

NAMUKOLO COVIC

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VISION

Former Country Coordinator and convener for the CGIAR Research Program – Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH) in Ethiopia, Namukolo Covic worked closely with several NL-CGIAR Senior Experts. NWO-WOTRO spoke with her about benefits of the partnership for her and the Dutch scientists and how the flexibility of the Experts contributed to the development of Ethiopia’s Food Systems Transformation Pathway.

## Harnessing the flexibility of the Senior Experts



### Empowering

Namukolo Covic played an important role in making the Senior Expert’s research engagements meaningful to Ethiopia. She provided them not only with local perspectives, but her engagement in African Union discussions also allowed her to provide them with insights on a continental and global

**‘The flexibility of the Senior Experts needs to be harnessed for future programmes.’**

level, always using a local lens. Namukolo mentions that her interactions with the Senior Experts were also empowering to her, because she was able to draw on the evidence made available by them. The SEP programme has provided the Senior Experts the opportunity to expand and deepen their collaboration with Namukolo in her new roles at CGIAR.

### Flexibility

The SEP programme allowed flexibility for the Senior Experts to focus not only on research, but also on making strategic engagement decisions. In the case of A4NH, these were

strategic decisions on food systems, nutrition and health. Namukolo has experienced first-hand how this built-in flexibility in the programme was beneficial. For example, for Ethiopia’s response to the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit, Namukolo Covic requested all the Senior Experts working on the Food Based Dietary Guidelines project: ‘You guys have been collecting information in Ethiopia forever, now is the moment to use it’. And together with national partners and CGIAR researchers, they all contributed to the development of the background paper to describe the current status of Ethiopia’s food systems, charting a path for the consultations for the UN Food Systems summit that followed. The paper, developed as a government document, was a shift from the usual authorship requirements of academic settings to an altruistic mind-set to benefit an important national process. The Ethiopian Food Based Dietary Guidelines has been incorporated as a game changing idea in Ethiopia’s Food Systems Transformation Pathway.