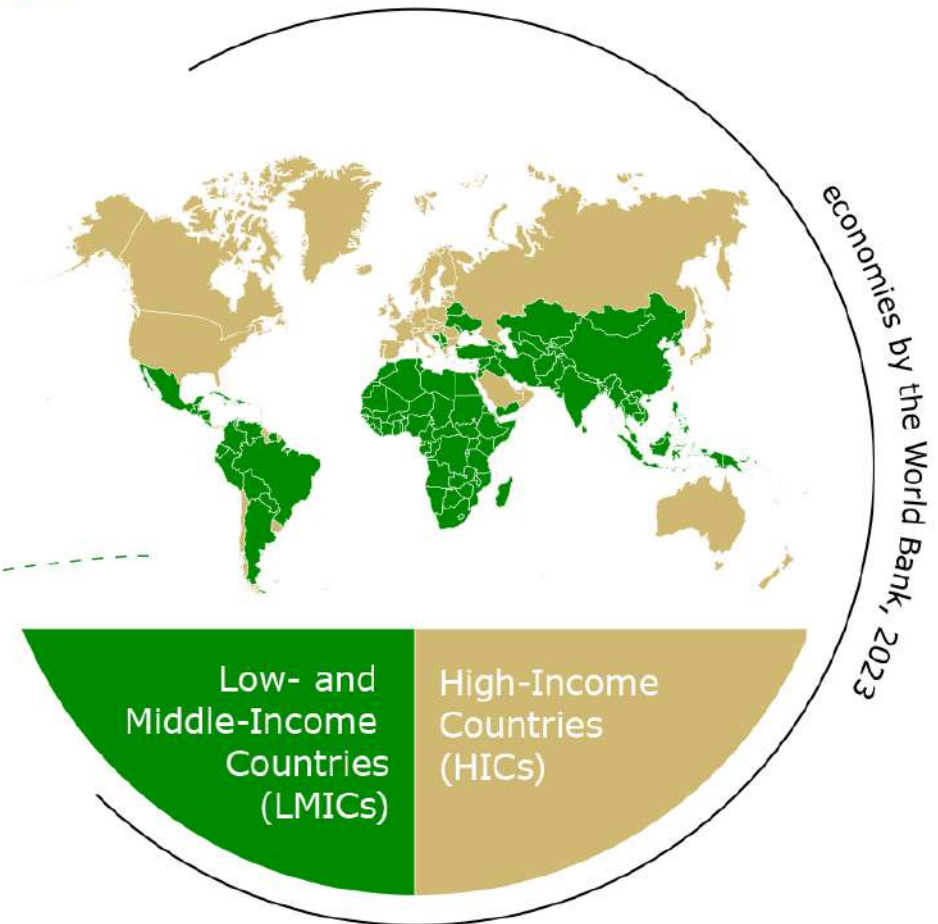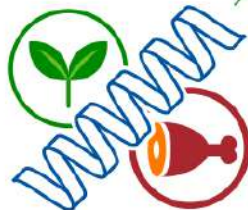# How do consumers in Low- and Middle Income Countries make food choices?

How can consumers influence a food system?
What are their main challenges and
opportunities, especially regarding animal and
plant-based proteins?

To this day, consumer research is often focused
on consumers in High-Income Countries. We
aim to make this field more inclusive by looking
at what drives consumers in LMICs to make
their food choices, and how they impact the
food system as a whole.

economies by the World Bank, 2023

Low- and
Middle-Income
Countries
(LMICs)

High-Income
Countries
(HICs)

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All people need to consume a good balance between plant- and animal-based proteins to stay healthy! But how to supply these with respect for the environment?

health   proteins   environment

This becomes even more difficult when we look at the uneven availability of protein around the world, along with the challenges of population growth, urbanization, and the rising demand for animal-based foods in Low- and Middle-Income Countries.

People make food choices for many reasons—like health, habits, and what's around them. To help everyone eat in ways that are good for them and the planet, we need to understand what influences these choices.

Case study findings

Content highlights from case studies in different countries. Methods for the different cases vary, but include expert interviews, data analysis, and literature review.

// INDIA

India's food system transition is moving from carbohydrate-rich diets to protein-enriched ones, rather than shifting from animal- to plant-based proteins. Food habits, perceptions, and acceptance vary a lot across the country, with vegetarianism being a notable dietary preference in some regions.

- Growing health awareness
- Increased consumption of processed food
- Growing global outlook among young professionals
- Shift in retail from small shops and stalls to supermarkets
- Digitalisation

// South Africa

It's important to differentiate between "traditional" soy products (like canned mince) and "new" products (such as veggie sausages and burgers). Traditional soy products are mostly consumed by low-income families, while newer alternatives are popular with higher-income consumers.

// CHINA

In China, we created a model to design an optimal diet to reduce environmental impact, while still meeting nutritional needs and consumer preferences. Here are some of the most important changes:

- Beef: -20%
- Pork: -14%
- Soybean: 50%
- Broad beans and horse beans: 7%

Recommendations

More than one path to a healthy and sustainable diet

To support both people and the planet, we need to explore different ways to achieve balanced diets. Different approaches can help everyone reach healthier diets, while meeting consumer preferences and nutritional needs.

Different consumers, different needs

Food choices vary within and between countries and there are inequalities in food access and nutritional status. Tailoring solutions to these groups will help promote healthy and sustainable diets.

Food choices are not just what people want – but also what they can do

To know the motivations of people and their access to the right food is important. It is also important to ensure knowledge and skills to make changes to support better food choices.

health

high carb nutrient-rich

tailored solutions

plant-based animal-based

knowledge &skills importance

novel & traditional alternatives

sustainability

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Contact & Further Information

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