



Nutrition Advocacy: Building Opportunities in Europe

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Table of Contents

Disclaimer	2
Acronyms	4
Acknowledgements	5
Executive summary	6
Introduction	8
1. Multilateral organisations	10
2. Bilateral donors	14
3. NGOs	17
4. Private sector	20
5. Private funders	25
6. Discussion	27
References	30

Acronyms

Acronym	Definition	Acronym	Definition
ACF	Action Against Hunger (Action Contre La Faim)	IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
ACF	Association for Charitable Foundations	LMIC	Low and Middle Income Country
ACP	African Caribbean and Pacific	LSHTM	London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine
AECID	Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional Para el Desarrollo	MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
AGC	Agricultural Growth Corridors	MDG-F	MDG Achievement Fund
AIM	Amsterdam Initiative Against Malnutrition	MFO	Multi-Family Office
AIP	Agriculture Input Providers	MNCs	Multi-national companies
BMGF	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	MSF	Medicines Sans Frontières
BOP	Bottom of the Pyramid	NAS	Nutrition Advisory Service
CIFF	Children's Investment Fund	NAG	Nutrition Advocacy Group
CFS	Committee on World Food Security	NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
CMAM	Community Based Management of Acute Malnutrition	NPC	New Philanthropy Capital
CSO	Civil Society Organisation	OCT	Overseas Countries and Territories
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility	OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
CSV	Creating Shared Value	PLB	Project Laser Beam
DAC	Development Assistance Committee	PPP	Public-Private Partnership
DALY	Disability Adjusted Life Years	RAIN	Repositioning Agriculture in Nutrition
DANIDA	Danish International Development Assistance	ROI	Return on Investment
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)	RUF	Ready to Use Foods
DG	Directorate General	SAC	Sustainable Agriculture Code
EC	European Commission	SAL	Sight and Life
EDF	European Development Fund	SAM	Severe Acute Malnutrition
EDP	Oxfam Enterprise Development Programme	SFO	Single-Family Office
EFSG	European Food Security Group	SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
EU	European Union	STC	Save the Children
EVPA	European Venture Philanthropy Association	STO	Sales and Trading Organisation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation	SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition
FPP	Food Processing and Packaging	TAFAD	Trans-Atlantic Food Assistance Dialogue
GAFSP	Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme	UK DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
GAIN	Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition	UN HLTf	United Nations High Level Task Force on Global Food Security
GAP	Global Action Plan	UN SCN	United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition
GSMA	Global System for Mobile Communications Association	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
HNP	Health Nutrition and Population	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
HNWI	High net worth individual	VP	Venture Philanthropy
ICAI	DFID's International Commission on Aid Impact	WB	World Bank
ICCO	Interchurch Organisation for Development Cooperation	WFP	World Food Programme
IDA	International Development Association	WHA	World Health Assembly
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development	WHO	World Health Organisation
		WRI	World Resource Institute

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Executive summary

Undernutrition continues to burden many populations. Tackling the problem has historically been challenging due to multi-sector influences on nutrition status and a chronic lack of funding to drive forward solutions. In effect, nutrition has been ‘everyone’s problem but no one’s responsibility.’ In recent years, the combination of food price rises and economic volatility has intensified the challenges in nutrition security. However, global attention to the issue of undernutrition is starting to rise. New initiatives, such as the Scaling Up Nutrition roadmap and the 1,000 Days partnership, have increased nutrition’s visibility. Coordinated advocacy efforts will be integral to build on this momentum and drive forward sustainable change in global nutrition.

Research scope

The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine was contracted by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to conduct a mapping exercise of the landscape of European organisations that have existing or potential involvement in activities addressing undernutrition in low and middle income countries. This report provides an overview of the European landscape, highlighting potential opportunities to scale investments and activities.

Research was carried out from October 2010-April 2011. The research process comprised several stages. Desk-based research was conducted and stakeholder consultations were held with over 100 stakeholders representing multilateral organisations, bilateral donors, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private sector industry and private funders. In addition, Development Initiatives was sub-contracted to conduct a funding flow analysis of European bilateral and multilateral donor commitments to nutrition from 2000-2009.

Key findings

Multilateral Organisations are making nutrition a strategic priority. Many agencies are increasing their financial commitments and strategic focus on improving nutrition outcomes. There is also a growing emphasis on integration and understanding how food security and rural development initiatives can best support improved nutrition. The European Commission represents a significant source of funding and has been increasingly operational in its nutrition programming across development priorities, although there remains a need to increase and protect these investments within institutional policy. In general, there is still a need for stronger leadership and coordination across multilateral organisations and the wider nutrition community.

Nutrition is becoming a more prominent focus on the European bilateral donor agenda. A common emerging pattern is the extent that bilateral donors are integrating nutrition across programmes and placing high priority on results-based frameworks. France, Ireland, Spain and the United Kingdom emerge as leaders in terms of strategic focus on nutrition. At present it is difficult to gain a clear picture of financial flows for nutrition given that nutrition funding sits within and across several development sectors. Mechanisms to maintain or increase nutrition programming and funding from bilaterals can come through harnessing existing high-level momentum around food security and maternal and child health and necessitates working within political parameters.

NGOs are developing increased capacity for nutrition advocacy. NGOs have strong commitment to addressing undernutrition and bring valuable technical expertise and field knowledge into informing evidence-based policies at both national and international levels. NGOs can be constrained by funding parameters, which can deter collaboration and comprehensive strategic planning.

