



ACF - INTERNATIONAL NETWORK



RESEARCH FOR THE MOST AT-RISK

Scientific research at Action against Hunger tackles the operational needs which arise in the field. It produces tools and methods to be used in high-quality and sustainable actions. Research includes carrying out studies, capitalisation, dissemination and valorisation of know-how towards missions and local partners.



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IN NUMBERS

Action against Hunger in 2006

- Nearly 6200 staff
- 43 countries of intervention
- Over 4,800,000 beneficiaries
- A budget of 101 million Euros
- 5 offices (Canada, France, Spain, United Kingdom, United States)

Set up in 1979, **Action contre la Faim** (Action against Hunger) is now one of the most important humanitarian organisations in the **fight against hunger**. It is active in some forty different countries and works in the fields of nutrition, health, food security, water, sanitation and hygiene. It develops advocacy and testimony in its activities. The purpose of all programmes is to help the beneficiaries to regain food autonomy and the means to live without having to depend on outside help.

Over **850 million people** world-wide do **not get enough to eat**.

Action against Hunger's humanitarian challenge is based on over **25 years of technical and scientific expertise**, and is supported by operational research and the implementation of know-how, which involves project beneficiaries from definition to evaluation.



DEVELOPING THERAPEUTIC NUTRITIONAL CARE FOR HIV-AFFECTED CHILDREN IN MALAWI

One of the major challenges for governments and humanitarian aid and development organisations in their fight against malnutrition in southern Africa is the incidence of HIV/AIDS in the region. The mutually reinforcing relationship between HIV and nutrition is recognised within the region.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Health Malawi, Action against Hunger has set up a programme to improve the quality of nutritional care provided for the people living with HIV/AIDS, especially for severely malnourished children. In order to achieve this, an operational research programme was conducted between September 2004 and August 2006 amongst other programmes to assess the effects of HIV/AIDS on children's response to therapeutic treatment for acute malnutrition. The research addressed nutritional response, mortality and mortality, CD4%, anaemia, issues related to stigma and family perceptions of care. Previous studies conducted in Malawi have assessed the acceptability of HIV counselling and testing and the prevalence of HIV in children with severe malnutrition in Malawi.

Findings indicated a significant prevalence of HIV within children admitted for therapeutic feeding with a higher concentration in the season where admission levels are traditionally low. Contrary to common perception, HIV counselling and testing was well accepted for both children and caretakers. Mortality risk was significantly increased among those children with HIV and was associated with a lower CD4%.

Cooperation is paramount in research programmes. In Malawi, partnership was formed with the Institute of Child Health of London, and University of Ches-

ter. At the same time, the close cooperation which exists between the national authorities such as the Ministry of Health, the National AIDS Committee and the local NGO REACH meant that it was possible to interchange the technical and institutional know-how. This will streamline the effectiveness of therapeutic treatment for HIV/AIDS-affected children in southern Africa. This research was the subject of five publications in Toronto, on the occasion of the 16th International Conference on AIDS (2006).

Fergusson, P., Chinkhumba, J., Tomkins, A.; "Mortality in HIV infected and uninfected severely malnourished children", Centenary meeting of Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, 13 - 15 Sept 2007.



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[Other achievements in Nutrition - Health - Care Practices]

- Production of a practical manual on taking charge of adult malnutrition for experts and practitioners at headquarters and in the field, on the basis of the work of Carlos NAVARRO-COLORADO (Navarro-Colorado, C., *Low BMI does not identify acute malnutrition nor predicts death during famines*, Proceedings of the 18th International Congress of Nutrition, 19-23 September 2005, Durban, South Africa).
- Practice Attitude Awareness Survey (C.A.P.) on feeding practice for children in crisis situations – Indonesia: feeding, nutritional practice, mental health of mothers in 2006.
- Research on the effect of malnutrition in infants on the mother-child relationship in Afghanistan in 2006.
- Three self-training mini-modules in 2006 on breast feeding, micro-nutrients and care practices implemented at the feeding centres.



