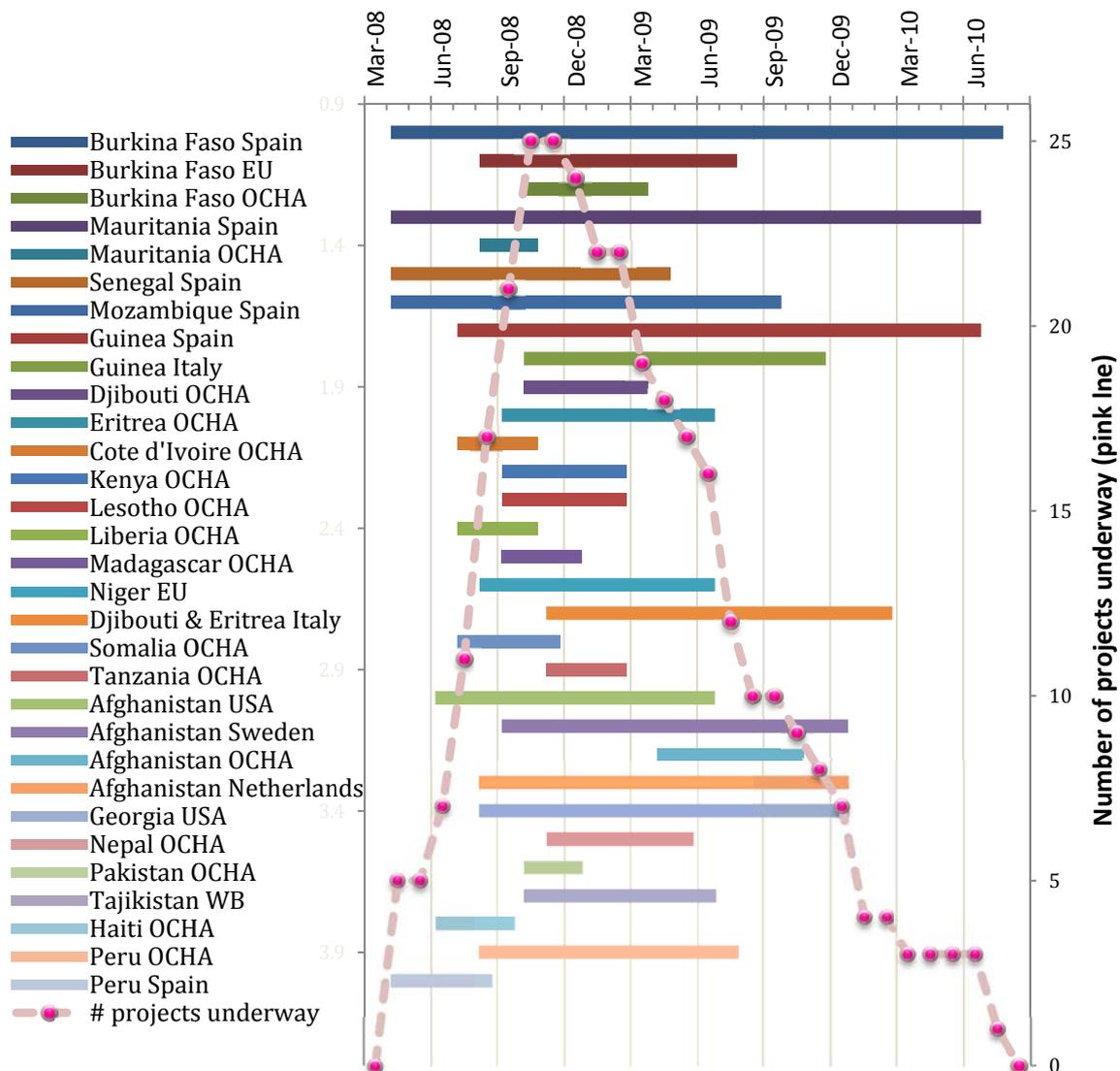


Source: Adapted from Tables 5 & 6 in FAO 2010. **Notes:** Blanks indicate no data. See Note to Figure 3.8 for a definition of countries in each group

Timing of FAO non-TCP responses, as shown in Figure 3.10, revealed few programmes were mobilised before July of 2008, which for most parts of the Northern Hemisphere would have missed planting dates for rainfed crops in the March/May window.

Still, of the agencies reporting on this, FAO responses are among the more timely, since most programmes were under implementation by late 2008. Half of these were still active by mid 2009, though this dropped off so that by late 2009, less than a third were active. By mid 2010, only 3 of the 31 programmes were still going. Though these projects were selected for a review partially based on their completion, this is still an impressively quick response, even if it was likely not rapid enough to stimulate many 2008 harvests.

Figure 3.10 Timing of a food crisis response: months over which non-TCP programmes implemented by FAO were conducted



Source: Constructed with data from FAO, forthcoming.

Note: The legend shows the country where projects were implemented, and the funder.

Some other agricultural supply-boosting responses were similarly timed; particularly some of those funded by the Asian and African Development Banks.

