



2-2023

Latest Research: Summary 5. A Review on the Impact of Climate Change on Food Security and Malnutrition in the Sahel Region of Cameroon

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Recommended Citation

(2023) "Latest Research: Summary 5. A Review on the Impact of Climate Change on Food Security and Malnutrition in the Sahel Region of Cameroon," *Journal of Nonprofit Innovation*: Vol. 3: Iss. 1, Article 6. Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/joni/vol3/iss1/6>

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Latest Research: Summary 5

A Review on the Impact of Climate Change on Food Security and Malnutrition in the Sahel Region of Cameroon

From Elvis Chabejong Nkwetta, *Climate Change and Health: Improving Resilience and Reducing Risks*, 2016. See article for in-text citations.

Context

Climate change has direct and indirect impacts on human health. One indirect impact is food insecurity, which can lead to malnutrition. In the Sahel region of Cameroon, the population regularly experiences high levels of malnutrition, because harsh climate conditions (including extreme drought) have a negative influence on agriculture. In particular, the extreme drought conditions lead to a reduction in agricultural production, an important parameter of food security.

This paper assesses the impact of climate change on food security and, subsequently, an increase in malnutrition in this region. The paper suggests ways to raise awareness on climate change, food security, and malnutrition.

Key Takeaways

The Sahel region has limited varieties of food crops; cereal, the most cultivated crop, has faced a deficit in the last decades. Researchers have attributed this deficit to irregular rainfall, an increase in temperature, frequent drought, deforestation, desertification over population, and technology (Kenga et al, 2005; Epule et al, 2009; Epule et al, 2011; Epule, Changhui, Lepage, & Chen, 2013; Molua & Lambi, 2006). The lack of



storage facilities during harvest is also a significant factor contributing to food insecurity in the Sahel region (Heather, Lea, & Ford, 2010).

Malnutrition can have a lifelong impact on health and development; malnutrition can impair growth, resistance to diseases, pregnancy, physical work, and learning ability. Malnutrition also makes a population more vulnerable to malaria and diarrheal diseases (Niang et al., 2014). This heightened vulnerability could be the reason why the Sahel region has frequent outbreaks.

Application

This article raises awareness on climate change, particularly its effect on food security and malnutrition. This study demonstrates how unreliable rainfall and increasing temperature affect crop yield and malnutrition in the Sahel region. However, climate change is not the sole cause of malnutrition. Overall, efforts to alleviate climate change and its effects could also improve other challenges, including international public health issues.

