

Implementing a peer-led psychological self-support program in resource-limited contexts: a pilot in Eastern Cameroon

Elisabetta Dozio – Psychologist, PhD- Action contre la Faim, Paris, France edozio@actioncontrelafaim.org



Background

In Eastern Cameroon, psychosocial needs are high among both Central African refugees and host communities. Following two months of group psychological interventions, many participants expressed a desire to continue the support process.

→ A **self-support protocol** was introduced to help sustain and strengthen emotional and social bonds within the groups.



METHOD : THE PROTOCOL

- A flexible, peer-led protocol was developed following the initial group sessions.
- Participants formed self-support groups of up to 10 members, meeting weekly for 90 minutes.
- The first two sessions were facilitated by psychosocial supervisors; subsequent sessions were observed to assess group dynamics.
- Pre-and post-intervention assessments focused on emotional well-being, resilience, and social cohesion.

Results

- ✓ Improved social cohesion, especially between refugees and host community members.
- ✓ Participants reported a sense of empowerment and valued the emotional stability gained through the exercises.
- ✓ Increased emotional connectedness among group members.
- ⚠ Key challenges identified:
 - Decreased motivation without regular facilitation.
 - Economic barriers limiting long-term group engagement.

Objectives

- Promote the continuity of psychological support through autonomous engagement.
- **Enhance participants' well-being, resilience, and coping skills.**
- Provide long-lasting tools for emotional regulation and peer-based support.

Conclusions & Recommendations

- The self-support protocol proved feasible and effective in low-resource settings.
- **It reinforced emotional resilience, mutual support, and community solidarity.**
- Future directions should include:
 - Integration of economic empowerment components.