



THE FORT PORTAL FOOD SYSTEM LAB

ABOUT THE FORT PORTAL FOOD SYSTEM LAB?

The Fort Portal Food System Lab operates in Fort Portal Tourism City, coordinated by Kabarole Research and Resource Centre (KRC Uganda) in partnership with Hivos, Health Food Africa.

Fort Port Portal is the economic, social and cultural hub of the Toro Sub Region in Western Uganda, where the resident population has the highest rates of stunting (40.6%) among children under five in the country. The stunting situation is a paradox in a region renown for producing high amounts of food for Uganda and neighboring countries. The increased malnutrition rate is attributed partly to limited household dietary diversity and monotonous diet staples of banana and cassava flour recipes.

Fort Portal Tourism City has over 400 street food vendors that serve food daily to the residents, students, people in transit, the rank and file of the informal sector, and especially low-income earners. The City's population is projected to increase 10-fold by 2040 according to the (Uganda Vision 2040) and its increasing urban population largely depend on informal food markets for its food needs.

THE GOAL OF THE FORT PORTAL FOOD SYSTEM LAB

The main goal of our Food System Lab is to influence sustainable, resilient and equitable production and consumption of diverse, nutritious and safe food for all. The Food System Lab influences communities and local policy makers on production and consumption of diverse, nutritious and safe foods thus contributing towards reduction of stunting and other forms of malnutrition in the Region.



Production and consumption of diverse, nutritious and safe food is at the core of the Food System Lab awareness campaign.

THE FOOD SYSTEM LAB APPROACH;

- The lab employs the Coalition of the Willing approach to reach out to community members with sensitization messages on nutritional behavioral change in order to increase the understanding of well-functioning food systems leading to better nutritional outcomes.
 - The lab creates space for mainstream actors and frontrunners to meet and shape the green and fair food systems.
 - The lab operates under four major pillars, popularly known as “work packages”.
- 1. Food consumption and healthy nutrition:** This package is dedicated to improving nutrition and health through transformation of consumption patterns towards sustainable healthy diets.
 - 2. Sustainable food production:** This is aimed strengthening sustainability, resilience and diversity of food production systems to produce healthy and nutritious food.



Nutrition education is one way the Food System Lab is using to increase knowledge and influence voluntary adoption of good nutrition behavior and practices.

- 3. Post-harvest technology and food safety:** Aimed at developing innovative post-harvest technologies to improve food safety and reduce food waste.
 - 4. Transformational impact, scalability and exploitation:** Aimed at promoting pathways for exploitation and scalability to maximize sustainable impact.
- The FSL employs a multi actor approach to identify the key food systems constraints and develop actions and innovation to address them.

- The key actors in the Fort Portal FSL include; local government, District Nutrition Coordination Committee (DNCC), Coalition of the Willing (a consumer advocacy group), food ambassadors (influential leaders who promote healthy diets in their communities), small holder farmers, small scale food processors, street food vendors, formal chefs, academia, researchers, hospitals, nutritionists, media, artists and civil society organizations. The actors are convened on a round table to discuss the challenges facing Fort Portal City Food System and generate ideas on its improvement. They have also been engaged in participatory research and experiential learning. The actors play a leading role in influencing behavioral changes to address issues of food and nutrition security.

The Food System Lab employs the following strategies for implementation of its activities;

1. Organises annual workshops for the food system actors to discuss key issues facing the food system and generate actionable ideas for improvement.
2. Conducts research on food and nutrition security and safety to inform decision making and programming.
3. Creates awareness on food systems and nutrition through different media platforms.
4. Builds and strengthens the capacity of the stakeholders in the food systems to engage and to effectively play their roles.
5. Participates in the District Nutrition Coordination Committee (DNCC) engagements.
6. Facilitates health inspections of the food markets, abattoirs and food selling spaces in partnership with Fort Portal City and Kabarole District authorities.
7. Coordinates the food system actors to adhere to the food system protocols.
8. Conducts advocacy on food systems and nutrition.

INNOVATIONS FOR SUSTAINABILITY OF FOOD SYSTEMS LAB PROGRAM

The KRC Nutrition Clinic

Under work packages 1 and 4 of the Fort Portal Food Systems Lab, KRC Uganda established the KRC Nutrition Clinic in order to enhance nutrition promotion service delivery and to support community nutrition surveillance for timely malnutrition case identification and referral. Establishment of the clinic is a tailored response to the dire malnutrition and stunting rates in the Tooro Sub Region.

Rapid urbanization and population increase in Fort Portal Tourism City is increasing the risk of over dependency on highly processed and fast foods as well as sedentary life styles of the population. This increases the risk of poor nutrition and associated Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), including heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes and chronic lung disease. According to the World Health Organisation, these diseases are collectively responsible for almost 70% of all deaths worldwide.

In order to address some of the issues, KRC nutrition clinic conducts the following activities:

- Conduct nutrition screening to identify cases of malnutrition. This is done at the static clinic.
- Conduct referrals of the identified cases to the government health facilities for management.
- Create community awareness on health and nutrition through different media platforms including radio, social media, website and print resources.



Fort Portal City and Kabarole District Local Government leaders and area Members of Parliament inspecting the KRC Nutrition Clinic. Leadership engagement is part of the FSL strategy to keep the food systems of the region on the national food systems agenda.

- Conduct health and nutrition counselling to under and over nourished patients as well as those with Non-Communicable Diseases.
- Design dietary and meal plans for all categorizes of people.
- Capacity building and strengthening of the community structures such as Village Health Teams (VHTs) and leaders as well as health workers on nutrition.
- Conduct research on food and nutrition.
- Conduct food and cooking demonstrations at community level.
- Conduct physical activity therapy to the beneficiaries who are recommended for the therapy.
- Facilitate and actively participate in advocacy for nutrition programming at the city and district level.
- Support the adoption of vegetable kitchen gardening at community level by KRC Extension Workers.

The Nutrition Clinic is manned by a team of expert and experienced staff. The static clinic is situated within KRC Uganda sub office in Booma, President's Road, next to Njara Primary School.

For more Information, Contact:

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