



## News from A4NH

### FOCUS: Vietnam

#### A Note from the Director

The first half of 2020 has been dramatically different than anything anyone could have anticipated. COVID-19 origins, responses and future recovery and resilience are topics central to A4NH. The pandemic also highlights the need for continued emphasis on food and nutrition security, food system transformation, and One Health. Also clear from the initial impacts of COVID are the importance of equity and deliberate actions for supporting inclusive food systems transformation. A4NH researchers and their many partners in Vietnam and around the world have been working hard to address these development challenges, with an eye toward determining how to build back better from the COVID-19 pandemic. We are pleased to bring you recent highlights of that work.

*John McDermott, Director, A4NH*

#### Update: A4NH Project on Efforts to Contribute to Vietnam's Zero Hunger National Program for SDG 2

Under [A4NH](#), the Entry points to Advance Transitions towards Sustainable diets (EATS) project and the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT continue to participate in the Zero Hunger technical group and have contributed to building up guidelines for applying a nutrition-sensitive approach to the Zero Hunger National Action Program in Vietnam for the period from 2020 to 2025. In addition, Tuyen Huynh, A4NH Country Coordinator for Vietnam and Research Associate at the Alliance, is a member of the Appraisal Committee for training materials for the Zero Hunger National Action Program, enabling A4NH and its food systems research products to inform the policy making process on nutrition-sensitive work in Vietnam. *Learn more:*

<https://a4nh.cgiar.org/files/2020/05/FSHD-in-Vietnam-May-2020-update.pdf>

#### COVID-19 and Transformations in Food Safety

A4NH researchers at ILRI working on interventions through the SafePork project have been studying how [COVID-19 can spur transformations in food safety in traditional Vietnamese pork value chains](#). The timing of the interventions coincides with the COVID-19 pandemic, providing opportunities to enhance learning through existing studies. Current evidence indicates that coronavirus is transmitted through respiratory droplets or contact. Consequently, hand hygiene, as currently promoted by SafePORK, is extremely important to prevent the spread of coronavirus, while also interrupting transmission of other viruses and bacteria. The crisis has offered opportunities to enhance compliance of engaged actors for better hygiene practices in the pork chains.

The pandemic has brought additional interest in A4NH work on food safety, zoonoses, and One Health, among other topics. Hung Nguyen, co-leader of the Animal and Human Health program at ILRI and A4NH's Flagship Leader on Food Safety, [was interviewed on VTC14, a Vietnamese national media outlet](#), on the current situation of zoonotic diseases and how a One Health approach could help better control these diseases.

#### Research Partnership for Data and Information Sharing on Food Systems to Achieve SDG 2 Vietnam

More than fifty representatives from government agencies, research organizations, academia and local partners participated in the ["Data gaps for interdisciplinary collaborations to contribute to SDG 2 Monitoring and Evaluation in Vietnam"](#) workshop held by the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, the A4NH-supported EATS project, the [Vietnam General Statistics Office](#) (GSO), and the Zero Hunger Office, on 18 June 2020. The workshop generated ideas from multiple stakeholders about opportunities for interdisciplinary institutional collaborations and research and data gaps related to sustainable food systems, as well as tools and platforms for monitoring SDG2 in Vietnam.

## Food Systems Profiles at A4NH Benchmark Sites Along Rural-Urban Transect

Following the successful implementation of the [Partial Food Systems Baseline Assessment at the Vietnam Benchmark Sites](#) by A4NH in 2018, the food systems profile is a visualized and collaborative product led by A4NH researchers in partnership with local authorities to provide a synopsis of the different food systems. The final profiles of the three benchmark sites, in English and Vietnamese, were validated in [three workshops](#) and will be published by A4NH in 2020. Building on this work, the policy engagement process will continue through October 2020, with local authorities at the three sites to prioritize local food systems issues and identify possible demand-based actions and interventions.

## Increasing Fruit and Vegetable Intake of Low-Income Populations in Vietnam through Food Systems Innovations

Following a series of baseline studies in 2019, [the pilot studies are now aiming](#) to increase fruit and vegetable accessibility, affordability and desirability are being co-designed with local stakeholders and implemented in 2020. In addition, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, a short survey about the effect of the pandemic on retailers at projects sites was carried out in May 2020. Data analysis is in progress and will be shared on the A4NH website in 2020.

## The Agroecology and Safe Food Systems Transitions (ASSET) Project

Launched in July 2020, ASSET is [a five-year project](#) aiming to transform the Agro-ecology Learning alliance in South East Asia (ALiSEA) platform into a knowledge hub synergizing stakeholder engagement and initiatives to achieve ASSET up to the regional level. A consortium agreement between CIAT, CIRAD, ILRI and project partners has been signed and activities are expected to soon be under way.

## Update from the Field: Seed Systems Characterization

The project [“Integrated vegetable seed systems development among ethnic minority communities in Northern Vietnam for enhanced nutrition and income security”](#) finished collecting data for its seed systems characterization study in Sa Pa township (Lao Cai province) and Mai Son district (Son La province). The study aims to “take the pulse of the seed system” at the project sites and identify opportunities to improve nutrition and income through system interventions. Led by the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT with

support from the [Fruit and Vegetable Research Institute](#), the data collection process first involved nutrition, vegetable production and seed related aspects. The final phase, conducted from June 30 to July 10, focused specifically on priority crops for nutrition and income. Insights gained from this final step will help inform the selection and design of interventions the project will implement in the coming months.

## New Brief Details Drivers of Stunting Reduction in Vietnam

The Vietnam Story of Change in Nutrition study aims to understand the history, contemporary treatment, and future of nutrition in Vietnam, including policy and practice in relation to undernutrition with a focus on equity for Vietnam’s 53 ethnic minority groups. [A new brief](#) aims to highlight the main findings and give recommendations on how to tackle the remaining pockets of high malnutrition in Vietnam.

## More News from A4NH

- **CGIAR Announces COVID-19 Hub to be Housed in A4NH**  
[The Hub, launched June 23](#), provides a coordinated research response to the global pandemic threatening health systems worldwide, along with posing serious risks to food security; local businesses and national economies; and hard-fought progress by stakeholders at all levels toward the SDGs. Convening researchers, funders, and key stakeholders, the Hub focuses on supporting national response and recovery work across CGIAR research themes, harnessing knowledge for **emergency response, recovery, and resilience**.
- **A4NH Releases 2019 Annual Report**  
[The report, released in late May](#), highlights program activities and accomplishments from across A4NH’s portfolio of five research flagships, cross-cutting work on gender and equity, and the partnerships through which research has led to outcomes in five focus and more than two dozen other countries.
- **Scoping Review Supported by A4NH Explores Equity and Governance Research**  
[The literature review](#) examined how governance and equity have come together in agriculture, nutrition, and health research over time, with an eye toward identifying what topics have not been studied, to identify recommendations for strengthening research moving forward.