



Bringing Food and Nutrition Awareness to Rural Households in Africa to Enhance Food and Nutrition Security

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Abstract:

Statement of the Problem: Food production in Africa is driven by the requirement for sufficient food for family consumption, and partly on the economic returns from selling excess production. Chronic malnutrition still exists especially in the rural areas despite the number of programs by national governments and international development organizations. In rural areas, food preparation is done by women and is based on traditional recipes without knowledge on their nutritional contents. Women depend on their own farm produce and on what is cheaply available in the local markets for ingredients. Actually, traditional foods are nutritious. However, the type, the preparation, the quantity and the frequency of consuming them should be properly understood by consumers to ensure consumption of a well-balanced nutritious food. In the last 5 years, there is also a concern on the growing unsafe food commodities offered in the markets because of the presence of Aflatoxin which results from poor harvesting, storing and processing of the crops. Surprisingly, Aflatoxin and its effects on health is not known in rural communities. There is also lack of legislation and weak implementation on control of food quality, safety and standards. The Sasakawa Africa Association (SAA) has been implementing programs aimed at combating hunger, malnutrition and poverty by promoting improved production, harvesting and postharvest handling practices and technologies to increase productivity, reduce losses, improve quality and enhance food safety and nutrition in addition to increasing income of smallholder farmers in Africa. Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: SAA, in its four focus countries (Ethiopia, Mali, Nigeria and Uganda) works with partners, majorly the Ministry of Agriculture to strengthen its agricultural extension advisory services for smallholder farmers to bring improved practices and technologies along the value chain through trainings and demonstrations. Among the awareness campaign SAA and its partners are bringing to the rural areas are training of stakeholders on good agricultural practices, knowledge on Aflatoxin (determination, mitigation and control measures), information and training on basic nutrition, dietary diversification and food regulations, and handling pesticides/chemical residues in food commodities.



Biography:

Leonides Halos-Kim is an agricultural and food process engineer with over 35 years work experience on crop processing, postharvest and food engineering education, research, development, and extension, in Asia and Africa. Currently, she is the Thematic Director of Postharvest and Agro-processing (PHAP) Extension of SAA, and is based in its Regional Office in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Recent Publications:

1. Fofana, B., L Halos-Kim, M. Akeredolu, A. Okiror, Kebeba, N. Deola, M. Oluoch, & I. Fumiko. 2020. Innovative agricultural extension models for empowering smallholder farmers in Africa: the case of the Sasakawa Africa Association. *Frontiers of Agricultural Science and Engineering*. Manuscript ID FASE 201908.
2. Halos-Kim, L. 2019. Enterprise-Oriented Postharvest and Agro-processing Models. *SAA Archive*. October.
3. Halos-Kim, L. 2014. Why Value Chain Approach Matters in Promoting Post-production Technologies in Africa. *Proceedings, SAFE Regional Workshop on Analysis of Options for Developing and Implementing Value Chain-Oriented SEPS (Student Enterprise Project)*. Bamako, Mali. 11-13 February.

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