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 **PREMIERE
URGENCE
INTERNATIONALE**



EDITORIAL

Urban food and nutrition security: a new challenge for humanitarian aid

In 2014, almost 4 million people were living in urban areas. Urbanisation is happening fast. We estimate that by 2030, two-thirds of the world's population will be urban dwellers. Towns and cities affected by crises, conflicts and natural disasters have become the site of frequent interventions by humanitarian NGOs. The movement of populations fleeing poverty and danger often causes a massive influx of displaced and impoverished people, for which they are unprepared.

This exponential growth in the urban population poses new challenges in food and nutrition security on a global scale. Largely unable to produce their own food, urban residents depend heavily on rural food production and external food imports, leaving them vulnerable to the impact of natural disasters which can make transporting food difficult, as well as to fluctuations in global food prices. Even when good food is available, access and proper usage remain barriers to food and nutritional security.

In fact, for the majority of the urban population, urbanisation has not been accompanied by economic development and a lifting out of poverty. There is enormous inequality within cities. According to the United Nations, almost 828 million city-dwellers live in slums. In the cities of Africa and Asia, households spend almost 50% of their food budget on cheap, mass-produced food products, those which are most commonly devoid of vitamins and minerals essential to health. Severe malnutrition is as common in the cities as it is in the countryside, and the situation in the slums is even worse. In these areas, apart from food insecurity, the huge population density combined with frequently appalling sanitation and limited access to basic services contributes to a rapid decline in the health of the local population.

Accordingly, *Première Urgence Internationale* is intervening more and more in urban areas, for example through its current projects in Maiduguri in Nigeria, Beirut in Lebanon, and Amman in Jordan. We will not give up our efforts to improve the aid we offer, especially in food and nutrition security in these areas. Being able to detect those most at risk, setting up early warning systems, and responding appropriately, for example by offering financial aid which helps beneficiaries to afford food, and using mobile phones to spread messages, all demonstrate how *Première Urgence Internationale* has adapted its response to the changing landscape of humanitarian aid in order to better meet the needs of vulnerable people.

Elise Lesieur

Responsable du service technique et capitalisation



REPORT

FOOD SECURITY, THE KEY TO A WORLD WITHOUT HUNGER

Throughout the world, hunger is in retreat. The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has seen a decrease in the number of undernourished people of 167 million over the last ten years. However, more progress still needs to be made. 795 million people, or around one in nine of us, still suffer from undernourishment. According to the FAO, malnutrition caused by an inadequate diet remains the world's greatest cause of illness.

Conflict, political instability, population pressure and economic crises can plunge entire populations into critical food shortage. Equally responsible are natural disasters. Increasingly frequent, they can have dire consequences. The climate phenomenon known as *El Niño*, which reappeared in 2015, worsens periods of drought and flood in many countries, especially in southern Africa. According to the UN, it threatens the food security and livelihoods of 60 million people worldwide.

A progressive approach

In response to this global challenge, *Première Urgence Internationale* is developing food security programmes, a concept which has evolved tremendously since its inception at the World Food Conference in 1974. If the phrase "food availability" was often used back then, the idea of food "security" which has emerged since has shown itself to be broader. According to the FAO, "Food security exists when a person has physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to meet their nutritional needs and dietary preferences, in order to maintain a healthy and active life".

For *Première Urgence Internationale*, someone is considered to be food-secure when four criteria have been met: access, availability, usage and stability. We therefore intervene in these four areas, focusing our efforts on at-risk countries.

Access

Populations' access to food resources is a fundamental issue. Is this person able to reach the market? A flooded road can make it impossible. Insufficient buying power can also limit people's access to basic foodstuffs. Without a medium of exchange, people will not be able to use shops to provide for themselves. Faced with this problem, *Première Urgence Internationale* has developed specific, innovative programs aimed at helping the most vulnerable. For example, in the Central African Republic,

Nigeria

In Maiduguri, Nigeria, there is plenty of food in the markets. However, the most vulnerable among the populace do not have the means to take advantage of it. Premiere Urgence Internationale distributes electronic cashcards for beneficiaries to use in the local markets.



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“Cash for Work” activities allow us to pay the local populace by recruiting them to perform repairs on the road network. This income then allows them to buy food and other basic necessities directly from local markets.

