

OSRO/RAF/808/SWE

Monitoring & Evaluation, Rumonge, Burundi

Date: 10 June, 2009

Location : FFS group in Rumonge, Burundi

FAO Implementation Partner: OPE Rububu

Background

The FFS group in Rumonge had just started holding regular meeting sessions, facilitated by a female facilitator trained in the Ngozi TOF. Field activities so far had included establishment of a nursery for vegetables (cabbage, tomatoes, eggplant, amaranths, onion etc.). The group has access to two plots, one right on the shore of a river close to the resident area of members, and another plot on the prison owned land close to the lake shore. Tomatoes production was planned to form the groups learning enterprise, and experimental plots were to be established the following week. The group had a formal structure in place with group officials and FFS sub-groups (all with names and slogans). A majority of members were women and considered vulnerable due to poverty or health status. The group meets weekly on Wednesdays for FFS learning sessions.



M&E on Nutritional status of FFS group members

Purpose of M&E exercise:

- Identify and discuss the food habits and nutritional status among group members at the start of the FFS learning cycle in order to create a baseline against which future impact on nutrition can be evaluated.

Process:

1. The theme of nutrition was introduced by referring to the objectives of the project and the field activities the group had commenced in terms of vegetable production.
2. The larger group was divided in three subgroups and provided with flipchart and felt pens.
3. The groups were asked to make three columns on the sheet of paper, where the different columns were to indicate food items consumed; 1) regularly/daily, 2) weekly, and 3) monthly or seldom. They were then asked to fill in the columns by making drawings of their food items consumed. The facilitator asked probing questions to make sure potential major items were not left out.

4. The three groups presented their tables for each other and discussed further details about their food habits.
5. The facilitator then asked probing questions on what aspects of their diet they would like to change and why, and in particular which items from the seldom/monthly column they would wish to move to frequent consumption.



Results (from the three groups and the discussion):

	<i>Food items consumed</i>	
	<i>regularly/daily</i>	<i>Weekly</i>
Beans Potatoes Cassava leaves Amaranths leaves Cassava Ugali Tomatoes Onions Small fish (not daily) Etc.	Rice (lowest quality) Maize Bananas Oranges / mandarins Vegetables: eggplant, cabbage, peppers, carrots etc. Palm oil Etc.	Mean (all kind) Large fish Milk Egg Soft drinks Fruits (pineapple, avocado, mango, papaya) Etc.

Conclusions:

- The exercise indicates high poverty levels among members. Since daily food intake is made up of items that can be obtained from own fields or at low cost the purchase power among members can be assumed very low. Costly food items such as meat are consumed very rarely.
- The daily diet indicates poverty more so than poor diet. Daily intake does include most important food groups, and probably provides enough carbohydrates and proteins.

However crucial vitamins could be lacking due to the relatively infrequent intake of fruits, and a lack of diversity among the vegetables consumed.

- Many items in the column for monthly intake was specified as taken very rarely, i.e. more likely on quarterly or even yearly basis rather than monthly, for example meat, egg and soft drinks.
- Poultry and milk producing livestock is kept to a very little extent among members, thus little intake of egg and milk. Egg is also culturally not regarded highly in the diet and therefore the few times eggs may be collected on farms they are usually sold rather than consumed.
- Vegetables, though consumed daily, are generally made up of leafy greens (cassava, amaranth) and tomatoes. Other types are not consumed regularly or even known about.

Discussion:

- During the discussion, it became evident that the desired food items, i.e. items that members wish to consume more of are mainly selected due to its "status" value rather than informed knowledge of nutritional gaps in the diets. For example "more meat" was mentioned as highly desired and important for the members. However, with frequent beans and small fish intake, protein might not be the most crucial food item for improved nutrition. There is thus a need for the group to analyze their food habits and come to an understanding of which items to source /desire for based on nutritional gaps rather than status desires.
- There is a big potential for recognition and understanding of the value of local poultry production. Poultry meat and egg consumption could probably easily be increased by little financial means through improved poultry management. There is also need to change the cultural perception of egg to boost its recognition in the diet.
- The exercise did not discuss seasonal variation in food intake but focused on a "over the year"-average diet. It would also be important to follow-up on this exercise to further analyze seasonal changed in diversity and quantity of food in order to fully understand the nutritional situation.
- Since many food items are consumed very rarely (mainly at celebrations) a 4th column could be added to this exercise in future (i.e. separate columns for mostly and yearly intake)

Pictures of the nutritional charts prepared by the groups:



