
NEWS

Acute Food Insecurity Spreads Across Africa: 2021 Global Report on Food Crisis

As in previous years, conflict, economic shocks, and extreme weather events formed the main drivers of food crises across Africa South of the Sahara. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing food security challenges in many countries. According to the [2021 Global Report on Food Crisis](#), the number of people around the world facing severe food insecurity skyrocketed by 20 million in 2020. Acute food insecurity now affects at least 155 million people across 55 countries/territories, with some regions facing famine-level hunger. Of the 10 worse food crises identified by the report, six were in Africa (the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, northern Nigeria, Ethiopia, South Sudan, and Zimbabwe).

As summarized [here](#), the 2021 GRFC highlights the need for urgent, coordinated efforts to address all the drivers of food insecurity. This includes strengthening and transforming global, regional, and local food systems to be more inclusive and sustainable, and enhancing resilience to future shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic. Only by recognizing how conflict, extreme weather, and economic shocks reinforce one another and tackling these factors in tandem can we get back on track to achieving the SDG goal of zero hunger.

African Vegetable Value Chains and the COVID-19 Pandemic

Health and safety measures imposed to contain the spread of COVID-19 resulted in disruptions in food marketing systems in most countries. Two recent studies examined the impact of the pandemic in vegetable value chains. In [Ethiopia](#), based on primary data collected just before the start and a few months into the pandemic, the authors assessed the changes in farm and consumers prices of four major vegetables. The authors found large, but heterogeneous, price changes for different vegetables with relatively larger changes at the farm level, leading to winners and losers among local vegetable farmers due to pandemic-related trade disruptions. In [Senegal](#), using trade statistics and survey data collected through online questionnaires and telephone interviews, the authors examined the early impact of the pandemic on the fruit and vegetable supply chain. They found major differences in how COVID-19 and containment measures disrupt supply chains between the modern export-oriented supply chain and the more traditional domestic-oriented supply chains, with the former showing more resilience to the COVID-19 shock. They found that both modern and traditional supply chains innovate to cope with the containment measures.

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