



SECURING
WOMEN'S
RESOURCE RIGHTS
THROUGH GENDER
TRANSFORMATIVE
APPROACHES

**LIFAD**
Investing in rural people

Country Virtual Learning Exchange Workshop Series

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Insights from

BANGLADESH



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ABOUT THE INITIATIVE

SECURING WOMEN'S RESOURCE RIGHTS THROUGH GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACHES

In 2020, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) invited a consortium of the Center for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry (CIFOR-ICRAF), the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the Alliance of Bioversity International and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) to work with selected IFAD projects to promote and strengthen women's land rights through the integration of gender transformative approaches (GTAs) in rural development interventions by improving policies, tools and practices.

<https://www.cifor-icraf.org/wlr>

https://www.ifad.org/en/gender_transformative_approaches

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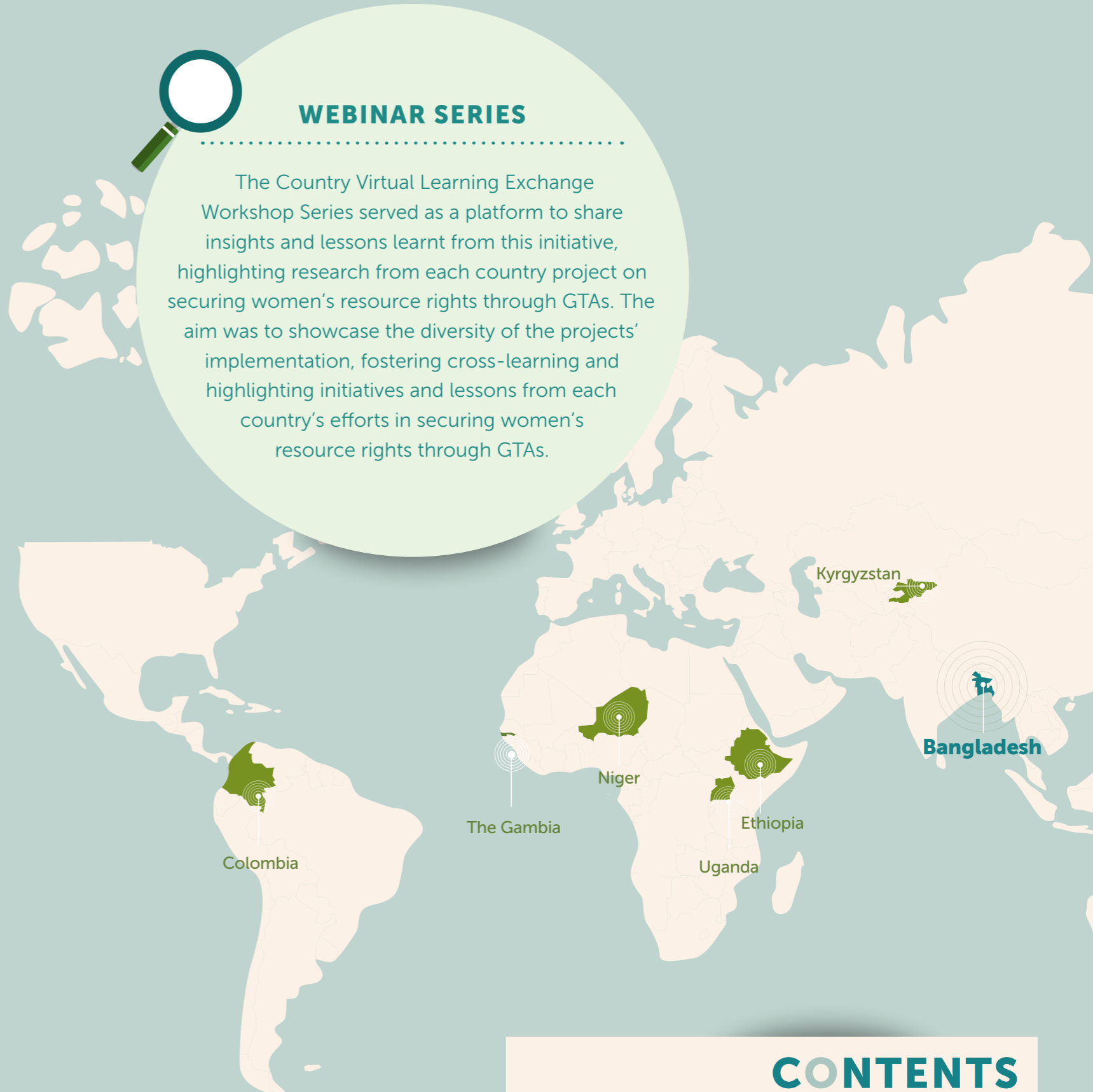
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WEBINAR SERIES

The Country Virtual Learning Exchange Workshop Series served as a platform to share insights and lessons learnt from this initiative, highlighting research from each country project on securing women's resource rights through GTAs. The aim was to showcase the diversity of the projects' implementation, fostering cross-learning and highlighting initiatives and lessons from each country's efforts in securing women's resource rights through GTAs.



