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Possible Topics for Master Theses

The list of topics mentioned here is not exclusive. Students' own ideas and initiatives are welcome, as long as they broadly fit into the research directions and approaches pursued at our chair. Even the topics mentioned here are flexible and can be adjusted. Many of the topics also provide scope for more than one thesis (e.g., by working on different countries).

1. **Women's employment and household welfare.** In many low-income countries, women's employment is increasing, which can have multiple implications for household and individual welfare (income, women's health, child nutrition and health, etc.). This study utilizes primary data from Ethiopia and econometric approaches to analyze possible effects of women's employment (contact: Dr. Bethelhem Legesse Debela).
2. **Land-use change, tropical ecosystems, and rural livelihoods.** This multidisciplinary study examines issues of tropical deforestation, conversion of forestland to commercial crops, such as oil palm and rubber, and related effects on tropical ecosystems and farm and non-farm households' welfare. Primary (including household survey and experimental data) and secondary data for statistical analyses are available for Indonesia – a country at the forefront of tropical rainforest conversion to commercial plantation crops (contact: Dr. Kibrom T. Sibhatu).
3. **Exploring relationships between households' food purchase sources and nutritional outcomes.** In most developing countries, the food retail sector is rapidly evolving, with modern retailers such as supermarkets gaining in importance. Changing food environments can affect people's dietary choices and nutritional outcomes. This study explores the implications of using different types of retailers for people's nutritional outcomes based on available survey data from urban Kenya (contact: Dr. Bethelhem Legesse Debela).
4. **What determines the adoption of nutrition-sensitive and gender-inclusive farming practices?** Recently, there has been a strong global, regional, and national focus in implementing nutrition-sensitive and gender-inclusive agricultural practices as key to improving nutrition in smallholder farm households. This study examines what factors

explain the adoption of nutrition-sensitive and gender-inclusive farming practices in developing countries. Available secondary datasets (such as the IFPRI's Bangladesh Integrated Household Survey, BIHS, and others) can be used for statistical analyses (contact: Dr. Kibrom T. Sibhatu).

5. **The implications of transforming food systems on household and individual welfare.** Food systems in developing countries are transforming, causing changes in the modes of production and distribution of food. By utilizing existing micro-level data from developing countries and statistical techniques, this study analyzes the implications of transformations in agriculture and retail sectors on household and individual welfare (e.g., nutrition, income) (contact: Dr. Bethelhem Legesse Debela).
6. **Impact of climate-smart agricultural technologies on food security in smallholder farm households.** Climate-smart agricultural technologies (including improved farm management practices, adoption of drought-resistant seeds, renewable energy sources, etc.) are increasingly recommended to support transforming agricultural systems, so that smallholder farm households can become more resilient and food secure in spite of continued climate change. This study examines how the adoption of such technologies impacts smallholder farm households' food security and dietary diversity. Secondary datasets for various countries (such as LSMS-ISA) are available for statistical analyses (contact: Dr. Kibrom T. Sibhatu).
7. **Social protection programs and food security.** Food-based transfer programs have become the standard tool to address chronic food insecurity in developing countries. Nevertheless, chronic undernutrition continues to be a widespread problem. This study examines the effects of social protection programs on food security and nutrition. Micro-econometric approaches are employed to investigate important linkages using existing data from developing countries (contact: Dr. Bethelhem Legesse Debela).
8. **Farm production diversity, market access, and dietary quality in the small farm sector.** This study analyzes the relationship between production diversity at the farm level and consumption diversity in the farm household in developing-country smallholder settings. The role of markets and agricultural commercialization will also be examined. Primary and secondary data for the statistical analyses are available for various countries (contact: Dr. Kibrom T. Sibhatu).