



AgriDiet Update

July 2014

AgriDiet Progress Report

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AgriDiet Partners

AgriDiet is a 3 –year joint research project between University College Cork, University College Dublin, the Ethiopian Development Research Institute, Haramaya and Mekelle Universities in Ethiopia, Sokoinne and St Augustine’s Universities in Tanzania and the Institute of Development Studies in the UK.



HEA

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An Údarás um Ard-Oideachas

The AgriDiet project has been in full swing over the past year, with the first phase of field research for the household surveys completed in both Ethiopia and Tanzania. Our researchers are now preparing for the second and final round of the household survey which will run from July through September.

Some 400 households were surveyed in both Ethiopian sites, in the Enderta and Hintalo-Wajerat woredas in Tigray and the Babile woreda in Oromia, as well as 250 households in each of the Tanzanian sites, in Mvomero district in Morogoro region and Kishapu district in Shinyanga region.

Plus our nutrition researchers conducted detailed nutrition surveys on a sub-set of the overall survey, including anthropometric tests and food consumption details.

Field research is also ongoing for the meso level research under Work Package 4 of the project and for the mapping and reviews of pro-nutrition agricultural interventions under Work Package 6.



Initial findings will be discussed at the annual project workshop, which will be held in Cork in November 2014 and posted on the website soon after.

Meanwhile our policy experts in both countries have completed working papers on government policy relating to agriculture and nutrition in each country, and these are reviewed in pages 2 and 3 of this newsletter. The working papers will be posted on the website later this month and policy briefs will be issued later in the year.

The second round of stakeholder workshops were held in Addis Ababa and Dar Es Salaam at the end of last year. A central discussion point in both workshops was the coordination of agriculture and nutrition officials at regional and district level. It was therefore decided to hold the third round of workshops at regional/district level, with the Ethiopian workshop in Mekelle on 31 July and the Tanzanian workshop in Mwanza on 11 August.

Meanwhile our website continues to evolve and now includes a link to the Eldis database to provide stakeholders with access to the latest research on agriculture and nutrition issues in Ethiopia and Tanzania (see page 5).

AgriDiet is funded and facilitated by Irish Aid and the Higher Education Authority of Ireland, through the Programme of Strategic Cooperation, between Irish Aid and Higher Education and Research Institutes

Country Policy Review -Tanzania

Work Package 2 of the AgriDiet project focusses on the policy environment for agriculture and nutrition in our focus countries. Professor Joyce Kinabo of Sokoine University recently completed a working paper for the project on the policies linking agriculture and nutrition in Tanzania, a brief synopsis of which is provided below.



“capacity strengthening at all levels is needed to empower actors to implement nutrition actions, more specifically on the link between agriculture and nutrition”

Professor Joyce Kinabo, Sokoine University of Agriculture

We consider nutrition to be a cross-cutting issue; therefore it is important that every policy should address it in one way or another. Nutrition is about enhancing human capital. Without nutritionally sound and healthy personnel, people working in various sectors will not be able to perform their tasks well. However, the whole chain starts with agriculture. Humankind consumes what is being produced. Therefore, there is a direct link between agriculture and nutrition. Consequently, agriculture is the driver of other sectors.

An analysis of national policies in Tanzania was carried out to obtain an overview and ascertain the extent to which nutrition issues have been addressed.

A total of 33 policy documents and 12 strategies were collected from various ministries and reviewed. Aspects related to nutrition addressed in the policy documents included malnutrition manifestations (for instance stunting, wasting and micronutrient deficiencies) and causes (immediate, underlying, and basic). Close to 43% of the policy documents did not include any explicit mention of nutrition, and 57% mentioned nutrition and some have incorporated aspects related to nutrition varying from food and nutrition security to aspects of under- and over-nutrition.

The analysis identified several gaps in the policy documents. These included:

- Limited collaboration during formulation of policies; it is very difficult for one sector to know what other sectors are planning to implement.
- All policies that were found to have included nutrition focus on children below five years of age and women of childbearing age. Men, boys, girls and the elderly are not mentioned in most of the policies.
- Many policies were formulated about 20 years ago; therefore there are gaps in relation to the current nutrition situation affecting the country. Hence there is a strong need for policy reviews to address many of the emerging issues. It is not clear as to how often policies should be reviewed and what mechanisms are in place to capture emerging issues as they happen and prepare programmes or budget to address them. This is one of the factors that led to the initiation of scattered programmes that in the end do not address the goals and targets of the country.

