

transform nutrition

WEST AFRICA

Led by IFPRI

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Along with our usual roundup of news and evidence, this ninth issue highlights the impacts of the [COVID-19 pandemic on food security and nutrition in West Africa](#). Please share any feedback, news, or events relevant to the region with [Sokhna Sall Seck](#)

Spotlight on COVID-19, food security and nutrition in West Africa

The COVID-19 pandemic and its associated lockdown measures have not only caused a global health crisis but also an economic crisis, which together have had an impact on food security and malnutrition globally. This spotlight summarises the latest knowledge available on [COVID-19 and its impact on food security and nutrition in West Africa](#) and highlights what could happen next.



NEWS from Transform Nutrition West Africa

Call to Action endorsed by West African Health Organisation

A graphic titled "A CALL TO ACTION". It features a quote from Prof. Stanley Okolo, DG WAHO, who commends an initiative to strengthen the management of nutrition data. The graphic includes the logos of several partner organizations: Transform Nutrition, UNICEF, Countdown to 2030, African Union, USAID, World Health Organization, European Union, GIZ, and NIPN.

The [Call to Action](#) to invest in the data value chain for nutrition in West Africa, developed by participants in the Together for Nutrition: West African Data Forum, has now been endorsed by WAHO. We hope this will accelerate uptake and contextualisation of the CTA at country level. We will be holding a webinar in December. More information on this soon.

Strengthening leadership

This Call to Action is reinforced by a recent review from TNWA researchers of [Leadership and Capacity Gaps in Nutrition-Sensitive Agricultural Policies and Strategies for Selected Countries in Sub-](#)

[Saharan Africa and Asia](#). The review reinforces the call for strengthening leadership along the data value chain for nutrition across different sectors. A social media campaign was rolled out by our partners and comments by the authors can be found [here](#).

A CALL TO ACTION

ACTION 1

 **Provide leadership**
for developing and implementing coordinated strategies for nutrition data across institutions, sectors, and partners that meet policy and program needs.



- A nutrition data ecosystem characterized by stronger leadership, consensus on #datapriorities & capacity to generate, analyze & use data, analytics & evidence is needed to tackle #malnutrition in all its forms.
- #Together4Nutrition Calling to action to provide leadership for developing & implementing coordinated strategies 4 nutrition data across institutions, sectors, & partners that meet policy & program needs.

Trends and inequalities in nutrition for girls and women in Africa

In our last newsletter we presented our work on trends in research and gaps in knowledge on [adolescent nutrition in the region](#). Jiwani *et al.* have recently published on the [trends and inequalities in the nutritional status of adolescent girls and adult women in Sub-Saharan Africa since 2000](#) -- research to which TNWA contributed. This highlights evidence of a 'triple burden' of malnutrition in the West African region, characterized by a persisting burden of underweight and anaemia, and increasingly overweight and obesity.



New Stories of Change in Nutrition platform



Six years of '[Stories of Change in Nutrition](#)' country study outputs and resources are now accessible on a new platform. This draws upon the experiences of policymakers, nutrition leaders, program managers, and implementers in making decisions on what to do in real time in different country contexts. Studies of Burkina Faso, Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal are included.

NEWS relevant to the West African region

As malnutrition affects millions of children in the Sahel, UNICEF have launched the '[Nutrition now](#)' campaign, calling for urgently combining emergency and development actions to address child malnutrition in a sustainable way.

The [Food Insecurity Experience Scale \(FIES\)](#), developed by the FAO, is now available as a new module for the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS)-8 model household questionnaire. The DHS Program offers several topic-specific questionnaire modules, which countries can add to DHS standard questionnaires. Access the module questionnaire [here](#). Access the interviewer's manual instructions [here](#).

The Centers for Disease Control, the World Health Organization, Nutrition International, and UNICEF have developed a new [Micronutrient Survey Manual \(2020\)](#). The manual contains 16 stand-alone modules that cover "all aspects of a cross-sectional micronutrient survey, from planning through implementation to analysing, reporting, disseminating and using the data." A [toolkit](#) is also available.

