

Evidence-based Strategic Briefing Note

Strengthening Local Governance against Malnutrition and Food Insecurity in Cameroon: Lessons Learned during the UNOPS Project led by Helen Keller International Foundation Cameroon

Full report

June 2020

CDBPS-H



Hearing of the Strategic Briefing Note (NIS)

Stakeholders, managers, their collaborators and other parties involved are concerned by the issues of **local governance against malnutrition and food insecurity in Cameroon**.

Why was this briefing note written?

This Strategic Briefing Note was written to **clear deliberations** concerning the improvement of local governance against malnutrition and food insecurity by providing a summary of **the relevant data of lessons learned**.

What is a Briefing Note?

The Strategic Briefing Note summarises global relevant data made from research (systematic reviews *) and local data to inform decision-making and deliberations related to health policies and schedules.

***What is a systematic review?**

A study summary that answers questions clearly formulated and that makes use of systematic and explicit methods to identify, select and critically judge relevant studies. Data from different studies are extracted and could be analysed altogether thanks to meta-analysis techniques.

Executive summary

The presented evidence in this full report is available under [executive form](#).

Authors

Pr Pierre Ongolo-Zogo

Head, Centre for Development of Best Practices in Health

Central Hospital of Yaoundé, Cameroon

Email: pc.ongolo@gmail.com

Rénée Cécile Bonono, PhD

Researcher, Center for Development of Best Practices in Health

Central Hospital of Yaoundé, Cameroon

Email: bonono2003@yahoo.fr

Moustapha Moncher Nsangou, PhD

Researcher, Centre for Development of Best Practices in Health

Central Hospital of Yaoundé, Cameroon

Email: mnsangou09@gmail.com

Mail

Pr Pierre Ongolo-Zogo, P.O Box 5604 Yaoundé – Cameroon

Contributions of the authors

POZ, RCB and MN designed the approach and wrote parts of this document. POZ revised successive versions of the document.

Conflicts of interest

None.

Appreciation

This strategic briefing note was prepared upon demand by the Cameroon country office of the Foundation Helen Keller International. The sponsor is not responsible for the content of this strategic briefing. The following researchers *François Colin Nkoa and Robert Marie Mba* from the Center for Development of Best Practices in Health commented the note.

Suggested reference

Ongolo-Zogo P, Bonono RC, Nsangou MM, Strengthening Local Governance against Malnutrition and Food Insecurity in Cameroon: Lessons Learned during the UNOPS Project led by Helen Keller International Foundation Cameroon, PERLS-Cameroon strategic briefing note. Yaoundé, Cameroon : CDBPS, 2020. www.cdbph.org.

CDBPS-H - The Center for the Development of Best Practices in Health is a research unit established in 2008 aiming to promote knowledge translation and exchange in order to improve health and socioeconomic well-being in Africa. CDBPS-H has for goal to permit the researchers and policy makers to work together and this initiative wishes to help researches through collecting, synthesising and disseminating the relevant evidence in a simpler, digest and user friendly format. CDBPS-H equally wishes to support the policy makers by offering capacity building opportunities, providing evidence based summaries and identifying the needs and gaps of policy-relevant and practice-relevant evidence in order to guide research. www.cdbph.org

Key messages

Malnutrition and hunger constitute global socioeconomic and health scourges that affect the physical and cognitive development of millions of children with serious and persistent effects on individuals, families, communities and countries. Malnutrition is sustained because of lack of knowledge in communities, misperceptions fueled actors and socio-cultural backgrounds. The factors of food insecurity vary according to places, action mechanisms and contextual manifestations.

