



Collaborating for Food Security in Ethiopia

IFPRI's long-term collaboration with the government and research institutions in Ethiopia has provided the foundation for a strong knowledge base for the rural sector, incorporation of research evidence into policymaking, and development of effective institutions to promote agricultural productivity and support rural populations.

Ethiopia is one of the largest, poorest, and most populous countries in Africa, with most of its population living in rural areas. A very low point for the country came in 1984 when drought combined with civil war resulted in a catastrophic famine. To help look for the solutions, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) conducted research on the underlying causes of the disaster, which pointed to the role of chronic poverty and lack of policy and investment to promote rural development. With greater stability established in the 1990s, Ethiopia has moved toward a strong program for agricultural development and poverty reduction. Throughout this process, IFPRI has built a strong collaborative program with the government and Ethiopian research institutions to provide data, policy analysis, capacity building, and institutional strengthening. Research on famine, land management, public expenditure, food security, and poverty, as well as Ethiopia's participation in the East African 2020 Vision Network—an entity IFPRI designed to promote regional cooperation—maintained IFPRI's connection with Ethiopia over the years. Over the last decade, that relationship has expanded

and deepened with IFPRI's contribution to Ethiopia's food security program, the establishment of IFPRI's Ethiopia Strategy Support Program (ESSP), and IFPRI's support to the Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency (ATA).

Productive Safety Net Programme

Since 2005, the Ethiopian Government has sought to reduce the country's dependence on emergency food aid while redressing chronic food insecurity by establishing a Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP). PSNP is one of the largest social protection programs in Africa south of the Sahara, with over 1.3 million direct participants, and benefits about 10 percent of Ethiopia's rural population. The PSNP aims to meet the needs of the rural poor and chronically food insecure through direct transfers and public works programs that improve rural infrastructure.

Since the program's beginnings, IFPRI has served as the external independent program evaluator—playing a key role in measuring and improving PSNP outcomes. Through assessments carried out every two years, IFPRI measures the program's effectiveness and identifies ways to improve its efficiency. IFPRI assessments show that thanks to PSNP, 7.6 million people who normally would have required emergency food assistance did not need it. The program also promotes rural development—beneficiaries are not only more likely to be food secure, they also are more likely to borrow for productive purposes, use improved agricultural technologies, and operate their own nonfarm business activities. IFPRI's documentation of these benefits has helped secure continued international support for the program, which is now funded through 2020.

IFPRI's evaluations have led to better targeting by PSNP of the poorest and most food-insecure populations and redesign of the asset-building component of the program. Operational changes based on IFPRI recommendations—such as setting appropriate wage rates for public-works participants, defining criteria for “graduation” from PSNP, ensuring timely payments to program beneficiaries, and including a nutrition component—have significantly increased the program's benefits. Recognizing these improvements, Prime Minister H. E. Hailemariam Desalegn

thanked IFPRI researchers at the 2020 Vision Conference in May 2014 for their long-term work on the PSNP.

Rural Household Survey

Initiated shortly after the 1984 famine, the Ethiopia Rural Household Survey (ERHS) has collected valuable data on household-level responses to food insecurity. The ERHS is a unique long-term survey covering nearly 1,500 households in villages throughout rural Ethiopia. Over the course of 20 years, IFPRI collaborated with the Economics Department of the Addis Ababa University (AAU), Oxford University, and other partners to supervise the ERHS and analyze collected data. Data were tracked on a broad range of household characteristics—including agriculture and livestock information, food consumption, health, and women's activities—and on community information, including electricity and water use, health services, and education. The data are made public and have been used in more than 300 publications. Knowledge spillovers are substantial—ERHS data have been used to study links between poverty and investments in extension and roads, schooling, and informal support networks, among other topics. The ERHS also furnished initial data for evaluation of the PSNP.

IFPRI's long-term involvement with the ERHS has contributed to capacity building, largely through its connection to the university, as well as its training of enumerators. University faculty and students have contributed to survey design and data collection since the survey's first round. This collaboration has produced significant improvements in Ethiopia's economic analytical capacity. The ERHS has been well used by AAU graduate students in master's theses and doctoral dissertations.

Modeling and Mapping

IFPRI has also built local knowledge and capacity through projects that have trained more than 1,200 national researchers in computer economic modeling and mapping. To support policy analysis for Ethiopia, IFPRI and its partners developed a computable general equilibrium (CGE) model that incorporates agriculture and 256 subsectors. This has been used in combination with a social accounting matrix

to predict how the Ethiopian economy would react to specific policy changes. The CGE model has also been used to assess the effects of the government's foreign exchange rationing, distributional impacts of public investment, and climate change impacts.

