

# JOANNA B. UPTON, PhD

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Senior Research Associate

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## AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Economics of Development, Public Policy Analysis, Food Security, Resilience,  
Sub-Saharan Africa

## SELECTED PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Senior Research Associate, Charles H. Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management,  
Cornell University, July 2022 - present

Research Associate, Charles H. Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management, Cornell  
University, January 2017 – June 2022

Research Consultant with Catholic Relief Services, Southern Africa, on the Measurement  
Indicators for Resilience Analysis (MIRA) project, March 2018 – Sept 2019

Postdoctoral Associate with Christopher B. Barrett and Mark Constas on food security and  
development resilience, Aug 2014 – Dec 2016

Academic Consultant for the Somalia Resilience Programme (SomReP), a consortium of seven  
non-profit organizations, for work on innovating resilience measurement practices and assessing  
household- and community-level impacts of SomReP programs, Jan 2015 – Sept 2016

Consultant for the World Food Programme, for research related to procurement from smallholder  
farmers' organizations under the Purchase for Progress pilot, Dec 2015 – June 2016

Research collaborator on a World Food Programme cash/food transfer pilot project in Niger with  
John Hoddinott at the International Food Policy Research Institute, Apr 2011 – Aug 2015

Research assistant for Professor Christopher B. Barrett on food security and socio-political  
stability, Spring – Fall 2012

Consultant with Catholic Relief Services in Burkina Faso for a comprehensive evaluation of a  
local procurement project for a school-feeding program, Summer 2011

Research Assistant for Professor Christopher B. Barrett on the Local and Regional Procurement  
Learning Alliance, a collaboration with multiple NGOs under the USDA, Spring – Fall 2011

Research Assistant for Professor Christopher B. Barrett for collaborative work with the Global Public Policy Institute on transatlantic policy convergence, Fall 2010

Field assistant for Professor Christopher B. Barrett for an implementation of the Market Information and Food Insecurity Response Analysis framework in Uganda, Summer 2010

In-country representative and program administrator for Rain for the Sahel and Sahara, Inc., a non-profit organization implementing education and health projects among nomadic populations in Niger, Sep 2004 – Jul 2006

Bibliographic Services Representative for the United States Library of Congress, to build The Library's collection of works published in Niger, Feb – Jul 2006

Founder of an independent neighborhood fire relief project to raise money and re-build huts for 40 families who lost their homes to a fire in Niamey, Niger, Feb – Apr 2003

## EDUCATION

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Cornell University, The Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management  
*PhD in Applied Economics and Management*, August 2014

The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University  
*Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy*, August 2008

Boston University  
*Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics, Minors in French and Music*, May 2002

## RESEARCH OUTPUTS

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### ***Published Journal Articles***

Upton, Joanna, Elizabeth Tennant, Hope Michelson, and Erin Lentz (2025). Shocks and Rural Food Insecurity: Insights from high frequency data during the COVID-19 pandemic in rural Malawi. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 120: 103879.

Upton, Joanna, Susana Constenla-Villoslada , and Christopher B. Barrett (2022). *Caveat utilitor*: A comparative assessment of popular resilience measurement approaches. Conditionally accepted, *Journal of Development Economics*, 157: 102873

Barrett, Christopher, Kate Ghezzi-Kopel, John Hoddinott, Nima Homami, Elizabeth Tennant, Joanna Upton, and Tong Wu (2021). A scoping review of the development resilience literature: Theory, methods, and evidence. *World Development*, 146: 105612.

Amolegbe, Khadijat, Joanna Upton, Elizabeth Bageant, and Sylvia Blom (2021). Food price volatility and household food security: Evidence from Nigeria. *Food Policy*, 102:102061.

Vaitla, Bapu, Jennifer Denno Cissé, Joanna Upton, Girmay Tesfay, Nigussie Abadi, and Daniel Maxwell (2019). How the choice of food security indicators affects the assessment of resilience—an example from northern Ethiopia. *Food Security* 12: 137-150.

Hoddinott, John, Susanna Sandström and Joanna B. Upton (2018). The impact of cash and food transfers: Evidence from a randomized intervention in Niger. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 100(4): 1032-1049.

Upton, Joanna and Erin C. Lentz (2017). Finding Default? Understanding the drivers of default on contracts with farmers' organizations under the World Food Programme Purchase for Progress Pilot. *Agricultural Economics*, 48(S1): 43-57.

Lentz, Erin and Joanna Upton (2016). Benefits to smallholders? Evaluating the World Food Programme's Purchase for Progress Pilot. *Global Food Security*, 11: 54-63.

