



**Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations**

MASAMI TAKEUCHI PRESENTATION

Risk communication

a.k.a. risk of underestimating the power of communication
in the area of food safety

Mandate of FAO

FOOD SECURITY



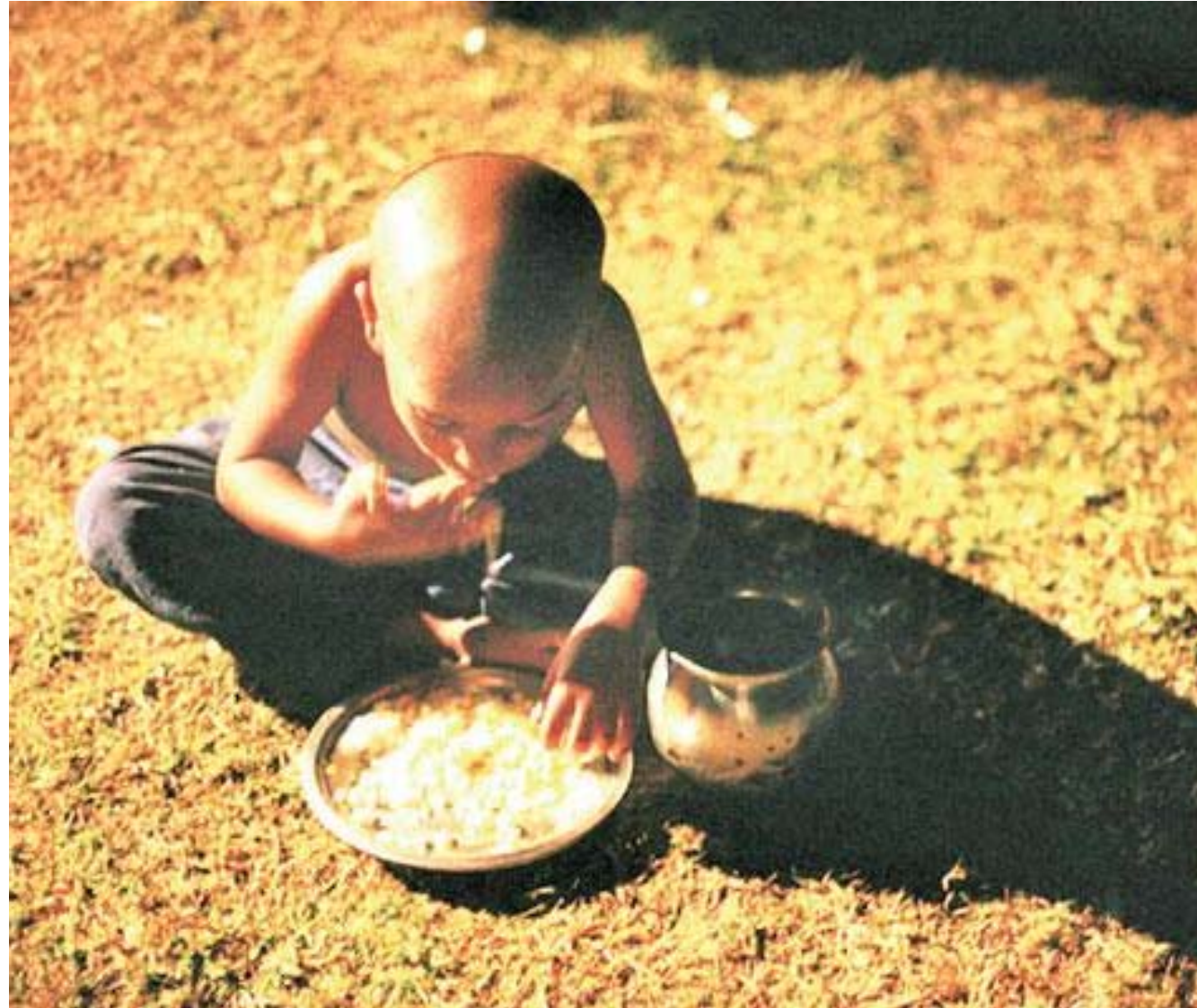
Zero hunger




Everyone can play a part



Codex Alimentarius (1963),
Committee of World Food
Security (1974), The Right
to Food (2004) and many
more achievements



