

## INTRODUCTION

### Background

Food purchases and consumption are influenced by the food environment and individual-level dimensions, according to the Environment Conceptual Framework (Turner et al. 2018):



Turner, C., et al. (2018). Concepts and critical perspectives for food environment research: A global framework with implications for action in low- and middle-income countries. *Global Food Security*, 18, 93–101.

### Context

- Ethnographic consumer studies were conducted to inform two five-year USAID-funded activities: Feed the Future Mali Sugu Yiriwa and Feed the Future Niger Yalwa
- Both activities support objectives of Regional Resilience in the Sahel Enhanced II initiative

### Study Objectives

- Identify cultural, economic, and social factors driving food household purchasing and consumption decision-making
- Inform community-centered design of contextualized social marketing messages and nutritious food products to increase consumption of nutritious foods

## METHODS

### Data were collected by:

- Shop-along interviews** – in-depth interviews in which consumers were accompanied from homes to market and probed for point-of-sale factors that influenced planned and actual food purchases (Mali and Niger)
- Free list interviews** - respondents listed responses to questions about food purchase practices, consumption practices and beliefs, and food preferences (Mali and Niger)
- Pile sort interviews** – respondents sorted food cards in response to questions about nutrition, cost, and foods for pregnant women and children 6-23 months (Niger only)



Location	Data Collection Method	Number of Respondents per Market	Total
USAID Yalwa 8 Markets across Zinder, Tillaberi, and Maradi Regions in Niger	Shop-alongs	2 women, 2 men (4)	32
	Free Lists	5 women, 5 men (10)	80
	Pile Sorts	5 women, 5 men (10)	80
USAID Sugu Yiriwa 6 Markets in Sikasso Region in Mali	Shop-alongs	2 women, 1 man or 1 woman, 2 men (3)	18
	Free Lists	3 women, 3 men (6)	36

- Locations represent diverse culture and market contexts
- Sampling was purposive and recruited from participants in project-supported structures
- Shop-along data were coded deductively and inductively and managed in MAXQDA Pro
- Free list data were analyzed using Visual Anthropac – Freelists
- Pile sort data were analyzed using Visual Anthropac – Pile Sorts

## FINDINGS

### Hierarchy of Decision-Making Factors



Purchases are planned considering available food budget. Value for money is evaluated by shoppers as being a sufficient quantity at an acceptable cost to feed all intended consumers/family members. The size of the family is a key factor in determining value for money and strategies for efficiently using the available budget.

Consumers perceive nutritious foods as expensive, not locally available, and what families wish they could eat but do not (mostly due to cost)

Appearance/perceived quality of product and perceived hygiene of vendor were important factors in Mali. Perceived nutritional value was an important factor in Niger.

Vendor-buyer loyalty builds trust and gives the buyer more confidence in the price and quality received and encourages the seller to give credit, which was more important in Niger than in Mali

Prepared foods are reportedly purchased in the market mostly to please and bring home to children, but they are also purchased as a convenient meal or snack for adults

Food production, purchasing, and consumption are influenced by gender norms

### Perceived Positive Food Attributes

Rich in energy Aids digestion	Increases blood Builds the body	Has vitamins Good for children's development	Promotes growth Gives strength
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## CONCLUSIONS

- Target men and women differently for nutrition social marketing to support family nutrition
- Highlight perceived positive food attributes to market nutritious food products for the family and of food products tailored to the special needs of children 6-23 months and for pregnant and lactating women
- Emphasize revaluing indigenous plants as nutritious foods and include as enriching ingredients in innovative nutritious food products (examples Bambara nut, baobab fruit)
- Enhance nutritional value of prepared foods by incorporating desired nutrient-dense ingredients (e.g., egg, milk, small amounts of meat, dried dark green leafy vegetables, peanut paste, fruit or orange-fleshed sweet potato purees)
- Encourage production and increase promotion of available nutritious and convenient flour formulations for young child feeding in affordable package sizes
- Prioritize youth for potential business opportunities related to improving nutrition and food safety knowledge and increasing consumption of safe, nutritious foods
- Help shift perceptions that nutritious foods are affordable by strengthening household food budget management skills