



Evidence for Sustainable Human Development Systems in Africa  
Evidence pour les Systèmes de Développement Humain Durable en Afrique

**Evaluation of *Bèsèn Diannou* Local and Regional Food Aid  
Procurement (LRP) Project**

**Baseline Study Report**  
**Executive Summary**

Prepared for **Catholic Relief Services (CRS)** Benin

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## Evaluation Team

This study was conducted by EVIHDAF (Evidence for Sustainable Human Development Systems in Africa). EVIHDAF's core evaluation team consists of **Dr. Jean Christophe Fotso**, EVIHDAF Executive Manager; **Dr. Mouftaou Amadou Sanni**, Director of the *Ecole Nationale de Statistique de Planification et de Démographie* (ENSPD) at the University of Parakou; **Dr. Harounan Kazianga**, Associate Professor of Economics at Oklahoma State University; and **Ms. Ashley Ambrose**, Global Health Research Officer.

## Acknowledgements

With Dr. Mouftaou Amadou Sanni's leadership, the *l'Observatoire Démographique et Statistique des Populations Locales* (ODeSPoL) at the *Ecole Nationale de la Statistique, de la Planification et de la Démographie* (ENSPD), University of Parakou, Benin served as the field partner for data collection.

We would like to acknowledge the unique role played by M. Thierry Kinkpe, our Agri-Economic Advisor for his immense contribution to the evaluation. He supported the revision of the tools, led the training for and supervised data collection, and conducted the quantitative data analysis with dedication. Dr. Charlotte Baquet, Socio-Anthropologist, contributed to the revision of qualitative tools, led the training, and supervised the qualitative data collection and analysis.

M. Fred Akoha was the programmer of tablets used for data collection; the quantitative Data Processing Officer was M. Djima Baranon; and M. Elihou Adje compiled the qualitative data. Ms. Nadia Tefouet, EVIHDAF's Program Officer, also supported the study, including with French-English translation. Finally, data collection was made possible by 20 quantitative enumerators, four supervisors, and four qualitative researchers (See Appendix C4).

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Most importantly, EVIHDAF would like to acknowledge the hospitality and enthusiasm displayed by individuals who were involved in the study. Participation in questionnaires, focus groups and interviews was demanding of their time, yet it was willingly given.

The Bèsèn Diannou Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement (LRP) project, funded by USDA and implemented by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) Benin, supports the establishment and functioning of school canteens in government schools of N’dali, Perere, Parakou and Tchaourou districts in the Borgou Region. The purpose of the project is to develop a replicable and scalable model for decentralized school feeding through effective local procurement and distribution of commodities with the aim of providing students with nutritious and locally procured meals (rice, shea, cowpea and maize) from an estimated 200 Producer Associations. CRS and its sub-recipient *Union Régionale des Producteurs Borgou-Alibori* (URP) will work with school management committees, commune authorities, central government agencies and private partners to achieve project goals.

As part of the evaluation, the project’s relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact will be measured. In addition to measuring the timeliness and cost-effectiveness of local ration distribution under the LRP project compared to those imported and distributed under other school feeding programs, the impact of school canteens on attendance of pupils at school and the nutritional state of children will also be evaluated.

The Baseline Study, led by EVIHDAF, establishes benchmark values against which progress on impact and outcome indicators can be tracked and informs decision-making about early project implementation, planning and execution. A mixed method approach involving a quasi-experimental quantitative design as well as a qualitative component was used. Surveys with students, *Comite de Gestion des Ecoles* (COGES) and Producer Associations were implemented, as well as key informant interviews with school principals, target communes, *Programme d’Appui au Secteur du Developpement Rural* (PASDeR), and ProAgri. Focus group discussions (FGDs) with Producer Associations, parents, women’s groups, teachers and students were also conducted. A summary of the survey results is presented in Table ES1 below.

The results of this baseline study, as outlined in this report, demonstrate the need for improved nutrition and eating patterns among students to achieve a minimum acceptable diet. In achieving improved student outcomes, Producer Associations have the potential to increase organizational capacity so as to successfully deliver quality local foods to support school canteens. Furthermore, COGES have the potential to improve their capacity in school canteen and stock management to ensure the efficient and sustainable provision of nutritious foods to students.

### *Survey results summary*

	Comparison districts	Intervention districts	Difference
<b>1. Producer Associations</b>	0.30 (0.05)	0.16 (0.03)	-0.14 **
Overall organizational capacity score <sup>a</sup>	0.30 (0.05)	0.16 (0.03)	-0.14 **
Score derived from PA’s management <sup>a</sup>	0.30 (0.10)	0.20 (0.04)	-0.11 <sup>NS</sup>

	Comparison districts	Intervention districts	Difference
Score derived from PA's members <sup>a</sup>	0.29 (0.05)	0.12 (0.02)	-0.17***
Use of URP Market Information System	30.0	11.8	-18.2*
<b>2. Schools</b>			
<b>2.1. COGES</b>			
Overall Score in school canteen and stock management <sup>a</sup>	0.23 (0.2)	0.19 (0.1)	-0.04 <sup>NS</sup>
Score derived from COGES management <sup>a</sup>	0.68 (0.7)	0.56 (0.3)	-0.12 <sup>NS</sup>
Score derived from COGES cooks	0	0	0
Score derived from COGES store keepers	0	0	0
<b>2.1. Students</b>			
Students who consumed foods at school that they consume at home <sup>a</sup>	20.0 (1.3)	22.4 (1.4)	2.4 <sup>NS</sup>
Female <sup>a</sup>	18.9 (1.9)	22.8 (2.0)	3.9**
Male <sup>a</sup>	21.1 (1.9)	22.1 (2.0)	1.0 <sup>NS</sup>
Students receiving a minimum acceptable diet	54.7 (1.7)	64.3 (1.6)	9.6***
Female <sup>a</sup>	55.5 (2.54)	64.7 (2.3)	9.2***
Male <sup>a</sup>	54.0 (2.3)	64.0 (2.3)	10.1***

<sup>a</sup>Values in brackets are standard error

<sup>NS</sup>Not significant at the level of 0.10; \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01