Nutrition and Food Security is the ultimate ideal, “a situation in which everybody has sustainable physical, social and economic access to enough, reliable and nutritious food that satisfies their dietary needs and food preferences in order to live a healthy and active life”. Agenda 2030 related to Sustainable Development Goals makes of good local governance a must when it comes to the fight against malnutrition and food insecurity. It deals with a collective work that values on one hand, “*access to adequate food*” and on the other hand, “*social contract*” stating the citizen as the ultimate power holder. Improving local governance against malnutrition and food insecurity demands team effort to achieve the six following goals: (i) coordinate interventions between sectors and agencies, (ii) promote accountability, (iii) increase food supply, (iv) strengthen community approval, (v) improve responsiveness to citizen demands, and (vi) enshrine the rule of law on adequate diet.

With UNOPS financing the implementation of the project entitled: “*Strengthening the national and international NGO capacities including Civil Society Organisations (CSO) in order to enable a better participation of these entities in the planning, resource mobilisation and implementation of the national plan to strengthen nutrition in Cameroon*”, the ‘Helen Keller International’ Foundation in Cameroun paved the way for optimising local governance against malnutrition and food insecurity in the East region of Cameroon. The commitment of councils, civil society organisations, women associations and journalists related to nutrition and food security issues enabled the successful pilot-testing of promising approaches whose scaling up ability will transform the profile of malnutrition and food insecurity in Cameroon especially in the high priority regions of Far-North, North, Adamawa, North-West and South-West.

SUN Movement

Aim: A world free from all forms of malnutrition by 2030. Under the supervision of states and with the support of organisations and individuals, the collective action guarantees to each child, teenager, mother and family, the achievement of their right to food and nutrition, the heist of its full potential and participation to building sustainable and prosperous communities.

Four strategic objectives:

1. Develop and maintain an appropriate political environment.
2. Prioritise and institutionalise the effective measures that contribute to good nutrition.
3. Implement the effective measures that align with common results.
4. Use efficiently and increase significantly the financial resources allocated for nutrition.

1. Malnutrition and food insecurity

1.1. Problem extent

Malnutrition and hunger constitute global socioeconomic and health scourges that affect the physical and cognitive development of millions of children. If all countries happen to be affected, women, infants, children and teenagers are particularly vulnerable in low-income countries. Every country struggles with nutrition; a good number of them struggle with chronic nutrition causing stunting, whereas others struggle with obesity and non-communicable diseases. An increasing number of countries simultaneously face under-nourishment during early childhood, followed by obesity and non-communicable diseases at the age of procreation. Micronutrient deficiencies (iodine, vitamin A and iron) are a huge threat for health and growth, especially to children and pregnant women.¹ **In central Africa**, 44% of children suffering from chronic malnutrition live in Cameroon. Most of them live in rural areas and come from destitute families with poorly educated mothers equally suffering from chronic malnutrition.² According to the 2018 DHS, the prevalence of food insecurity amongst persons aged from 15 to 49 years varies from 63% in men and 47% in women. This prevalence varies according to the rural and urban zones being 67% to 59% in men and 52% to 43% in women and amongst regions, 48% in the Adamawa to 78% in the East in men, 31% in the West to 63% in the South in women. Three children out of ten (29%), that are younger than 5 years old struggle with stunting; 4% are emaciated, 11% are underweight and 11% are overweight. Three children out of five (57%) aging from 6 to 59 months are anemic. Two women out of five (40%) aging from fifteen to forty-nine years are anemic whereas two out of five are overweight (of which 14% are obese and 24% overweight) with regional disparity; Douala (61%), West (54%), Yaoundé (53%), Adamawa (20%), North (18%), Far-North (10%). In children, underweight (meaning weight-for-age) constitutes a global malnutrition index which encompasses acute (emaciation) and chronic (stunting). In 2018, 29% of children younger than five years old struggled with chronic malnutrition and 14% of them manifest severe stunting. Underweight affects 11% of children younger than five years old. Moreover, 11% of children are overweight. The stunting prevalence is 36% in rural areas to 20% in urban areas; It decreases with the mother's level of education, being from 39% to 8% depending on whether the mother has no education or a higher level of education. Regional disparity are noticeable; North (41%), Far-North (37%), East (37%), Adamawa (35%), Yaoundé (11%), Douala (9%). Three children out of five (57%) aging from six to fifty-nine months are anemic.³ The trouble context in the three Northern regions, the East border and the two Anglophone regions struggle with food insecurity since 2016. In 2018, close to sixteen million Cameroonians struggled with food insecurity in the following regions: Far-North (28.8%), North (15.9%), West (15.2%), North-West (15.1%), South-West (11.6%), Adamawa (8.1%) and East (5.4%). Close to four hundred thousand people struggled with phases 3 to 5 of food insecurity in the following regions: South-West (32.3%), Far-North (27.7%), North-West (20.3%) and North (9.3%)⁴.

