

NIPN AT A GLANCE

4th Quarter, December 2021

National Nutrition Research Conference 2021 Successfully Hosted By EPHI/NIPN

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EPHI/NIPN hosted a successful National Nutrition Research Conference (NNRC) from December 8-10/2021 in Addis Ababa at Hilton Hotel, with the theme **“Generation and mobilization of nutrition evidence to tackle malnutrition: From data to action”**.

The objective of the conference was to bring together different nutrition stakeholders and to discuss food and nutrition-related issues that matter most in the fight against malnutrition.



The Minister of Health (MOH), H.E. Dr. Lia Tadesse, giving an opening remark at NNRC

The conference was opened by youth group

music with choreography which gives an inspirational message of nutrition to the audience. The Minister of Health (MOH), H.E. Dr. Lia Tadesse, gave an opening remark in which she reiterates the MOH is implementing the National Food and Nutrition Strategy which is crucial to meet the stunting reduction goals of 2030.

Dr. Tsegereda Kifle, Director General of EPHI, on her part explained that EPHI received mandates to perform public health researches and the Institute is serving the community by undertaking food and nutrition-related researches among other things.



Dr. Tsegereda Kifle, Director General of EPHI, Giving a welcoming speech at NNRC

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Message From The Coordinator



Aregash Samuel (PhD), Senior Researcher at EPHI and NIPN Coordinator

“As this year is the final year for NIPN phase 1, the preparation of NIPN phase 2 is on progress. The phase 2 proposal is currently being written.”

Greetings from the NIPN Ethiopia team,

The year 2021 is gone now. This year, the NIPN team accomplished numerous activities. First of all, we are pleased to inform you that the National Information Platform for Nutrition (NIPN) had hosted a successful National Nutrition Research Conference (NNRC) from December 8-10, 2021 at the Addis Ababa Hilton hotel. More than 120 abstracts were received, with the scientific team reviewing them and selecting 54 abstracts for oral and poster presentations. This conference includes a food innovation competition, which is the first in EPHI's history. The organizing team has selected five finalists who compete to win the final prize. The conference provided universities with an excellent opportunity to establish a platform for future research collaboration. More than 171 academicians, advisors, and nutrition stakeholders attended this conference. A lot of positive feedback had been received from participants which gives the energy for NIPN team to work more.

This year, the NIPN's outputs were produced as usual. The NIPN team was successful in producing six (6) knowledge (research) outputs, which were shared at various events including the meetings with the Advisory Committee (AC), MER SC Workshops, during the Arba-minch Workshop display, and the NNRC exhibition.

The NIPN has enjoyed a great deal of success. The team also

completed the second cycle of the Policy Question Formulation (PQF) process after validation of the questions by the NIPN AC.

With regards to capacity strengthening efforts, NIPN gives special emphasis to capacity-strengthening training, which allows sectors, regional health bureaus, and regional PHI's to receive potential career-enhancing skills. This year NIPN organized four trainings with a mix of attendees from sectors, regional health bureaus, and regional PHI's. We received constructive feedback from sectors on the quality and importance of such trainings.

As this year is the final year for NIPN phase 1, the preparation of NIPN phase 2 is on progress. The phase 2 proposal is currently being written. Many consultations and discussions are taking place with EUD, C4N, and GIZ, to define the next phase of NIPN. To ensure the sustainability of NIPN at EPHI, a sustainability plan document has been finalized.

One of the key objectives of NIPN is to establish and operationalize a NIPN central data repository system, and so far, six datasets have been uploaded to the system, and two more are in the process of being uploaded. This will make it easier for researchers to access pertinent information about data. This year, the NIPN's outreach efforts were also successful. The NIPN website has been updated with new features, and it is now more structured and appealing. The look and the feel

of the website are splendid. The social media is continuously updated, with different tweets and retweets. People are following the posts and interactions are growing. The webinars brought our partners and stakeholders to attend attentively since the webinars selected timely topics for discussion. The regular quarterly newsletters are disseminated on time too.

