

AGRICULTURE SERIES

Enhancing your workforce
nutrition programme



NUTRITION EDUCATION

A practical guide for agricultural organisations to
strengthen their workforce nutrition programme
with a nutrition education component

**WORKFORCE
NUTRITION ALLIANCE**

The first wealth is health

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Version

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1

Introduction

BEFORE YOU START

BACKGROUND

Introduction

A practical tool

Imagine smallholder farmers living in rural areas, where long workdays begin before sunrise. Meals are often simple, carbohydrate-based, prepared quickly due to limited time, fuel, and food options. Even though most smallholder farmers understand the long-term benefits of healthy eating, changing long-standing food habits and behaviours are not easy. Culture, the food environment, and gaps in nutrition knowledge all influence what they eat.

This guidebook recognises these realities. It is a practical tool that helps organisations (companies, supply chain actors, cooperatives, buyers, NGOs, civil society organisation, and other implementing partners) to design and implement simple and effective nutrition education and wellbeing programmes in agricultural communities. Whether you're launching a pilot or strengthening an existing initiative, this guidebook helps you to turn ideas into action.

Who we are

The [Workforce Nutrition Alliance](#) was launched by [The Consumer Goods Forum \(CGF\)](#) and the [Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition \(GAIN\)](#) in October 2019. Since our launch in 2019, the Workforce Nutrition Alliance has supported programmes reaching over 6 million farmers and workers. We aim to reach 10 million by 2030. We encourage organisations (e.g., supply chain actors, cooperatives, buyers, and implementing partners) that are committed to improving nutrition for smallholder farmers and workers to enrol in one of our implementation support programmes. These programmes offer tailored guidance, tools, and technical support to help you design, scale, and monitor effective workforce nutrition initiatives across the four pillars.

This guidebook is one in a series of four produced by the Workforce Nutrition Alliance, which complements the [Smallholder Farmer Scorecard](#), to offer actionable guidance to strengthen programme areas such as breastfeeding support, access to healthy food, nutrition education, and nutrition-related health checks. All four guides are publicly available on our [website](#) with the aim of helping supply chain actors and smallholder farmers to enhance their nutrition programmes.



Definition of 'workforce nutrition programme'

Workforce nutrition programme is a term we use to describe a set of actions that aim to improve nutrition and wellbeing in diverse work environments. These programmes can be implemented in formal work settings (e.g., factories, offices) or agricultural settings (e.g., tea plantations, coffee farms, trading or buying centres of agricultural commodities where farmers sell).

Before you start



What is covered in this guidebook?

This guidebook offers practical strategies to deliver nutrition education tailored to smallholder farmers and their households. It outlines actionable steps that not only increase knowledge but also promote behaviour change and encourage healthier dietary practices. The guide presents simple solutions and includes case studies from those already implementing similar efforts. Nutrition education is most effective as part of a broader workforce nutrition programme and is best combined with improving access to food, nutrition focused health checks and counselling and breastfeeding support (see [guidebooks](#) for each pillar).



Why is this guidebook important?

Good nutrition starts with basic knowledge about food: what to eat, why it matters, and how to make healthier choices every day. Yet for many smallholder farmers, making decisions about what foods to eat to support a healthy lifestyle are difficult particularly when there are barriers around information, affordability, accessibility. As a result, their diets are often imbalanced and inadequate to sustain a productive and healthy life.

Delivering nutrition education programmes may sound simple, but it requires more than just sharing information. The goal is not only to raise awareness, but to encourage lasting improvements in eating habits. This guidebook is designed to support organisations in developing impactful nutrition education programmes for farmers and agricultural workers. It offers clear, practical steps to get started, ensuring that efforts lead to real outcomes. By acting on this guidance, organisations can directly and positively impact farmer health and wellbeing while also contributing to key global targets, including SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing), and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).



Definition of 'nutrition education'

Nutrition education programmes aim to change the nutrition and/or lifestyle behaviours of individuals including smallholder farmers by increasing their awareness on the benefits of healthy diets and habits. Nutrition education activities often include the dissemination of nutrition information through posters, videos, text messages, etc. and the use of behaviour communication campaigns through town halls, trainings, challenges, support groups, events, TV, radios, etc. to bring those key messages across.



2

Evidence of impact

TURNING INSIGHT INTO PRACTICE

BUSINESS CASE

The evidence of impact

Smallholder farmers in many countries across the world are the backbone of agriculture industry and strongly contribute to the food security. However, there is often an assumption that because they produce food, they would be food secure. Unfortunately, they are mostly food insecure,^{1,2} experience poverty and struggle to meet their food needs throughout the year.

Food insecurity and malnutrition frequently occur together, affecting farmers' health, productivity, and overall wellbeing.³ According to the [UNICEF conceptual framework for malnutrition](#), households experiencing food insecurity often consume inadequate and monotonous diets, leading to hunger and undernutrition. Over time, this contributes to illness, poor growth, reduced work capacity, increased risk of diet-related non-communicable diseases, ultimately weakening community and national development.^{4,5}

A key factor underlying this challenge is limited nutrition knowledge. Many farmers lack practical information on how to make healthy food choices within their means, despite being food producers themselves.⁶ In order to achieve sustainable food and nutrition security, all agricultural interventions should include health awareness and nutrition education.² When farmers receive the right knowledge and guidance, they are more likely to make nutritious choices even on limited budgets.

