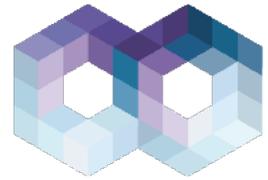


senseguide



SenseMaker® case study PROOFS Bangladesh 2014



Food security
Is about more than having enough to eat

‘2 million people
suffer from
‘hidden famine’





According to recent figures published by the World Bank, more than 850 million people all over the world don't have enough to eat. The main problem areas are in developing countries. However, over 2 billion people suffer from 'hidden famine'; a lack of nutrients caused by a diet that's too one-sided. Realising food security for everyone is a crucial global challenge, in which the Dutch government plays an important part.

The global challenge around food cannot be understood just by itself. Food security is linked to issues around poverty, social inequality, climate change and the use of scarce natural resources. That is why food security requires diverse policy initiatives and a national and international cooperation between governments, the private sector, NGOs and science.



PROOFS Bangladesh: innovative food security programme for the 'Base of the Pyramid'

It is against this background that the Dutch Embassy in Bangladesh finances the Profitable Opportunities for Food Security (PROOFS) programme, that aims to improve food security and nutrition for households that are in the so-called Base of the Pyramid (BoP). The programme will run for four years and will be implemented by three NGOs: BoP Innovation Centre, ICCO and IDE.

PROOFS is a unique cooperation between governments, NGOs and the private sector. The programme will simultaneously promote inclusive and sustainable growth in the agricultural sector and eradicate malnutrition. In doing so, the programme will make use of the most up-to-date knowledge and research methods around malnutrition prevention, local food chains and behavioural change.



Understanding what's really on the mind of the Base-of-the-Pyramid

At BoP Innovation Centre, the project managers already knew that traditional market research techniques would not allow them to fully understand consumer behaviour in the Base of the Pyramid and design meaningful interventions. They found that too often, our Western view of the world limits our thinking about developing countries. That's why they were curious to find out what insights they would get by asking local people to simply tell stories about food and their daily life. They asked SenseGuide to help them do this.

Over a period of six weeks, eight local nutrition officers used iPad Minis with the SenseMaker® app installed to gather a total of 800 stories around food and cooking from local villagers. The stories were told by a representative group of women and men from seven different areas in Bangladesh, in their own language.



All stories were stored as audio recordings using SenseMaker®. After telling a story, the storytellers were asked to make sense of their own story by answering a number of indexing questions called ‘signifiers’. These signifiers generate metadata in real-time and allow researchers to look at patterns and correlations that start to form as soon as the data comes in.

While the nutrition officers were gathering stories in the field and uploading them, students from Dhaka University translated the raw audio files into English text. These text files were then combined with the proper metadata to form a coherent and context-rich database that would allow us to take the next step: looking at different perspectives and trying to make sense of the underlying issues.



“The Nutrition Competent Community”

Looking at the metadata, the first insight was that access to and availability of nutritious food were not the key issues. Even the monthly household income was not as important as it was first thought to be. From the stories, we learned that lack of knowledge about food and food preparation had a bigger influence on eating patterns. This was true for both the lowest and the highest income groups.

