



**THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE AWARENESS
CAMPAIGN OF THE AFRICAN LEAFY
VEGETABLES PROJECT TO NUTRITION
BEHAVIOUR CHANGE AMONG THE
KENYAN URBAN POPULATION:
THE CASE OF NAIROBI**

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Background

- v Hunger and malnutrition threaten millions of people in sub-Saharan Africa, yet the value of African traditional vegetables is not fully appreciated.
- v Increased consumption of African leafy vegetables (ALVs) can have a positive effect on nutrition, health and economic wellbeing of both rural and urban populations.

The African leafy vegetables (ALVs) awareness campaign - 2002 to 2005

Campaign aim:

- ✓ To increase the level of awareness on nutritional and health benefits of ALVs
- ✓ To influence behaviour change among urban populations on consumption of ALVs



Why African Leafy Vegetables?

- v Vegetables such as Amaranthus, Cowpea, African nightshades, Crotalaria, Jute or Cat's whiskers are good sources of micronutrients including iron, folate, iodine, selenium, zinc and vitamins A, B complex , C and E.



The key initiatives of the PA campaign: An Overview

- ✓ March 2003: “**Rediscovering a forgotten treasure: Health benefits of traditional leafy vegetables**”, a 3-day event on the potential of traditional foods, especially ALVs in fighting micronutrient deficiencies.
- ✓ 2003: “**Enhancing market access for ALVs**”, a market assessment of consumers, suppliers and sub-sector in Nairobi. This was aimed at promoting ALVs and other underutilized traditional foods through social marketing.
- ✓ October 2003: Nutrition week on the theme “**Fight HIV/AIDS through proper nutrition**” a five day event that comprised a nutrition walk, outreach and in reach programmes, a symposium, health talks at Kenyatta National Hospital (the largest referral hospital in East and Central Africa), and an open day with exhibits

.....Campaign overview continued

- v June/July 2004: “***Dietary diversity for quality health***”, an 8-day forum aimed at promoting variety in our diets as a means of achieving better nutrition and health.

Activities: a 7-km walk for health, lectures from experts, traditional cooking competitions, food processing demonstrations, food displays, exhibitions, a traditional foods garden, and a symposium for professionals and policy makers.



Promotional Materials

Opportunities for Higher Nutritional Benefits

Mean Composition per 100 Gram Edible Portion of Selected Traditional Leafy Vegetables Compared with Cabbage



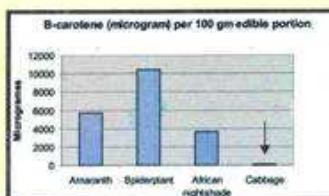
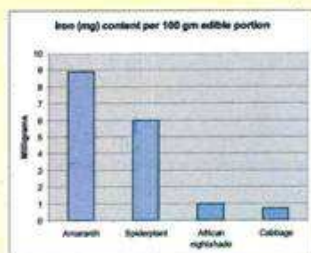
African nightshade (Mnavu)



Amaranth (Mchicha)

	Amaranth (Mchicha)	Spiderplant (Mwangani)	African nightshade (Mnavu)	Cabbage (Kabiji)
Moisture (water) (gram)	84	86.6	87.2	91.4
Iron (milligram)	8.9	6.0	1.0	0.7
Protein (gram)	4.6	4.8	4.3	1.7
Calories	42	34	38	26
Carbohydrates (gram)	8.2	5.2	5.7	6.0
Fibre (gram)	1.8	1.4	1.3	1.2
Ascorbic acid (Vit. C) (milligram)	64	13	20	54
Calcium (milligram)	410	288	442	47
Phosphorus (milligram)	103	111	75	40
*B - carotene (microgram)	5716	10452	3660	100
Thiamine (Vit. B ₁) (milligram)	0.05	-	-	0.04
Riboflavin (Vit. B ₂) (milligram)	0.42	-	0.59	0.1

* Note: B - carotene is Vitamin A precursor



Supported by International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI). This chart is available at Kenya Resource Centre for Indigenous Knowledge (KENRIK), National Museums of Kenya, P.O. Box 40658 Nairobi, Kenya. Tel: 3741673, Email: ikcentre@kenrik.org



Spiderplant (Mwangani)

Study Objectives

- v To establish the level of awareness among urban dwellers in Nairobi on the health and nutritional value of traditional African vegetables;
- v To evaluate nutrition awareness and behaviour change among various audiences in Nairobi;
- v To review and examine communication strategies used by institutions to raise awareness on the value of ALVs; and
- v On the basis of the findings, therefore, to advise on appropriate measures to enhance awareness on nutritional and health benefits of ALVs among urban dwellers.

