

# IFPRI's Research in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Settings

## ADDRESSING AN URGENT CHALLENGE

By 2030, nearly two-thirds of the world's extreme poor are predicted to live in fragile and conflict-affected settings (FCAS). Individuals in these settings face spiraling risks from conflict, climate change, and displacement, leading to entrenched poverty, persistent food insecurity, and widespread malnutrition—including high rates of acute malnutrition (wasting) among children. Efforts by governments, UN agencies, and local and international non-governmental organizations to respond to these challenges have shown that strategic investments and innovations in these “frontier food systems” can have transformative, systemwide effects, but more evidence is needed to test and document the most effective response strategies.

For more than twenty years, IFPRI has worked closely with partners in FCAS to generate practical evidence on effective programs and policies, including in **Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Mali, Mozambique, Myanmar, Sudan, Papua New Guinea, Somalia, and Yemen**, among others, helping to identify strategies that can harness frontier food systems as engines of resilience, stability, and recovery. Meeting this challenge requires integrated solutions that address all phases of crises—linking humanitarian response with peacebuilding, economic development, and long-term transformation.

In just the past three years, IFPRI has supported more than 75 projects in FCAS, working in partnership with local and national governments as well as leading humanitarian and development actors. IFPRI provides rigorous and full-spectrum policy research and engagement—from foresight and monitoring to the design, impact evaluation, and scaling of solutions—to help shape enabling environments for recovery. From 2020 to 2025, IFPRI produced 975 research publications on FCAS.

## WHAT WE DELIVER: *Tools, Evidence, and Partnerships*

IFPRI's research provides partners with support through a wide range of evidence and products:

- **Decision-support tools** spanning all phases of crisis and conflict: anticipating and preventing risks before they escalate, monitoring and responding during acute crises, and supporting long-term recovery and resilience.
- **Context-relevant evidence** on policies, programming, and interventions to address the unique challenges faced by FCAS—relevant for governments, UN agencies, NGOs, and other partners.
- **Rapid-response policy support** to address emerging challenges.
- **Best-practice guidance** for conflict-sensitive, gender-responsive policy designs.

The examples below illustrate the breadth and depth of IFPRI's tools, evidence, and partnerships in FCAS:

### 1 Anticipation & Prevention

Anticipating crises can minimize their overall cost. This work strengthens the ability of governments and humanitarian actors to foresee risks and act before crises escalate. We develop AI-based famine prediction models that integrate conflict, weather, soil, market, and satellite data to forecast food insecurity up to a year in advance, alongside machine-learning approaches for granular food security mapping to sharpen early warning and improve aid targeting. Our internal (i-MPI) and external (e-MPI) Migration Propensity Indexes track migration pressures and help identify population movement drivers. We complement these analytics with foresight and scenario-planning tools that link climate variability, migration, and agricultural productivity. Our work also advances gender-responsive anticipatory action frameworks that draw on insights from local leaders and civil society, ensuring early action is inclusive and context appropriate. To support resource allocation, we design tools and methods to assess the cost-effectiveness of investments in anticipatory and emergency response. Finally, through the Food Security Portal, we provide real-time transparency on global and local prices, policy shifts, and emerging risks to guide timely preventive action.

### 2 Monitoring & Crisis Response

Food crises demand effective responses that balance many goals. This work provides governments, humanitarian actors, and other partners with a comprehensive backbone of analytics and evidence. This includes the Food Security Portal, which delivers real-time data and policy analysis to anticipate emerging food crises, and the Food Security Simulator, an Excel-based tool that models how price and income shocks affect household food security and diets. We also disseminate datasets collected directly from households and businesses as well as through novel means including high-frequency phone and satellite surveys.

We generate evidence on how cash transfers, hybrid social protection models, and digital delivery systems can contribute to more effective crisis response in conflict contexts such as Sudan and Yemen. Our work also advances innovative targeting and delivery modalities to reach vulnerable populations amid active conflict, and evaluates school feeding and nutrition-sensitive safety nets in hotspots across the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, and the Middle East. We complement this evidence by analyzing food and agricultural input value chains in frontier economies. Further, we analyze integrated approaches to preventing and treating child wasting (Mali, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, and Kenya), and support the development of self-screening tools for early detection of child wasting. We share timely evidence and insights through our crisis-focused blog series.

