PIM Achievements in 2018: Highlights

POLICY RESEARCH FOR A FOOD SECURE FUTURE

Sound policies and well-functioning institutions and markets are essential to building sustainable and inclusive agri-food systems. The CGIAR Research Program on Policies, Institutions, and Markets (PIM) works with research and implementation partners to generate evidence and develop capacity in Africa, Asia, and Latin America to support policies that help poor people, both men and women, improve their lives; produce nutritious and affordable foods; and protect the soil, water, and biodiversity in rural landscapes.

Through work on technological innovation, rural transformation, value chains, social protection, natural resource governance, and gender, PIM research informs policies, strategies, programs, and investment decisions of governments, development organizations, NGOs, and private companies. PIM-supported research led to many achievements around the world in 2018. Some examples are highlighted in this brochure.


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Informing governments’ agricultural policies and investment plans

PIM-supported research informed National Agriculture Investment Plans for Malawi and Rwanda and contributed to the development of two key policies in Pakistan: the National Food Security Policy and the Punjab Agricultural Policy. Research using the Statistics on Public Expenditures for Economic Development (SPEED) database informed China’s decisions on agricultural expenditures and its Rural Revitalization Strategy. Several donor strategy documents were informed by PIM’s work, among which the United States’ Global Food Security Strategy Country Plans for Bangladesh and Ethiopia, and the Government of Flanders’ strategy on extension in Malawi (as part of a broader development strategy). A new digital tool, the Arab Agricultural Investment for Development Analyzer (AIDA), was developed to assist governments assess whether levels of investment in the agricultural and rural sectors are sufficient for achieving desired objectives.

Supporting women’s empowerment

The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) - part of the PIM portfolio and a joint effort of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) under the US Feed the Future Initiative - is the first comprehensive and standardized measure of women’s empowerment and inclusion in the agricultural sector in developing countries. By the end of 2018, 86 organizations in 53 countries had used the WEAI. The Inter-American Development Bank used the WEAI to assess the impact of agricultural projects on women’s empowerment in Nicaragua and Bolivia and introduce interventions to enhance women’s empowerment in Bolivia. As described in USAID factsheets on women’s empowerment in Feed the Future countries, WEAI findings were used by the governments of Bangladesh and Ethiopia to inform the design of national nutrition and agricultural programs and by USAID in several Global Food Security Strategy Country Plans. The WEAI guided the Feed the Future Bangladesh Women’s Empowerment Activity (2014–2018), aimed at improving gender parity and increasing women’s contribution to economic growth in Bangladesh. [Read more]

Providing evidence on the role of cash transfers in reducing intimate partner violence

PIM-supported research on intimate partner violence found that social protection programs may reduce this form of violence against women. A study found that cash transfers coupled with nutrition counseling led to a sustained decrease in domestic violence in Bangladesh even after the program had ended. Another study found that the Government of Mali’s Jigiséméjiri cash transfer program decreased intimate partner violence within polygamous households. These promising findings have helped catalyze a new collaborative research program on linkages between cash transfers and intimate partner violence.

Assessing food systems futures

The PIM-supported foresight team made significant contributions to the global discourse on future food systems under alternative scenarios. Several high-impact articles were published on issues related to climate change, food security, nutrition, and health. A widely cited study in Nature showed that avoiding serious environmental impacts while producing enough food to feed the world in 2050 will require dietary changes, technological changes, and a significant reduction in food loss and waste. Another paper showed that the greatest food security challenge in 2050 will be securing diets that include enough critical micronutrients such as iron, calcium, and vitamin A.

Helping secure rural populations’ rights over natural resources

In Tanzania, PIM contributes to applied collaborative research on joint village land use planning. This approach has already led to the protection of four shared grazing areas totaling 150,000 hectares (with the largest covering 95,000 hectares) and helped to reduce conflicts between pastoralists and other land users. As part of this project, researchers have developed and presented to the government a manual on conflict resolution in village land use planning. Similar approaches are being piloted in Ethiopia, and recommendations have been developed to apply land use planning for better land governance in Viet Nam and Indonesia.
A **PIM-supported study** found that community forest concessions in Guatemala have **positive socioeconomic outcomes** in addition to their environmental benefits. These findings were presented at policy fora in support of the renewal of the community concessions, which were attended by senior government officials.

**Enhancing technology adoption through improved extension methods and tools**

PIM assisted Digital Green and the Government of Ethiopia in testing the **video-mediated extension system** being rolled out in the country, which has already reached more than 350,000 farmers. **Farmer-to-farmer extension approaches** in East Africa were shown to be effective in promoting technology adoption in the dairy sector, and a monitoring effort showed that they are used by 86 organizations in Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda. Researchers collaborated with the State University of Bihar in India to design a **new Soil Health Card** to help farmers choose appropriate blends of fertilizers. The new card will be used in the next cycle of Bihar state’s **Soil Health Card Scheme**, through which over 4 million cards were produced and distributed to farmers in 2017-18.