- Lack of qualified nutritionists in key ministries to provide leadership or guidance in aspects related to nutrition. It is envisaged that the newly recruited nutrition cadres in Local Government Authorities and nutrition focal persons in lead ministries will facilitate incorporation of the nutrition aspects that each Ministry should contribute to.
- All policies lack a section on monitoring and evaluation including an evaluation plan.
- The analysis also revealed that there is limited inter-sectoral collaboration during formulation and implementation of policies.

Agriculture has the potential to provide solutions to the problems related to nutrition. Several initiatives and projects are being implemented in the country to try to unleash the potential of agriculture to address nutrition challenges existing in Tanzania. However, the linkage between the two sectors is not well understood by many policy implementers in all sectors. Most of the existing policies have minimal incorporation of nutrition issues. Only a few policies related to health, food and nutrition, agriculture, child and community development have incorporated nutrition issues

All policies need to put quality of human resource as the prime driver for implementation of each policy, strategy or programme; in that without good quality human capital none of the policies, including the laid out strategies or programmes, will be implementable to a desired level. It is strongly recommended that there is a need to incorporate issues of nutrition and their importance in all policies in relation to the core nature of the policy and how it affects availability, accessibility and utilisation of food and therefore influences nutrition outcomes of the entire population of Tanzania.

It should also be realised that children and women do not live in isolation; they are surrounded by other members of the household, family and community. Therefore policies should be more encompassing and include statements that apply to various groups of people in the community. A policy is a high level document and working tool with declared objectives that a government seeks to achieve and preserve in the interest of national development and peace. Consequently, if other groups are left out, it is very difficult to develop a programme to address their problems and needs.

Country Policy Review - Ethiopia

Professor Tassew Woldehanna of the Ethiopian Development Research Institute (EDRI) recently completed a working paper for AgriDiet on the policies linking agriculture and nutrition in Ethiopia, a brief synopsis of which is provided below.



“more research work is required on how intensification of agriculture has contributed to the reduction of under-nutrition in Ethiopia, and what kinds of specific intervention in the agricultural sector are required to improve the nutritional status of children and the population at large”

Professor Tassew Woldehanna, Ethiopian Development Research Institute (EDRI)

The Ethiopian Policy Review shows that there are several Ethiopian programmes related to food security and nutrition including rural and health sector development programmes.

The rural sector development programme includes food security programmes designed to improve households' access to food. This programme substantially affects agricultural production and productivity resulting in improved household access to food, which in turn has a profound effect on the nutritional status of children over time. The health sector development programme has been designed to improve the health status of the population and thereby improve the nutritional status of children.

Though these two development programmes have impacts on nutrition, their role was not clearly articulated until 2008 when the first National Nutrition Strategy was developed. The Federal Ministry of Health has been assigned as the coordinating ministry regarding nutrition. However, coordination between the agriculture and health ministries has not been very effective especially at regional level.

Until 2012, the coordination among different sectors was very limited. When we look at the rural development strategy and food security programmes, they aimed at making increased food available to the population and to improve food security. The rural development strategy focused on general food availability, not on specific micronutrient-rich food types. The absence of a link between crop choices and nutrition implies that the link between agriculture-nutrition was very weak in Ethiopian rural development policies.

Moreover, the *“Agriculture Sector Policy and Investment Framework”*, the 10-year road map for development, aspires to promote fast, broad-based development and increase productivity within the agricultural sector so that surplus production enhances economic growth, but does not explicitly mention increased production of micronutrient rich foods. Hence it is crucial to revise the Framework and include micronutrient-focussed interventions so as to encourage small scale and commercial farmers to produce more micro-nutrient-rich foods.

In 2012, Ethiopia developed its second National Nutritional Programme with many sectors becoming part of the strategy, implying that addressing nutrition has become

more multisectoral. The new strategy outlines how nutrition could be mainstreamed in the agricultural, education, water, trade, and industrial sectors. It also envisages that the programme must address equity by dealing with gender sensitive nutritional programmes. However, there still seems to be a need to find a better way of coordinating the nutrition related activities across sectors instead of providing the coordinating responsibility to the Federal Ministry of Health. One potential action could be for the agricultural extension services currently run under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to take the responsibility of creating awareness among small-scale and commercial farmers so as to encourage production of micro-nutrient rich crops.

Various food security and health policies have been developed and implemented over the last 15 years in Ethiopia, mainly geared towards improving agricultural production and productivity. Little effort has been done so far with regard to improving the quality of food production. However, malnutrition among children in the country has declined substantially. Is such a decline in malnutrition attributed to increased agricultural production or improved health services or improvement in education? There are no explicit studies made so far on the contribution of agriculture to nutritional improvement. Therefore, more research work is required on how intensification of agriculture has contributed to the reduction of under-nutrition in Ethiopia, and what kinds of specific intervention in the agricultural sector are required to improve nutritional status of children and the population at large.

