



Lunch being served at the tuberculosis clinic.  
Photographer: Alysala Malik

# Cricket Powder Provides Valuable Nutrients for Vulnerable Populations

CRS is employing a new strategy to improve the health and nutrition of citizens in the Androy region of southern Madagascar: cricket powder. The powder is produced by Valala Farm- a Malagasy organization committed to conserving local wildlife while fighting food security. Madagascar is home to many rare and endangered species such as lemurs, which are being threatened by local consumption. Additionally, malnutrition rates are high across the country. The Androy region specifically has been in an “emergency” state for the past four years due to devastating drought, leaving families struggling for food during the harsh lean seasons. The goal of Valala farm is to provide those struggling with a sustainable protein source, helping to alleviate malnutrition and decrease the consumption of endangered species.

Crickets are a highly nutritious and sustainable alternative to meat. Insects contain up to 65 percent protein and are rich in minerals such as iron, zinc, copper, and magnesium.

They also grow quickly and are easy to breed and raise in small spaces, making their production possible for anyone. The byproduct of the process is a fertilizer that can be used in farmlands and forests.



Sister Bertine discusses the operations of the tuberculosis clinic.  
Photographer: Alysala Malik



faith. action. results.

CRS has previously used the cricket powder in schools in Madagascar and is now employing the strategy with some of the nation's most vulnerable populations: tuberculosis patients and individuals with disabilities.

Catholic Sisters in the town of Beloha, located within the Androy region, run a tuberculosis treatment clinic. The facility currently houses 26 individuals infected with tuberculosis and provides treatment for two months. The patients are served traditional Malagasy meals of rice with meat, leaves, or beans, with cricket powder added.

It's not only healthy, but also tasty.

"Sometimes they ask where the powder is if we don't put it in. They like the taste," reported Sister Bertine. There has been an increase in tuberculosis in the Androy region due to water scarcity and high winds. A healthy diet is critical for recovery, as appetite and weight loss are common when infected and leaves the body struggling to combat the disease. All 26 people at the center gained weight after just two weeks of treatment and regular meals. Within the first three weeks, one patient even gained 5.5 pounds.



Lunch being served at the tuberculosis clinic.

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The Sister's efforts don't stop with tuberculosis patients. Their support extends to numerous groups in Behola, including a family with disabilities. Six members of the family are unable to walk due to a hereditary bow leg condition. The Sisters sent them to a larger town, Farafangana, to learn income-generating activities such as how to fix phones and radios. They also serve them meals three times a week, which include the cricket powder. The family echoed the same sentiments as the tuberculosis patients, saying that they like the taste of the powder.



Family members waiting to be served food by the Sisters.

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