

SUPPLEMENT

AFRICA
Forbes

**HOW SUSTAINABLE
PHILANTHROPY CAN
BUILD AFRICA'S FUTURE**

FOCUS: MARY DINAH FOUNDATION

Lady Mary Dinah: The Philanthropist Redefining Wealth And Purpose On A Global Scale



Lady Mary Dinah, officially the Lady of Ellington, is a distinguished food and nutrition expert, humanitarian, and philanthropist reshaping global aid and advancing food security, especially within Africa's most vulnerable regions. Through Mary Dinah Foundation and pioneering initiatives such as the Maternal and Newborn Fund, she is bridging the gap between innovation and community impact.

Mary Dinah Foundation: Multi Sectorial Impact At Scale

Founded in 2005, now in its 20th year, Mary Dinah Foundation addresses urgent humanitarian needs across health, nutrition, education, gender-based violence, and economic empowerment. Its flagship Zero Hunger Program has distributed over 55 million meals in Northeast Nigeria, Far North Cameroon, and Chad's Lac Province, reaching 102,000 beneficiaries each year, while linking women to antenatal care and vaccinating thousands of babies. Mental health programs, such as Mother and Girls Voices, have reached 305,000 women across 83 African villages, combining psychosocial support and counseling with training in hygiene, breastfeeding, and entrepreneurship. Across 83 communities, measurable impact shows that exclusive breastfeeding rates increased from 47% to 95%, antenatal care attendance reached 97%, and hospital deliveries rose to 91%. Its refugee scholarship programs have further enabled higher education, empowering girls to rebuild communities.

A New Era Of Aid

Global humanitarian needs are surging while traditional aid is shrinking. In 2024, nearly 300 million people required assistance, yet donors—including the U.S. and Europe—cut over \$25 billion from UN appeals. Twenty countries, primarily in Africa, account for 86% of humanitarian need but receive less than 50% of global aid allocations.

Mary Dinah Foundation addresses these gaps through fast, flexible, and data-driven interventions. Programs are locally embedded, leveraging community leaders, mothers, and health workers as primary responders. "We need to start investing in the people who are already solving local problems," Dinah says. She is not waiting for the global system to catch up—she is creating new systems.

The Mary Dinah Model: Local, Scalable, Sustainable

The Foundation operates on the principle that humanitarian leadership must be both urgent and enduring. What makes her unique is her ability to move fast and go deep at the same time, says a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) partner in Cameroon. She doesn't parachute in—she builds locally. And then she scales. Partnerships with local communities and alignment with national health strategies enable interventions that scale without sacrificing quality. Programs are measured rigorously, integrating health metrics, nutrition indices, and education outcomes to ensure accountability.

The Maternal And Newborn Fund

In 2025, the Maternal and Newborn Fund was announced as a \$250 million investment, set to scale significantly. Focused on maternal and newborn health in crisis-affected regions, it combines philanthropic capital, policy alignment, and local delivery to expand proven interventions such as Multiple Micronutrient Supplementation (MMS).

BirthStrong, its flagship program, will reach over 5 million women across 21 countries by 2030. MMS is reported to reduce low birthweight by 19% and lowers infant mortality among anemic mothers by 29%. Local production hubs and strengthened supply chains cut costs, build resilient health systems, generate employment, and enable real-time impact tracking. Together with a coalition of global partners, the intervention's impact includes advocating for policy reform and health systems adoption.

Through Mary Dinah Foundation and the Maternal and Newborn Fund, philanthropy is taking a new shape and the path forward is clear. It will not be paved by legacy institutions alone, but by courageous, data-driven action. The kind that rewrites the narrative. Dinah is not only envisioning this future—she is building it.

