

CGIAR System Board
20th meeting, Virtual
18-19 May 2021

Background Resource:
[CGIAR's COVID-19 Hub](#)

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Purpose: This material sets out, for information, an update on the work of the [CGIAR COVID-19 Hub](#) as it approaches one year of operation, and emerging lessons for future CGIAR responses to crises.

Issue date: 7 May 2021

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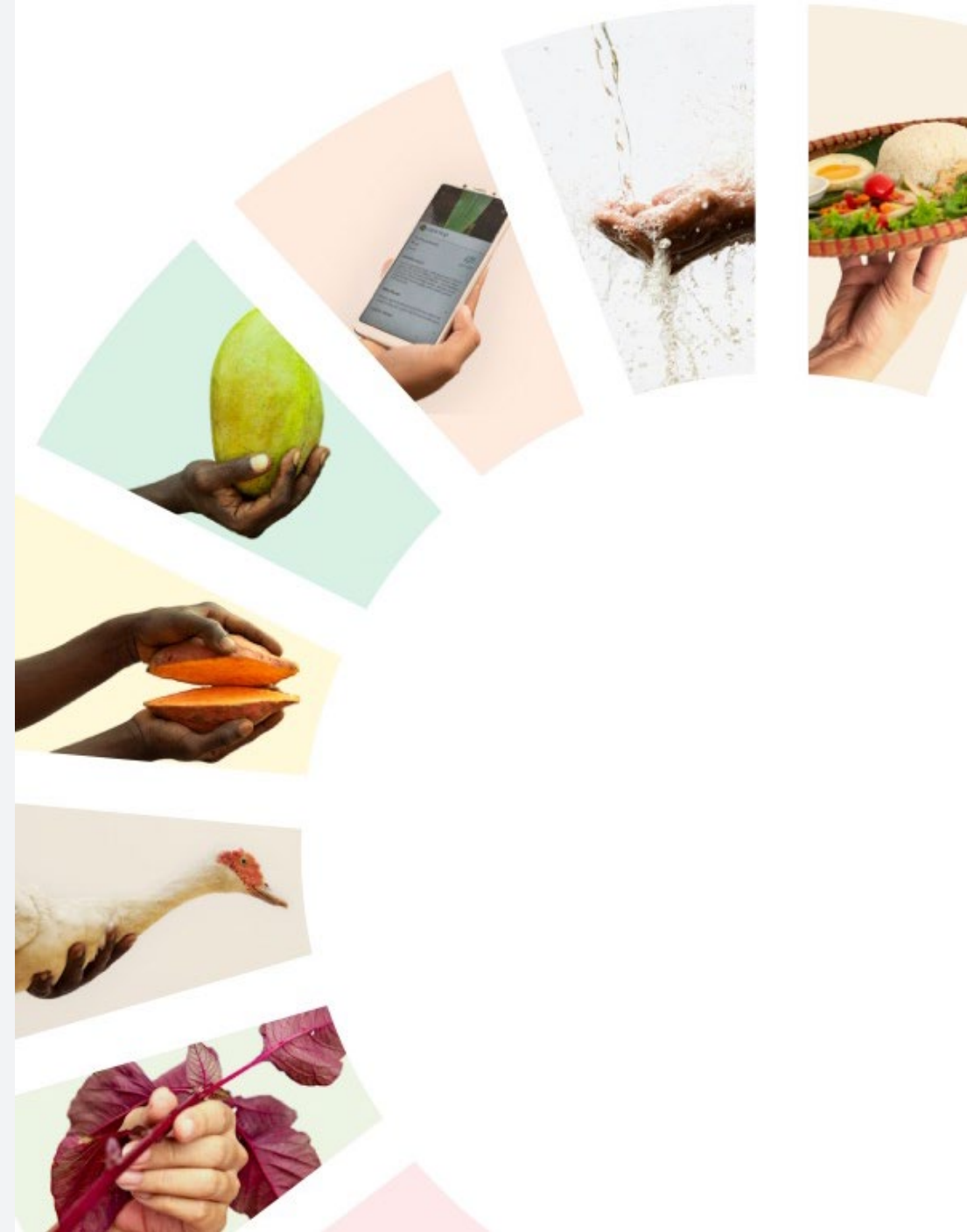
EMT sponsor: EMT Convener and Managing Director, Research Delivery and Impact