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CASH-BASED INTERVENTIONS IN FOOD SECURITY, AN ACTION SCENARIO TO CONSIDER

The distribution of food is today the most widespread response to food emergencies. In certain contexts, however, the opportunity to directly inject cash may be taken, even in crisis or security-endangered situations. Action against Hunger, always striving to upgrade the quality of its operations, has become involved in projects for the purpose of scientifically studying the effect of cash-based interventions in the general framework of its fight against malnutrition. Between June and October 2004, Action against Hunger developed cash-based interventions in the Wajid district in southern Somalia. The injection of 138,891 dollars into 4029 homes, reaching around 25,000 beneficiaries, was closely followed up by the food security teams via the analysis of regularly collected data. The results of this study have shown that cash-based interventions can be effective in emergency contexts by raising purchasing power, economic independence and spreading the sources of income of populations.

It is essential for the association to capitalise on its experiences to be able to adapt to other contexts. A report has therefore been drawn up defining theoretical and practical locations for cash-based interven-

tions with a view to producing a self-training module for the Action against Hunger staff. This report has been revised and validated by scientific experts and humanitarian professionals (GTZ, Save the Children UK, Oxfam, British Red Cross). A training workshop bringing together all the national and international "Food security" heads in the Action against Hunger network was held in June 2007. Action against Hunger is now a strong supporter of the fact that cash-based interventions can be an effective response to food crises, even in situations where security is seriously threatened.

Mattinen, H., Ogden, K., "Cash-based interventions: lessons from southern Somalia", Disasters, 2006, 30 (3): 297-315.



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[Other achievements in the area of Food Security]

- Organisation and participation in a practical workshop on "Income generation activities" in Bamako (Mali) in November 2006 with the representatives from 22 missions of the Action against Hunger - International Network.
- Instalment of Sphinx® software on the 2006 missions to facilitate the development of the questionnaires for the assessment and analysis of the situations of the beneficiaries.

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THE PROGRAMME OPERATED BY ACTION AGAINST HUNGER AND IRD (INSTITUT DE RECHERCHE ET DE DEVELOPPEMENT) IN THE MATTER OF WATER SANITATION IN A POST-EMERGENCY CONTEXT

Since 1996, Action against Hunger has been running food security and water, sanitation and hygiene programmes in Sri Lanka helping displaced or vulnerable populations affected by the conflict. After the tsunami of December 26, 2004, Action against Hunger immediately implemented emergency operations.

The association has continued until now with its support for the victims. Access to water is still a crucial issue, particularly since the coastal water tables have been contaminated by a high salt levels because of the tidal wave. In order to find a sustainable solution for the water requirements of the disaster-affected populations. Action against Hunger has established a close relationship with the Institute for Research and Development, Pierre et Marie Curie University (Paris VI), the French Red Cross and the IWMI (International Water Management Institute).

This research has satisfied the operational challenges in Sri Lanka: the Action against Hunger teams have been able to rationalise and optimise the use of wa-

ter resources, particularly as regards the salt-affected aquifers. They have also shown the effectiveness of geophysical methods such as TDEM (Time Domain Electro-Magnetism) which make it possible to rapidly locate salinated water intrusions caused by the tsunami. This application has certainly improved the technical capabilities of the association in the field of water, sanitation and hygiene, while opening the way to the building of more than 100 water supply points in the affected area.

Hoareau J., People-centred Approaches to Water and Environmental Sanitation, « The use of transient Electro-Magnetism methods to localize the saline water intrusion in coastal aquifers. A case study in Sri Lanka. », 32nd WEDC International Conference, Colombo, Sri Lanka, 2006.



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TDEM: equipment used to localize the saline water intrusion Sri Lanka-2006

[Other achievements in the area of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene]

- Definition of the "Action against Hunger policy on water, sanitation and hygiene" showing the approach and the standard position throughout the Action against Hunger International Network as a platform for the development of a technical strategy in this sector, 2006.
- Publication of the French edition of the "Water Sanitation - Hygiene for vulnerable populations" Editions Hermann, 2006.

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OVER 25 YEARS OF EXPERTISE

An International Scientific Council

The Action against Hunger International Scientific Council includes research and academic experts. It backs operational services in defining priorities, validating operations and supporting the research programmes in progress.

Quality programmes recognised in the field

The association undertakes external assessments of actions in the field. They are based on the following criteria: programme impact, coverage, coherence, relevance, sustainability, effectiveness and efficiency.

Since 2003, Action against Hunger has also been developing quality management procedures covering all its headquarters and missions activities. It has its own internal auditing system designed to streamline its capability as regards directing and optimising the means implemented.

Capitalisation: a basic step

The purpose is to evaluate, document and disseminate the information drawn from experience with a view to making our future programmes better.



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