MARY DINAH
foundation

Powering Progress Together: A United Front To Tackle Undernutrition

BY CHILD NUTRITION FUND (CNF), A FINANCING MECHANISM LED BY UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN FUND (UNICEF)

In recent years, philanthropic capital has supported the scale up of the Child Nutrition Fund (CNF), a unique financing and coordination mechanism led by the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF). The CNF aims to grow sustainable nutrition financing and to scale up programs, policies and supplies to prevent and treat undernutrition in children and women in 63 high-priority countries.

Nearly half of all child deaths under five are linked to undernutrition. Today, about 148 million children are stunted and 45 million are wasted, conditions that harm growth, brain development, and health for life. Wasting is a life-threatening condition resulting from poor nutrient intake, recurrent illnesses, and lack of access to affordable nutritious foods. Children suffering from wasting face an increased risk of infections as well as developmental delays. Around one in five deaths among children under five are attributed to severe wasting, the most acute form of malnutrition.

This tragedy can be avoided with the existing solutions and knowledge needed to prevent malnutrition and provide effective treatment. What is currently lacking is sustainable financing for nutrition services and commodities, which is where the CNF comes in. With a unique model that incentivizes national governments to commit domestic funding for high impact nutrition programs and supplies, the CNF has matched domestic resources with philanthropic capital in 18 countries so far, facilitating the procurement of \$74 million worth of nutrition supplies to date. In addition, the CNF program window supports flagship multi-year country partnerships for scaling high-impact prevention and treatment nutrition interventions in a holistic and sustainable way.

With backing from several philanthropic and government funders, the CNF is a key platform working with countries to accelerate progress in achieving their national commitments to the nutrition of children and women and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The role of philanthropy in tackling undernutrition is now larger than ever and the power of multi-philanthropic collaborative partnerships like the CNF will become increasingly important. Contributions from additional philanthropic partners can help accelerate progress and can be tailored to support specific strategies within the CNF:

- **Program Window:** funding is allocated directly to essential, high-impact actions at country level. It also includes leveraging co-financing, where CNF investments complement government contributions, scaling up services and accountability for nutrition outcomes.



- **Commodities Window:** governments are encouraged to invest in their own nutrition supplies, with the CNF matching domestic contributions, creating a multiplier effect.
 - **Supplier Window:** funding is used to support the production and distribution of essential nutrition commodities such as ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF).
- Each of the approaches above is delivering significant outcomes for children and their families whilst strengthening health systems and building on the domestic leadership in tackling undernutrition.

No child, mother, or family should suffer from undernutrition. Collaborative partnerships such as this can help fulfil everyone's right to good nutrition and to a happy, successful life.

To learn more and to join the effort, please visit:
<https://www.childnutritionfund.org>

From Crisis To Solutions In Northern Nigeria: Rethinking Food Systems In Fragile Settings

BY UNITED NATIONS WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME (WFP), AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (AFDB), AND INTERNATIONAL FOOD POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE (IFPRI)



Across northern Nigeria, conflict and climate shocks have shattered lives and livelihoods. Once a breadbasket for the country, large swathes of the region now rely heavily on humanitarian food assistance. Farmers have been cut off from their fields. Traders struggle to move goods through dangerous or impassable roads. Millions are displaced. And yet amid this fragility, pockets of resilience are emerging.

This story is not unique to Nigeria. From the Sahel to the Horn of Africa to Yemen and Afghanistan, humanitarian agencies are delivering life-saving aid in places where formal economies have crumbled. But what if food assistance could do more than meet immediate needs? What if it became the catalyst for rebuilding food systems, revitalizing local economies, and laying the groundwork for durable peace and recovery?

A recent study by the World Food Programme (WFP), the African Development Bank (AfDB), and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) offers an answer—and a challenge.

Humanitarian Food Systems: A Missed Opportunity?