The benefits summed up

Successful programmes understand that healthier farmers build stronger families, more resilient communities, and better outcomes across the supply chain. Nutrition education is one of the most practical and affordable programmes to improve wellbeing in rural farming communities. It helps farmers understand what a nutritious diet could look like, and how to apply simple changes both in the field and at home.

The benefits of nutrition education



The evidence of impact

Nutrition education interventions play a key role in improving farmers' nutrition and wellbeing by increasing knowledge and encouraging healthier dietary practices, which is particularly important in agricultural areas where access to diverse foods can be limited.⁷

Evidence from diverse contexts show that individuals who receive nutrition education are more likely to adopt positive eating behaviours and consume a greater variety of nutrient-rich foods. These behavioural changes can, over time, contribute to improved nutrition and health outcomes, particularly when supported by other food systems and livelihoods interventions.

A study in Zimbabwe found that nutrition education was associated with a 50% greater likelihood of fruit consumption, an 18% higher likelihood of vegetable consumption, and a 53% increase in household dietary diversity.⁸ Similar improvements in dietary diversity have also been noted in farming communities in Western Kenya.⁹ These dietary improvements are crucial in reducing malnutrition indicators such as stunting and anaemia, benefiting both children and adults.¹⁰

Nutrition education programme is reported to increase work efficiency, lowering absenteeism and employee healthcare cost, thereby improving overall productivity. It's impact is even more pronounced when combined with agricultural initiatives. Programmes that integrate nutrition education with activities like distributing diverse seed varieties or establishing home gardens have proven especially effective. In Odisha, India, over 97% of farming households reported increased consumption of diverse fruits and vegetables after participating in a combined nutrition education and home garden program, along with notable improvements in household health.¹¹

Good practice

CASE 1

Sustainable healthy diets for Kenya's tea workers¹²



Country
Kenya



Sector
Tea



Study and outcomes

Kenya is the top exporter of black tea in the world with about 23 per cent of global market. However, tea workers and farmers often suffer from high malnutrition rates because their diets, which consist largely of staple foods such as rice, bread, maize, and wheat, often lack foods rich in essential nutrients and vitamins needed for good health.

GAIN and the Ethical Tea Partnership implemented the Healthy Diets for Tea Communities programme to strengthen nutrition knowledge while increasing access to healthier foods. Weekly training sessions were implemented to equip farmers with the practical skills necessary to cultivate diverse, nutritious vegetables using domestic kitchen garden systems, substantively supported by highly visible demonstration plots for practical reinforcement. To make adoption easier, farmers received high-iron bean seeds, vegetable seeds, and orange-fleshed sweet potato vines to establish or expand their gardens.

To reinforce nutrition messages and ensure sustained behaviour change, the programme equipped 122 kiosk vendors to offer counselling on nutritious foods at the point of purchase. Community-wide awareness was further strengthened through radio broadcasts in local languages and weekly SMS reminders, helping ensure consistent, repeated exposure to healthy diet messages across the population. The programme reached 136,025 Kenyans in total, 27,205 workers directly and 108,820 household members indirectly. This combined approach - nutrition education, practical inputs, and reinforced messaging led to:

- The share of farmers growing orange-fleshed sweet potatoes doubled from 24% to 48%.
- Worker awareness of fortified foods increased significantly from 61.4% to 76.6%.
- The percentage of women meeting minimum dietary diversity rose from 22% to 32%.

This case demonstrates how pairing knowledge with practical access and repeated community messaging helps farming families and communities adopt and sustain healthy eating habits.

CASE 2

Nutrition education improved nutrient intake and work participation¹³

**Country**

India

**Sector**

Farming community

**Study and outcomes**

Indian women are predominantly the food producers for the nation, however, majority of them are anaemic, malnourished and have health problems due to insufficient nutrient intake. A targeted nutrition education programme was introduced for 90 farm women across five villages in the Khammam district of Telangana State. Using simple charts, handouts, and practical demonstrations, the programme taught participants about balanced diets, food groups, the importance of micronutrients, and tailoring dietary consumption to optimise energy expenditure and physiological demands. After the training, the women showed clear improvements in both diet and work capacity:

- Consumption of vegetables, pulses, green leafy vegetables, fruits, and milk increased significantly.
- Daily energy intake rose from 1478 kcal to 1897 kcal, and protein intake nearly doubled. Intake of key micronutrients such as calcium, iron, and vitamin C also improved.
- Among farm women who initially worked in the fields only once or twice a week (5.7%), nearly all (96.6%) later began working in the fields every day.
- Significant reduction in reported fatigue, and work-related pains, coupled with an increase of improved endurance.

This case shows that practical nutrition education can improve women farmers' diets, energy levels, and productivity.

A background image showing a kitchen environment. Several people, likely staff, are wearing white uniforms and face masks. They appear to be working at a counter or preparing food. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter.