NIPN Ethiopia was also involved in webinars organized by C4N and shared its best experience with NIPN global implementing countries on data and sustainability plan preparation. The C4N team also conducted a NIPN case study and analysis is expected to be compiled from C4N. The Media engagement is also growing in that 12 media houses attended the NNRC event and news coverage was excellent.

Of course, we are delayed in some activities and this is because the team is highly involved in the baseline survey of the Food and Nutrition Strategy.

NIPN is proud to announce its supports to this national and unique nutrition survey both financially and technically. The nature of the survey is challenging and it consumes most of the NIPN team's time and yet the team continues to support the survey until it is finalized.

We Would like to Wish a Great New Year Ahead!!

Stay Safe! Be Safe!

The NIPN Advisory Committee (AC) members met at Elilly Hotel on October 28, 2021, to discuss the updates of NIPN activities. The Committee also gave directions on the forthcoming NIPN activities.

The AC chairman, Dr. Ferew Lemma, welcomed the participants and invited the NIPN team to deliver the updates. The team presented the summaries of key performances that have been done for the past 4 years. As one of the key activities, the PQF process was explained and was stated that NIPN is working to answer the queries from the stakeholders. NIPN also produced different knowledge outputs and they were disseminated via NIPN communication outlets. Over the past years, NIPN provided 20 capacity strengthening training in which over 400 participants have benefited from it.

The team briefed the AC members about the functionality of the data repository and data sets that were uploaded with complete codebook. It was also mentioned that 17 outreach events, quarterly MER SC, and bi-annual AC meetings were organized and hosted on time. The NIPN website and social media were updated regularly.



After the brief, the AC members suggested constructive comments and provided productive directions. Considering the NIPN team's involvement in the current National Food and Nutrition Baseline Survey, it was suggested that, the team needs to realize and figure out feasible ways to work concurrently on priorities between the 2022 FNS analysis and NIPN activities; while recruiting additional staff was raised as a solution as well.

More engagement of universities was proposed for the sustainability of NIPN. In addition, capacity strengthening activities are recommended to be done with more engagement of vital sectors. Sectors' attention to EPHI's research findings and their active engagement will enhance the success. It was raised that many similar nutrition-related and in many cases, similar researches have been done and found challenging to get them all

in one. NIPN should take the initiative to collect such similar researches and use it to reinforce its data repository.

As financial stability is a key factor to determining the extension of NIPN phase 2; due considerations and actions are needed.

Hence, it was suggested that NIPN should advocate itself in searching for additional funding for its sustainability.

The mechanism of receiving online webinar feedback is recommended during the discussion. The necessity of planning effective ways of policy brief dissemination was underscored and prior discussion shall be practiced as the briefs need to be communicated to different sectors.

Merging the NIPN data repository with the National Data Management Center (NDMC) has been advised for more secure data.

NIPN Ethiopia Deeply Saddened by the Death of the AC Chair, Dr. Ferew Lemma

Dr Ferew is a Public Health Physician with a PhD in Public Health Nutrition from London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Dr. Ferew has worked in various capacities in higher education teaching/learning, health service delivery and management, as well as research. Dr Ferew has been serving as a Senior Nutrition Advisor to the Minister, Ministry of Health, Ethiopia.

Dr Ferew served as a chair of the National Information Platform for Nutrition (NIPN) Advisory Committee.

Dr. Ferew Lemma passed away on Dec 25, 2021. EPHI/NIPN colleagues would like to express our heartfelt condolences for his families, friends and colleagues. The NIPN Ethiopia team, as we were working closely with him, benefited from his rich experiences.

EPHI/NIPN would like to thank Dr. Ferew Lemma for his relentless effort to support the NIPN Ethiopia project through his vast experiences. For a detail Bio, please refer <https://www.facebook.com/Nipninethio>.



"The Nexus Between Nutrition, Food Safety and Food Security" A NIPN Webinar Summary



According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), there is no food security without food safety. Access to safe and nutritious food is a basic human right. Yet every year around the world, over 420,000 people die and some 600 million people (almost one in ten) fall ill after eating contaminated food (FAO, the Future of Food Safety). Challenges to ensuring food safety is an essential dimension of food security.