The effects of malnutrition on social, economic and health development are serious and persistent for individuals, families, communities and countries. The people suffering from under nutrition, especially children are more exposed to diseases with a higher mortality rate. Undernutrition counts close to 45% of deaths amongst children younger than five

¹ 2018 World Food Security Report

² PAM 2016

³ Demographic and Health Survey 2018, NIS 2019

⁴ PNRVSA 2018

years old in low and middle-income countries. Malnutrition increases health expenses, decreases productivity and slows the economic growth, therefore maintaining the vicious circle of poverty and poor health.

1.2. Determinants of malnutrition and food insecurity

The double burden of malnutrition affects especially children younger than five years old, pregnant and breastfeeding women. It is the result of an inadequate diet due to inappropriate food practices or lack of food or persistence of infectious or parasitic diseases that spread in poor hygiene and environmental conditions, being both individual and collective. Malnutrition is maintained because of ignorance within communities and misperceptions depending on the socio-cultural areas and actors. The inappropriate feeding practices of newborns and children are due to poverty, cultures and habits, preferences and ignorance.⁵ **Poverty** is a universal determinant of food insecurity and a risk amplifier and malnutrition effect. Poor people are more bound to suffer from famine and different forms of malnutrition⁶.

The institutional and political framework being economic, commercial and fiscal, structures agro pastoral production and its redistribution while influencing the habits and interactions amongst stakeholders, land property, market stability, agro pastoral practices, taxes and socio-political security and stability.⁷ **Factors of production** (human capital, labor, land, financing)⁸ as well as the instability of producer prices jeopardise the profitability of agro pastoral projects. Moreover, food insecurity is amplified by difficulties encountered by producers to access inputs⁹ and lack of production material and infrastructure, storage, conditioning and transformation¹⁰. Furthermore, some **agro pastoral practices** play a role in the soil degradation and harmful use of natural resources. The financing of the research and development in agriculture and adoption of new agricultural technologies are constrained¹¹. The poor quality of **communication infrastructure** hinders agricultural productivity in limiting technology transfers and access to inputs and markets. Degraded infrastructure limits the supply of isolated localities, prevents products reaching markets because, and amplifies losses after the harvest and favors price inflation because of induced high transport costs¹². However, some good quality road infrastructure could contribute to malnutrition in prioritising the sale of agricultural production without safeguarding the stocks necessary for the nutrition of local populations. Localities in the West region and the council of Ayos in the Centre region are school cases¹³. **Climate change** influences the quality and quantity of produced food and causes environmental disasters. **Sociocultural factors** vary. Beliefs, practices and ideas that feed the diet are based on local standards and logic, not always rational. The lack of diversity of the diet linked to traditional preferences and prohibitions, the standardisation of household food and the inequalities in family food distribution are frequent. The community dimension of the child's feeding style, colostrums rejection considered harmful, non-exclusive breastfeeding, abrupt weaning and force-feeding of children influence breastfeeding practices.

