IFPRI IS REACHING THE LIVES OF MILLIONS OF PEOPLE THROUGH ITS CONTRIBUTIONS to policies and programs that reduce poverty, hunger, and malnutrition. For more than 40 years, IFPRI’s research has informed policy decisions and investments made by governments, development organizations, and other partners around the world.

This brochure looks at how a selection of IFPRI’s research is contributing to better outcomes for food and nutrition security and poverty reduction.

Through HARVESTPLUS, IFPRI has helped to increase access to critical micronutrients for about 42 MILLION people by introducing biofortified crops.

The design of BRAZIL’s Bolsa Familia conditional cash transfer program, which has about 43 MILLION beneficiaries, was informed by IFPRI’s evaluation of an earlier program.

IFPRI’s technical support to ETHIOPIA’s Agricultural Transformation Agency helped to expand a program that has brought affordable, quality seeds to 1.4 MILLION farmers.

CHINA’s increased investment in agricultural R&D, following IFPRI’s recommendation on priority-setting, helped nearly 6 MILLION people move out of poverty.

IFPRI’s policy advice on market reforms led to greater opportunities, incomes, and food security for 24 MILLION people dependent on rice farming in VIET NAM.

In INDIA, where IFPRI provided evidence of the high returns to road building, the Prime Minister’s Rural Roads Program helped up to 18 MILLION people escape poverty.

IFPRI MAKING A DIFFERENCE

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“Food policy” refers to the collection of decisions made by governments, civil society, businesses, and international organizations that shape our food systems, including production, processing, distribution, and consumption of food.

HOW WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE

FPRI’s policy research informs the design and uptake of better policies and investments that can create substantial economic, social, and environmental benefits. The links from research to outcomes can be direct—for example, when policy research helps a government to design an improved social protection program or fertilizer subsidy. More often the link is indirect and much harder to trace—such as when policy research contributes to market reforms and trade policies or national public investment plans with wide-reaching impacts.

How does IFPRI’s research reach decisionmakers?

IFPRI supports policy change by bringing research results and policy recommendations to policymakers, practitioners, development partners, and other researchers through:

- Direct dialogue with policymakers in developing countries and regional and international development agencies
- In-country research teams
- Collaborative research with national partners
- Capacity-strengthening work with national partners
- Conferences, publications, and the media

Together the estimated benefits of just these six research efforts exceed US$1 billion.
Nearly a billion people in the developing world receive cash transfers, and 1.5% of developing countries’ GDP is spent on social safety nets. Helping to design programs that target beneficiaries efficiently and minimize leakages can increase the benefits of social protection spending. IFPRI, along with partners, has conducted rigorous evaluations of many of the largest and longest-standing cash transfer programs in the world and provided recommendations on program targeting and design. IFPRI’s research on cash transfers has had a broad impact through its influence on development partners’ programming policies on the use of cash-for-food assistance.

Nutrition-sensitive safety net programs help to diversify and improve diets. IFPRI’s research on the World Food Programme’s Transfer Modality Research Initiative in Bangladesh showed that child stunting can be reduced by adding nutrition behavior change communication (BCC) to a transfer program. Based on this evidence, Bangladesh incorporated BCC into its largest social protection program for destitute rural women, currently directly reaching 750,000 women and indirectly reaching 3.75 MILLION BENEFICIARIES through their households.

In Egypt, IFPRI found that cash transfers under the Takaful and Karama program were effective in achieving multiple government objectives. Following IFPRI’s evaluation, the program will be continued and expanded to more households. Takaful and Karama reached about 8.2 MILLION BENEFICIARIES in 2019. In addition, 6,000 community health workers were recently deployed, a step that accords well with IFPRI recommendations on improving communication about nutrition and program requirements. In line with IFPRI’s recommendations, the government is currently preparing a comprehensive national social protection strategy and took steps to further enhance the collaboration between Ministries of Social Solidarity, Health, and Education in order to effectively implement the program’s conditionalities.

IFPRI played the principle role in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of Ethiopia’s Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP), developing guidelines for the implementation of the project, contributing to improved performance of the project’s multiple subprograms, and helping to secure continued donor support. The PSNP has 8 MILLION BENEFICIARIES.

IFPRI’s evaluation of Brazil’s Bolsa Alimentação CCT program resulted in changes in the targeting approach of its successor program, Bolsa Família, and inclusion of a monitoring and evaluation system. Bolsa Família has about 43 MILLION BENEFICIARIES.
lobally, 821 million people are malnourished and about 2 billion people suffer from micronutrient deficiencies, most of them living in the developing world. Policies and investments that help increase the production, availability, and nutritional benefits of foods, especially when combined with behavior change and improved nutrition knowledge, can help diversify and enrich diets.

By pioneering the biofortification of staple food crops with higher vitamin A, iron, or zinc content, HarvestPlus—based at IFPRI and working in collaboration with multiple CGIAR centers and over 600 partner organizations—has helped increase access to critical micronutrients for an estimated 42 MILLION PEOPLE in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean. By the end of 2019, 24 countries in the global south had adopted legislation and/or regulations on biofortification. HarvestPlus, in collaboration with CGIAR and national partners, has facilitated the release of 242 varieties of 11 staple food crops in 30 countries.

IFPRI collaborated with Alive & Thrive, a global initiative to raise rates of breastfeeding and improve young children’s meals, to evaluate its impact in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Viet Nam and identify where interventions could be strengthened. In its first phase from 2009–2014, Alive & Thrive reached about 16 MILLION MOTHERS of children under 2 through large-scale interventions including interpersonal counseling, mass media campaigns, community mobilization, and policy advocacy efforts to improve infant and young child feeding.

