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“Competing pathways for equitable food systems transformation:
Trade-offs and synergies”

Enhancing sustainable food security and transforming food systems in four woredas of Gurage zone, Ethiopia

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Abstract

Food systems must be appraised holistically with consideration of the potential trade-offs and synergies in the economic impacts (e.g. incomes, profits, taxes and food supply), social impacts (e.g. gender equality, nutrition, and animal welfare), and environmental impacts (e.g. the conservation of ecosystems, biodiversity, soil and water). In Ethiopia, over 20.1 million people are food insecure, including 2.73 million internally displaced people (IDPs) and 1.88 million returnees. Food system in Ethiopia is characterised by prevalence of extreme poverty and hunger, unaffordability of healthier diets, and dietary composition. Ethiopia seeks to use a sustainable and healthy-diet centred lens to transform food systems, uniting around a common goal of healthy and sustainable diets for all. To contribute to such national objectives of Ethiopian Gov't in this regard, the current study was initiated, the baseline survey conducted and study report prepared. The study area is Sodo, Debub-Sodo, E/Maskan and Marako Woredas of Gurage Zone, Ethiopia. Crop (73%) and livestock (16%) productions are the prominent economic activities, complemented by off-farm activities (11%), in the study areas. This research analysed existing situations of food security and food systems in the four study areas, in six sample Kebeles. The study targeted total of 24 (women groups, youth and mixed groups) for FGDs, and 12 KIIs. Moreover, 600 HHs were sampled for HH survey via systematic random sampling methods. Descriptive statistics and econometric data analysis have been applied. The results indicated that the areas are characterised by low production & productivity, no sustainable food security, poor nutrition of women and children, and the food systems are so poor (production, processing, transportation & consumption), which needs to be transformed. Household dietary diversity score (HDDS) of 600 women is 3.35 and individual dietary diversity score (IDDS) of infants (6–36 months) is 1.62, and 80% of target households use 1–2 food groups (HDD). The study recommended that enhancing supply of agricultural technologies & knowledges, financial inclusions, environmental protections and skill trainings within the communities of the study areas have paramount roles in curbing the existing low level of food security and transforming the food systems.

Keywords: HDDS, food groups, food systems, IDDS, synergies, trade-offs