Understanding local contexts and knowledge around feeding practices and food availability

2011: Baseline study (n=182) in 4 communities in highland Peru (Huancavelica) shows that:

- 42% of children were stunted
- Infectious disease might be principal cause of malnutrition.
- Child nutrition was better at times of scarcity because of bought foods and supplements.
- Main nutritional deficits are Iron, Zinc, Ca and folic acid, which can be remedied with legumes, animal products, fruits, and green vegetables.
- There is not a relationship between size of farm and nutrition.
- Agrobiodiversity was not associated with food security in this population and did not protect against low dietary intakes of essential micronutrients.

Intake of animal protein was the main determinant of dietary quality and raising small animals seemed to protect against food insecurity.

2013: Carrot, chard, watercress and onion seeds were distributed to 300 families, along with training on raising vegetables to 373 women organized in 14 mothers’ groups. 65% of the families (n=300) use the fresh vegetables directly for home consumption.

Changes in childhood feeding practices:

2011: 5 chickens each were distributed to 210 women through 14 women’s associations. Initially, there was high chicken mortality that decreased with training. 2012: 49 families were visited and coached on nutrition using the TIPS methodology. Around 30% had added important foods to their children’s diets like fava beans, eggs, cheese and meat one week later.

2013: Of 167 families that participated in a forage management farmer field school that focused on 2 introduced pasture grasses, a follow-up survey showed that 25% bought seed to increase pasture, 45% spent money for fencing, 80% invested in irrigation and 100% said they increased cows and cuyes by 65% due to pasture. While families are not incorporating guinea pigs into their regular diet, 678 were eaten during 15 wedding celebrations in June 2012. It is possible that this intervention resulted in more milk production from the cattle that led to milk availability for the children.

Changes in knowledge, perception and attitudes of families towards child and family nutrition and roles and responsibilities

2015: Focus groups and interviews with participants (n=90) revealed the following changes in their practice due to the project:

- Prioritize child feeding and give them foods specially prepared for small children.
- Interest in preparing a balanced diet complementing traditional foods with vegetables, milk, and eggs

Summary: The aim of this project is to strengthen agrobiodiversity to broaden the food base. This includes an increase in small animal production and the installation of home gardens. Also to provide information and knowledge to women emphasizing the food products that originate in their own farming system.

For more information see: https://www.ccrp.org/grants/agrobiodiversity-and-nutrition/