



**MALNUTRITION
TEACHING
GUIDE
2023-24**



**Save the
Children**

With this guide of the course 2023/24 we want to approach you to very particular situations related to malnutrition because we are facing the most serious hunger crisis of decades. It is a real emergency that we all have to work on together to make it stop.

There is no vaccine against hunger but there will be a solution if we act now.

Apart from this guide, there are videos, which explain many of the concepts that appear here, as well as didactic activities for each stage and in different languages that will help you to study in more detail about this reality in the classroom.



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PRESENTATION

Welcome once again to our solidarity activities. Every year there are more and more schools participating, which means that thousands of students get a closer insight into the realities lived by children in vulnerable situations and become a voice for those realities.

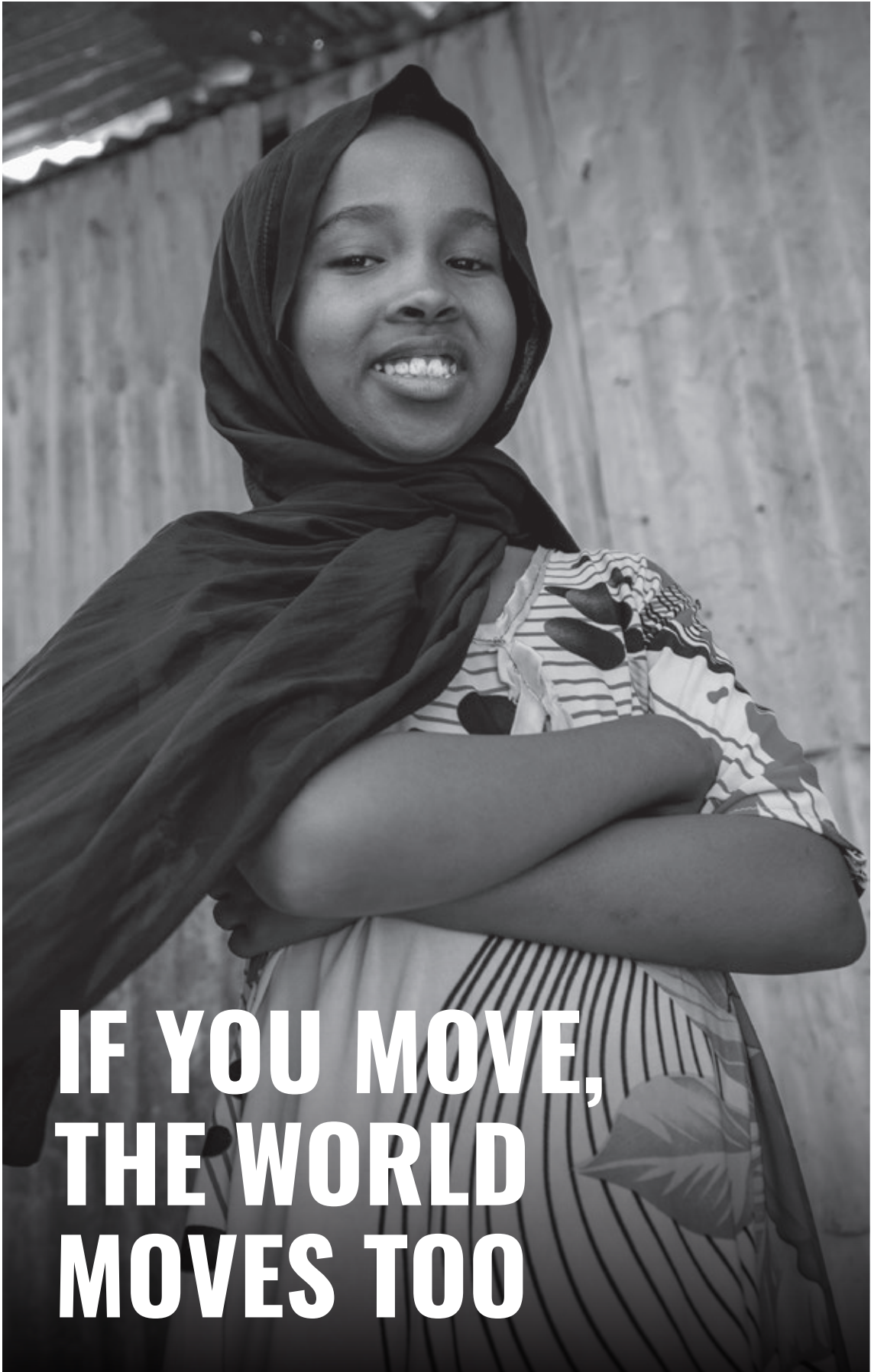
The situation of childhood malnutrition has worsened exponentially in the last few years mainly because of three reasons: **climate change, conflicts and consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.** Many countries are at serious risk and we want to talk about three of them: Afghanistan, Niger and Somalia. We will then see what Save the Children does in these zones.