Food assistance has saved millions of lives in northern Nigeria while also contributing to the agricultural economy, but not systematically. WFP's policy reform, from food aid to food assistance, has enabled \$200 million per year to be invested in Nigeria—through locally-purchased food, cash transfers for people to buy food in local markets, and e-vouchers redeemable with local retailers. However, there are missed opportunities to stimulate local production, restore markets, and build the foundations for resilience. For example, cash-based transfers risk undermining local markets when beneficiaries and retailers opt for imported food, allowing imports to outcompete or displace local production. Local food purchases can incentivize production and strengthen markets, complimenting private sector investment in fragile settings.

Nigeria's North: Navigating The Complexities

Despite the constraints, the region has extraordinary potential—spanning diverse agroecological zones with year-round production capacity. Demand for processed products is growing.

Public investment, like the government's AfDB-supported National Agricultural Growth Scheme and Agro-Pocket (NAGS-AP) operation supporting wheat cultivation on over a million hectares, is scaling up. And innovations in climate-smart agriculture, digital input systems, and inclusive finance are taking root.

Turning Crisis Into Solutions: A Paradigm Shift What Needs To Change?

First, humanitarian food systems must be reimagined—from emergency pipelines to economic platforms. Local sourcing, tailored cash transfers, and co-investments in storage, processing, and logistics can turn assistance into a driver of resilience. The local purchase program could be expanded so that it contributes as a humanitarian solution. WFP's Food System Influence Index (FSII) is one example of how the agency is shifting toward food-system-sensitive operations—designed to advise on the contributions cash transfers and local food purchases can have on the local food system.

Second, investments must be structured, not scattered. Too often, development plans stop at project lists. Typically missing are bankable investment portfolios. These portfolios should skillfully blend grant financing with concessional loans, specifically tailored to the unique challenges of fragile environments and supported by expert technical assistance on the ground. This approach has yet to be implemented and requires meaningful engagement between the private sector, international financial institutions (IFIs) and operational agencies such as WFP. Bundling road repair with off-grid processing, or linking farmer cooperatives to procurement hubs, can unlock scale and impact.

Third, the real levers of resilience must be targeted: reducing post-harvest losses, improving input access, cutting transport costs, and modernizing processing. Climate-smart technologies—like solar-powered dryers, drought-tolerant seeds, and weather insurance—must be mainstreamed. And the informal taxation that bleeds value from food systems must be tackled.

Finally, recovery must be inclusive. Women and youth are central to food systems in fragile settings but face barriers to land, finance, and training. Targeted programs—combined with broader policy reforms—are needed to unlock their economic potential.

Unleashing The Potential Of Every Child: Committing To Sustainable And Transformative Philanthropy

FOR OVER 60 YEARS, AMADE HAS BEEN WORKING TO PROTECT THE MOST VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND ENABLE THEM TO GROW UP WITH DIGNITY, SAFETY, AND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO THEIR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS. BY RELYING ON LOCAL ACTORS AND INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS, IT BUILDS IMPACTFUL PHILANTHROPY IN THE SERVICE OF CHILDREN.

BY AMADE (ASSOCIATION MONDIALE DES AMIS DE L'ENFANCE)

Founded in 1963 by Princess Grace of Monaco and now chaired by H.R.H. Princess Caroline of Hanover, AMADE—Association Mondiale des Amis de l'Enfance (World Association of Children's Friends)—defends an ambitious and deeply human vision: a world where every child, regardless of their social, religious, or cultural background, can live with dignity, in safety, and with respect for their fundamental rights, and become an actor in their own life.

This commitment is reflected in four structural programs: One Child One Talent, Civil Status for All, Dignity for Women, and Energy of Hope. These programs address key challenges: the right to identity, education, menstrual insecurity, sexual violence and access to energy.

In 2024, more than 440,000 children benefited from AMADE's work. The association supported 22 projects in 11 countries, in collaboration with 20 local organizations, illustrating an approach based on proximity, co-construction, and sustainability. AMADE does not position itself as a direct operator, but as a strategic partner: it finances, strengthens, and supports solution providers in the field. This approach promotes genuine local ownership, organizational capacity building, and, ultimately, the empowerment of the actors involved.

