



REDUCING DEATHS AND SUFFERING
FROM TROPICAL DISEASES

CAPACITY STATEMENT

for Nutrition Management

NOVEMBER 2025

ABOUT

The MENTOR Initiative ('MENTOR') specialises in integrated disease control and supporting primary and secondary healthcare services in health and humanitarian emergencies.

Since 2002, we have been responding to global humanitarian emergencies to save lives and prevent suffering. We stay for as long as needed, working side by side with communities and health authorities to strengthen health systems and ensure resilient long-term disease management.

OVERVIEW

Access to quality healthcare services is critical to reduce illness and deaths from infectious diseases and improve health in humanitarian and post-crisis contexts. MENTOR supports healthcare services in vulnerable settings by focussing on four key areas:

- **Community Health**
- **Supporting Health Facilities**
- **Nutrition Management**
- **Supply Chain Support**

MENTOR integrates nutrition activities into healthcare services to address high rates of malnutrition among children under five, pregnant and breastfeeding mothers, who are also at risk of other diseases such as malaria. In the settings where we work, there is typically reduced access to healthcare, poor sanitation, insecurity and issues with accessibility. These activities are an important part of our operations and approach; results have shown their life-saving impact and contribution to strengthened community-based healthcare.

Malnutrition is a critical health challenge, leading to developmental delays, learning difficulties

and increased mortality. Our approach combines prevention, treatment, and education, ensuring holistic care in fragile and conflict-affected settings. Our activities include cooking demonstrations to build practical skills and enhance understanding of nutrition among caregivers, in collaboration with community feeding schemes.

Healthcare workers, including community health workers, are also trained to implement nutrition interventions and manage malnutrition, focusing on internally displaced populations with limited access to healthcare.

By incorporating nutrition into broader healthcare strategies, these efforts support the improvement of healthcare and the resilience of affected communities.

Community health workers are supported to integrate malnutrition and malaria as part of the healthcare they provide in communities. Wasting can also mask typical malaria signs which is why close follow ups of malnourished children are crucial to avoid the delayed diagnosis of malaria. In these contexts, malaria cases – particularly in malnourished children – are frequently fatal, and compounded by reduced access to healthcare.

Operational Research

The critical association between malnutrition, season and malaria in regions of Central African Republic affected by conflict was presented in a paper published in the BMC Medicine Journal.

The MENTOR Initiative analysed data from community health workers, Armed Conflict Location and Event Data, and The World Bank Group meteorological data for eight subprefectures in the north-west between

October 2015 and August 2021.

Results from consultations with children aged between 6-59 months for malnutrition aligned with rates of severe malaria and the rainy season, providing evidence of the clear associations between malnutrition, season and malaria. The analysis is unique because it includes almost half a million children, making it the largest study of its kind to date.

CORE ACTIVITIES

Integrated health and nutrition programming

Nutrition interventions form part of a holistic healthcare strategy, including malaria prevention and maternal health.

Community-based delivery

Training and equipping community health workers (CHWs) and Female Focal Points to screen, treat, and refer malnourished children.

Strengthening local systems

Regular training for CHWs and volunteers on malnutrition management, maternal care, and disease prevention.

Evidence-based approach

Programme design informed by research, including large-scale studies on malnutrition and disease associations published in peer-reviewed journals.

We have been supporting nutrition, feeding and social and behaviour change programmes in several vulnerable settings where acute malnutrition cases need to be managed as soon as possible. In **Mozambique** and **Central African Republic**, the integration of nutrition management into programmes has helped reduce rates of malnutrition and increase knowledge about the importance of nutrition and infant feeding.



CASE STUDIES

1 Cabo Delgado, Mozambique

With UNICEF Mozambique support MENTOR has worked with children and communities displaced by armed conflict that began in 2017, helping to strengthen the activities of health technicians and community health workers who screen, treat or refer malnourished children in the province.

