

Tajikistan in the driver's seat to collect dietary diversity information for evidence-based policies



Measuring the diversity of women's diets with the Minimum Dietary Diversity – Women (MDD-W) to monitor nutritional outcomes

MDD-W: a global dietary diversity indicator

Demands for a proxy indicator to assess women's dietary quality have been intensified due to an increased focus on improving maternal and child health during the critical 1,000-day period. An indicator to support such efforts includes the MDD-W indicator that reflects women's consumption of ≥ 5 of 10 food groups throughout the previous day and night. This is because higher dietary diversity in women is associated with higher micronutrient adequacy and that women are less likely to have micronutrient deficiency.

Why using the MDD-W

- A standardised and universally accepted indicator for nutrition
- Indication of immediate changes in dietary quality and micro-nutrient adequacy of the diets
- Simple to collect, analyse and interpret dietary information
- A cost-effective and less labour intensive tool
- Requires minimal resources and capacities compared to most traditional dietary assessment methods
- Easy to integrate MDD-W into national nutrition information systems and to create linkages with other information systems (e.g. health, trade, education etc.)

Benefits to integrate MDD-W into the Tajikistan's Household Budget Survey (HBS)

- Develop capacity for Tajikistan to obtain routine information on women's dietary diversity for monitoring nutrition situation, assessing nutrition impacts of food & nutrition policies, target setting and advocacy
- Develop capacity for Tajikistan to implement a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework to strengthen country's capacity to collect quality and reliable nutrition data for evidence-based policy and accountability
- Tajikistan will be the champion in the region and among the SUN countries in using the MDD-W to monitor nutrition outcomes
- Stimulate national data ownership
- Strengthen partnerships in M&E of nutrition outcomes with SUN countries, international organisations, donors etc.
- Easy integration of MDD-W in HBS, because:
 - ✓ National representative population samples are available
 - ✓ Regular and sustainable data collection
 - ✓ Quick and cost-effective collection of food security and nutrition data
- Assist policymakers to identify regions and population groups at high risk of malnutrition, and monitor nutrition progress

FAO capacity development activities in Tajikistan



Figure 1. Map of Tajikistan

Activities supported so far:

- Increase awareness of food security and nutrition situation in country
- Cost-effective capacity development activities
- MDD-W indicator adapted locally– available to be used in subsequent activities throughout the country
- Strengthen country partnerships to improve maternal and child nutrition
- Nation-wide capacity development in using MDD-W and data management
- The first large-scale data on dietary diversity of women of reproductive age in different regions of the country
- Feasibility of linking national food security and nutrition data was assured



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More information

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<http://www.fao.org/nutrition/evaluacion-nutricional/en/>

Picture: Enumerators conducting MDD-W interviews during the fieldwork of the training courses in Khujand-Sughd and Dushanbe regions of Tajikistan. Food items depicted in local markets in Sughd. Photo: W. Lee, T. Mouratidou and C. Lazarte