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Webinar overview

Key discussions revolved around the gender analysis within the Char Development and Settlement Project (CDSP), its findings, and the co-creation process for GTAs, leading to the development and piloting of a toolkit to address gender biases in project implementation. Testimonials underscored the toolkit's utility and the transformative potential of GTAs in project activities. Looking ahead, IFAD reiterated its commitment to supporting ongoing projects and fostering collaborative learning for gender equality and women's empowerment in rural Bangladesh.

OPENING SPEAKERS



Marie Parramon-Gurney
Event Facilitator



Rilla Kirk
IFAD Bangladesh Programme Manager

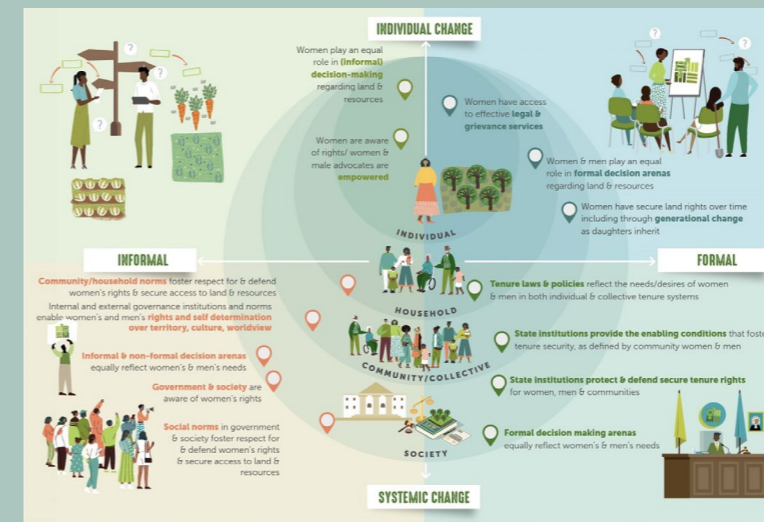


Elisabeth Garner
CIFOR ICRAF's Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) Lead & Scientist

Background and gender analysis

Rilla Kirk, IFAD Bangladesh Programme Manager, welcomed participants to the webinar, emphasizing the critical importance of securing women's resource rights through Gender Transformative Approaches (GTAs). Kirk highlighted IFAD's commitment to fostering gender equality in smallholder agriculture and outlined the organization's approach to moving projects along the gender equality continuum. Drawing on experiences from the CDSP land titling initiative, Kirk underscored the need to navigate social norms and attitudes shaping gender dynamics in project interventions. Kirk's call to action urged participants to lead by example in fostering inclusive environments conducive to personal and institutional transformation, setting a tone of urgency and possibility for collective action towards genuine gender transformation.

Elisabeth Garner, CIFOR ICRAF's Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) Lead & Scientist, provided insights into the Bangladesh Initiative and the gender analysis conducted as part of the project. A brief was produced discussing the team's understanding of GTAs in relation to land and resource rights through the Gender @ Work framework. GTAs were defined as strategies to address underlying structural causes of gender inequalities and to change power relations across multiple levels. The approach prioritized local leadership, adaptability, recognition of multiple forms of discrimination, and facilitation of trust, ownership, visioning, and critical reflection.



The project chosen for the Global initiative was the Char Development and Settlement Project (CDSP). Originally an infrastructure project starting in the late 70s, CDSP has evolved to become a comprehensive and integrated approach to uplift the livelihoods of impoverished communities residing on recently formed coastal islands, locally referred to as chars. This land is a critical resource in Bangladesh, one of the most densely populated countries in the world. The project was strategically designed to address the multifaceted challenges faced by these vulnerable populations and has mainstreamed gender throughout all the activities, with an emphasis on women's participation in field level institutions (FLIs) as well as decision-making and responsive infrastructure.

A key focus of CDSP is to provide legal, dual title khas (public) land to married couples where wives' names are listed first and husbands and wives each own 50% ("50:50 titling"). Notably, the initiative places a special emphasis on distributing land to and reaching the most disadvantaged members, particularly landless households, and abandoned, divorced, or widowed women.