Background Resource

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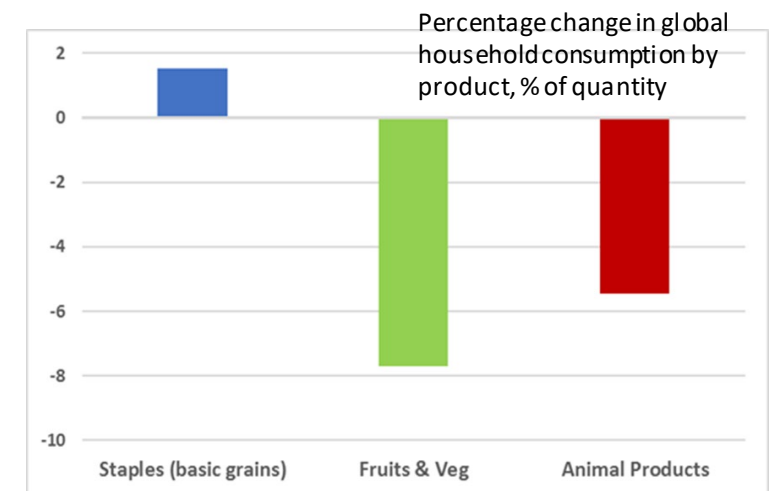
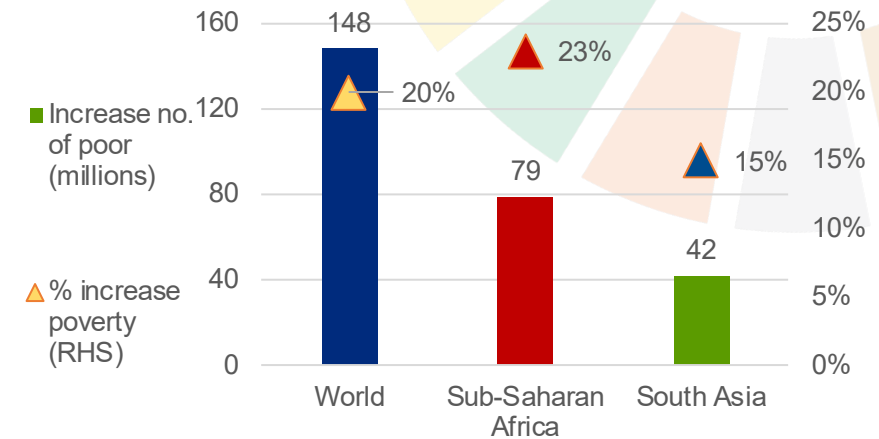
CGIAR COVID-19 Hub



COVID-19 impacts on food systems and food security

- The worst global economic crisis since the Great Depression in 1930s with complex, interlinked shocks to health and economies
- The crisis exacerbated inequality, poverty and malnutrition, with poverty increasing by 20% globally
- Quick response by CGIAR leveraging existing tools and data, for example [country economy-wide model assessments](#); [COVID-19 Policy Response](#), [One Health](#).
- [Early communication on lessons](#) from food price crisis contributed to relatively smooth agri-food trade.
- Key future implications identified:
 - Systemic changes to public sector programs
 - Potential for accelerated food system innovations
 - Delayed but not forgotten – climate change and environment