The situation in Afghanistan has worsened in the last few years, especially for women, girls and teenagers. Successive conflicts have displaced thousands of people from their homes looking for a shelter, limiting access to food and drinking water.

For decades, the Sahel -composed by Niger, Burkina-Faso and Mali- has been affected by food insecurity. Climate change has affected even more the availability and accessibility to food. In recent years, growing insecurity and violence have exacerbated this crisis, disrupting market, agricultural and shepherding activities, and causing displacements and rivalry for land and resources. The food security situation in the Sahel was extremely worrying even before COVID-19.

Somalia is part of the so-called Horn of Africa, one of the hardest hit areas of the world, facing an unprecedented threat to food security from the combined impact of climate crisis -droughts and floods-, desert locusts, political instability, conflicts and insecurity, economic instability and the COVID-19 pandemic. All while many communities are still recovering from previous severe droughts that eroded household incomes due to widespread loss of cattle and crops failure.

This brief overview of the situation in different, but very vulnerable places of the world helps us to understand why the progress made in recent years against malnutrition is being reversed.



**IF YOU MOVE,
THE WORLD
MOVES TOO**

LOTTERY OF LIFE

We all agree that no child should go hungry. However, in many regions of the world such as the ones we have just described, there are millions of families who have to make very difficult choices in order for their children to survive. Poverty is arguably the leading cause of child death in the world, but the causes associated with it are varied and their impact depends on the place of birth.

