

Makerere to Fight Malnutrition

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Makerere University is to initiate a project to fight malnutrition in six districts in the country.

Dr. Florence Isabirye Muranga, head of the project at the Alliance for Improved Nutrition and Food Security for All (AINFSA), said during a review meeting on Thursday that malnutrition was rampant even in districts that have plenty of food. The project is under the department of Food and Science in the Faculty of Agriculture. "If people are not well fed they cannot perform well. Instead of two people you need 10 to do the same work. They fall sick frequently and you lose a lot of man-hours. Economically we lose," she said. Muranga said AINFSA is to identify the main causes of malnutrition and the most cost-effective ways of enhancing nutritional status. She said the project proposal was being finalised for presentation to donors. The project, she said, would form focus groups in villages and schools, to be trained by Makerere University using various distance learning techniques. They would in turn influence the communities towards better feeding. Demographic surveys indicate that 38% of Ugandan children are stunted due to poor feeding and that Ugandans consume between 50% and 90% of the food requirements stipulated by the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations. "We are trying to have a mass outreach for nutrition and food security," adding, "We are going to have focus groups at the grass roots which will be composed of opinion leaders and school clubs These will be the medium for disseminating information on nutrition in the communities," Muranga said.