Mozambique has one of the highest rates of child malnutrition in southern Africa, with 15 per cent of children under five suffering from acute malnutrition. In Cabo Delgado, where many communities are hard to reach, early detection and treatment is critical. (UNICEF)

Key programme activities

- Community-based management of acute malnutrition.
- Cooking demonstrations to raise awareness of healthy child nutrition.
- Nutrition and feeding advice, supplementation and screening, treatment and referral of malnutrition through mobile clinics.
- Monthly Nutrition Interventions Package (PIN) programme

MENTOR supported the implementation of community-based management of acute malnutrition (CMAM) in two districts of Cabo Delgado province. Community health workers were trained and supported to screen, identify and treat malnourished children and referral of severe cases to health facilities.

We also worked a local community led organisation APDS - MOZ who held cookery demonstrations to raise awareness of good child nutrition practices with affected communities. These demonstrations formed part of a Nutrition Interventions Package programme, known locally as PIN, which included monthly sessions that reached more than 50 children under the age of two with growth monitoring, micronutrient supplements and breastfeeding advice. For parents, it is often the only access to regular child health services.

This programme was supported by European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) in partnership with UNICEF Mozambique and local NGO APDS. Funded by the Government of Germany through the KfW Development Bank.



IMPACT 2023-2025



55,838

children 6-59 months screened for wasting



27,939

children 6-59 months received Vitamin A supplementation



4,161

primary caregivers of children 0-23 months received Infant and Young Child Feeding counselling



2,055

children 6-59 months with severe wasting admitted for treatment

2 Paoua, Bocaranga and Alindao regions, Central African Republic

MENTOR in partnership with FCDO has delivered a holistic nutrition programme in regions where communities are most at risk of disease and suffering. The two areas of work we focus on are:

Community-based activities:

- Selection, training and supervision of community volunteers.
- Malnutrition screening of children under 5 years and pregnant women.
- Referral of Severe Acute Malnutrition cases to the closest facility with nutrition treatment capacity.
- Follow-up of treatment (when the patient is not admitted) and follow up after three and six months.
- Sensitisation sessions on adequate nutritional inputs for vulnerable age groups

Health Facility based activities:

- Training of health workers on adequate nutrition of children and in treatment solutions for malnourished patients.
- Support with nutrition supplements and equipment to selected health facilities.
- Treatment of Severe Acute Malnutrition patients (not requiring admission).
- Referral to specialised units when required.

In some communities, women were also trained as Female Focal Points to improve maternal care and address high rates of malnutrition in children. They supported their communities to access treatment and promote health and hygiene through information and education campaigns.

"I was recruited by MENTOR to encourage positive behaviour changes in my community and help improve people's health. Our training focused on malnutrition screening, maternal and child health and the promotion of infant and young child feeding. I can testify to changes in my community because we have a much lower maternal and infant death rate after we highlighted the importance of going to the health centre quickly for treatment when people became ill.

"When we screened for malnutrition, most of the children who were ill turned out to be malnourished and were sent to the health centre for treatment. We made pregnant women aware of the importance of pregnancy monitoring by going to antenatal clinics at every appointment."

- *Imbeti Claudine*, a female focal point in Beboy village near Paoua

With the nearest health centre over two-hours walk away, Female Focal Points like Imbeti are improving access to healthcare in the community and helping to save lives. In the Paoua Health District, community health workers have received regular training since 2016 supported by UK aid, to reinforce their skills and build knowledge to serve communities that have limited access health services.

Training in childhood illness, infant feeding and other family practices is an opportunity to mobilise around nutrition activities, so teams can apply this knowledge to make a real difference.

Malnutrition prevention activities were also launched in Alindao in August 2024. After initial training in support health facilities, 25 community relays were each given a bicycle to help them pass on information, improve screening, refer cases and raise awareness of common diseases such as malaria, respiratory infections, diarrhoea and malnutrition. The nutrition and community health programme in Central African Republic was supported by UK aid.

IMPACT 2023-2025



13,747

children screened
for malnutrition



7,297

malnutrition cases treated
at supported health
facilities



6,631

pregnant and lactating mothers
trained in adequate nutrition
for children



779

children referred to
specialized treatment
centres



752

malnutrition cases
diagnosed by community
health workers



MENTOR refurbished a nutrition centre in the University Hospital of Berberati in 2023 with UK aid support, which treated between 30 to 40 children a month for severe malnutrition after it reopened.



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