



Tropentag, September 20-22, 2023, hybrid conference  
“Competing pathways for equitable food systems transformation:  
Trade-offs and synergies”

## Dietary diversity, fish consumption patterns and its determinants among women, children and households in Bangladesh

LUCY NJOGU<sup>1</sup>, RAHMA ADAM<sup>2</sup>, CATHERINE MWEMA<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>World Agroforestry (ICRAF), Impact Unit, Kenya

<sup>2</sup>Worldfish, Gender Unit,

<sup>3</sup>Worldfish, Impact Unit,

### Abstract

Bangladesh has been successful in reducing poverty levels, but malnutrition still persists with about 35 % of population being food insecure. In Bangladesh, malnutrition among women and children is widespread. It is estimated that 41 % of the children under five years are stunted, 16 % are wasted and 36 % are underweight. Overall, nearly a third of the women are undernourished making the rest prone to micro-nutrient deficiency related illnesses. Bangladesh's government is committed to end malnutrition by improving access to adequate and nutritious food, through adoption of various policies and initiatives.

Given the high levels of malnutrition in Bangladesh, and the importance of fish in providing micro-nutrients, we sought to understand the dietary diversity levels, patterns of fish consumption and its determinants among households in Rangpur and Rajshahi divisions. We collected data from 2669 households. The study employed a household dietary diversity (HDD), individual dietary diversity – women (IDD-W) and minimum dietary diversity (MDD) to analyse the dietary diversity. Results indicate that the average HDD was relatively high (8.22), the mean IDD\_W for women and children was low at 4.99 and 4.90, respectively. T-test analysis indicated dietary diversity scores increased with consumption of fish and the number of fish species consumed. Intra-household discrimination and substitution of fish and other types of meat in the households, was observed. Increase in level of education and pond ownership were factors that increased fish consumption. In the study area, the most affordable fish species wasn't the most consumed fish species. This demonstrates the importance of considering tastes and preferences in fish consumption among potential beneficiaries in projects aiming to improve nutrition.

**Keywords:** Bangladesh, dietary diversity, fish consumption, gender, nutrition