



COUNTRY PROFILE ON NUTRITION 01/2021

GUATEMALA

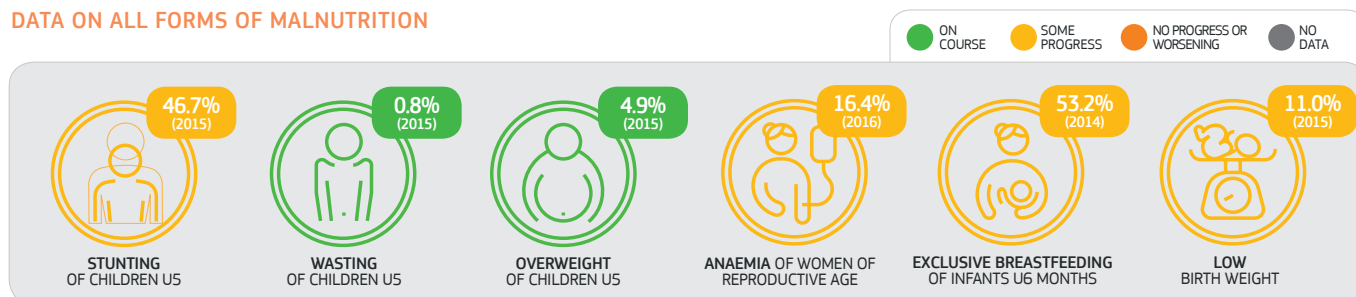
Nutrition situation in Guatemala

AT A GLANCE

Guatemala has a population of 17.6 million people which is estimated to reach 21.2 million by 2030. The country has made the fight against stunting a top commitment. With almost half of children under five stunted, it is not on track to meet its national stunting target. There are persisting inequalities (in indigenous groups, 70% of children are stunted) and an alarming rise in adult obesity (disproportionally affecting indigenous women) leading to the rapid rise of non-communicable diseases. Poor infant and young child feeding practices, declining dietary quality, limited education

and teenage pregnancies, along with other persistent gender and ethnic inequalities¹, contribute to undernutrition. Recurrent natural disasters also exacerbate social and food vulnerabilities. The COVID-19 pandemic poses a serious threat to the already precarious nutrition situation of the most vulnerable groups². Undernutrition alone costs the country at least 11% of GDP³. Guatemala has a Gender Inequality Index value of 0.479 and is ranked as 119 of 162 countries in the 2019 index.

DATA ON ALL FORMS OF MALNUTRITION



NUTRITION GOVERNANCE

- Guatemala had established a sound food and nutrition security policy, legal and institutional framework in 2005. It joined the Scaling Up Nutrition movement in December 2010.
- Nutrition is a top political priority for 2020-2024 through the government's recently launched 'Great Crusade for Nutrition'. It aims to reduce child stunting to 42% by 2024 (and to 24.5% by 2030⁴).
- National information systems are well developed in Guatemala and a national information platform for nutrition (NIPN) is in place since 2017, hosted by the national Food and Nutrition Security Secretariat (SESAN). A decentralised NIPN is now operational in Momostenango municipality, and the model is planned to be scaled up in seven additional municipalities of Totonicapán Department.
- Key challenges include reaching multi-sectoral consensus to increase the budget for nutrition as well as a reduced capacity in some sectors to translate the multi-sectoral approach from policy to practice.
- The National Commission for Food Fortification, Enrichment or Restoration coordinates a mandatory food fortification programme.

