Modernizing Extension and Advisory Services

Engaging Extension and Advisory Service Providers in Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture
Part I: Focus on Malawi

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Part I: Integrating Agriculture and Nutrition in Malawi

- TODAY’S WEBINAR

- First in the two-part series

- About integrating agriculture and nutrition in Malawi within the agricultural extension and nutrition education context.

- Based on findings from a recent assessment, commissioned by USAID/Malawi, of Malawi’s

  - agricultural extension,
  - nutrition education, and
  - integrated agriculture-nutrition programs and systems.¹
Malawi Assessment

Purpose:

investigate these different programs and systems with the aim of informing the design of an activity to strengthen extension and nutrition outreach services in Malawi’s Feed the Future focus districts.
Assessment

● Team

Valerie Rhoie Davis
Vickie Sigman
Theresa Banda
Grace Malindi
John Peters

● Framework: programs and people: 3 types, 3 sectors
● Methodology: visits, interviews, focus group, review workshop, literature review
Today’s Presentation

- Key findings:
  - Context
  - Structure and Linkages of Nutrition
  - Delivery Systems
  - Challenges and Possibilities
● Key statistics
  • 85% of livelihoods from agriculture
  • Over 50% under the poverty line
  • 47% of under-fives stunted

● Key policies and initiatives
  • Agriculture Policies
  • Nutrition Policies
  • Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN)
  • New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition
Overarching Nutrition Structure & Linkages

Office of the President and the Cabinet
Department of Nutrition & HIV&AIDS (DNHA)

Donors
SUN Task Force Tech Working Groups National Nutrition Committee

Private Sector Entities (business, farmer associations)
Public Sector (ministries, academe, research)
Civil Society Sector (NGOs, media)
### Ministry Structure & Linkages

#### National-Level: DNHA

#### District-Level: Ministry of Local Government
(District Nutrition Coordination Committee)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MINISTRY</th>
<th>Agriculture &amp; Food Security</th>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Gender, Children &amp; Social Welfare</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DISTRICT-LEVEL Staff</strong></td>
<td>Nutrition Officer Own Committee</td>
<td>District Nutritionist Own Committee</td>
<td>Com Dev Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coordination</td>
<td>Own Committee</td>
<td>Own Committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FIELD-LEVEL Staff</strong></td>
<td>Ag Ext Dev Officer</td>
<td>Health Surveillance Agent</td>
<td>Com Dev Ass’t</td>
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**Private & Civil Society (NGO) Linkages:**
Participation on committees or working through or with field level staff.
How are farmers and farm families being engaged in nutrition-sensitive agriculture and other nutrition-related activities?

- Assessment Identifies
  - Various systems
  - Department of Agriculture Extension Services (DAES)
  - Care Groups
  - Farmer Organizations
  - Blended Care Groups/ Farmer Organizations
• Public sector system – largest provider of agricultural extension services – has a Food and Nutrition Unit

• Field-staff
  • Some trained in nutrition (through DAES Food & Nutrition, NGOs, or SUN) typically in crop diversification; six food groups; food preparation, processing, storage, & preservation, cooking demonstrations; other SUN-developed messages)
  • Incorporated as part of their every day work
  • Collaborate with health field-staff
  • Engaged by NGOs to implement NGO-funded nutrition-sensitive agriculture projects, or NGO staff work collaboratively with DAES field staff
DAES Methods

● Lead Farmers
  • Respected farmer, trained by ag extension, voluntarily extends to others

● Mndandandas
  • Contiguous fields, best practices, demonstrated by extensionists and farmers, on different crops

● Model Village
  • Various service providers from various sectors, assist in overall development, village is then a teaching tool
Care Groups

● In Malawi:
  • widely-used by public sector health and NGOs
  • system adopted by SUN
  • tested by NGOs implementing USAID activities

● Focus: improving maternal and child health and nutrition

● Characterized: volunteer health educators, neighborhood groups, behavior change, household level

● Primarily a health and nutrition system; limited agriculture integration
Care Group Structure

Diagram referenced in End Note #6.
Farmer Organizations

● Private-sector approach

● Two large apex organizations:
  • Farmers Union of Malawi
  • National Smallholder Farmers’ Association of Malawi (NASFAM)
  • Today’s example
• Structure

- Farmers
- Clubs (10-15 farmers)
- Group Action Centers (10-15 Clubs)
- Farmer Associations (10-15 Group Action Centers)
- Innovation & Productivity Center (Associations grouped in a District)

• Paid extension staff
  • Field officers work at association level, with lead farmers, DAES staff

• Development entity supports nutrition activities
  • production and utilization of diversified crops
  • nutrition education

• Lead Farmers/others receive training
  • scaled through clubs and out to community
Blended Care Groups / Farmer Organizations

- New system, introduced and tested by USAID/Malawi partner
- Explicit linkages between the two systems: Care Group and Farmer Association.
- Example: Promoters are recruited from NASFAM membership - information flows among groups/clubs
- One example: peanut production for income and home consumption
- Integration driven by both ag & nutrition concerns
Challenges and Possibilities

● Personnel and Related Support Issues

● Coordination

● Investments
Challenges and Possibilities: Personnel and Related Support Issues

- Coverage
- Capacity
- Conditions of Service
- Incentives
Challenges and Possibilities: Coverage

Challenge: Coverage

- High-vacancy rates = ratio of 1:2000 to 4000; difficulties recruiting women
- Health Surveillance Agent numbers also low

Possibilities: Coverage

- Lead farmers
- Improved transportation
- More mass media & ICT
- Strengthen GOM- NGO coordination
- Hire more agents, moderate expectations
Challenges and Possibilities: Capacity

Challenge: Capacity
- Numerous subjects including nutrition-sensitive ag
- Limited refresher training
- Not all have participated in nutrition training
- Learning aids lacking

Possibilities: Capacity
- Peer to peer training
- Self-paced learning modules
- More ICT
- Advocate for increased budget for training
Conditions of Service & Incentives

**Conditions of Service**

**Challenge**
- Sub-standard housing & minimal transport
- Lack of communication tools
- Narrow opportunities

**Possibilities**
- Long-term costed plan

**Incentives**

**Challenge**
- Conditions of service and training
- NGO – GOM extension; wide-differences

**Possibilities**
- GOM & NGO develop standards and protocols
Challenges and Possibilities: Coordination

Challenges:
• Many actors
• Coordinating structures understaffed; few function effectively
• Ministries and entities have own set of coordination committees
• Lack of funds to coordinate at the field level

Possibilities
• Streamline, realign, merge, the various coordinating structures and committees
• Establish a coordination fund to support field-level coordination across sectors
Challenges:

- GOM has numerous priorities and limited funds
- Many systems require investment, but particularly public sector agricultural extension
- Resources needed to address challenges identified
- Data to guide investments lacking
Possibilities: Investments

Possibilities:

• Study cost-benefit of investments in various systems
• Use resources more efficiently
• Main contributor is GOM
  • Improve DAES capacity to advocate
• Some donor contributions to GOM extension; most bi- and multilateral donors finance NGO-based and private sector extension and advisory services
  • Given expectations, reconsider trend
THANK YOU
End Notes


This presentation was given:

By Vickie A. Sigman, on behalf of MEAS

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