

Nutrition Promotion via Agricultural Extension Services: Addressing Mixed Messages in Zambia

Edye Kuyper¹ and Kristy Cook²

Examples of mixed messages: (often confusing to rural households)

“Eat from the 3 food groups”

“Give your young child foods from each of the 7 food groups each day”

“The diets of women of reproductive age likely deliver better micronutrient adequacy if they include foods from at least 5 of 10 food groups”



A community leader with Profite+ facilitates a training on gender-equitable agricultural behaviors in March 2015. © K. Heinz 2015

Effective nutrition promotion in Agricultural Extension Services (AES) is:

- context-specific,
- responsive to nutritional opportunities and challenges,
- built upon existing capacity of farmers, extension staff



Image: National Food and Nutrition Commission of Zambia, 2012



Maize in Zambia
photo: Molly Messner, 2015

The Zambian Context for nutrition-sensitive agriculture:

- Strong momentum for nutrition (SUN movement particularly active, 1st 1000 Most Critical Days)
- Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) implements nation-wide agricultural extension service
- High stunting burden (~40% of children <5)³

INGENAES Objectives in Zambia

- Identify nutrition messages disseminated to rural households
- Facilitate convergence around harmonized nutrition messages
- Realize potential contribution of AES to improving diets and the well-being of Zambians



Preliminary Activities:

- MoA developed content for nutrition officers based on SUN messages
- MoA and INGENAES convened stakeholders to share nutrition promotion experience

Findings:

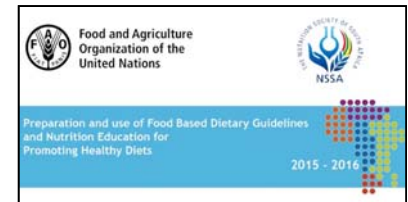
- Health, agriculture staff often work in parallel to promote agricultural production, nutrition.
- Households receive messages from multiple sources; some are inconsistent
- Low diversity of agricultural production, and low dietary diversity are pervasive (at population level, ~2/3 of energy consumed = maize)^b
- National Food Based Dietary Guidelines (FBDG) could help harmonize messaging

What's next?

- INGENAES, MoA collaborating to develop, field test nutrition-sensitive content for camp extension officers
- Zambian representatives attended an FAO technical consultation on FBDG development
- Analysis of M&E tools for nutrition-sensitive agriculture in Zambia underway
- NGO-focused capacity development for integrating nutrition, gender within AES supports common themes



Small group work at stakeholder workshop, Lusaka, 28 Jan 2016
photo: Kristy Cook



A lead woman farmer presents her demonstration plot of maize to local farmers and stakeholders in March 2015. © K. Heinz 2015

How AES can support nutrition:

- Complete support for food security: add stability, utilization to expertise in access, availability
- Support WASH actions impacted by agriculture
- Where appropriate, improve production diversity
- Empower women and engage men in both agriculture and nutrition
- Engage and advocate for the most vulnerable to poor diet and nutrition: low-income laborers, women of reproductive age, infants and young children

References

³Central Statistical Office (CSO), Ministry of Health (MOH), and ICF International. March 2015. 2013-14 ZDHS Key Findings. Rockville, Maryland, USA: Central Statistics Office (CSO), Ministry of Health (MOH), and ICF International.

^bFAO. Nutrition Country Profile, The Republic of Zambia. 2009. available at: <http://ftp.fao.org/ag/agn/nutrition/ncp/zmb.pdf>.

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Contact: Edye Kuyper, emkuyper@ucdavis.edu