Private sector industry is increasingly interested in its role in addressing undernutrition and there are opportunities to engage industry partners across the food value chain. Preferred mechanisms for engagement are through core business and expanded market presence and through public-private partnerships. The private sector brings a diversified functional and technical expertise and an inherently entrepreneurial approach. Private sector involvement in addressing undernutrition is enhanced if there is a sustainable business model which is often challenging given variable return on investment metrics. Although, broadly speaking, the private sector is aware and interested in solutions to undernutrition; there remains a level of distrust between private and public sectors and a sentiment that the private sector is often not considered as part of the response to undernutrition. There remains a need to clarify goals and understanding of where the private sector can add value and also a need for robust evaluation of health and nutrition impacts of private sector initiatives.

Private funders for nutrition in Europe are few. Funders are generally inhibited by a perceived complexity of the nutrition problem and a lack of understanding of how and where their funds may achieve impact. There is potential to increase funding from this sector through developing targeted, clarified advocacy messages and utilising the convening power of membership bodies.

Several interrelated themes are evident across sectors. These include an awareness of industry as an important partner coupled with simultaneous distrust between public and private sectors, a growing interest in integrating responses to undernutrition across the spectrum of agriculture, health, food security and direct nutrition interventions, an acknowledgement of the need for further impact evaluation and a broad sentiment that the nutrition agenda needs stronger messaging and goals.

Recommendations

Analysis of the research findings highlights several opportunities for the nutrition community to prioritise in advocacy efforts to scale resources/activity/attention to nutrition:

- **Engage the European Commission and bilateral donors to increase funding/activity** through targeting the European Commission to develop a nutrition policy and through pushing bilateral donors to continue to prioritise nutrition through both strategic and financial commitments.
- **Facilitate increased public-private sector dialogue** by working with stakeholders from both sectors to increase trust and transparency and clarify the environment for effective partnership.
- **Mobilise new resources from European private funders** by utilising membership bodies and engaging funders in meetings and seminars aimed at education and awareness-building.
- **Increase the evidence for improving nutrition through agricultural development** by prioritising research focussed on how large scale investments in agriculture best translate into improved nutrition.
- **Develop targeted advocacy messaging** that is clear, concise and powerful and can reach a broad audience of donors and partners. Combining effective communications with clearly defined targets will further enhance the growing global nutrition agenda.

This landscaping study highlights an expanding European interest and engagement in addressing undernutrition. It is imperative that this momentum is continued and that more efforts are targeted to encourage, coordinate, and drive European activity. There is a clear window of opportunity to drive the coordination and scale-up of efforts across the nutrition community to ensure that tackling the problem of undernutrition becomes *'everyone's responsibility'*.

Introduction

The nutrition situation in lower- and middle-income countries

The problem

An estimated two billion people, or 30% of the world's population, suffer from undernutrition.¹ Given multi-sector influences on nutrition status, the global response to the problem of undernutrition crosses many different sectors and stakeholder constituencies. The 2008 *Lancet Series* on maternal and child undernutrition highlighted the present dysfunction and fragmentation among the various actors in the nutrition landscape and the need for a coordinated response at both national and international levels.²

The worrying lack of progress towards achieving Millennium Development Goal 1 on hunger reduction and undernutrition³ has spurred growing attention to nutrition, illustrated by several recent initiatives, including the 1,000 Days partnership, jointly launched between the U.S. and Ireland, and the Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) framework and roadmap, which are supported by an increasing number of organisations and governments.

Despite the growing focus, the burden of undernutrition around the world remains high:

- Undernutrition contributes to an estimated 3.5 million preventable child and maternal deaths annually and 11% of global Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs);⁴
- The undernutrition burden is concentrated in a small number of countries: 90% of the world's stunted children live in 36 countries, and 80% live in just 20 countries;⁵
- The effects of undernutrition in the first two years of life pose severe long-term consequences, affecting both physical and mental development;⁶
- Efforts to tackle undernutrition are severely hindered by the legacy of the global financial crisis and the trend of rising food prices;
- There is still a large gap between existing funding for nutrition and anticipated needs to enable effective scale-up of programmes.⁵

Although nutrition interventions have been shown to be some of the most cost-effective development solutions,⁷ the scale of global funding targeting nutrition has remained stagnant and well below estimates of need.^{5,8} Undernutrition continues to be one of the most serious but least addressed health issues globally, with high impacts on human health, development and economic productivity. Multi-sector influences on nutrition have made it difficult to coordinate activity to tackle the issue, rendering it simultaneously 'everyone's problem' but 'no one's responsibility'.

Nutrition-relevant activities

Given the range of causal factors for undernutrition (Box 1), the scope of potential activities to tackle undernutrition is broad. Recent aid and development efforts have encouraged a widening of the lens from the classical narrow nutrition and health focus to a broader nutrition in development focus. Potential nutrition actions include:

- Nutrition-specific interventions, such as provision of micronutrient-fortified foods and breastfeeding promotion (which focus on immediate causes); and,
- Nutrition-sensitive interventions, such as agricultural, education and water and sanitation interventions (which focus on the underlying and basic causes of undernutrition).

Food security initiatives are often seen as a distinct type of nutrition-relevant action, in that they prioritise the provision of sufficient food (in terms of calories), often as part of a humanitarian response. More broadly, agricultural and other interventions that increase household incomes and improve the livelihoods of the rural poor may be interpreted as benefiting nutrition and health, since they increase resources for the purchase of food and health care.