⁵ UNICEF 2020

⁶ UNICEF-MINSANTE, 2017; Fongnzossie, 2018 ; RNDH,2019

⁷ PARM, 2017

⁸ Ouedraogo, 2007

⁹ Ngo Nonga, 2013

¹⁰ Waïgalo, 2018

¹¹ Teno, 2018

¹² Berlinger, 2018

¹³ Fosso, 2015

Acculturation and marginalisation are food insecurity factors of the Baka people¹⁴. The **approximative implementation WASH strategy** is affiliated to malnutrition due to poor hygiene, inadequate access to drinking water and lack of sanitation.¹⁵ **Access to health services is limited** in the East, North and Far North regions due to low-skilled offer of care and services and the existence of geographical and financial barriers. **The inconsistency product quality control** could be explained by the lack of resources related to it. The risks of food chemical contamination are proven due to urban agricultural practices¹⁶ and common use of dangerous preservatives in Yaoundé markets¹⁷. **Humanitarian aid causes adverse effects** such as dependence and confusion amongst the beneficiaries due to non synchronisation of the donors’ actions¹⁸.

To conclude, malnutrition and food insecurity are the main sustainable human development problems of which the symptoms and causes vary according to the local context. The search for solutions demands local perspective.

Civil Society Network Scaling Up Nutrition RSC SUN inaugurated on 11 June 2013	Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global network of Civil Society Organisations (CSO) that visualise a world in which multiple actors and civil society work together in a productive and mutually beneficial manner in order to eradicate malnutrition. • RSC SUN established to support the efficient and sustainable training, evolution and functioning of Alliances of the civil society in SUN-based countries, all while easing communication and coordination amongst the various alliances of the civil society with the whole SUN Movement. • RSC SUN respects the principles that govern commitment within the SUN Movement including the ones on conflict interests • Multi-actor, multi-level and multi-sector network including universities and international, national and local SCOs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the effective and efficient functioning of national alliances of the strong, credible and influential civil society on the long run. • Coordinate SCOs nationally • Contribute to the conception, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of policies and an efficient national plan to strengthen nutrition • Encourage and ease coordination amongst all the actors of the civil society • Ensure the harmonisation of their strategies, programmes and resources with national priorities in nutrition.

2. Local Governance against Malnutrition and Food Insecurity as part of the 2030 Agenda

Governance is a set of processes allowing public and private actors to formulate their interests, frame and prioritise their problems, make related decisions, implement and monitor and evaluate their implementation. Political economy analysis of stakeholders allow us to understand the contextual governance issue. **The 2030 Agenda**, comprising 17 SDGs, adopted by 193 countries in 2015 is a window of opportunities to “transform our world” with twice as much ambition: *universality*—for all, in all countries – and *integration*—by each, while collaborating to achieve the goals. The systematic analysis shows that universal healthy nutrition is inextricably related to all SDGs and constitutes the basis of universal health coverage. Five strategic domains are common to the SDGs in which nutrition could contribute to and profit from: (i) sustainable food production, (ii) the strength of

¹⁴ Fongnzossie, 2018

¹⁵ Unicef-Minsanté, 2017

¹⁶ Lekeanju, 2016

¹⁷ Bonono, 2019

¹⁸ Nsangou, 2018; Berlangue, 2018

the systems infrastructure, (iii) health systems, (iv) equity and inclusion and, (v) peace and stability. In this context, unsatisfying and inappropriate governance in the fight against malnutrition and food insecurity constitutes the main determinant of the violation of the *right to adequate food*.

Regarding international actors, the *Paris Declaration on the effectiveness of development assistance* and the *Accra Program of Action* establish five relevant principles to the signatory parties of any development aid process: (i) *Appropriation*, beneficiaries conduct their policies and development plans themselves and run their development activities on the field; (ii) *Alignment*, donors help according to the indicated priorities in the national development strategies of beneficiaries; (iii) *Harmonisation*, donors run their mutual development activities better by themselves to avoid double employment and transaction costs too high for the beneficiaries; (iv) *Results-based management*, all the parties involved in the aid lay a greater emphasis on results, meaning the impact made on the lives of the less fortunate; (v) *Mutual responsibility*, donors and beneficiaries all take conscience of the use of aid in a clear way and inform their citizens and parliaments of the impact aid has made.

