



## ETHIOPIA

# IMPROVEMENTS IN THE LIVES OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN: PROJECTS FROM THE FIELD

## AGPII: Harnessing agricultural investments to improve the diets of women and children in Ethiopia

### Malnutrition in Ethiopia

Ethiopia has set ambitious targets to reduce malnutrition and has made considerable progress on reducing stunting among children under five. However, stunting is still very common (38%): over 6 million children are affected by stunting and 1 in 10 suffer from wasting. Only 7% of children aged 6 to 23 months get a minimum acceptable diet<sup>1</sup>. One in 4 adult women are anaemic. At the same time the number of overweight and obese children and adults continues to rise. Malnutrition continues to undermine national development efforts: the cost of undernutrition has been estimated at 16.5% of annual GDP<sup>2</sup>.

### Second agricultural growth programme (2015-2020)

AGPII is a EUR 418 million flagship programme implemented by the Ethiopian government within the framework of its second national nutrition programme (NNPII). AGPII is supported by multiple donors<sup>3</sup> including the EU (EUR 45 m) along with Member States, Spain and the Netherlands. The goal of AGPII is to contribute to sustainable agricultural transformation while improving the food and nutrition security situation of vulnerable groups. The programme focuses on areas of considerable agricultural potential in seven regional states<sup>4</sup> with high stunting prevalence. More than 20 million smallholder farmers are expected to benefit from the intervention while 1.6 million smallholders (40% of them women) are direct beneficiaries. The programme components include public support services for agriculture, agricultural research, small-scale irrigation, agriculture marketing and value chain promotion. EU support includes a EUR 5 million complementary action designed to accelerate the provision of nutrition training and promotion of

nutrition-sensitive technologies to farmers. This component also develops nutrition-related capacities for the delivery of public services across agriculture, education and health sectors. Overall, AGPII reinforces the focus of the NNPII on tackling the underlying causes of malnutrition via a multi-sectoral approach<sup>5</sup>.

### Tangible results in the lives of women and children

AGPII closely monitors the links between agriculture and nutrition outcomes along the dietary pathways of women and children. Improving complementary feeding of children aged 6 to 23 months has been identified as a crucial pathway to prevent stunting in Ethiopia<sup>6</sup>. While very few Ethiopian children get a minimum acceptable diet and the diet of most mothers is inadequate, the programme has already led to significant changes between 2017 and 2019. Children in the regions of intervention are now consuming more pulses, grains, roots, tubers, fruits, vegetables and animal and milk products than previously<sup>7</sup>. Data from the outset of the programme showed that in female-headed households surveyed no young children were getting an acceptable diet. As a result of AGPII this is beginning to change.



Outcomes <sup>8</sup>	2017	2019
Children's diet in male-headed households	5.4%	9.3%
Children's diet in female-headed households	0%	6.7%
Women's diet	17.9%	30%
Household diet	65%	84%

### Realising human potential

Ethiopia's NNPII adopts the lifecycle approach with a particular emphasis on the crucial period of pregnancy and the first 2 years of life (first 1 000 days) during which good nutrition and healthy growth deliver lasting benefits throughout life. AGPII is playing a fundamental role in raising awareness of the contribution that nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems play in achieving this goal. However, addressing the overlapping inequalities of wealth and gender remains a challenge. AGPII therefore focuses on rural households with access to limited resources and specifically ensures the inclusion of women farmers. Support is explicitly provided to build the capacity, representation and financing of women in agriculture through a transformative approach. Attention is given to ensuring that the workload of women is not exacerbated through access to relevant information, labour-saving technologies and regular gender impact evaluations.

### Tackling climate and environmental challenges

Ethiopia is especially vulnerable to climate change. AGPII is therefore committed to mainstreaming climate smart agriculture (CSA) approaches across the entire programme, thereby providing an important contribution to Ethiopia's climate resilient green economy strategy. The programme also includes the establishment of a climate advisory service across the agricultural extension system to promote CSA technologies while supporting improved conservation and management of the natural resources upon which farmers and pastoralists depend.

- 1 Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey 2016.
- 2 The Social and Economic Impact of Child Undernutrition in Ethiopia, UNECA/WFP 2013.
- 3 The principal donor is the World Bank (USD 350 million), along with the EU, USAID, Canada, Spain and the Netherlands.
- 4 Amhara, Oromia, SNNPR, Tigray, Benshangul-Gumuz, Gambella and Harar as well as Dire Dawa city administration.
- 5 This follows a narrower focus during the first phase to address the more immediate causes and treatment of malnutrition.
- 6 Baye, Kaleab et al, Irrigation and women's diet in Ethiopia: A longitudinal study. IFPRI Discussion Paper 1864, 2019.
- 7 Kuma, T., Changes in household and children's dietary diversity in AGP intervention areas, Policy Studies Institute, December 2019.
- 8 The Policy Studies Institute AGPII Impact Evaluation Report, May 2019, has applied internationally recognised indicators: for children's diet, the Minimum Acceptable Diet 6-23 months; for women's diet, the Dietary Diversity Score for pregnant women; for household diet, the Household Dietary Diversity Score.

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