



## EXPERIENCES FROM THE FIELD

### CLIMATE CHANGE AND NUTRITION

It is estimated that some 1.3 million southern Angolans live in a state of acute food insecurity driven by the climate crisis and consequent prolonged drought, with cause and effect fueling one another including a lack of both food and dietary diversity, as well as poor hygiene. CUAMM's aim in the region is to identify the malnourished and provide them with treatment.

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#### FROM CLIMATE CHANGE TO DROUGHT

In the southern provinces of Angola, climate change is all too real, with visible and concrete consequences for the local population. In the past the region alternated between the dry season and the rainy season (the latter running from November to March), but the lack of significant rainfall from 2018 on has led to the fourth consecutive year of drought – the worst recorded in 40 years. A report issued by the National Institute of Meteorology and Geophysics (INAMET) showed below-average rainfall in the final quarter of 2021.

The impacts of drought are multi-faceted, with cause and effect fueling one another. The direct consequences of water scarcity include a lack of both food and dietary diversity, as well as poor hygiene. The lack of food inflates market prices and the lack of crop surpluses, in turn, weakens the purchasing power of families. In addition, in 2020 IDP camps were set up in some areas of the south to host the internally displaced (IDPs), mainly pastoralist populations who move with their livestock in search of pastureland and water sources for the herds and themselves. According to a recent study by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), more than 1.3 million people in the provinces of Cunene, Huila and Namibe are experiencing acute food insecurity, a number that was expected to rise to 1.58 million between October 2021 and March 2022<sup>1</sup>.

#### NUTRITIONAL SCREENING IN THE FIELD

Doctors with Africa CUAMM has been active in one of these provinces, Cunene, since 2000, working on an intervention aimed at strengthening the health care system both at the hospital level – especially the maternity and pediatric wards and the malnutrition unit – and at the community level, with prevention and awareness-raising initiatives on topics such as safe childbirth, malaria, hygiene and nutrition.

In response to the current crisis and to mitigate the adverse effects of drought, CUAMM, alongside local authorities, continues

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/IPC\\_Angola\\_FoodSecurity%26Nutrition\\_2021July2022Mar\\_Snapshot\\_English.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/IPC_Angola_FoodSecurity%26Nutrition_2021July2022Mar_Snapshot_English.pdf)

FIGURE 1 / THE FOOD INSECURITY SITUATION, JULY- SEPTEMBER 2021



to provide essential health services primarily through the following two interventions.

The first is the identification of cases of malnutrition at the community level, thanks to a mobile health team composed of three nurses who travel to 33 areas in the province to undertake the nutritional screening of children and pregnant women, reporting cases of moderate and acute malnutrition to the nearest health centers when necessary. Support supervision is also provided every month to the health technicians working at the latter, to help bolster their knowledge regarding the management of malnutrition. The distances that need to be traversed from one area of intervention to the next are significant, but it is imperative that we reach those living in the most remote areas.

#### FOOD KITS FOR MOTHERS AND CHILDREN

The second intervention involves the distribution of food kits to the families of the children being cared for in the hospital's malnutrition unit, to avoid their interrupting treatment; to children in outpatient treatment at peripheral centers, so that their families will have food support and avoid sharing nutritional supplements with other family members; and to the women staying at the *casa d'espera*, an area next to the hospital where expectant mothers in their final weeks of pregnancy, usually accompanied by young children, can lodge until they give birth, receiving antenatal checkups and support in the event of an emergency.