3

Fundamentals of nutrition education

CHANGING BEHAVIOR

BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

Nutrition education and behaviour change



Behavior change

Most people including smallholder farmer aspire to eat well and recognize the long-term benefits of a healthy lifestyle. Yet changing habits is not easy. The human brain tends to follow familiar routines, especially for repetitive tasks like deciding what to eat. These habits allow people to go on “auto-pilot”, freeing up mental energy for more urgent or complex challenges, such as farming tasks or household responsibilities. Even though this mental shortcut has value, it also means that shifting to healthier behaviours often requires conscious effort.

Nutrition education is a critical first step to improving healthier behaviours. It introduces new ideas, increases awareness, and provides practical knowledge that helps people understand why healthy diets matter. However, knowing what is healthy does not automatically translate into doing it. Many people understand nutrition principles but still struggle to change their habits because of factors including cost, convenience, limited access, family preferences, cultural norms, or time pressures.

This is where the socio-ecological model (SEM) becomes essential. Utilising this model serves as a critical analytical framework that provides implementing organisations with a systematic structure for understanding the multifaceted determinants that influence human behaviour, particularly concerning dietary choices. These underlying factors can be assessed through established qualitative methodologies, such as focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. The SEM distinctly illustrates how food-related decisions are collectively shaped by influences across multiple interacting layers, specifically:

Individual: Knowledge, attitudes, and personal beliefs.

Interpersonal: Family dynamics and social networks.

Community: Local norms, traditions, and cultural practices.

Organisational: Institutional routines and structures.

Policy and environment: The broader food environment and policy landscape.



Definition of ‘behaviour change communication’

Behaviour change communication (BCC) is a strategic approach used in public health, development, and social change initiatives to promote positive behaviour change among individuals, communities, and societies. It encompasses a range of communication activities aimed at influencing attitudes, beliefs, and practices to support healthier, safer, and more sustainable behaviours.

Hailu et al., 2025¹⁴

By systematically identifying both the barriers and potential opportunities inherent at each of these ecological levels, implementers are empowered to design nutrition education programs that are precisely tailored and ecologically valid within the operational realities of the target population, such as smallholder farmers.

With this understanding in place, Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) becomes the central approach for making behaviour change possible. BCC is the strategy that turns knowledge into practical action. It uses communication tools that fit naturally into smallholder farmers' daily routines such as radio, SMS, posters, market announcements, cooking demonstrations, community storytelling, and role models. Some of the ways a BCC strategy can help with improving the nutritional status of smallholder farmers include:

- Delivering messages in simple, relatable ways that farmers can easily connect with.

- Clarifying myths and misconceptions that discourage positive nutrition practices.

- Encouraging the adoption of new practices through repeated exposure to the same key messages.

- Fostering motivation and connection to ideas by showing others modelling desired behaviours.

- Building supportive environments where families, peers, and community structures reinforce and sustain behaviour change.

BCC is therefore the key driver that turns knowledge into action and helps new behaviours become part of farmers' everyday routines. In essence, these three programmatic components fulfil distinct yet complementary strategic roles:

Nutrition education

Provides the fundamental “what” and the foundational “why” for dietary changes.

Socio-Ecological Model (SEM)

Identifies the complex “where” of behavioural influence, mapping the environmental and social determinants.

Behaviour Change Communication (BCC)

Delivers the operative “how,” by ensuring that messages are contextually relevant, perceived as achievable, and effectively supported upon reaching the smallholder farmers and community members.

Together, these above three components ensure farmers are not only informed, but also supported, encouraged, and enabled to adopt healthier and more sustainable nutrition practices.



4

Assessing the needs

PREPARING YOUR PROGRAMME

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Defining the need for nutrition education

Before designing a nutrition education programme, it is important to conduct a preliminary assessment to gather information about existing nutrition knowledge, beliefs, and behaviours of smallholder farmers and their families. This helps to accurately identify the real challenges and barriers to improved nutrition; and second, it enables the programme to be precisely tailored to local habits and cultural norms, thus clarifying the specific behavioural changes targeted by the intervention. This foundation provides the necessary baseline metrics to support more effective monitoring and evaluation processes.

Aim to answer the following key questions:

- What baseline data and evidence are required prior to the implementation of the intervention?
- What is the precise behavioural objective or change we want to achieve?
- Who should be involved in collecting or giving this information?
- How will the information be used?



Sample key assessment area

Table 01

What to assess?	Objective	Who to involve	How to collect information?
What do farmers already know about healthy diets and nutrition? Are there common misconceptions or gaps? What is their dietary pattern?	To understand the baseline and tailor content to local knowledge levels	Farmer organization, extension agents, farmers (especially women and youth), community leaders	Short surveys, group discussions, group interviews, diet quality questionnaire
What are the common nutrition-related health challenges in the community?	To align content with actual nutrition risks	Community health workers (CHW), health NGOs	Health database, group discussions
What motivates and/or prevents farmers from eating healthy foods?	To understand drivers and barriers to behaviour change	Farmers (including men and women), community leaders	Interviews
How do farmers prefer to receive information? (e.g., radio, infographic)	To choose communication channels that are trusted and accessible	Farmers, youth groups, community leaders	Surveys, interviews, suggestion boxes
Who already provides nutrition information in the area?	To identify partners, opportunities for collaboration, and avoid duplication	Local NGOs, CHW, cooperatives, community leaders, local governments	Stakeholder mapping, key informant interviews
What resources (time, staff, materials, transport) are available to support implementation?	To plan for feasible, cost-effective delivery	Local NGOs, related stakeholders, local governments	Internal resource review, surveys, discussions

This table can be used to brainstorm key assessment areas, identify what to assess based on the objective, and determine who to involve and how to collect the data. It serves as an example and should be adjusted according to the specific field context.



