

Project to combat the malnutrition based on the improvement of complementary feeding in Madagascar : the experience of Nutrimad

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In 1997, a National Demographic and health Survey was conducted by the INSTAT (Institut National de la Statistique) with the assistance of Macro International Inc. The sample included 3154 children under three years old. It was pointed out that Protein – Energy Malnutrition is a serious nutritional problem for young children:

- the prevalence of stunting was 47.4 % with 21.5% of the severe form.
- the prevalence of underweight children was 39.3% with 12.7% of the severe form
- the prevalence of wasting was 7.2% with 0.9% of the severe form.

Micronutrients deficiencies of vitamin A, iron and iodine were also prevalent in this age group throughout the country.

The present report is based on results of Nutrimad Project about surveys of infant feeding practices and nutrition in two pilot regions of intervention in Madagascar : an urban areas in Antananarivo, the capital, and an rural areas in East coast, Brickaville.

According to these surveys, some practices, particularly the early introduction and poor quality of complementary foods, were the major determinants of the nutritional status of children during the period of complementary feeding.

Nutrimad is a project developed in collaboration between GRET, IRD and LABASAN. In view to alleviate malnutrition, the aim objective of Nutrimad is to ensure that a greatest number of young children have access to an adequate, balanced in different nutrients particularly protein - rich and low - cost complementary food.

In this way,

Firstly, researchers of Nutrimad purpose two types complementary food prepared with local available raw materials. Composition corresponds to the recommendations of WHO/Unicef

- For children from 6 to 9 months : energy dense gruel (100 to 120 kcal /100ml) using germinated beans as amylase and protein sources or industrial amylase permitting an acceptable fluidity
- For children aged more than 10 months, some semi – solids recipes enriched with protein, vitamins and minerals

Secondly, the two types complementary food are popularized at the regional level through nutrition seminars training focusing on the good feeding practices of children.

Current studies showed that these good quality complementary food permit to increase energy ingested of the children who consume them.