



Understanding the motivation of community health volunteers (CHVs) in promoting nutritious child-feeding practices in Benin drylands



Georges Djohy¹ & Fomilayo Eves Fidélia Tokponwé¹

¹ University of Parakou, National School of Statistics, Planning and Demography (ENSPD), Benin

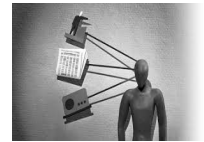
RATIONAL

- Successful nutrition education is key to reducing child malnutrition in Africa.
- Nutrition education in Benin relies on Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) operating through Nutrition Assistance Groups (GANs) and Food and Nutritional Surveillance Committees (CSANs)
- Real motivations of CHVs in promoting nutritious child-feeding practices unknown



THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

- Motivation/self-determination theories (*Interaction between individual's goals, emotions & appreciation of his/her abilities & opportunities offered by environment*)
 - ✓ **Intrinsic motivation:** engagement based on interest and pleasure
 - ✓ **Extrinsic motivation:** engagement based on external factors or instrumental motives
 - ✓ **Amotivation:** engagement without reason / absence of motivation



OBJECTIVES

- Understanding the motivations and related actions of CHVs in the current community-based child nutrition and health education system, in order to contribute to inform sustainable and scalable child-nutrition interventions.



METHODS

- Literature review
 - Key informant interviews with 23 NGO workers (including 17 women) working with CHVs
 - Focus group discussions with 99 CHVs, including 76 women
 - Content analysis of recorded speeches
 - Descriptive statistics
- Tools used:** Field diary, interview guide, digital recorder, SPSS software, MAXQDA software

STUDY AREAS

Arid zones of Northern Benin:

- **Banikoara District** (Agro-Ecological Zone II / Benin Agricultural Development Pole No.2 / Main Cotton Basin
- **Nikki District** (Agro-Ecological Zone III / Benin Agricultural Development Pole No.4 / South Borgou Food-producing zone / Cotton-food crops-cashew diversification zone

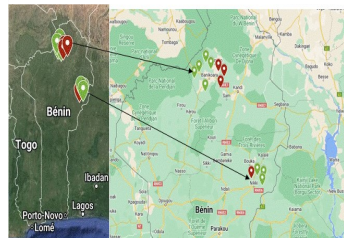


Fig. 1. Study areas



Fig. 2. Study tools

RESULTS

□ CHVs have more extrinsic motivation in engaging in nutrition education programs

- Social prestige, monthly allowance, social influence, divine blessing and training per diem are the main sources of motivation as mentioned by the informants:

"Others [projects/NGOs] pay their volunteers well and organise regular trainings that allow them to earn a lot of money, but we are given nothing and the few trainings we are involved in are no longer held" (Informant A.S.)



□ No cases of amotivation were recorded / Ignorance (*nyinru sariru*) is an amotivating factor for nutrition education among mothers of children

- CHVs have clear reasons to engage in nutrition education
- Amotivation seen as related to ignorance (*nyinru sariru*)

"If not for something, then for something else. Nobody does anything for nothing. If someone tells you that, they lied" (Informant F.S.)

□ Gender power relations negatively influence the access of women in general and mothers of children in particular to nutrition education

- Self-motivation of CHVs not the only barrier to nutrition education.
- Imbalances in gender relations (husbands hinder women's participation in nutrition education activities, they even remove children detected as malnourished from hospitals) are also a problem.
- Conflicts in prioritizing children's needs and mothers' nutrition education needs.



□ Cases of intrinsic motivation recorded

- Family welfare, learning/mutual learning and new skills acquisition were mentioned by some informants as driving their engagement in nutrition education programs:

"I have learned a lot from this job, which allows me to feed my own children and keep my family well" (Informant D.A.)



CONCLUSION & WAY FORWARD

- CHVs show a low level of self-determination in nutrition education
- Gender power relation influence women's access to nutrition education
- Quantitative data to support findings from qualitative data
- Stakeholders involvement in consultations to determine ways to increase self-determination



Contact information

Dr. Georges Djohy
University of Parakou (UP), Benin
National School of Statistics, Planning and Demography (ENSPD)
Email: gdjohy@gmail.com