To address this issue a webinar on "the nexus between nutrition, food safety and food security" was co-organized by the National Information Platform for Nutrition (NIPN), the Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI) and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) on October 13, 2021.



Introduction: Dr. Aregash Samuel, NIPN Ethiopia National Coordinator, Researcher at the Food Science and Nutrition Research Directorate, EPHI

Moderator: Cornelia van Zyl, Senior Technical and Policy Advisor at IFPRI in support of the NIPN

Speaker: Prof. Mogessie Ashenafi, Ph.D., FTWAS. Professor of Food Microbiology, Center for Food Security Studies, College of Development Studies, Addis Ababa University.

Panelists: Dr. Ferew Lemma, Senior Advisor, Office of the State Minister (Programs), Federal Ministry of Health; Ato **Wendafrash Abera**, Technical Advisor on Food Safety and Nutrition at Ethiopian Food and Drug Authority.

"Food security exists when all people at all times have economic, physical and social access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" said professor Mogessie Ashenafi (AAU) in his presentation on the nexus between nu-



trition/ food safety and food security. He added availability, access, utilization, and stability as the four pillars of food security.

However, in most cases, safety and nutrition, the vital component of food security, are undermined. As a result, there has been a shift in policy focus from access to consuming safe and nutritious food. Considering the multifaceted connection between food safety and nutrition, professor Mogessie stressed the need for environmental sanitation, adequate health facilities, sufficient and caring practice for vulnerable parts of the society.

Mr. Wendafrash Abera and Dr. Ferew Lemma, reflected on the Ethiopian food safety regulation and linkage to the Food System respectively.

Mr. Wendafrash said adulteration, use of chemical as raw material, illegal food

trade, climate change and increase in foodborne disease are some of challenges related to food safety in Ethiopia. He



called for sectoral collaboration, expansion of infrastructure, accredited food laboratories and strengthening food safety regulation. Dr. Ferew presented the pathway for Ethiopian food system from the challenges of food safety to the game changing ideas. He presented the prioritized 22 innovative game changing solutions related to food safety and security in Ethiopia. Moving forward, Dr. Ferew remarked the importance of having a recent country specific evidence on food safety and foodborne diseases and its impact in the country. He added the need for a "one health approach" to strengthen food safety.

session ended with a lively question and answer session. The webinar brought together 52 participants from different sectors, including policymakers, academia, researchers, development partners and NGOs.

To access the webinar presentations, and for the summary of the Q&A session, visit, <https://www.nipn.eph.gov.et/node/230>

Two Capacity Building Trainings Were Given by NIPN

NIPN organized two trainings for media and public relations professionals in the fourth quarter of 2021. The media training was part of the NIPN training program, which was held on 20th and 21st of October in Adama, with the theme "Access to Health Research Information."

The training focuses on strategies and tools for reporting on health and nutrition issues. Special emphasis was made on how to effectively report during emergencies such as COVID-19 and internally displaced people, who are in need of food and nutritional interventions, and on how to communicate effectively during such crisis times. The topics also include understanding the nature of crises and how they affect health and nutrition, as well as the links between emergencies and their impacts on health and nutrition. The training focused on how emergency health and nutrition treatments were influenced by information accessibility.



(The Media Training Participants)

The COVID-19 pandemic experience, as well as the awareness creation, and communication actions that were taken during the outbreak, including agenda-setting and message framing, were the topics of hot discussions during the training.

The PR Training Participants



The training was given to 26 journalists from government and private media houses. Finally EPHI health/nutrition -media network was established.



Dr. Awoke from NDMC explaining the importance of data and evidence for health communication

On the other hand, public relations professionals received training on October 22nd and 23rd, 2021.

The training primarily focused on the role of public relations in promoting health and nutrition issues and provided an overview of health communications, including providing access to research information via websites and social media, as well as event planning and management in health and nutrition advocacy. The training also covered the PR's role and responsibilities in comprehending the nature and expectations of the media, as well as the need for establishing strong media relations by providing access to information and building an enabling environment to meet media demands.