### 3 Recovery & Resilience

This work focuses on strengthening household-, community-, and system-level capacities to rebuild livelihoods and food systems during and after crises. Focusing on diets and nutrition, our work generates conversion factors to estimate caseloads for treatment services for [child wasting](#) and assesses both wasting [relapse prevention](#) and local [therapeutic food production](#) to reduce child wasting. Additionally, our work evaluates graduation and livelihood programs supporting displaced populations ([Somalia](#) and Bangladesh) to shed light on the value of multi-component packages combining cash, training, psychosocial support, and community engagement. We also examine how mental health and psychosocial interventions ([Ethiopia](#), [Somalia](#), and the Sahel) can complement social protection and livelihoods programming to address trauma and strengthen resilience. Complementary work analyzes how novel programming including innovative targeting and delivery systems can promote [better governance and trust-building](#) in conflict-affected settings like Ethiopia, Mali, Sudan, Yemen, and Kenya.

Equipping farmers in FCAS is also central. For example, in Nigeria, our work with HarvestPlus has analyzed the impacts of providing [biofortified seed innovations](#) to conflict-affected farmers and has deployed [mapping and decision-support tools](#) for small-scale irrigation. In [Myanmar](#), we test digital agricultural extension models that leverage NGO and private-sector providers. Alongside [Mastercard Foundation](#), we generate evidence to promote youth employment, postharvest loss reduction, and digital services. In Sudan, our Thabat Project with WFP and Mercy Corps evaluates major resilience investments in climate-smart agriculture and digital tools. We also develop [economywide modeling](#) frameworks ([Sudan](#), Ethiopia, and Papua New Guinea) combining microsimulation and poverty modules to identify recovery pathways.

### 4 Cross-Cutting: Gender & Inclusion

Because women are most threatened by shocks and crises, we weave a focus on gender and inclusion throughout our FCAS portfolio. We develop and apply metrics to assess [food system resilience in FCAS](#) and provide practical [guidance](#) on embedding gender and social inclusion into policies, programs, and delivery systems. Using these foundational metrics, we evaluate interventions designed to strengthen [women's voice and inclusion](#) in community decision-making, enhance their participation in governance processes, and expand their access to productive livelihoods. Complementary research examines governance reforms, institutional trust, and inclusive policy design to promote systems that are more responsive, legitimate, and equitable.

## WHY INVEST

- **Unique Role:** IFPRI led CGIAR's [Fragility, Conflict, and Migration Initiative](#) (2022–2024) and now **leads the FCA Food Systems Area of Work** under the CGIAR's [Food Frontiers & Security Science Program](#).
- **Systemwide Reach and Local Presence:** Policy-focused solutions shaping billions in humanitarian and development investment and guiding decisions in settings where hunger is greatest, leveraging IFPRI country offices.
- **Strong Partnerships:** National and local governments, WFP, IOM, UNICEF, World Bank, ActionAid, World Vision, and more.

## PROVEN TRACK RECORD ON DELIVERY AND PARTNERSHIP IN FRAGILE AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED SETTINGS

IFPRI's research in FCAS is supported by core partnerships. During 2023/24, for example, IFPRI worked closely with other CGIAR centers and global partners to co-design a portfolio of 29 research projects with WFP as part of a multi-country resilience programming initiative in Africa funded by the [Government of Norway](#). Additionally, IFPRI has supported UNICEF by evaluating a portfolio of programs ranging from child wasting prevention in [Mali](#) and [Burkina Faso](#) to the strengthening of outpatient treatment services for severe acute malnutrition in [Kenya](#) and [Ethiopia](#), as well as assessing the efficacy of locally produced therapeutic [food supplements](#). With World Vision, IFPRI is building an evidence base that informs the development and scaling of multifaceted livelihoods, nutrition, and mental health interventions that build resilience and enhance well-being in fragile settings in East Africa. With ActionAid, IFPRI is working to design effective ways to transform harmful gender norms and support women facing fragility and conflict. Together, these examples highlight IFPRI's ability to generate rigorous evidence that drives real-world change, ensuring that donor investments translate into measurable impact.

## CONTACT

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