Impact evaluation of a multisector intervention programme to reduce childhood stunting in a food-insecure area in Madagascar

- Project Duration
  36 months, starting October 2013.

- Intervention Zone
  Madagascar, Betioky district.

- Project objectives
  The global objective is to assess the impact of ACF interventions on chronic under-nutrition in 6-59 months aged children.

**CONCEPT AND BACKGROUND**

In developing countries, the number of children younger than 5 years suffering from chronic malnutrition was estimated at 178 million (32%) in 2005. The mortality risk for a child suffering from severe acute malnutrition is multiplied by 4 compared to a healthy child. Thus, the number of deaths for children under 5 associated with malnutrition is estimated at about 1.5 million a year. One should also notice that chronic malnutrition becomes permanent after 24 months, and that there is no efficient cure to this day.

Current knowledge about mid-term and long term effects of the different kinds of intervention remain uncertain; it is thus urgent to evaluate ACF’s programmes in areas where chronic malnutrition remains endemic. This research project seeks to evaluate the decrease of chronic malnutrition in ACF’s areas of intervention. With 50% of under 5 children suffering from chronic malnutrition, Madagascar ranks 4th in the global rating of chronic malnutrition prevalence in children under 5: in Betioky district, almost 25% of them suffer from GAM et over 26% suffer from its most severe form.

Some interventions have proven to be effective in reducing the prevalence of chronic under-nutrition, including general nutrition interventions, the supplementation in micronutrients (mainly zinc) as well as interventions aimed at improving hygiene practices. Few studies have also reported the effectiveness of multi-sectoral programs, combining several types of interventions, in reducing chronic under-nutrition.

- SUMMARY
  The research project will be located in the district of Betioky in Madagascar, where ACF launched a three-year multi-sectoral program (2013 - 2016), which has the overall objective of contributing to the prevention of under-nutrition among <5 years children, acting on its structural and cyclical causes. The project area includes 5 counties whose population is estimated at about 50,000 people. Among these 5 counties, 30 communities (called Fonkontany) were selected, representing approximately 50% (3,000 households) of the 7,200 households in this area.

  In March 2014, the research project did a random selection of households for the baseline information. These selected households should then have follow-up visits, one in March 2015 and another one in March 2016 (a fourth investigation in March 2017 after the programme will be considered). A total of 1070 households have thus been selected according to several criteria, divided in a control group and an intervention one.

  Here, the methodology of the research project is based on a comparison between data at the beginning of the program and data at the end of the program, and a comparison between data in the area of intervention and data in a “control zone”. Information about children (age, sex, nutritional and immunization status, food diversity and development level), mothers (age, level of education, hygiene knowledge, care and breastfeeding practices, MUAC, etc.) and households will be collected.
The global objective is to assess the impact of ACF interventions on chronic under-nutrition in 6-59 months aged children.

To compare the evolution of chronic under-nutrition prevalence between intervention and control groups;

To compare the evolution of other indicators (risk factors, intermediate indicators of the program) between intervention and control groups;

To monitor the implementation of the program as well as contextual factors over the study period;

Measure risk factors for chronic under-nutrition in the area

To compare the evolution of other indicators (risk factors, intermediate indicators of the program) between intervention and control groups

A 9% reduction (a 3% reduction per year according to the World Health Assembly) in the prevalence of chronic under-nutrition among children less than 59 months of age is achieved in the intervention group compared to the control group.

Implementing agency
- Action Contre la Faim - France

Sponsor and funder:
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- Europaid

Scientific partners
- Michigan University

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