Poverty and nutrition impacts of COVID-19



COVID-19 Hub in brief

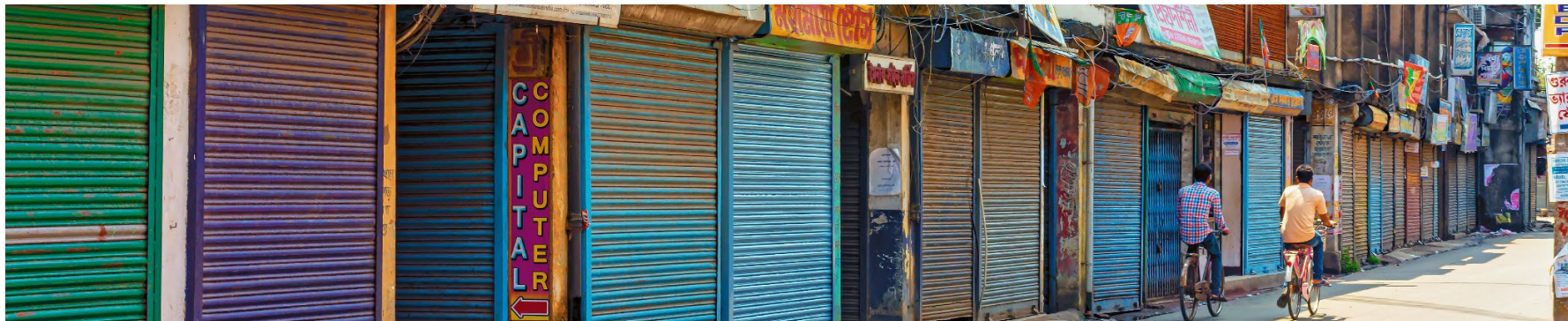
- [CGIAR response to COVID-19](#) – document for System Council, June 2020
- [Hub launched June 2020](#) – communication, coordination and “joint” research
- Hub proposal submitted to funders. Funding SO \$500K (2020) and UK (W2) \$2M to be spent in 2021
- Hub is a time-limited structure – coordinated by A4NH and SO
- Management Team from A4NH, PIM, ILRI, FTA, SO, and LSHTM
- Coordinates CGIAR work in four key areas:
 - [Addressing value chain fractures](#)
 - [One Health](#)
 - [Supporting country responses](#)
 - [Resilient food systems and building back better](#)
- Amplifies work conducted across CGIAR outside the Hub structure

Research: Working Group 1

Addressing Value Chain Fractures



- Brief: [Analytical Framework for Addressing Value Chain Fractures \(January 2021\)](#)
 - Identifies two types of policies affecting agrifood value chains: movement or market restrictions
 - Defines research questions moving forward using this framework
- Planned 2021:
 - Inventory of CGIAR value chain studies on COVID-19 to date
 - Synthesis of lessons learned from existing studies of value chains during COVID-19
 - Collaborative study of how well innovations in value chains mitigated impacts of COVID-19



Research – Working Group 2

One Health



Planned 2021 work:

Pathogen crossovers

- Review of key drivers associated with cross-over of pandemic-potential pathogens from animals to humans, and policy approaches to addressing these risks
- Study on wildlife trade and wildlife farming in Vietnam

Epidemiology

- Framework to map COVID-19 and other zoonotic diseases on agricultural productivity.
- Transmission at the interface among humans, domestic animals, and wildlife in different host ecosystems.
- Slaughterhouses as “hot-spots” for SARS-CoV-2 transmission
- Framework for one health assessment of aquatic food systems in Bangladesh

Integrated modeling of interactions between health economic impacts

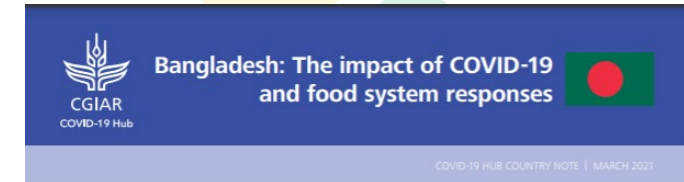
- Integrating Economic and Epidemiological models at country level
- Health impacts of lockdown and economic impacts of ill-health



Research: Working Group 3

Supporting Country Responses

- Half of CGIAR COVID-19 Hub funds focused on country engagement work in [Bangladesh](#); [Ethiopia](#); [Malawi](#), [Myanmar](#), [Nigeria](#)
- Co-design and implementation of research action plans, with 2-3 priorities areas that respond to country demand. For example:
 - Farm stress monitor under development by the Hub is a priority for **Bangladesh**' Prime Minister's office; Aquaculture disease intelligence system discussed with stakeholders;
 - To contribute to **Ethiopia's** COVID-19 response plan by the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), the Hub is undertaking a seed supply chain mapping to generate digital solutions;
 - Research in **Nigeria** on improved access to quality seeds and varieties; strengthening the capacity of women/ youth and providing policy evidence address four of the government's six priority areas.
- Cross-country knowledge sharing and synthesis of lessons for One CGIAR country engagement



Strong economic growth in Bangladesh in recent years has led to positive development outcomes across all areas. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected every sector of the country. CGIAR researchers have estimated the economic impact of COVID-19 in Bangladesh, and the effects of the pandemic on food security.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19

During the lockdown period (April to May 2020), Bangladesh's gross domestic product (GDP) was assessed to have fallen by 29 percent (US\$15.8 billion). The national poverty rate was estimated to have increased by a staggering 25 percentage points, with 42 million more people temporarily living below the national poverty line. The impact on exports was extensive, resulting in a decline of approximately 50 percent.

