

The use of indigenous knowledge in nutrition communication The example of pastoralist communities in Turkana County, Kenya

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Indigenous knowledge is more and more often recognized as an important aspect for development especially regarding people living in marginalised regions like Turkana County in Northern Kenya. However, the current utilization of such knowledge and the system standing behind of it is rather low, especially, regarding the field of health and nutrition. Therefore, this study aims at investigating the possible utilization of indigenous knowledge systems for nutrition communication. In how far certain messages are detectable in local knowledge as well as what positive aspects of the local knowledge system can be utilized will be questioned. Furthermore, attitudes and perceptions of the local population and other stakeholders on the administrative level will be explored. For this purpose, twelve Focus Group Discussions (FGD) within the local population were conducted in April 2016. Additionally, eleven Expert Interviews with different stakeholders were conducted in July and August of the same year. The findings imply a strong connection and high appreciation of indigenous knowledge and people transmitting it. Nutritional messages could only partly be detected in local narratives but upon request, crucial knowledge about nutrition was available on a community level. Local decision makers are at least partly aware of the possible use of indigenous knowledge systems. The overall attitudes towards the utilization of indigenous knowledge systems were positive. However, it seems that especially stakeholders grown up in the particular cultural setting are more aware of the possible use. Lastly, the local population calls for an acknowledgment of their local culture and knowledge. This supports the use of indigenous knowledge systems as a well-adapted mean to deliver nutrition-related messages in Turkana County.

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