

ABSTRACT

OBJECTIVE: To determine and compare the socio-economic characteristics, childcare and feeding practices among children aged 6-59 months of households participating in a World Vision Kenya programme with non-participants. **DESIGN:** A comparative cross-sectional survey. **SETTING:** A World Vision Kenya project area (Kimundi and Yinthungu sub-locations) and a non-project area (Thavu and Yeekanga sub-locations) both in Kathonzweni division, Makueni district. **STUDY POPULATION:** A random sample of 320 children aged 6-59 months and their respective households. A sub-sample (n=60) was assessed for dietary intake. **RESULTS:** A significantly higher proportion of children in the non-project area (63.8%) than in the project area (37.5 %)(p=0.00) were introduced to complementary foods within the first three months. The first main food given to children in both areas was an enriched cereal porridge. In both areas, grandmothers were reported to be the main alternative caregivers though most of the mothers prepared food for the children while other caretakers did the actual feeding. **CONCLUSION:** No significant difference was noted in the childcare practices in the two areas contrary to what may have been expected since the programme aimed at promoting appropriate childcare and feeding practices hence the expected difference.