

Impact of Covid-19 on food value chains in West Papua Province, Indonesia

Preliminary findings

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Introduction

The province of West Papua is ranked among the lowest in food security and vulnerability in Indonesia with more than 20% of the population living under the poverty line. The province is less accessible than other regions because of its mountainous geography, and far distance from the economic center of Indonesia. The study aims to understand the impact of the covid-19 pandemic on the food value chain in West Papua Province.

Method

CIFOR and its partner, the Research and Development Agency of West Papua Province, conducted a mixed online and field visit survey among actors in the food value chain in six regencies of West Papua which represent different geographies and states of food security. We circulated a link to an online survey, and combined this effort with visits to markets, distributors, food stalls, farms etc, to ask food value chain actors to participate in the survey, from September to December 2020.¹ Results of the surveys were analysed using descriptive statistics and exploratory analysis. Comments were analyzed by coding key words and then quantifying the numbers of each keyword stated by respondents.

Findings

Demography

We received valid responses from 423 respondents, 55% of whom were female. More than half (51%) of the participants identified themselves as indigenous Papuans. The roles of the respondents in the value chain, the commodities that they traded and their range of income are described in Figure 1.

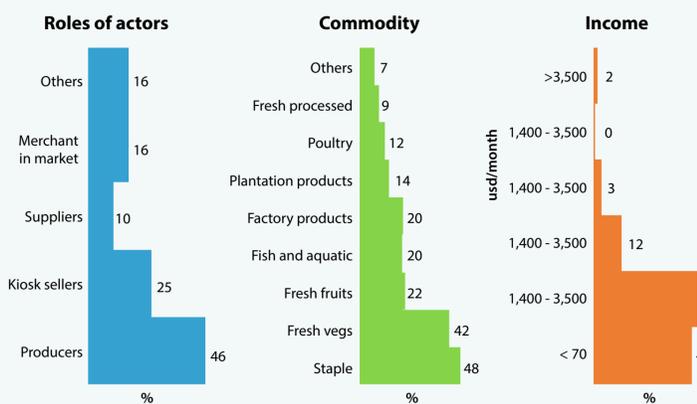


Figure 1. Roles, commodity, and income of the actors

Impacts of Covid-19 on food supply chain

Covid-19 affected incomes of 83% respondents. Among those who were affected, 78% reported less than a 50% decline (with 31% reported less than a 30% decline), and 16% reported more than a 50% decline. Most of the Papuan women in this study (72%) earned less than 70 usd per month before pandemic, and 72% of the Papuan women experienced decline in their income down to 50% after pandemic. The type of difficulties reported by respondents are described in Figure 2.

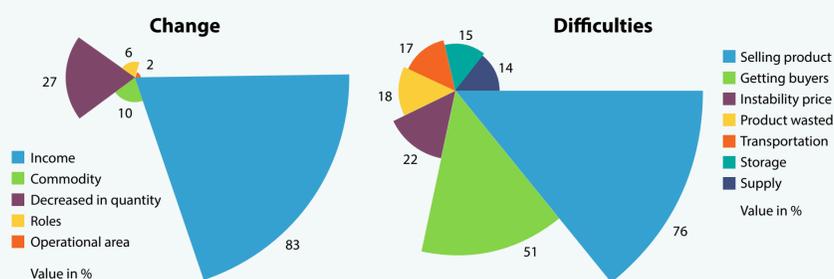
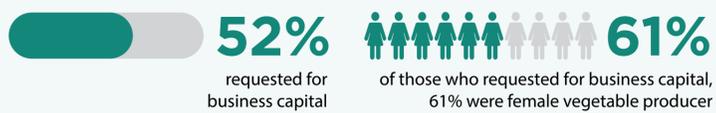


Figure 2. Changes and difficulties faced by the actors during the Covid-19 pandemic

Analysis of comments

Analysis of the essay answers or comments from respondents after show and become show.



A fisherman in Manokwari Teluk Bintuni complained about the abundant fish not sold but also could not be stored due to the lack of infrastructure;

“...Here we don't have ice factory, so it's very difficult for us to store fishers' catch”.²



A female vegetable farmer from Teluk Bintuni complained;

“...Our products sometimes are not sold, we have to carry them back home, but we cannot store them well, and finally damaged, deteriorated, we throw them away. And sometimes we spend money on transport, while not getting any profit.”²

Strategies for mitigation of impacts

Despite having these difficulties, only a few respondents had a specific strategy to mitigate the disruption; only 18% said they reduced production and stock, 13% said they went looking for new markets, and 11% said they processed less than usual. Other than food-based social assistance, only 12% of respondents had received business support, and mostly from government.



Recommendations

In order to reduce the disruption caused by Covid-19 to the food value chain in West Papua Province, small and medium scale food value chain actors need support. Respondents suggested that financial support would be most helpful for their businesses to get through

the pandemic. We also observe that the value chain actors may benefit from business support, such as financial literacy courses, business management during crisis, and the like. Such capacity building may help them become more resilient and help their businesses to survive future crisis. Special attention needs to be given to the Papuan women, who are important actors in the value chain of vegetables in West Papua province, had low income and affected by the pandemic.