**Sample Assignments**

**Assignment 1**

**Understanding context of food insecurity**

**For use after the micro analytics module**

Create a 2-4 page brief contextualizing about the food security situation in a location of interest. This can focus on just a subregion of the country. (1) Summarize key (primary or secondary) evidence on the frequency, form, and severity of food insecurity, crises commonly experienced, dominant forms of livelihoods, key commodities consumed and produced, and common threats to livelihoods. (2) Include available estimates of marginal propensities to consume, terms of trade, and income and price elasticities of demand for food among the relevant population(s). (3) Include a summary of food assistance programs and regional and domestic trade policies related to food, and, if possible, directions of food flow for each country’s key commodities in that region. (4) Include careful citations of all sources consulted.

Here are some resources to help you begin. You can and should find others online or through tracking studies and data referenced in the resources below.

Basic Information Sources:

* Famine Early Warning Systems Network: [www.fewsnet.org](http://www.fewsnet.org)
* National basic food prices – data and analysis tool

<http://www.fao.org/giews/pricetool/>

* Food Budget Shares and Demand Elasticities from USDA

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/data/InternationalFoodDemand/>

and

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/Data/elasticities/query.aspx>

Resources for Kenyan Data:

* Kenya Food Security Meeting: <http://www.kenyafoodsecurity.org/>
* Ratin: [www.ratin.net](http://www.ratin.net)

Resources for Ugandan Data:

* FoodNet <http://www.foodnet.cgiar.org> and <http://www.foodnet.cgiar.org/market/market.htm>
* WFP (2009) “Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis: Uganda.” April.

<http://www.wfp.org/content/uganda-comprehensive-food-security-and-vulnerability-analysis>

**Assignment 2**

**Understanding commodity-specific information**

**For use after the meso analytics module**

Using available secondary sources, create a 3-6 page brief about a key commodity in a location of interest. This can focus on just a subregion of the country. (1) Assess supply, production and consumption levels. (2) Examine domestic/local prices compared international prices and compute import parity prices. (3) Conduct a spatial price analysis either using data provided or using data for Gap Analysis Final Project. (4) Describe the supply chain relevant to the target commodity and country or subregion, including processing, storage, transport and quality control/food safety dimensions. (5) Include careful citations of all sources consulted.

For clear presentation of price information, see FEWs, “Learners Notes - Markets Assessments and Analysis. Lesson Three: Annex 7: Presenting Price Data.” P. 30.

Access through Cornell Library’s Databases for “International Financial Statistics” for commodity prices etc.:

<http://www.imfstatistics.org/imf/>

FAOStat for food balance sheets, etc.: <http://faostat.fao.org/default.aspx> and <http://faostat.fao.org/site/368/default.aspx#ancor>

UN Data

<http://data.un.org/>

UN Commodity Trade Statistics Database: <http://data.un.org/Browse.aspx?d=ComTrade>

World Bank commodity price data (pink sheet): <http://econ.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTDECPROSPECTS/0,,contentMDK:21148472~menuPK:556802~pagePK:64165401~piPK:64165026~theSitePK:476883,00.html>   
   
IMF International Financial Statistics commodity price series: <http://www.imfstatistics.org/imf/>

**Assignment 3**

**Gap Analysis and Presentations**

**For use after analysis module**

Thefinal project will be to identify and review available academic and grey literature examining food markets and analyzing secondary data on markets in a targeted area in order to prepare a gap analysis. A **gap analysis** critically reviews and analyzes available information and identifies what aspects of market analysis are currently lacking in secondary sources. These identified gaps will then help to prioritize collection of primary data.

A good gap analysis should:

(1) Link analysis and findings from assignments 1 & 2 to answer relevant MIFIRA questions.

(2) For unanswered (or thinly answered) MIFIRA questions, search for and synthesize relevant findings in secondary data.

(3) List MIFIRA questions that you were unable to answer, for which you have incomplete or outdated data, or you would like to triangulate findings for and describe your concerns. Note your data limitations as well as list any (major) sites you searched unsuccessfully.

(4) Assess whether primary data collection could inform these MIFIRA questions or whether more up-to-date secondary data may be available in-country.

(5) Be skeptical of your sources. If you have competing findings, present both and identify why one appears more reliable than the other.

(6) Cite carefully!

(7) Synthesize into a report that identifies (i) MIFIRA questions for which reasonable answers exist from secondary data and analyses available at Cornell – and provide your answer to that question and the rationale for your answer – (ii) questions for which some data exist and the tentative conclusion you would reach, but for which more data would be highly desirable, and (iii) the questions for which no good evidence is available. Finally, (iv) describe how you would prioritize effort in the field to fill the gaps and complete the MIFIRA assessment.

**Presentations**

Individuals are strongly encouraged to collaborate, brainstorm, and share sources with each other. Individual presentations should be approximately 15 minutes long. After each presenter, there will be about 5 minutes for questions. If you would prefer to present jointly with someone working on the same country, plan for a presentation 25-30 minutes long.

The presentations should (1) highlight key findings drawn from secondary sources that are relevant for a MIFIRA analysis, (2) identify areas where additional information is required, and (3) assess whether these gaps could be filled by primary data collection.

The presentations are not just an opportunity to present preliminary findings, as one might at the start of a field mission (explaining to partners what is already known and what questions the field researchers need to answer in the coming weeks), they are also an opportunity to raise any questions about data availability or quality, to present competing findings, and to share useful information sources.