In South Sudan, our teams have set up canteen projects in health centres treating children under 5 afflicted by severe malnutrition. To keep families from falling back into the vicious cycle of under-nutrition, we distribute food to households during the three months following a child coming out of hospital.

Premiere Urgence Internationale teams may also choose, local conditions permitting, to organise food fairs during which coupons are given out to beneficiaries to act as “money”, which they can exchange for food from local shopkeepers. We then reimburse the vendors in exchange for the coupons they have received from the beneficiaries.

Availability

« In South Obangui province, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we carried out an intervention in an extremely isolated area, where the local population was having huge difficulty getting hold of seeds to grow food. It took at least a month to get supplies there by sea, which did not mesh with the sowing periods of the agricultural calendar at all. It was impossible to organise a seed fair because there was no availability on the local markets », explains Cécile Wils, Premiere Urgence Internationale’s advisor on food and nutrition security and livelihoods.

Seed shortages in an area represent a serious threat to food security for the local population, since it means that they do not have the production capacity to ensure food autonomy. To solve the problem in the DRC, Premiere Urgence Internationale teams flew in a small amount of certified seed by air. This was then distributed to seed multiplier groups, or seed “producers”, who planted them and grew more seed in their fields. « We then bought back the seed they had produced and redistributed it to a larger number of beneficiaries », Cécile Wils explains.



A person is considered to be food-secure when four criteria have been met: access, availability, usage and stability »

Usage

One of the conditions necessary for food security is the appropriate use of food. Preparation, transport, hygiene and processing conditions of food, distribution into households and food diversity: all these aspects contribute to guaranteeing a safe, high-quality diet, an essential foundation against

Yémen

Premiere Urgence Internationale teams distribute non-perishable food rations in the Hodeidah and Raymah regions of Yemen, to ensure the food security of vulnerable populations. Each month, people receive supplies of salt, sugar, oil, grains and other «dry foodstuffs rich in protein».



malnutrition. In the Central African Republic, for example, cassava processing has become a serious public health issue. Tubers harvested too early and eaten too soon can cause serious illness, especially among young children who can end up suffering from paralysis. To counter this scourge, Premiere Urgence Internationale teams offer support to ensure that cassava processing takes place in hygienic conditions and that it is quicker and more efficient. At the same time, in order to ensure the best use of this foodstuff, our teams also educate the local population, encouraging them to be patient and process their cassava properly. Nutritional awareness is an important aim for us. In some



markets in Chad, Première Urgence Internationale organises cooking demonstrations to familiarise people with new foods, to promote food diversity and to encourage good habits. The aim is to vary the diet so that it becomes more balanced.

Varied diets: a worldwide challenge. If developing countries are powerfully affected by the problem of under-nutrition, developed countries are equally afflicted by over-nutrition. In the US and in France, malnutrition leads to problems like obesity, diabetes and the risk of cardiovascular disease. Nutrition is a major global issue.

North Korea

Première Urgence Internationale provides support for soy milk or goat milk production and its processing into yogurts. In the province of South Hwanghae, these are then distributed to schoolchildren whose diet contains insufficient protein, in order to prevent them from becoming malnourished.

« Varied diets: a worldwide challenge »

Stability

Première Urgence Internationale develops programs to improve access to, availability of and usage of resources. Stability is essential in planning and carrying out food security projects. Without stability, the conditions leading to food security cannot develop.

« It is absolutely necessary that the criteria of access, availability and usage become sustainable in the long term, because it is possible to have food insecurity at intervals, during one part of the year for example », Cécile Wils explains.

The goal of these food security programs is to rapidly and sustainably build a world without hunger.



THE BAROMETER OF SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

For the first time, Première Urgence Internationale has joined the group of NGOs who meet each year to determine the "Barometer of Sustainable Solutions", previously known as the "Barometer of Hunger". This, its sixth edition, concentrates on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals laid out by the UN in September 2015; a shared challenge motivating participants all across the North and South.

The Barometer published in 2016 serves as a tool to educate the general public and to allow better understanding of the challenges facing food security around the world. In this edition, Première Urgence Internationale used its technical expertise to provide clarity on the subject of refugees. We produced an infographic (below) which shows the needs of refugees in each phase of a crisis, from humanitarian emergency through to solutions which help them regain their autonomy.



