

4 February 2010 - A major new report from Action Against Hunger reveals why and how some countries have managed to reduce undernutrition, while others have not.

Governments and international donors must put nutrition at the top of their political agenda to successfully reduce hunger, urges Action Against Hunger | ACF International. The humanitarian group's latest report – *Undernutrition: What Works* – lays out how countries with the political will and a demonstrable commitment to the fight against hunger have successfully brought down undernutrition rates.

The report examines policy and practice in five countries – Brazil, Peru, Mozambique, Malawi and Bangladesh - and argues that by studying these success stories, lessons and examples of good practices can be derived that can be implemented across other countries.

“Economic growth alone is not enough to reduce undernutrition,” says Morwenna Sullivan, Policy Advisor at Action Against Hunger. “What is needed is a balance between income security and increased investment in proven nutrition interventions across a variety of sectors.” The case studies in the report provide evidence of how a combination of effective policies and adequate investment has achieved positive results in reducing undernutrition. “The question we have to ask ourselves is why these interventions are not systematically implemented,” says Mrs Sullivan. “All countries can reduce hunger if they prioritise nutrition. This involves working across sectors including health, agriculture and education, and in collaboration with civil society to achieve lasting solutions. Progress achieved in the five countries examined in the report shows what can and must be done to help save lives.

If we want to tackle undernutrition, we need to take action now.” Action Against Hunger calls on governments and international donors to:

- Put nutrition at the top of the political agenda
- Ensure the participation of civil society in the development of sustainable policies to improve ownership and impact among affected communities
- Address the multiple causes of undernutrition through a wide range of sectors, including health, agriculture, water and sanitation, and education to enhance policy coherence and coordination
- Combine both short and long-term approaches to address both the immediate and underlying causes of undernutrition
- Provide long-term financial resources to guarantee policy effectiveness

“Undernutrition is not just an emergency issue,” says Mrs Sullivan. ‘It is clearly linked to poverty reduction. As the case studies have shown, concrete steps can be taken to address undernutrition.’”

ENDS

Undernutrition: What Works constitutes the first phase of Action Against Hunger’s Zero Hunger research project. It is largely based on the policies and best practices implemented in Brazil, Peru, Malawi, Mozambique and Bangladesh, countries that have successfully managed to reduce their rates of undernutrition in recent years. Phases 2 and 3 of Zero Hunger will analyse how the policies and best practices identified in these five countries are applicable in Niger and at West Africa regional level respectively.

Source: [Reuters](#)