

Research Priorities for Drivers of Food Choice

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DFC Grantees and their research teams



Drivers of Food Choice
Competitive Grants Program

BILL & MELINDA
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Foreign, Commonwealth
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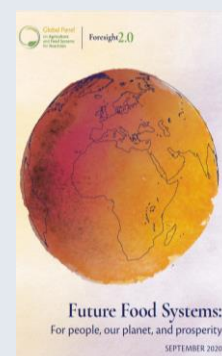
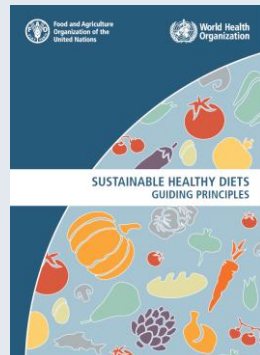
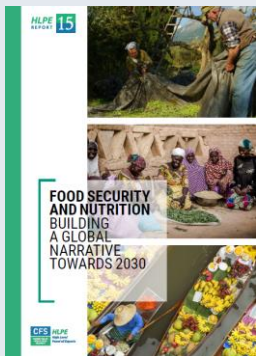


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Goal to transform food systems for human and planetary health

- “Sustainable healthy diets are accessible, affordable, safe, equitable, and culturally acceptable dietary patterns that are health-promoting and have a low environmental footprint” (FAO & WHO, 2019)
- “Make food environments more supportive of healthy and sustainable food choices” (IFPRI, 2022)
- Ability to increase demand for sustainable healthy diets hindered by limited understanding of relationships between food environments and food choice
- Understanding individual food choice and the net aggregate—which constitutes demand—is foundational for any attempt to reshape food systems to meet climate, environmental, or food and nutrition security goals



What is Food Choice?

Food choice encompasses the processes by which individuals and households decide

- What, how, and why to acquire, store, prepare, distribute, and consume



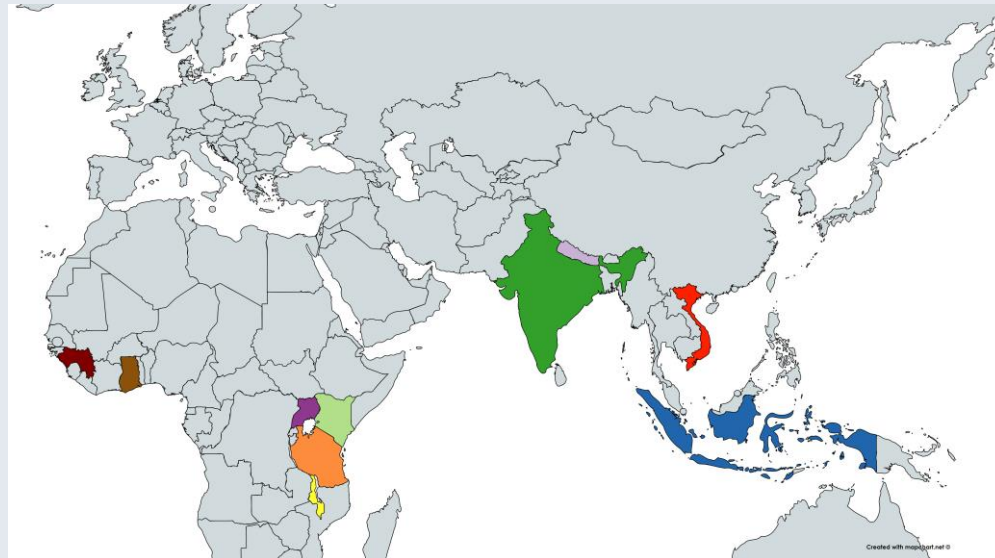
Rapidly Changing Food Environments



- Transformation is broad
 - Not just urban middle class
- More foods are
 - Purchased
 - Perishable
 - Processed
 - Prepared
- Urbanization

Drivers of Food Choice (DFC) Competitive Grants Program

- Facilitate, synthesize and disseminate research to provide a deep understanding of the drivers of food choice among the poor in developing countries in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa



Physical and Economic
context of the
Food Environment

WHAT?

Dietary intake

Political and Socio-cultural
context of the
Food Environment

HOW?

Food Choice Behavior

Acquire, Store, Prepare, Distribute, and Consume

WHY?

Drivers of Food Choice

Availability and Accessibility, Prices and Affordability, Vendor and product properties, Marketing regulation, Convenience and Time,

Preferences and Desirability, Nutrition and Health, Food Safety and Trust,

Social and cultural influence, Tradition, Gender Dynamics, Livelihoods

Decision-making: Unconscious, Routine, Habit, Value negotiations and Trade-offs

Key Learnings from DFC: Drivers of Food Choice in LMIC

Food Environment Drivers of Food Choice

- Availability
- Prices
- Vendor and Product properties
- Marketing and Regulation

Personal Drivers of Food Choice that Shape Interactions with the Food Environment

- Accessibility
- Affordability
- Convenience and Time
- Preferences and Desirability
- Nutrition and Health
- Perspectives on Food Safety and Trust