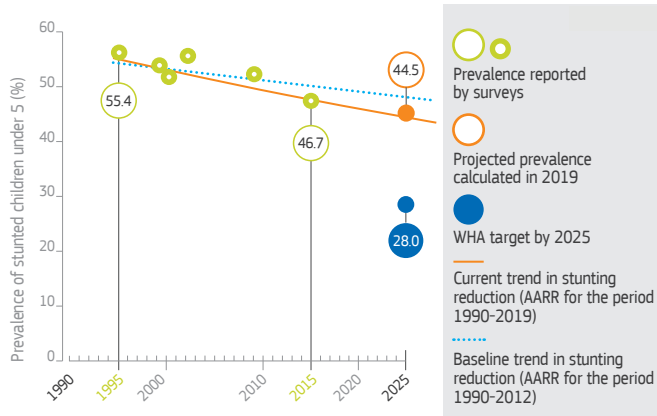
Example of EU support

Under the leadership of SESAN and supported by global and national expertise, the EU-funded NIPN in Guatemala conducted a major study of the last four multi-sectoral nutrition strategies, since 2006. The detailed analyses of budget allocations and expenditure across different sectors and over time led to the following key insights:

- Over the years, the strategies have progressively narrowed in terms of targeting fewer areas, age groups and interventions.
- Funding and human resources have often not matched the ambitious commitments made, meaning that coverage targets could not be met.
- There has been a greater focus and budget allocation on immediate causes (via nutrition-specific interventions within health) as compared to addressing more structural causes like poverty and gender inequality.
- Beyond the health sector, capacities to use resources effectively were very limited, particularly at local levels and monitoring systems were found to be weak.

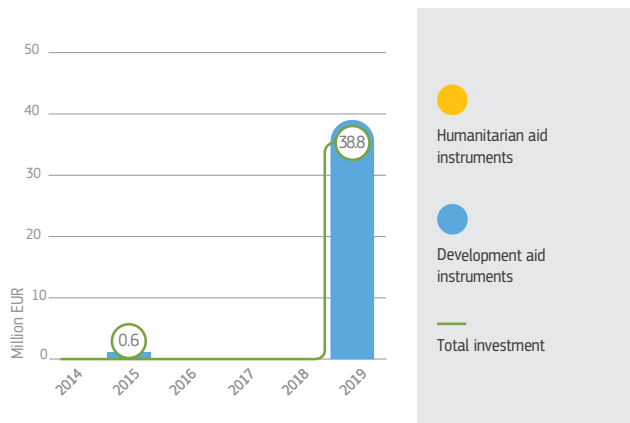
Progress on the two EU pledges for nutrition

TREND, PROJECTION AND TARGETS IN THE PREVALENCE AND NUMBER OF CHILDREN (U5) STUNTED



Guatemala has experienced a limited decline in stunting prevalence since the mid-1990s, and the number of children stunted has not really changed due to population growth. The rate of decline in the number of children stunted has accelerated from 0.41% in 2012 to 0.72% in 2019. If this trend is maintained, then nearly 950 000 children are expected to be stunted in 2025.

EU FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS TO NUTRITION BETWEEN 2014 AND 2019 – TOTAL OF EUR 39.4 MILLION



The EU contributes up to EUR 20 million specifically targeted for nutrition to support the primary health care system to combat chronic malnutrition in Guatemala (implemented by Pan American Health Organization). With an emphasis on the first 1 000 days of life and targeting 22 municipalities in four departments, the programme's objective is to improve nutrition and hygiene knowledge and behaviour, as well as coverage and quality of health and nutrition interventions. A further EUR 15 million was allocated to support the comprehensive strategy to fight chronic malnutrition in the same municipalities (implemented by UNICEF). The EU also allocated EUR 15 million (of which 25% for nutrition) for comprehensive resilience-building interventions aimed at improving food and nutrition security in municipalities in the 'Dry Corridor' region (implemented by WFP). These communities are most vulnerable to food insecurity and climate shocks, especially droughts.

¹ 20% early childbearing by age 18; 43% female secondary education enrolment (GNR 2019).

² Food security under the COVID-19 pandemic (FAO/ECLAC 2020).

³ El costo de la doble carga de la malnutrición. Impacto social y económico en Guatemala. ECLAC/WFP, 2020.

⁴ Based on the target set in the National Development Plan «K'atun nuestra Guatemala 2032».