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The social construction of anemia in school shelters for indigenous children in Mexico.

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Abstract: Indigenous children in school shelters in Mexico suffer from anemia in spite of food that is subsidized, prepared, and served to them. Economically and biomedically centered strategies to reduce anemia have achieved only partial and short-term success. An interdisciplinary team investigated the food security system of the school shelters and collected data through interviews and participant observation. The analysis revealed that the children's nutrition depends on a frail chain of events in which a single link's failure can lead to nutritional insecurity. The authors conclude that the social actors involved in the process are mainly considering the economic aspects of nutrition, but anemia persists as a social construction of the faulty relationship between the institution that runs the shelters and the indigenous culture. The authors make suggestions for an intervention that empowers the community by involving it actively in solving the problem.

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