

Informing Development Strategies in Latin America and the Caribbean

Outcomes of IFPRI's Policy Research and Partnerships in the Latin America and Caribbean Region



For more than three decades, the International Food Policy Research Institute's (IFPRI) research and collaborations in the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region have produced rigorous evidence leading to innovative market and trade policies and effective social protection and nutritional programs. In the 1980s and 1990s, IFPRI's research in the region centered on global and regional issues, particularly on the role of market and trade policies in increasing agricultural productivity. By the mid-1990s, IFPRI's work expanded to provide direct support to national and local governments and stakeholders to help them tackle the challenges affecting the well-being and livelihoods of the poor.

Notable work between the mid-1990s and 2010s include the rigorous evaluations of social protection and nutrition programs. In **Brazil**, **Mexico**, and **Nicaragua**, IFPRI's evidence-based results helped policymakers make program improvements that enhanced the welfare of millions of poor people.

The global strategy for addressing undernutrition was influenced by IFPRI's trailblazing work in LAC. One of IFPRI's **earliest nutrition research projects**, conducted in Haiti, produced robust evidence that a preventative approach (giving nutritional interventions to children under two years before they become undernourished) was most successful at reducing stunting and wasting. A **long-term study** in Guatemala provided the first direct evidence that investments in child nutrition before the age of two yield high returns in adulthood—increasing men's wages by 46 percent and raising women's educational completion level by one to two grades. Both findings in Haiti and Guatemala helped convince the global nutrition

community, including the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement, to adopt a child's first 1,000 days as the critical window of opportunity for improving nutrition. Further, IFPRI's nutrition work helped significantly lower stunting and anemia in LAC. The Programa Comunitario Materno Infantil de Diversificación Alimentaria (PROCOMIDA) in Guatemala, which IFPRI co-designed, reduced child stunting by 10 percentage points, and IFPRI's **Happy Faces** program in Peru decreased anemia in adolescents by 50 percent.

IFPRI's longstanding collaborations in LAC enhanced policy makers' access to rigorous evidence and credible information to develop strategic policies and investments. In partnership with the Peruvian Ministry of Economy and Finance, IFPRI created a groundbreaking typology that ranks development projects based on their risks, potential impact on poverty, and costs by region. The typology was integrated into the National System of Public Investment during the 2015-16 budget planning process and was used to target and prioritize about US\$1 billion of public expenditure in rural development projects.

IFPRI has contributed to positive changes in the region for more than 30 years, including partnering to enhance the culture of accountability and generating robust evidence that has strengthened resilience, improved nutrition, and prompted strategic policies and investments. Motivated to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in the face of continued poverty, malnutrition, economic inequality, climate change, and inadequate public investments in agriculture, IFPRI will continue to build on its work to accelerate progress to sustainably reduce poverty and end hunger and malnutrition in LAC.

INTERNATIONAL FOOD POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE (IFPRI)

A world free of hunger and malnutrition

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