Social and Cultural Drivers of Food Choice that Shape Food Environments

- Social and Cultural Values
- Food Traditions: Foods, Dishes, Customs
- Gender Dynamics
- Stability (e.g., Income, Climactic Variables, Politics)
- Changing Livelihoods



Perspectives on Food Safety and Trust

- Concerns
 - Food hygiene—influences decisions about where to eat
 - Food adulteration and contamination
 - Environmental sanitation
- Assurances
 - Trust built with food vendors
 - Meals prepared at home
 - Policies and regulations
- Food safety valued over cost

<https://driversoffoodchoice.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/DFC-Food-Safety-Brief-Final-1.pdf>
<https://www.unscn.org/uploads/web/news/UNSCN-Nutrition44-WEB.pdf>

Wertheim-Heck et. al, 2019; Raneri and Wertheim-Heck, 2019; Zhang et. al., 2020; Patil et. al, 2020; Dominguez-Salas et. al., 2019; Isanovic et. al., 2022

Social and Cultural Values

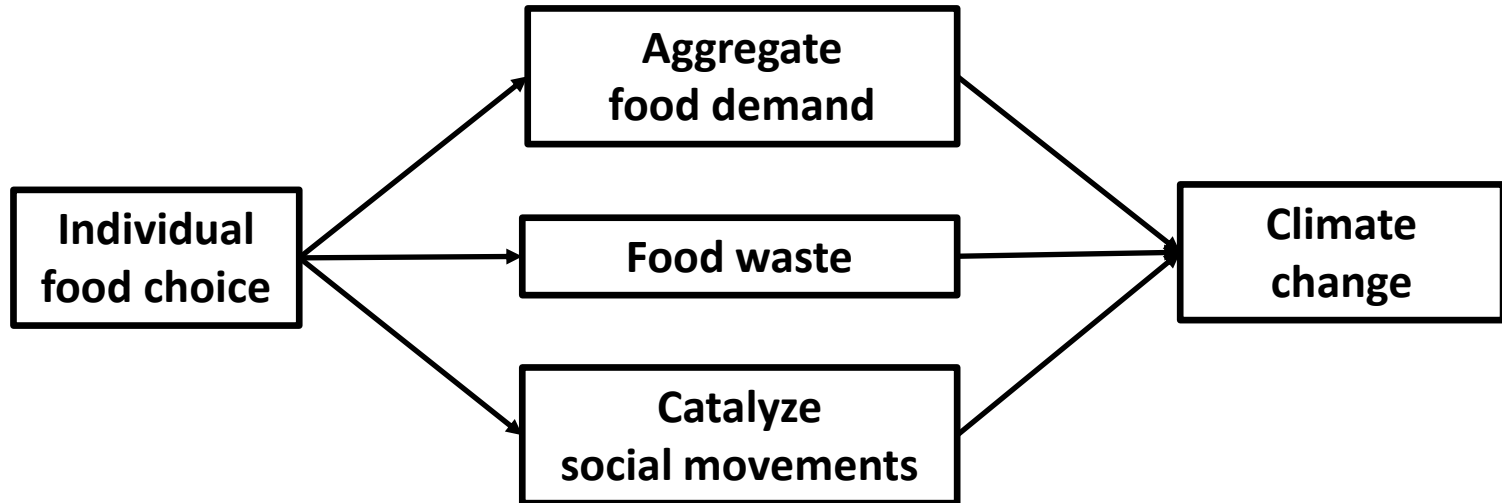
- Food choice thought to be driven by considerations
 - Cost, Taste, Convenience, Health
- Basic values rooted in cultural context shape how considerations defined and negotiated
 - Acceptable Cost (price, value)
 - Desired Taste (flavor, texture, preferences, social status)
 - Degree of convenient (time, access, packaging)
 - Aspect of Health (individual, environment)
- Changes in social, cultural, and environmental contexts alter basic values with implications for demand
 - E.g., climate, livelihoods, food environments, communications, technology, and politics
- Understanding basic values in context is important for aligning policies and interventions for successful promotion of sustainable healthy diets



Changing Livelihoods

- Climate, environmental, geopolitical, and sociocultural pressures changing how and where people work and live
- Need to understand mechanism for how changing livelihoods impact food choice behavior
- For example, changes in...
 - **Occupation and Locality**
 - → Alter how food produced and acquired
 - **Time, Income, Social Relationships**
 - → Alter how foods acquired, prepared, distributed, and consumed

Climate Change and Food choice



What is needed

- Challenge of our time is promoting sustainable healthy diets to transform food systems for human and planetary health
 - Need actions that simultaneously address multiple concerns (e.g., undernutrition, obesity, NCDs, contamination, infection, and climate)
 - Need to increase demand for sustainable healthy diets through effective actions
- Generate quality data on what, how and why people eat the way they do to guide action for food system transformation
 - Development of consistent but flexible designs that integrate multiple methods
 - Advances in essential areas of measurement
- Innovations in what works to change or reinforce positive food choice behaviors is essential
 - Climate driven food system transformation
 - Human and planetary health
 - Successful scaling of learnings for long-term impact



Drivers of Food Choice

Competitive Grants Program

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