Upton, Joanna, Jennifer D. Cissé, and Christopher B. Barrett (2016). Food Security as Resilience: Reconciling Definition with Measurement. *Agricultural Economics* 47(S1): 135-147.

Harou, Aurélie P., Joanna B. Upton, Erin C. Lentz, Christopher B. Barrett and Miguel I. Gómez (2013; first authorship shared between Harou and Upton). Tradeoffs or Synergies? Assessing local and regional food aid procurement through case studies in Burkina Faso and Guatemala. *World Development*, Vol. 49: 44-47.

Violette, William J., Aurélie P. Harou, Joanna B. Upton, Samuel D. Bell, Christopher B. Barrett, Miguel I. Gómez, and Erin C. Lentz (2013). Recipients' Satisfaction with Locally Procured Food Aid Rations: Comparative Evidence from a Three Country Matched Survey. *World Development*, Vol. 49: 30-43.

### ***Book Chapters***

Upton, Joanna, Elizabeth Tennant, Kathryn J. Fiorella, and Christopher B. Barrett (2023). Covid-19, household resilience, and rural food systems: Evidence from southern and eastern Africa. In Béné, Christophe and Stephen Devereux, Eds, *Resilience and Food Security in a Food Systems Context*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2023.

Barrett, Christopher B. and Joanna Upton (2018). Resilience as an Integrative, Measurable Concept for Humanitarian and Development Programming. In Benjamin Trump, Marie-Valentine Florin, & Igor Linkov, eds., *Resource Guide on Resilience, Volume 2: Domains of resilience for complex interconnected systems* (Lausanne: International Risk Governance Center, 2018).

Barrett, Christopher B. and Joanna B. Upton (2013). Food Security and Sociopolitical Stability in Sub-Saharan Africa. In Christopher B. Barrett (Ed.), *Food Security and Global Stability*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Upton, Joanna B. and Erin C. Lentz (2012). Expanding the food assistance toolbox. In Christopher B. Barrett, Andrea Binder and Julia Steets (Eds). *Uniting on Food Assistance: The case for transatlantic policy convergence*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Barrett, Christopher B., Andrea Binder, Alex Gaus, Erin C. Lentz, Cynthia Mathys, Julia Steets, and Joanna Upton (2012). Moving food assistance forward. In Food Security and Sociopolitical Stability in Sub-Saharan Africa. In Christopher B. Barrett, Andrea Binder and Julia Steets (Eds). *Uniting on Food Assistance: The case for transatlantic policy convergence*. Abingdon: Routledge.

### ***Working Papers Under Journal Review / Revision***

Parker, Megan, Stull, Valerie, Agme, Chandrakant, Runfeldt, Elena, Upton, Joanna and Hoddinott, John (2025). Black soldier fly larvae and cricket-fortified crackers are a safe and

acceptable snack for school-aged children in Madagascar. Revise and re-submit in *Scientific Reports*.

Christian, Paul, Brian Dillon, Erin Lentz, Hope Michelson, Dana Smith, and Joanna Upton (2025). Optimizing food security monitoring: Theory and evidence. Revise and re-submit for *Food Policy*.

Tennant, Elizabeth J., Michuda, Aleksandr, Upton, Joanna B., Chamorro, Andres, Engstrom, Ryan, Mann, Michael L., Newhouse, David, Weber, Michael, Barrett, Christopher B.(2025). Nowcasting Disruptions to Human Capital Formation: Evidence from High-Frequency Household and Geospatial Data in Rural Malawi. Policy Research Working Paper; 11202. ©World Bank. <http://hdl.handle.net/10986/43679>, and revise and re-submit in *WBER*

Berry, Alexandra N., Christopher D. Golden, Joanna B. Upton, Angela J. Rigden, and Peter J. Huybers (2025). Food security in Southern Madagascar informed by satellite-based remote sensing data. Under review in *Communications: Earth & Environment*

### ***Other Working Papers and Current Projects***

Upton, Joanna, Schreiber, Kelsey, Agme, Chandrakant, Norton, Benjanmi, and Ravaka, Annick (2025). Comparing community-based and data-driven targeting approaches: Evidence from southern Madagascar. OPM DEEP Series Working Paper, <https://doi.org/10.55158/DEEPWP36>

Dillon, Brian, Joanna Upton and Twivwe Siwale (2025). Phone Tree Surveys and the Wisdom of Crowds. Working Paper.

Jensen, Nathan, Joanna Upton and Dieynab Diatta (2025). When it rains, it pours: Compounding shocks and food security in rural Malawi. Working Paper.

