

Implementation of Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture in the Central Province of Zambia

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Abstract : The Central Province of Zambia contains the majority of the nation's malnourished children, despite being the most productive province in terms of Agriculture. Most studies in the province have not paid attention to the linkages between agriculture performance and nutrition outcomes of the population. In light of this knowledge gap, this study focused on the linkage between nutrition and agriculture. In 2010 the Ministry of Agriculture in the Central Province while working with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education started a pilot project in Kapiri-Mposhi on Orange-fleshed Sweet Potatoes and Orange Maize and educating farmers on the importance of crop diversity. The study assessed the extent to which the small scale farmers are implementing the best practices of nutrition-sensitive agriculture in the Central Province. This study sought to determine the association of crop diversity and nutritional status of children aged 6-59 months in Kapiri-Mposhi district in the Central Province of Zambia. A cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted using a structured questionnaire. A total of 365 households were randomly sampled and the nutritional status of one child from each household assessed using anthropometric measurements. A total of 100 children were included in the study. Up to 21% of the children were stunted; 2% were wasted; and 9% underweight. There was a significant relationship between crops grown in households (ground nuts, maize and mangoes) and Z-scores for stunting (HAZ) and underweight (WAZ) ($p < 0.05$). This study has established that farmers may not diversify if they have high market demands on the staple.

Keywords : agriculture, crop diversity, children, nutrition

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