



# Perceptions on criteria influencing complementary food choices among (agro-) pastoralist mothers in northern Kenya

Patricia Kiprono<sup>1</sup>, Jennifer Kaiser<sup>1</sup>, Hussein Wario<sup>2</sup>, Brigitte Kaufmann<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> German Institute for Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture (DITSU), Germany, <sup>2</sup>Center for Research and Development in Drylands (CRDD)

## Background

- Child Feeding is a causal factor of malnutrition.
- Mothers make decisions about foods and feeding in general on behalf of their children.
- There are limited qualitative studies to understand mothers' child food decision making process and its influencing factors.

**Aim:** To understand mothers' decision making process as influenced by their context and personal food environment.

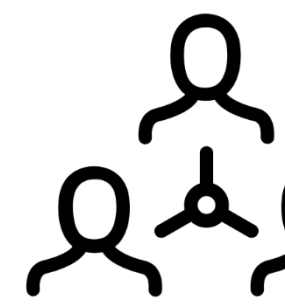


## Materials and Methods



Qualitative design

Marsabit county (Saku and Ngurunit-Korr)



Selection of 6 women groups

(Borana- pastoralists, Burji- mainly crop farmers & Rendille-pastoralists from rural & urban areas).

21 group sessions

Rating of 25-28 child foods (☹️1- 😊5)scale against 5 factors. *Common foods across: 14*



## Results

### Meaning of factors



**Accessibility:** own production, seasonality and market proximity



**Affordability:** linked to accessibility and seasonality. Strategies used



**Convenience:** time, fuel and water used in food preparation



**Child acceptance:** soft, sweet foods taken without force



**Healthiness:** related to child outcomes, such as growth and development

### Rating similarities among ethnic groups



Porridge, beans, eggs and Rice



None



Beans, eggs, ugali and potatoes



Meat



Fruits, cow's milk, eggs, ugali, porridge



Beans



Cow's milk, porridge, potatoes and rice



None



Cow's milk, porridge, eggs, meat



Ashir/ maize

### Explanation of rating differences

Only Rendille rated cow's milk as least accessible. *They majorly keep camels & goats*

Cow's milk rated as least accessible by rural Burji & Rendille. *Crop farmers*

Fermented products e.g. qita (made from wheat and maize flour) commonly used by Burji is considered *inconvenient*

Only Rural Burji considered rice to be moderately (3) accepted by children. *Crop farmers but do not grow rice.*

Only Rendille rated pawpaw and orange low. *Not commonly exposed to those foods and are perishable*

## Conclusions

- Mothers from different ethnic communities are mostly agreeing on the meaning of food environment factors
- Out of 14 common food items across both locations, 4-5 and 1 food item(s) were rated similarly; high and low respectively under each factor. Porridge was the only food item with a high rating across all factors except affordability which was rated moderately affordable by the Borana.
- Despite mothers having an agreement on meaning of the factors, they have varied perceptions on child foods in relation to these factors as influenced by their different situations and contexts.



### Contact information

Patricia Kiprono  
p.kiprono@ditsl.org

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societal actors:  
• Women groups  
• Mothers  
• Local government  
• Other actors