5

Building your nutrition education programme

BUILD YOUR PROGRAMME

STEP 1

Understanding the context and define the focus

The first step to building your programme ensures it is grounded in the authentic experiences and established beliefs of smallholder farmers and their families. This helps to prioritise the focus on behaviours that are both high-impact and realistically achievable. This can be successfully achieved by taking the following actions:

- Establish the priority nutrition issue(s)
- Map the influences across the socio-ecological model levels
- Define the specific behaviours to transform
- Identify the target group
- Define goals of the intervention
- Map key stakeholders and potential collaborators



Establish the priority nutrition issue

The results from the needs assessment should guide the identification of the most important nutrition problems in the area. This ensures the nutrition education programme focuses on the right issues, making it more practical, engaging, and relevant for the farmers. Additionally, data from any nutrition-health checks can help highlight which issues are the most urgent.

It is also vital to remember that nutrition education creates lasting improvement when it is paired with other supportive efforts. These actions include increasing access to healthy foods, creating better food environments, strengthening income and livelihoods, and providing health checks.

The following table outlines common nutrition challenges along with simple, generalized recommendations that can be adjusted. These are not meant to be rigid solutions but rather a helpful starting point that can be easily adapted to local requirements.

Balanced and diverse diets

Lack of diversity in diets can lead to nutrient deficiencies. In many farming households, meals are dominated by starchy staples. These foods provide energy but lack essential nutrients when eaten alone. Also, the economic pressure forces farmers to often sell their more nutritious foods and consume what remains.

Cultural norms or food beliefs may restrict certain household members (e.g., women or children) from accessing diverse foods. Therefore, these set of key messages are recommended.

Eat a variety of foods from at least five food groups every day.

Include proteins (like beans, fish, or eggs) regularly in meals.

Choose fortified staples and whole grains when available.

Eat vegetables and fruits with every meal.

Use local and seasonal produce to reduce cost.

Follow national dietary guidelines for food balance.

Communicable diseases

Smallholder farmers frequently contend with the burden of communicable diseases. On one hand, meals consumed in the field often lack access to clean water and handwashing facilities, which significantly elevates the risk of infectious diseases, such as diarrhoea and food poisoning. Furthermore, food is typically prepared early in the morning, stored in rudimentary containers, and consumed hours later, sometimes cold or spoiled due to insufficient storage conditions. Consider including these key messages if these issues are relevant.

Practice safe food storage and handling, especially when eating in the field.

Drink safe, clean water or unsweetened drinks like tea.

Promote both hygiene and healthy eating habits to prevent illness.

Mother and children's health disparities

The challenges associated with maternal and child health are pronounced within agricultural communities. Mothers in agricultural or informal work also face time and energy constraints that can reduce the quality and diversity of their own diets and limit time for infant feeding and food preparation, and, in some contexts, lead to poorer child growth outcomes.¹⁵

Eat nutrient-rich during pregnancy and breastfeeding to support mother and child.

Exclusively breastfeed infants for the first six months.

After six months, continue breastfeeding and provide nutritious complementary foods.

Educate caregivers about healthy feeding practices for themselves and for their young children.

Use simple recipes and local ingredients to improve children's diets.



Map the influences across socio-ecological model levels

Understanding behaviour through a socio-ecological model (SEM) allows you to identify other factors shaping smallholder farmers' food choices.

This model reinforces that beyond individual factors such as knowledge, behaviour is also driven by interpersonal, social, environmental, and structural influences. The following examples demonstrate typical influencing factors experienced at each level within the model:

Individual level

Farmers may have existing habits, fears, or knowledge gaps that limit change. For example, some farmers may believe vegetables do not keep the family full, or they may lack confidence to try new cooking practices. These intrinsic barriers (i.e. emotional, practical, or cognitive) must be considered for realistic and effective messaging.

Interpersonal level

Family dynamics, gender roles, and daily household routines influence behaviour. Meal choices may be shaped by the preferences of husbands, children, or elders. Despite an inclination toward healthier practices, women may particularly experience constraints imposed by prevailing household expectations.

Community level

Local traditions, norms, and cultural beliefs guide what is considered "proper food." Certain foods may be considered taboo during critical life stages, such as pregnancy, or communities may exhibit a high reliance on staple meals due to tradition or habit.

Mapping these levels of influences early gives a complete picture of what hinders or supports behaviour. It highlights which barriers must be addressed and which opportunities must be harnessed. It helps ensure that the nutrition education and BCC efforts respond to the actual condition's farmers live in.

