

Staying focussed on the impact of value chain interventions:

Research questions, field evidence & future challenges

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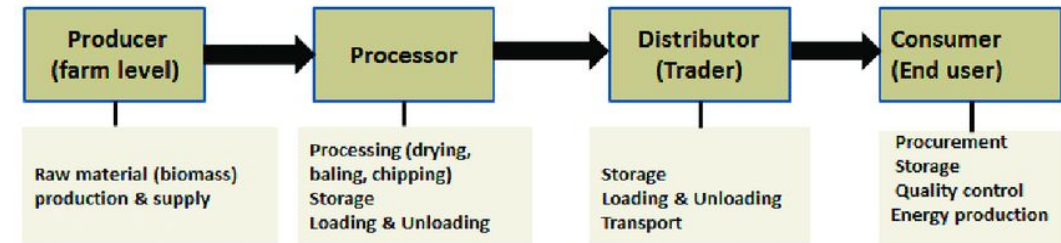


Background & Key Issues

- Personal background: field experience; academic work; policy advice & advocacy (fair trade).
- Key issues:
 - Studying impact from a food systems perspective (methods, approaches)
 - Common fallacies and mistakes
 - Evidence base on VC impact

Impact from a systems perspective

Value chain analysis: product flow and contracting principles



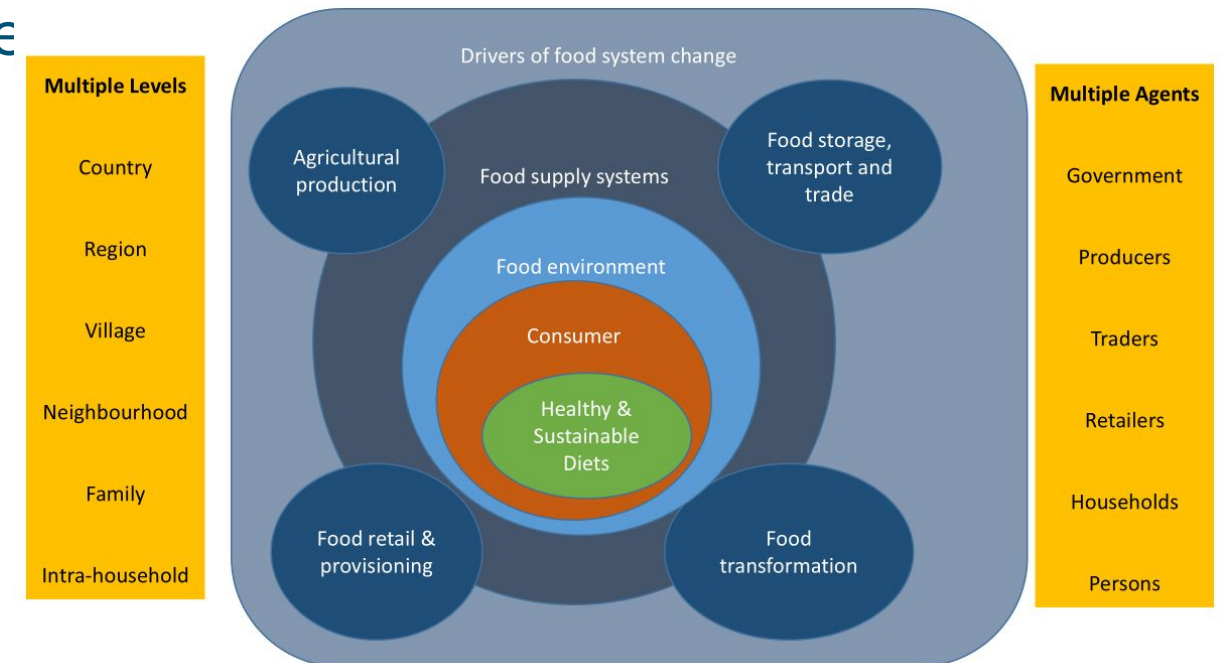
Disadvantages: linear & static, limited

Food systems analysis:

- Multiple objectives
- Multi-layered

Multiple stakeholders

Behavioural changes



What makes a Systems Approach ?

1. Understanding the *drivers* of system performance (insights in causality)
2. Identifying solutions in *another area* than where the problem occurs
3. Linking pathways of *technical and behavioural* change
4. *Different roles* for public, private & civic agents



5. Reconciling *local and global* outcomes

*Not just 'fixing' the
problem, but
finding a 'system
solution*

Common fallacies and mistakes

Focus on more production and trade

- could lead to **less food security**
- (& reduces women's bargaining power)



Focus on value chain certification

- shifts benefits to **midsize farmers**
- (& reduces food security of smallholder farmers)



Focus on value chain upgrading

- shifts value added to **midstream** parties
- (& may lead to environmental externalities)



Evidence of VC Impact on Food Systems Performance

- Economic dimension



Positive effects of higher prices (horticulture)

Efficiency # Economic efficiency

- Social



Environmental costs (true price)

dimension



Building trust to reduce risks

- Political

Changes in bargaining power (gender)

dimension

Long-term contracts for reducing TCs

Future challenges

■ Novel **research approaches**

- Focus on behavioural changes (trust, reliability, compliance, reputation)
- Identifying un-usual solutions (entry points thinking)

■ New **research priorities**

- How to bring 'justice' in value chain relationships ?
- How to change bargaining power (assets, knowledge) ?

■ Implications for **policy**



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- Full chain responsibility (CO2 emissions; deforestation, decent labour)

Thanks for your attention

Further reading:

Ruerd Ruben (2024). Identifying pathways for food system transformation: Unusual solutions for improving food system performance. *International Journal on Food System Dynamics*, 15(1), 1-9.

Ruerd Ruben (2024). What Smallholders Want: Effective Strategies for Rural Poverty Reduction. *Sustainability*, 16(13), 5525.

Ruerd Ruben (2017). Impact assessment of commodity standards. *Enterprise Development and Microfinance* 28 (1-2), 82-97.