Good governance of the fight against malnutrition and food insecurity focuses on two values: (i) the « *right to adequate food* » admitted as basic and fundamental human right and; (ii) the « *social contract* » within modern societies that establishes citizens as the ultimate holders of the legitimacy of the authorities. The six goals that contribute to good governance in the fight against malnutrition and food insecurity are the following: (i) coordinate interventions between sectors and agencies, (ii) promote accountability, (iii) improve food supply, (iv) strengthen community ownership, (v) improve responsiveness to citizen requests, and (vi) enforce the « *right to adequate food* ». Several key actors involved in the fight against malnutrition admit that an integrated, multi-sectoral and open-ended approach is a must in order to address food system problems at the global, national and local levels. Ensuring a healthy and sustainable feeding to the population is one of the authorities' greatest challenges wherever they may be.¹⁹

3. Fight against Malnutrition and Food Insecurity in Cameroon from 2016 to 2020: Lessons Learned from the UNOPs Grant

Long fragmented and siloed, the fight against malnutrition and food insecurity struggle to achieve their goals. The Cameroonian government with the support of its partners, has undertaken various actions to improve the nutrition status of vulnerable groups, amongst which: the institution during a national week for mother and child health and nutrition (SASNIM) since 2007, the implementation of a multi-sectoral working group concerning nutrition in 2008; the establishment of the National Food Fortification Programme in 2008, joining the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) in 2013, the roadmap elaboration to reduce chronic malnutrition in Cameroon in 2013 and the establishment of an Interministerial Committee of the fight against malnutrition housed at the Prime Minister's Office in 2014. This committee is a body of strategic coordination, consultation, concertation and orientation dedicated to the fight against malnutrition. Similar coordination bodies in the fight against malnutrition are expected at the level of the ten regional governors, 58 senior divisional officers and 360 municipal councils. It is in this context that the National Nutrition Policy (2018-2030) and its multisectoral operational plan for implementation (2019-2023) were developed. The aim of the first phase is to: reduce chronic malnutrition down to 27% and reduce or stabilise overweight to 5% in children younger than five years old by 2023. In addition, a food guide was developed in 2017 to overcome lack of communication and information regarding food and nutrition.

¹⁹ Global Nutrition Report 2017

Agencies of the United Nations System and the government set up a nutritional action plan to address these urgent needs improve on nutrition practices and reduce stunting in 2016. The humanitarian response provides emergency food assistance under food form and/or cash transfer, targeting the more vulnerable ones (e.g. refugees, internally displaced persons, local populations etc.). Actions are continued to consolidate the achievements of previous operations through rehabilitation and promotion of livelihood such as the “Food-for-Assets” project which supports the creation of assets in target communities in order to protect and strengthen it.²⁰ Community-based interventions strengthen the diagnostic capacities and the treatment of acute malnutrition of children younger than five years old and of pregnant and breastfeeding women in hospital and outpatient settings. Monitoring and evaluation and procurement mechanisms aim to ensure an efficient response. Emergency and Systems Strengthening approach are combined in order to improve resilience of the concerned populations. The priorities of the government in the Agricultural Investment National Plan (PNIA) constitute the operational phase of the Rural Sector Development Strategy (RSDS) that is itself anchored in the Growth and Employment Strategy Paper (GESP). Since 2018, Rural Sector Development Strategy is operationalizing the sustainable management and development of natural resources through the improvement of access and use of agricultural land, development and exploitation of natural resources, as well as environmental protection and adaptation to climate change.

The progress observed in the fight against malnutrition is attributable to membership of SUN Movement in 2013 regarding the coordination of actors and advocacy. Since 2018, the ‘Helen Keller International’ Foundation in Cameroon as leader of the **civil society platform** SUN, has received financing from UNOPS for the implementation of the project entitled: “*Strengthening the national and international NGO capacities and the Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in order to allow a better participation of these entities in the planning, resource mobilisation and implementation strengthening national plan of nutrition in Cameroon*”. This financing indeed allowed the **mobilization of and capacity strengthening of CSOs, media and elected municipal authorities**.