As a first step, a socio-legal and gender analysis were conducted within the CDSP project area, which gave insight to the broader contextual landscape:

<p>01</p> <p>Legal Framework and International Commitments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bangladesh has ratified international agreements safeguarding women's rights, reflected in its constitution. Noteworthy representation of women in government at multiple levels underscores commitment to gender inclusion. 	<p>02</p> <p>Land Ownership Dynamics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inheritance emerges as the primary mode of land acquisition. Women own land in only 34% of households, highlighting gender disparities in property ownership. 	<p>03</p> <p>Socio-Cultural Barriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Societal norms and expectations constrain women's agency, particularly in public spheres. Disproportionate barriers to mobility hinder women's participation and empowerment.
<p>04</p> <p>Policy Initiatives and Legal Reforms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Khas Land Distribution Policy (1997) aims to address landlessness through joint ownership arrangements. However, persistent gender biases in addition to inheritance laws pose challenges to sustainable equitable land distribution. 	<p>05</p> <p>Religious Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inheritance of khas lands is regulated by Personal laws, or codified religious texts. The majority are Muslim followed by Hindu. While Muslim law permits daughters to inherit land, this share is smaller than those of sons. Conversely, Hindu law prohibits women from land ownership altogether. 	<p>06</p> <p>Transformative Potential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research highlights the transformative impact of women's empowerment on poverty alleviation and nutritional outcomes. Legal reforms and governance efforts must be complemented by sustained initiatives to dismantle systemic barriers and foster gender equity.

The gender analysis further revealed both direct and indirect implications of interventions on women's land tenure, as well as challenging inheritance dynamics:

Co-creation process for GTAs

In a collaborative workshop involving CDSP tech staff, NGO partners, and IFAD representatives, the co-creation process for Gender Transformative Approaches (GTAs) aimed to identify gaps and opportunities for gender equality integration. Opportunities emerged at three levels: Systems, emphasizing training and integration into project activities; Community, focusing on engaging men, boys, and youth as allies; and Individual, targeting capacity building for women in agri-tech, entrepreneurship, and land resource management to enhance empowerment and access.



Directly the project has increased land titling for women and improved awareness of land rights among women and men. However, social norms continued to hinder women's exercise of land rights, contributing to their limited decision-making power and vulnerability in land-related disputes.



Indirectly, formal titling has reduced land conflicts and unlawful evictions but also underscored persistent challenges in addressing normative barriers to women's land ownership. While women's participation and mobility were gradually increasing, gender-based violence and unequal inheritance practices remained significant concerns.



Inheritance dynamics:

- Inheritance rights for daughters are determined by national law and religious norms, often resulting in unequal treatment.
- Despite maternal advocacy for daughters' inheritance, fathers remain decision makers and are often resistant.
- Daughters frequently forfeit land inheritance to preserve familial relationships, prioritizing social cohesion over individual ownership rights.



Policy implications stemming from the Khas land distribution policy amendment were also discussed. The proposed reduction in land allocation from 1.5 acres to 0.5 acres raised concerns about women's diminished access to land, potential exacerbation of gender inequalities, and adverse effects on food security and nutrition outcomes. **Karim Rizoul** from CDSP highlighted the significance of land scarcity in Bangladesh, exacerbated by high population growth and annual land loss due to erosion. Efforts were underway to advocate for reinstating the original 1.5-hectare ownership rights, particularly in coastal regions.



Karim Rizoul
CDSP

Overall, the gender analysis underscored the complex interplay between legal frameworks, social norms, and project interventions in shaping women's land tenure in Bangladesh. Despite progress in formal land titling and awareness-raising, entrenched gender inequalities persisted, necessitating addressing the root causes and barriers to ensure equitable access to land and resources for women.

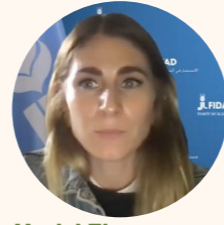
CO-CREATION WORKSHOP



Visioning of transformative change regarding the social norms of women's engagement with land

Designed the GTA tools that respond to the opportunities identified by the Gender Analysis and fit with the CDSP activities and schedule

Planned for how those tools could be integrated and implemented, including identifying **potential barriers, resources and support**



Mariel Zimmerman,
IFAD

To ensure sustainability beyond the CDSP project, **Mariel Zimmerman** emphasized efforts were directed towards expanding knowledge dissemination to encompass other IFAD-funded agricultural projects with relevance to gender biases and GTAs. Recognising the importance of field staff engagement, initiatives were designed to include individuals working directly with target beneficiaries, such as engineers, thereby enhancing their capacity to understand and address community needs effectively. These considerations guided the shaping of the pilot project, aiming for broader and long-term impact.

