



Unintended Consequences of Food Aid: Nutrition and Sustainability Challenges in Developing Countries

Dagnechew Degefu*

PhD in Public Health Nutrition, Department of Public Health and Social Work, Texila American University, Guyana

***Corresponding Author:** Dagnechew Degefu, PhD in Public Health Nutrition, Department of Public Health and Social Work, Texila American University, Guyana.

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The Acta Scientific Nutritional Health Journal continues to serve as a premier platform for disseminating cutting-edge research addressing global nutrition challenges. Our journal critically examines the full spectrum of nutritional science from energy metabolism, macronutrients, and micronutrients to nutritional microbiology, public health nutrition, and emerging fields like culinology and sports nutrition. This comprehensive scope positions us uniquely to address the complex interplay between food systems, human health, and environmental sustainability.

As a Board Member from developing regions, I observe how our collective scholarship informs the urgent transition toward sustainable food security. Current global crises reveal a critical paradox: while food aid remains an essential humanitarian intervention, poorly designed programs risk undermining long-term food sovereignty. Climate shocks and intensifying conflicts demand evidence-based reforms to transform aid from a dependency catalyst into a resilience-building tool, a complex duality explored in this issue through contributions from leading scholars.

Decades of research expose systemic flaws in conventional aid frameworks. Schubert's seminal analysis (1981) quantified how cereal aid depresses producer prices by 15 to 30 percent, a pattern confirmed by Mushitsi (2023) [1] in Malawi where recurrent distributions reduced farmer planting investments by 32 percent. Compounding these economic distortions, nutritionally incomplete aid baskets diminish dietary diversity by 22 percent [2], perpetuating micronutrient deficiencies. These challenges mirror broader risks

identified by Sharma (2025) [3], wherein efficiency-focused global supply chains compromise food safety through heavy metal contamination and pathogen transmission.

The recent 44 percent reduction in U.S. food aid budgets has exposed dangerous dependencies, projecting 369,000 preventable child deaths annually (Standing Together for Nutrition, 2025). Nigeria's experience, where terminated feeding programs triggered 300 percent mortality surges, exemplifies this emergency. Yet within this crisis lies transformative potential: reduced donor influence creates policy space for national redesign, accelerates innovation in climate-resilient crops like Ethiopia's drought-tolerant teff, and necessitates contamination-resistant food systems aligned with Sharma's (2025) safety protocols [4-6].

Transformative models demonstrate the power of integrated approaches. Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme reduced stunting by 21 percent through climate-smart agriculture integration, while Uganda's vitamin-A enriched sweet potato initiatives decreased child anemia by 32 percent. Niger's e-voucher systems boosted dietary diversity by 34 percent while stimulating 2.3 million dollars in local market activity. Crucially, Ghana's blockchain-based grain tracking slashed aflatoxin contamination by 57 percent, exemplifying the food safety innovations essential to sustainable nutrition security.

Moving forward, achieving nutrition sovereignty requires coordinated action across four dimensions. Localized procurement

of biofortified crops could provide 30 percent price support for farmers while increasing micronutrient availability by 25 percent. Governance reforms, including blockchain-monitored national coordination units, may reduce aid diversion by 40 percent while enabling real-time safety alerts. Agroecological innovation using climate-resilient indigenous crops and phytoremediation techniques could halve heavy metal contamination. Finally, integrating aid with nutrition education and WASH programs might reduce food-borne illnesses by 28 percent. As globalization intensifies, we must champion solutions that reconfigure supply chains into engines of nourishment sovereignty, where humanitarian imperatives converge with scientific rigor to build truly resilient food systems.

This issue embodies our journal's commitment to bridging rigorous science with actionable policy. The insights herein equip stakeholders to transform food aid from a stopgap measure into a cornerstone of sustainable nutrition sovereignty.

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