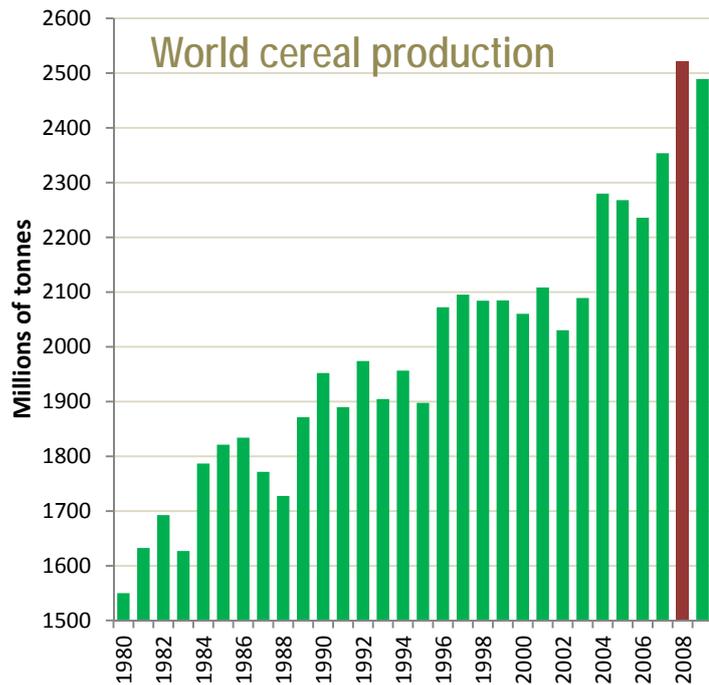
In most cases however, supply response initiatives did not catch the 2008 harvest; exceptions appear to be for rice in Bangladesh and for some crops in West Africa — for example via the African Development Bank’s expansion of NERICA rice seed dissemination. So does this mean the programmes were irrelevant? Perhaps not: later interventions may still be appreciated, particularly as they then become tantamount to cash transfers, saving farmers on input costs. It does however court exacerbating production cycles, but this study found no reports of extra large harvests in 2009 driving local prices below the levels seen prior to the food price spike.

What can be said then about the *effectiveness* of all the money, seeds, fertiliser, pesticides, tools, and other inputs and incentives that went into boosting staple food supply? It is difficult to attribute production increases solely and directly to these programmes: indirectly, however, there are estimates of cereals harvests in 2008.

Cereal supply response globally & by UN region

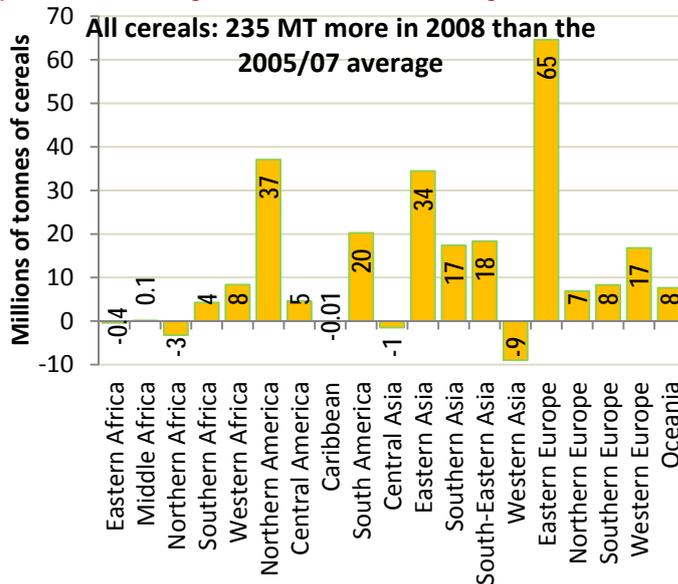
Production of cereals in 2008 increased dramatically; 2,521M tonnes compared to 2,286M tonnes over the average period between 2005 and 2007, an increase of 235M tonnes, or 9.3%. A 7% increase was recorded from 2007 levels to 2008 levels.

Figure 3.11 Global cereal production in millions of tonnes from 1980 to 2009



Source: Constructed with data from FAOSTAT

Figure 3.12 Global cereal supply response by UN region: production change from the 2005/07 average to 2008 levels