Box 1: Causes of undernutrition

There are variable causes that influence an individual's susceptibility to undernutrition that can be classified as immediate, underlying and basic.⁹

Immediate: Poor dietary intake and disease;

Underlying: Family food shortages, inadequate care and feeding practices, especially of children and women, poor living conditions, and poor health services;

Basic: For each underlying causes, there are deeper causes of undernutrition that include poverty; access to resources; women's status; environmental damage; political unrest and conflict; lack of health; education; and, economic infrastructure.

Report aim and objectives

This report aims to map the landscape of European actors that are engaged in addressing undernutrition in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), and to provide a high-level roadmap for scaling-up advocacy activity around the issue. The research objectives of this report are:

- To understand how a range of European organisations/institutions address undernutrition in LMICs;
- To assess the strengths and challenges facing organisations and sectors to address undernutrition;
- To assess stakeholder receptivity to engage, scale-up activities and work with others; and,
- To analyse the enablers and barriers to engagement across sectors and stakeholders.

Research methods

Desk based research

The initial research phase involved a process of reviewing published literature, media and institutional websites to understand the nutrition landscape as well as to identify interview targets.

Stakeholder interviews

The Project Team interviewed more than 100 individuals in 60 semi-structured interviews with organisations in ten countries, representing multilateral organisations, bilateral donors, NGOs, the private sector (food/agriculture industries) and private funders and financial institutions. The research focused on European-based actors; however, several organisations have global operations which preclude focus on only one geographic region. Therefore, the analysis includes organisations headquartered elsewhere but with a large European presence and global reach. The interviews covered the following key thematic areas:

- General awareness of nutrition issues in LMICs and past/current involvement;
- Past/current/future appetite for partnership, cross-sector collaboration/engagement;
- Mechanisms for prioritising nutrition and barriers/enablers to engagement;
- Views on respective sector involvement; and,
- Views on activity gaps across the nutrition community

Quantitative data analysis

Development Initiatives, a consultancy, was contracted to complete a quantitative analysis of funding flows for nutrition from European bilateral and multilateral donors from 2000-2009. Findings from the quantitative analysis provided a comprehensive background of funding trends and informed the qualitative data collection from bilateral and multilateral stakeholders.

Study limitations

The project was conducted over a six-month period which limited the scope of landscaping. The sample of organisations targeted was not exhaustive and prioritised large organisations and companies rather than smaller enterprises. Interviews were conducted with a small number of senior individuals within each organisation. Comprehensive analysis within each organisation and sector would merit in-depth discussions across a larger range of stakeholders. The findings therefore represent a high-level picture of each sector and may not contain some more detailed nuances.

1. Multilateral organisations

Key findings	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strategic focus on nutrition is increasing across a number of agencies • There is potential for increased funding and focus from the European Commission, though it is not likely to have a nutrition policy in the near term • There is growing emphasis on integration: an understanding of how food security and rural development initiatives can best support nutrition outcomes
	<p>Key considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is uncertainty around private sector engagement • There is a strong need for a cohesive coordinating body for nutrition • Funding patterns can either be limiting or divisive: there is a need for funding that supports collaborative integrated approaches

Background

Multilateral agencies form an important element of the international nutrition system and a significant portion of total aid for ‘basic nutrition’* is channelled through multilateral agencies. We commissioned Development Initiatives to conduct a thorough quantitative analysis of bilateral and multilateral funding flows for nutrition.¹⁰ Aid for nutrition has variable routes: through health, agriculture or food security and other programming. Capturing exact figures on nutrition spending is therefore challenging. There are limitations to the data reported to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC), which must be noted prior to interpretation. Aid data are reported to the DAC based on sector codes. Each project or programme can be assigned only one sector code but because nutrition crosses multiple sectors, it is difficult to capture accurate numbers without detailed project level analysis. The Development Initiatives team focused their analysis on ‘basic nutrition,’ as well as including development and emergency food aid and project-level analysis where possible.

We present the broad findings of the quantitative analysis and then focus on a qualitative analysis of data collected through stakeholder interviews. Interviews were conducted with organisations and coordinating bodies directly or peripherally engaged in nutrition issues at European and global levels. Organisations targeted fell within the United Nations (UN) system, Bretton Woods institutions, European Union (EU) development aid institutions and UN coordinating bodies that cross institutional and European member state constituencies.

Summary trends

Funding

Analysis of the OECD DAC data identified the following trends in funding for basic nutrition from multilateral organisations¹⁰:

- Basic nutrition aid from multilateral agencies has increased on average 62% between 2000–2003 and 2005–2008;
- The largest multilateral contributions in 2005–2008 were from the EU institutions (\$86.9 million), World Bank (International Development Association) (\$62.6 million), and the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) (\$24.7 million);
- Several institutions have launched or are discussing new nutrition strategies (European Commission (EC), World Bank (WB), World Food Programme (WFP)) or are prioritising nutrition

* ‘Basic Nutrition’ is the primary code used by the OECD Creditor Reporting System (CRS) to categorise aid designed to support direct feeding programmes, micronutrient provision and assessments, nutrition monitoring and education and household food security.

within areas of core focus (UN High Level Task Force on Global Food Security (UN HLTF), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)), opening a window for increased engagement and funding;

- Multilateral agencies are a significant channel of donor funds (bilateral and other) for total basic nutrition aid; and,
- Obtaining a clear picture of total funding commitments to nutrition is extremely complicated.

Linking food security and nutrition

Dialogue is increasing in the intersection between food security and nutrition. For example, the reformed Committee on World Food Security (CFS) has been urged to give higher priority to nutrition and the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition (SCN) now has an approved seat on the CFS advisory board. Similarly, the UN HLTF has revised its Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA) and has taken steps to incorporate nutrition into its activities. Additionally, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), IFAD and the WFP have a strong history of collaboration on food and nutrition security issues. However, stakeholders stress that the link between food security and nutrition remains an area where considerable work is needed, both in establishing the evidence base and intellectual argument and simultaneously opening the dialogue from both sides.

