

Improving Dietary & Health Data for Decision-Making in Agriculture and Nutrition Actions in Africa



Challenge

Nutrition and health are some the most used indicators for tracking progress against benchmarks, such as the SDGs, and for assessing the impacts of development interventions. Unfortunately, conventional methods for collecting indicators of nutrition and health status require considerable training, are slow, difficult, and expensive to collect accurately. One outcome is that the available data are insufficient for many tracking, humanitarian and surveillance needs. Such data are especially sparse among those for whom it is especially expensive or challenging to collect; for example, in pastoral communities (Wild et al. 2019; Hassell et al. 2020), during conflict and in emergency settings (Carrol et al. 2017), and during pandemics (Griffith et al. 2020; Hassell et al. 2020).

Objectives

1. To develop a low-cost approach to high-frequency, low-cost collection of health and nutrition data in remote locations and for marginalized populations.
2. To provide simple tools for caregivers to track the performance of their children against global standards for health and nutrition.

Proposed Solution

To develop a mobile-based platform by which caregivers can easily collect, submit, and access information on their and their children's nutritional and health status in near-real time and at extremely low cost.

Progress to date

We have partnered with FANRPAN to develop a mobile application that caregivers can use to record and submit information on the health and nutrition of their children that does not require literacy or numeracy. We have piloted the tool for the last 12 months among nearly 200 caregivers in pastoral communities Northern Kenya.

Key lessons learned

- Caregivers are able and willing to collect, record and submit data on nutrition and health indicators for themselves and their children. (preliminary)
- Caregivers change behavior in response to customized messaging resulting from the data that they provide. (preliminary)

Outputs and further reading

- [Project 2-pager](#)
- [Blog](#) on piloting activities in Samburu County.
- [Blog](#) on field work and project management during the COVID lockdown
- Jensen, N., V. Alulu, W. Lepariyo, T. Madzivhandila, B. Mkandawire-Munthali, S. Sibanda. 2020. [Improving nutrition and health data to and from remote regions](#). *United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN)--Nutrition*, 45, 96-102.