



*Use for Survey
Europe*

Workshop on Household Survey Data:
their use in nutrition policy planning

Athens, 30 September - 2 October 1987

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SCOPE AND PURPOSE

Very few countries have good information about their national diets, neither about current levels nor about trends. Such information is one of the prerequisites for the formulation of nutrition policy objectives and for monitoring of policy implementation. At present, many countries have to make do with food balance sheet data, either national or FAO food balance sheet. The information provided in this way is rather crude, and has been subjected to many approximations and may even contain direct errors.

Most countries do, as part of price indexing exercises, collect information about food expenditure at household level. This information can be very useful for nutrition planners, because it gives more disaggregated data - for example about household food patterns in urban/rural areas, in different occupations, different income levels and so on. The data are collected for economic purposes only in most countries.

The statisticians responsible for this data collection are, however, usually willing to consider the needs of nutrition planners if they are made aware of their data needs and the kind of information required.

The Nutrition Programme of the WHO Regional Office for Europe is concentrating much of its attention on nutrition policy formulation and implementation, and the current training workshop therefore concerns a theme that is central to the Programme.

The main issues for discussion will be:

- an overview of existing household budget surveys in Europe; who are responsible for the surveys: what information is acquired; methodology and use of the information.
- discussion of the advantages and difficulties with expenditure accounting vs. expenditure/amounts accounting.
- proposals for an "ideal" methodology which will accommodate the needs of both economists and nutrition planners.
- possibilities of including additional surveys into the existing household survey.

The participants will be expected to bring national data for the illustration of discussion points. They will be asked to formulate their views on a set of problems to be spelled out in advance.

The final outcome should be practical and detailed recommendations for the improvement of this kind of data collection so that it can be better tailored to the needs of data for nutrition policy planning. These recommendations should be circulated to statistical offices responsible for this kind of data collection, and to nutrition policymakers in the European Region.