

ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Assessing The Role of Multi-Sectoral Platforms and Their Influence on Nutrition Outcomes in West Pokot County, Kenya

John Kutna¹, Happiness Oruko¹, Esther Wambui², Anne Gitimu¹, Yvonne Opanga¹

¹Amref Health Africa in Kenya

²Food Agricultural Organization

¹Corresponding author Email: Happiness.Oruko@amref.org

Abstract

Background: Various actors continue to implement food and nutrition security interventions in West Pokot. SMART Survey Report, 2022 indicates higher stunting rates of 43.2% against 26% at national level. Multisector approach offers comprehensive strategies to enhance food systems as well as food and nutrition security (FNS) through addressing underlying and basic causes of malnutrition which seem to be missed out in most nutrition interventions. The paper highlights the functionality of multi-sectorial platforms (MSP) and their influence on FNS issues in West Pokot County.

Methods: A cross sectional design utilizing qualitative data collection methods was utilized. 25 Key Informant Interviews with purposively selected representatives from line ministries and implementing partners were conducted. Additionally, 9 FGDs with Community Based Organizations and Community Health Volunteers were conducted. Qualitative data was audio recorded, translated, transcribed verbatim and coded using MAXQDA version 22. Data was analyzed thematically through deductive and inductive methods.

Results: Key findings indicated lack of awareness on existence and objectives of multi-sectoral platforms and County FNS priorities among stakeholders. There was minimal evidence of stakeholder participation in development of FNS priorities at subcounty and community levels, poor dissemination of FNS priorities and the MSP terms of reference. At the community level, food security was limited due to high food prices, poor road networks for food distribution as well as cultural practices that limit consumption of certain foods. It was also noted that some community members also lack awareness on food preservation leading to food wastage. Facilitating factors for MSP functionality included availability of well-established government structures and technical capacity of various stakeholders. Barriers included: inadequate financial and human resources to support MSP, minimal capacity to coordinate MSP and failure to prioritize MSP by stakeholders. Proposed sustainability mechanisms included: Need to strengthen government commitment to fund and convene MSPs, improve capacity of stakeholders to coordinate MSP, and institutionalize MSP in line ministries.

Conclusion: There is need to improve inclusivity of all stakeholders in MSP processes including design, implementation and monitoring. To ensure sustainability, there is need to enhance government commitment and stakeholder contribution in co-funding MSP activities.

Key Words: Stunting, Multi-sectoral platform, Food and Nutrition Security, co-funding, Sustainability