



Analysis of seasonal variations in weight gain of 6-24 month-old children in Tapoa, Burkina Faso

► Duration of the project

18 months: April 2014 – October 2015

► Area of intervention

Tapoa province, Burkina Faso.

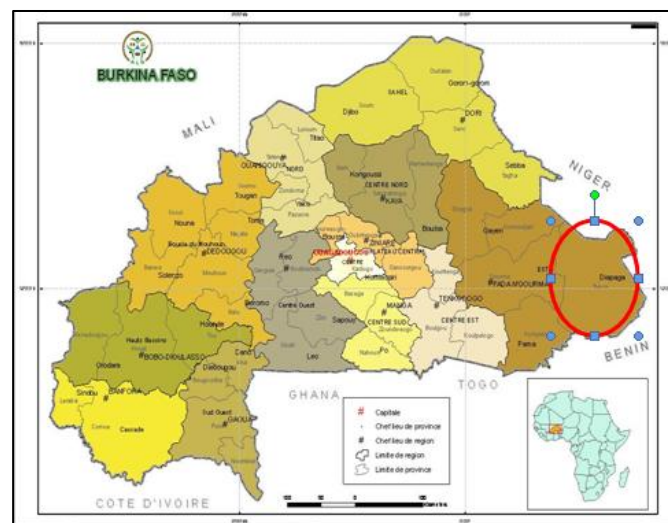
► Objective of the project

To improve the understanding of the nutritional statuses' seasonality in the Tapoa province, including the trend related to weight gain of 6-24 month-old children during the hunger gap.

► Context and background

In Burkina Faso, malnutrition is considered as a major public health issue by sanitary authorities: according to UNICEF statistics in August 2013, malnutrition numbers in the country are concerning: 10,9% of children under five years are suffer from acute malnutrition, with 1,8% suffering from the severest form of malnutrition. The nutritional situation in Tapoa is structurally preoccupying and particularly damaging for vulnerable individuals (pregnant and lactating women, children under 5 years old). Nutritional surveys realized in Tapoa bring to light a level of prevalence of acute malnutrition among children under 5 that is both concerning (10, 8%) and above the national average (8,2%)¹.

The Ministry of Health thus began the implementation of a series of strategic actions, together with its partners; ACF initiated a range of analysis on seasonal variations of weight gain in 6-24 months children in Tapoa, as part of a sentinel programme based on the "Listening Post" (LP) methodology. The present study, focusing on weight gain, analyses the driving factors on weight gain of 6-24 months old children during rainy season (July-August). This period is indeed characterized by difficulties of access to food, and recognized as a hunger gap period. Thus, this project will try to highlight and examine the correlation between weight gain and care practices, the population diet during this period, and availability of water.



► Project Summary

The "Listening Post" methodology has been tested by ACF Burkina in order to evaluate the nutritional status of children under 2 and its seasonal variations. As part of this approach, the goal is to analyze data collected on a monthly basis in the sentinel households, in order to detect trends on the period and seasonality relationships and allow for a better understanding of multisector seasonal factors related to under-nutrition in the context of Tapoa. This data is used monthly by ACF teams, also to determine early warning indicators when the needs are increased in the area.

The LP project brought to light the fact that weight gain, as well as with food diversity, was following a same seasonality since 2011. It appears that the most important weight gains for children between 6 and 24 months occur during the hunger gap, and that the proportion of children benefitting from acceptable food diversity increases.

Thus, it appears relevant to repeat the study with children aged between 6 and 24 months in Tapoa province in a comprehensive perspective (the approach is mainly qualitative). The goal is to identify and analyze food practices and care resort at different times (dry season, rainy season), and between mothers of children who gained weight and mothers of those who didn't. One seeks to know to what extent one can observe weight gains in some children aged between 6 and 24 months, despite poor feeding conditions characterizing rainy season, which is also the hunger gap marked by the reduction of cereal provisions.

► OVERALL OBJECTIVE

- ◆ To improve the understanding of the nutritional statuses' seasonality in the Tapoa province, including the trend related to weight gain of 6-24 month-old children during the hunger gap, especially considering the primary hypothesis of the project: it stipulates that children's weight gains during the rainy season can be explained by the availability of nutrient-dense foods, and also by the reduction of diseases related to malnutrition, result of good hygiene and adequate care practices.

► SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- ◆ To determine, through a qualitative methodology based on the collection of testimonies and in situ observation on a limited number of LP households, the factors that could impact the weight gain evolution of 6-24 month-old children during the May-Septembre period.
- ◆ To analyze the changes related to daily food habits of children and seasonal alimentation, and the evolution of weight gain of 6-24 month-old children.
- ◆ To show the changes that have occurred on children care practices, and analyze the conditions of access to drinking water related to the nutritional conditions of children.
- ◆ To identify and define operational recommendations deriving from these results, in order to support the ACF Burkina country strategy in the area during the hunger gap.

► EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- ◆ Driving factors in the evolution of the 6-24 month-old LP children's weight are highlighted in a qualitative investigation report among the LP households before, during and after the hunger gap – respectively May-June, July-August, and until October.
- ◆ A capitalization document of the research is produced during year 1 and allows for an analysis of these factors and a production of quantified evidence.
- ◆ Operational recommendations are made to ACF's mission in Burkina Faso on the relevance of actions to take on during the hunger gap, on the basis of these analyses.

► Executing agency:

- ◆ Action Contre la Faim - France

► Sponsor and funder:

- ◆ Action Contre la Faim – France

► Scientific partners :

- ◆ INSS (Burkina Faso)

► For further information...

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