IFPRI has helped to design programs that educate women about nutrition issues and promote food gardens and other approaches to diversify diets. A 10-year collaboration between IFPRI and Helen Keller International improved the programming and evaluation design for the Creating Homestead Agriculture for Gender Equity (CHANGE) program, part of HKI’s broader work on Enhanced Homestead Food Production. By 2017, HKI’s Enhanced Homestead Food Production programs had reached nearly 1.5 MILLION FAMILIES in Africa and the Asia Pacific region.
In China, IFPRI’s research provided evidence about the returns on different types of public expenditures—showing the relatively large impact of investment in rural roads, agricultural research, and education in rural areas. These modeling studies, completed in 2002–2004, influenced public discourse, and national partners became important advocates for adjusting priorities. Changes in government spending priorities several years later—particularly the expansion of rural investment—reflected IFPRI’s findings. China’s increased investment in agricultural R&D alone helped nearly 6 MILLION PEOPLE rise out of poverty by 2007.

IFPRI’s research in India on the impact of public investments played a key role in the development of the Prime Minister’s Rural Roads Program, which supported substantial spending on the construction of roads to connect many previously isolated villages. This investment is estimated to have helped BETWEEN 6.5 AND 18 MILLION PEOPLE move out of poverty between 2004 and 2009, and added substantially to agricultural GDP.

Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index

Women play a critical and potentially transformative role in agricultural growth in developing countries, but they face persistent obstacles and economic constraints limiting further inclusion in agriculture. IFPRI with partners developed the Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) to measure the empowerment, agency, and inclusion of women in the agriculture sector in an effort to identify ways to overcome those obstacles and constraints. The WEAI has gained widespread recognition and has now been used to measure women’s empowerment by 104 ORGANIZATIONS IN 54 COUNTRIES.
African countries have agreed—under the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)—that agriculture must grow by 6% per year to meet their future food needs and create adequate income and employment opportunities for their growing populations. CAADP countries are committed to increasing agricultural investment and promoting policies for inclusive agricultural transformation.

IFPRI has been providing technical support to CAADP since 2003 at regional and country levels, including helping many countries develop their National Agricultural Investment Plans (NAIPs). A recent controlled comparison between countries that have adopted NAIPs and those that have not shows that the NAIPs have led to an 85% increase in public spending on agriculture since the early 1990s, a 4% increase in labor productivity, and substantial benefits to the poor, including moving 1 million people above the poverty line.

In Nigeria, IFPRI led the evaluation of the Fadama II program for rural poverty alleviation. That study showed welfare benefits to rural households stemming from Fadama’s provision of extension services, rural road infrastructure, and local institutional capacity building. IFPRI’s evaluation of the program provided substantial evidence to support its expansion. Fadama III benefited 965,000 households, or about 4.8 million poor people.

IFPRI supports the agricultural and rural development work of several African countries through its research program on development strategy and by outposting research staff as part of country strategy programs, with a focus on 11 countries (Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia)* that together account for about 60% of Africa’s rural population. A recent evaluation study found evidence that IFPRI’s outposted staff contributed to improvements in country policy and development outcomes—and estimated that the value of these benefits far outweighed the costs of IFPRI’s country postings.

IFPRI’s technical support to Ethiopia’s Agricultural Transformation Agency (ATA) includes analyzing policy reforms for fertilizer and seed distribution systems. IFPRI helped test a new model, based on public and private sector competition, to improve farmers’ access to affordable, quality seeds of improved varieties. Based on the positive results, the ATA refined and launched its Direct Seed Marketing program at scale. The program now operates in 228 woredas and involves more than 1,100 marketing agents and 47 seed producers. More than 46 million kilograms of seed were sold in 2018 to an estimated 1.4 million farmers.

* In addition to the development strategy work in 11 countries, IFPRI also does substantial work on other topics in these and 21 other African countries.
Global trade in agricultural commodities is worth about US$1 trillion, and domestic agricultural markets in the developing world are worth much more. Food imports by emerging economies account for considerable recent trade growth. IFPRI research has helped governments to manage the transition to more liberalized markets, while avoiding spikes in prices for food staples, which risk worsening food insecurity among poor households. Ensuring that these markets work openly and efficiently is crucial for the economic growth and food security of developing countries.

Between 1996 and 1998, IFPRI examined Viet Nam’s rice policies. IFPRI’s analysis contributed to the government’s decision to relax rice export quotas and internal restrictions on rice trade. The market-oriented policy changes generated substantial economic benefits for Viet Nam, including greater opportunities, incomes, and food security for 24 MILLION PEOPLE dependent on rice farming.

A severe flood in Bangladesh in 1998 caused a drastic reduction in rice production. IFPRI researchers helped the government decide to allow the private sector to import rice, and a price spike was avoided. About half the population, or about 65 MILLION PEOPLE, who were living below the national poverty line at the time, likely benefited from more stable rice prices.

In 2014–2016, India experienced a national shortage of pulses, a key staple food for the poor, which led to widespread demonstrations. Around 89% OF INDIANS eat pulses at least once a week. The government urgently needed to act. Its new policy— informed by IFPRI’s ongoing research on the country’s pulses sector—reversed some counterproductive measures.
RESOURCES

For more information about the contributions mentioned here and other ways in which IFPRI makes a difference, visit:

IFPRI’s Impact Assessments
http://www.ifpri.org/impact-assessment

IFPRI’s Outcome Stories
http://outcomestories.ifpri.info/

IFPRI’s Donor Brochures
https://www.ifpri.org/topic/outcome-stories

IFPRI’s Stories of Making a Difference
https://www.ifpri.org/topic/ifpri-40-twelve-stories-making-difference-through-food-policy-research