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How Africa Can Build a Future Free
from Hunger and Malnutrition



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SENEGAL



CASE STUDY



Between 2000 and 2016, Senegal made remarkable progress on undernutrition reduction. The GHI score fell from 38 in 2000 to 17 in 2016. The prevalence of stunting decreased from 30 percent to 19 percent over the same period. These improvements in nutrition have been driven in large part by significant institutional and programmatic commitment by the Senegalese government.

INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS

Drawing on the experience of the Programme de Nutrition Communautaire (1994–2000), then executed through a private contractor, the Cellule de Lutte contre la Malnutrition (CLM) was created in 2001 within the prime minister's office.¹ It provides technical assistance in the definition and implementation of the national nutrition policy. The CLM coordinates its activities with seven ministries—Health, Education, Economy and Finance, Decentralization, Trade, Industry, and Agriculture—and the National Association of Rural Advisors and civil society organizations.

The main function of the CLM is to:

- Assist the prime minister in defining national nutrition policy and strategies;
- Review and agree on proposals for collaboration from the technical ministries in the implementation of the program;
- Facilitate a framework for consultation between technical ministries, nutrition policy entities, NGOs, and grassroots community organizations;
- Develop good synergy with other programs to fight poverty in general;
- Foster a policy to promote communication for behavioral change and good practices in the fight against malnutrition; and
- Contribute to the strengthening of national capacities for the effective conduct of nutrition programs.

To ensure the implementation of community nutrition interventions in the 14 regions it covers, the CLM has also set up a Bureau Exécutif National (BEN) in charge of programs and project management.

Furthermore, Senegal joined the SUN Movement in 2011.

POLICY AND PROGRAMMATIC INTERVENTIONS

In 2002, the Programme de Renforcement de la Nutrition (PRN) was launched by the CLM. The program seeks to improve nutrition status and healthy development of children under the age of five living in poor urban or rural areas of Senegal, and to strengthen the institutional and organizational capacity to implement and evaluate nutrition interventions. PRN interventions are organized around six types of activities:

- A monthly weighing of the child from birth to age three, followed by advice given to the mother;
- Treatment of moderate cases of malnutrition through the distribution of fortified food and awareness activities treatment;
- For mothers, with severe cases referred to health services for treatment;
- Community-based distribution of products and

- medicines (mosquito nets, iron, vitamin A supplements);
- Information, Education and Communication (IEC) and Communication for Behavior Change for the promotion of key family practices;
- Support for community initiatives (such as mills and market gardening); and
- Provision of potable water.

To implement the PRN, the CLM relies on the Agences d'Exécution Communautaire (AEC) and ministries. The AEC is a network of community agencies, NGOs, and branches of local government, thus putting implementation into the hand of organizations already embedded in local communities. In 2006, an evaluation² of the impact of PRN was carried out by analyzing wasting rates between 2004 and 2006 in villages in the Fatick, Kaolack, and Kolda regions and within the PRN program. It was found that between 2004 and 2006 wasting rates decreased significantly more in the intervention villages (–34 percent) than in the control villages (–21 percent). The reduction in wasting was most pronounced for children of 6–11 months in the intervention villages (–52 percent), against a worsening trend in control villages (+3 percent).

While the health sector remains the lead sector tackling malnutrition in Senegal, there is evidence that making agriculture more nutrition-sensitive can improve nutrition outcomes. A study among pastoralists in northern Senegal has shown that using a dairy value chain approach to promote access to more nutritious food, in this case a micronutrient-fortified yogurt, can improve the nutritional status of preschool children.³ With the introduction of the micronutrient-fortified yogurt, anemia prevalence dropped from a very high 80 percent to close to 60 percent. Furthermore, after one year, hemoglobin concentration increased by 0.55 g/dL more among children consuming micronutrient-fortified yogurt. However, this latter impact was greater for boys than for girls.

Another program, Yaajeende (Abundance),⁴ has been developing biofortified varieties of millet, beans, and sweet potato since 2011, addressing micronutrient deficiencies including iron, zinc, and vitamin A. Yaajeende has been operating in Matam, Bakel, and Kédougou regions since 2011, and was introduced in Kolda in 2014.

It is also promoting the adoption of conservation agriculture and sustainable land management techniques. The Yaajeende mid-term evaluation concluded that households and individuals living in villages in project intervention areas saw greater improvement in nutritional status indicators than those residing in non-project areas: stunting prevalence among children aged 6–59 months in project areas decreased from 23 percent before project implementation to 16 percent at the mid-term evaluation, while in the non-project areas, the stunting level decreased from 32 to 29 percent during the same period. The stunting rate reduction due to the intervention was evaluated at more than 4 percent.

A high level of political commitment and leadership on nutrition through the CLM, coupled with effective interventions under the PRN, has shown that malnutrition can be successfully reduced. This progress could be further accelerated by involving the agriculture sector, as seen in some programs in northern Senegal.

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¹ Transform Nutrition, Country Brief Senegal, "Stories of Change in Nutrition. A Research Summary," 2016, http://www.transformnutrition.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2016/08/SoC_Senegal_Online.pdf.

² République du Sénégal PRIMATURE, Enquête d'évaluation de l'impact de l'intervention du Programme de Renforcement de la Nutrition en milieu rural dans les régions de Fatick, Kaolack et Kolda, 2006, <https://crddivision.com/docs/prn2006/prn2006.pdf>.

³ A. Le Port, et al., "Delivery of Iron-Fortified Yogurt, through a Dairy Value Chain Program, Increases Hemoglobin Concentration among Children 24 to 59 Months Old in Northern Senegal: A Cluster-Randomized Control Trial," *PLoS ONE* 12, no. 2 (2017): e0172198, doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0172198.

⁴ International Development Group, "USAID Yaajeende Program Mid-Term Evaluation Final Report," 2016, http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00MFPW.pdf.