



Tropentag, September 15-17, 2021, hybrid conference

“Towards shifting paradigms in agriculture
for a healthy and sustainable future”

Fruit and Vegetable Intake: Knowledge, Attitude and Practices among Rural School-Aged Children in East Africa

LUISA ALVES, JACOB SARFO, GUDRUN B. KEDING

University of Goettingen, Division Quality of Plant Products, Department of Crop Sciences, Germany

Abstract

Fruit and vegetable (FV) intakes are very low in Sub-Saharan Africa, leading to different forms of malnutrition. As there is only little data on FV consumption of school-aged children, the “Fruits and Vegetables for all seasons” project, in one work component, measured FV intakes, and the knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAPs) of school-aged children on the processing and consumption of FVs in rural households in East Africa.

Data was collected from households in six study sites – three fruit and three vegetable production areas – in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. While the main interviewee was the mother or caregiver, available children between 6-13 years were interviewed applying a 24-hour dietary recall and 7-day FV recall during two seasons. KAPs were assessed using closed and open-ended questions. In total 251 children, 68 from the fruit and 183 from the vegetable areas were considered for the analysis.

All 68 children from the fruit areas reported that they consume fruits in general and like to eat them. Top three favourite fruits and mostly known were mango (50%), jackfruit (38.2%) and orange (36.8%). From the vegetable areas 97.8% of children consumed vegetables in general and 98.4% liked to eat them with cabbage (60.7%), kales (54.6%) and cowpea leaves (39.9%) being the three most favourite vegetables and also the most known. Only 4.4% of the children from the fruit and 4.9% from the vegetable areas disagreed on the statement, that fresh fruits/vegetables are good for the body. Contrariwise, there were 86.8% of children from the fruit and 99.5% from the vegetable areas that did not know what a processed or preserved fruit/vegetable is. Moreover 66.2% and 57.9% of the children stated that they are unable to eat fruits or vegetables, respectively, year-round. Only 42.6% of children eat fruits and only 4.4% eat vegetables while in school.

First results show that FV consumption among school-aged children is seasonally insufficient and diversity of most preferred FVs is limited to few mainly exotic species. In addition, intake of FVs will be analysed and related to the household demographic, socio-economic and KAPs data among all three countries.

Keywords: East Africa, fruits, KAPs, rural, school-aged children, vegetables