In total, almost 323,000 refugees, primarily from Nigeria and the Central African Republic, have fled to Cameroon to escape the conflict in their own countries. Almost half of these are living in camps. In order to help them, coordination among humanitarian organizations on the ground is a necessity. When they arrive in Cameroon, most refugees have left everything behind, and have nothing. Humanitarian organisations initially target their immediate needs: food, drinking water, and a roof over their heads. By coordinating and ensuring the smooth day-to-day running of these camps, we are responding to these immediate needs. Later, it becomes necessary to help and support these refugees in regaining their autonomy and ending their complete dependence on outside aid.

From emergency...

-  Construction of emergency shelters to welcome refugee families.
-  Transport of drinking water by truck. Construction of boreholes. Repair of water sources. Construction of latrines.
-  Distribution of food rations (grains, oil, legumes, salt).
-  Waste management in all areas, to avoid the spread of sanitation-related diseases.
-  Taking charge of primary healthcare (maternity, vaccinations, treatment of malaria, malnutrition...) in support of health centers.
-  Construction of classrooms. Donations of study kits. Raising awareness of the importance of education, especially of girls.

... to return to autonomy

-  Creation and education of committees of refugees for the construction of lasting shelters.
-  Distribution of seeds for market gardens. Installation of vegetable bags to allow families to grow some food and diversify their diet.
-  Creation and education of water management committees dedicated to maintaining water sources. Construction of durable sanitation blocks.
-  Setting up of a network of community health agencies allowing the spread of messages promoting health and nutrition.
-  Appeals to governments to send teaching staff to education centers in the camps.
-  Briquette's production from refugees from wood blocks. Households are heated up and food can be prepared without running through provisions. Also, this action prevents violence against women, that sometimes happen while they gather wood out of the camp.



THE SENTINELS OF CHAD

In 2012, Premiere Urgence Internationale developed a food security surveillance tool in Chad. For several years, this observation and early warning system has given us advance warning of humanitarian crises. Cécile Wils, Premiere Urgence Internationale's advisor on food and nutrition security and livelihoods, explains how this tool, which relies on community representatives based in sentinel villages, works.

What is the observation and early warning system which Premiere Urgence Internationale has set up?

Chad does not have much in the way of resources, and there are few means of collecting information on food security in the country. However, a surveillance system is absolutely essential in order to detect situations which could develop into humanitarian crises, and to be able to react soon enough. Effectively, since the start of this campaign in the countryside, we are able to detect damage to crops, whether an area is facing flooding or drought conditions, so we can anticipate if there will be an impact at harvest time. If the damage is severe, or likely to affect a particularly vulnerable population, we need to be able to alert the country's authorities. The early warning also allows us to appeal to our backers and release funds, if necessary, in order to intervene in the most effective way possible.

How does this method work?

We carry out our surveillance through sentinel villages, which we have chosen to represent the geographic area we are monitoring. Every two months, community representatives who have been elected by the communities in these villages and trained by Premiere Urgence Internationale teams, collect information about these sentinel households. "How much millet do you have stored at the moment?", "How long does it take to get from your plot to the village this month?", "Has any of your plot been affected by the floods?". The community representatives review the information they have collected from the sentinel households to get an idea of how a situation is progressing, according to the socio-economic levels of the households involved. Other information about issues relevant to the villages, that is to say, to local communities, are also collected by key liaisons via discussion groups.



The idea is also to make the system sustainable, and allow it to be used again in future without our support. »

Why work with community representatives and key liaisons in the villages?

Chadians obviously know their country better, and this also allows us to involve local communities directly in the plan. They can therefore follow the analysis of information from their area. The idea is also to make the system sustainable, and allow it to be used again in future without our support.

Has this surveillance and early warning system been proven to work?

Yes. For example in 2015, we raised the alarm because the harvest was much smaller than projected. We were able to obtain funding to distribute food to the most vulnerable populations during the hunger gap. In 2014, following the floods, the harvest was destroyed and, by raising the alarm, we were able to organise food fairs so that populations who had lost their harvest were able to feed themselves. The information we had collected enabled us to set these emergency programs in motion as soon as they were needed. We are trying to reproduce the Chad surveillance system in other countries where Premiere Urgence Internationale operates.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS
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