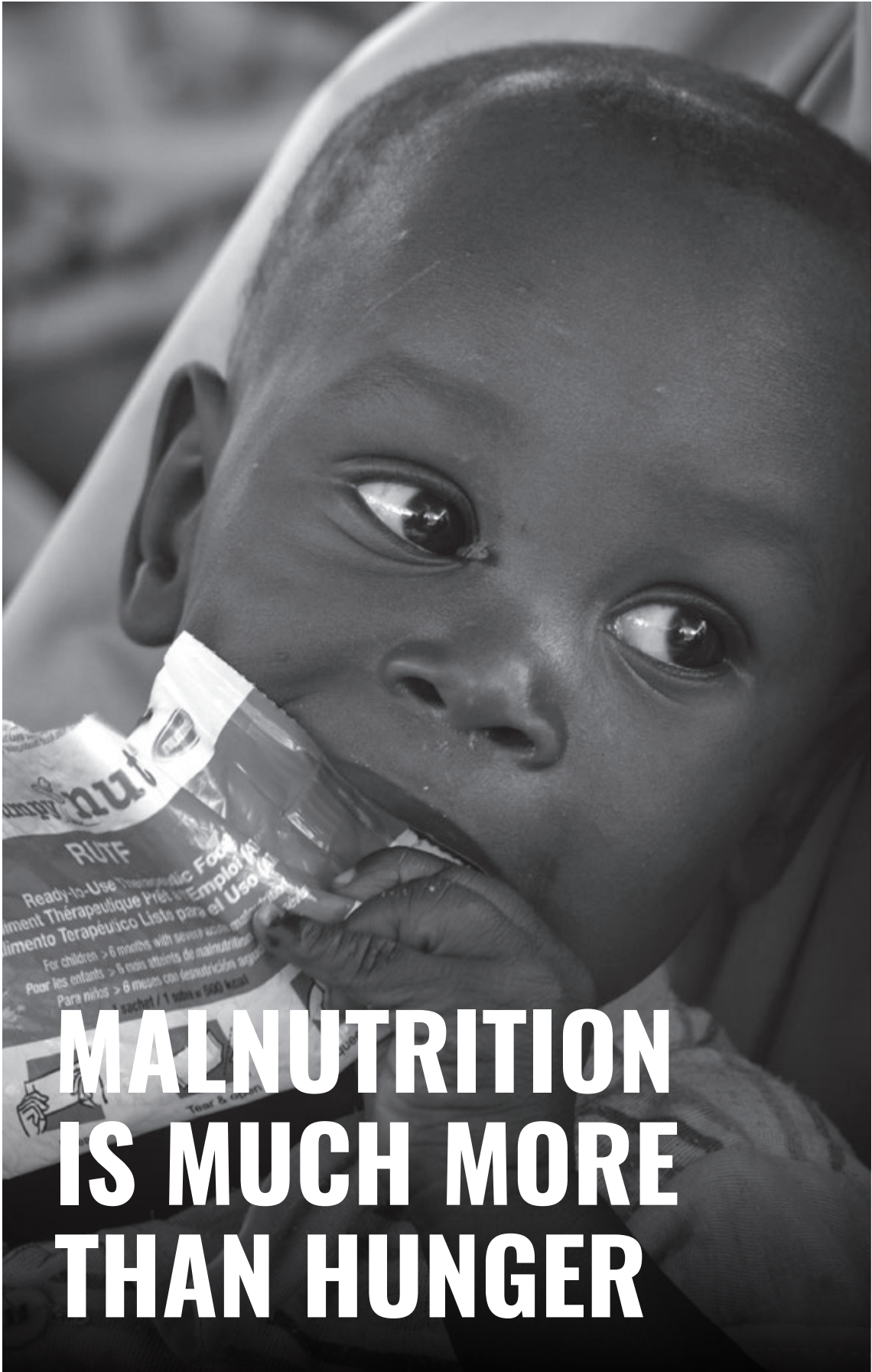
Climate change is causing more and more natural disasters such as droughts, fires and floods that disrupt the crops cycle and affect the most vulnerable countries. In turn, this has other consequences such as immigration, conflicts and global increase of prices.

Armed conflicts where the victims are civilians are escalating. Russia's invasion of Ukraine results in a lack of seeds and fertilisers for areas such as the Horn of Africa and the Sahel. Children in these regions will not be killed by bombs, but by hunger because of war, and this is just one example. Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen are places where being born is already a challenge. 60% of the world's hungriest people live in conflict zones.

These conflicts lead to food shortages and **food price rises** that affect poor families by forcing them to sell their animals, spend their savings, reduce the number of meals and take their children, especially their daughters, out of school. As a result, the future of these millions of children is threatened. Poverty is perpetuated generation after generation, and countries themselves are unable to break out of a cycle of dependency.

Facing this context, international organisations are warning of a situation of food insecurity that affects millions of people, especially millions of children. After decades of progress in recent years, we are seeing that progress turning into setbacks: in 2019 there were 690 million undernourished people in the world. If we do not change the trend, it is estimated that by 2030 the number will have risen to 840 million.

Save the Children is calling the international community to deal with the root causes. Only by ending global conflicts, tackling climate change and building more resilient communities, we will ensure a reduction in world hunger. To achieve this, we need society, the true engine of profound changes. Mientras tanto, los recursos económicos y las donaciones nos ayudarán a conseguir que los niños y niñas sobrevivan.



