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Food-based Approaches for Improving Diets and Raising Levels of Nutrition



CONTRIBUTION OF HOMESTEAD FOOD PRODUCTION TO IMPROVED HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION STATUS - LESSONS LEARNED FROM BANGLADESH, CAMBODIA, NEPAL AND THE PHILIPPINES

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Abstract

Malnutrition is a serious public health problem in Asia. Since 2003 Helen Keller International (HKI) has been implementing homestead food production (HFP) programmes to increase and ensure year-round availability and intake of micronutrient-rich foods in poor households of Asia.

The aim of this paper is to review the impact of HFP programmes and identify lessons learned for adaptation, replication and potential scale-up.

Impact evaluation data collected on a representative sample (10 to 20 percent of ~30,000 households in HFP programme and comparison (non-HFP programme) villages in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Nepal and the Philippines) were reviewed. Information assessed included household garden practices, dietary intake, income and prevalence of anaemia and night-blindness among children (6-59 months) and non-pregnant women. A review of the implementation process was also undertaken.

The HFP programme improved household garden practices, food production, consumption and dietary diversity. The number of crop varieties consumed was significantly increased from a range of 2-3 to 8-9 between baseline and endline among programme households. The change in proportion of households consuming eggs and/or liver was higher among programme (24 percent to 46 percent) than comparison (12 percent to 18 percent) households. The median income earned from selling surplus HFP produce increased from US\$1 to 7 in all programmes. Anaemia prevalence was lower among children in the programme households at endline compared to baseline, however, the decrease was only significant in Bangladesh (63.9 percent to 45.2 percent), and the Philippines (42.9 percent to 16.6 percent).

The HFP programme improved household garden practices, consumption, dietary diversity and income as well as reduced anaemia among preschool children.

Key words: agriculture; nutrition; food security; malnutrition; women; children; anaemia

