

How evidence is feeding into the World Food Programme's global nutrition programming

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Highlights

Evidence impact

- Evidence from a 3ie-supported working paper confirmed the assumptions behind the World Food Programme's global nutrition policy and operational strategy.

Factors that contributed to impact

- The WFP's process requiring a management response to research ensured that the implementation departments engaged with the evidence and its implications.

Other details

Title: [Synthesis of impact evaluations of the World Food Programme's nutrition interve...](#)

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Status : Completed January 2018



Context

Acute malnutrition in the Sahel region affects 6 million children under the age of 5, of whom approximately 1.3 million require treatment for severe acute malnutrition. Preventing and treating malnutrition and improving food security is critical to improving the quality of life of vulnerable groups and breaking a vicious cycle of ill health and inequality and meeting other sustainable development goals such as education and decent work.

While there is considerable evidence about the effectiveness of interventions to treat moderate acute malnutrition, evidence around the relationship between prevention and treatment of malnutrition, particularly in fragile contexts, has been unclear and insufficient. To fill this gap, the World Food Programme (WFP) commissioned four evaluations in Chad, Sudan, Niger and Mali to examine aspects of its food security and moderate acute malnutrition prevention and treatment programs, and their effects on nutrition and food security outcomes in fragile contexts. The goal was to identify lessons to improve program effectiveness.

This working paper synthesizes the findings of four evaluations managed by 3ie under its [Humanitarian Assistance program](#). The paper provides evidence on how programs for preventing moderate acute malnutrition and those for treating it in emergency and post-emergency contexts are related.

Evidence

The synthesis of the four studies found that:

1. Implementers need to pay greater attention to the timing, sequencing and rollout schedule of a package of interventions for enhancing their effectiveness.
2. Closer partnerships and coordination can support more effective, timely and efficient delivery.
3. Barriers to achieving better coverage and access include infrastructure deficits. Awareness of the availability of high-quality services is also important.
4. The quality, availability and lack of monitoring and evaluation data are a problem.

Evidence impacts

Reaffirmed the WFP's next steps on partnerships and programming

The World Food Programme used evidence from the 3ie working paper to test the assumptions of the organization's global nutrition policy for 2017-21 and improve its operational strategy. The WFP agreed to all five recommendations from the synthesis, including those calling for forging better partnerships to enhance operational effectiveness, context-specific layering of different types of interventions following a nutrition situation analysis, and improving cost data collection for nutrition programs. Specifically, the management response to the synthesis highlighted the need to increase the use of the organization's 2017 guidelines related to nutrition-sensitive approaches, make data from beneficiary information to nutrition indicators available internally and to partners, and mobilize resources for more detailed and disaggregated cost data.

Suggested citation

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Related

[Management response to the recommendations from the synthesis report on four evaluations of the impact of WFP programs on nutrition in humanitarian contexts in the Sahel](#)

This document presents the World Food Programme Executive Board's response to the synthesis, and lessons and recommendations highlighted to improve program effectiveness.

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