

Q&A Session: The Productive Safety Net Program and the Agri-Food System in Ethiopia

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Question	Answer
Is seasonality addressed in the evaluation?	Thank you for the question. Seasonality has multiple parts. Overall, the evaluation over the years did not take seasonality explicitly into account except to make data collection effort taking place at same time to minimize the impact of seasonality on the results. Food security is seasonal. Production is seasonal, markets are not very well integrated, as a result production conditions consumption significantly that introduces seasonality. There are religious and other practices which of course influences all this. We have one important study, supported by Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, led by Kalle Hirvonen and Guush Berhane from IFPRI, which is looks at the impact of seasonality on PSNP and nutritional outcomes. The discovery is interesting in that child nutrition outcomes are reflected in seasonality. They discovered that animal source food consumption and diet diversity was better in August than March. This is surprising as March is post-harvest, and we would expect better outcomes then.
What is the reasoning for the problematic targeting in the lowlands?	Targeting in lowlands is complicated. The basic fact is that the poor or most vulnerable do not have significantly higher likelihood than the less vulnerable ones, even richer ones. This reflects perceptions and understanding of how assistance should be allocated and the role of influential members of community. Overall capacity challenges in terms of implementation were also observed although significant effort was made by federal and regional governments through training, follow-up and so on, but the problem persist. The final evaluation which is going on right now and we will soon see if and how this changed.
What could be the reason for the little change in children nutritional status and no change in mothers' knowledge? How do you see integration of nutrition response with PSNP in this regard?	The PNSP 4 tried to cover this knowledge gap of mothers. However, education levels are rather low, so nutrition knowledge is also low. The interaction between mothers and health extension workers are limited. There may be some improvements, but the implementation of nutrition-sensitive interventions according to study by IFPRI, is not encouraging, it is still weak. Thirdly, the information that mothers have on good feeding practices and hygiene are not expanding fast enough. These are related phenomena and solutions will occur, especially as we go into the new PSNP 5, but we will see more about this in the end line evaluation we are currently conducting.
Despite the program taking millions out of poverty, what do you see the dependency syndrome be in many cases?	There is a perception, broadly shared, that the PSNP has produced a dependency syndrome. However, there is very little systematic evidence of that. Our studies suggest that the disincentive effects are not occurring. Beneficiaries do not refrain from supplying labor or sending kids to school because of the PSNP. Non-government transfers have not been modified. The caveat, mentioned in the presentation, is that these studies are dated now, so it is important to relook at these questions with newer datasets. We are

	planning this in the next few months, but overall, there was no systematic evidence showing dependency syndrome.
Can you describe how the food gap is used as a measure of food security? I would like to know how this is different from other access scales such as food insecurity experience scale?	Thank you for the question. To remind everyone, the definition of the food gap is the number of months that a household finds it difficult to satisfy their food needs. The food gap is a respondents' assessment. It is simple to administer and easy to understand. There are more complex indicators as the one mentioned in the question, but they are harder to implement, particularly the validation is an issue. We have used some of them in the past and found difficulty in administering them. The program itself has identified the food gap as a measure of food insecurity. It is closely correlated with other measures of food insecurity such as food consumption.
What is your one key take home message for our nutrition stakeholders?	A lot can be said, but one thing I want to leave audience with is there is no magic bullet to solve the nutrition challenge and we should stop looking for one. Instead, we should be prepared and continue to provide multiple interventions that address the multiple constraints that cause the problems, and these need to be sustain overtime, such as social protection, education income growth. All must be sustained overtime, and only then can problem be solved.
Theodros Hailemariam, Nutrition Lead, National PSNP	
Question	Answer
Is there any mechanism of modality added to increase program quality? What is new on output 5 TDS compared to PSNP 4.	The new modality to increase the quality of the program in PSNP 5 is that the system is being modernized. For instance, with introduction of Management Information System (MIS), it will capture the planning, implementation, and reporting of the PSNP and it also includes a knowledge management component. As part of Output 3 there is also a mapped database, a digitized system which is developed for PSNP 5. One of the challenges with quality is that everything is paper-based, and that targeting was not always consistent (some targeted clients were not eligible, some eligible clients were excluded etc.). But now the registration is being conducted to identify every PSNP household. The registration uses a biometric type of registration to avoid duplication of efforts by projects and to improve targeting. Output 4 is temporary direct support (TDS). TDS clients now treated as independent, with budgets, different institutional sectors, so this is new for output 4. TDS and PDS now treated as standalone outputs and cross cutting.
How can people access the PSNP 5 document?	I can share the program agreement, design, and implementation documents. I will share with the NIPN to include on their website.
Are public works (PW) at individual level or household level or both?	PW in the PSNP is at individual level. The household is targeted but only able-bodied individuals above 18, will participate in PW. For instance, children (below 18 years old), people above 60, pregnant and lactating women, are exempt. The latter will rejoin when their children reach the age of two years.
What is your one key take home message for our nutrition stakeholders?	The PSNP is an opportunity to mainstream nutrition, food security, social projection, nutrition-sensitive interventions. We ask all partners, development partners, the private sector, the public sector to work

	with the PSNP 5. Secondly, is to strengthen institutional collaboration to ensure accountability. Nutrition is a multisectoral thematic area and it needs the engagement of multiple groups.
Dr. Filippo Dibari, Nutrition Team Leader, World Food Program, Ethiopia.	
Question	Answer
72% of the diet cannot afford by households. What mechanism did you follow to alleviate this situation?	72% of population in those woredas cannot afford the cost of nutritious diet. We looked at what are existing platforms from government we could use? The best platform was the PSNP. However, the PSNP is looking at certain commodities, not the ones providing the nutrient dense elements, such as micronutrients, vitamins. There are home garden activities of course. We are looking at the most vulnerable and using the platform of PSNP for kilocalories, and to top-up the PSNP with a voucher for what is missing. These are micronutrients and vitamins in the shape of vegetables and eggs. There is currently a discussion amongst colleagues in the government to see if we should change the name (Fresh Food Voucher) as we are not only including fresh produce but also other types of products. For instance, UNICEF has asked to look at egg powder, which will be produced here in Ethiopia.
What is next after the pilot of the Fresh Food Voucher? What is sustainability model you envision to use?	Thank you for this question as you give me the chance to share what was happening in 2020 and now in 2021. Jointly with Seqota Declaration, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and IFPRI, WFP designed a large program looking at the entire food systems approach. It is looking at how to support more PSNP 5 households in the production of nutrient dense foods. This also includes Ministry of Horticulture who requested to sign an MOU with WFP. Then, the program will also look at expanding of the Fresh Food Voucher approach to the entire Seqota Declaration geographical area, topping up on the PSNP transfer. IFPRI also showed interest to be custodian of the lessons learned component of this new program.
What is your one key take home message for our nutrition stakeholders?	I will say only four words: sustainability healthy food systems. This is the way forward. I call on all colleagues to please engage with the Ethiopian food system transformative process. This is the chance for PSNP 5 to shine in action track number 5 of the food system, which is looking at resilience. That is the way forward - the Ethiopian food system needs to be healthy and nutritious.