Effective Health and Nutrition message development for different Media platforms was explored. In order to improve these skills, due attention should be given to message development and topic selection. Using the right message for both conventional and digital media was also a topic of discussion, with many people sharing their experiences.

The two-day training was attended by 26 public relations professionals from government sectors, regional health bureaus, and regional public health institutes.



The National Nutrition Research Conference - In Pictures

FSNRD Exhibition



Youth Group Music performance on Nutrition & Health



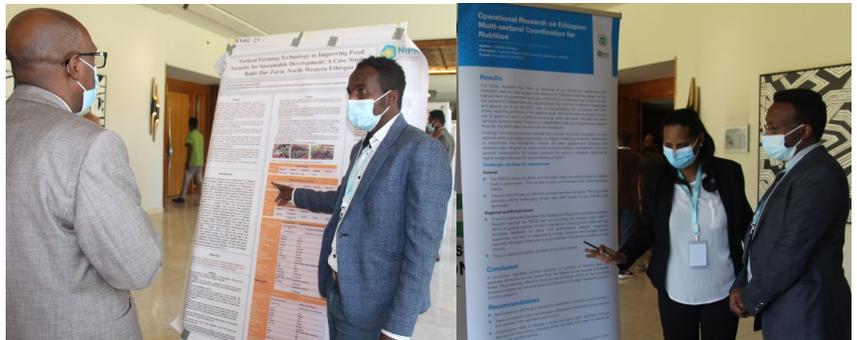
Press Conference (Dr. Aregash Samuel-Briefing the Media)



3 minute Presenters



Poster Presenters



Judges @ the First Food Contest in the History of EPHI

The food Contest Judges



NIPN Team Evaluated Nine Months Performance Review

NIPN team with the presence of the IFPRI team evaluated its performance of the past nine months. The NIPN team members presented their activity performances and evaluated the status of the activities. The team identified activities that were completed and agreed to finalize those activities that were delayed. It was also decided to postpone some activities that need to be done in early January next year. The overall evaluation confirmed that NIPN is still on track despite the team's engagement in the FNS related tasks.



The NIPN performance review was conducted in the presence of Dr. Teunis Van Rheenen, from IFPRI Washington DC and Dr. Jemimah Njuki (<https://www.ifpri.org/profile/jemimah-njuki>) and Dr. James Warner. Dr. Jemimah will manage the ENTAP project for the EUD extension and the new NIPN 2.0 project. Dr. James will be an interim until the replacement of Mrs. Cornelia Van Zyl comes

on board.

During the discussion, it was requested to assess the effects of policy questions since the impacts are necessary to determine the next steps of PQF, although impact assessment is very difficult to measure. A quick assessment of seminars was also recommended and the team was requested to consider adding staff members. It is also stated that NIPN Ethiopia is mentioned as an exemplary team among the NIPN implementing countries for its proper management of NIPN.



EPHI/NIPN National Nutrition Research Conference 2021...continued from P1

Representative of the Ministry of Agriculture Mrs. Alemtsehay Sergawi also coined her message by saying that the issue of improving nutrition is a key priority agenda of the country and it potentially alleviates malnutrition. Realizing this fact and acting for its solution is expected from all stakeholders, Mrs. Alemtsehay also called out for action. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and UNICEF also delivered their speeches during the opening of the conference.

The NNRC accommodated over 120 abstracts that were received and reviewed, and 54 finalists were selected, of which, 14 abstracts were selected for oral presentations, 10 of them were 3-minute presenters and 30- poster presentations were arranged for the conference. Well-known keynote speakers spoke introductory presentations which are in line with each session presentation topics. The 3-minute presentation was also one of the good features of the conference and interactive enough in which participants were engaged to vote online to select the best presenter.