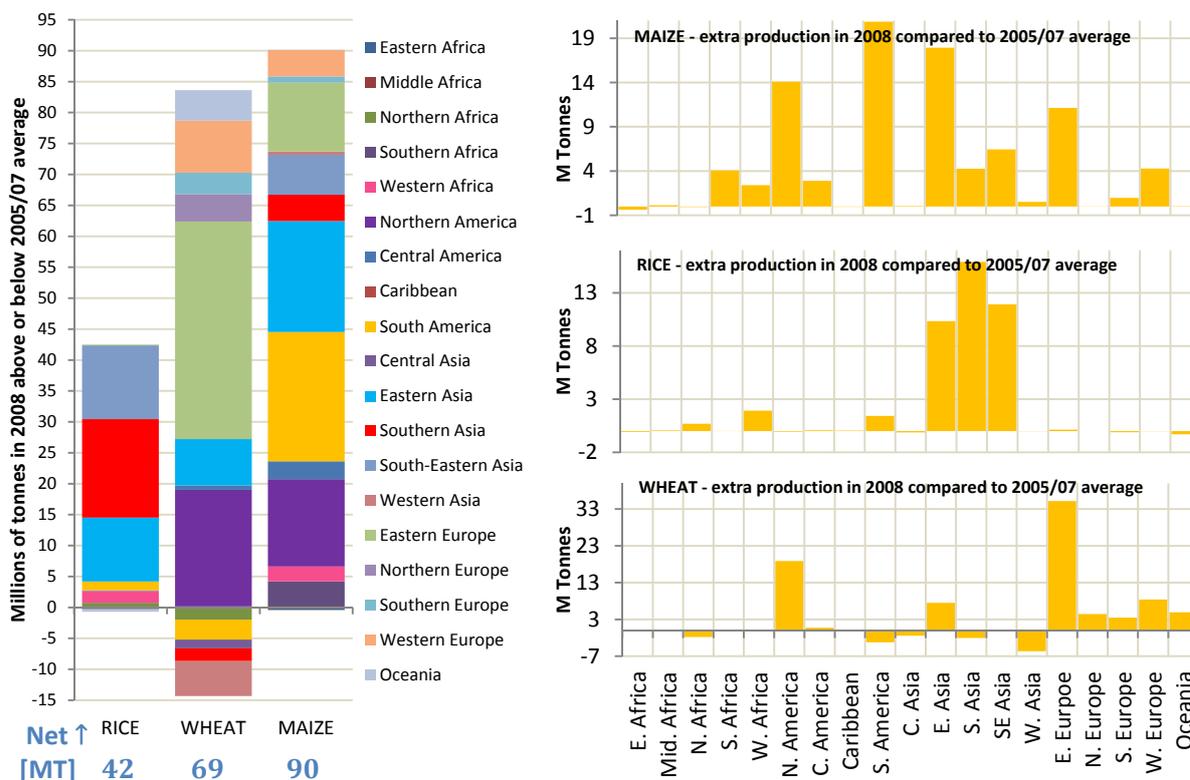


Source: Constructed with data from FAOSTAT. Note: Rice in this measure is expressed on an unmilled basis

Eastern Europe, Northern America, and Eastern Asia saw the largest increases; followed by South America, SE Asia, Southern Asia, and Western Europe. In Africa, Western Africa saw the largest increases — see Figure 3.12

This can be broken down into the three major cereal crops: maize, rice, and wheat. Distribution of these individual crops' supply response is shown in the two panels of Figure 3.13. The panel on the left shows how percent increases in 2008 from 2005/07 levels are distributed—for all cereals (for comparison) and for rice, wheat, and maize individually. The panel on the right shows the actual tonnage increases or decreases in 2008 on the 2005/07 average, by region.

Figure 3.13 Comparing supply response in major cereals by UN region



Source: Constructed with data from FAOSTAT. More data is available in Annex E. **Note:** Rice expressed on an unmilled basis

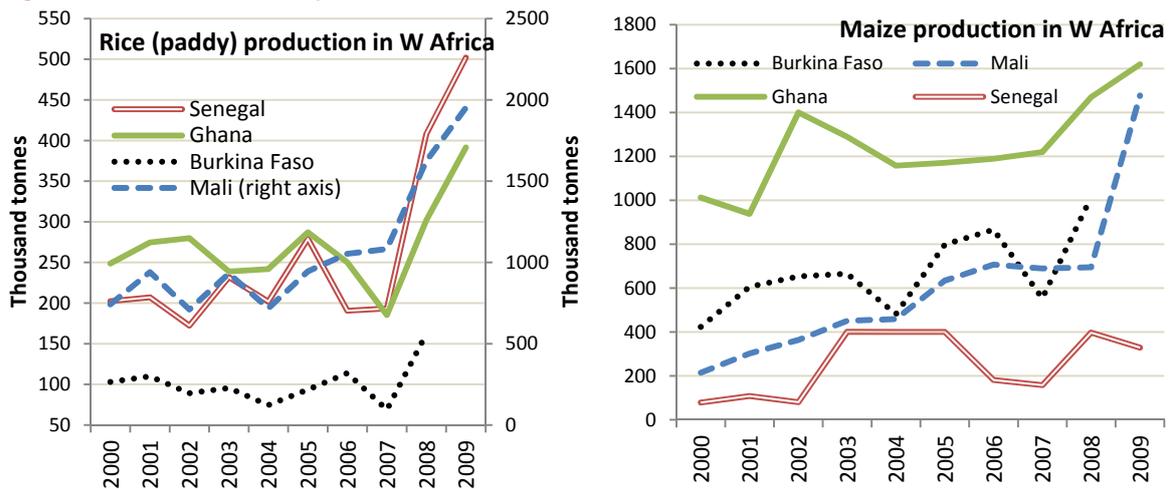
There were substantial increases for all three of the main cereals. Overall, Eastern Europe, North America, and Eastern Asia produced most of the supply response. On maize however, South America and East Asia were particularly strong. Rice response came almost entirely from Asia, with the response from Southern Asia particularly marked.