**MALNUTRITION
IS MUCH MORE
THAN HUNGER**

MALNUTRITION: TYPES AND COUNTRIES MOST AFFECTED

We often use the term hunger to refer to a situation of malnutrition, but malnutrition is much more than this. It is a disease resulting not only from insufficient food intake -in quantity and quality-, but also from the lack of proper care and the appearance of infectious diseases. Thus, a malnourished child's survival is affected, but if he or she survives, his or her physical, cognitive and intellectual development is also affected.

We can talk about two types of malnutrition: chronic and acute malnutrition, and to measure them we use the height and weight of the person according to age.

Chronic Malnutrition

Chronic malnutrition is determined by a child's low height for age and occurs when a person spends months or even years eating a diet lacking in nutrients, such as rice every day as the only basic food. Chronic malnutrition causes stunted growth, affecting the child's mental maturity.

Chronic malnutrition used to be more prevalent in areas such as Asia and Latin America, but it is nowadays rising in many African countries.

Acute Malnutrition

We consider underweight for height according to age and it develops in a short time due to eating too little for weeks at a time. It is often combined with diseases such as diarrhoea and cholera, leading to medical complications.

To identify acute malnutrition quickly, we work with a bracelet called MUAC, which allows us to measure the diameter of the arm and to know if there is severe or moderate acute malnutrition. It works like a traffic light: when it is green, we are well; when it is yellow or orange, we are not so good and we call it Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM), and when it is red, we are Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM). In this case we must act quickly.

DEEPENING SEVERE ACUTE MALNUTRITION

The effects of SAM are dizziness (blurred vision without being able to focus), breathing problems, irregular and unsteady heartbeat, sluggish thoughts, the mind cannot stay awake, muscles shrink while vital organs swell up... In summary, the bodies come to physical and mental collapse.