Organisational level

Routines at work, including long hours, eating in the field, limited access to water or storage, or lack of breaks fundamentally shape what foods are practical to eat throughout the day.

Environmental and policy level

Access, affordability, and market structure ultimately determine the availability of healthy food options. A significant number of farmers may prioritise selling their nutrient-rich produce while retaining only starchy staples for themselves, often driven by prevailing market pressures. In certain areas, nutritious foods may be scarce, expensive, or subject to inadequate storage. Furthermore, national policies and commercial marketing practices can inadvertently favour inexpensive, processed alternatives over healthier, locally sourced options.



Define the specific behaviours to influence

Using insights from the needs assessment and SEM mapping, identify the current behavioural practices that need to change and define the desired behaviours you want to promote.

The following could guide you in defining specific behaviours to influence. Start by describing the current behaviour:

Example: Farmers mainly eat large starchy meals with few vegetables because they are affordable, filling, and culturally accepted. This pattern is shaped by several factors:

Individual: Limited knowledge about the importance of vegetables.

Interpersonal: Families prioritise filling foods because of long labour hours.

Community: Meal norms centre around staples (e.g., cassava, yam, rice).

Environmental: Seasonal availability of vegetables.

Structural: Sometimes limited access to diverse, affordable vegetables

Then define a realistic desired behaviour that addresses this pattern and account for the influences you identified earlier (e.g., availability, family habits, cultural norms).

Example: Farmers include at least one locally available, affordable, and seasonal vegetable (e.g., leafy greens, okra, tomatoes) to their main meal each day, and family meal preparers are encouraged to follow this practice consistently. This desired behaviour reflects SEM insights by:

Individual: Ensuring the change is simple and achievable.

Environmental: Aligning with what is available locally.

Interpersonal: Considering family eating habits and shared meals.

Community: Respecting existing cultural norms around cooking.

Not requiring: Major structural shifts (e.g., high cost or new technologies).

Choosing clear, realistic behaviours in this way ensures the programme is grounded in the farmers real context. It also sets the foundation for selecting the right target group, crafting meaningful BCC messages, and creating practical support that makes behaviour change possible.



Identify who needs the most support

Once the desired behaviour is defined, identify who the behaviour applies to and who influences it. This helps you tailor your messages and delivery methods to the right people. These guiding questions could support the process:

- Who is directly involved in the behaviour? (e.g., the person who cooks, the farmer making food choices, the caregiver feeding a child)
- Who influences this behaviour? (e.g., spouses, elders, community leaders, peers)
- Who is most affected by the nutrition issue? (e.g., children, pregnant women, workers doing heavy labour, farmers with low dietary diversity)

Taking time to clarify your target group helps you provide the right type of support, design more relevant BCC messages, and choose delivery channels that effectively reach the people who can drive the change.



Map potential collaborators

Collaborators strengthen interventions by providing expertise, access to communities, or delivery support. Therefore, identifying the people and groups who can help make the behaviour change possible is important. Potential collaborators include:

- **Community health workers** for nutrition counselling and follow-up
- **Community leaders and agricultural extension officers** for mobilising farmers and reinforcing messages.
- **Nutritionists and dietitians** for technical accuracy and guidance
- **BCC specialists** for designing effective communication and behaviour-change approaches.
- **Women's groups and cooperatives** for peer support and group learning.

Mapping collaborators early ensures your goals and activities are realistic and aligned with the resources and partners available.



Define your goals

Based on the desired behaviour and target group, set the goal using the SMART criteria: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant to your context, and Time-bound. Setting clear goals gives programme direction and helps measure progress over time.

STEP 2

Design a nutrition education programme

This step combines learning, practice, and consistent communication to drive impactful behaviour change through:

- Developing clear, simple nutrition messages
- Choosing simple and practical delivery methods
- Implementation



Guidance for developing effective key messages

When designing key messages for nutrition education, facts, clarity and relevance are essential. Effective messages help audiences understand what to do, why it matters, and how it fits into their daily realities. The most impactful messages share the following characteristics:

- **Focused:** Address one behaviour at a time
- **Simple:** Easy to understand, remember, and repeat
- **Relevant:** Connect to farmer's priorities (e.g., wellbeing, family health, productivity)
- **Action-oriented:** Use clear verbs such as choose, add, include, wash, store

Example: "Choose foods from different food groups to stay strong and healthy."

Do's and don'ts when shaping messages

Do's

- ✓ Keep messages short, clear, and direct
- ✓ Use locally meaningful words or expressions where appropriate
- ✓ Reinforce messages through repetition across different formats
- ✓ Develop a memorable supporting line or tagline
- ✓ Link messages to everyday situations or familiar foods

Don'ts

- ✗ Use long or complicated phrasing
- ✗ Include technical or unfamiliar terminology
- ✗ Share too many messages at once
- ✗ Change core messages too frequently
- ✗ Assume understanding without providing practical example

Creating memorable taglines

A strong tagline helps messages stick. Aim for language that is rhythmic, relatable, and easy to repeat, making it simple for people to share the message with others.