**Supporting private sector engagement in Ethiopia’s seed market**

Ethiopia’s **Direct Seed Marketing** (DSM) program, facilitated by the Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency, aims to increase the participation of the private sector, cooperatives, and other non-state actors in procuring and marketing high-quality seed to farmers. An evaluation of the DSM program pilot phase by PIM researchers contributed to the decision to scale up the approach. In 2018, DSM reached 1.4 million farmers in 228 districts and generated significant savings for the Government of Ethiopia compared with the conventional public distribution system. [Read more]

**Testing and disseminating promising value chain interventions**

PIM continued to pilot and disseminate a new methodology for measuring food losses and to support information sharing through the **Technical Platform on the Measurement and Reduction of Food Loss and Waste** hosted by FAO. Using a **methodology** developed by PIM, researchers found that for non-highly perishable foods, losses at harvest and postharvest stages are low to modest (5-10%) compared with losses during production. Results from studies measuring food losses in the potato value chain in Ecuador and Peru showed that losses caused by pests and diseases during the production stage range from 10% to 18%.

The PIM-supported **gender-sensitive LINK methodology** is now being used by the NGO Swisscontact to strengthen rural businesses in Honduras, with particular focus on promoting the inclusion of women and youth.

Insuring crops against weather-related risks can be highly beneficial to smallholder farmers, but the uptake of insurance products remains low. New research on **picture-based insurance** shows potential to significantly lower basis risk and increase farmer demand for insurance. This innovation is attracting interest from the private sector both as a standalone product and coupled with advisory services, and is expanding in Ethiopia, India, and Kenya.

Although contract farming can help overcome credit and market access constraints for smallholders, PIM studies completed in 2018 found mixed results on the ability of smallholders to benefit from contract farming arrangements (see for example papers on Ghana and Nepal).

**Strengthening national social protection programs**

Research coupled with intensive engagement with donors and government stakeholders resulted in the use of PIM findings to modify the design of social protection programs in several countries. In Bangladesh, building upon a long-standing relationship with IFPRI, the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs adopted recommendations from PIM-funded research to improve targeting criteria of two safety net programs. The first of these – the Vulnerable Group Development Program – is the largest safety net program for ultra-poor women in rural Bangladesh. The second – the newly established Improved Maternity and Lactating Mothers Allowance Program – is expected to benefit 700,000 poor rural and 250,000 poor urban women in 2019. [Read more]

Findings from the **impact evaluation** of Egypt’s national social protection Takaful and Karama program showing...
positive effects on consumption, diets, and poverty were presented at two major events hosted by the Ministry of Social Solidarity in October and November 2018, and the government adopted recommendations to improve program targeting.

Midline findings from the impact evaluation of Mali’s national cash transfer program (Programme de Filets Sociaux du Mali Jigisémêjiri) were used to design the next phase of implementation, which begins in 2019. As recommended by the research team, the size and frequency of the cash distributions have increased, and the accompanying training now includes home visits for more individualized counseling on maternal and child health. [Read more]

**Synthesizing insights on the structural transformation of African economies**

Collaborations with the International Fund for Agricultural Development and Michigan State University as well as continued support to the Structural Transformation of African Agriculture and Rural Spaces (STAARS) program with Cornell University resulted in two special journal issues on the structural transformation of African agriculture (in *World Development* and in the *Journal of Development Studies*). In July 2018, PIM organized a workshop on "Rural Transformation in the 21st Century: The Challenges of Low-Income, Late-Transforming Countries" as part of the 30th International Conference of Agricultural Economists (ICAE) held in Vancouver, Canada.

**Integrating CGIAR efforts for increased efficiency**

In 2018, PIM continued to host and fund the [CGIAR Collaborative Platform for Gender Research](https://www.cgiar.org/). Five projects on gender dynamics in seed systems coordinated by the Platform are nearly complete, while a set of nine studies investigating changing gender roles in transforming economies (including migration) was launched in 2018. A review of gender-transformative approaches in agriculture was undertaken. The Platform’s annual [Scientific Conference and Capacity Development Workshop](https://www.cgiar.org/), held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, attracted 120 participants.

In October, PIM organized a workshop on integrating value chain research across CGIAR to catalyze the development of a CGIAR-wide value chains community of practice and help define priority value chain research topics.

PIM and the CGIAR Research Programs on Forests, Trees and Agroforestry and on Water, Land and Ecosystems launched an initiative to strengthen collaboration on landscape restoration, with progress on a major restoration program in India.

Finally, PIM initiated discussions to produce high-level CGIAR reports on foresight and on gender and agriculture, which are proceeding with strong engagement of all CGIAR centers and research programs.

In 2018, PIM researchers authored or contributed to about 500 publications, including 164 peer-reviewed journal articles. The program’s capacity building activities (in-person and online) reached over 8,000 people in 40 countries.

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