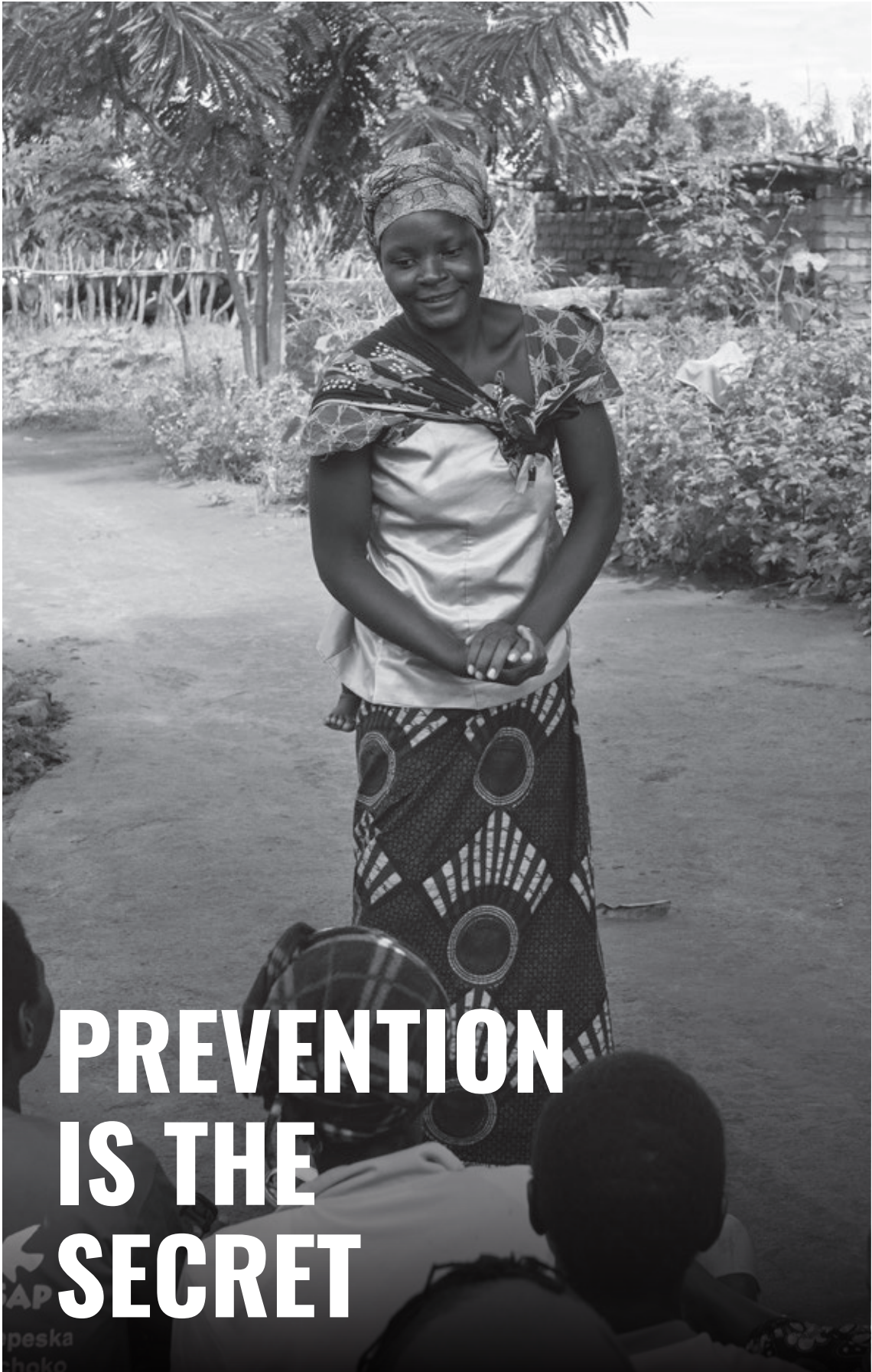
Acute malnutrition is on the rise worldwide, affecting 70% of girls under the age of five. It is worth knowing that 181 million children and adults are at risk worldwide.

Asia and Africa are the most affected continents with a total of 45 million children at risk of malnutrition. If we consider that there are 47 million people living in Spain, the number of children with malnutrition equals the Spanish population. Specifically, 14 million people, equivalent to the population of the Community of Madrid and Catalonia combined, are in a severe acute malnutrition situation.

But the hardest part is that 1 in 5 children under the age of 5 fails to survive malnutrition, and that in the 15 countries most affected by hunger, a child falls into Severe Acute Malnutrition every minute.







THE KEY TO THE SOLUTION

When a child arrives to the hospital to be treated for acute malnutrition, we can identify which people are helping the child to survive, and where help is needed: transport to the hospital, medical treatment, hospital stay, and so on. However, it is just as important to be able to treat as many of these cases as it is to prevent them.

