

IMPROVING NUTRITION WITH AGRICULTURAL BIODIVERSITY

Pathway Component: food production; agricultural income; food expenditure; food access; diet

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CONTENT SUMMARY

Brief Description: This practical tool can be used by field workers trained in agroecology and home survey data gathering techniques, as well as experienced health and agriculture professionals. The manual outlines a systematic and credible process for documenting research in how agrobiodiversity and dietary diversity impact nutrition and health status of communities. It provides practical guidance on how to plan and implement a nutritional agrobiodiversity project.

Uses: This tool will help field staff on community nutrition programs to document the how agrobiodiversity and dietary diversity impact nutrition and health status of communities who consume the foods. This manual outlines a systematic and credible and replicable process for documenting all stages of research into such relationships.

The findings of quality research must be applied, meaning that analyzed data will be used to design community-appropriate interventions to fill gaps found over the course of the study. It is paramount that the research findings be directly utilized to further assist the communities in which the data was collected.

Tool Components: This manual recommends a 7-phase process:

- Phase 1: Program Design and Preparation

- Phase 2: Developing the Macro-perspective
- Phase 3: Assessing Food Security and Nutritional Status at the Household Level
- Phase 4: Data Analysis and Baseline Study Report Writing
- Phase 5: Intervention Design
- Phase 6: Intervention Roll-out and Assessment
- Phase 7: Final Evaluation of Intervention Efficacy

OPERATIONS

Number of Staff Required: The following set of staff members is recommended to design and implement the research and intervention: program director, project facilitator/ manager, agro-botanist, agronomist, nutritionist, anthropologist/sociologist, project facilitators, and local guides/interpreters (as needed).

Time: The time required will depend on the specific interventions. The project should allow sufficient time for local capacity development and adoption of new practices for sustainability. The intervention should be pre-adjusted to account for the time of two or three project facilitators per site.

Cost of Assessment: Not specified; this will depend on the context of the specific assessment.

Training: Comprehensive training of the team is a vital stage in the survey process. The staff are taught survey procedures, how to collect data, and appropriate use of the questionnaires. In addition, anthropometric

techniques, such as measuring and recording should be practiced to ensure standardization of methods and collection of reliable data. The toolkit provides a list of suggested training modules.

Geographic Targeting: Commonly, the area where the survey is to be conducted is a governmental administrative area such as a district, province, or community within these administrative divisions. Ideally, the area chosen should consist of a population with a similar nutritional situation in order to obtain a reliable perspective.

Type of Data Collection: A variety of qualitative and quantitative data will be required, including focus groups, key informant interviews, and household surveys including anthropometry. This assessment may also include lab testing of food composition and/or serum micronutrient levels.

Degree of technical difficulty: This complex assessment requires significant technical expertise in a variety of fields.

Complements other Resources: This manual focuses on links between agrobiodiversity, dietary diversity, and nutrition/health outcomes. Assessments and interventions along agricultural income or women's empowerment pathways could complement this manual.