

Improving hygienic management of poultry in rural Uganda



Through a USAID-funded grant under the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Partnerships and Learning for Sustainability (WASHPaLS) project, The Water Trust is piloting a training intervention that aims to help rural households adopt poultry management practices that will reduce the fecal exposure of children under five while also improving household livelihood outcomes. This project began in July 2019 and will be completed in August 2020.

INITIAL FINDINGS

83%

Higher prevalence of diarrhea in children in households with more than 5 chickens compared to those with less than 5 chickens in rural Uganda. *Source: Ercumen et al, under revision*

Poultry is a common livelihood

- 83% of households own chickens, with an average of 8 chickens
- Women are the primary caretakers

There is opportunity to improve livelihood outcomes

- 3-4 chicks lost per month to predators, disease, accidents or theft. This is the greatest perceived barrier to improved livelihood outcomes
- ~10% provide antibiotics to their poultry
- <1 egg sold per month and one consumed per week
- <15% of households consumed chicken in the last week

Poultry management hygiene is poor

- Virtually all homes had poultry feces observed in compound
- >4 chickens per household observed wandering freely around compound
- Raised chicken coops for sleeping at night are relatively common, but chicken runs for the day are rare

Households perceive knowledge and skill gaps

- Market cost of chicken feed and lack of awareness of locally-sourced alternatives are key obstacles to enclosing chickens during the day
- How to construct poultry housing is a desired training topic
- Vaccination of poultry is rare, and a desired training topic

Source: Baseline assessment of 493 households and qualitative assessment following five focus group discussions.

BARRIERS TO CHANGE



Low awareness of poultry as a risk to child health



Social norms of limited investment in poultry management, including but not limited to feces management



Low awareness of both possible health and economic benefits of greater investment in poultry management



Low practical skill levels in poultry management



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DISTINCTIVE PROGRAM THEORY

Emphasize salient livelihood benefit

Catalyze sustained behavior change

Reduce child exposure to poultry feces

INTERVENTION

ONE-DAY TRAINING

Trigger awareness

Help communities map (and increase salience of) health risks and livelihood opportunities related to poultry

- Foster sense of personal agency and feasible solutions to mitigate risk and leverage opportunities with minimal financial investment
- Motivate households to change poultry management behaviors

THREE-DAY TRAINING

Build skills

Provide training that allows households to improve poultry hygiene while accomplishing higher-salience livelihood goals

- Focus on simple, affordable practices that can produce significant health and livelihood benefits
- Provide practical, hands-on learning exercises rather than theory or conceptual knowledge

SIX MONTHS OF COACHING

Foster community of practice

Capitalize on existing high-attendance self-help group meetings for coaching

- Foster a community of poultry practitioners to learn and problem solve together
- Build on local, independent institutions that can provide ongoing access to technical, social, and financial capacity

SAMPLE TRAINING TOPICS



Brooding young chicks



Housing management, sanitation and clean environment



Disease control - vaccination



Feeding and feed mixing

EXTERNAL RESEARCH

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS

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STUDY DESIGN

Methodology: Randomized controlled trial with surveys at baseline, 9 months and 12 months

Sample size: 1,200 households across 100 communities (51 treatment; 49 control)

Location: Rural communities in western Uganda (Masindi and Kiryandongo districts)

Complementary data collection: Following the intervention microbial testing of water, soil, and/or hand rinse samples from 100 households

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