Under the initiative entitled «**Municipalities against Malnutrition**», sixty-five municipalities benefited from capacity building activities related to nutrition, social mobilization and advocacy supportive of nutrition activities. The efforts of the councils aim at improving access to drinking water through construction of boreholes, equipment for human-powered pumps and installation of sources. Following the capacity building of councils, a regional network of municipalities to promote nutrition (RECENUT) was established in the East region with 25 mayors endorsing the Charter of the Network. In addition, forty mayors from the East and Far-North regions have signed letters of engagement to invest at least 1% of their council’s budget to fight against malnutrition. The advocacy campaign led by RECENUT in the East region enabled 15 municipal councils to institutionalize a nutrition budget line as well as a validated framework for planning and budgeting nutrition activities. The above network extended in 2020 to become a national network (RECCNUT). As part of the social mobilization component, thirty-four (34) national civil society organisations (CSOs) and four international CSOs joined the SUN platform in 2019. This platform has strengthened the capacities of 36 CSOs in nutrition amongst which 33 have since added nutrition activities to their action plans. A thousand groups of women have benefited from capacity building in nutrition organized by the CSOs members of the platform.²¹ The table below shows the committed actors and their roles;

Actors	Roles
--------	-------

²⁰ OCHA ONU 2018

²¹SUN Civil Society -Alliance Cameroon, 2019

Ministries: Public health - agriculture and rural development - Husbandries, fishing and animal industries - Commerce - Women empowerment and Family - Economy, Plan and Regional Development - Domains, Cadastre and Land Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Draft legislation ▪ Set up favorable measures for FNS ▪ Ensure effective budgeting of the identified nutrition activities
Prime Minister's Office – Interministerial Committee in the fight against malnutrition (CILM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Align efforts in favor of FNS ▪ Optimise the impact of the efforts of partners and the government
Decentralised local authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote the development of agricultural, pastoral and fish farming activities
Helen Keller International (HKI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leader CSA of Movement SUN ▪ Strengthen the capacities of local elected officials and SCO regarding nutrition
RECENUT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sustain the achievements of the local nutrition governance project
Global Water Project - Cameroon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitate consultation set out the issues and challenges relating to water and FNS
NGOs and Donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contribute financial resources and expertise
Local and community media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inform and raise awareness with measures in favor of FNS
Education community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teach and apply measures in favor of FNS
Village chiefs and members of GIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Build storage stores ▪ Allocate fertile land to the populations

4. Capitalizing the Lessons Learned from the UNOPS Grant

The end of UNOPS financing makes imperative the capitalisation of lessons learned from this project to the light of evidence and conceptual framing of the local governance supportive of nutrition and food security. It is necessary to scale up lessons from the East region in Cameroon to the other regions most affected by malnutrition and food insecurity namely Adamawa, Far-North, North, North-West and South-West. The current context is particularly favorable since the entry into force of the 2019 General Code of Decentralised Territorial Communities early 2020, the launch of the reconstruction programme in the North-West and South-West regions and, the upcoming election of regional councilors in early December and the inauguration of the newly elected mayors resulting from the 2020 February municipal elections.

4.1. Definitions and dimensions of local governance in the fight against malnutrition and food insecurity

Local governance is the ability of local institutions with other local actors and stakeholders to enshrine the principles of participation, inclusion, transparency, responsiveness and accountability in order to reassure all the citizens' access to *adequate food* and optimal food and nutritional security. One main lesson learned in the East region is that the inclusive commitment of the stakeholders and interested parties fosters the ownership of the initiatives against malnutrition and food insecurity on the one hand and highlights the critical conditions for their sustainability on the other hand. In broad terms, **ten dimensions contribute to good governance within organisations**: accountability, transparency, participation, inclusion, responsiveness, consensus orientation, rule of law, effectiveness, efficiency and equity. Accountability means a clear explanation of individual responsibility, alignment of resources mobilised to a time schedule of activities chosen based on their

