



AKADEMIYA

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CONSEIL NATIONAL DE
DEVELOPPEMENT DE LA NUTRITION

AKADEMIYA2063 BOARD SEMINAR

Concept Note

Thursday, March 9
9.30 AM - 12.45 PM
Radisson Blu Hotel
Dakar-Senegal

Better understanding community-level nutrition and vulnerability status for enhanced crisis preparedness and response capacities

Africa, like the rest of the world, has faced major crises, which have engendered significant alterations to life as we know it, with far-reaching implications for the continent's ability to achieve its development goals. In recent years, the Russia-Ukraine war and the COVID-19 pandemic have, in different ways, brought to the fore gaps in response capacities, underscoring Africa's limited capacity to deal with shocks.

These gaps are intrinsically linked to a shortage of information and knowledge needed to calibrate and target crisis response interventions to increase the efficiency of resources deployed. Furthermore, efforts to address vulnerability to shocks are not systematically mainstreamed into programmatic interventions and tend to be developed only when these shocks occur. Yet, we know that the impacts of shocks at community level are only precursors of broader and more pervasive ramifications, which must be grasped and addressed to build Africa's capacity to anticipate and respond to shocks.

How can we better understand the nature and drivers of vulnerability at community level? What are the best approaches to gain insights into which communities are most exposed or have the least capacity to absorb shocks? What are the best strategies to mobilize instruments, institutional infrastructure, and resources to strengthen the continent's capacity to react more promptly and efficiently in responding to shocks as they come?

At AKADEMIYA2063, we are working on a two-pronged approach to generating the knowledge required to reduce vulnerability and strengthen crisis response capacities in Africa. The first is to develop a composite indicator of vulnerability to rank communities in terms of the degree to which they are vulnerable to shocks due to preexisting conditions related to poverty, malnutrition, chronic diseases, limited access to services, etc. Examining patterns and intersections of different dimensions of vulnerability allows us to identify communities with limited capacity to absorb shocks where crisis response efforts will be especially vital.

The second area where we are contributing to understanding vulnerability and building response capacity is the area of nutrition. Nutrition status is determined by a range of factors and is, therefore, a key indicator of what is going wrong in a community. Nutrition status reflects the level of poverty and malnutrition, the prevalence of disease, as well as the level of environmental degradation in a community, and livelihood conditions.

Remarkable progress has been made during the last two decades in reducing extreme hunger in Africa; however, around one in five people are still chronically undernourished. Senegal has placed significant priority on nutrition programs and investments and has made significant progress in improving nutrition outcomes over the past two decades. Still, notable challenges remain, including that of hidden hunger. Micronutrient deficiencies are therefore recognized as an important public health issue despite limited data on their extent and distribution. Significant micronutrient deficiencies exist in both urban and rural areas, particularly for calcium, iron, riboflavin, and zinc. Senegal's Strategic Multisectoral Nutrition Plan 2017–2021 (PSMN) called for action to reduce deficiencies in a number of nutrients, including iron, folic acid, iodine, zinc, and Vitamin A.

1 Malabo Montpellier Panel. 2017. Nourished: How Africa Can Build a Future Free from Hunger and Malnutrition. Dakar. https://www.mamopanel.org/media/uploads/files/MaMo_Panel_report_2017.pdf

2 Government of Senegal, Centre de Lutte contre la Malnutrition. 2017. *Plan Stratégique Multisectoriel de la Nutrition du Sénégal, 2017–2021*. Dakar. <https://extranet.who.int/nutrition/gina/sites/default/filesstore/SEN-2017-2021-Plan%20Strategique%20multisectorel%20de%20la%20Nutrition.pdf>

AKADEMIYA2063's research focuses on using micronutrient gaps as an indicator of community-level vulnerability and examining how micronutrient status can be linked to the degree of resilience to external shocks and the depth of impact. This entails mapping the nutrient adequacy gaps and connecting them to vulnerability along other dimensions to provide a more comprehensive picture of chronic vulnerability and exposure. This knowledge will facilitate the development of instruments to deal with threats in these communities in terms of reducing vulnerability and improving response readiness and capacity.

The AKADEMIYA2063 Board Seminar, hosted in collaboration with the Conseil National de Développement de la Nutrition (CNDN), Senegal, will provide a platform to exchange with key stakeholders and development partners on the data and analytics needed to have better-informed programs and instruments to anticipate and respond to shocks when they occur and ascertain protections for the most vulnerable communities.

The objectives of the seminar are to allow participants to:

1. Discuss research evidence and trends in programmatic interventions to improve nutrition outcomes across the continent;
2. Examine dynamics in micronutrient deficiencies in urban and rural populations;
3. Review policy action to alleviate micronutrient deficiencies across Africa, notably in Senegal.

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