

IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Food is what we eat. Nutrition is how our bodies use food. Both are key to effective development. In Human Development Projects as in all of life, adequate nutrition fuels the social processes just as money fuels the economic processes. Calories are like cash. Both are stored up selfhood, and when sent or burned they enable participation in society. Run out of money or calories of energy and you cripple your effectiveness.

People of the Western world are so used to worrying about being overweight and overfed a new term, "empty calories" has been invented. To someone who is not eating enough to sustain his body as it labors and burns up more than was put in for the day, (In the West, it's called loosing weight and is relished almost as much as over eating.) and who did so yesterday, and will do so again the next day, any calorie would not be "empty" but necessary to prevent starvation.

Most Global Social Demonstrations sites have a range of people from a well-fed few to some clinically starving, defined as having a chest measurement smaller than the circumference of the head. Most people do not have enough to eat. They work harder physically than Westerners and eat less food in total amounts and nutritive value.

If our bodies were likened to automobiles, food would function to provide fuel, maintenance and repair, and growth. With the necessary foods, our bodies run at a fast pace, in fine tune for more miles per gallon, and grow from a Volkswagen into a big Mercedes. To apply this image to villagers, most of them are being required to fill their tanks half full of cheap, regular gas and get further down the road than those Westerners with a full tank of premium gas.

The need is all sites is for adequate nutrition. Only in the Marshalls does overweight appear as a primary concern. The other sites are looking for more food to begin to approach an adequacy of calories.

A community kitchen as a dynamic, rather than as a building needs to begin at once to meet the nutritional needs of the site. First determine a lack of calories by looking at village children, newborns, 6 months old, 1, 3 and 5 years, size at puberty, size of men in comparison to women, and looking at how body frames are filled out. Expectations should not be too much different than in your experience. Babies should double their weight by 6 months, triple it by one to one and a half years, and be half the adult height by 2 to 3 years old. By 16 most adult size should be reached, and men are usually about only 6 inches taller than women. Unequal food distribution within the family may produce very large men and undersized women.

The task of getting adequate food to people once a general lack is confirmed is simple. Any cheap source of adequate calories will meet this demand. Supplying any food that gets eaten by those who need it is all it takes to improve caloric intake. By selecting an inexpensive food already on their menu which needs little preparation or utensils to eat it, the community kitchen can start immediately. Bread with a spread on it usually fills the bill.

To meet calorie needs and begin to supply protein which would be the next level of concern, United States Public Law 480, distribution of excess commodities of wheat flour, Wheat Soy Blend (WSB) flour, bulgar (cracked wheat), dried milk, and soy or peanut oil to the site thru Catholic Relief or government programs should be explored. Incorporating these into the diets would usually mean introducing them as new foods. With choices of what to eat possible for the first time in many lives, information on why to eat one food instead of another is a whole new arena of thought and decision.

After the caloric need is met, the quality of the food in giving enough protein needs to be considered. Proteins' functions are key in all three arenas of running, maintenance and repair, and growth. The Health Care Manual's emphasis on Five food groups recognizes protein's crucial role by separating grains from legumes and giving them equal emphasis. Protein is obtained both thru animal products and by eating grains in combination with legumes. Bread with peanut butter, tortillas and beans, and rice with lentils are examples. If bread and butter or honey were served to begin the Community kitchen dynamic, then cheese or peanut butter on the bread would supply more complete protein with the same preparation demands.

After calories and protein needs are met, other key nutrients, vitamins and minerals, may need to be supplied. For example Vitamin A is lacking in Majuro and iron, in Bayad. At this point, getting "expert" help is most useful. Most countries have Nutrition Institutes and Composition of Foods Tables. Inquiring through health channels usually gets excellent response and results.

With our concern for the whole village, the Nutrition section of the Health Care Manual contains pages on Observable Signs of Malnutrition and Assessing Nutritional Status, and the Unique Role of Protein which are tailor made for any auxiliary to move effectively and instantly if outside help is not available. Developing lists of the 20 most commonly eaten foods, the 4 foods least expensive per kilo in each of the five food groups, those raised locally (in each season), and consumed locally vs. being sold as cash crops, the foods and approximate amounts eaten in a day give an objective data base for judgements and actions.

The community kitchen dynamic can move from modest, but key beginnings in highly caloric, instant prep foods like sand-

wiches to preparing and introducing high protein foods.

Key foods to meet vitamin and mineral deficiencies can be selected with the help of health, nutrition, and agriculture personnel in government and/or use of the Health Care Manual. Look for "new" already at hand sources of highly nutritious foods, for example, rice polishings or wheat germ and bran from milling operations, a brewery vat's yeast and foods thrown out like chicken giblets in a hotel kitchen. Creative ways to introduce new foods include serving them at a village council meeting, hosting the mayor to a dinner with new food on the menu, having children plant seeds and grow it to eat, doctoring up the new food with sugar or a sauce, mixing it into a stew, and adding it to a favorite recipe and gradually increasing its proportion. Minimizing access to Western "junk" foods aids in good selection of highly nutritious food.

A super kitchen at the end or adjacent to the community center may be the vision of the future in the document, but much can and must be done before a building will be built. Community meals and feasts hold the promise of grand, celebrative events. "Pot luck" allows them to happen sooner with more community participation. They allow for a creative mixing of honoring the customary foods and introducing new ones.

Having meals for each stake and/or guild may be a workable way to feed everyone once a month or week, if necessary, and cut over against the soup line image. As the project moves on the economic and more income is generated, more, wisely chosen foods are consumed and the focus of the community kitchen can move to the celebrative.

Global Health
Acceleration Team

THE COMMUNITY KITCHEN AS A DYNAMIC IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Bayad
Feb., 1977

CALORIES

PROTEINS

EXPANDED
ECONOMY

-X-

VITAMINS & MINERALS

FOCUS
FORCES

Large, Nutritious
Snack at All
Classes & Work Days

CRS Food Distribu-
tion
Community Oven

Community Meals
and Feasts Chocked
Full of Vitamins &
Minerals

Emphasis shifts
from Nutrition
to Celebration

-X-Pills of
vitamins and
minerals as
well as protein
could be given
if sever sit-
uation and/or
government
health program
had them. Only
a short term
tactic, coming
from outside &
requiring much
contexting.

Local Program

Sandwich Catering
Service

Women Bake and Have
Class once a week

Complete Meals
1 per Stake, Guild
per week/month

Federal/Regional
Programs

Excess Comodities
Programs

Plan and/or
Provide Land

Local
Initiative

Preparation and
Distribution

Plan & Supervise
Distribution
Build Oven

Build Community
Center with
Kitchen

Other
Recources

Arrange Payments
for Food

Catholic Relief
Services

Finance Building
Supplies, Labor