ability to achieve the goals validated by the stakeholders. **Transparency** means accessibility of data and relevant information to all stakeholders and interested parties. **Participation** gives to citizens, civil society organisations and associations, local traditional, municipal, administrative authorities a say regarding priority actions and resource allocation to achieve the goals that benefit the maximum of people. **Inclusion** demands that all sociological components of which the marginalised, poor and minorities be involved parties in every community process. **Responsiveness** enshrines the management principle on the citizens' demand with for aim to guarantee satisfaction of all while considering necessity, emergency and sociocultural preferences. **Orientation towards consensus** enshrines dialogue and negotiation in order for the strategic choices to take place according to the unanimous will of stakeholders without having to undergo voting. The **rule of law** states that everyone must respect the existing rules and regulations without discrimination, there is no room for the *laissez-faire* approach. **Effectiveness** deserves to be the core of the public action. Resources are allocated based on a logical model or a theory of change validated and known by all stakeholders with waste of resources not being tolerated. **Efficiency** deals with optimising the use of resources needed to achieve the goals set with the bare minimum of the scarce available resources. **Equity** is a normative dimension which states that public action should not fuel or consolidate inequality amongst citizens on the basis of their attributes such as place of residency, occupation, gender, race, ethnicity or socioeconomic status.

4.2. Conditions for success of local governance against malnutrition and food insecurity

To translate into the reality the ten dimensions listed above, local public action requires **the instauration of evidence-informed decision-making mechanisms**. These mechanisms and processes involve the structured analysis of issues in breadth, underlying factors, the magnitude, the actors' views and preferences, and the effectiveness of interventions and strategies on one side with implementation considerations being on the other (e.g., barriers, incentives, finances etc.).

Investing in evidence production and dissemination is mandated to speeding the progress towards the achievement of nutrition goals in particular and all SDGs targets in general. The collected data must be gathered, analysed and used to make better decisions; to plead for political decision-making and to feed it; to strengthen dialogue, partnerships, actions and important responsibilities to stop malnutrition of any kind. Quality evidence is essential to reach each person suffering from malnutrition or food insecurity. They enable the identification of people left behind and guide the appropriate strategies to improve on coverage and quality of important nutrition interventions meant for children, teenagers and women²². Here, municipal councils and civil society organisations constitute the principal actors not only to produce reliable information but equally to target and contextualise strategies in the fight against malnutrition and food insecurity.

In Cameroon, evidence is available through investigation, research and administrative management information systems. The sources of evidence to quantify how serious the problem is in inter alia SMART investigations, DHS-MICS and harmonised framework for analysing nutrition and food insecurity, research, technical and financial evaluation reports of partner interventions. Evidence on effective interventions and strategies is found in systematic reviews and impact evaluations studies available in dedicated online databases.

²²World report on nutrition 2017

4.3. Ten strategies to optimise local governance against malnutrition and food insecurity

There exist best practices of decentralised territorial communities for nutrition and food security of which some have been applied in the East region particularly:

1. Empower the municipal executive and local administration by building up a work team of the municipal council in charge of questions regarding the fight against malnutrition and food insecurity on one hand and by introducing a focal point on it within the municipal administration on the other;
2. Ensure access of the actors to quality information on malnutrition and food insecurity through a functional information incorporated local system;
3. Institute the fight against malnutrition and food insecurity as a socioeconomic development priority by incorporating related activities in the local development plan.
4. Lead by example during municipal activities and schedules by highlighting the local agro-food and pastoral production;
5. Profit from municipal police power to encourage change in terms of preference granted to food production des high in micronutrients, monitoring of the quality of sanitary food, support to local production and market supply, de raising of awareness on malnutrition and support for the management of acute malnutrition cases and the regulation of use of pesticides and fertilisers;
6. Plan land use in order to favor the integration of agro pastoral production activities like school gardens, promotion of incorporated peri-urban agriculture and agro pastoral production and to facilitate access to the land of women through the commitment of traditional authorities;
7. Encourage adequate diet and change of eating patterns through information actions and nutritional education in schools, associations and women's groups;
8. Promote local methods of sustainable production like cultural methods maintaining soil and water resources, developing a communication infrastructure and transport service linking production areas to consumption areas in order to decrease waste and post harvest losses;
9. Ensure the accessibility of food products by securing the production and marketing sectors especially the maintenance of communication infrastructure, building of accessible markets and stores, promotion of the local agro-industrial transformation;
10. Advocate for the fight against malnutrition and food insecurity by developing an incorporated local system of information on food and nutrition that generates reliable evidence to the stakeholders and parties involved on one hand and suggesting synergistic actions against malnutrition and other development problems on the other hand.²³