Given that farmers are now being advised to grow for the market, interventions on changing the pattern of consumption from staple to high micronutrient rich crops would be good. It might be useful to use the health extension system to provide nutrition education. Once people are aware of the importance of micronutrients for better health and nutritional outcomes, the consumption behaviour of people may change in favour of consumption of micronutrient-rich foods, which in turn will have a positive influence on the production of micronutrient-rich crops. With respect to the production of micronutrient rich crops, advice from agricultural extension would be appropriate.

This review of Ethiopian Policy implies that AgriDiet and other research needs to identify policy gaps in the agricultural sector in addressing micronutrient deficiencies. Further research is also important to identify ways to have a better link between agriculture and nutrition based on evidence so as to propose concrete evidence based intervention programmes.

Review of the Agriculture-Nutrition Literature .. a year on

One of the first goals of the AgriDiet team was to compile a review of the latest global evidence on agriculture-nutrition linkages, in order to inform subsequent activities. The final report was posted on the website this time last year. We felt it would be useful to highlight some of the important literature that has appeared over the past year on agriculture-nutrition linkages by international organisations, NGOs and academic journals.

The theme of last year's annual **FAO State of Food and Agriculture** report was **Food systems for better nutrition**. FAO argues that improving nutrition must begin with food and agriculture and depends on every aspect of the food system, but also a multi-sectoral approach that includes complementary interventions in food systems, public health and education. See <http://www.fao.org/publications/sofa/2013/en/>

The focus of the annual **UN Standing Committee on Nutrition** report earlier this year was also on **Changing food systems for better nutrition**. http://www.unscn.org/en/Publications/SCN_News/index.php#Current_issue. This year's SCN report includes a number of interesting articles on the agriculture-nutrition nexus including a summary of a study by Jessica Fanzo et al assessing **The Nutrition Sensitivity of Agriculture and Food Policies** in 8 countries, the final report of which is at; http://www.unscn.org/en/publications/country_case_studies/the_nutrition_sensitivity.php. The SCN report also includes the AgriDiet **Global Review of Agriculture and Nutrition Linkages** report under Work Package 1 of the project - <http://agridiet.ucc.ie/2013/10/03/a-state-of-the-art-review-of-agriculture-nutrition-linkages/>

Staying with the policy focus, **Action Against Hunger (ACF)** published **Sowing the Seeds of Good Nutrition** which assesses progress on aligning agricultural and nutrition policies, using case studies from three countries, and making recommendations for more nutrition-focussed agricultural policies <http://www.actioncontrelafaim.org/en/content/seeds-of-good-nutrition>. ACF also produced **Aid for Nutrition - Maximising the impact of nutrition-sensitive interventions** last year. http://www.actionagainsthunger.org.uk/fileadmin/contribution/0_accueil/img/Publications/Aid%20For%20Nutrition%203.pdf.

Another key policy report related to AgriDiet was the Ethiopian Academy of Sciences study on the **Integration of Nutrition into Agriculture and Health in Ethiopia** <http://www.eas-et.org/publications.htm>, which recommended that the coordination of nutritional interventions be changed from the Federal Ministry of Health to the Office of the Prime Minister, in order to make nutrition policy more accessible to wider actors.

Five years after its seminal edition on maternal and childhood malnutrition in 2008, **The Lancet** published a new series of papers in June 2013; <http://www.thelancet.com/series/maternal-and-child-nutrition>. Amongst these is Ruel and Alderman's paper on **Nutrition-sensitive interventions and programmes**, which

highlights the potential of such programmes to enhance nutrition-specific interventions.

Miller and Welch in the October 2013 edition of the journal **Food Policy** provide a useful categorisation and review of **Food system strategies for preventing micronutrient malnutrition**, under the headings agricultural production (cropping systems, soil fertility, biofortification, livestock), food processing (waste, fortification), economic and consumer education strategies, recommending a holistic food systems approach to address the malnutrition problem. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0306919213000742>.