The conference was accompanied by the first food innovation contest in the history of the Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI). Among the competitors, 5 finalists were selected for the final competition. And 5 judges were evaluating the competition after a five-minute presentation of the innovative product at the conference hall. The finalists were also invited to demonstrate their food innovations and they were challenged by judges. Hence, Dr. Addisu Fekadu from Arbaminch University has won on his innovative food product "Value-added *enset*-based food products produced using innovative technologies". The second-place winner was Hayat Hassen from Jimma University on "Naturally colored *Dabo Kollo*". The third-place winner was Dr. Paulos Getachew from Addis Ababa University on "Ethiopian egg-powder – an initiative to improve daily diet diversity". The winners were awarded trophy (for the first winner) and certificates of participation.

Poster presentations and exhibition were also part of the conference and a lot of researches were explained.

The conference was attended by 171 participants from government sectors, the National Nutrition Coordination Body members, a lot of academicians, researchers, and advisors in nutrition, national and international nutrition partners, and government sectors.



The National Nutrition Research Conference which took place from December 8-10, 2021 marks the first Food Innovation Contest in the history of the Ethiopian Public Health Institute. Five finalists were competing to win. The five judges challenged the finalists. Go through this food innovation winners' interview. Enjoy Reading!!

Please introduce yourself

My name is Addisu Fekadu, a lecturer and researcher at Arba Minch University. I was born in a small town called Mitto, Siltie Zone, Ethiopia. I got my Ph.D. degree from KU Leuven, Belgium, MSc degree from Haromaya University, and BSc degree from Jimma University.

Why did you want to apply for the food contest? Any specific reason?

My intention to apply for the national food innovation contest was to unveil the findings of my research works and to promote value-added *enset* based food products to the wider public.

What was your intention when you selected the topic?

Enset based-food products are considered as a low market price, so I deliberately selected the topic to promote such indigenous food product

Tell us about your food innovation? What is unique about it?

About my innovation:



My innovation is a multi-purpose *kocho* flour prepared using innovative fermentation and processing technologies. The food product is the first of its kind here in Ethiopia and abroad. It has high quality and a longer shelf-life. The flour is used to prepare cakes, snacks, bread, waffles, and other related bakery products. Also, *kocho* fortified with Garden cress powder, Moringa leaves powder, Chickpea flour, and special blend products are presented for the contest and received encouraging feedback from the juries and audiences.

What is new in that?

Traditionally prepared *kocho* paste has poor quality and very short shelf life, but the new food products (*kocho* flour) have high quality and much better sensory acceptance than the traditional prepared one. Moreover, the fortified *enset*-based food products are rich sources of protein, fiber, calcium, iron, zinc, folate, and other essential nutrients. These indigenous food products are ideal for malnourished children, pregnant and lactating women. (Continued to P9)



What is unique about it?

These food products are prepared using state-of-the-art fermentation technology and are free from food pathogenic and spoilage microorganisms, which is not the case in traditionally prepared *kocho* paste. Also, the flour is nutritious and safe food.

What is the problem that is addressed in your food innovation?

Traditionally, *enset* is processed using basic tools and fermented in a soil pit without the addition of well-defined starter culture. This resulted in a long fermentation time (usually >2 months), poor quality products, and high post-harvest loss (24 – 45%). Moreover, it was impossible to prepare the *kocho* flour from the food product. Hence, in our previous field and laboratory experiments, we managed to improve the traditional *enset* processing and fermentation systems using an innovative approach, which included: Developing standardized *enset* starter culture; introducing a new fermentation vessel to ferment *enset* and Developing user-friendly and cost-effective *enset* processing machines, by using these technologies, we managed to develop a new type of food product, which is *kocho* flour, and value-added food products (snacks, cakes, biscuits), and fortified *enset*-based foods.



What was the most challenging question from the judges?



The question about product certification took my attention, I wish, I had the product certificate at that moment.

What is your plan for the future concerning your innovation?

I already established a start-up company, that exclusively produces and sells *enset* based-value added products to the Ethiopian and East-African markets. Hopefully, the products will be on the market in February 2022.

Are you aspiring to do new food innovations in the future?

Sure, I will keep working on new food product innovation by focusing on indigenous foods and beverages.