Rosalind Gibson's classic and comprehensive textbook on 'Principles of Nutritional Assessment' is being updated and released online in an accessible format. Access it here: <https://nutritionalassessment.org/>

EVIDENCE

The following four peer-reviewed studies have been selected, from an evidence search (August- October 2020), as they demonstrate rigour in their methods, highlight areas of concern, and identify new knowledge for future action in the West Africa region:

- A recent overview of eight systematic reviews explores [Evidence that informs feeding practices in very low birthweight and very preterm infants in sub-Saharan Africa](#). This study finds limited evidence for resource-limited settings and calls for pragmatic studies to generate evidence to guide management and improve outcomes for vulnerable infants.
- New qualitative research explores national decision-making on [Adapting acute malnutrition treatment protocols in emergency contexts in Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, and South Sudan](#). Authors recommend that global-level stakeholders should urgently improve coordination and communication around existing protocols, and that both guidance and updates on research must be disseminated in a rational, systematic, and digestible way to national actors.
- The [Un Oeuf study is a cluster randomized controlled trial in Burkina Faso](#), aiming to increase child egg consumption. The trial combines a behaviour change communication package with community champions gifting chickens directly to children. The study design, methods and results from baseline data are described.
- The [effects of food supplementation on cognitive function, cerebral blood flow, and nutritional status in young children at risk of undernutrition is investigated in a randomized controlled trial in Guinea Bissau](#). Authors find supplementary feeding for 23 weeks could improve executive function, brain health, and nutritional status, particularly for vulnerable children under 4 years old.

We also highlight several recent insightful reports and web articles:

[The relationship between malnutrition and malaria in children under 5 in Koila Bamanan, a malaria endemic area in Mali](#) – a medical thesis from the University of Bamako.

A brief by IFPRI on [measuring the impact of agriculture programs on diets and nutrition](#).

Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH) partners explore [Supporting consumer choices toward healthy](#),

[safe, and sustainable diets in low- and middle-income countries.](#)

Cross-sectional research on [expanding and intensifying rice production consequences on agrobiodiversity management and diet quality. A situated transdisciplinary gendered analysis in Senegal Middle Valley River](#) that relates rice intensification with food and environmental problems.

A series of articles published in Le Monde Afrique [exclusive breastfeeding in West Africa](#) highlights the importance of exclusive breastfeeding across West Africa and discusses obstacles to achieving the target of 50% exclusive breastfeeding by 2025.

Events

Past Events

The [1st Africa Food Environment Research Network \(FERN\)](#) meeting with the theme 'Connecting Food Environment Researchers across Africa' was successfully convened online Nov 3-5, 2020. Over 3 days 26 speakers from Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, and North America with diverse expertise shared experiences, challenges and opportunities to push the boundaries of translational research on food environments and related policy in Africa.

The [5th Micronutrient Forum Global Conference](#) was held in November and the Burkina Faso Stories of Change in Nutrition work was presented as part of the session [Introduction- History of Stories of Change and Common Themes to Date](#). The slides are free to view once you register, along with a video panel discussion.

Future event

December 10, 2020, 10.00-11:30 EST [Seizing Opportunity from the Jaws of Crisis: A Playbook for Nutrition](#) IFPRI Martin J. Forman Memorial Lecture by Ellen Piwoz.

About Transform Nutrition West Africa

Transform Nutrition West Africa is a regional platform to enable effective policy and programmatic action on nutrition, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation from 2017–2021 and led by the International Food Policy Research Institute. We want you to join us and be part of a network of people and organisations in West Africa using evidence to generate change.

About this update

This Transform Nutrition West Africa Update features news and summaries of articles published in peer-reviewed journals as well as grey literature, including reports, briefs, or other forms of evidence from researchers, NGOs, or other organizations/institutions. The presented studies were selected as they demonstrated rigor in their methods and analysis, and relevance to the region and target audience of Transform Nutrition West Africa. There are two main sections: peer-reviewed article summaries and grey literature summaries (from websites and google scholar). This publication has been prepared by Transform Nutrition West Africa and has not been peer-reviewed. Any opinions stated herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the policies of the International Food Policy Research Institute.



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