Geographic information system (GIS) training for staff of the Central Statistical Agency (CSA) and regional offices led to the production of a series of atlases providing in-depth information about the country. The *Atlas of the Ethiopian Rural Economy*, among others, is in high demand and has raised the policy profile of spatially disaggregated analysis. Moreover, the training had important spillover effects. For example, professors who took part in the training used IFPRI materials to design university courses on computer-generated mapmaking. And the IFPRI training program has now been expanded to Malawi and Mozambique.

Ethiopia Strategy Support Program

About a decade ago, to bridge the gap between research and policy and provide technical assistance for national development strategies, IFPRI initiated a number of Country Strategy Support Programs through which IFPRI staff, many based in the countries, collaborate with governments and national research organizations. The Ethiopia Strategy Support Program (ESSP), a collaboration between IFPRI and the Ethiopian Development Research Institute (EDRI) supported by a consortium of international donors, was established in 2004 at the request of the Ethiopian government, and a small team of IFPRI researchers was posted to Addis Ababa. An external review found that IFPRI's role in the policy dialogue in Ethiopia took a quantum leap with the ESSP.

The ESSP provides direct support to the government of Ethiopia with well-researched advice on agricultural

Ethiopia Commodity Exchange

While Ethiopia successfully increased agricultural productivity in the 1990s, weak markets and high transaction costs meant that farmers did not receive the best prices and food was not sent where it was most needed. As a result of significant technical and analytical support from the ESSP, as well as extensive dialogue with local stakeholders and a study tour to India for policymakers, the Ethiopia Commodity Exchange (ECX) was launched in 2008. The ECX provides a platform for quality standards, market information, payment systems, and contract enforcement for farmers trading key crops such as coffee, sesame, beans, maize, and wheat. The exchange aims to bring transparency and integrity to the pricing system for smallholders and small traders. Today the ECX successfully handles virtually all of Ethiopia's coffee exports, although it has not yet been widely adopted by the cereals market. The ECX is considered path-breaking in Africa, where many countries face the problem of weak market integration; it was also path-breaking for IFPRI, marking a first foray beyond policy recommendations into institutional design.

and rural development policy, particularly on the design and implementation of the government's Agricultural Development-Led Industrialization strategy.

Collaborative research—primarily with EDRI, but also with the CSA and the Ministry of Agriculture—promotes poverty reduction and economic development. Areas of collaboration have ranged from formulation of policies for stabilization of wheat prices to the roll-out of weather insurance products. By 2014, ESSP had published over 60 working papers that were widely read in the country. According to an external evaluation, these activities have improved “the ability of Ethiopian partners to create, process, and analyze information, and ultimately, to deliver more effective policy advice.”

IFPRI's research has also contributed substantially to agenda-setting for agricultural development by informing the Ethiopian donor community's priorities and ensuring consistency in those priorities. In addition to evaluation of the PSNP, ESSP has provided evaluations of other programs as a means to improve investment decision-making. These include an evaluation of the government's Agricultural Growth Program—a large-scale investment program funded by the World Bank, the US Agency for International Development, and others. This role in

monitoring and evaluation has given IFPRI a voice in the design of large development programs.

ESSP efforts in capacity strengthening have focused on applied research, through training activities, guidance to MSc and PhD students on theses, and funding for advanced degrees. Capacity strengthening has also contributed to institutional development of three other core national institutions, in addition to EDRI and the CSA: the Ministry of Agriculture; the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development; and the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research.

Designing New Institutions

As a result of IFPRI's long-term engagement with Ethiopia's agricultural sector, IFPRI researchers have contributed to the creation of two new rural development institutions—ATA and the Ethiopia Commodity Exchange. The ATA, established in 2010, was set up to address bottlenecks in the agricultural economy by evaluating institutional and policy options. The ATA is taking on large problems aggressively—achieving recommended policy changes could lead to major breakthroughs. One project ATA is carrying out with IFPRI researchers is the creation of a National Soils Database and a digital soil map of Ethiopia. These maps will give soil scientists the information needed to tailor fertilizer blends to specific locations and crops, in the long run increasing sustainability, productivity, and the nutritional value of crops.

Making Progress

Ethiopia has suffered no recurrence of major famine, and sustained growth in the agricultural sector in the

1990s and 2000s contributed to the country's overall economic development. IFPRI's close collaboration with the government and research institutions has allowed for a positive exchange of data analysis and evidence-based agenda-setting, as well as capacity building and the development of new institutions to promote rural development. IFPRI's work has underpinned the formation and operation of the PSNP, the ATA, and the ECX, as well as intellectual institutions—namely the ERHS, the GIS-based atlases, and the CGE model—that will facilitate further generation of knowledge. These are important milestones in rural development policy.

Resources

For IFPRI's Ethiopia-related research, see <http://www.ifpri.org/country/ethiopia>.

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