Summary of Key Findings

- ✓ Positive attitudinal and behaviour change occurred at the individual level
- ✓ At government level, the Kenya Parliament tabled a motion to support Bill on Nutrition Policy
- ✓ Personal influence through family & social networks proved stronger than the media in influencing attitudes and behaviour change

Research Methodology

- ✓ Outcome evaluation, using a sample survey to gather quantitative & qualitative data on awareness, attitudes & behaviours on ALVs
- ✓ Research tool - questionnaire with open & closed-ended questions
- ✓ Sample size - 100 respondents in Nairobi (72 buyers & 28 vendors)
- ✓ Sample design – deliberate or purposive sampling

Types of ALV Markets Sampled

**Nine formal & 16 informal markets in high,
Middle and low income areas**



Key findings

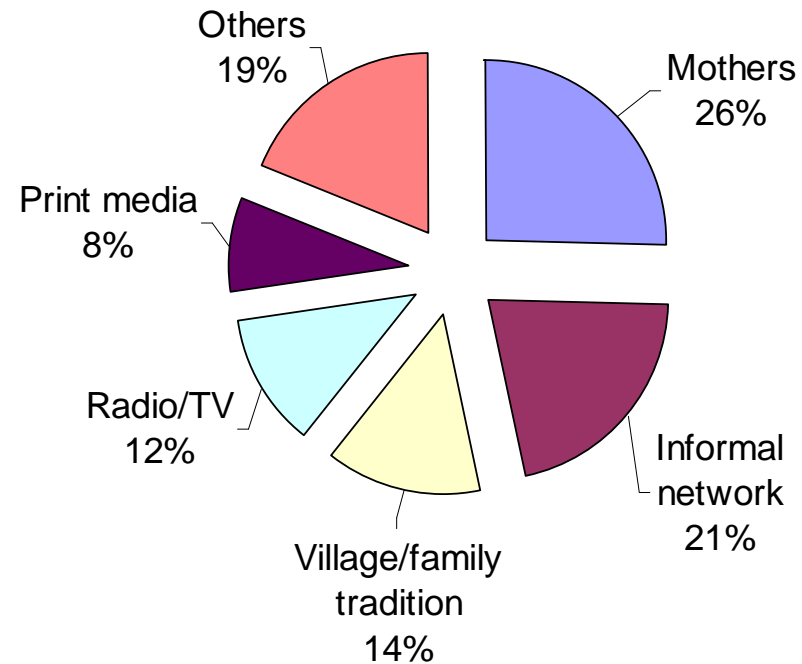


- v Awareness on the value of ALVs for nutrition & health was raised to 91% for 56% of study group
- v Behaviour change occurred in 14% of respondents who dropped red meat, kales, cabbage, spinach for ALVs
- v Consumer demand for ALVs increased tenfold in 2 yrs. Demand outstrips supply by 40%

...key findings cont.

- v Supermarkets are now key outlets for ALVs, giving them a high profile & creating consumer confidence in their source & quality
- v More rural & peri-urban farmers producing ALVs, hence increasing their incomes
- v Parliament tabled a motion for a Nutrition Policy & started to review the Food Policy to include traditional foods

Communication channels



Lessons learnt

Factors for successful and effective communication campaigns:

- ✓ Credibility of source
- ✓ Attention to audience characteristics
- ✓ Message quality, clarity, consistency and repeated exposure
- ✓ Informal sources of communication

Recommendations

- v A research-based and comprehensive information, education and communication (IEC) approach in health and nutrition
- v The IEC strategy should be of national scope with a multi-sectoral committee of organizations that provide technical and policy leadership
- v Different types of multi-channel communication campaigns tailored to meet specific audience needs should be integrated into an overall approach dealing with the various aspects of the health and nutrition problems being addressed.



...Recommendations cont.

- v Campaigns should aim beyond just raising awareness and identify causes of resistance to behaviour change (such as beliefs that all ALVs are bitter) and address them by focusing on what can be influenced.
- v An IEC strategy should have a cyclical approach process that entails ongoing audience research, and repeated monitoring, evaluation and revision according to needs and lessons learnt . Feedback is essential .

...Recommendations cont.

- v IEC should target specific population segments that have particular characteristics that influence behaviour (culture, beliefs, family status, socio-professional status, and so on), rather than view audiences as a mass public
- v Political support is needed to scale up the promotion of traditional foods; the government should therefore develop policies that link food security, nutrition and health, & improve rural infrastructure to enhance marketing

Activities that address environmental or situational factors

- v Training farmers on improved agronomic practices for increased production of ALVs
- v Providing extension services to farmers
- v More scientific research on under-researched aspects of ALVs e.g their value as antioxidants
- v Developing cottage industries for drying and packaging ALVs for long-term storage



...Activities that address environmental factors cont.

- ✓ Wider popularization of ALVs that are only locally appreciated
- ✓ Documenting indigenous knowledge on traditional foods
- ✓ Cultural revival nationally to reconnect traditional foods with culture



Conclusion

- v Rogers and Storey (1987) conclude in relation to campaigns that *‘the shifting conceptualization of communication effects and communication process has led to recognition that communication operates within a complex social, political and economic matrix and that communication could not be expected to generate effects all by itself’*.

THANK YOU