Private sector

There is growing interest and enthusiasm around the role that the private sector can play in addressing undernutrition and the promise of Public Private Partnerships (PPPs). However, the private sector is viewed with caution and there are concerns about conflicts of interest. Agencies have different regulations around private sector engagement and the WFP and FAO were the only two multilateral organisations interviewed with documented policies for engagement. Maintaining independent legitimacy is important to all international agencies. It was broadly agreed that continuing to develop clear guidance and understanding of the role and limitations of the private sector is needed.

Opportunities

Continued and increasing priority to nutrition –UN organisations

The UN system houses several institutions relevant to nutrition and forms an important element of the nutrition architecture, not least due to its country inclusiveness. Each institution approaches the problem of nutrition with nuances based on its remit. A dominant focus on nutrition as a health issue has found it an institutional home in agencies such as UNICEF and the World Health Organisation (WHO). Both agencies have been working to improve the horizontal integration of nutrition and both work effectively across other health and social sectors. The 2010 WHA requested the WHO to develop a comprehensive implementation plan across a range of nutrition interventions.¹¹ A final policy paper will be completed by the 65th WHA in May 2012.

The FAO has a clear nutrition mandate, though nutrition has been under-prioritised institutionally. Other Rome-based agencies are beginning to increase their nutrition focus: the WFP has incorporated nutrition clearly into its current five-year strategy (2008-2013) and IFAD has begun to use nutrition as one of two metrics to measure success. There is growing opportunity for holistic solutions and collaboration across sectors.

Capacity for increased resources

The World Bank

The World Bank (WB) expressed renewed commitment to scaling up its investments in nutrition following a 2008 internal assessment that highlighted nutrition as a gap in its activity. The WB takes an integrated approach to nutrition and is able to address the issue through multiple routes (agriculture/ direct intervention/ general country budget support/ social protection/ education/ water and sanitation). Given the renewed interest in nutrition, funding and new projects in the pipeline are moving forward apace. The WB has been an important driver of the SUN process and the previous Global Action Plan (GAP). The WB is a strong advocate but does not think in terms of advocacy; rather it thinks in terms of policy dialogue, as this more clearly reflects the WB role as a generator of scientific evidence, from which it supports in-country policy work.

The European Commission

Development assistance from EU member states and the European Commission account for 13% of total aid flows (€12.3 billion in 2009).¹² This research focuses on the EC as the implementing agency for EU development cooperation and the agency tasked with allocating funds from the European Development Fund (EDF). The EC is divided into several Directorate-Generals (DGs). DG DEVCO (Development Cooperation) and DG ECHO (Humanitarian Aid) are considered specifically in terms of nutrition programming.

DG ECHO has a clear mandate for nutrition in emergencies. In 2010, DG ECHO developed a Position Paper (currently being revised) re-affirming its commitment to address undernutrition in humanitarian crises and setting the framework for these interventions. It is increasingly recognised that the boundaries between emergency and development programming are blurred and warrant a revised approach. DG DEVCO has no stand-alone nutrition strategy at present. Nutrition is addressed primarily through food security and rural development programming as well as health. This is in line with the overall development policy of the EC, which articulates nutrition as a sub-theme of its Food Security Thematic Focus.¹³ A Nutrition Advisory Service (NAS) has been instituted to provide technical and strategic support to the delegations whose work relates to nutrition. In 2010, the EC, with the support of the NAS and a number of Member States, developed a Nutrition Reference Document highlighting the EC's increasing engagement in nutrition at the technical level.

Many member states and civil society representatives have been pushing the EC to produce a nutrition policy. However, in response to a parliamentary question about a potential nutrition policy, the Development Commissioner Andris Piebalgs indicated that the 2011 work plan for the EC did not include plans for a policy on nutrition.¹⁷ Efforts are now focused on pushing for a nutrition policy in 2012. A nutrition policy is an important element of fully institutionalising the EC's commitment to nutrition funding. Key influences on the likelihood of a future nutrition policy will come via maintaining external pressure on the EC by member states, NGOs and civil society, through pull mechanisms from partner country requests and by maintaining high level international attention on nutrition and the link to achieving the MDGs and economic development.

Coordination

Coordinating mechanisms are valuable to the work of all agencies. The major coordinating platforms with institutional grounding in nutrition are the UN SCN, UN HLTF and the CFS. Additional platforms are manifest in REACH, the Global Nutrition Cluster and SUN, though these are less institutionally formalised. Coordination has historically proved challenging and the UN SCN remains the platform that holds nutrition as its primary focus. The SCN is currently undergoing significant reform. There remains a shared desire for a robust and functional coordinating body, and there is a sense of optimism around the SUN and the UN SCN reform process (Box 6).

Box 2: Coordination in flux: UN SCN and SUN

UN Standing Committee on Nutrition (SCN)

The UN SCN is recognised for its knowledge contributions in the form of the World Nutrition Reports and its ability to bring global actors from North and South together at the annual SCN session.¹⁴ The SCN is undergoing a reform process to establish consensus on what type of coordination is needed to scale-up nutrition activity and the desired institutional arrangements to facilitate these functions. Stakeholders have varying views on the role of the SCN, most agree that a normative coordinating body is desirable.

Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN)

The SUN movement began in 2009-2010 with the development of the SUN Framework¹⁵ and Roadmap.¹⁶ The roadmap outlines principles and directions for multi-sectoral support for *country-driven* efforts to achieve sustainable reductions in the burden of undernutrition. The roadmap will begin to be implemented in selected "early riser" countries in 2011, with an aim to show positive, replicable results in the next three years. A report of progress is expected in late 2011.

The SUN process is supported by six interlinked Task Forces under the current stewardship of the SUN Transition Team. Institutional stewardship arrangements remain unformulated. Task Force D focuses on governance issues and is developing options on future institutional home(s) for SUN.

Key considerations

Agreed approach

There is established engagement from multilateral agencies in addressing nutrition, though also clear opportunities for increased funding and collaboration across sectors and institutional strengths. Large donor agencies, such as the EC and the WB, prioritise integration of nutrition across food security, agriculture and other development platforms. The rationale expressed is that singling out specific programming for nutrition in a silo risks future underinvestment and marginalisation. On the other hand, some stakeholders express the worry that mainstreaming nutrition risks losing the clarity of attention on specific initiatives. It is still apparent that a level of disagreement on the best approach continues to plague the nutrition community and that there is no clear sense of leadership.

Funding

Funding parameters can be a challenge in planning integrative programming and there is a clear need for multi-partner or joint funding that takes into account the respective institutional strengths and promotes joint action. Multi-partner funding incentives may help to mitigate the perceived problem of competition for resources; some point to the MDG Achievement Fund (MDG-F) as a positive example (Box 3).

Private sector

Multilateral agencies are seeking guidance on how to engage with the private sector and an evidence-based assessment of the impacts of private sector nutritional investments. Across agencies there is growing acknowledgement of the role that the private sector can play in nutrition, both locally and internationally. All agencies interviewed agreed that collaboration between public and private sectors increases the potential to bring interventions to scale. However, few agencies except the WFP and the FAO have established private sector engagement strategies and guidelines.

2. Bilateral donors

Key findings	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is general policy alignment across bilateral donors with existing engagement in nutrition and increasing attention to integrating nutrition across development programmes • European bilaterals are important partners in focusing international attention on nutrition • Understanding nutrition's links across other development priorities may help policy makers increase the value placed on nutrition
	<p>Key considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding trends differ: bilaterals have varying conceptions of multilateral effectiveness as reflected in funding channels • Longevity and consistency of development aid strategies hinges on politics • There is hesitancy around how to engage with the private sector

Background

Undernutrition is an increasing priority among several European bilateral donors. Bilateral development agencies approach the issue of nutrition through avenues of health, agriculture, rural development, food security/food aid and social protection programming. The extent that nutrition is conceptualised across these sectors varies. France, Ireland, Spain and the UK illustrate leadership among European bilateral donors in prioritising nutrition. European bilateral donors play an important role in the nutrition system in addition to bilateral assistance. They represent a source of funding for multilateral agencies and research institutions. They have strong country presences and also fund implementation work through international and local NGOs. Bilateral donors have a clear advocacy role to play in working with donor agencies and recipient governments and in building the evidence base and supporting implementation. Interviews were conducted with representatives from bilateral agencies in Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Spain and the UK. The following analysis is based primarily on qualitative data collected through stakeholder interviews.

Opportunities

Funding

European bilateral donors comprise a significant portion of global funding for nutrition and funding trends appear to be increasing. While some bilaterals have developed specific nutrition strategies or reference documents (France, Ireland, Spain and the UK) others continue to address nutrition through strategies of health, agriculture, food security and social protection. Some donors have developed working documents on the importance of nutrition but have yet to incorporate a cohesive strategy into central development aid planning. Often the presence of technical experts within bilateral donor organisations ensures that nutrition remains on the radar irrespective of specific budget lines. Financial flows from bilateral donors are typically routed through international NGOs, research institutes, multilateral institutions or through country governments and local NGOs. Interestingly, several bilateral donors indicate a decrease in channelling contributions through the multilateral system due to increasing perceptions of inefficiency. This is further driven by increased attention to impact assessment and results-based aid.

Spain stands out in the European bilateral landscape as it channels a high percentage of its basic nutrition funding (80% in 2008) through the multilateral system. Spain has also taken a lead in supporting the multilateral system through collaborative funding, illustrated by the MDG Achievement Fund (Box 3).

Donors, such as Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands, may impact nutrition through their strong existing commitments in food security and agricultural development. Emphasis on nutrition-sensitive programming can increase nutrition impact from these donors and there is increasing interest in doing so. There is a need to further develop the evidence base in terms of how best to ensure that inputs into agricultural development and food security promote increased nutritional status. To date the link is implied but the evidence base is largely lacking.

Clarity of messaging around nutrition and the important links to other sectoral programmes will be important to maintain or potentially increase resources and focus devoted to the issue. There may be opportunities around current high-level attention and momentum to food security and maternal and child health to comprehensively integrate nutrition messaging into these dialogues.

Country relationships

The relationship with national governments receiving aid is an important strength of the bilateral donor's role. In terms of nutrition, this is relevant in several respects. Donor governments such as Ireland place high importance on their development cooperation relationships and indicate that it is often through these relationships that issues are highlighted and national priorities are channelled. The importance of these relationships is significant, as sustainable solutions must be country-driven.

Often geographical prioritisation in development cooperation has historical roots. The picture of country prioritisation that emerges for each donor government is therefore a mixture of priorities based on disease burden and need, as well as the historical influence of past relationships rooted in colonial and other historical relationships. One noteworthy trend across several European bilateral donors is a focus on fewer countries for bilateral assistance. Current development strategies from Denmark, the Netherlands and, most recently, the UK reflect a narrower country focus.¹⁸⁻²⁰ The rationale, that fewer target countries will enable higher impact, is in line with a global trend around results-based management of aid and development programming.

