



## SUCCESS STORY

### AFIA Women Improve Child Feeding Practices



Above: Mama Katiye, second from right and her baby girl, Bwake.

Below: Mothers of AFIA



In Kolwezi health zone chronic malnutrition for under-five children is especially high in the Kasulo health area. The AFIA project (meaning "Health" in Swahili), in collaboration with World Vision International and Project AXxes, promotes community-based nutrition using the positive deviancy Hearth model. AFIA also encourages exclusive breastfeeding, safe feeding practices and complementary feeding. Mothers and caretakers learn from each other about care and feeding practices.

In conjunction Project AXxes, AFIA also integrates sessions in growth monitoring promotion, safe motherhood, HIV/AIDS, birth spacing, raising awareness of family planning methods and distribution of contraceptives. Members of AFIA have become important channels of information to their villages, peers, partners and other family members. One AFIA member, Mama Katiye, provides this testimony:

*Poor health for my children was partly contributed by poor feeding practices. Before I joined AFIA PD hearth sessions, our main meal at home was Bugali (maize meal) taken with sombe or lengalenga (cassava leaves or amaranthus) and sometimes bitoyo (dried fish). I will let my children eat in one pot except for my small baby who is still breastfeeding. After joining hearth sessions I learned that the way I cook my food can help to preserve important nutrients. I now also know that it is important to add some ingredients in order to not only make it tasty but nutritious. We still eat the same type of food as before but our meals are now enriched with ground nuts, soya flour and the usual palm oil. I also make sure that I do not overcook vegetables. My small children eat in a separate pot from older siblings and I see that my children grow up healthy day by day.*

The Kasulo area is also surrounded by copper mining with many people concentrating on non-agricultural commerce rather than farming. AFIA encourages members to raise family income through nutrition-related income generating activities and gardening. Clementine Shimili, age 38 and with 8 children, is a food vendor. She sells cooked food and flour (mixture of maize and soya flour) outside her house, and says:

*I thank God that I can feed my family through this work. I am widowed but I can still make some small money to pay for the house, health care and school. I also use part of the food I prepare for sale to feed my children”.*