The change in GDP in the agri-food sector relative to a non-COVID-19 scenario was 8.2 percent (US\$1.3 billion). The food services sector was estimated to have declined by 46 percent, resulting in US\$300 million in losses. Losses occurred in the poultry and dairy sectors. Losses were also reported for beverages and sugar crops due to a decline in consumer demand, primarily as a result of the closure of hotels and restaurants.

The GDP for the processing of meat, fish, and fruit and vegetables is expected to decline by 25, 24 and 14 percent, respectively, following

the lockdown, driven by falling consumer demand. Modelling results show a decline in exports as a consequence of lower demand for export crops such as jute and cut flowers. Households in income quintiles three to five had around a 29 percent decline in income, while households in quintiles one and two had a 26 percent income decline.

MITIGATION MEASURES TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT AND THEIR EFFECTS

The government initially declared a ten-day public holiday from March 26, 2020, which was extended seven times, finally ending on May 30. After this date, social distancing measures were introduced and lockdown measures were gradually eased.

Government tax measures included removing import duties on medical and protective items and tax exemptions on certain business incomes. One of the earliest fiscal policies was the announcement of a BDT 50 billion (US\$577 million) stimulus package for export-oriented industries. US\$8 billion was allocated to increase public expenditure, formulate a stimulus package, widen social safety net coverage and increase monetary supply. In the last quarter of 2020, the government released more than BDT 18.31 billion (US\$211 million) to the Bangladesh Bank, with the intention to pay cash incentives to exporters.

Two agricultural policies were introduced: farm input subsidies and targeted rural income support. The government allocated BDT 90 billion

