

**First, successful application
of the Positive
Deviance/Hearth approach in
rural Cameroon**



Ephraim Toh, MD, SPH; Esther Tallah, MD DrPed; Christopher Mfornyam, MD MPH; Joseph Shu Atanga, MD MPH;
Health Department, Plan Cameroon, Yaounde, Cameroon,

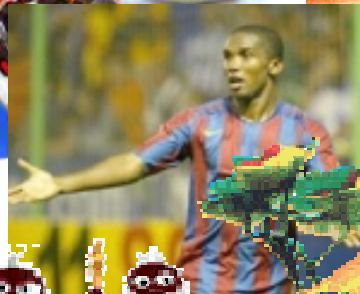
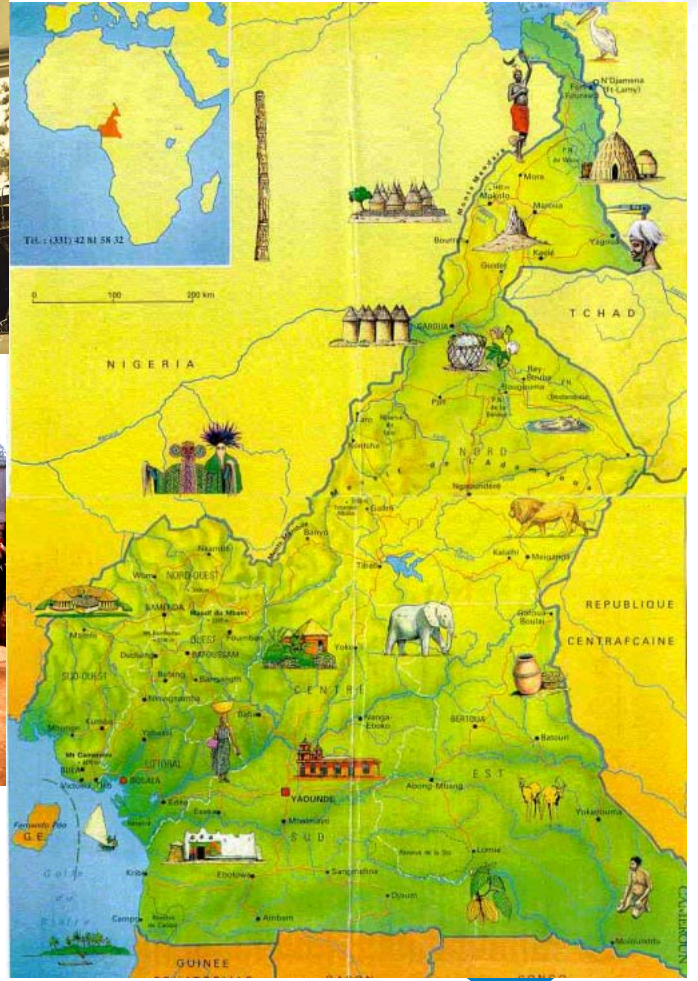
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THE PROBLEM:

1. 32% of under-five children in Cameroon (Central Africa) suffer from chronic malnutrition.
2. 13% of under-fives have acute malnutrition.
3. Plan Cameroon, an international, humanitarian NGO, has partnered with the Ministry of Health, UNICEF and other local agencies to address child malnutrition, both at policy and at program implementation.



THE PROBLEM, cnt'd:

1. Some traditional approaches such as growth monitoring and follow-up have proven not effective in significantly reducing child malnutrition.
2. Consequently Plan Cameroon piloted the first Positive Deviance/Hearth Approach project in the country during 2004.



CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PD/HEARTH PROJECT

1. Project Area

4 pilot rural villages in East Cameroon

2. Target Population

6- 60months old children

3. Goals and Objectives

- To empower U-5 caregivers to conduct community-based nutrition rehabilitation through hearth within 12days
- Use locally available foods to constitute balanced meals for malnourished children
- Provide feeding and health education talks to caregivers during hearth sessions