Bilaterals as advocates: Influence on EU institutions

European bilaterals are increasingly working in partnership to push for stronger attention to nutrition within EC priority areas. European bilaterals especially France, Ireland, Spain and the UK have been strong advocates for a nutrition policy and greater resources for nutrition from the EC and advocacy efforts are increasing in Germany and the Netherlands.

Opportunities to engage across sectors (food security, agriculture) for nutrition

Several European bilateral donors with no specific nutrition strategies are increasingly embracing nutrition-sensitive approaches to existing priorities such as food security and agricultural development. Scaling nutrition activity is likely to be boosted by advocating attention to the issue across existing funding platforms and leveraging respective donor strengths, rather than focusing solely on direct nutrition interventions.

Box 3: MDG Achievement Fund (MDG-F)

The **MDG-F** is an international cooperation mechanism initiated in 2006 with a €528.0 million donation from the Spanish government. Spain gave an additional €90m in 2008, primarily for nutrition and food security. The aim of the fund is to improve efficiency of the UN system by working in concert to address the MDGs. Currently 40% of the fund is directed to hunger and nutrition. The framework for the MDG-F is in line with Spain's desire to increase the effectiveness of the multilateral system, as well as its commitment to the MDGs.

The fund operates 128 programmes across 49 countries. Programmes are formulated at country level to reflect national priorities and involve an average of six UN agencies. The structure incentivises collaborative work and the utilisation of agency strengths and leadership. Programmes have been implemented in phases. Programmes focusing on children, food security and nutrition were launched in 2009, so evaluation data are not yet available. Lessons learned from the MDG-F will contribute to ongoing UN reform efforts.

Key considerations

Working with the private sector

While acknowledging the value of private sector involvement, bilateral interviewees expressed a need for more guidance in working with private sector actors. Bilateral donors perceive actors from multinational private companies and local in-country private sectors differently and are less concerned about risks of conflict of interest with the latter. There is a strong desire across European bilateral donors to increase the evidence base around private sector roles specific to nutrition.

Some bilaterals are increasing their collaboration and engagement with private sector actors. The Netherlands, for example, is a strong proponent of the PPP model and is involved in the Amsterdam Initiative against Malnutrition (AIM) in partnership with Unilever, DSM, AkzoNobel, GAIN, Wageningen University and the Interchurch Organisation for Development Cooperation (ICCO). France has consulted French food producers for inputs into its recent nutrition reference document. DANIDA has engaged in partnership with Danisco in Kenya, developing shelf-life solutions for milk. DFID is developing a report on the role of nutrition products in prevention and treatment of undernutrition that highlights the potential roles the food industry. Lessons learned from these and other partnerships and activities may help to guide donor governments in best practices moving forward. Interestingly, it was noted that European governments are generally less open to private sector engagement than the U.S. government which has taken a strong lead in driving PPPs across development sectors.

Politics

Bilateral donor strategies inherently have a political dimension. Changes in government and macroeconomic climates can influence development policies and funding commitments considerably. The snapshot of European donors' prioritisation of nutrition issues could therefore look quite different in a few years' time. The only donor whose commitments to hunger and nutrition seemed above the influence of politics was Ireland, as the historical legacy of famine has ensured that its development aid makes hunger issues a top priority that crosses political party lines. Current focus on the food price crisis and growing attention to maternal and child health at the global level afford opportunities to open the dialogue on nutrition. Several bilateral donors expressed the importance of high-level leadership: for example, DFID's ability to drive forward its nutrition agenda is strongly enabled by the support of top-level leadership.

Measuring aid effectiveness

There is growing attention among donors to results-based management of aid programming and value for money. For example, the recently released UK aid review highlights the importance of impact assessment and aid evaluation.²⁰ Evaluation and results-based prioritisation reflect a positive sentiment to ensure aid effectiveness, but measuring impact is not without challenge. Several interviewees pointed to the tensions between results frameworks and long-term development planning. Often the mechanisms to measure impact do not exist and it can be difficult to fit long-term objectives into measurable targets.

Ireland is exemplar of having a strong and robust impact measurement system relevant to nutrition, where success is measured against the 41 recommendations of the Hunger Task Force through specific country strategy papers. DFID similarly has a strong focus on impact evaluation in nutrition and is currently developing a nutrition pilot, which will work to use impact evaluation processes to address the evidence gaps in measuring the effectiveness of long-term strategies and will work comprehensively across DFID programmes with nutrition components. It is hoped that this activity can balance tensions in results frameworks and development strategies.

3. NGOs

Key findings	Opportunities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGOs are a valuable source of technical expertise and are increasingly involved in nutrition-related policy and advocacy activities • Several formal and informal NGO partnerships exist and play an important part in advocacy for nutrition and influencing donor policies • NGOs have a strong desire to connect experience to advocacy and advocacy to action. They are well positioned in terms of implementation and national level advocacy efforts to support this critical process
	Key considerations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding is often a challenge: understanding and negotiating the funding environment takes considerable capacity • Long-term and short-term strategies to address undernutrition are often artificially divided due to a bifurcation in emergency and development funding streams • Making cross-sector linkages is seen as increasingly important for sustained impact, though can be challenging in practice • Private sector engagement is viewed as an opportunity, but is also challenging for many organisations to embrace

Background

A large number of European-based NGOs work in the field of international development and we focused on European NGOs with specific remits in agriculture, health, and/or nutrition. We identified relevant NGOs through a number of different sources to capture some of the largest organisations with remits relevant to nutrition. Stakeholder interviews were conducted with eight organisations.

