Nutrition and utilization for health and income generation: an incentive for the promotion of legumes in Kenya

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Introduction

Soybean is the most complete food and contains the highest proteins content of all food crops. Soybean is both food and nutra health which can support human wellbeing.

The utilization of soybeans through sustainable and participatory capacity building in soybean processing, nutrition and marketing is to act as an incentive to boost production of soybeans at the grass-root levels.

Adequate and appropriate nutrition which can be achieved through the consumption of a balanced healthy diet (consisting of locally available foods and fortified food and/or micronutrient supplementation when needed) is vital for the health and well-being of all individuals regardless of HIV status. Nutritional support helps to maintain the immune system and to sustain healthy levels of physical activity.

Soybean is also a tradeable commodity and can be processed to produce soymilk and other products which can be sold to generate income.

Goal

The goal of the project is to improve food security, income and nutrition and health of rural populations affected by HIV while conserving the natural resource base in the target areas.

Contributions to MDG’s

- Eradication of extreme poverty and Hunger (Goal 1)
- Enhancing nutritional quality and safety (Goal 2)
- Empowerment of women (Goal 3)
- Improvement of Child Nutrition (Goal 4)
- Improvement of cleanliness, sanitation, health mother’s nutrition (Goal 5)

- Improvement of health and nutrition increase in income and reduction in susceptibility to HIV (Goal 6)
- Ensure environmental sustainability (Goal 7)
- Development of global partnerships for development (Goal 8)

Project operational areas

The project is operating in different districts of Western Kenya, West Pokot and Nakaseke District in Uganda

Materials and Methods

At the inception of the project, in order to create awareness on the nutritional benefits of soybeans and the project, we adopted the module of visiting farmer associations and living positive groups and giving short talks on the goodness of soybeans and allowing question and answer sessions to ensure that our clients had a voice.

We adopted a methodology of training of trainers (ToT) for five days (ToT-5 days) and training of farmers (ToF) for two days (ToF-2 days). Topics covered included:

- Processing and Utilization of Soybeans
- HACCP: Food Hygiene and Sanitation
- Basic Business Management
- Nutrition Education
- Packaging and Labelling.

Results and Discussions

- Currently over one thousand individuals have been trained on food fortification, nutrition, basic business management, food safety and hygiene.
- Nutritional status of children, women as well as men in current project operation areas had improved overtime since the inception of food fortification idea using soybeans.
- Popularity of soybean products has been on the increase in the different operational regions creating a demand for soybean products.
- The project has created employment by the installation of three soybean processing machines as well as setting up linkages to large scale processing companies and soybean farmers.

Key Next Step

- Continue to incorporate soybean into local foods and scale out to other regions in Kenya and East African Countries such as Uganda.
- Increase participation by other key processing companies and micro finance agencies.
- Packaging of the processed foods must be encouraged.

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