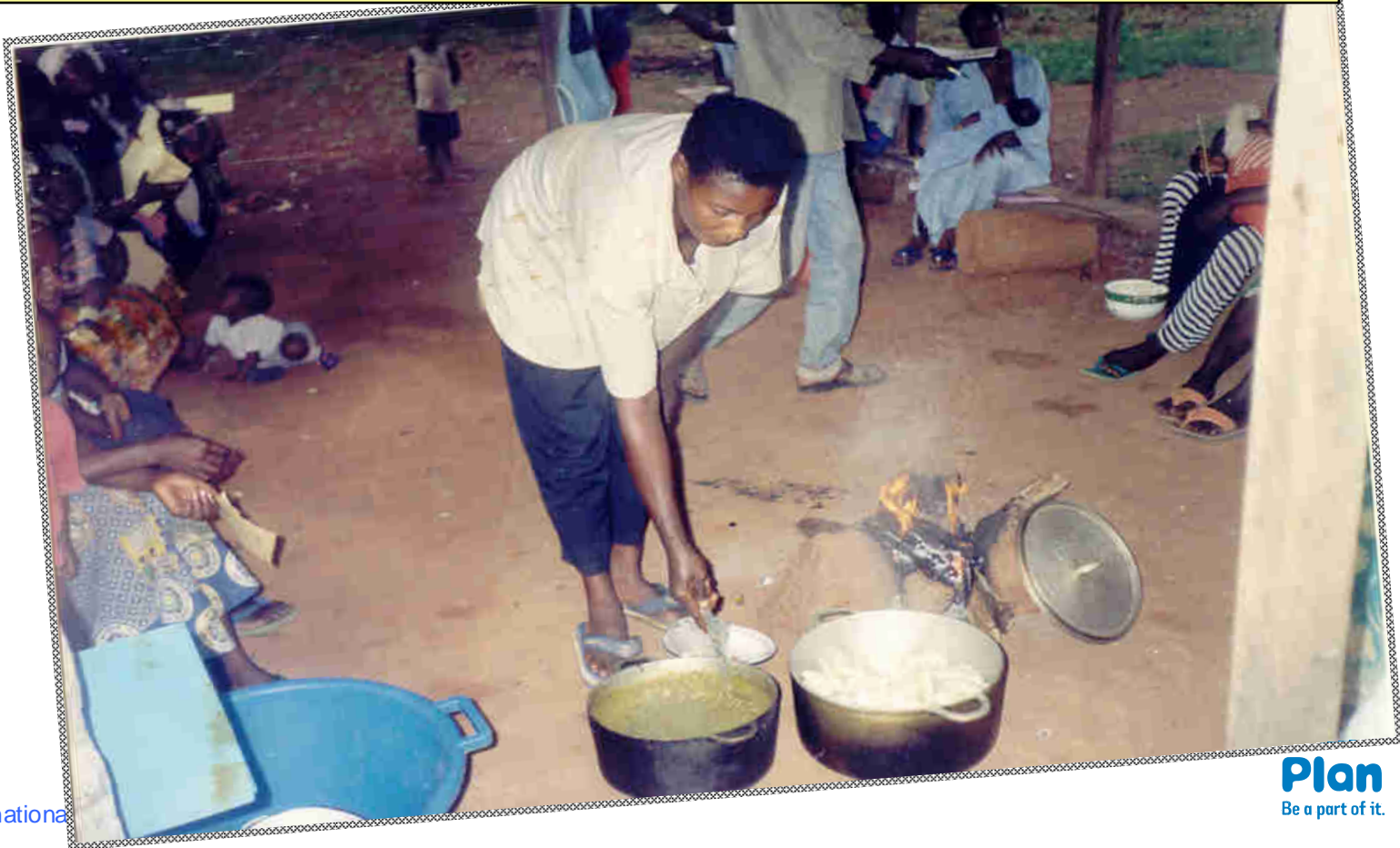
PROJECT STRATEGIES

- Selection of malnourished children (WAZ-score $\leq -2SD$) during routine monthly growth monitoring by Community-based Organizations (CBOs)
- Hearth sessions using model mothers (“Maman lumiere”) for 12 days



RESULTS (1):

- In the four pilot, rural villages, 34 children were identified with mild (29 = 85%) and severe malnutrition (5 = 15%)
- All malnourished children (except one) took part in at least 8 of the 12 days of nutrition rehabilitation.



RESULTS (2):

- Of the 34 children, all except one had adequate weight gain of at least 300g.
- Weight gain ranged from 300 – 2500g with an average of 1082g per child.
- One child lost 400g in spite of 12 day participation at the hearth session being ill health. After treatment, he participated at the next hearth and gained from 4.6 to 6.3 kg.