Choose simple and practical delivery methods

Once the core behaviour-focused messages have been developed, the next step is to choose delivery methods or channel that fit the nature of the intervention. In farming communities, effective interventions should fit naturally into everyday life, address local barriers, and use trusted platforms to engage farmers and their families.

These delivery methods combine BCC channels (how you deliver your messages - e.g., radio, posters, group talks) and BCC strategies (how you motivate and reinforce behaviour) that help farmers learn and practise the desired behaviour.

The table below presents different types of intervention types and delivery methods that can support behaviour change among farmers. These can be adapted to different barriers and enablers, literacy levels, schedules, and cultural norms.

Type	Examples	Table 03
Education Increase nutrition knowledge or understanding	Food group posters at markets, food demo cards, illustrated quiz games, local radio messages	
Motivation Use communication to stimulate action and positive emotions	Community pledges, colourful visuals with simple slogans, photo stories, family role models	
Rewards Offer incentives to encourage healthy behaviour	Stickers for completed home tasks, “healthy meal” contest, cooperative point systems, small recognition	
Training Provide opportunities to learn new nutrition skills	Cooking demos during farmer field schools, healthy food prep sessions, workshops for spouses	
Change context Modify the social or physical environment to support new behaviours	Label foods in local SHOPS, display meal samples at nutrition stalls, use health check days as education	
Set an example Inspire others by highlighting real-life role models	Local champions share stories, elder testimonials, youth-led nutrition clubs	
Empowerment Support individuals and groups to adopt and maintain new behaviours	Home visits, mother support groups, peer mentoring, participatory cooking or feeding plans	

Channel choices

The success of the message often depends not just on what you say, but how and where you say it. In rural farming settings, using a mix of channels (passive to interactive) can increase reach, trust, and recall. Remember, behaviour change takes time and repetition. A single poster or talk won't be enough. Use multiple, reinforcing channels across the season to repeat the same message in different forms.

Channel type	Examples	Table 04
Push channels Display information without requiring action	Posters at water points, flyers in cooperatives, megaphone announcements, wall murals	
Pull channels Make information available when people seek it out	Nutrition corners in health posts, printed guides for lead farmers, hotline or radio call-in shows	
Conversational Facilitate two-way dialogue to build understanding	Community meetings, group discussions, home visits, storytelling circles	
Community channels Encourage shared values and identity	Farmer field schools, savings groups, peer-led nutrition talks, family cooking events	
Engagement channels Stimulate participation and interest	Cooking competitions, food taste sessions, photo campaigns, food diaries	
Participatory Enable feedback and shared decision-making	Focus groups, family interviews, meal mapping sessions, village health committee co-design	



Implementation

Planning is important, but how a nutrition education programme is implemented will determine whether it leads to real change. Here are four key tips to guide smooth implementation in rural farming communities:

Choose the right time

Plan activities around the agricultural calendar. Avoid peak periods such as planting or harvesting, when farmers have limited time and attention. Similarly, steer clear of major cultural, religious, or community events, when participation and engagement naturally drop.

Build community ownership

Successful programmes are those communities feel they helped shape. Engage local groups early and involve them in decisions. This builds trust, increases participation, and ensures the programme reflects real needs and priorities.

Keep messaging consistent

You don't need formal branding for messages to stick. What matters is clarity and repetition. Use the same tagline or key phrase across all materials—from group sessions to posters, SMS reminders, and demonstrations—to reinforce learning and support behaviour change.

Gather feedback and adapt

Learning should be continuous. After each session, ask participants what resonated, what was unclear, and what they plan to try at home. Observe changes in community practices—what foods are being discussed, cooked, or grown. These insights help refine activities and keep the programme relevant and effective.

Note: Consider starting small bearing in mind that it does not have to be perfect from the beginning.



Key success and challenges

Key success

- Strong community involvement
- Use of trusted messengers
- Culturally appropriate and visual learning tools
- Regular follow-up and reminders

Key challenges

Time and labour constraints

Farmers' schedules are demanding, especially during planting or harvest seasons.

Tip: Offer short, focused sessions linked to existing gatherings such as cooperative meetings or market days.

Low literacy levels

Written materials may not be accessible for all participants.

Tip: Prioritise visual tools images, storytelling, food cards, demonstrations and use simple, local language when text is needed.

Cultural food beliefs

Some foods may be avoided due to local traditions or household norms.

Tip: Focus on relatable benefits such as strength for farm work or children's learning, and introduce new foods through familiar examples.

A person wearing a white lab coat and a patterned face mask is looking down at a clipboard. The clipboard has a checklist with handwritten entries. The background is a blurred laboratory setting with shelves of equipment. The entire image has a green-to-orange gradient overlay.

6

Monitoring and learning

MONITOR YOUR PROGRESS

TRACKING CHANGE

Monitor your progress

Monitoring is a key success factor for any programme and can help your organizations and partners to understand whether the nutrition education programme is reaching farmer households and leading to actual behaviour change. Regular monitoring ensures that your programme remains responsive, effective, and inclusive, even in remote, low-literacy, or resource-constrained farming communities.

Simple community-based monitoring tools, such as logbooks, village registers, farmer group reports, and nutrition education checklists, can be highly effective when used consistently. Tracking and reflecting on progress helps identify what's working, what needs adjustment, and how to strengthen community ownership.



