SESSION 2: MARKETS

This session will examine the opportunities and challenges that increased market integration in Africa and Asia presents to improved nutrition. We will look at the potential linkages through the impact of markets on raising incomes, increasing women’s empowerment, and changing availability of different foods.

Tom Reardon (Michigan State University) will provide an overview of how market changes in Asia and Africa are shaping agriculture-led income pathways along with changes in demand for different foods. With particular respect to nutrition, he will demonstrate the growth in non-grain consumption, particularly vegetables, fruit, meat, fish, and dairy, which present positive opportunities for both nutrition and incomes. His research also shows a rapid rise in the food processing segment, which can be an economic multiplier, but can also pose risk for nutritional outcomes. While much of the focus on the transformation of the food system has focused on formal and large-scale market players, the larger story is with small and medium enterprises that are driving the supply chain revolution that links agriculture and nutrition through both income and food availability components.

Significant evidence points to the income generation, women’s empowerment, and nutritional benefits of animal source foods. Lora Iannotti (Washington University at St. Louis) integrates the nutrition literature along with an evolutionary biology framework, providing the rationale for increased, affordable animal source foods in the diets of undernourished populations. She then looks at a case study from Samburu, Kenya to highlight the nutritional implications of shifting livelihoods in two pastoralist communities at differing stages of the livestock-cultivation transition and market integration. Further, her analysis of the food and financial crisis demonstrates the economics of micronutrient nutrition, specifically income-nutrient and price-nutrient elasticities.

A market-based approach to agriculture-led growth offers multiple entry points for improving nutrition. Yet there are tensions or points of misalignment between responding to market opportunities for income growth and nutrition outcomes. Ladd (ACDI/VOCA) will explore how addressing issues related to gender and equity can affect the competitiveness
of agricultural production and markets. Focusing on a variety of market actors and not just the most vulnerable can result in large-scale improvements to food access. A case study from Ethiopia serves as a lens for exploring the successful promotion of nutrition across the value chain.