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## Pathways Leading to Diversified Diets – A Retrospective Analysis of A Participatory Nutrition-Sensitive Agricultural Project

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### Abstract

Our previous studies in Western Kenya have revealed that participatory farm diversification and nutrition education leads to increased dietary diversity of women and young children. In this present study, we have determined the pathways that led to an increased dietary diversity. Moreover, we have identified possible aftereffects of the intervention, such as factors related to sustainable behaviour change and factors that increased the participants' overall wellbeing beyond their nutrition (ex: empowerment). The overall objective of the study is to assess the extent to which widely used theoretical frameworks on agriculture-nutrition linkages applied to a real world, community-based, participatory project.

The study design consists of a qualitative, cross-sectional study of 10 focus group discussions and 5 key informant interviews. We conducted focus group discussions with community members who engaged in the participatory farm diversification program. The key informant interviews were conducted with local authorities that worked with these communities during the project. The data collection and analysis techniques used in this study were inspired by a widely used framework related to nutrition-sensitive agriculture. We then used social models to better identify and quantify potential aftereffects—which can be beneficial outcomes in and of themselves. Gender disaggregation during data collection and analysis enabled more nuanced interpretation regarding gender equality and women's empowerment.

Based on the data analysis, we developed our own framework showing the pathways from our participatory nutrition-sensitive agricultural intervention to improved diets. All three conventional pathways that are shown in widely used theoretical frameworks were well utilised in this project, including food production, agricultural income, and women's empowerment. Instead of a linear relationship, as shown in existing frameworks, our framework is a complex network of branched pathways with back-loops. In particular, the framework reveals details regarding empowerment as a pathway. Key components of this pathway include women's income, women's time, and men's support in agriculture. Identified aftereffects include empowerment, community cohesion, and increased harmony within households.

In the future, we hope to see more nutrition-sensitive agricultural projects that develop frameworks beforehand and to measure aftereffects that can be outcomes in and of themselves.

**Keywords:** Agricultural-nutrition pathways, community-based participatory approach, dietary diversity, nutrition-sensitive agriculture