Questions to answer

Questions to guide your monitoring process

What do you want to know?

What specific changes are we seeking in farmers' knowledge, attitudes, or behaviours? For example, are farmers acquiring knowledge of core nutrition messages? Are a greater number of households consuming at least five food groups on a regular basis?

How will data be collected and measured?

Which practical tools are suitable for assessing these changes in a rural, often low-literacy context? Will data collection involve surveys, interviews, or alternative methods?

Who will collect the data?

Which individuals or groups are best positioned to collect this information accurately, reliably, and respectfully?

What does success look like?

Which indicators or observable signs will demonstrate that the programme is achieving its objectives?

How will the collected information be utilized?

In what ways will the data inform programme improvements and support evidence-based decision-making?

Monitoring area	What to track	Simple indicators	Common frequency	Data collection tool
Dietary diversity	Household diet quality	Percentage of households eating foods from at least 5 out of 10 food groups in the past 24 hours	Every four months	Diet quality questionnaire or minimum dietary diversity for women (MDDW)
Meal or breastfeeding Frequency	Adequacy of feeding practices	Average number of meals per day (adults/children) Percentage of children 6–23 months meeting minimum meal frequency Percentage of infants exclusively breastfed	Every four months	Minimum meal frequency survey for infants, exclusive breastfeeding survey
Beneficiary satisfaction	Perception of programme usefulness	Percentage of households reporting satisfaction with food quality, relevance, and usefulness of education messages or materials	Twice a year	Short feedback survey or suggestion box summary
Participation	Engagement of target group	Number and percentage of farmers or households attending at least 75% of sessions	Quarterly	Attendance sheets or session registers
Reach	Coverage of programme	Number and Percentage of farmers or households who received education materials (leaflets, posters, radio, SMS, peer education, etc.)	Quarterly	Distribution log or outreach records
Diversity of channels	Multiple delivery methods	Number of channels used (e.g., group sessions, posters, radio, peer educators)	Annually	Programme records
Beneficiary knowledge	Change in nutrition knowledge	Percentage of participants scoring $\geq 70\%$ on a knowledge test (pre- vs post-session)	Before and after each cycle	Pre- or post test, short quiz, or interviews
Awareness	Recall of key nutrition messages	Percentage of participants able to correctly recall at least 3 promoted messages	Twice a year	Structured interviews or surveys
Practice or behaviour change	Adoption of healthier behaviours	Percentage of households reporting improved practices (e.g., more diverse meals, safer food storage, reduced sugary drink intake, improved child feeding)	Twice a year	Household KAP (Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices) survey
Impact indicators	Long-term nutrition outcomes	Percentage of children under 5 stunted, wasted, or overweight Percentage of women of reproductive age with anaemia Average BMI of adults	Baseline and endline (every 1–2 years)	Anthropometric measures; Hb test; health records

Tips for success

- Prioritise simplicity and focus on monitoring what is most important, rather than attempting to track everything.
- Select appropriate tools that align with your community's literacy level and preferred communication style.
- Share results findings with the group, acknowledge success, and make adjustments as necessary.
- Promote open dialogue by encouraging women to discuss which forms of support have been most helpful and identify any remaining gaps.

What to do with the data?

- Provide regular updates to relevant stakeholders.
- Track and map progress systematically.
- Evaluate areas where additional support may be required.
- Highlight success stories through reports, social media, or donor communications.
- Inform strategies for scaling and expanding reach.

Key elements of nutrition education in agricultural settings

Table 06

Area	Indicator	Basic	Better	Best
Quality and scope	Nutrition information and delivery	Simple, credible, and actionable information on healthy diets is shared through at least 3 materials (e.g., posters, videos, SMS, booklets).	A behaviour change strategy is developed for farmers, using at least 2 channels (e.g., cooking demonstrations, group trainings, farmer support groups). (This has an additional point if farmers are involved in pre-testing or if baseline data is collected).	A community-wide behaviour change strategy is developed, reaching farmers and their families with at least 3 channels (e.g., demonstrations, group trainings, community events, peer educators). (This has an additional point if pre-tested or baseline data is collected).
Frequency	How often education is provided	Sessions are organised ad hoc (irregular).	Sessions are held at least 4 times per year.	Sessions are held monthly.
Reach	Coverage of farmers and families	Nutrition education reaches all smallholder farmers linked to the organisation.	Nutrition education reaches all farmers and their families (e.g., via school feeding or family activities).	Nutrition education reaches farmers, families, and the wider community (e.g., schools, local groups).
Affordability	Cost to farmers	Farmers (and families, if relevant) access education free of charge.	Farmers, families, and community members access education free of charge.	—
Monitoring and evaluation	Tracking progress	Output-level indicators (e.g., number of sessions, or number of materials distributed) tracked internally once/year.	Output-level data tracked internally and shared externally once/year.	Output and outcome indicators (e.g., diet diversity, behaviour change) tracked internally and externally; audited by a third party (additional points).
Longevity	Duration and sustainability	Initiative is a pilot and has run at least 12 months.	—	Initiative has secured resources to continue for at least 24 months, with sustainability planning.