GTAs toolkit

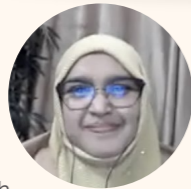
A toolkit was developed that adapted community dialogue tools to address gender biases and norms impacting project implementation. Tools included the **Gender Position Bar, Challenge Tree, Walk of Privilege,** and **Theatre Drama.**

Following the toolkit's design, a two-day training workshop engaged participants from all four projects, who then implemented the toolkit within their respective project teams. Led mainly by focal gender points with support from project management units, CDSP extended toolkit usage to the field level, allowing projects to tailor implementations to their objectives, budget, and time constraints. Feedback from a December 2023 workshop highlighted appreciation for the interactive gender discussions, increased interest in Gender Transformative Approaches (GTAs), and enhanced staff engagement with gender issues. Reflections emphasized the importance of early activity integration into project design, prioritizing gender equality, and the need for skilled trainers and user-friendly tools for effective GTA implementation.

PILOT APPROACH TESTIMONIALS

- 1 What are the activities that your project is already implementing to address pro-actively gender biases and develop a common vision for GTAs?
- 2 How did you use the toolkit, how useful was it, what did you learn from it?
- 3 Based on your insights from using the toolkit, what did it change/what will it change in your approach and what are your next steps?

DR. JANNATUI NAIM,
Gender and Nutrition CDSP-B:



- 1 Our CDSP project actively addresses gender biases through activities such as providing women with 50% ownership of land and ensuring their participation in various field institutions.
- 2 The toolkit facilitated community dialogues and training sessions, proving valuable in engaging diverse stakeholders and fostering understanding of gender issues.
- 3 Moving forward, we plan to integrate the toolkit across all project activities and orient stakeholders at different levels, including partner NGOs and field institutions.

LIPI AKTER,
Gender Social Inclusion Officer RMPT/PKSF:



- 1 The RMPT project focuses on engaging women in various sectors and addressing gender norms.
- 2 The toolkit provided valuable insights and tools to rethink project approaches and envision gender transformative interventions.
- 3 Our next steps involve simplifying the toolkit language and processes to enhance accessibility and applicability in the field.

ROWNOK JAHAN,
GSIA PROVti3:



- 1 PROVti3 engages in multiple activities to address gender biases, including engaging women in traditionally male-dominated sectors.
- 2 The toolkit's tools were found useful for training sessions and analysing project approaches from a gender perspective.
- 3 We plan to incorporate additional toolkit tools into our training projects and vocational training to deepen understanding of gender issues among youth.

LUTFUN NAHAR,
Gender Social Inclusion and Nutrition Specialist, SACP:



- 1 Our project focuses on transforming gender power dynamics through various components, including women's empowerment in agriculture.
- 2 The toolkit facilitated dialogue and provided tools to identify gender biases and envision transformative interventions.
- 3 We plan to implement digital training for women and revise the toolkit for greater accessibility and relevance.



Lutfun Nahar
Gender Social Inclusion and
Nutrition Specialist, SACP



Lipi Akter
Gender Social Inclusion Officer
RMPT/PKSF

Next steps for projects

Following the toolkit evaluation, speakers outlined the next steps for their projects, emphasizing a more comprehensive to capacity building and skill development. **Lutfun Nahar** highlighted plans for digital training initiatives targeting women engaged in farm activities, aiming to enhance their technical skills and entrepreneurial capabilities. Meanwhile, **Lipi Akter** underscored the importance of refining the toolkit to ensure broader applicability and user-friendliness across diverse project contexts. These forward-looking strategies underscored a commitment to continuous learning and innovation in advancing women's resource rights through GTAs.



Farhana Urmee
Communication and KM
Advisor at IFAD Bangladesh

IFAD's continued support

Farhana Urmee, Communication and KM Advisor at IFAD Bangladesh, articulated IFAD's ongoing commitment to supporting projects in their journey towards gender equality and social inclusion. From capacity building initiatives to knowledge sharing platforms, IFAD sought to empower project teams with the tools and resources needed to drive sustainable change. The emphasis on strategic partnerships and collaborative learning underscored IFAD's holistic approach to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in Bangladesh's rural communities.



INITIATIVE CONSORTIUM



The Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and World Agroforestry (ICRAF) envision a more equitable world where trees in all landscapes, from drylands to the humid tropics, enhance the environment and well-being for all. CIFOR and ICRAF are CGIAR Research Centers.



Climate change, biodiversity loss, environmental degradation, and malnutrition. These four interconnected global crises have put at stake the wellbeing of our planet for years. Fueled by COVID-19, their impact on agriculture, landscapes, biodiversity, and humans is now stronger than ever. Reversing this negative trend is a challenge, but also an opportunity for bold choices and integrated solutions. Established in 2019, the Alliance of Bioversity International and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) was created to address these four crises, maximizing impact for change at key points in the food system.



The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) provides research-based policy solutions to sustainably reduce poverty and end hunger and malnutrition in developing countries. Established in 1975, IFPRI currently has more than 600 employees working in over 50 countries. It is a research center of CGIAR, a worldwide partnership engaged in agricultural research for development.

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