Opportunities

Knowledge generation, monitoring & evaluation, influencing policy

NGOs have a strong field presence and are strategically driven by population needs on the ground. All interviewees emphasised that their mission and strategy in the nutrition space is informed by learning in the field. NGOs are active in monitoring and evaluation to assess what programmes work and to guide effective implementation of interventions. NGOs also play a role in evaluating the effectiveness of new interventions. These actions are important elements in ensuring that policy and practice are evidence-based and that policy recommendations are feasible for scale-up. Several NGOs are developing their advocacy capacity and policy influence in nutrition and are active partners in the SUN process and other global policy processes, including the reform of the CFS. Country level advocacy is also an important strength of the NGO role.

Partnerships for advocacy

Several NGOs indicated that partnership platforms provide an effective mechanism to organise advocacy efforts and mobilise a unified NGO voice. Many coalitions already exist to this effect, including NGO-specific platforms (Concord, Nutrition Action Group) as well as broader global platforms bringing together a breadth of actors (NGOs, bilateral, multilateral, academics) across the nutrition sector (e.g., the Global Nutrition Cluster) and across multiple sectors (e.g. SUN). Some NGOs place a high value on their autonomy and independent voice and only act as observers in partnerships.

Connecting experience and evidence to advocacy and action

The strong NGO emphasis on action and implementation is important in keeping research and advocacy connected to the field. NGOs are vocal in the need to connect theory to action. NGOs play a key role in making sure international dialogue stays relevant and serves its purpose by producing concrete impact.

Developing Capacity

Local capacity building is an important element of NGO's impact in nutrition. For example, several NGOs have played integral roles in promoting the adoption of community management of acute malnutrition (CMAM), while others have worked with communities to empower local voices to influence national policies. Overall, capacity development is crucial for implementing and scaling sustainable interventions.

Key considerations

Funding

NGOs receive funds from multilateral and bilateral donors, as well as from private funders. Interviewees reported that most European and local NGOs face a competitive funding environment given the large number of organisations and it can take considerable time energy and resources to understand and navigate a funding environment that is complex and dynamic. The downstream effects of this funding reality have several negative outcomes:

- It discourages collaboration between NGOs;
- NGO activities become funder driven instead of needs-based and aligned with strategy; and,
- It is difficult for NGOs to navigate between emergency vs. development funding parameters.

Bridging the gap between short- and long-term objectives

Long-term and short-term strategies are often divided and implemented in a stop-go manner. Due to the chronic and multi-faceted nature of undernutrition, many NGOs are wary of focusing on short-term 'silver bullet' type solutions if they do not address underlying causes. NGOs have an incentive to embrace long-term solutions, but are often faced with funding limitations. Noting that the 13 interventions prescribed by the *Lancet Series* on maternal and child undernutrition only address one-third of the undernutrition problem,²¹ many organisations struggle to find comprehensive ways to address the other two-thirds. Thus, increased collaborative work is needed to build on the organisational strengths of NGOs in specific areas and to incentivise collaboration across a spectrum of short- and long-term interventions. There may be opportunity to use even small amounts of funding to incentivise organisations to work collaboratively and to trial and evaluate promising delivery models for potential scale-up.

Making cross-sector linkages

Making linkages between agriculture, health, nutrition and other sectors is seen as increasingly important but is not without challenge. Restricted funding is a barrier to approaching the problem of undernutrition in a more holistic manner. Funders, who have their own priorities and goals, will often fund certain components, instead of backing a programme in its entirety. Another significant barrier is the siloed structure of government ministries and bilateral funding. There is an opportunity for funders to incentivise NGOs to act more horizontally, and the SUN process is creating a momentum to overcome these structural weaknesses.

Collaboration with other actors

Inter-NGO collaboration

Many NGOs are very attached to their mission and their programmes. Some NGOs have more flexibility than others in terms of funding structures that can impact ability/desire to partner. Although challenges in collaboration are highlighted, it is important to note where collaboration does happen. For example, NGOs collaborate through the Nutrition Action Group and Concord and through the SUN process. Informal collaboration in the form of information sharing is also very strong among many NGOs. Nevertheless, there may be opportunities to enhance the capacity of NGOs to collaborate with each other.

Private sector engagement

All interviewees agreed that the private sector has a role to play in tackling undernutrition but also noted concerns over engagement and the need to ensure that private sector interests do not dominate or derail the public health response. It is not a question of yes or no to the private sector, rather *how* to collaborate. Some NGOs have established guidelines around working with the private sector. However, it is recognised that guidelines must be sufficiently robust to enable partnering with the private sector as both a funder and increasingly as an implementing partner.

Effective technical forums

Interviewees identified the lack of effective and inclusive technical forums where stakeholders can come together, review existing evidence and current best practice, and forge agreement on guidelines for action. Normative guidance from agencies like the WHO is often slow to evolve. Research must be channelled into practice and agreement on best practices must be channelled into advocacy. Without interim consensus on technical issues and programme approaches, effectively scaling-up of programmes and advocacy efforts are hard to realise. Several NGOs have recently come together with UNICEF to initiate a 'CMAM forum' to serve this purpose, but funding poses a limitation. Ideally such forums would sit within a nutrition coordinating body. Effective technical forums will also be important to the ongoing work of the SUN.

