

Assessing Nutrition Knowledge Gaps and IYCF Practices of Mothers in Rural Senegal: A Formative Assessment for Nutrition Education

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INTRODUCTION

Progress on Hunger. As we approach the deadline of the Millennium Development Goals, substantial progress has been made to reduce the global proportion of people who suffer from hunger (UN, MDG Report 2014). However, as we make progress on decreasing calorie-insufficient malnutrition, the global nutrition community has begun to focus on the “hidden hunger” of micronutrient deficiency (Fitzpatrick, IFPRI Blog, 2014).

Dietary Diversity. New indicators have been developed to reflect individual and household dietary diversity; these indicators are essentially proxies of adequate micronutrient intake. Dietary diversity indicators can also be used to evaluate food access and socioeconomic barriers to consumption of quality foods (FAO, 2013).

Why Nutrition? Poor quality diets trap people and communities in a cycle of poor health and poverty. Improving nutrition can improve both health and community development.

PURPOSE

This study will aim to provide a basis on which to build a food-based nutrition education curriculum for women in rural Senegal. Nutrition education focused on dietary diversity and proper infant and young child feeding (IYCF) provides the tools for women to improve their own nutrition profile and that of their children. Improved nutrition and health allows children to reach their full productive potential, providing pathways out of poverty

SAMPLE POPULATION

This study is part of a larger project (PAPSEN-TIPA RCT) that will enroll 140 villages in the rural regions of Thies, Diourbel, and Fatick. This formative assessment samples 10 of these villages with methodology targeted at women in smallholder farming communities. Village selection will be based on geographic clustering.

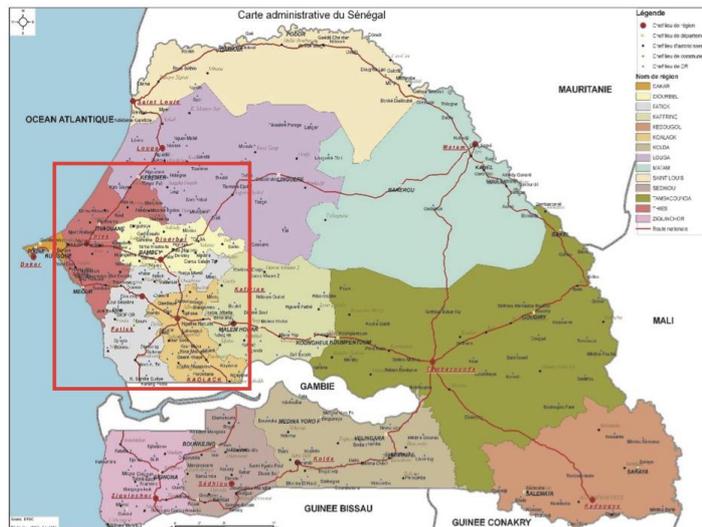


Fig 1. Map of administrative districts of Senegal. The red box encompasses Thies, Diourbel, and Fatick.

Source: Agence Nationale de la Statistique et de la Démographie (ANSD), MEASURE DHS, ICF International. (2013) Continuous Demographic and Health Survey in Senegal (2012-2013). Final Report Year 1. Dakar, Senegal and Calverton, MD, USA: pp. xvi

METHODS

Developing an effective nutrition education intervention requires a strong knowledge of the socioeconomic and cultural characteristics of the target population, as well as ecological constraints that influence access to consumption of certain crop foods.

Focused Ethnographic Study (FES). The methodology used in this formative assessment is largely adapted from the FES protocol developed by the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN).

- Focus groups (1 per village) with 6 to 8 women (mothers and grandmothers, as well as other women of reproductive age).
- Individual interviews to better understand particular nuances of nutrition knowledge gaps and IYCF practices.
- Participant-observation to triangulate/validate findings from focus groups and interviews.

OUTCOMES & GOALS

Expected Outcomes. This formative assessment will allow for the production of a food-based nutrition education curriculum that is socioeconomically, culturally, and ecologically appropriate for women involved in smallholder farming in rural Senegal. We will collect data on:

- Nutrition knowledge gaps.
- Specific IYCF practices (e.g., EBF, complementary foods, age specific foods).
- Crops grown for consumption and/or sale.

Long-term Impacts. The actual product (i.e., the nutrition education itself) will impact the nutrition status and health profile of the target population. This impact will be appraised using the following indicators:

- Minimum dietary diversity for women (MDD-W).
- Minimum acceptable diet (MAD).
- IYCF knowledge, attitudes, and practices, as assessed by baseline and endline surveys.
- BMI from measured weights and heights.

FUTURE WORK

Ultimately, the nutrition education curriculum will be combined with an agricultural intervention (i.e., drip irrigation as provided by PAPSEN-TIPA). Increasing horticultural production, providing education on food and nutrition, and empowering women can have a synergistic effect toward improving community health and productivity profiles (Remans et al, 2011; Smith et al., 2013).

Assessing Effectiveness. The PAPSEN-TIPA RCT will allow effectiveness of nutrition education to be assessed when combined with an agricultural intervention as compared to nutrition education given alone.

Mode of Delivery? Half of the villages in the PAPSEN-TIPA study will be given nutrition education via ICT to assess the effectiveness of ICT vs. traditional modes of communication for nutrition education. This can inform policy and programming; cost-effective nutrition education with wide coverage is ideal.