Smith, Dana, Foroushani, Farnaz and Upton, Joanna (2025). Shifting Winds: Shocks and the Self-Selection of Temporary Migrants Across Sub-Saharan Africa. Working Paper.

Upton, Joanna, Ngosi, Chisomo, and Tohera Razafitsiarovana (2025). Higher frequency data is valuable; but what frequency do we need? Working Paper, invited as part of special issue in *PNAS*.

Tennant, Elizabeth, and Joanna Upton (2024). Features of Resilience in Shock-Prone Environments: Evidence from Malawi. Working paper, invited as part of special issue in *PNAS*.

Upton, Joanna (2023). The enormous challenges of Madagascar's Great South. Working paper.

Demissie, Birhan, Tesfahun A. Kasie, Joanna Upton, and Sylvia Blom (2022). Climate shocks and resilience: Evidence from rural Ethiopia. Working paper as part of the STAAARS+ fellowship.

### ***Reports and Policy Briefs***

Upton, Joanna, Jan Duchoslav and Elizabeth Tennant (2024). Compounding Stresses Confront Rural Houses in Southern Malawi. Policy Note 52, International Food Policy Research Institute, February 15, 2024.

Kalagho, Kenan and Joanna Upton (2023). Can data empower communities to build resilience? A mixed-methods study of data use by rural communities in Malawi as part of the Measurement Indicators for Resilience Analysis (MIRA) platform. Report for Catholic Relief Services.

Knippenberg, Erwin and Joanna Upton (2019). Measurement Indicators for Resilience Analysis, Phase III: Malawi (Ubale) and Madagascar (Havelo). Report for Catholic Relief Services.

Fava, Francesco, Joanna Upton, Rupsha Banerjee, Masresha Taye, and Andrew Mude (2018). Pre-feasibility study for Index-Based Livestock Insurance in Niger. International Livestock Research Institute Research Report RR51, June 2018.

Watkins, Ben, Eric Nussbaumer, Joanna Upton, Alison Campion, Frank Riely and Elizabeth Foster (2017). Famine Early Warning Systems Network Resilience Measurement Activity: Resilience Measurement for Decision Support. USAID, Kimetrica.

Watkins, Ben, Eric Nussbaumer, Joanna Upton, Alison Campion, Frank Riely and Elizabeth Foster (2017). Famine Early Warning Systems Network Resilience Measurement Activity: Methodology Report. USAID, Kimetrica.

Upton, Joanna, Mark Constas and Erwin Knippenberg (2016). Assessment and classification of indicators for resilience analysis. Report for the Technical Consortium for Building Resilience in the Horn of Africa.

Hoddinott, John, Daniel Gilligan, Melissa Hidrobo, Amy Margolies, Shalini Roy, Susanna Sandström, Benjamin Schwab, and Joanna Upton (2013). Enhancing WFP's Capacity and Experience to Design, Implement, Monitor, and Evaluate Cash Transfer Programmes: Study Summary. International Food Policy Research Institute.

Upton, Joanna B. (2011). Local Foods for Education: A comprehensive evaluation of the Local Education Assistance and Procurement project, piloting local purchase for school feeding in Burkina Faso. Final Evaluation Report, submitted to the United States Department of Agriculture on behalf of Catholic Relief Services, Burkina Faso, September 2011.

Upton, Joanna B. and Elaine Hill (2012). Local and regional procurement of food aid in Uganda: The experience of maize traders. Report with CARE International on implementing the Market Information and Food Insecurity Response Analysis Framework (MIFIRA).

#### RESEARCH GRANTS AND GIFTS

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Evaluation of insect-fortified crackers in supplement to school feeding, as a climate-smart solution to child undernutrition – King Philanthropies (gift funds), co-PI with PI John Hoddinott (\$1,100,000)

Leveraging high-frequency panel data to evaluate medium- and longer-term impacts of large cash transfers in rural Malawi – Give Directly / Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office, PI (2026-2027, \$70,000)

Extreme Poverty – Building evidence for effective action, Oxford Policy Management - DfID, Co-PI (2020-2026, \$881,500)

Madagascar RFSA: Continued Partnership in Madagascar for Data Integration and Resilience, Madagascar, Catholic Relief Services – USAID, PI (*terminated due to dissolution of USAID*), 2024-2029, \$499,745)

Application of the Monthly Interval Resilience Analysis (MIRA) Protocol to understand, and promote, food security and recovery in Kasai Central, DRC, Catholic Relief Services – USAID, PI (2023-2028, \$207,745)

Measurement Indicators for Resilience Analysis (MIRA) - Malawi: Expanding best practices and partnerships for high-frequency data collection and resilience analysis, Catholic Relief Services - USAID, PI (2020-2025, \$246,902)