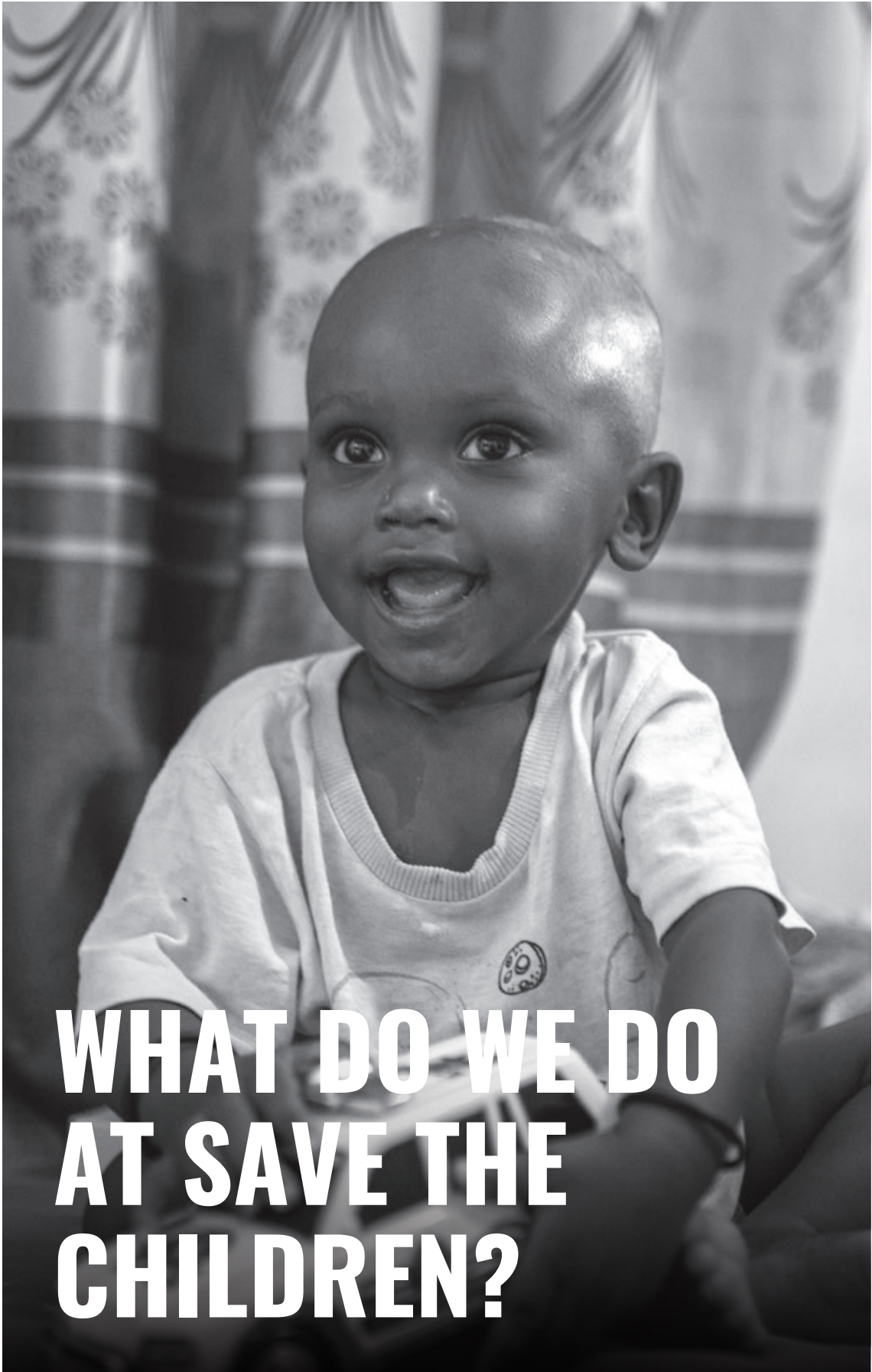
This is where Save the Children has an essential, and perhaps less known, role to play in training specialised staff and creating community networks to detect cases of malnutrition in their early stages and prevent them from becoming more complicated to treat.

Mothers should have access to all the necessary nutrients that can be passed on to their babies from pregnancy onwards, so that they are not born with a deficit of everything that ensures proper growth. But the community where the mother lives is equally important, even more so in areas where rapid access to health services is more complicated.

Lack of knowledge about nutrition and hygiene can cause many problems for children's growth and development, making them more likely to get ill frequently. For example, in Malawi, in the Scaling up Nutrition programme, trained staff teach through lessons and practice the importance of nutrition. In particular, it focuses on the critical role of diet during pregnancy, breastfeeding and age-appropriate diets for babies. They also provide guidance on cooking and growing fruit and vegetables, and on raising cattle to eat and sell.