One of the flagship projects supported is in Burundi, in the province of Makamba, where the local NGO SaCoDé produces and distributes washable sanitary pads to 10,000 schoolgirls. This project helps improve menstrual health, reduce school absenteeism among young girls, while generating local employment and breaking taboos related to menstruation. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, AMADE supports the Panzi Foundation, founded by Nobel Peace Prize winner Dr Denis Mukwege, in providing psychosocial support to girls aged 10 to 15 who have left brothels in Bukavu. These girls receive medical and psychological care, as well as support for social reintegration and rebuilding their future.

In the Brazilian Amazon, AMADE is working with Energy Assistance to electrify isolated indigenous villages, thereby promoting access to education, health, and information for hundreds of children. In West Africa, the Civil Status for All program aims to register so-called 'ghost children', who have no legal identity, so that they can go to school, receive healthcare, and exist fully in the eyes of the state.

In 2024, more than €1.2 million (≈\$1.41 million) was raised for these projects, with a particular focus on impact measurement, accountability, and sustainability. AMADE does not simply provide one-off funding: it invests in structures, training, evaluation, and economic models that enable initiatives to survive beyond subsidies.

Through its actions, AMADE is building a long-term philanthropy that is rooted in local realities, demanding in terms of results, and guided by the conviction that every child deserves a real chance to change their life and their future. It is this ambition that we are proud to carry forward today on the African and international stage.

H.R.H. Princess Caroline of Hanover, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2017



Supporting Young Survivors Of Malnutrition, By Turning To Toys

AS THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN SUFFERING FROM MALNUTRITION GROWS IN NORTHERN NIGERIA, A LEADING MEDICAL HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATION IS EXPANDING ITS SERVICES TO TREAT THE DEBILITATING CONDITION.

BY MÉDECINS SANS FRONTIÈRES (MSF)/DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS

In the northern Nigerian city of Katsina, Lucile Saint-Louis and two of her colleagues make their rounds through the hospital ward. The patients—all under the age of five—remain in their respective beds, held and comforted by relatives. Many of the children have been here for just a few days; others have been here for weeks. All are suffering from severe acute malnutrition with medical complications.

Saint-Louis pauses the longest at the bedsides of the patients whose conditions are most dire, screening their responsiveness.

“Movement is super important at the beginning of life,” says Saint-Louis, a pediatric physiotherapy specialist for Doctors Without Borders/ Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF). “Because our patients don’t have the energy to move, they are missing all the mastery of the world around them.”

To change their trajectories, MSF has begun piloting a new physical therapy program. Selected patients are guided by physiotherapists like Saint-Louis through both active and passive activities to stimulate their brains and muscles using balls, walkers, and other toys.

“It’s well known in scientific literature that a child suffering from malnutrition is at risk of developmental delays,

but most of the time he or she is assessed at school age,” says Saint-Louis. “It’s a bit late. Instead, we are proposing an early intervention in the first two years of life—years that are very important to brain and body development.”

MSF is uniquely positioned to launch such a project. As a global leader in treating childhood malnutrition, the medical nonprofit has increasingly focused its attention on combatting the condition in Nigeria, as the numbers grow year after year. In 2024 alone, MSF admitted more than 326,000 patients to its inpatient and outpatient nutrition facilities across northern Nigeria. In just Katsina, the MSF-supported facility admitted—on average—one child every five minutes during last year’s peak.

To manage such a burden of acute malnutrition cases, MSF already invests nearly 10 million euros every year in procuring ready-to-use-therapeutic-food (RUTF), the most essential treatment to treat acute malnutrition. Two sachets a day of this milk-based paste mixed with vitamins and minerals allows a child to recover at home within a matter of weeks. It is MSF’s biggest malnutrition program both in Africa and the world.

