



A social behaviour change communication card on ASF consumption

The challenge

- There is a high burden of stunting, low dietary diversity, and low consumption of animal source foods (ASFs), including milk. 38 % of children in the study area were stunted.
- Less than one-third of children 6-23 months are fed at least four food groups per day (minimum dietary diversity) and consumption of animal-source foods (ASFs) is low.
- Mothers lack knowledge about the importance of ASFs for child growth, the appropriate timing of introduction of ASFs and appropriate milk storage.

Our innovative approach

- Cluster-randomized controlled trial to test if a social behaviour change communication (SBCC) intervention on ASFs increases milk intake from own cow production in Nyabihu and Ruhango Districts.
- Measuring the impacts of participation in (1) the Girinka program plus a community-based ASF SBCC intervention compared to participation in Girinka only and (2) Girinka only compared to Girinka eligibility, but no participation.
- Enrolled a cohort of mothers with child aged 12-29 months in Girinka households and Girinka eligible households.
- SBCC was implemented by community health workers from February-October 2019.

Impact of animal-source food (ASF) social behaviour change communication (SBCC) on nutrition in Girinka households

- The Government of Rwanda provides an exotic or cross-bred cow to poor families through the Girinka program.
- The Girinka program plus a social behaviour change communication promoting ASF consumption increased maternal knowledge and awareness but not percentage of households that sold or retained milk for home consumption.
- We found a trend toward increased frequency of child milk intake in the Girinka and SBCC intervention group to 2 or more times a week.



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Outcomes

- Knowledge of types of ASFs, timing of milk introduction, and milk food safety higher in SBCC group.
- Awareness of feeding child ASFs, drinking 1 cup of milk daily and starting to give milk at 12 months higher in SBCC group.
- Height-for age did not decline in either group.

Recommendations:

- Scale up of the ASF SBCC designed for men in households.
- Longer duration for intervention.
- Explore other sustainable support mechanisms so that poor households don't have to sell milk.

Next steps

- Insufficient milk production by Girinka cows and the need for some households to sell milk suggests the need for complementary interventions to increase milk production and retain sufficient amounts for home consumption.

Partners