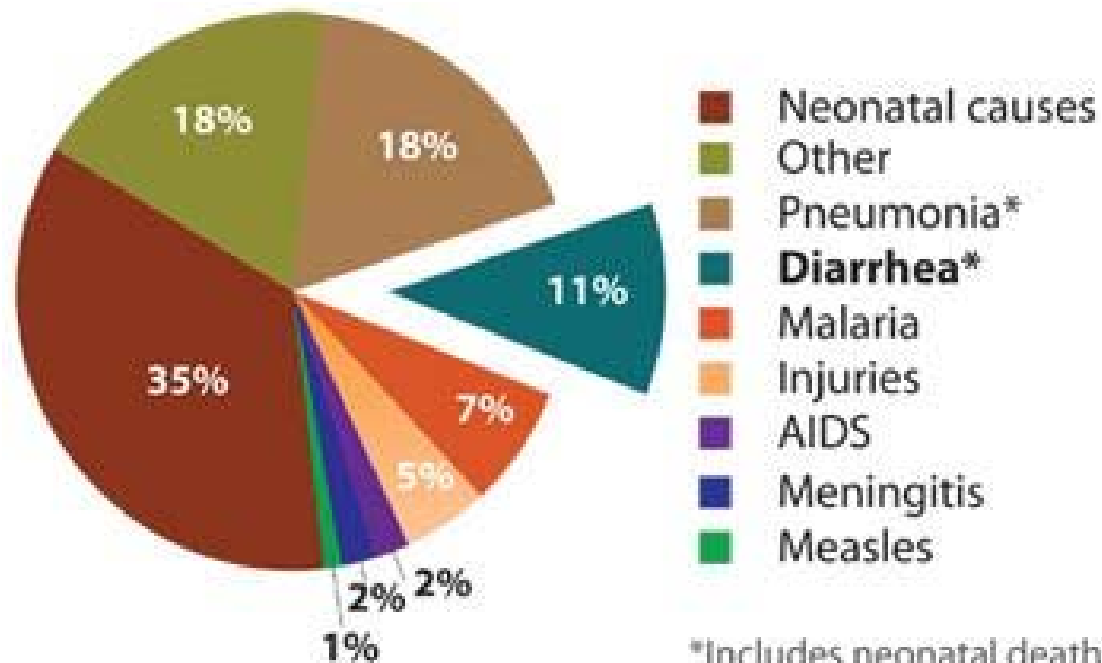
A background image showing a person's hands holding a bowl of food, possibly a salad or a dish with vegetables, over a bowl of rice. The image is dark and has a textured, almost halftone-like appearance.

“Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to **sufficient, safe** and **nutritious** food”

[FAO World Food Summit, 1996]

Diarrhea

Global killer



*Includes neonatal deaths

Source: Liu et al. *Lancet* 2012



Kills **2 195** children
everyday

Second leading cause of
death among children >5
yo

88% associated with unsafe
water, bad hygiene,
inadequate sanitations

Most diarrheal germs are
spread through **food and
water**

Interactions between:

