

A4NH

2017 Annual Report



RESEARCH
PROGRAM ON
Agriculture for
Nutrition
and Health

Led by IFPRI



PHOTO: APOLLO HABTAMU, ILRI

FLAGSHIP 1 | Food Systems for Healthier Diets

Highlight 1: Analysis, Collaboration Key to Food System Improvements

The Food Systems for Healthier Diets (FSHD) flagship research program was established as part of the CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health's (A4NH) second phase. With this focus, A4NH is responding to concerns about global diet trends and demand from countries for knowledge needed for navigating food system transformations to better address problems such as undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, and overnutrition.

The first step toward identifying ways to improve something is to understand the situation as it currently exists. Guided by this premise, in 2017, FSHD researchers embarked on an in-depth analysis of food systems in four focus countries—Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Viet Nam—to determine what and where food systems research is needed and to identify possible entry points for interventions.

The goal is to develop a base of knowledge to inform the project through Phase II.

Steps in the process for identifying the research agenda included:

- several rounds of consultations at the national level to gather opinions and insights and test ideas for approaches as the overall process developed;
- an in-depth literature review to draw on existing research and understand the national context; and
- the gradual development of a final research agenda.

The first national analysis to be completed, Ethiopia, served as a case study to refine methods of study and information-sharing for the other countries. It also informed the research agenda in Ethiopia for work over the next several years, including several activities now implemented that developed from ideas that arose during the process. Among these are:

- Working with the Ethiopian Public Health Institute to develop food-based dietary guidelines, a key tool identified during the analysis for educating people on what constitutes a healthy diet, and
- Building local capacity by engaging young Ethiopian researchers in food systems work through a small grants project that targets graduate students in Ethiopian universities who have expressed interest in this area, particularly on topics that arose during the national food systems analysis process.

Through this work, FSHD researchers are building strong partnerships with local stakeholders, including government, nongovernmental organizations, research institutions, and development partners. They are laying the foundation for future collaboration in identifying strategies and opportunities that will lead to systemwide improvements with real impacts for consumers in the focus countries.

A4NH's Food Systems for Healthier Diets flagship is led by Wageningen University and Research, in collaboration with Bioversity International, the International Food Policy Research Institute, the International Center for Tropical Agriculture, and the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition.



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