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## Rural Agriculture for Improved Nutrition: Stakeholder Insights from Different Sectors in Tanzania

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### Abstract

**Background:** Nutrition sensitive pathways and approaches involving agriculture are being recognised as essential to guarantee nutrition security and lessen undernutrition. In Tanzania, the majority of the population lives in the rural areas and 80 % depend on agriculture as the main source of livelihood. Although agriculture can play a big role in alleviating undernutrition, its role in tackling malnutrition needs to be dealt with based on policies to the actual implementation.

**Objective:** This study aimed to investigate perspectives of stakeholders on links between rural agriculture and nutrition, opportunities and challenges, evidences and policy inferences.

**Methodology:** Open ended interviews were conducted with 11 stakeholders identified for the Scale-N project in Tanzania who contribute in one way or another to the nutrition sector. Two focus group discussions with 20 farmers from Mzula and Tindiga villages in Dodoma and Kilosa were conducted. **Results:** Stakeholders acknowledged obstacles to better achievement of undernutrition reduction which included absence of clear cut motivations in the agriculture sector regarding enhancing nutrition, concentrating on cash crops, lack of accountability for agriculture matters for improving nutrition, policies exist but putting them into action is hindered, limited competence in the available human resources, absence of coordination between sectors, lack of proof that agriculture works for nutrition and economic constraints to support agriculture. Possible measures mentioned to be taken to improve rural agriculture for better nutrition including home gardening with different crops, nutrition training, better access to markets and labour saving technologies to women. From the farmers' side, 13 mentioned lack of extension services, 17 mentioned lack of access to agricultural productive resources, lack of knowledge about nutritious and safe food and the majority mentioned increased occurrences of natural disasters such as floods and serious drought.

**Conclusion:** Numerous possibilities are present to strengthen the role of agriculture on nutrition in Tanzania, however, there is need to strengthen the structure and making of policies which will in turn need proper implementation for the desired success.

**Keywords:** Agriculture, nutrition , policy, rural