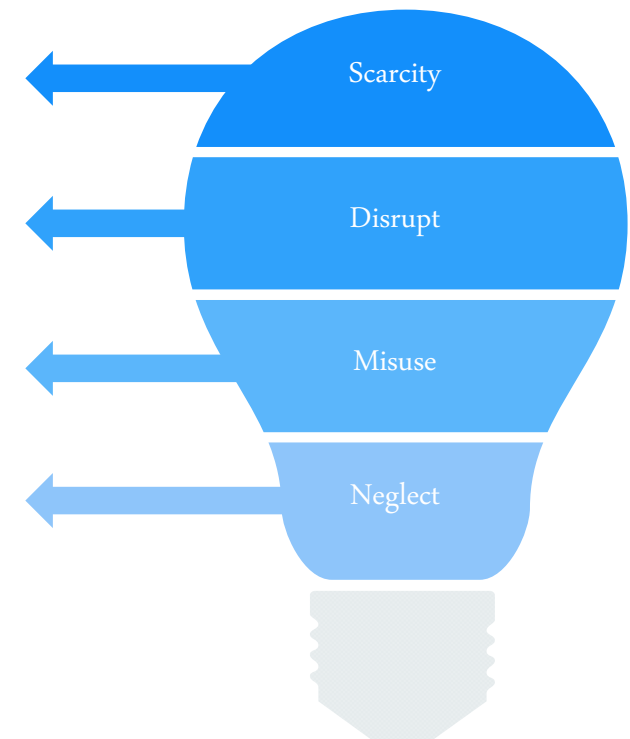
Food safety and food security

Food scarcity can coerce populations to consume whatever food is available even if it is unsafe or contaminated

A food safety scare in a country already facing food scarcity: can severely disrupt the food supply and cause wastage of the available food

Marked increase in food production by application of additional inputs (fertilizers, pesticides, vet meds): possible misuse of them – food safety concerns

“If it is not safe, it is not food” – but food safety often gets neglected



See the title and the photos:

Food safety risks



WHAT



DO YOU



PERCEIVE?

The background image shows a restaurant table with several white plates and bowls containing food. The lighting is low, creating a moody atmosphere. A large, semi-transparent blue oval is centered over the image, containing white text.

“Safety” + “Risk” + Photos

=

People think they may be risky!

Remember:

Key terminologies





Hazard

Food safety hazard is a biological, chemical or physical agent in, or condition of, food with the potential to cause an adverse health effect.

H

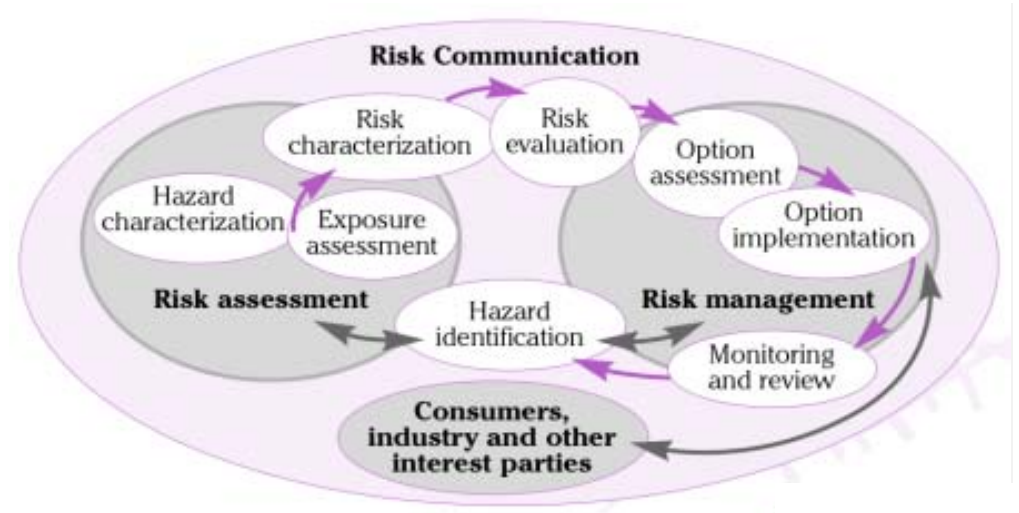


Risk

Food safety risk is a function of the probability of an adverse health effect and the severity of that effect, consequential to a hazard(s) in food.

R

Food safety risk analysis



A risk is NOT a hazard

A background image showing a person's hands cooking in a kitchen. One hand is holding a spatula over a large, dark, round pan. The other hand is holding a yellow object, possibly a lemon or a piece of food. The scene is dimly lit, with the focus on the cooking process.

Communication

A process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behavior.

C

It is not hazard communication

So what is risk communication?

