Photo by Alan D. Coogan

Improving Access to Family Planning Can Promote Food Security in a Changing Climate

Study Summary: Modeling Climate Change, Food Security, and Population Growth

March 2012

FS-12-71

A growing body of evidence indicates that climate change is decreasing the productivity of many crops around the world, thus exacerbating existing food security challenges. Ensuring sufficient food for a growing world population in the context of climate change will require innovative technologies and strategies to boost agricultural yields and improve access to nutritious foods for the world's poorest people. New research demonstrates that slower population growth, achievable by addressing women's existing needs for family planning, can also play a significant role in promoting future food security in a climate-altered world.

In a ground-breaking new study, researchers at the Futures Group[1] combined three models to demonstrate that the lower fertility rates that would result from greater use of family planning can help to promote food security in two important ways: by slowing population growth, thereby easing demand on strained agricultural systems; and by altering population composition in ways that can enable improved nutritional outcomes among children under five—a group that is highly vulnerable to food insecurity. The study, which focused on climate change impacts, food security challenges, and population growth in Ethiopia, suggests that meeting women's existing needs for family planning should be considered in broader strategies for adapting to the impacts of climate change on agriculture.

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