Save the Children trains people from the community itself, who know their own context best, so that they can pass on to their neighbours the importance of clean water to prevent disease or the most nutritious meals for the youngest children. In this way, everyone can benefit from the knowledge they need to prevent disease and malnutrition, and it allows the community to participate in its own development by getting involved in vital issues, such as helping children survive.

We end with these words from Memory, a young mother from Malawi: "The lessons of breastfeeding, hygiene and nutrition have made a difference to our health and there is no stunted growth. My son is now growing up very healthy, with a normal weight. Personally, I think that I have benefited a lot from this, and I feel very empowered".



**WHAT DO WE DO
AT SAVE THE
CHILDREN?**

POSITIVE NUMBERS: SAVE THE CHILDREN'S WORK THANKS TO YOU

Our work is not only focused on boys, girls and adolescents, but also on pregnant and breastfeeding mothers, because as long as the mother is healthy and does not suffer from malnutrition, the baby will be more protected and we will prevent it from being born with malnutrition problems. There is a critical period of time, "**the 1,000-day window**", from conception until the baby is two years old. The actions we undertake in these 1,000 days have a direct impact on strengthening children's immune and digestive systems, enabling them to resist easily treatable diseases and avoid the short- and long-term consequences of malnutrition.

But direct action on children is not the only thing Save the Children does. All our programmes are based on three fundamental pillars: **survival, protection and education**. Our actions are aimed at meeting these three transversal objectives.



Support to health centres

We support hospitals and outpatient clinics to provide appropriate treatment, therapeutic food and medicines.



Training of healthcare workers

We train doctors and nurses so that they can pass on their skills and their own learning to others.



Information on child malnutrition

We inform caregivers of children with malnutrition problems about resources, tools and capacities.



Schools and community networks

We work with governments to strengthen community networks and their schools, the place where the only nutritious meal a day is often provided to children.



Drinking water

We rehabilitate drinking water points and provide access to clean water to improve hygiene habits and prevent infections. Because without water there is no life.



Cash

We provide cash to families to buy basic commodities to ensure hygiene and proper nutrition.



Resources against the effects of climate change

We provide communities with knowledge on drought-resistant cultivation practices, as well as more resistant cattle feed or seeds.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU ON SAVETHECHILDREN.ES!

In this guide, we want to make visible the effects of malnutrition on child development, which areas are most affected, and what Save the Children is doing to stop its devastating consequences. We have seen that responding in a short term is vital to saving lives, but focusing on the root causes helps us bring about meaningful change for children. Thanks to the people who support us year after year we can achieve this. To complete the information in this guide **we invite you to see more resources on our website**, and to continue working with students on one of the most serious problems suffered by children: malnutrition.

Videos and activities

You have short **explanatory videos** which you can watch in class to help your students better understand some terms, as well as **didactic activities** that will give context to your solidarity action.



Solidarity Kilometres
[savethechildren.es/actualidad/
propuestas-didacticas-para-el-aula](https://savethechildren.es/actualidad/propuestas-didacticas-para-el-aula)



Solidarity Bookmarks
[savethechildren.es/actualidad/
propuestas-didacticas-para-el-aula-marcapaginas](https://savethechildren.es/actualidad/propuestas-didacticas-para-el-aula-marcapaginas)

Access through this QR
code to see the videos we
have prepared for you



FAQs and account numbers

On our website you will find **frequently asked questions** about our organisation and our activities. There you will find **the account numbers** where when entering your solidarity collection we will send you a receipt and a certificate of appreciation to share with your educational community.



I already have my collection. Now what?
savethechildren.es/centros-educativos/recaudacion-coles

FOR A SCHOOL TIDE AGAINST MALNUTRITION

At Save the Children we advocate for students to be the protagonists of action. A childhood that mobilises to change the world is a childhood educated in values of empathy, sustainability and solidarity.

Become a voice for the most vulnerable children and we will reach the goal before hunger does together.

savethechildren.es/movilizacion-coles



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THE WORLD MOVES TOO**



Save the Children