- ✓ Interactive, through risk analysis process, among risk assessors, risk managers, and all stakeholders
- ✓ Communication concerning risk and risk-related factors and risk perceptions.
- ✓ Also includes explanation of risk assessment findings and the basis of risk management decisions



Case 1

Bangkok traffic

Hazard communication:

“Bangkok has a huge traffic jam problem.”

Risk communication:

“According to the latest statistics, the ABC Road between A and C is extremely congested between 7:00 am and 9:30 am on weekdays. If you plan to take a taxi to go to your meeting in B (between A and C) on a weekday morning, it is better to avoid going through the ABC Road, or to leave home before 7:00 to minimize the risk to arrive late at the meeting venue.”





Case 2

Salmonella in chicken

Hazard communication:

“Chicken may be contaminated with *Salmonella*.”

Risk communication:

“A number of studies have confirmed that if the street vendor does not have a frequent access to hand-washing facilities, and if s/he is not careful enough in avoiding cross-contamination, it is possible to have a significant level of *Salmonella* in your chicken purchased at street vendors in Bangkok, and the consequence can be serious. However, if you ask the vendor to re-grill your chicken in front of you right before you eat, the grilling temperature is usually high enough to kill most of the bacteria and the probability to get salmonellosis from that chicken will significantly go down.”



Fake news

Why are they so influential?

Accurate and evidence-based
counter-information is
needed



Media

Are they scandals or news?

Media-trainings for both
authorities and journalists are
beneficial



Chemicals(?)

Why people fear?

Constant and sustainable
education to general public is
key



Unique role of food:

Culture and society



Foods are part of religious, cultural and traditional practices



Food choices are a way to communicate identity, cultural membership, or ideological viewpoints.