7

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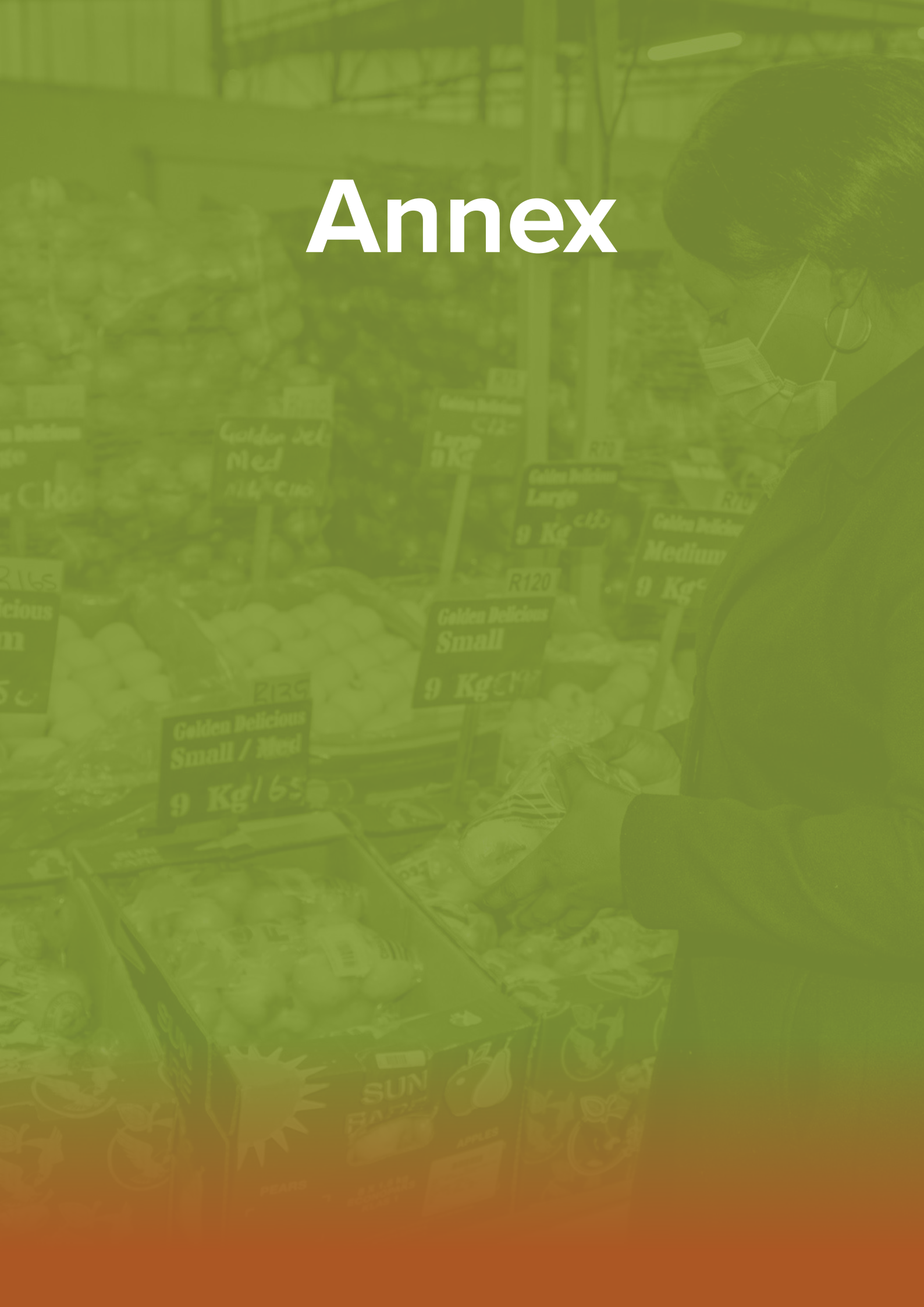
TOOLS TO LEARN MORE

LEARN MORE

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Annex



Golden Delicious
Med
R140

Golden Delicious
Large
9 Kg
R120

Golden Delicious
Large
9 Kg
R115

Golden Delicious
Medium
9 Kg
R120

Golden Delicious
Small
9 Kg
R110

Golden Delicious
Small / Med
9 Kg
R165

SUN
RANGE

APPLES

PEARS

INTRODUCTION

About the annex

In addition to this guidebook, these four annexes serve as tools to help implementers design communication and training materials for nutrition education activities in agricultural settings.

 [Download the annex](#)

They support the selection of relevant nutrition messages by building a clear understanding of what makes a balanced and diverse diet, the benefits of healthy eating, and key nutrition issues that affect farmers and their families. Each annex covers a specific theme.

Annex A: Balanced and diverse diets

Annex B: Disease prevention

Annex C: Women and children's health

Annex D: Role of key nutrients in the body

The guidebook section on *Understanding Your Context* helps you define your specific challenges and needs across the three areas of Annex A, B and C. The annexes provide sound and factual nutrition information for each of these areas. Use the information provided to create the right messages for your campaign.



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