

Community-based development of nutrition interventions in Western Kenya

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Background

This research project supports communities in Vihiga County, Western Kenya in developing and implementing their own agriculture for nutrition interventions to improve dietary diversity for women and small children. The project is part of the Humidtropics, a CGIAR research program. It consists of:

- a diagnostic phase covering agricultural biodiversity, diets and nutrition (I) (Odour FO et al. 2015),
- a participatory intervention development phase (II),
- participatory intervention implementation (III).

Methodology

In the five sub-locations targeted for the intervention development (phase II), six workshops were carried out to raise awareness on nutrition, to present results of phase I and to identify and plan interventions. Per sub-location, 36 participants were selected (180 participants in total).



Research question

How well are local communities in Western Kenya able to develop nutrition interventions through participatory workshops?



Fig. 1: Participants use food cards to learn about food groups and dietary diversity



Fig. 2: The participants develop a community action plan

Some quotes by Beveling Malesi, one of the 180 participants in the community nutrition workshops:

"Through the workshops I have learnt many new things. Before, I did not know that a diverse diet is important for health."

"We have improved eating at home, thanks to the workshops. We never used to eat fruits. As we did not know the importance of fruits we did not buy them in the market. Now we eat at least two types of fruits a day, for example banana and watermelon. I have created a timetable to diversify food consumption at home. The food I eat today, I try not to eat tomorrow."

"I did not know that some plants are actually foods, for example cassava leaves and passion fruit leaves. I also started to plant a vegetable, dania, as I have learned it is important and can also be mixed with other vegetables such as sukuma wiki (kale) or spinach."

Results

All five sub-locations chose a combination of vegetable and legume planting and poultry keeping as intervention to diversify diets. Community action plans were developed specifying how the interventions are going to be realized. The participants identified local funding mechanisms to finance their interventions and developed a budget. They also defined ways in reaching other community members with their actions.

VEGETABLE									
ACTIVITY	WHAT HAS TO BE DONE	WHERE	WHEN	RESPONSIBLE	HOW MUCH	HOW MUCH	HOW MUCH	HOW MUCH	HOW MUCH
1. Introduction of vegetables	1. Introduction of vegetables	1. At the farm	1. At the farm	1. At the farm	1. At the farm	1. At the farm	1. At the farm	1. At the farm	1. At the farm
2. Introduction of vegetables	2. Introduction of vegetables	2. At the farm	2. At the farm	2. At the farm	2. At the farm	2. At the farm	2. At the farm	2. At the farm	2. At the farm
3. Introduction of vegetables	3. Introduction of vegetables	3. At the farm	3. At the farm	3. At the farm	3. At the farm	3. At the farm	3. At the farm	3. At the farm	3. At the farm
4. Planning	4. Planning	4. At the farm	4. At the farm	4. At the farm	4. At the farm	4. At the farm	4. At the farm	4. At the farm	4. At the farm
5. Introduction of vegetables	5. Introduction of vegetables	5. At the farm	5. At the farm	5. At the farm	5. At the farm	5. At the farm	5. At the farm	5. At the farm	5. At the farm
6. Introduction of vegetables	6. Introduction of vegetables	6. At the farm	6. At the farm	6. At the farm	6. At the farm	6. At the farm	6. At the farm	6. At the farm	6. At the farm
7. Introduction of vegetables	7. Introduction of vegetables	7. At the farm	7. At the farm	7. At the farm	7. At the farm	7. At the farm	7. At the farm	7. At the farm	7. At the farm
8. Introduction of vegetables	8. Introduction of vegetables	8. At the farm	8. At the farm	8. At the farm	8. At the farm	8. At the farm	8. At the farm	8. At the farm	8. At the farm
9. Introduction of vegetables	9. Introduction of vegetables	9. At the farm	9. At the farm	9. At the farm	9. At the farm	9. At the farm	9. At the farm	9. At the farm	9. At the farm
10. Introduction of vegetables	10. Introduction of vegetables	10. At the farm	10. At the farm	10. At the farm	10. At the farm	10. At the farm	10. At the farm	10. At the farm	10. At the farm

Fig. 3: Draft version of a community action plan for vegetable planting

Discussion

All groups developed agricultural interventions to diversify diets with different levels of performance quality. The factors that determine these differences will now be analyzed. The participants interventions will need to be adjusted as all groups are planning with an ambitious budget. An extra workshop on budget development would help to avoid misjudgment in this regard.

Acknowledgments

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References

Odour Francis Odiambo, Termote Céline, Kennedy Gina (2015). What has our landscape to offer for community's food and nutrition security; a case of Vihiga County, Kenya. Oral presentation at the 2nd International Conference for Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition in Nairobi (November, 2015).