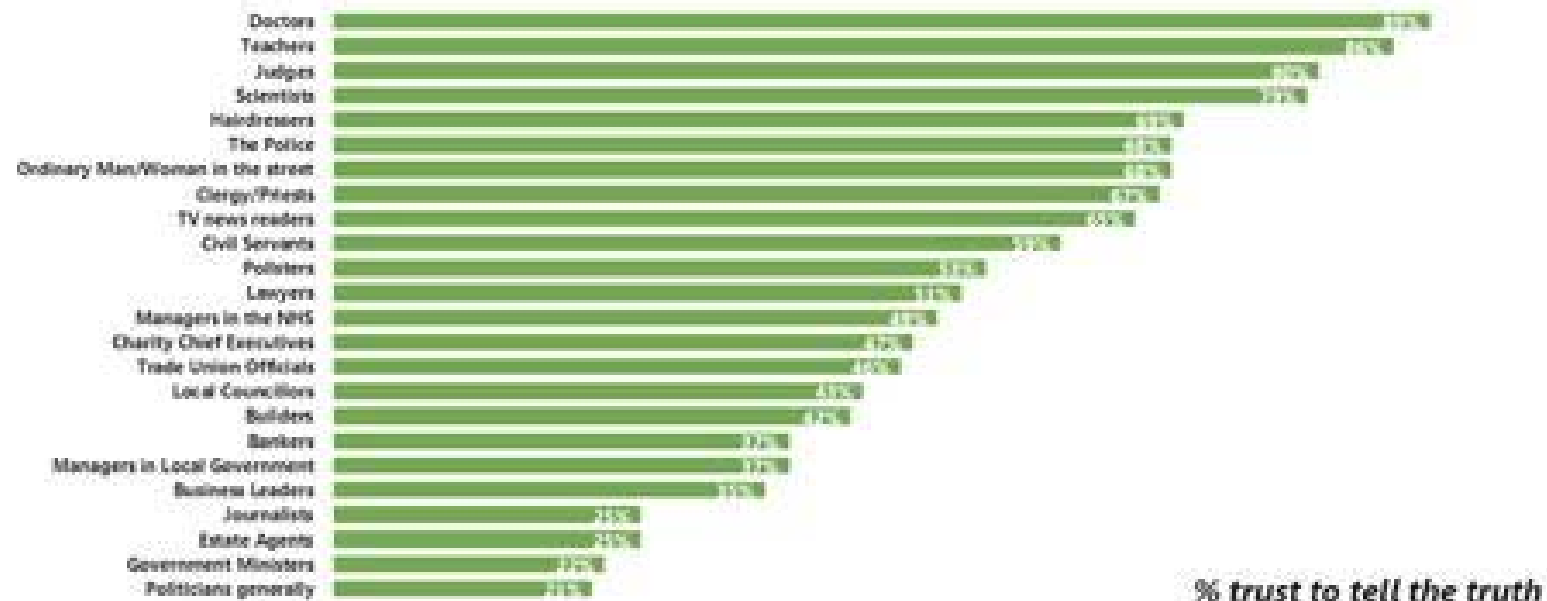


Consumption of unsafe foods cannot always be avoided, for example, if alternatives are not available

Who are the best influencers?

Veracity Index 2015 – all professions overview

"Now I will read you a list of different types of people. For each would you tell me if you generally trust them to tell the truth, or not?"





Need to know

Providing only information that the target audience “needs” to know may not be sufficient in food safety risk communication.



Want to know

Addressing all information that the target audience “wants” to know may not overwhelm them in food safety risk communication

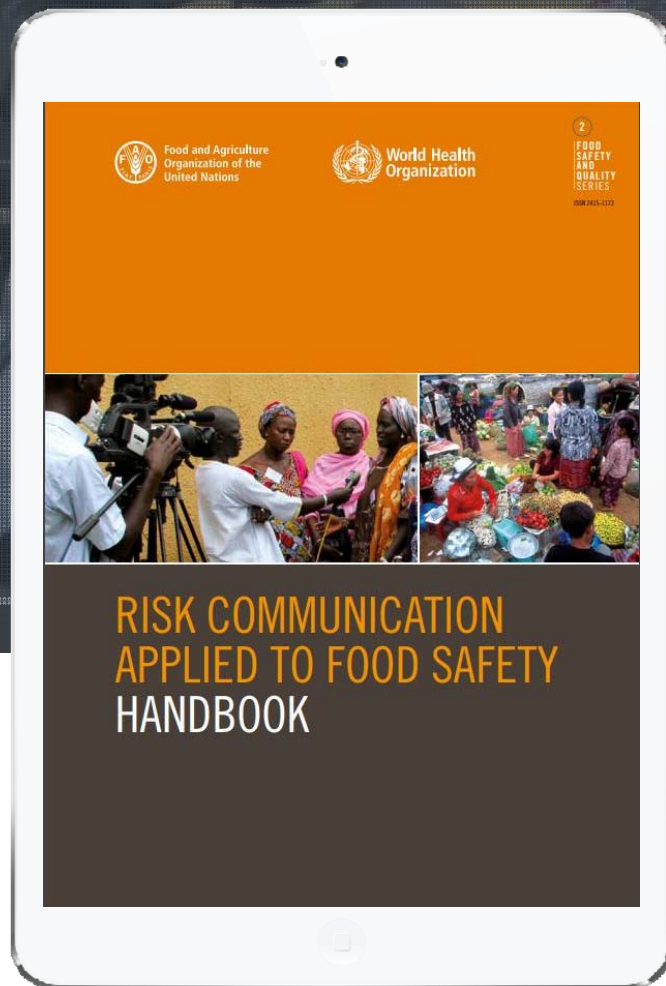
Balance is key

Plan it better:

Risk communication strategy

| Risk | Perceived risk | Examples | Strategy |
|------|----------------|--|--|
| Low | Low | Allowed level of chemical contaminants | Passive |
| Low | High | Mercury in fish, dioxin, GMOs | Responsive, ad hoc, sincere |
| High | Low | Microbial (bacteria, viruses, parasites) contamination | Educative, constant (regular), emphasizing |
| High | High | BSE | Proactive, highlighting |

Food safety risk communication FAO/WHO Handbook



It explains Codex principles in a practical way with various good practices around the globe, considering different culture and language contexts, case studies and specific applications to food safety.

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THANK YOU

谢谢