

IMPROVING NUTRITION PROGRAMS: AN ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR ACTION

Pathway Component: health care; caring capacity & practices

Search Category: health & nutrition services; caring capacity, norms & practices

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CONTENT SUMMARY

Brief Description: The Improving Nutrition Programs assessment tool presents the methodology of program assessment in a concise and user-friendly fashion. It advocates for engaging target communities in nutrition program planning and implementation.

The assessment tool is best suited for programs of at least two years' duration. It is ideal for continuous national nutrition programs that allow time for regular assessments and revisions.

Uses:

- Contributes to strengthening community-based food and nutrition programs through a step-by-step analysis of program design, macro and microenvironments, and likely sustainability.
- Helps users develop and launch a process to strengthen their country's ability to address the causes of malnutrition.
- Suggests post-assessment actions.

Tool Components: The tool is comprised of the following components:

- Section I: Assessing Program Design
- Section II: Assessing the Macroenvironment
- Section III: Assessing the Microenvironment
- Section IV: Assessing Sustainability

OPERATIONS

Number of Staff Required: The assessment team should be comprised of 10-15 people. The toolkit explains the ideal profile of these people, but indicates that if such an extensive, high-caliber team is not an option, users can settle for a more modest one with a minimum of two people.

Time: Not specified; this will vary with each assessment.

Cost of Assessment: Not specified; this will vary depending on the context and staff involved in the assessment.

Training: A Users' Training Manual is available to prepare assessment team members who may not be familiar with some of the nutrition concepts used in this tool. The training can be adapted to varying levels of knowledge and amount of time available.

Geographic Targeting: The assessment toolkit is most appropriate for national nutrition programs.

Type of Data Collection: The assessment methodology should be viewed as a continuous and participatory process. It is based on seeking answers to questions through discussions with key informants, an examination of documents, as well as field visits and observation.

Degree of Technical Difficulty: Anticipated users are food and nutrition program planners, but any number of individuals with planning and programmatic responsibility who are concerned about poverty alleviation and overall development can be part of the assessment team. This toolkit is not intended for staff with limited prior experience.

Complements other Resources: The nutritional focus of this assessment tool could complement other agriculture or food-security assessment tools.