

ABSTRACT

A cross-sectional survey was conducted in Kathonzi division, Makueni district to assess and compare the nutritional status of children (6-59 months) drawn from households participating in a World Vision project vis-à-vis non-project area. The purpose of the study was to provide region specific data on the nutrition situation in the World Vision Project area and establish whether there is any significant difference from the non-operational area. A total of 320 households, of which 160 were from the World Vision project area each with at least a child aged between 6-59 months were randomly selected. In households with more than one child at this age category, only one child was selected. Structured questionnaires were administered to mothers or to alternative caretakers while anthropometric measurements were taken for all the children in the study households. Statistical package for Social Scientists (SPSS/PC+) computer package was used for data entry and analysis. Indices of nutritional status that is weight-for-age, height-for-age and weight-for-height were computed using the Epi-Info programme. The prevalence of stunting in the project area (46.5%) was slightly higher than among the non-project area (42.1%). A significant relationship was found between the children's age and their nutritional status based on the prevalence of wasting and of underweight ($p < 0.01$) while nutritional status, based on stunting, was significantly associated with birth order. Overall, there was no significant difference in prevalence of stunting, wasting and underweight between the world vision project area and nonproject area. However, the prevalence of stunting and underweight was higher than the national levels. It is, therefore, concluded that chronic malnutrition is a problem in the study area and age is an important determining factor. Even though World Vision Kenya has been involved in development projects in the area, there is still need for more targeted nutrition interventions by the organization.