

# Just Too Small? The Heavy Toll of a Low Dietary Diversity in Children: Exploration of Cultural Influencing Factors in Madagascar's Central Highland

'The people of Madagascar have been close to my heart since my first visit to this country. Since then, I have been concerned about the high prevalence of chronic malnutrition there, meaning that children are too small for their age (stunted) and thus cannot fully develop their physical and cognitive potential in their life. Despite the fact that diverse crops are planted in Madagascar's highland region many children receive a monotonous mainly rice based diet. A low dietary diversity was identified as a determinant of stunting. Therefore, it was my interest to do an exploratory research work to find out more about cultural influences on children's diet and thereby provide a small piece of the puzzle for other researchers or projects. The data collection through interviews, focus groups and transect walks was both challenging but also an unforgettable new experience. The closeness to the people and their honesty and joy of life touched me deeply. The work at the analysis of the results gave me great pleasure and awakened the desire to continue working in the field of research in the future.'



Jacqueline Ribeli

## **Where I come from**

Bachelor's degree in Nutrition & Dietetics with diverse internships as dietitian in hospitals followed by a volunteer assignment with AiNA soa in Madagascar.

## **Why I decided on this degree programme**

It gave me the opportunity to do public health related research in Madagascar and to broaden my nutritional horizon with modules in the fields of sustainability, management as well as food industry.

## **Where I'm going next**

My plans are fairly open, I can imagine working as a research associate or in the field of public health nutrition in awareness-raising projects for a more sustainable and healthy diet of society, or to continue working as dietitian and become a lecturer in some years. Besides, I would like to continue my volunteer work with the team in Madagascar.



Bern University  
of Applied Sciences

► School of Agricultural, Forest and Food Sciences HAFL

Master's thesis MSc in Life Sciences  
Specialisation: Food, Nutrition and Health  
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# The Impact of Nutri-Score on the Purchasing Behaviour of Consumers in Switzerland Compared with other Front-of-Pack Nutrition Labelling Systems

'I am a registered dietitian nutritionist with culinary, medical-therapeutic and scientific skills at the interface between food, nutrition and health. Which foods are healthy? What is a healthy diet? These are two central questions of my professional practice. I am interested in questions concerning the health/nutritional quality of food and how this can be communicated to consumers so that it is considered in their purchasing and consumption decisions. Non-communicable diseases are widespread worldwide. Unhealthy nutritional patterns promote the development of diet-related non-communicable diseases like overweight and diabetes. The World Health Organization recommends that countries use easy-to-understand front-of-pack nutritional labelling as a strategy to address the growing global concern about unhealthy dietary patterns. Since 2018 the introduction of the front-of-pack nutrition label (FoPL) called Nutri-Score has been discussed in Switzerland. In my master's thesis I investigated with an online consumer test the impact of the Nutri-Score on the purchasing behaviour of consumers compared with other FoPL approaches already used in Switzerland.'



Stefan Siegenthaler

## Where I come from

I was born and raised in Switzerland and live with my family in the Oberaargau region of the canton of Bern. Following vocational education and training as chef, a federal vocational baccalaureate in technology and a bachelor's degree in nutrition and dietetics I have 13 years of professional experience as registered dietitian nutritionist in various areas.

## Why I decided on this degree programme

I am interested in questions at the interface between food, nutrition and health sciences. In my view, at the end of the value chain of the food system is not the paying consumer, but the individual health and well-being of the eating person and finally questions of the interaction between food, nutrition and public health. The Master's programme at BFH-HAFL addresses precisely these aspects in an interdisciplinary and interprofessional manner.

## Where I'm going next

I want to work as a nutrition and health expert in a place where food is produced, processed and/or sold, e.g. in the food or catering industry, or where the promotion of public health in relation to nutrition and food is addressed.

# Comparison Between the Techno-Functional Properties of the Plant-Based Beverages Offered and Cow's Milk in the Swiss Market

'Nowadays eating trends are shifting towards plant-based consumption. One sector of the market that has been growing is plant-based beverages. I was especially curious about understanding their characteristics and I also wanted to make a comparison between them and milk. These beverages are being offered as an alternative to milk and I thought that it would be interesting to know whether they can actually be considered as that in terms of their appearance, texture and functionality. I performed different assays that helped me determine which varieties of beverages most resemble milk characteristics. The most exciting part of the work was observing the influence that phytic acid had on functional properties such as foaming.'



Camila Villarreal

## **Where I come from?**

Bachelor's degree in Food Engineering

## **Why I decided on this degree programme**

The combination of nutrition, public health and food technology courses

## **Where I'm going next**

Seeking a PhD in the Food Science field

# Advancing Sustainable Healthy Diets in Bangladesh: Expert Interviews on Challenges, Opportunities, and the Way Forward

‘The way we currently grow and eat food causes environmental degradation and is still not enabling people to realise their full health potential. I was particularly interested in the concept of sustainable healthy diets, which aims to promote health, the environment and social wellbeing through guiding dietary principles published by the WHO and FAO. In particular, I performed and analysed interviews with nutrition experts in Bangladesh to understand how they interpret that concept and how they suggest to advance it in this country. Speaking to and learning from the experiences and wisdom of these experts was a highlight of my degree.’



Eric Brûlé-Champagne

## **Where I come from?**

Bachelor’s degree, then three years of professional experience

## **Why I decided on this degree programme**

The multidisciplinary course offering insights into nutrition, public health, sustainability and business management

## **Where I’m going next**

Work in public health and/or food system sustainability. Considering a PhD and planning some entrepreneurship.



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Specialisation: Food, Nutrition and Health  
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