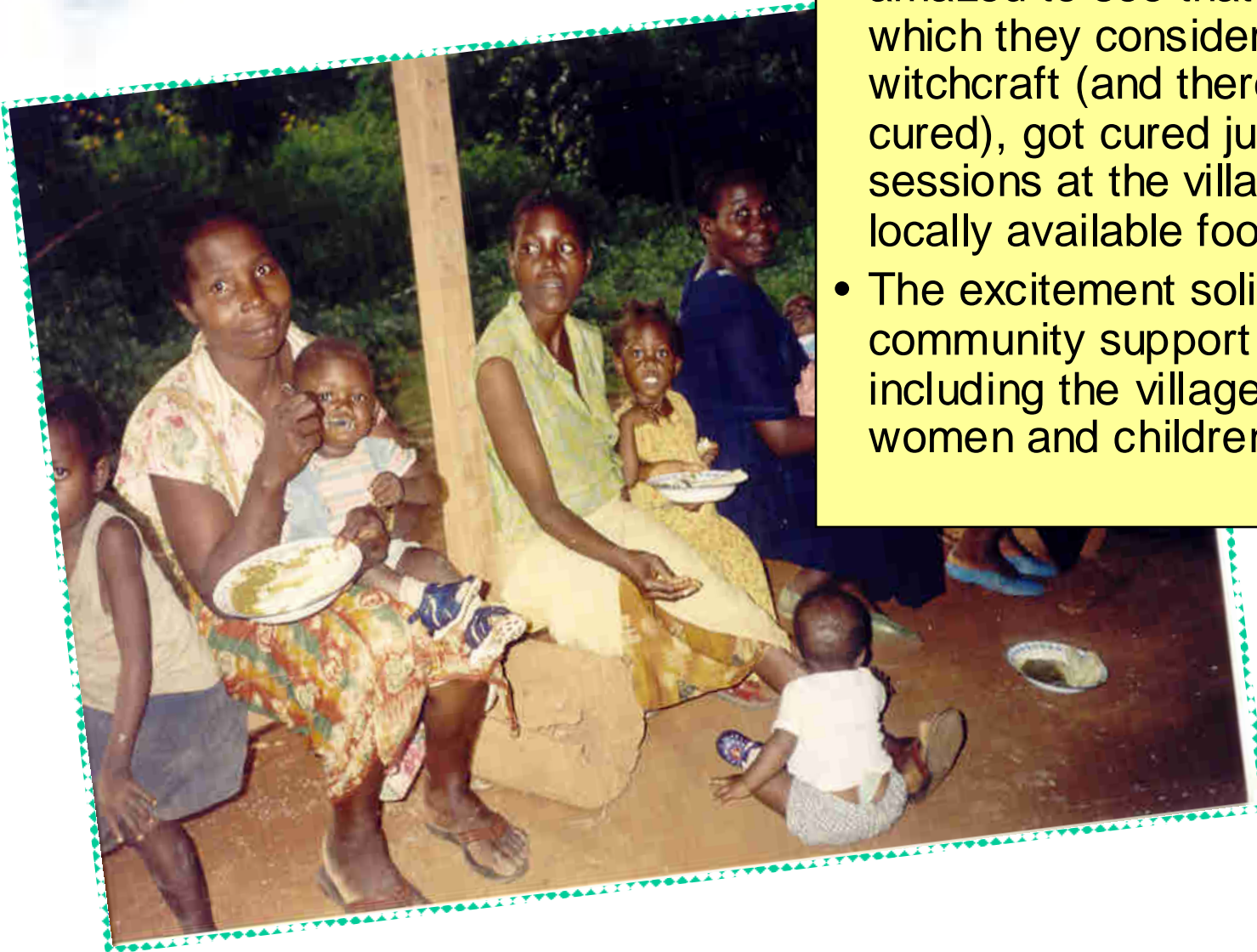
RESULTS (3)

- In three children, reasons for discontinuation included
 - traveling out of the village,
 - continuation of rehabilitation at home and
 - simply abandoning the activities for the third case.
- Even though this happened, their weight gains were ranged between 300 and 1300 grs for the 8 and 9 days participation respectively.



RESULTS (4)

- Community members were amazed to see that malnutrition, which they considered as due to witchcraft (and therefore cannot be cured), got cured just after a few sessions at the villages using locally available food items.
- The excitement solicited extensive community support for the hearths including the village chiefs, men, women and children.



CONSEQUENCES

- PD/Hearth was an effective to rehabilitate malnutrition especially in communities with high prevalence.
- Plan Cameroon is scaling up the PD/Hearth approach in 11 health districts of the country.
- The MOH has approved this approach and is considering the development of a policy for scaling up PD/H to eligible communities