Much of the response had nothing to do with food crisis programmes: these were not directed to North America and Eastern Europe. There were some strong responses within the developing world, such as the rice increases in Asia, that may owe something to the programmes.

National level evidence of cereal supply response?

Developing regions which saw particularly strong response include Western Africa and Southern Asia. The following figures illustrate some examples of production responses at the level of country and crop, with data beginning in 2000 and running to 2008, and in some cases, to 2009.

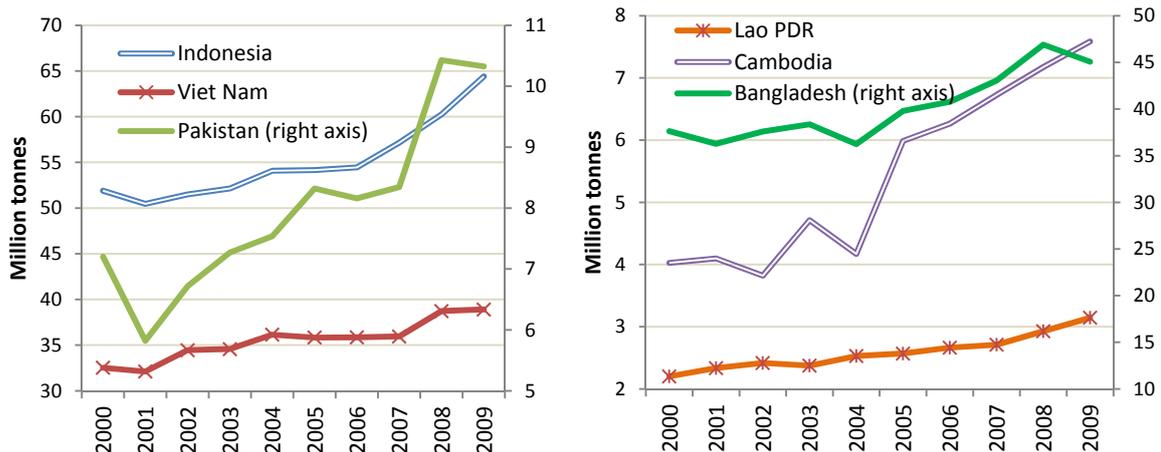
Figure 3.14 Rice and maize production trends in West Africa



Source: Constructed with data from FAOSTAT

Paddy production jumped strongly in some of these countries. In Senegal for example, it doubled from 2007 to 2008, and in Mali it increased by half over the same period. Mali's maize production increase from 2008 to 2009 was also dramatic, more than doubling.

Figure 3.15 Rice production trends in Asia



Source: Constructed with data from FAOSTAT. Note: Rice is on unmilled basis

From 2007 to 2008, paddy in Pakistan increased by about 25%; in Vietnam about 8%; in Indonesia about 4%; and in Bangladesh about 10%. These are cases where response programmes reached; and where governments did what they could to stimulate farming.

Supply response appears to have been highest in places where price transmission was strong and opportunities for expansion were easy to seize — wheat and maize in North America, Eastern Europe, and South America. Some other places, such as West Africa, may have seen strong response as farmers were inspired by higher prices. Small farmers in Africa are also well known to be limited for lack of inputs; thus seed and fertiliser programmes that were launched or scaled up may have loosened these limits. In other places, such as Bangladesh and other Asian rice growers, there was a concerted government effort to induce supply response.

Programme level evidence of cereal supply response?

Effects of many supply response initiatives may not show up at a national level in annual statistics. Some examples of effectiveness at the programme level exist in the literature:

- Largely attributed to higher procurement prices offered by the government, Bangladesh's main Boro harvest increased 17% in 2008 on 2007 levels (and 2007 was a good year) (Wiggins et al. 2010)²⁰

- Looking at its GFRP initiatives, the World Bank (2009c) found:

There is emerging evidence from several countries of a strong short-term supply response.

For example, in Tajikistan, irrigated wheat yields in households benefiting from seeds and fertilizers distributed under the GFRP project increased from 3.19 ton/ha in 2008 to 3.43 ton/ha in 2009, while yields in non-project households decreased from 3.51 ton/ha in 2008 to 3.15 ton/ha in 2009.

In Niger, results from farm surveys indicate that rice yields in the GFRP project supported areas for the 2009 off-season are 20 percent higher than yields recorded during the 2008 off-season.

In Bangladesh, the broader Government and development partner initiatives, also supported by the Food Crisis Development Support Credit led to about a 20 percent increase in Boro season rice production.

However, there are mixed expectations of crop performance in some countries, including Ethiopia and Kenya, due to delayed and erratic rainfall. [paragraphing added]²¹

- In Cambodia, the main ADB-funded productivity enhancement programme worked via distribution of seeds and fertilisers. In one district, despite drought and pest attack, there was a 45% increase in yield from plots of land using distributed inputs for the 2009 wet season (May to October). The evaluators noted:

Yields were increased, but could have been even better if farmers had trusted the quality of the seed more, and if there were better irrigation facilities. Survey results also show however that a high percent of farmers used less seed, more chemical fertilizers, and improved transplanting and farming techniques, indicating the success of the training. (ADB 2010e)

A typhoon hit 70% of participating households in another district, but results from farmers unaffected by the typhoon indicate they saw almost a 56% increase in yields (ibid).