²³ World report on food 2017

References

- Berlanger, M. (2018). What food response to food insecurity? Case study in Ethiopian pastoral and agro-pastoral region. Faculty of Economics, Social, Political and Communication Sciences Catholic University of Leuven. <http://hdl.handle.net/2078.1/thesis:14546>
- Bonono-Momnougui, C. R. (2019). Between plantain « Marie-Claire » and plantain “natural ripe: health food supply problems in Yaoundé. *African Journal of Economics and Management*, Vol. 19 no.2.
- CFSV (2017), Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis.
- Fongzossie, E. Mbang Nkongo T., Dibong Siegfried, D. et Ngansop, M. (2018). Plant agrobiodiversity within forest landscapes applied by the Baka and Konabembé communities in the South East region of Cameroon Characterisation and potential for household food security. *Ethnoecology Review*. Vol 13. |Varia + File " Marine anthropology "
- Fosso, A.L. (2015). « La forêt qui tue et la forêt qui soigne : la santé humaine en milieu forestier tropical humide au Cameroun », Working Paper, CAFHUT SL, CIFOR/CEGIAR.
- Lekeanju Nguatem Tayoh., Lenyu Mumah, I. K. and Mbunya F. Nkemny. (2016) Chemical fertilizer application and farmers perception on food safety in Buea, Cameroon. *Agricultural Science Research Journal*. Vol.6(12): 287–295, <http://resjournals.com/journals/agricultural-science-research-j>
- MINADER (2018), Followed by the implementation of the rural sector development strategy: 2018 Annual Report.
- MINANTE (2019), SMART nutrition survey and retrospective mortality in women, teenagers and children in Cameroon (East, Adamawa, North, Far North).
- Ngo Nonga, Minkoua Nzie and Bedzeme (2013). Cameroon performances on food security: cas of cereal.
- Nsangou, MM., and al. (2018). Agro-pastoral practices and diet habits of populations in the North of Cameroon, *Africanist Inter-disciplinary Journal*, no. 2.
- ONU OCHA (2018), Humanitarian response plan, Cameroon (2017-2020)
- PAM (2016), Strategic review of Food Security and Nutrition : « no hunger by 2030.
- PNRVSA (2018), Harmonised Framework for identifying high risk areas and populations in food and nutrition insecurity (HF) in the Far North, North, l’Adamawa and East regions of Cameroon : Results and analysis of the current acute food insecurity situation.
- PARM. (2017). Agricultural risk assessment in Cameroon, Report.
- PNSA and PAM (2015). Food security assessment in the East, Adamawa, North and Far North regions of Cameroon. Report. 14-28.
- RECENUT (2019), Local governance project on nutrition, Final statement.
- SUN Civil Society Alliance Cameroon (2019), Fact Sheet.
- SUN-CSA Cameroon, Report of the capacity building workshop for local elected officials, Community development frameworks and SCOs of the East region in Cameroon.
- Teno, G., Lehrer, K., & Kone, A. (2018). Factors in the adoption of new technologies in agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africaa literary review. *African Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics*, 13(311-2018-3120), 140-151.
- UNICEF-MINSANTE. (2017). From maternity hospitals to homes. Anthropological study on newborn care in Cameroon. Report.