

International food aid alone cannot solve the global malnutrition crisis

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In an editorial in this week's *PLoS Medicine*, the journal's editors discuss some of the controversies surrounding international food aid, and conclude that "donor-supported food programs are not enough as a long term strategy" for addressing malnutrition.

At a recent two-day meeting in New York City, organized by Columbia University's Institute of Human Nutrition and the humanitarian organization Médecins sans Frontières, nutrition experts called on the international community to urgently focus its efforts on delivering more food aid, of better quality, to prevent and treat malnutrition in the highest-burden areas.

"Such an emergency measure," say the PLoS Medicine editors, "is clearly needed to bring down death rates as quickly as possible—but it is not a sufficient long-term approach to the global malnutrition crisis." The editors argue that a broader and longer-term strategy is needed to address global food insecurity. Such a strategy, they say, would include "an array of policies to stimulate local agricultural and economic development—particularly the economic and social empowerment of women, the primary caregivers in most households."

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Food delivery alone cannot solve the malnutrition crisis. *PLoS Med* 5(11): e235. doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.0050235

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