



Nutrition Effect Assessment Project (NEAP)

▶ Project Duration

36 months, commencing May 2014

▶ Intervention Zone

Headquarters based, with pilots in various ACF countries and contexts of intervention.

▶ Project objectives

Overall objectives

To contribute to improve nutritional impacts of preventive interventions through enhanced outcome measurement and understanding, and identified most efficient interventions

Specific objectives

To develop and build capacities on robust, simple, low resource methods (and indicators) to assess in a systematic way nutritional impact of nutrition-oriented interventions

To identify a set of effective interventions aiming at preventing undernutrition, especially with regard to programmes targeting underlying factors and multi-sectoral strategies, where evidence currently lacks.



▶ Background

Levels of acute and chronic undernutrition have seen modest decreases in the past 20 years, yet there remain an estimated 165 million children suffering from chronic and 52 million children with acute undernutrition.

ACF through its work has realized that 'doing good' for beneficiaries is not enough, and recognizes interventions targeting vulnerable populations must be proven to work. In today's current humanitarian context, ACF must be able to show that they are contributing to lasting change in the nutritional outcomes of beneficiaries, or having an impact.

In the Lancet series, Maternal and Child Undernutrition (2008 and 2013) a number of nutrition sensitive interventions were identified to be core or beneficial programs that would contribute to a reduction in maternal and child undernutrition. Yet within the same series, the authors confirmed there is little evidence showing whether programs described actually are proven to work through scientific methodologies. Many interventions focus on the achievement on the activities and outputs ensuring that indicators for these are met. Yet the successful achievement of process indicators (activities and results) does not signify whether nutritional outcomes of the beneficiaries improved.

It is from this that ACF has developed the NEA. This methodology, building on the organization standard M&E guidance, aims at providing credible evidence showing the effectiveness of nutrition oriented interventions, while being fully incorporated into the intervention and monitoring plan reducing cost, workload while improving results.

▶ Project summary

As part of the ACF WINS strategy (Working for Improved Nutrition Security), the NEAP aims at developing, piloting and systematizing a rigorous and efficient nutritional effect assessment method, to be used in ACF interventions aimed at preventing under-nutrition and improving nutrition status.

The research project will be articulated around 3 main steps:

1. Identifying/developing a robust, yet adaptable low-resource framework/methodology for systematic nutritional effect assessment including analysis within the projects M&E system (Research component)
2. Develop guidance and capacity building material and systematize the use of the methodology to assess ACF interventions against nutrition impact (Dissemination & Capacity building component)
3. Meta-analysis and identification of what works best for undernutrition prevention (Evidence building component)

As a transitional stage, NEAP will involve the piloting of an NEA method on a set of ACF interventions in order to test its adequacy, practicality, cost-efficiency and robustness and refine tools and guidance that have been drafted.

► Expected benefits of NEAP

First and foremost, the expected direct benefit is an enhanced understanding of the effectiveness of ACF nutrition oriented intervention with the aim to inform and improve programming for higher impacts.

At local level, knowing what works will support the focus and improve funding to nutrition sensitive interventions, therefore contributing to an overall reduction of undernutrition and its long-term effects on the local population. Internationally, the project will contribute to build evidence on what works to prevent undernutrition. It will also support the promotion, and scale-up of these interventions.

ACF will have a greater body of knowledge internally to be able to design effective nutrition specific and sensitive programs.

► How does NEAP work?

The NEAP is not rocket science! It aims to be systematic, simple and coherent in its application so that teams are able to effectively incorporate and implement it into programs.

NEAP uses existing skills and capacities within each mission, bringing them together in a standardized methodology to identify the effect of nutrition sensitive interventions on the nutritional outcomes of beneficiaries.

Using program cycle management, NEAP starts from the identification of the needs of beneficiaries and develops a Theory of Change (ToC). ToC uses a backwards mapping exercise to identify what pre-identified conditions need to be met so that an effect on the nutrition outcome of beneficiaries can be archived. The ToC helps to identify the process and outcome indicators, as well as possible barriers or enhancers that either oppose or support achieving that change.

The NEAP uses and strengthens the monitoring skills of teams to be able to effectively identify and report on when process or outcome indicators are achieved. While in addition conducting baseline and end-line beneficiary assessments to see what possible quantitative changes have been realized, while triangulating these with qualitative information and monitoring data/information.

The NEAP within its methodology looks to unlock the black box of possible confounders (unknowns) by not just focusing on the sector of the intervention but on a broader multi-sectoral approach. By using monitoring components combined with the other components of the NEA, the team will be able to show whether the intervention had a weak, moderate or strong influence on any changes in the nutrition outcomes of the beneficiaries.

► Implementing agency

- ◆ Action Contre la Faim - France

► Sponsor

- ◆ Action Contre la Faim – France
- ◆

► Scientific partners

- ◆ To be identified

► More details...

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