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## Contextual Factors of Food Insecurity in Rural Communities in Tanzania: Developing Social Learning for Community-Based Innovations

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### Abstract

In Tanzania 40% of children younger than five years of age stunted. This situation is even more severe in remote rural areas. To safeguard food and nutrition security and sustainable development, projects put a strong emphasis on tailored nutritional education programmes. Education programs are more effective when local knowledge and problem perceptions are integrated into social learning processes. However, it is not clear which pedagogical process should be included to consider contextual factors in nutrition education programs in the context of sustainable development. This work aims to understand the contextual factors of food and nutrition insecurity, targeting community problem perceptions in remote rural villages in Tanzania, Africa. The methodological approach was based on three steps: exploratory expeditions; household survey (n 663); and pedagogical workshops (n 270) applied in four study cases. Our findings show that, despite the influence of biophysical environmental conditions (lack of infrastructure, and water scarcity), also interpersonal factors play a fundamental role in critical food insecurity situations (conflicts, beliefs, consumption practices). Although food insecurity was identified in all four case study sites as a significant local problem, the underlying causes and contextual factors of food insecurity differ in each one of the Tanzanian villages. Identifying local problems perception is a fundamental approximation to the reality of local population which the sustainable development projects propose to transform. The pedagogical process of codification and decodification of hunger situations are indicated as a key activity to generate nutrition education programme in the context of social learning to development projects. The findings can inform the policy planning sectors of food security in developing livelihood diversification strategies and educational tools for sustainable development.

**Keywords:** Freire pedagogy, nutrition security, sustainability