What about impacts on people's food security?

Some assessments explored beneficiaries' perceptions of programme impacts. Figure 3.17 records some perceived impacts of FAO TCP initiatives by region for three indicators: **crop production, food accessibility, and ability to sell**. This figure also records the ratio of spending per household in the regions.

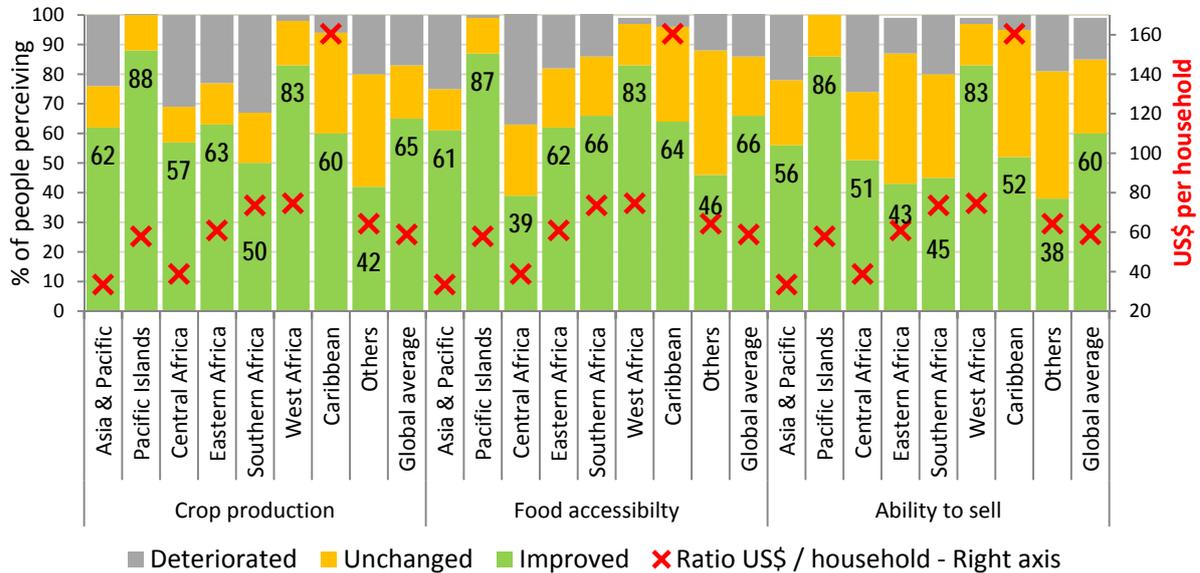
This indicates that on average about two-thirds of beneficiaries saw improvements. Some areas showed particularly strong improvements, notably Pacific Islands and West Africa – on all factors. Countries in the 'others' category (Armenia, Haiti, Honduras, Kyrgyzstan,

²⁰ This appears in national statistics as expected, since the Boro harvest is Bangladesh's main rice harvest.

²¹ Of these examples, the one relating to Tajikistan shows the strongest evidence. Simply comparing production data from one year to the next has attribution problems, and may not be a robust indicator of effectiveness.

Mauritania, Moldova, Nicaragua, and Yemen) fared poorly on all the indicators²². There seems to be very little correlation between spend per household and percent of people perceiving improvements.²³

Figure 3.17 Perceived impacts of ISFP TCP projects on crop production, food accessibility, and ability to sell, by region, compared to average household allocations



Source: Constructed with data in FAO (2010).

Note: Labels in the green columns represent percent of households in the region who perceived improvements in the categories. See note to Figure 3.9 for a definition of countries in each group.

Preliminary findings relating to impact are also available from the ADB-funded supply response programmes in two districts in Cambodia:

- Food gaps were reportedly reduced in both districts where interventions were implemented, and participants felt their living standard improved in both;
- Despite the impact of the typhoon in one of the districts, a high percent of beneficiaries (56%) felt living standards improved because they hadn't spent money to buy the seeds and fertilizer; and,
- A microfinance institution contracted to collect cash credit from farmers on behalf of the Government for the 2009 wet and dry season fertiliser distribution reported that by mid 2010, about 60% of a total of US\$622,971 that was loaned across the two districts had been recovered.

3.3.3 Effectiveness of protecting the vulnerable against effects of a price spike

Safety net programmes were an important response to the price spike. For instance, about 36% of provisional allocations of the EUFF until December of 2009 were intended for safety nets. HLTF member organisations together reportedly helped as many as 20% of the world's

²² Mauritania and Haiti appear in this list as opposed to in the West Africa and Caribbean aggregates because the available analysis is broken down by FAO regional office administration, rather than by UN country regions.

