The Role of Increased Income and Women’s Empowerment on Nutrition: SPRING’s Review of Two Feed the Future Activities in Rwanda

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Field work: How are USAID Missions and Feed the Future activities operationalizing the agriculture to nutrition pathways?
To document the process and progress made by two Feed the Future activities working along the agriculture-nutrition pathways

1. The Integrated Improved Livelihoods Program (IILP)
2. The Rwanda Dairy Competitiveness Program II (RDCP II)
Study Questions

- Have increases in income, as a result of participating in Feed the Future activities, changed purchasing and consumption patterns?
- How has activity engagement affected care-seeking and care-giving practices?
- How has activity engagement affected women’s empowerment?
Sample Size and Data Collection

Qualitative and quantitative mixed-methods approach was used:
- Secondary document review
- Interviews and focus group discussions held with 143 program recipients (76 in IILP, 67 in RDCP II)
- Key informant interviews with IP staff, other community members/leaders
Findings: Food Consumption Patterns

- Increased access to different foods (either through home production or purchase)
- Increased consumption of vegetables, fruits, milk, fish (considered new food), sugar, oils
- Increased knowledge about the importance of paying attention to food nutrient content
- Positive shift in perception of the importance of fruits and vegetables across all ages

However, meat and egg consumption still low!
Care-giving and Care-seeking Activities

- Improved time management skills for most IILP beneficiaries
- Improved time management skills, easy-to-reach milk collection centers, and use of more efficient tools for RDCP II beneficiaries

We learnt how to plan for different activities and how to manage time, we used to misuse our time but now, it has changed and have time for everything than before where we have been doing different activities in disorganized way.

—Female respondent, Karongi District

Some milk traders noted that more efficient sources of energy and larger milk boiling equipment would help to further reduce the time/labor burden and increase time available for other activities
72% of total female IILP and RDCP II respondents reported being more involved in income-related decisions making within HH

Increased participation of women in activities outside the home

Women are saying that they are being taken into consideration when it comes to decision-making. Traditionally women say that they cannot do this and that. The men are also not happy. Now they have to check with the women. You have to go slowly. It is changing little by little. —IILP program Officer

Women’s empowerment is a work in progress. National policy and strategies to enhance women’s status and improve gender mainstreaming were commended for helping foster discussions.
Conclusions

- Positive trends working along the agriculture-nutrition pathways

- Challenges:
  - Continued large demands on women’s time
  - Low consumption of animal-sourced foods
  - Lack of targeting children’s nutrition in the first 1,000 days
  - Monitoring nutrition indicators

Access the report at: https://www.spring-nutrition.org/publications/reports/role-increased-income-and-womens-empowerment-nutrition
Thank You