Figure 1: Changes in agri-sector GDP following lockdown

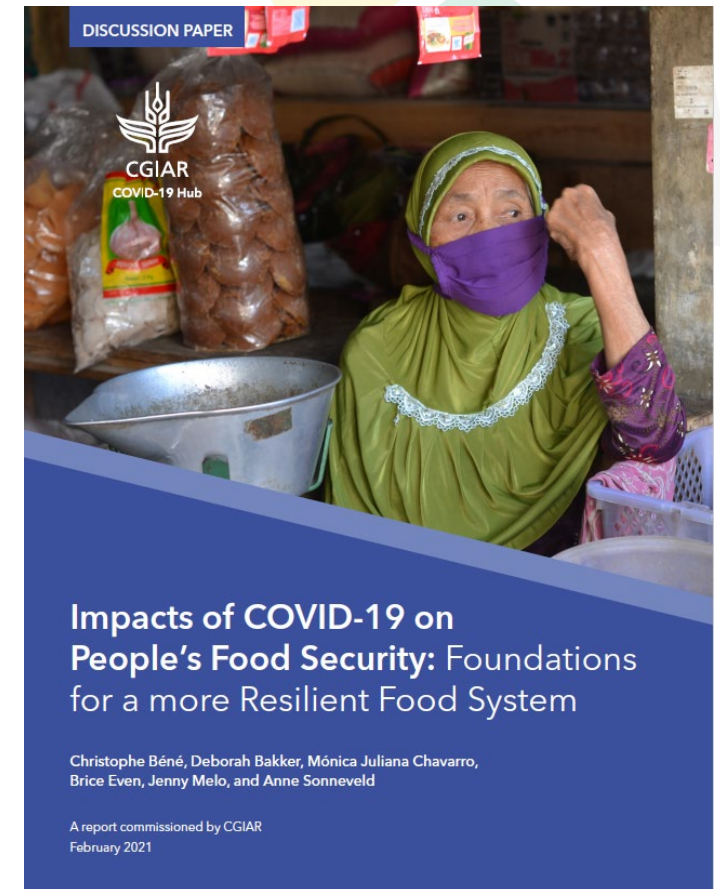


Research – Working Group 4

Food System Fragilities and Building Back Better



- 2020: [First global assessment \(62 countries\) of COVID-19's impacts on food security](#). (Published Feb 2021).
- 2021 (planned) : Studies on **how to address vulnerabilities and provide solutions to build resilience**, with key action domains :
 - Food environments
 - Diversification of production and consumption, markets
 - Urban-rural relations, and buffers for employment
 - Integrated surveillance systems food/health/land (link with WG2)
 - Guidelines for countries and actors to analyze and manage food chains shocks and crises (link with WG1 and WG3)
 - Foresight analysis : which new trends, new drivers, new levers to build resilience?



Internal and External Engagement

- Internal updates to Science Leaders and CGIAR researchers:
 - Held December 2020, April 2021
 - Planned June, Q3, Q4 2021
- Webinars:
 - January 2021 on [supporting country responses](#)
 - March 2021 on [food systems lessons from COVID-19](#)
 - May 2021 on [One Health](#)
- Consultation with Rome-based agencies: May 2021
- Planned external events:
 - with RBAs, Q3 2021
 - with CGIAR GENDER Platform, Q3 2021



Lessons for future CGIAR responses to crises

- COVID-19 is a global health, food, social and economic crisis that required a collective CGIAR response
- The Hub empowered and adapted existing structures to launch some collective research actions and implement quickly
- Agile and coordinated response to emergencies requires effective country engagement: with limited resources, the Hub is testing One CGIAR approaches
- Future emergency response needs to be supported by an appropriate institutional structure – such as the Regional and Country offices
- The Hub is a time-limited arrangement until the end of 2021: for continuity, the Hub work areas can be mapped to the CGIAR Initiatives (One Health, Value chains and markets, etc)
- Resilience building as a key feature of the future CGIAR research portfolio (along with others like sustainability, inclusion, efficiency)



Annex: CGIAR COVID-19 Hub – Working Groups



WG1: Value Chain Fractures

- [Frank Place](#), PIM
- [Thomas Reardon](#), MSU
- [Alan de Brauw](#), IFPRI
- [Dietmar Stoian](#), ICRAF
- [Isabelle Baltenweck](#), ILRI
- [Matty Demont](#), IRRI
- [Diego Naziri](#), CIP
- [Christine Chege](#), ABC
- [Michael Hauser](#), ICRISAT
- [Jason Donovan](#), CIMMYT
- [Ben Belton](#), WorldFish

WG2: One Health

- [Hung Nguyen](#), ILRI
- [Jo Lines](#), LSHTM
- [Bernard Bett](#), ILRI
- [Vivian Hoffmann](#), IFPRI
- [Nichola Naylor](#), LSHTM
- [Amy Ickowitz](#), CIFOR
- [Karl Rich](#), ILRI
- [Vishnumurthy Mohan Chadag](#), WorldFish

WG3: Supporting Country Responses

- [Ekaterina Krivonos](#), CGIAR System Organization
- [Karl Pauw](#), IFPRI
- [Naureen Karachiwalla](#), IFPRI
- [Thomas Randolph](#), CRP Livestock
- [Tharavil Shereef Amjath Babu](#), CIMMYT
- [Nicoline de Haan](#), CGIAR Gender Platform
- [Kwesi Atta-Krah](#), IITA
- [Nadia Manning-Thomas](#), CGIAR System Organization
- [Gaudiose Mujawamariya](#), AfricaRice
- [Simon Heck](#), CIP

WG4: Food System Fragilities

- [Vincent Gitz](#), CRP FTA
- [Jean Balie](#), IRRI
- [Inge Brouwer](#), WUR
- [Delia Randolph](#), ILRI
- [Izabella Koziell](#), CRP WLE
- [Samuel Benin](#), IFPRI
- [Christophe Béné](#), ABC
- [Victor Lopez](#), CIMMYT
- [Ruerd Ruben](#), WUR
- [Keith Wiebe](#), IFPRI
- [Brian King](#), ABC
- [Ekaterina Krivonos](#), CGIAR System Organization