²³ For instance, though the Caribbean region saw the highest ratio of spending per household, it did not see the most perceived improvement. In Central Africa, where the ratio of spending per household was higher than in Asia and the Pacific, perceived impacts lagged behind on each of the three indicators.

hungry with ‘support or technical assistance to design, build, or expand social protection and safety net systems’ in more than 60 countries in 2008²⁴ (HLTF 2009).

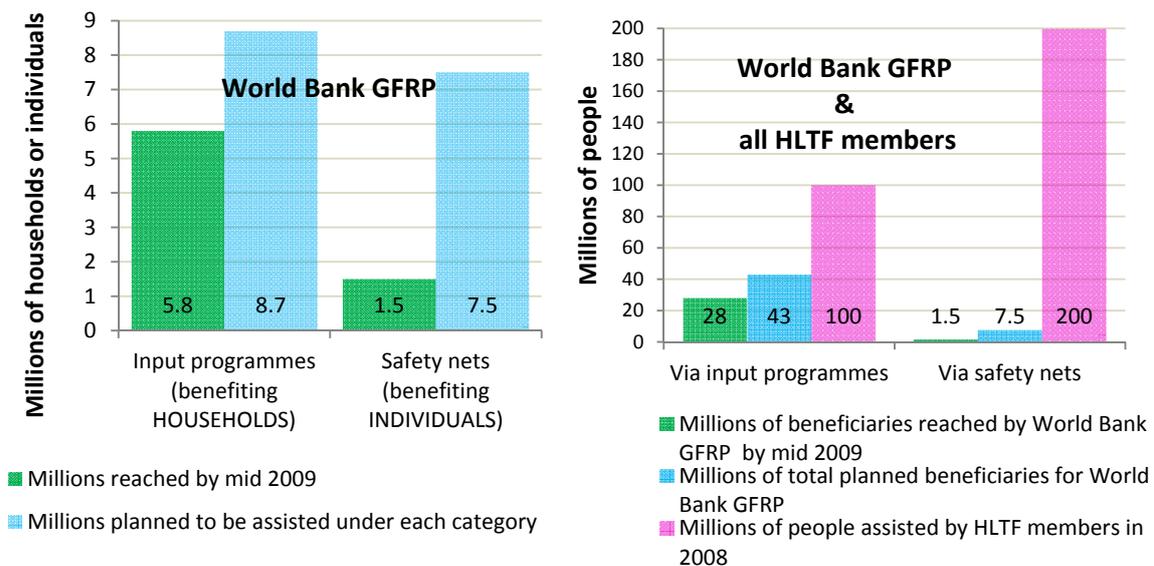
For instance, new or scaled up projects from WFP supported 23 million people in 24 countries. This included: scaling up food assistance to fill gaps in livelihood protection programmes, including emerging safety nets in countries with a risk of persistent social disruption including Haiti and Liberia; and scaling up school feeding in Benin, Ghana, Kenya, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, and Tajikistan to allow children to stay in school and to increase their food security (HLTF, 2009).

Overall, HLTF estimates that twice as many people were helped through safety nets, compared to those assisted by agricultural programmes in 2008, see Figure 3.18. This varied by agency, of course: for example the Bank’s GFRP projects provided more households with agricultural inputs than by safety nets, as the left hand panel of Figure 3.18 shows.

What about *timing*?

Expanding safety nets may have taken longer than the provision of farm inputs. For example, by mid 2009, GFRP production initiatives had reached two thirds of intended beneficiaries — 5.8 million out 8.7 million farm households (two thirds), while by the same time safety net measures had reached one fifth of intended beneficiaries 1.5 out of 7.5 million people: See Figure 3.18

Figure 3.18 World Bank GFRP safety nets compared to agricultural inputs



Source: Constructed with data in World Bank 2009c & HLTF 2009. **Note:** Number of people estimated assisted by safety nets Derived by aggregating: number of children benefiting from school feeding + women receiving nutrition interventions (supplements and education) + children receiving nutrition supplements + direct and indirect beneficiaries from cash/food for work programs + direct and indirect beneficiaries from cash transfer programs. For indirect beneficiaries, the assumption is that each beneficiary household includes 5 beneficiaries. Figures were estimated using Project Appraisal Documents (PADs), biweekly GFRP reports and project supervision reports.

Generally, as with interventions to boost food production, most of the safety nets were not launched until late 2008, and many began only in 2009. For example, schools added to WFP’s

²⁴ Considering estimates of hunger were over 1 billion in 2008, this is about 200 million people. Less is known about how much each of these 200 million received by way of support.

school feeding programmes in Sierra Leone didn't receive rations until October 2008, when prices had already been high for several months (Wiggins et al. 2010). The Asian Development Bank's safety nets in Cambodia were also launched relatively late:

- A Food for Work programme was implemented by WFP and the Ministry of Rural Development between November 2008 and July 2010
- The Cash for Work (CFW) programme was piloted in 11 subprojects from July to October 2009. After piloting, the programme was expanded in seven locations.
- A school feeding programme, undertaken by the Ministry of Economy and Finance and WFP was planned to cover 266 primary schools (65,861 students) with hot breakfasts for the school year October 2009– July 2010. Although this didn't capture the peak of the 2007/08 price spike, it was an appropriate response to the higher prices in Cambodia seen in late 2009.