What is your impression of the National Nutrition Research Conference as a whole and the food contest in particular?

The conference was well organized and exceeded my expectations. A very worthwhile experience. The first food innovation contest event was also an outstanding mind-opener! I hope that it will bring other innovators onboard.

You are the winner of the food innovation contest in the history of EPHI, how do you feel about it?

I am honored and humbled to become the first winner in the history of EPHI. Definitely, it will motivate me to scale it up and commercialize the food product to

Ethiopia and other East African Market.



Thank you EPHI for organizing such an inspirational event and for the recognition!



Please introduce yourself

My name is Hayat Hassen Mohammed. I work as a chief technical assistant, in Jimma University, Department of Post-harvest management. My educational background is in Food Science and Post-Harvest Management (BSc.) and specialized in Food Science and Technology (M.Sc.). I am hardworking, open minded, and ready to know and try new things. Thank you for considering me for this interview



Why did you want to apply for the food contest? Any specific reason?

As I work in a food laboratory I always think about new findings, saying “what will happen if I add this food with that?” this was my usual question. When I heard the announcement through E-mail I ask myself ‘why don’t I give it a try?’ because the contest will create a lot of chances to publicize my innovative ideas concerning foods.

What was your intention when you selected the topic?

Even if the idea of natural colorant is in my mind long before, I tried to give more attention to the selection criteria of contest organizers including; novelty, focus on indigenous food products, Considerations on ingredient selection, Contribution to nutritional challenges of the population, and ease of commercialization. Thus I found all the criteria in ‘naturally colored *‘Dabo Kollo’*.’

Tell us about your food innovation? What is new in that? What is unique about it?



My innovation food is entitled “Formulation of “*‘Dabo Kollo’*” using natural colorants: A double-edged sword approach to ensure food quality and safety.” *‘Dabo Kollo’* is one of the Ethiopian snack foods, which is made from wheat flour, sugar, oil, and water and marketed into various sizes, shapes, and colors to consumers. Most people add synthetic food colorants to *‘Dabo Kollo’* that are hazardous for human health, just to attract more consumers.

consumers.

The new formulated *‘Dabo Kollo’* is developed by using vegetable powder colorant (Ethiopian kale, pumpkin, beetroot, tomato, and carrot). The mentioned vegetables are a source of natural pigments (betalains, carotenoid, and chlorophyll) and important health-promoting vitamins and minerals (iron, folate, and beta carotene). Thus, substituting the synthetic colorant that has no food value with vegetable powder is a wise idea to enrich the *‘Dabo Kollo’* in micronutrients (vitamins and minerals).

Since the *‘Dabo Kollo’* is liked by both children and adults it can help to combat micronutrient deficiency among children and women. In addition, using natural food colorant is not only works for *‘Dabo Kollo’* but also for other snack products, like biscuits, cake, cookies, and other pasta and noodles. (Continued to P11)

What was the most challenging question from the judges?



I think the judges assume that my innovative food was already supported with experiments, methods, and models when formulated. The truth was the formulation was done considering the taste influence on the final product.

What is your plan for the future concerning your innovation?

The first thing that I want to do is formal research to see nutrient improvement and sensory acceptance. The scientific research will support my idea and help to reach the result to the scientific community. Then I

want to create awareness in society about the health implication of my product using various mass media. Finally, I wish to have my own business-oriented company which focuses on the production and marketing of such healthy snack products.

Are you aspiring to do new food innovations in the future?

Sure, I have a lot in mind. I am really glad to participate if such a contest is continued.

What is your impression of the National Nutrition Research Conference as a whole and the food contest in particular?

Wow, that was wonderful! The warm welcoming of the team, the cooperation of the contest organizing team, the important comments and appreciation from the judges, and even the audiences were very heartwarming. I also got a lot of ideas from the candidates which can help me for the next contest.



You are the second winner of the food innovation contest in the history of EPHI, how do you feel about it?

I am grateful and happy, that I won second place. Being a candidate among the five was also like a winner for me. Thank you!

Visit us on our Website
Website: www.nipn.ephi.gov.et

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