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## A sustainable approach to nutrition intervention: Addressing the role of proximal determinants of undernutrition, Bukoba rural, Republic of Tanzania

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Today, close to 1.2 billion people, approximately a fifth of the world's population continues to live in conditions of abject poverty and almost 800 million people in the developing world are chronically hungry. A basic right to adequate and nutritious food, which most people take for granted, remains a distant dream for those who struggle with food shortages every day of their lives. The presence of extreme poverty and hunger on such a vast scale in a world of apparent opulence is a moral outrage. Evidence-based strategies for nutrition intervention commonly address direct determinants such as food/nutrient intake, whereas community-based intervention tends to take more holistic approach resulting in greater efficacy when combined with other proximal determinants such as women's economic and social empowerment. We need to address not simply the immediate causes of malnutrition, but also their underlying and basic factors if we are to achieve nutritional well-being and reach full potential for functional and productive capacity in a population. It is thus imperative that food and nutrition programs succeed and that success is sustained. In the case of Bukoba rural, Republic of Tanzania identified direct determinants of undernutrition were lack of availability, accessibility and utilization of food whereas identified proximal determinants were women's lack of sustainable purchasing power, decision making power, business acumen and horticultural and technical assistance. The proximal determinants imply the lack of women person and social empowerment in their family and community context. These data lead to a cooperative farming project creating a collective way to cultivate soybean crops to improve the quality of the existing diet (direct determinants) and an infrastructure to effect the women's economic sustainability and empowerment (proximal determinants). The success of ongoing programs suggests when feeding programs and food-based safety nets are supplied from local production, there is a double benefit; not only are the hungry fed but local markets for food expand, opening income-earning and employment opportunities for the poor thereby creating sustainability. The body of evidence clearly suggests that nutrition interventions work best when it is designed with long-term sustainability as an explicit goal.

### Biography

Neeta Singh has completed her PhD from Oregon State University followed by MBA in International Affairs and she is a Registered Dietitian. She serves as Chair of Nutrition Program with School of Mathematics, Science & Engineering at University of Incarnate, San Antonio, Texas. Her initial research was in artificial intelligence applications in areas of food aid distribution. From past 7 years, she has been working on various food sustainability projects as means of improving nutritional status among rural population in the Republic of Tanzania. She has presented her work at various international venues, published in books and has been serving as an Editorial Board Member of several international journals.

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