Measurement Indicators for Resilience Analysis (MIRA): Pushing the Resilience Research Frontier, While Innovating Targeting, Community Feedback, and Adaptive Food Assistance Programming in Madagascar, Catholic Relief Services - USAID, PI (2020-2024, \$278,192)

Measurement Indicators for Resilience Analysis (MIRA): Expansion of Best Practices Through the Multi-Partner Rapid Feedback Monitoring System in Malawi, Catholic Relief Services, PI (2020-2022 (with expansions), \$135,892)

Measurement Indicators for Resilience Analysis (MIRA): Expansion of Best Practices and Partnerships for High-Frequency Data Collection and Resilience Analysis, Catholic Relief Services, PI (2020, \$37,304)

Measurement Indicators for Resilience Analysis (MIRA): Pushing the Resilience Research Frontier, While Innovating Targeting, Community Feedback, and Adaptive Food Assistance Programming in Madagascar, Catholic Relief Services – USAID, PI (2019-2020, \$74,900)

#### TEACHING AND MENTORING

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Fall 2025	<i>Introduction to the Economics of Development (AEM 2350)</i>
Summers 2016-2024	Cornell University School for Continuing Education
2016 - present	Mentor, <i>STAARS Fellowship Program</i> Cornell University and the African Development Bank
Spring 2018-2020	Team Leader, <i>Student Multidisciplinary Applied Research Team</i> Cornell SC Johnson College of Business, Emerging Markets Program In Kenya (2018), Ethiopia (2019), and Botswana (2020)
Spring 2013	<i>Introductory Macroeconomics (ECON 1120)</i> Teaching Assistant to Arnab Basu
Spring 2010	<i>Introductory Statistics (PAM 2100)</i> Teaching Assistant to Jeffery Lewis
Fall 2009	<i>Intermediate Microeconomics (PAM 2000)</i> Teaching Assistant to John Cawley
2006-2008	Tutor, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy Graduate Student Writing Program

## OUTREACH AND DISSEMINATION

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### ***Conference and Workshop Presentations***

Oxford Policy Management DEEP Consortium, Conference on Poverty Evidence, Arusha, Tanzania, June, 2025

Conference for the Study of African Economies, St. Catherine's College, Oxford, England, March, 2025

Insights and Opportunities from High-Frequency Survey Data, Organized and Hosted as part of the Cornel CIDER Initiative, August, 2024

An overview of approaches to resilience measurement, and insights from high-frequency data collection in Malawi, Workshop on Resilience & Vulnerability: Concepts, Methods, and Future Directions, University of Bath, May 2024

Agile Data Systems for Food Security Monitoring, Resilience Insights, Forecasting, and Collaborative Response, Panel at the Norman E. Borlaug International Dialogue, DeMoines, IA, October 2023

Rapid Feedback Monitoring System – Malawi: Data Uses and Insights, Panel at the InterAction Forum, Washington, D.C. October 2023

Rapid Feedback Monitoring System (RFMS): A Unique Fusion of Statistical Innovation and Community-Driven Data Collection in the Climate Change Era, Results Peer Learning Series, World Bank, Washington, D.C. October 2023

Real-time monitoring of poverty and food security in an era of climate change: Innovations in rural southern Malawi, World Bank, Washington, D.C. May 2023

USAID-Catholic Relief Services (Madagascar) Data Sharing Sessions, December 2021

Pan-African Scientific Research Council, COVID-19 Conference, August 2021

Alliance Biodiversity – CIAT, Conference on Resilience and Food Security in a Food System Context, June 2021

Catholic Relief Services Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEAL) team, International (webinar), July 2020

United States Agency for International Development, Washington, D.C. (webinar), July 2020

Rome-Based Agencies (IFAD, ICABR, IAAE-ICWAE, FAO), Rome, Italy (webinar), June 2020

Agricultural and Applied Economics Association Annual Meetings, Washington, D.C., Aug 2018

Board for International Food and Agricultural Development (BIFAD) Public Meeting on Resilience Measurement and Analysis, Washington, D.C., May 2018

The 2<sup>nd</sup> International workshop on Modelling of Physical, Economic, and Social Systems for Resilience Assessment, European Union Joint Research Center, Ispra, Italy, December 2017

Structural Transformation in African Agriculture and Rural Spaces (STAARS) Research Consortium workshop, African Development Bank, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, December 2017

World Food Programme Purchase for Progress Expert Convening on Demand-Side Pro-Smallholder Market Development, Rome, Italy, June 2016