Now, by integrating physiotherapy alongside its intensive care, MSF is taking the lead in providing a new type of treatment for patients suffering from malnutrition. While physiotherapy is commonly used among burn survivors and mothers going through post-natal treatment, very little physiotherapy has been done to rehabilitate survivors of malnutrition. But because so many malnourished patients suffer from stiff joints, skin lesions, and neuromotor delays, Saint-Louis sees this as a practical way to prevent functional decline and improve survivors’ chances of developing stronger cognitive and motor functions.

“We are used to seeing the patient when it is too late,” says Saint-Louis. “We know that therapy can prevent a lot of developmental challenges if it is started early. By having the patients and their caregivers already in our hospitals, it gives us a critical opportunity to work with them to strategize long-term.”

While Saint-Louis has seen first-hand how quickly a child can regain his motor movements – citing an example of a lethargic child who learned to stand and walk within a couple days of therapy – she also cautions that more must be done in the immediate term to prevent malnutrition.

“We must respond to the crisis holistically,” Saint-Louis says. “Physiotherapy is just one tool to help these children lead healthy lives.”



A physiotherapist with a recovering malnourished child

A Model For Lasting Solutions To Forced Displacements Amid Global Funding Challenges

BY UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR)

Cameroon hosts over 2.1 million forcibly displaced people—including over 414,000 refugees from the Central African Republic and Nigeria—showing what's possible when national policy aligns with humanitarian goals. UNHCR's community-centered approach, anchored in Cameroon's National Development Strategy 2030, emphasizes integrating refugees into services rather than isolating them.

Education & Social Cohesion

Supported by Education Cannot Wait and the government, more than 47,000 refugee children attend formal schools and 6,400 access non-formal learning in public schools, with learning kits and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities fostering cohesion between refugees and hosts.

Health Integration

Over 95,000 refugees are now in the national health system, receiving subsidized care for malaria, HIV and maternal health. During the 2022 cholera outbreak in Minawao (124 cases, three deaths), vaccination campaigns reached 80,980 people—98.54% coverage.

Nutrition & Emergency Response

Partners like the Mary Dinah Foundation improved nutrition for 4,522 children under five and 2,683 pregnant and lactating women. In the 2024 floods that displaced over 21,000 out-of-

camp refugees, targeted distributions (Enovmum, Nutributter) proved decisive.

Identity Systems & Protection

A Central Africa-first biometric registration enrolled 33,000 refugees and enabled nearly 10,000 biometric ID cards issued by Cameroon's security authorities. Despite political debate, UNHCR stresses these IDs protect rights, access to services and freedom of movement.

Self-Reliance Through Agriculture

With legal documentation, refugees gained access to land—650+ hectares in the Far North and East—benefitting more than 1,000 people and opening pathways for private-sector scaling.

A Call For Solidarity

Progress is real but fragile. Falling global funds threaten vital initiatives—including a planned voluntary repatriation of 28,000 refugees in 2025. Cameroon's approach proves inclusion works, but scaling it needs renewed international solidarity, says UNHCR Representative Yvette Muhimpundu.

Cameroon's experience is a practical blueprint: durable solutions flow from partnership, systems integration and political will—if donors step up.



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Together elevating global access to nutrition with innovative and sustainable solutions

Together, we can support the long-term health, stability and prosperity of communities worldwide by increasing access to good nutrition with staple food fortification and public health supplementation.



The True Purpose: Building Futures

IT'S TIME TO SHIFT THE LANDSCAPE. WHAT IF WE FOCUSED GLOBAL FOOD AID AND PHILANTHROPY ON PROVIDING THE NUTRITION ESSENTIAL TO A CHILD IN THE FIRST 1,000 DAYS? THE IMPACT COULD BE TRANSFORMATIONAL.

