

# SDC's Nutrition in City Ecosystems (NICE) Project gets underway



## Author

**Helen Prytherch**, NICE Project Coordinator, Swiss Topical and Public Health Institute (Swiss TPH).

Contact: [helen.prytherch@swisstph.ch](mailto:helen.prytherch@swisstph.ch)

## The Nutrition in City Ecosystems Project

Initially focused on two secondary cities each in Bangladesh, Kenya and Rwanda, the Nutrition in City Ecosystems (NICE) Project strengthens nutrition exchange platforms between city authorities, local businesses, markets and civil society across the health, agricultural and education sectors.

Locally-led launching activities have taken place in Dinajpur and Rangpur, in Bangladesh, in the Kenyan cities Busia and Bungoma, and in Rubavu and Rusizi, in Rwanda. These culminated in a global project launch on 14 October 2021, in the run up to this year's World Food Day.



Kenya market stalls © Syngenta Foundation/NICE Project

## The NICE Consortium

**Swiss TPH** works in global health and nutrition, with a focus on low- and middle-income countries.

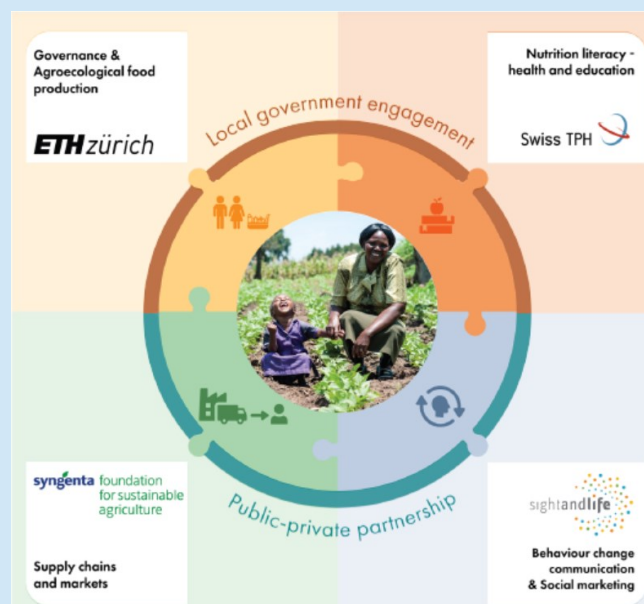
ETH Zürich **Sustainable Agroecosystems group** holds globally recognised expertise in agriculture, agroecology, food systems and city region resilience.

**Sight and Life** is a global nutrition think tank, which fosters public-private partnerships for improved nutrition and develops viable social business models.

The **Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture** works with a wide range of partners. Together, they provide small-holders in Africa and Asia with innovations to improve food security, income and resilience.

More information and city factsheets on the [NICE webpage](#).

Read the [NICE paper for the Food Systems Summit](#)



## An end-to-end value chain approach

According to city priorities targeted to reach vulnerable women, youth and marginalized population groups, NICE is making food value chains more nutrition-focused so they contribute to better health. This has started with a participatory process to identify the value chains of focus in each of the cities, according to a diverse range of criteria.

Along these value chains, the project will facilitate the use of innovative social business models to increase the demand for, and production of, local, diverse, agroecologically produced foods. The involvement of women and youth in income-generating activities is actively encouraged, while steps are also being taken to ensure their safeguarding.

NICE aims to create a dynamic network of city hubs that resolve concrete problems related to nutrition bottlenecks and then share these experiences and learning for wider dissemination and scale-up.

## Activities so far

To be able to monitor progress, NICE completed a city-level baseline data collection exercise. Working with local research partners, NICE has analysed this data with the cities involved to ensure its validity and trigger a joint discussion on the key nutrition challenges. It is planned to work with the cities to display key city nutrition indicators on publically accessible platforms for greater accountability. Some first insights from the baseline data were presented at the Food Day @ETH 2021 on 5 November, winning the poster prize (see image).



## Strengthening the supply and demand for local, agroecologically-produced, nutritious foods in secondary cities in Bangladesh, Kenya, and Rwanda: a first impression on nutritional status

Tanja Barth-Jaeggi<sup>1</sup>, Sophie van den Berg<sup>2</sup>, Kesso Gabrielle van Zutphen<sup>3</sup>, Charles Nwokoro<sup>4</sup>, Francine Bayisenge<sup>1</sup>, S. Fuad Pasha<sup>5</sup>, Simon Kimenju<sup>6</sup>, Helen Prytherch<sup>1</sup>, Johan Six<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute; <sup>2</sup>Independent Consultant; <sup>3</sup>Sight and Life Foundation; <sup>4</sup>Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture; <sup>5</sup>Mitra & Associates; <sup>6</sup>Kula Vyema Centre of Food Economics; <sup>7</sup>Department of Environmental Systems Science, ETH Zurich

### 1 Motivation & Method

- There is an urgent need for **food systems transformation** towards more sustainable ways of producing and consuming nutritious food.
- Agroecological practices** offer the potential to respond to this urgent need and could improve **suboptimal diets**.
- Women, youth and city ecosystems** play a pivotal role to initiate and sustain such transformations.

The Nutrition in City Ecosystems (NICE) project will focus on six initial cities to improve health and nutrition and reduce poverty among populations in city regions.



### 1 First Step

Baseline data collection on the nutritional status and consumer behaviour

### 2 Main preliminary results from nutrition baseline

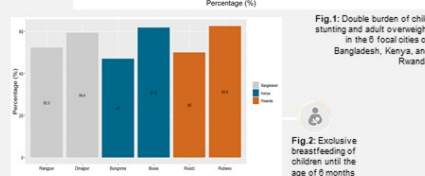
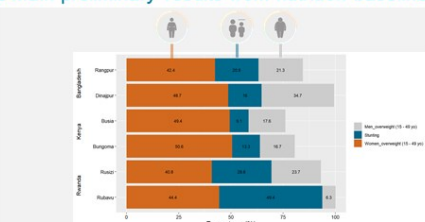
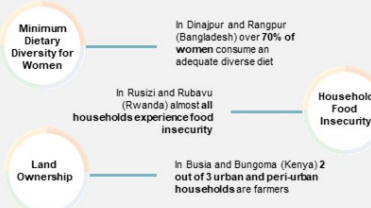


Fig 1: Double burden of child stunting and adult overweight in the 6 focal cities of Bangladesh, Kenya, and Rwanda

Fig 2: Exclusive breastfeeding of children until the age of 6 months



### 3 Conclusion

The **double burden of malnutrition** is a public health concern in secondary cities and food security levels have worsened with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Food systems transformation needs to be addressed holistically from farm to fork, with the appropriate **multi-sectoral governance** in place, and with greater **public-private engagement** for resilient food systems and improved nutrition outcomes.

The work is initially conducted in two secondary cities per country, creating a **dynamic network of learning hubs** for dissemination and scale up.



### 4 Contribution to Sustainable Food Systems

Our research is cross-cutting across 6 out of 17 SDG's:



Partner/Sponsor:



ETH zürich



Watch the poster pitch [HERE](#)  
(approx. 1min)