

# IMPROVING NUTRITION IN CHILDREN UNDER TWO THROUGH INCREASED EGG CONSUMPTION IN BURKINA FASO

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Burkina Faso is burdened by high rates of malnutrition and linear growth stunting in children under five years old. Undernutrition can have significant long term physical, cognitive, and socioeconomic impacts on a child's development, as well as the future economic success of the country. Animal source food (ASF) consumption can improve growth, nutritional status, cognitive development, and health in children. In Burkina Faso, ASF consumption is low, particularly among women and children. Livestock is typically produced for income, gifting, and socio-religious practices, rather than for direct household consumption. Barriers (i.e. cultural beliefs and stigma) prevent the consumption of chicken eggs in Burkina Faso and many other parts of Africa. This study aims to address the challenges to ASF consumption and improve small holder farm (SHF) poultry practices in rural Burkina Faso.

The innovative intervention consists of gifting chickens by religious leaders to children between six and twelve months of age to increase egg consumption. Each child's caregiver will commit to feeding their child one egg a day from the gifted chickens. Children are often the least likely to consume ASF, despite their unique need. Because food allocation inequities often exist, this study design proposes that the child be the true owner of the chickens as well as the beneficiary and recipient of the eggs for consumption. The study is designed to properly test a pilot study conducted in Ethiopia (Omer 2016) that increased the portion of children consuming three or more eggs a week egg from 5% to 70% through gifting of chickens through a religious leader to the children. It involves innovative behavioral change methodology to empower caregivers as poultry producers by improving their access to livestock production resources, providing tools for improved decision making, and enhancing nutrition

based knowledge. SHF production is important in eliminating food insecurities and building resilience to improve nutrition in children under five. This project targets vulnerable populations of smallholders, women and children, and should lead to improvements in poultry production, increased egg consumption by children, improved nutrition, and increased household level resilience.

We will examine if improved poultry inputs through gifting chickens by a religious leader, coupled with integrated

livestock management and nutrition trainings, will lead to higher ASF consumption among children under two in Burkina Faso. This community intervention trial will target families with children ages six to twelve months of age living in rural villages in Burkina Faso.

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