Impact of higher food prices on existing programme effectiveness: examples from WFP

Higher food prices in some cases had the early effect of reducing the effectiveness of some existing programmes, since higher costs of food and fuel meant that budgets for food inputs were stretched. For example, in Côte d'Ivoire, the WFP's protracted relief and rehabilitation operation (PRRO) had to be downsized or interrupted (WFP, Oct 2009).

Some of the earliest responses may have been scale-downs as well as scale-ups of ongoing programmes, as food and fuel prices contributed to soaring costs. For a number of safety nets already in place, the price crisis meant downgrading existing programmes, even while others were being expanded by the same agencies.

To keep the planned number of beneficiaries, less food was distributed per recipient. Between January and December 2008. For the period from July 2007 to Dec 2008, food distribution was planned to be 47,256 tonnes, but reached only 24,633 tonnes (52%), owing to '... the higher than expected costs of food commodities and transport.' (ibid) Since far more people requested support than the funds could buy, WFP provided smaller support per beneficiary using "more discretion...in applying the beneficiaries selection criteria." (ibid) Moreover, some projects were suspended, including take-home rations for girls. School feeding had led to increased enrolment, but then a cap was placed on the number of students being fed, meaning "the proportion of fed pupils decreased and social exclusion increased again." (WFP, Oct 2009)

This experience was not isolated to Côte d'Ivoire:

- One evaluation of a WFP programme to reverse growing undernutrition in Burkina Faso (WFP, Jan 2009) indicated that it was only 50% resourced:
"The actual extent to which such resourcing failures impacted on desired outcomes can only be guessed—but a negative impact can be assumed."
- An interim evaluation of WFP's Bangladesh country programme from 2007 to 2010 (Gardener et al. 2009) noted that the programme was too rigidly designed and too susceptible to external factors, particularly the rise in food prices which were not budgeted for.
- Another evaluation (WFP, May 2010) found that WFP's livelihood recovery interventions had the right policies in place, but that in practice relief work was prioritized at the expense of recovering livelihoods to increase resilience of people to future shocks.

3.4 Efficiency

3.4.1 Section summary: Efficiency

- **Were programmes that were implemented efficient?** *Rigorous evidence is lacking*
- **What sort of expenditures went on people and households?** *Most average spends per beneficiary or household varied within modest bounds, from about US\$20 to about US\$240. In kind transfers were also relatively modest.*

3.4.2 Questions about efficiency

Were programmes that were implemented efficient?

In other words, were sufficient impacts achieved for resources that went in? This review was not able to locate any rigorous reviews trying to answer this question.

An imperfect proxy can give some indication of what it cost to provide various kinds of assistance to a person or household, or the range in which in-kind transfers to people or households fell.

What did spends or basic outlays per beneficiary look like?

Without quantifying the impact or benefit of such transfers, it is impossible to compare across programmes in a systematic way. This is a task beyond the scope of this exercise.

The following table compiles some of the costs and in-kind transfers provided in response to individuals or households

Categories		UNIT	VALUE
IN MONEY TERMS			
Agricultural assistance	FAO TCP initiatives in Asia and Pacific, household average	US\$	33
	FAO TCP initiatives in Pacific Islands, household average	US\$	58
	FAO TCP initiatives in Central Africa, household average	US\$	39
	FAO TCP initiatives in Eastern Africa, household average	US\$	61
	FAO TCP initiatives in Southern Africa, household average	US\$	74
	FAO TCP initiatives in West Africa, household average	US\$	75
	FAO TCP initiatives in the Caribbean, household average	US\$	160
	FAO TCP initiatives on average globally, household average	US\$	59
	World Bank, Kenya, spending per 43K farmers for fertilizer input vouchers	US\$	110
Public works, safety nets, food assistance	ADB, Cambodia, CFW benefiting 2790 households	US\$	104
	World Bank, Liberia, CFW for 11K households, 40 days work at US\$3	US\$	120
	World Bank, Guinea, Urban public works for 5300 households	US\$	236
	World Bank, Ethiopia, PSNP, dollars per beneficiary 2009	US\$	45
	WFP global average spend per beneficiary in 2007	US\$	31
	WFP global average spend per beneficiary in 2008	US\$	35
Budget support	World Bank, Sierra Leone, US\$3M budget support, fiscal space allowed 20K to be fed in hospitals	US\$	150
Education	ADB, Cambodia, scholarship per school year for 8749 primary students	US\$	20
	ADB, Cambodia, scholarship per school year for 1741 secondary	US\$	45

	students		
IN KIND TRANSFERS			
School feeding	ADB, Cambodia, school feeding for 63K students	Kg	13
	World Bank, Liberia, school feeding for 60K children per month	Kg	7
Other food assistance	ADB, Cambodia, Early Childhood Learning Centre volunteers monthly rice ration for 12 months	Kg	15
Agricultural assistance	World Bank, Guinea Bissau, rice and mangrove seeds for 500 smallholders	Kg	144
	World Bank, Kyrgyzstan, high quality potato seeds for 5000 families	Kg	40
	World Bank, Tajikistan, high quality winter wheat seeds for 71,500 households	Kg	18
	World Bank, Benin, subsidized fertilizer for 39K farmers to pay about 60% of market prices	Kg	251

Sources: Constructed with data in FAO 2010, WFP annual report, ADB 2010e & World Bank, 2009c. **Note:** See note to Figure 3.8 for a definition of countries in the FAO TCP regional categories

Costs of delivering inputs need to be compared to benefits, but there is little evidence available of these.

