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Strategies to Close the Living Income Gap of Different Coffee-grower Archetypes in Kaffa Region, Ethiopia

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Abstract

In Ethiopia, small-holder coffee farmers are confronted with numerous challenges as a result of low income from farming. In order, to intervene, it is important to find out the what the farmers earn, their sources of income and challenges facing their livelihoods as far as living income is concerned. This study in the southern part of Ethiopia helps to calculate an estimate of actual income of coffee farmers and compare it to the living income reference value for Ethiopia to establish the living income gap. Expert interviews, focus group discussions and individual farmer interviews were conducted to collect the income data and marketing strategies of the farmers. These farmers were classified into different producer archetypes. The farmer archetypes were defined by the coffee production type of a farmer. The results showed that the small-holder coffee farmers have an income which is below the reference value. The living income gap depends on the archetype a farmer belongs to. There is overdependency on coffee farming among the farmers which increases the risk of huge loss in case of the crop failure or sudden price drop. Results from the discussions bring out various challenges which the farmers are facing in regard to production and marketing of their products. The results from the study proved the need for intervention by various actors to help combat poverty in the region. Due to these challenges associated with coffee farming, it is necessary to promote crop diversification among these farmers. It is also important for the stakeholders in the sector to help the farmers break the long market chain and intervene in providing education on better production systems.

Keywords: Coffee, Ethiopia, income gap, living income, poverty