USDA/USAID International Assistance and Food Security Conference, World Food Prize event, DeMoines, IA, October 2016

Midwest International Economic Development Conference, Minneapolis, MN, Apr 2016

2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Global Food Security, Ithaca, NY, Oct 2015

Agricultural and Applied Economics Association Annual Meetings, San Francisco, Aug 2015

Academic Workshop on Mobile Pastoralism, Index Insurance, Computational Sustainability and Policy Innovations for the Arid and Semi-arid Lands of East Africa, International Livestock Research Institute, Nairobi, Kenya, Jun 2015

Midwest International Economic Development Conference, Madison, WI, Apr 2015

USDA Economic Research Service workshop: "Finding Meaning in Our Measures: Overcoming Challenges to Quantitative Food Security Assessments," Washington, D.C., Feb 2015

Cornell Workshop on Resilience and Development, Ithaca, NY, Oct 2014

Agricultural and Applied Economics Association Annual Meeting, Minneapolis, MN, Aug 2014

Technical Consortium for Building Resilience in the Horn of Africa, Planning Meeting, Amsterdam, Netherlands, Jul 2014

Climate Change, Agriculture, and Food Security (CCAFS) Science Meetings Keynote, San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Madrid, Spain, Apr 2014

The Future of Food and Nutrition Student Research Conference, Tufts University, Boston, MA, Mar 2014

Mann Library Chat in the Stacks Book Talk, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, Nov 2013

Food Systems and Poverty Reduction IGERT Fall 2013 Symposium, Ithaca, NY, Sept 2013

Agricultural and Applied Economics Association Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C., Aug 2013

Northeast Agricultural and Resource Economics Association Annual Meeting, Ithaca, NY, Jun 2013

Midwest International Economic Development Conference, Madison, WI, Apr 2013

Pacific Conference for Development Economics, San Francisco, CA, Mar 2013

International Scientific Symposium on Food and Nutrition Security Information, Food and Agriculture Association, Rome, Italy, Jan 2012

Uniting on Food Assistance: Transatlantic Dialogue & Convergence of Policy and Practice, Airlie Center, Warrenton, Virginia, Mar 2011

Northeast Agricultural and Resource Economics Association Annual Meeting, Burlington, VT, Jun 2009

### **Research Blog Contributions**

Data and Evidence for Extreme Poverty, Oxford Policy Management

<https://povertyevidence.org/enormous-challenges-prevent-resilience-to-food-insecurity-in-madagascar-s-grand-sud/>

Econ That Really Matters, The Dyson School, Cornell University

[www.econthatmatters.com/byline/joanna-upton](http://www.econthatmatters.com/byline/joanna-upton)

Livestock Systems and Environment, International Livestock Research Institute

<https://livestocksystems.ilri.org/2015/05/21/looking-beyond-the-lamplight-measuring-resilience-in-somalia/>

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### **EDITORIAL AND REFEREE SERVICE**

Editor-in-chief, Economics That Really Matters Blog, 2018-2023

Referee: Agricultural and Applied Economics Association Annual Meetings (2019, 2017, 2016, 2015, and 2014); *Agriculture and Food Security*; *Agricultural Economics*; *Agricultural Systems*; *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*; *Data & Policy*; *Food and Nutrition Bulletin*; *Food Security: The Science, Sociology, and Economics of Food Production and Access to Food*; *Food Policy*; *Global Food Security*; *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics*; *Journal of Development Studies*; *Journal of Rural Studies*; Northeast Universities Development Conference (NEUDC, 2018); *SAGE Open*; *World Medical and Health Policy*; *World Development*; USAID DIV Grant Proposals

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### **AWARDS, HONORS, AND FELLOWSHIPS**

National Science Foundation Fellowship, Food Systems and Poverty Reduction Integrative Graduate Education Research Traineeship (2013-2014)

West African Research Association Pre-Doctoral Fellowship for pre-doctoral field work undertaken in Summer 2011 (2010-2011)

Rotary International Paul Harris Fellow Honorary recognition for relief work undertaken for fire recovery in Niamey, Niger (2003)

Phi Beta Kappa (initiated 2002)

Boston University's Ada Draper award and grant for independent research abroad (West Africa, 2002)

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### **OTHER SKILLS AND INTERESTS**

**Languages:** English (native), French (fluent), Hausa (fluent), Spanish (proficient), Zarma (basic), Fulfulde (basic)

**Data Computing Skills:** STATA (advanced), R (basic)

**Other:** Piano; gardening; food preparation and nutrition; choral singing; literature, languages, and linguistics; birding; photography; swimming; paddle boarding; cross-country skiing