Regarding interventions to secure access to food for victims of large-scale emergencies, FAO (2003) included an estimate for making seeds, tools, and other inputs available to small-scale farms that said:

“The costs, including administrative costs, of input packages for restoring subsistence production are estimated to be an average of US\$50 per family.”

In responses to the food price crisis, most average spends per beneficiary or household varied within modest bounds, from about US\$20 to about US\$240. In-kind donations were also modest.

4. Conclusions

The international community mounted a response to the food price crisis of 2007/08 that was remarkable and admirable for its size and urgency. But how relevant and effective were these responses? The record is not as clear as it might be, but nevertheless the following points stand out.

First, responses to the crisis of higher world food prices were heavily conditioned by how different agencies perceived the crisis. Humanitarian organisations, for example, tended to see the crisis as exacerbating costs of food aid, undermining cash-transfers, and adding extra demand for safety nets. They responded by securing more funding and expanding safety nets. Development agencies that saw the higher prices emerging from low production and stocks of key staples responded by promoting an agricultural production, and in some cases taking steps to increase (often humanitarian) cereal reserves. Other agencies took the perspective of developing country governments. They saw the crisis eating into the budgets of low income countries attempting to stimulate national production or cushion their vulnerable populations from price rises, so they provided funds to pay for these, and in some cases to compensate for budget losses arising from reduced import taxes, higher fuel bills and the like. When they saw governments struggling for lack of administrative capacity, they helped with technical and financial support.

Were these efforts directed to the right place and people? By location, the agencies seem to have chosen the right countries to focus their efforts. Only nine out of 123 countries seemed to receive more or less attention than might have been expected. It is not clear, however, if the neediest locations within countries were reached, as it is difficult to find information on the extent to which spatial mapping of sub-national vulnerability influenced decisions. It does however seem that rural areas got less attention than urban in many cases. In this respect, targeting was misinformed. The typical expectation was that urban households would be harder hit than rural ones since it was assumed that the latter would not have to buy in food. In fact, many of the rural poor — who were often poorer than their urban counterparts — relied heavily on buying in food and so were hit hard.

Socially, not enough is known about whether or not the right people within selected locations were reached. In some cases, reaching the neediest was too difficult at short-notice.

Were the responses the right ones? Most responses fell into two categories: stimulating production and protecting vulnerable people from high food prices. Broadly, these responses were appropriate, but perhaps not always entirely accurate. In addition to the questionable assumption that problems were more severe in urban areas, it was also often thought that the prime cause for concern was adding to the numbers in poverty, rather than the increased poverty of the already poor. Much of the urgency of the international response was stimulated by the estimate of an extra 100 million or so being added to the numbers of the hungry; rather than the worsening fate of the 850 million who were already hungry, ill-placed to cope with extra strain on their access to food. An earlier review found that not all of the predicted impacts of higher food prices were entirely as expected

As predicted, high food prices increased malnutrition (especially in young children) and poverty. Some findings were less obvious. These included: the depth of the impact in rural areas, the increase in inequality; the widespread use of credit to buy food, and the fact that

most poverty impact came from increasing depth of poverty in the already-poor, rather than increased 'poverty headcount.' (Compton et al. 2010)

How effective were these responses? Responses were not as timely as would have been ideal. Inputs were delivered but many arrived after the first half of 2008, when crops were planted in the Northern Hemisphere. Globally, most production response came from developed regions, rather than in developing countries. Some of these, however, did see strong response – particularly in West Africa and in South, South-East and East Asia. Some individual programmes report positive impacts on people's food security.

Safety nets were similarly delayed: most got going by late 2008 and early 2009, when prices had been high for some months. Less is known about their effectiveness. Some reportedly suffered from implementers' capacity constraints, overly complex targeting, and insufficient attention to women. There were also not enough attempts to examine relative effectiveness of implementing one type of safety net compared to another. In many cases, school feeding programmes were the focus because, unlike more sophisticated social protection programmes, they already existed in many low income countries and could be scaled-up relatively quickly.

There were furthermore some reports that initiatives to respond to crisis took priority over existing programmes. Higher food and fuel prices meant some programmes already underway had to be scaled back, even as funds were allocated to the new responses.

A final reflection concerns the evaluation deficit. While it may still be early to ask questions about impacts of these responses, not all agencies have made sufficient attempts to evaluate their response. Most reporting stops at outputs without consideration of impacts or outcomes. Very few evaluations of what was done are available; exceptions being for FAO's TCP responses, and for some WFP and DG ECHO programmes in place at the time of the food crisis. And while these studies did the best they could given limited time and data, they still leave some questions unanswered.

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