McDermott et al in the August 2013 edition of the **Food Security** journal highlight the challenges of making agriculture more nutrition-sensitive and put forward four areas for action; more coordinated thinking and actions between agriculture, health, water, sanitation and social protection services, better systems to accelerate learning on improved nutrition decision-making by households, building capacity to adapt and innovate at community level and gender empowerment. See—**Agriculture and household nutrition security—development practice and research needs**. <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs12571-013-0292-6>

The **Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GRFA)** provided some useful lessons and recommendations in **The Integration of Nutrition into Extension and Advisory Services** in September 2013. <http://www.g-fras.org/en/480-the-integration-of-nutrition-into-extension-and-advisory-services.html>

Other recent studies have focussed on market supply chains, including Gomez and Ricketts FAO paper on **Food value chain transformations in developing countries** http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/esa/Papers_and_documents/WP_13_05_Gomez_Ricketts.pdf, whilst Keding, Schneider and Jordan highlight the **Production and processing of foods as core aspects of nutrition-sensitive agriculture and sustainable diets** in the journal **Food Security**. <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs12571-013-0312-6>

Finally we should mention the latest systematic review of evidence on **Can agriculture interventions promote nutrition?** by the UK DFID team, which highlights the mainly inconsistent and mixed evidence on home garden, aquaculture, livestock and cash cropping interventions, although the evidence for biofortified crops suggests positive effects on child growth and micronutrient status in children. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/can-agriculture-interventions-promote-nutrition>



Participants in the second Ethiopia AgriDiet stakeholder workshop, held in Addis Ababa in November 2013

AgriDiet Stakeholder Workshops

The second round of stakeholder workshops were held in Addis Ababa and Dar Es Salaam in November 2013.

In Ethiopia, UNICEF, CARE international and the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) all gave presentations on current work and projects.

In Tanzania, FAO, the Ministry of Agriculture, Africare, ANGOZA, Oxfam, the Tanzanian Consortium of Nutritionists and Helen Keller International all made brief presentations.

Key points to arise from the workshops included the lack of coordination between agriculture and health at sub-national level. <http://agridiet.ucc.ie/2014/03/14/2nd-stakeholder-workshop-report-ethiopia-and-tanzania-workshops/>

A key issue is that work by agriculture officers at local level continues to focus on production rather than nutrition.

Also in Ethiopia it was noted that there are no regular meetings at regional or local level and that research evidence remains limited.

It was therefore decided that the next AgriDiet stakeholder workshops should be held at a regional/local level, possibly in partnership with one or more of the stakeholder participant organisations.

The next workshops will be held in Mwanza, Tanzania and Mekelle, Ethiopia—see News section page 8

AgriDiet Website

The AgriDiet website has been running for over a year now, providing all outputs from the project so far and a resource centre showing the latest research on agricultural and nutrition issues for Ethiopia and Tanzania. IDS experts Simon Colmer and Alan Stanley developed the website structure and resource feed from the Eldis database. See <http://agridiet.ucc.ie/>

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Understanding the links between agriculture and nutrition in Ethiopia and Tanzania

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AgriDiet News

AgriDiet 3rd Stakeholder Workshops—The next workshops will be held on 31 July in Mekelle, Tigray, Ethiopia and 11 August in Mwanza, Tanzania. A further round of stakeholder workshops will take place in 2015.

AgriDiet 3rd Project Workshop - The 3rd AgriDiet Project Workshop will be held on 3 and 4 November in University College Cork, Ireland.

AgriDiet Household Surveys Round 2 - The next round of the household surveys in Ethiopia and Tanzania will commence in July, and due for completion by October 2014.

AgriDiet Conference - Preparations are commencing for the AgriDiet conference in Addis Ababa in mid-2015, details to be confirmed

AgriDiet Work Package 6 - Researchers in Ethiopia and Tanzania have mapped projects in the key regions of the project and identified 3 projects in each area as case studies. Findings will be released as Working Papers on the AgriDiet website once available.

AgInvest Africa Web Portal - A new web tool maps a wide range of agriculture and food security interventions in Africa - <http://www.aginvestafrica.org/>

ICN2—the second UN International conference on Nutrition will take place in Rome on 19-21 November 2014, some 22 years after the first conference in 1992. http://www.who.int/nutrition/topics/WHO_FAO_announce_ICN2/en/index3.html



AgriDiet Team (from left to right)

Top Row - Chanyalew Seyoum Aweke, Nick Chisholm, Kathy Glavanis, Jemal Yousuf Hassen, Joyce Kinabo, Jim Kinsella, Edward Lahiff.

Middle Row - Goodluck Massawe, Amon Mattee, Jessica Meeker, Thadeus Mkwanzwa, Achilana Mtingele, Happiness Muhimbula, Nora O'Brien.

Bottom row - Deidre O'Connor, Tom O'Connor, Aifric O'Sullivan, Kedir Teja Roba, Girmay Tesfay, Stephen Thornhill, Tassew Woldehanna, Zenebe Abraha Kahsay.



For any information queries on this newsletter or any other aspect of the AgriDiet project please contact the editor Stephen Thornhill at University College Cork by e-mail at s.thornhill@ucc.ie or by phone on +353 21 490 3348 .