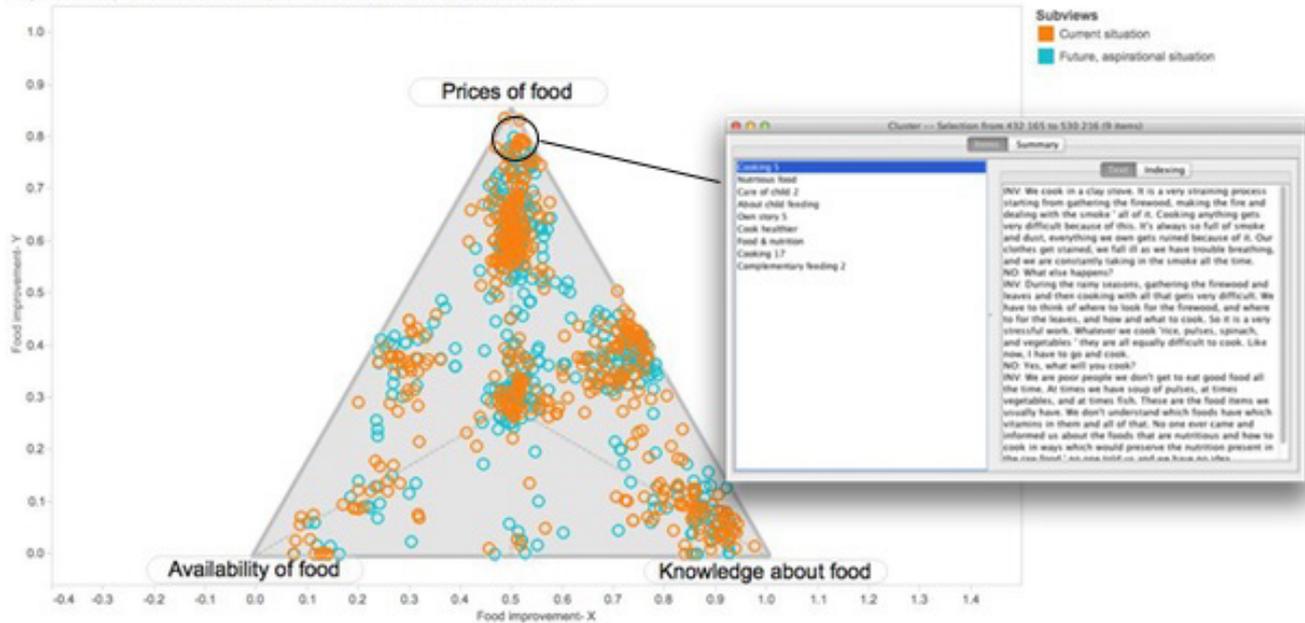
**Without Sensemaker®
I never would have come
to these insights**

The stories were not just about food. Many stories spoke about women’s subordinate role in the household and the sometimes harsh living conditions. Household dynamics have a major influence on food behaviour. Most communication efforts around healthy eating are aimed at women, but it is the men who usually decide what food is bought at the market. The result is too little diversity in the daily diet.

“Without SenseMaker®, I never would have come to these insights”, says Wendy van der Klein, project manager of PROOFS on behalf of BoP Innovation Centre, “The stories



In your story, what could improve the situation around food?



allowed us to empathise, to get a feel for the daily life of the local people, to see the connections between different aspects and paint a more complete picture of the situation.”

This complete picture was the result of a participatory analysis and interpretation of the data with the nutrition team and other local stakeholders in Bangladesh. Over the course of a three-day workshop, all parties involved worked to create a shared view of the situation and designed a coherent set of interventions. The “Nutrition Competent Community” is the strategic concept that links several sustainable activities to improve the income situation, the role of the

woman in the household and a change in eating behaviour.

Abul Kalam Azad, the manager of the nutrition team in Bangladesh, was very pleased with the whole process: “This is the first time that a Western NGO takes a deep dive into our culture to really understand what’s going on. Our local experts were able to share much of their knowledge as well. I fully expect to see a real breakthrough in these matters now.”



About Senseguide

SenseGuide is a centre of insights and innovation for complex social challenges. Today, organisations in both public and private sector recognise that they operate in complex and inherently unpredictable environments. The various relationships, dynamics and market mechanisms are constantly in flux and can never be fully understood with statistics and in terms of linear cause and effect.

In order to be effective, organisations require an approach that allows for continuous monitoring to understand complex change as it happens. Our goal is to utilize the rich context of narrative to inform sensemaking, but also to create objective data in which cognitive bias is minimized and we can place some reliance on the conclusions drawn. Together with a sense-making and intervention design process that involves stakeholders and leaves plenty of room for real-time adjustments, this provides a way to tap into the potential for change that exists in any complex system – instead of working against it.





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