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## The Impact of a Nutrition-Focused Livelihoods Program on Child Health and Nutrition in Burkina Faso

*Evaluation of the PROMIRIAN and RESIAN programs under the European Union's Trust Fund*

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**Partners:** [Terre des Hommes](#), [Action Against Hunger](#), [Save the Children](#), [GRET](#), [Wageningen](#), [ToTaa](#), [Hevelis](#)

**Funders:** European Union's Trust Fund

**Location:** Boule du Mouhoun and Est regions

**Study sample:** 168 villages

**Timeline:** 2017-2020

**Type of evaluation:** RCT

Over 700 million people live on less than US\$1.90 per day.<sup>1</sup> Many of these families depend on insecure and fragile livelihoods. Globally nearly half of all deaths in children under five are attributable to undernutrition, translating into the loss of about three million young lives a year.<sup>2</sup> Recent research has shown that holistic livelihoods programs, such as the Graduation Approach can have a wide range of benefits for these poor families, from increasing household consumption and income to improving food security and mental health. The Graduation model provides families with a range of services, including income-generating assets, training, access to savings accounts, consumption support, and coaching skills, and variations of the model have been successfully replicated in several contexts. The aim of this research in Burkina Faso is to rigorously evaluate whether an adapted Graduation program design, which focuses on strengthening the household's ability to cope with crises, leads to improvements in child nutrition and household food security. This brief summarizes findings from the midline survey, which suggest that the program successfully reduced child malnutrition and increased household consumption, food diversity, and investments in durable goods after one year. Some impacts were present across multiple program groups, while others were only present among households that received the full multi-dimensional set of interventions.

### Evaluation Context

Burkina Faso, like most of sub-Saharan Africa, has made significant progress in the last 10 years in reducing extreme poverty. Despite this, more than 40 percent of people in Burkina Faso live on less than US\$1.90 per day, the international benchmark for extreme poverty. Agriculture, much of it seasonal, employs nearly 80 percent of the active labor market, leaving many parts of the country vulnerable to food insecurity during the lean season. 21 percent of children under five suffer from chronic malnutrition (stunting) or low height-for-age and 10 percent suffer from a acute malnutrition (wasting) or low weight-for-height.<sup>3</sup> Childhood mortality was more than double the global average: 814 out of every 1,000 children born die before their fifth birthday.<sup>4</sup>

### Details of the Intervention

Innovations for Poverty Action is working with researchers to evaluate the effects of variations of the Graduation model on poor rural households' economic activities, wealth, and nutrition. The program will be implemented by a consortium of local nonprofits led by Terre des Hommes (TDH) and Action Contre la Faim (ACF). To select the poorest members of participating communities, the project teams conducted a census of all individuals in the poorest neighborhoods in the selected communities and used a short set of questions. Households receive a combination of four interventions:

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.worldbank.org/press/2018/08/18-08-18-the-line-of-global-extreme-poverty-continues-but-has-closed-world-bank](http://www.worldbank.org/press/2018/08/18/18-08-18-the-line-of-global-extreme-poverty-continues-but-has-closed-world-bank)

<sup>2</sup> <https://data.unicef.org/nutrition/nutrition/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/data/infodocs/burkina-faso-nutrition-profile-mar-2018-200.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [UNICEF Data: monitoring the situation of children and women. https://data.unicef.org/country/bf/](https://data.unicef.org/country/bf/)

# The Impact of a Nutrition-Focused Livelihoods Program on Child Health and Nutrition in Burkina Faso (Midline Survey)

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household consumption and income to improving food security and mental health. The Graduation model provides families with a range of services, including income-generating assets, training, access to savings accounts, consumption support, and coaching visits, and variations of the model have been successfully replicated in several contexts. The aim of this research in Burkina Faso is to rigorously evaluate whether an adapted Graduation program design, which focuses on strengthening the household's ability to cope with crises, leads to improvements in child nutrition and household food security. This brief summarizes findings from the midline survey, which suggest that the program successfully reduced child malnutrition and increased household consumption, food diversity, and investments in durable goods after one year. Some impacts were present across multiple program groups, while others were only present among households that received the full multi-dimensional set of interventions.

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