

FOR A COMPREHENSIVE, CHILD-CENTERED APPROACH TO UNDERNUTRITION THE OPERATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

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In a few days, we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, and this coincidence is happy. **Children have rights, but also needs.** These rights include the **right to be safe**, to a **quality health care system** and to **education**. Each of us in our respective roles should work together to ensure children's rights are respected -that is to say they have love, care, healthcare, attention, hygiene, healthy eating practices amongst other. A **collective strategy** is necessary, as well as a **multi-sectorial approach**, because if we continue to work in silos, we will not progress.

On the field, we are confronted with **very different contexts** and we often observe a reality that does not match the plan nor adhere to existing scientific evidence. We are not always able deliver actions designed by scientists but **we have to adapt** to the complex reality of the context on the ground. **Many of the children we support are displaced, in conflict or exposed to the impact of climate change.** These conditions affect their ability to claim their rights and meet their needs for access to health, education and healthy food.

When it comes to the treatment of undernutrition, our primary question is how to **ensure that our agenda envisages all the different types of undernutrition**. Children can be stunted and wasted at the same time and this double burden must be addressed through a holistic approach.

Another important question concerns the interaction with health, and how to ensure that all available health services are delivered as part of a basic package. We need to ensure that we don't have stand-alone nutrition programmes, but **rather comprehensive health programmes integrating nutrition**.

Lastly, a **child-centered approach must focus not only on the child's needs, but also on family situation, society, the ecological model and the overall context.** We also need to align ourselves with a global care framework, which integrates gender and mental health issues, investing adequate resources towards these objectives.