

Programs' Alternative Methods Used to Address the Issue of Child Malnutrition in Honduras



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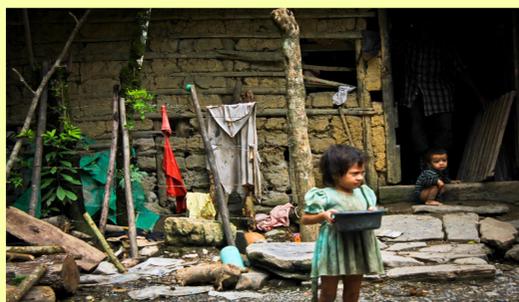
Background:

The World Health Organization has declared malnutrition as the gravest threat to global public health. Therefore, it needs to be addressed in countries severely affected such as Honduras. My research looks closely at the various programs currently working toward creating long-term investments, empowering the people, and accomplishing progress. Malnutrition, by definition, is the lack of adequate food for healthy growth, including lack of proper nutrients and proteins. Not only does it cause immediate problems, but leads to long term effects such as stunting of growth, high risk of diseases, and physical impairments. The people suffering from this are in desperate need of resources and most importantly leaders from either governance or private organizations to take charge in addressing the issue.



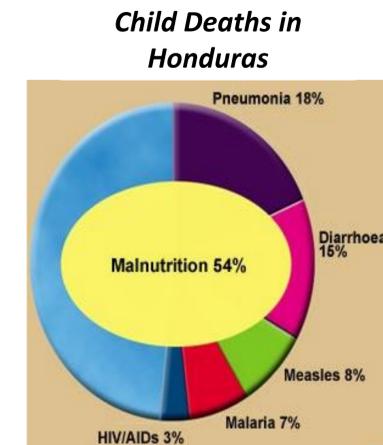
Rosbin Gonzales, 4, holds up his shirt and rubs his swollen stomach — a telltale sign of the worms he acquired by consuming a poor diet. Photo ©2007 Andrea Peer/World Vision

Four programs, both private and governmental, have been observed in their progress to successfully focuses on the extreme issue hindering children from proper development and healthy futures. The methods of the programs vary in order to compare different forms of action to accomplish the same goal of reducing malnutrition.



Health Problem:

Honduras has one of the highest rates of malnutrition in the world, especially in children. According to the UNICEF Annual Report, malnutrition rates are at 48%, with one in every three children lacking sufficient diets. Malnutrition is the most common cause of death in children in Honduras. Honduras earned the rank of the third poorest country in Latin America with one third of the entire population earning less than a dollar a day. The country's high levels of poverty acts as the biggest social determinant related to nutrition and families are not financially capable to provide children with a substantial diet with the limited food available in local communities. Children all across Honduras are hungry and lagging in development due to the lack of nutrient and the country itself is unable to grow and prosper because its people's physical growth and health are inhibited. The rejection of basic health for children needs to be stopped and the programs working to assist the ending of malnutrition need to be viewed, analyzed, and critiqued to work toward progress.



Solutions:



PRAF- Programa de Asignación Familiar

- Cash transfer program, established 1990
- Goal: to create opportunities for vulnerable populations
- Across Honduras, families given money to provide meals when their children were attending school and using the basic health services
- The aspect of duality, domestically driven but funded by external loans, plays a role in conflict over ownership/sustainability/politics
- James Wolfensohn, World Bank's past president, supports ability to benefit larger populations over longer time periods.



WFP-World Food Programme

- UN agency, voluntarily funded to tackle hunger worldwide
- Three central locations in the most vulnerable areas
- Goal: reducing food insecurity and malnutrition by improving food supply and access to food sources
- Examples: providing emergency food during disasters such as Hurricane Mitch and daily school meals
- The greatest criticism is importing grains, not buying locally



Shoulder to Shoulder

- Private, non-profit NGO, only in Honduras, supported fully by donations and volunteers, 20 years old
- Goal: sustain health, education, and nutrition services
- Centralized its focus in Western Intibucá, one of the poorest regions
- Feeding centers and school-based feeding programs provide nutritious food, feeding 2,000 children a day; also medical clinics
- Supply of food affects very positively with little conflicts or complications with financial stability



AIN-C- Integrated Community Child Health Program

- Governmental community based service program
- Monthly counseling to change behavior by empowering /educating families to address children's critical health problems
- Parents motivated to raising healthy children by understanding the proper ways to feed/care for them.
- Doesn't address socioeconomic problems (decreased income), but low costing with very broad results.
- Participant-based; use tool of community involvement, empowerment, and knowledge

Conclusion:

Success will be a product of corporation of different methods of various programs coming together to reach a helping hand to all poor and diverse areas in need. Whether through cash transfer, food supply, or changing of behaviors, the main key to success needs to always be to maintain the ability to keep the program going, monitoring to be assured a positive impact is being made, and avoid any form of corruption or conflicts when implementing the programs to communities. The different programs' solutions are able to come together as a united force to offer various assistance to a larger span of people. The methods of PRAF, WFP, Shoulder to Shoulder, and AIN-C need continued commitment to ease the burden of malnutrition and the devastating repercussions that come along with it. All receive praise for successfully achieving the goal of reducing malnutrition throughout Honduras in the past two decades.

Needed for program success:

- Reliable leadership
- Communities' trust
- Recognize diversity
- Stable monetary support
- Organized administration

Sitations

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