

# Bringing Food and Nutrition Awareness to Rural Households in Africa to Enhance Food and Nutrition Security

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**for Session 6 – Food Safety, Security and Control**

## Abstract (300-word limit)

**Statement of the Problem:** Food production in Africa is driven by the requirement for sufficient food for family consumption, and partly on the economic returns from selling excess production. Chronic malnutrition still exists especially in the rural areas despite the number of programs by national governments and international development organizations. In rural areas, food preparation is done by women and is based on traditional recipes without knowledge on their nutritional contents. Women depend on their own farm produce and on what is cheaply available in the local markets for ingredients. Actually, traditional foods are nutritious. However, the type, the preparation, the quantity and the frequency of consuming them should be properly understood by consumers to ensure consumption of a well- balanced nutritious food.

In the last 5 years, there is also a concern on the growing unsafe food commodities offered in the markets because of the presence of Aflatoxin which results from poor harvesting, storing and processing of the crops. Surprisingly, Aflatoxin and its effects on health is not known in rural communities. There is also lack of legislation and weak implementation on control of food quality, safety and standards.

The Sasakawa Africa Association (SAA) has been implementing programs aimed at combating hunger, malnutrition and poverty by promoting improved production, harvesting and postharvest handling practices and technologies to increase productivity, reduce losses, improve quality and enhance food safety and nutrition in addition to increasing income of smallholder farmers in Africa.

**Methodology & Theoretical Orientation:** SAA, in its four focus countries (Ethiopia, Mali, Nigeria and Uganda) works with partners, majorly the Ministry of Agriculture to strengthen its agricultural extension advisory services for smallholder farmers to bring improved practices and technologies along the value chain through trainings and demonstrations. Among the awareness campaign SAA and its partners are bringing to the rural areas are training of stakeholders on good agricultural practices, knowledge on Aflatoxin (determination, mitigation and control measures), information and training on basic nutrition, dietary diversification and food regulations, and handling pesticides/chemical residues in food commodities.

**Findings:** Smallholder farmers, as well as extension agents, are increasingly aware and are adopting improved postharvest handling, storage and processing technologies as a way to reduce postharvest losses, improve quality and enhance food safety and nutrition among the farming households. One outcome of this initiative is the interest generated among men and women on improving their food intake by allocating more budget to enhance nutritive values of their family diets. Farmers are also sharing the information on proper handling and processing of food crops to prevent Aflatoxin. They are now more confident that they are eating safe and nutritious foods. In East Africa, these also resulted to less grains rejected at the regional markets.

**Conclusion & Significance:** Food and nutrition research results and information have the most significant impact when they reach the end-users and are adopted by them. SAA had shown that awareness on the issues that affects rural households will help them understand the change that we want them to embrace. This has to be backed by more rigorous food safety regulations and implementation strategies to safeguard people's lives and develop healthy communities.

## Image



*Photo 1 Training women farmer-processors on food processing, food safety and basic nutrition. Kampala, Uganda. 2019.*

## Recent Publications (minimum 5)

- 1- Fofana, B., L Halos-Kim, M. Akeredolu, A. Okiror, Kebba, N. Deola, M. Oluoch, & I. Fumiko. 2020. Innovative agricultural extension models for empowering smallholder farmers in Africa: the case of the Sasakawa Africa Association. *Frontiers of Agricultural Science and Engineering*. Manuscript ID FASE 201908.
- 2- Halos-Kim, L. 2019. Enterprise-Oriented Postharvest and Agro-processing Models. SAA Archive. October.
- 3- Halos-Kim, L. 2014. Why Value Chain Approach Matters in Promoting Post-production Technologies in Africa. *Proceedings, SAFE Regional Workshop on Analysis of Options for Developing and Implementing Value Chain-Oriented SEPS (Student Enterprise Project)*. Bamako, Mali. 11-13 February.
- 4- Halos-Kim, L. 2013. Strategies to Improve the Adoption of Postharvest Handling and Agro-processing Technologies in Africa. *Ethiopian Journal of Applied Science and Technology*. Special Issue No. 1. Jimma University. Ethiopia. May.



### Biography (150 word limit)

Engr. Leonides Halos-Kim is an agricultural and food process engineer with over 35 years work experience on crop processing, postharvest and food engineering education, research, development, and extension, in Asia and Africa. Currently, she is the Thematic Director of Postharvest and Agro-processing (PHAP) Extension of SAA, and is based in its Regional Office in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Engr. Halos-Kim leads a team of specialists (agricultural engineers, food technologist, rural development experts and economists) in Ethiopia, Mali, Nigeria and Uganda in promoting the use of appropriate technologies and practices to reduce postharvest losses, improve food quality, safety, and nutrition, and increase income of smallholder farmers in Africa. SAA's work on postharvest technology extension is contributing to food security and nutrition.

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**Notes/Comments:**