

# The Value of Integrating Nutrition within Farmer Field Schools

## Experience from Malawi



In partnership with  
DMT Consult



Farmer Field School, BETTER-Kulima Project, Mweniyumba, Malawi, 2018

### The Project

- 5-year EU funded (2018-22) – 402,000 farmers (10 districts)/ Self Help Africa (SHA) lead implementing agency
- FAO conducted Master Trainer & Community Based Facilitator Training
- Nutrition considered “Special Topic” within FFS curriculum
- Implementing partners cascaded nutrition training -SHA nutritionist took the lead

### Study Objective

Assess effectiveness of nutrition integration within FFS Approach

### Study Method

- Mixed-methods approach –
- Household Surveys
  - Key-informant interviews
  - Gender-disaggregated focus group discussions
  - Target: 3 districts representing the 3 regions
  - Sample Size – 225FFS participants & 76 non-FFS participants (matched case control design)



Margaret Chavula Kachere, FFS Euthini EPA Mzimba



Tionelepo FFS in Mzimba grading rice

### Key Results

FFS participants: - 89% had received nutrition training within FFS with main topics including:  
Malawi 6 food groups (89%), Water, Sanitation and Hygiene promotion (39%), Integrated homestead Farming (28%), Food Processing (25%), Cooking demonstrations (24%)



Jonas Mwakyelu in his maize field, Mwangabala village, Karonga, Malawi

### Some Improved Practices

- FFS participating households - three times more likely to meet minimum dietary diversity compared to non-FFS participating households (OR =3.592, p<0.001).
- FFS participants were twice as likely to have a drying rack for utensils in their homestead compared to non-FFS participants.
- Significant uptake in developing a kitchen garden in the districts of Salima (30.9% FFS v 0% non-FFS) and Thyolo (33.8% FFS v 4.2% non-FFS) with limited uptake in Karonga district where there was a culture of growing vegetables in the dambo’s (river area).
- FFS participants cited the use of improved seed varieties (54.2%), increased knowledge on post-harvest handling (32.2 %), and improved management of pests and diseases (18.7 %) that they have acquired via FFS as key practices to improve production of and access to nutritious food in their households.

### Conclusion

Integrating nutrition showed statistically significant improvements in dietary diversity within FFS households. Going forward recommend that nutrition should be a core component of the FFS curriculum.

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