

IAPRI Embarks on the use of Telephone Surveys

By Cardinal Hachikona

The Indaba Agricultural Policy Research Institute (IAPRI) is a research and outreach institute that utilizes empirical evidence to advise and guide the Government of the Republic of Zambia and other stakeholders on agricultural investments and policies. Critical to achieving this is the task of collecting valid and reliable data from stakeholders in the agricultural sector including farmers, development agencies and farmer groups, among others. In a typical year, IAPRI would normally carry out face to face data collection activities across the country. However, with the onset of Covid-19 pandemic, IAPRI has had to innovate and adjust its data collection practices. As such, the Institute has embarked on the use of telephone surveys to collect data to ensure social distancing and other required guidelines under the COVID 19 scenario are adhered to.

Starting in the month of September 2020, the Institute will be conducting monthly surveys to generate district-level datasets that highlight the impact of COVID-19 on household food security and nutrition, against which IAPRI will recommend appropriate policies, action plans and prioritized interventions that can be tailored at district level. This research is intended to provide evidence of the effect of COVID-19 on food security and nutrition measured by the household hunger scale, household dietary diversity, minimum dietary diversity for women and minimum acceptable diet for children. The monthly surveys will ensure that there is empirical evidence on how COVID-19 is affecting food security and nutrition and thereby help in the formulation of appropriate policies or interventions. To ensure survey quality and timeliness, IAPRI will leverage the SUN LE baseline survey and collaborate with Khulisa, the management services heading the consortium evaluating the USAID-funded Scaling Up Nutrition Learning and Evaluation (SUN LE) project in Zambia, as well as consortium members, the National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC) and Nutrition Technical Working (TWG) group.

The monthly surveys will be carried out in the 30 SUN LE 2.0 priority districts. It will be conducted through telephone interviews among respondents who were included in the SUN LE baseline survey. During that survey, telephone numbers of all the respondents were collected. The SUN LE baseline study was conducted by IAPRI in partnership with Khulisa, the National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC) and the Central Statistical Office (CSO) after obtaining IRB

approval. The purpose of the study was to establish benchmark measures for 26 of 33 Most Critical Days Programme (MCDP) II indicators aligned to the Framework for Reducing Stunting. A total of 7501 households were included in the study.

About 40 enumerators to conduct the telephone interviews and 8 supervisors for data quality control will be involved. This key activity is led by Dr Rhoda Mofya-Mukuka, the IAPRI Senior Research Fellow.