BY NAVYN SALEM, FOUNDER & CEO, EDESIA NUTRITION (NORTH KINGSTOWN, RI - USA)

Over the past 15 years, our focus at Edesia has been crystal clear: save as many young lives as possible. It still astounds me that in a world of such abundance, a child dies from severe acute malnutrition (SAM) every 11 seconds—a treatable condition with a 92% survival rate through a simple, eight-week treatment of PlumpyNut (also known as ready-to-use therapeutic food—RUTF), the product that has been at the core of our work. I take great pride in Edesia's role in helping to save 26 million children.

Our mission has been to save lives. But I've come to wonder—what if our true purpose is to build futures?

I began to question our focus, not our commitment to the value of each child's life; but rather being part of a system that waits for children to be acutely malnourished before acting, before providing significant funding and food aid. I began to ask what is humane about that kind of humanitarian system.

Our answer at Edesia has been a major philosophical shift to prevention. Years of independent research led by the University of California, Davis and funded by leading philanthropists like the Gates Foundation, showed that products like Nutributter+ (also known as small-quantity lipid-based nutrient supplements—SQ-LNS) are high-

ly effective at preventing malnutrition and significantly reduce stunting, wasting, and micronutrient deficiencies. It comes in a 20-gram sachet packed with 15 essential vitamins and minerals that support development in children aged between six months to 24 months. Thanks to the incredible generosity of the Bezos family, Edesia will become the world's largest manufacturer of Nutributter+.

This powerful ready-to-eat supplement is shelf-stable for two years and can easily be mixed into local foods. Nutributter+ enhances social-emotional skills, language, and fine motor development during the first 1,000 days. Perhaps most importantly, it provides the essential micronutrients to support neurodevelopment during this critical window.

When a child has a fully-formed brain, you can never take that away. We can't control the conflicts or climate crises that may impact their lives, but we can guarantee that the most important tool needed for their future is secured.

Preventing malnutrition also requires strong local partnership. The work the Mary Dinah Foundation does in partnership with mothers and community health workers is an essential part of the solution. They are on the ground providing critical services that focus on maternal health and the prevention of malnutrition in young children. Because the first 1,000 days start in the womb, prevention work begins with PlumpyMum—another ready-to-use therapeutic food designed specifically for pregnant and lactating women, ensuring healthy pregnancies and early nutrition for babies through productive breast feeding.

At a time of constrained resources, prevention is also more cost-effective. A six-month supply of Nutributter+ costs \$15 per child, versus \$50 for an eight-week treatment of PlumpyNut. A Harvard-led study found the total economic cost of treating SAM is \$123 per child, while prevention costs only \$41—making prevention not only better for children, but fiscally responsible.

The hard truth is that even when PlumpyNut treatment saves a child from severe acute malnutrition (SAM), irreversible neurologic and physical damage (stunting) often remain. What is the cost to communities across Africa of this lost potential and human capacity? Imagine a future where we dramatically reduce the rates of SAM through proactive prevention. What are the possibilities represented in the human potential of a generation of healthy young minds and bodies with the full capacity to transform their communities? This is a future worth investing in.

Global forces are clearly aligning to truly make malnutrition history, to start focusing on building futures—mind, body, and spirit—for a generation of young children across Africa.



Navyn Salem, Founder & CEO, Edesia Nutrition in Chad

Yoko London: A Shared Vision For Responsible Luxury



At Yoko London, luxury is not just defined by design—it is defined by responsibility. Central to our ethos is a commitment to sustainable, ethical sourcing. We work exclusively with a curated network of 13 pearl farms globally, ensuring that every pearl used in our pieces is sourced with integrity, care for the environment, and respect for local communities who cultivate them.

Our approach is built on transparency, traceability, and craftsmanship. From the ocean to the atelier, every step in the creation of a Yoko London piece is measured against rigorous standards of environmental stewardship and ethical practice. This allows us to offer jewelry that is not only exquisite in design but meaningful in provenance.

Looking forward, Yoko London continues to explore innovative ways to minimize environmental impact while preserving the artistry and elegance that define our brand.

