Systematically Addressing the Determinants of Food Security

Governments, communities and households around the world face a variety of challenges related to food insecurity, including ensuring sufficient quantity and quality of nutritious foods within stable systems. Abt Associates helps our clients address each component of food security: availability, or sufficient quantities of food; access, or income and other resources to acquire food; and consumption, or adequate dietary intake. The goal is to help individuals, organizations and governments better meet dietary needs.

With businesses, we build capacity to improve availability of and access to nutritious foods. With community groups and individuals, we support healthy food choices and decision making from field to fork. Throughout, we strengthen food systems to address food insecurity and improve nutrition, leading to increased well-being and economic growth.

“Most of us here today don’t worry about going to bed hungry. Unfortunately, this is the reality for 48 million people in the United States each year.”

Mary Joel Holin, Division Vice President, Social and Economic Policy, Abt Associates
Strengthening Agricultural Markets and Productivity

Our global food systems must continue to evolve to meet the needs of the world’s expected population of 9 billion by 2050. Market-oriented agricultural development has the potential to spur economic growth and create opportunities for rural populations, especially youth.

Helping smallholder farmers and small farm businesses link with markets presents an opportunity to create growth and prosperity while filling nutrition gaps. Abt’s evidence-based, technologically current and business-savvy strategies for enhancing the food, feed and fiber industries target poor, underserved groups and rural areas. The strategies connect the groups and regions with proven approaches for operations and added value to reach more promising markets. Throughout the world, our public and private alliances generate measurable, lasting and country-led impacts on livelihoods, malnutrition and economic growth.

Over four years in West Africa, Abt facilitated $83.6 MILLION in agricultural investment and $61.9 MILLION in agricultural exports.
Evaluating Initiatives to Improve Food Security and Diet Quality

Both in the United States and globally, communities struggle with food insecurity and a lack of diet quality, which can lead to a variety of health risks and preventable diseases. Abt has pioneered rigorous research and evaluation in support of food assistance programs seeking to address food insecurity and improve meal quality.

Our recent research focuses on several key policy questions: Do food assistance programs improve child food security and diet quality? Can incentives improve the dietary intake of families receiving nutrition assistance? How do economic conditions relate to the use of nutrition assistance programs? Our extensive portfolio of projects for the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food and Nutrition Service, USAID and multiple foundations shows our commitment to improving the food security and nutritional well-being of the world’s most vulnerable citizens.

The $60 monthly Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer for Children cut very low food security among children by 33 PERCENT.
The Abt Advantage

Abt Associates is helping clients meet emerging challenges in food production, market development and health risks, including malnutrition (both over-nutrition and under-nutrition). Our multidisciplinary experts design, implement and evaluate initiatives and innovative strategies to provide incentives for consumption of nutritious foods, spur economic growth through agricultural development and provide nutrition assistance.

We have an extensive knowledge base, well-trained and experienced staff and a 30-year history in food security and agricultural development in the United States and globally. We can elevate national and local efforts to overcome nutrition and food security challenges at the consumer level, in the enabling environment, along value chains, on smallholder farms and within communities.

Our Food Security & Agriculture capabilities include:

- Evaluation of nutrition programs both domestically and internationally
- Technical assistance and capacity building in agricultural market development and productivity enhancements
- Design and implementation of market-oriented nutrition programs
Abt Associates is an engine for social impact, dedicated to moving people from vulnerability to security. Harnessing the power of data and our experts’ grounded insights, we provide research, consulting and technical services globally in the areas of health, environmental and social policy, technology and international development.