



Community Gardens and Dietary Diversity in Central Kenya: An Assessment of Food Security Programmes

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Abstract

Community gardens have been proposed as a strategy to enhance food security in rural communities, particularly in Central Kenya where agricultural productivity often suffers due to soil degradation and climate change. The study employed a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews, targeting households participating in selected community gardens across three districts in Central Kenya. Data collection occurred over two seasons to capture seasonal variations in crop yields and dietary patterns. Community garden participants demonstrated higher dietary diversity scores compared to non-participants ($p=0.045$), indicating an improvement in the variety of foods consumed per week, which contributes to nutritional balance and health outcomes. The findings suggest that community gardens can serve as effective platforms for promoting food security and enhancing household nutrition in Central Kenya's agricultural landscapes. Programme administrators should consider integrating complementary interventions such as training on improved gardening techniques and access to supplementary foods to further optimise the benefits of these programmes.

Keywords: *Kenya, Soil Degradation, Participatory Monitoring, Community Empowerment, Dietary Diversity, Food Security Programmes, Agroecology*

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