
Addressing malnutrition with FST

Malnutrition is a serious problem that affects millions of people worldwide.

The health, social and economic impact of both chronic and acute malnutrition on people and communities can be devastating and long-lasting.

Food science and technology (FST) could play a key role in responding to humanitarian crises and addressing malnutrition by formulating products using locally sourced raw materials and developing low-cost processing technologies. Such an approach could not only help prevent malnutrition, but could also aid emergency response and address the rehabilitation and development phases following an emergency.

The effective use of FST in preventing malnutrition in children has been demonstrated in work carried out by an NGO in Kesho Congo, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). This project used a nutritious biscuit enriched with an extract made from locally grown cow pea leaves which are rich in protein and micronutrients.

Trials carried out in collaboration with health professionals in general hospitals in Bukavu showed these



fortified biscuits could be effectively used as a convenient and low-cost method to prevent and treat malnutrition in children.

Further work will be carried out to optimise the formulation, scale up the process and develop a sustainable business model for production.

The project demonstrates that FST can play an important role in

addressing malnutrition in countries such as DRC which are regularly impacted by pandemics (such as Ebola virus and now COVID-19), by building resilience, empowering local communities and creating small community-based agri-food enterprises.

For more information on the project see: www.keshocongo.org