

NUTRITION

The Global Financing Facility (GFF) supports nutrition as an essential building block for healthy development and the well-being of women and children. Yet global funding for nutrition programs is inadequate. Given its potential for high impact, the GFF has made nutrition a priority area for its investments.

ALARMING RATES OF GLOBAL MALNUTRITION

Inadequate nutrition prevents millions of children from reaching their full potential. Undernutrition is an underlying cause of about 45% of all child deaths and anemia is the cause of about 20% of maternal deaths. Poor maternal nutrition during pregnancy increases children's risk of dying or being stunted. Worldwide, 156 million children under 5 are stunted (too short for their age). Chronic undernutrition in children seriously impairs cognitive development, and its effects are largely irreversible, with lifelong consequences for health and development.

GOOD NUTRITION: THE FOUNDATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

Well-nourished women, children and adolescents live healthier lives, with greater resilience to life-threatening disease. A diet comprised of nutrient-rich foods, in sufficient quantities, provides the foundation for the physical and cognitive growth and development needed to learn in school and succeed in the workplace—an essential precursor to economic prosperity for all.

The first 1,000 days from conception to 24 months are critical for insuring adequate nutrition due to the rapid pace of brain development during this period. Sustainable Development Goal 2 (target 2.2) calls for ending all forms of malnutrition by 2030, which includes achieving, by 2025, internationally agreed upon targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and addressing the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women.

GLOBAL PROGRESS HINGES ON MORE INVESTMENTS IN NUTRITION

Whether providing iron and folic acid supplements during pregnancy or insuring nutrient-dense complementary foods for young children, nutrition interventions are proven to be economical investments in health and development. Breastfeeding alone has the potential to prevent 12% of all child deaths in children under age 5: Exclusively breastfed children are 14 times more likely to survive than non-breastfed children. Nutrition investments also increase productivity and economic growth. According to one estimate, for every dollar invested in nutrition, a country can expect to get US \$16 back in increased productivity.

Despite its importance, there has historically been too little funding to address nutrition. This is changing, as global movements, such as Scaling Up Nutrition, are calling for more sustained funding. Through its work to achieve dramatic increases in financing for reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health in high-burden, low-income and lower-middle-income countries, the GFF is supporting the global scale up of nutrition interventions.

NUTRITION AND THE GFF'S INVESTMENT CASES

All of the GFF country Investment Cases call for increased funding for nutrition with aims to:

- End malnutrition as a cause of maternal and child morbidity and mortality and improve maternal, newborn, infant and young child nutritional status
- Scale up the coverage, quality and utilization of cost effective nutrition services, focusing on pregnant women, lactating women and children under 5 (especially those aged 0 through 24 months)
- Increase equitable access to nutrition services
- Strengthen the delivery of nutrition services through performance-based financing (PBF) and other tools.

GFF INVESTMENTS IN NUTRITION

The GFF supports a variety of nutrition interventions:

- **Integrating nutrition into the full continuum of maternal and child health services**, by focusing on actions such as increasing breastfeeding rates, improving counseling on infant feeding and early stimulation and the prevention and treatment of maternal anemia
- **Building capacity at the community and health-facility levels**, by supporting counseling on infant and young child feeding; better management of moderate acute malnutrition and severe acute malnutrition; and the scale up of Kangaroo Mother Care to assist low birth weight babies
- **Providing commodities**, such as micronutrient supplements and fortificants, ready-to-use therapeutic foods, and deworming medications
- **Increasing the community-based delivery of nutrition services**, through the use of community health workers and early childhood development workers
- **Reaching underserved areas**, by setting up mobile clinics and using a rapid in-and-out approach in security challenged settings to deliver services
- **Supporting the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative**, which encourages breastfeeding and other best practices for infant survival.

KEY COLLABORATIONS ON NUTRITION

The GFF maximizes its investments in nutrition by engaging in partnerships and collaborations with a broad range of stakeholders, including:

- **Power of Nutrition:** The GFF co-finances projects with the Power of Nutrition trust fund that invests in large-scale, high impact programs in some of the countries that are worst affected by undernutrition.
- **Early Childhood Development (ECD) Action Network:** Launched by UNICEF and the World Bank in 2016, this network seeks to advance progress toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals for early childhood development, including health and nutrition.
- **Scaling Up Nutrition:** This global movement aspires to increase investments and commitments to improving nutrition from donors, ministers of health, and civil society organizations.

NUTRITION IN GFF COUNTRIES

These are some examples of how nutrition has been integrated into the GFF's Investment Cases:

- Promoting optimal infant and young child feeding practices, including exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life, is a priority in **Cameroon**, where malnutrition rates have remained high for over 20 years. A development impact bond supports the scale-up of Kangaroo Mother Care while performance-based financing facilitates the community-based distribution of nutrition commodities. Conditional cash transfers are linked to nutrition and sanitation outcomes for adolescent girls.
- In **Uganda**, 75 percent of children and 31 percent of pregnant women are anemic (UDHS, 2011). The country's Investment Case calls for efforts to improve the nutrition of adolescent girls. School-based or school-linked facilities serve as adolescent health sites, which provide nutrition services. The country also uses performance-based financing to scale up quality nutrition service provision.
- The GFF's work in **Nigeria** is focused on the Northeastern states, where under 5 mortality rates are 54 percent higher than in the country's southern states. A key effort is strengthening the delivery of a minimum package of nutrition services, including the management of acute malnutrition, micronutrients and regular growth monitoring and promotion. Mobile teams reach remote and under-served communities including in security-challenged areas.
- GFF trust fund resources in **Guatemala** will be used to buy down IBRD financing to more concessional rates to support the expansion of nutrition services.

FINANCING FOR NUTRITION

It is estimated that investing an additional US \$2.2 billion per year in nutrition over the next 10 years will help to save 2.2 million lives and result in 50 million fewer stunted children by 2025 (Investing in Nutrition: The Foundation for Development, 2016). The GFF will contribute to filling this gap using its financing approach, which includes: supporting domestic resource mobilization to ensure nutrition is prioritized in the national budget; ensuring the efficiency of complementary financing by working with countries to provide a clear set of priorities in Investment Cases, including specific nutrition services that financiers (both public and private) can align behind; and, linking catalytic grant financing with IDA or IBRD resources to increase the available envelope for health financing, including for nutrition.

RESOURCES

Scaling Up Nutrition website: <http://scalingupnutrition.org/nutrition/the-importance-of-good-nutrition/>

UNICEF website, Breastfeeding: http://www.unicef.org/nutrition/index_breastfeeding.html - 2

UNICEF-WHO-The World Bank Group, Levels and Trends in Child Malnutrition, Joint child malnutrition estimates (2016 edition): http://www.who.int/nutgrowthdb/jme_brochure2016.pdf?ua=1

World Bank, Results for Development Institute, 1,000 Days, Investing in Nutrition: The Foundation for Development: <http://thousanddays.org/tdays-content/uploads/Investing-in-Nutrition-The-Foundation-for-Development.pdf>

World Health Organization, fact sheet (2016): <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs178/en/>

World Health Organization website, Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative: <http://www.who.int/nutrition/topics/bfhi/en/>