

HUNGER INCREASES WITHOUT SCHOOL MEALS

Now that schools are locked down in most developing countries due to the corona crisis, children have lost their access to school meals. According to Wageningen development experts, this is causing an increase in malnutrition in many countries.

The Wageningen research team interviewed colleagues in 18 developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America on how the corona crisis is impacting the food supply in their countries. The results show that the corona-mitigating measures do not directly impact food production. However, the emerging food crisis in the Horn of Africa caused by the locust plague is exacerbated by the corona crisis.

FRUIT

Many people's access to food is under threat, the researchers note. The corona measures hamper the import of staple foodstuffs such as



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grain, rice, maize and potatoes, reducing the food security of many African countries dependent on food imports. Furthermore, the availability of fruit and vegetables in urban areas is diminished, leading to a less varied diet. Small and

medium businesses are bearing the brunt of the corona crisis, as are informal markets in developing countries. Many jobs in the informal sector are disappearing, and many young men and women in urban areas are losing their jobs.

FOOD SUPPLY

The corona crisis could stimulate regional food production and lead to shorter food supply chains in developing countries,

the researchers state. But, if the crisis persists, rural areas may also face the threat of reduced food production due to lack of access to seeds and fertilizers, as well as a shortage of labour.

Several Asian countries are attempting to counter the problems by distributing food and money. But this form of support seldom reaches the most vulnerable groups. Support measures such as these are mostly absent in Africa, which is likely to cause a rapid and substantial increase in the number of people suffering from hunger in the slums, the researchers expect.

The study was conducted by development economists Els Lecoutere and Marrit van den Berg, nutrition expert Inge Brouwer, and professor of Impact Analysis of Food Systems Ruerd Ruben. They interviewed 31 experts in 18 developing countries. **R AS**