# Improving dietary diversity through agricultural public policies: an institutional perspective in Burkina Faso

## INTRODUCTION

- In response to malnutrition, improving dietary diversity is recognized to be one possible lever.
- The multisectoral approach of nutrition suggests that several sectors could undertake actions to increase dietary diversity, agriculture being one sector with the highest potential.
- Taking the case of Burkina Faso where dietary diversity is critically low and the government committed to develop nutrition-sensitive agricultural interventions, the research analyzed to what extent dietary diversity is addressed in agricultural and food security policies

# ADDED-VALUE

- Literature on policy analysis is limited, mainly focused on nutrition agenda setting, multisectoral approach of nutrition and the nexus agriculture-nutrition (see references).
- This research contributes to this body of literature by focusing on dietary diversity and by drawing on neo-institutional approach in policy analysis (Fouilleux et al., 2017; Schmidt, 2008).

## METHODOLOGY

#### A qualitative research

- Extensive policy and project document analysis.
- Participant observation in various policy forums from 2017 to 2019.
- 44 semi-structured interviews with institutional actors.
- 20 individual interviews and 3 focus groups in three villages in the Tuy province, South West of Burkina Faso.

#### Number of interviews per actors' categories and scales

	Central	Regional	Provincial	Municipality	Total
Officials - Min. of Agri.	4	3	2	3	12
Min. of Health	2	2		5	9
Local authorities		4	4	3	11
International agencies	4				4
Donors	2				2
NGOs	4				4
Producer Organisation		1			1
Research	1				1
Total	17	10	6	11	44
Villages	Gombélédougou	Makognadougou		Wakuy	
Individual interviews	9	6		8	20
Focus Groups	6	12		33	54

# RESULTS

## Limited focus on dietary diversity

- Nutrition has gained increasing political attention in Burkina Faso over the last decade, especially under the 2010 international Scaling up' Nutrition movement (SUN).
- Dietary diversity is now integrated in some food security policy documents (e.g. National Policy on Food Security, PNSAN) and monitoring systems.
- However, food consumption issues are addressed in a limited way compared to food production ones in documents, forums and practices. They are seldom linked to agriculture, including along diversification objectives.

#### Four different perspectives on dietary diversity

Productionist perspective "It is not possible to talk about quality and more diversified food diets when people have empty bellies"	Nutritionist perspective "Family farming prime objective in Burkina is self- consumption and not to sale" Health officials and local staff, NGOs, donors	Economic perspective "The mission of the Min. of Ag. is to improve producer incomes, not to say how to use incomes" Agriculture officials in the MoA	Agronomic perspective "We advise producers on production practices. Nutrition is only additional orguments to convince them" Agriculture local staff (extension services)	Differences in actors' perceptions of dietary diversity and of agricultural diversification do not facilitate the recognition of dietary diversity as a significant public problem and the need of an agricultural strategy to improve it.
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#### Segmented institutional landscape on dietary diversity

National Council on

Food Security (CNSA

Ministry of Agriculture

**Direction addressing** 

nutritional quality

**Agriculture** Regional

Direction

Agriculture

rovincial Direction

Agriculture Technica

staff in villages

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Dietary diversity is addressed both by the Ministry of Agriculture which focuses on nutritional quality of food and by the Ministry of Health which targets vulnerable groups. Despite closer move at national level, sectors remain mainly disconnected at subnational levels. This situation creates "institutional vacuum" to properly address dietary diversity. A. Alpha<sup>1\*</sup>, G. Oudoire<sup>2</sup>, T. Traoré<sup>3</sup> Arlene.alpha@cirad.fr

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### Incompleteness of policies on the ground

- Policies integrating dietary diversity as an objective such as PNSAN remain incomplete when it comes to implementation due to the critical lack of financial and human resources.
- Most of the interviewed agricultural officials at local levels do not know PNSAN and the agricultural interventions planned to increase dietary diversity.
- Some donors and NGOs may bring a dietary diversity perspective in villages by complementing agricultural public budget and activities but this situation raises issues of coordination and up-scaling.

## CONCLUSION

- Dietary diversity emerges as a public concern in agricultural and food security policy documents but hardly enters officials' and projects' realities due to barriers in perceptions and administration organization.
- The revision of agriculture curricula is a critical lever to open agriculture officials' perceptions to food consumption issues. In parallel, health curricula should be revised to better consider food production realities.
- Efforts to connect agriculture and nutrition sectors should pay more attention to officials' practices on the ground and not only to institutional organization and reform at national level.
- These findings are convergent with the growing literature on policy analysis of the agriculture-nutrition nexus, thus confirming the relevance of mobilizing political scientists and practitioners skills.

#### References :

National Concertation

Council in nutrition

(CNCN)

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Direction on nutritio

**Health Regional** 

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Health Provincia

Direction

Health Nurses ii

villages

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