

UNDERNUTRITION IN THE ANTHROPOCENE: FACING CLIMATE CHANGE AND SOCIAL INEQUITIES QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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How could Action contre la Faim integrate better the treatment or management of child undernutrition with prevention and long-term impact?

I think that Action contre la Faim has a great opportunity to **capture their experience**, identify the principles that enable success and recognize the weaknesses where that experience didn't go so well. It should also keep **making these learnings available** to the wider community: children in school, policy makers, health officials, the society as a whole should be supporting the principles shared, in every country in the world.

We don't have research-based data to prevent children wasting. There's a real research gap in that sense. Wat's your opinion on that?

When I was younger, I took part in a project where they screened everyone in the community. And they supported them using community health trainings -simple trainings. Children with Severe Acute Malnutrition received weekly support and normal children were checked on a regular basis. Over a period of 2-3 years there were no more SAM children. In terms of practices, **if you take the weight and height of children on a regular basis, you could anticipate when they are MAM, forecast the relatively small numbers you will have to deal with and manage to cope with the acutely malnourished**. When this approach is put into practice, it works. The question is that **challenges arise in practice**: the challenge is the **organization of the services and management of the system** that require a different set of skills. But again, this is not impossible. Treatment of malnutrition even in poor resources scenarios shows that people take enough to care to train people with the competences to do things but the question is to what extent it can be put at scale. These are political questions, and I am sure Action contre la Faim is very good at drawing attention at this. It's not up to me to say what the failures are, we know where the failures are, we know what it ought to be done, the question is how to get there.

In your presentation, you mentioned that doctors lack a comprehensive view on the health status of the child, one that takes into account also their nutritional status. However, each article you presented was produced by an exceptional doctor. Doctors are aware of their environment and the community, but they need a multidisciplinary approach.

You are right; there has been progress in the latest years. However, **the vast majority of the medical profession is not applying yet a nutritional lens to health**, nor implementing the ten points of structured care. Given that those principles apply across the whole field of health delivery, then there is still work to do. As an example, I am currently working on nutrition and cancer. There isn't another condition that has as many nutritional considerations as cancer, yet the number of oncologists who know how to manage patients still is quite low.