4. Private sector

Key findings	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The private sector is increasingly interested in its role in addressing nutrition issues • The private sector's awareness of the untapped market potential in LMICs can be leveraged towards nutrition solutions • Public-Private Partnerships are a valuable structure to engage the private sector • Private sector industries have a wide array of technical expertise that can be channelled to improved nutrition
	<p>Key considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable involvement requires a business case and a clear role • There are challenges in terms of short-term views on investment horizons • Public-Private Partnerships are not without challenge • There is a need for impact evaluation of private sector activities

Background

The private sector has important and diverse functions across the food value chain (Figure 1.1). This sector has an increasing influence on food production, availability, accessibility and consumption, impacting both dietary habits and the nutritional status of populations in its targeted markets. The private sector can be an important partner in addressing undernutrition in LMICs.

Figure 1.1: The food value chain



The majority of companies included in this research were publicly-owned multinational companies headquartered in Europe or with large European/global presence. Sectors covered include agriculture inputs, food processing and packaging (including specialty chemicals and food ingredients), and food retailing.

Private sector activities that impact undernutrition were classified by: 1) the type of activity undertaken (core business, public private partnerships (PPPs), philanthropy and social investment activities, public policy dialogue), and 2) whether the activities addressed the immediate, underlying and/or basic causes of undernutrition.

Nutrition activities

The private sector's focus, prioritisation and involvement in activities that target undernutrition in LMICs differ across sub-sectors and between companies. Activities focused on undernutrition are generally a product of senior management's priorities, corporate strategy, geographical presence, evolutionary context and relationships with outside organisations (such as NGOs, multilateral organisations and bilateral organisations). Several companies have foundations and philanthropic activities that are separate from corporate activities and because they have a degree of autonomy are able to take more risk in exploring and investing in innovation. Interviewees from several companies highlighted that the strategic vision for nutrition-focused activities and programmes were developed at a global headquarter level, but strategy translation and implementation depends on the objectives and priorities of in-country subsidiaries. Most of the private sector companies interviewed indicated that they did not currently conduct impact evaluations of whether their core business practices affect undernutrition.

Agriculture input providers (AIPs)

Differences in perspective and terminology between the nutrition community and AIPs make it challenging when analysing the role of AIPs in addressing undernutrition. The AIPs interviewed impact the underlying and basic causes of undernutrition through their core business of seeds (conventional breeding and/or biotechnology), crop nutrition (country-specific), and crop protection. Through their strong research and product development expertise, AIP activities focus on developing sustainable agriculture practices and rural development initiatives that contribute to economic development (Box 4). AIPs interviewed are actively involved in strategic PPPs with local governments, NGOs and in-county subsidiaries to implement their solutions. These activities have potential impacts on population nutrition in the long term.

The AIPs consulted view sustainable agriculture practices as primarily contributing to food security, suggesting that by increasing agricultural productivity (food production) they are able to help farmers boost yields and contribute to securing affordable food supplies for a growing population. AIPs also support programmes that potentially impact undernutrition through farming-related technical assistance and training programmes, access to finance programmes, crop and food standards development, and market linkages for smallholder farmers.

The role for the AIP sector in influencing undernutrition is not straightforward. The focus of AIP agricultural productivity efforts varies from assuring availability of basic calories requirements to complex biofortification or fortification initiatives. Concerns arise from the extent to which local communities benefit from such efforts and the limitations posed by affordability and market access. Further research is needed to provide a clearer understanding of these dynamics and give clarity to the AIP role.

Box 4: Agricultural growth corridors (AGCs)

AGCs are PPPs focused on economic and rural development and address some of the underlying causes of undernutrition. The Beira Agricultural Growth Corridor (BAGC) in Mozambique and the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT) are examples.

The AGC model secures public and private sector investment to promote transformational improvements in high-potential agricultural regions. The primary objective is to enhance regional agricultural productivity through international PPPs. Key stakeholders represented in these partnerships include country governments, global businesses, local private sector companies, farmers, foundations and donor institutions.

Food processors and packaging companies

Stakeholder interviews from food processing and packaging (FPP) companies with core business activities addressing undernutrition emphasised the need for viable business models to sustain existing efforts and internal support for activities that improve nutritional outcomes. Large multinational FPP companies all have core business activities that target the nutritional needs of populations in LMIC markets. These activities include fortifying products for local markets and addressing local nutritional issues through product, price and/or packaging modifications to improve affordability to LMIC consumers. Several FPP companies are engaged in PPPs and policy dialogues addressing undernutrition issues. Companies are most keen to engage in PPPs where they are able to share or apply their knowledge in the partnership and not just provide financing. Box 5 provides an overview of the PPP Project Laser Beam.

In general, FPP companies are able to influence undernutrition in LMICs through two channels:

- Targeting nutritious and affordable products to undernourished consumers (looking further down the food value chain to the consumer); and/or,
- Initiating interventions that target populations or agricultural productivity/ sustainability where FPPs source raw materials (looking further up the food value chain).

The majority of FPPs currently target consumers of their products although several are beginning to look further up the food value chain to effect change in undernutrition.

Specialty chemicals and food ingredients

Specialty chemical companies can contribute to addressing micronutrient deficiencies through the provision of fortification ingredients and technologies to food packaging and processing companies. Specialty chemical companies that have a large food ingredients division are increasingly incorporating food fortification into core business functions and sustainability initiatives. Specialty chemical companies are building a market position with FPPs that are fortifying food and are making efforts to target consumer groups towards the Bottom of the Pyramid (BOP). Specialty chemicals and food ingredient companies have a wealth of technical knowledge and a network of customers, from multinational companies to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in LMICs that have the potential to contribute to addressing undernutrition in those countries. Some

food ingredient companies are expanding their access to new markets and developing food solutions for consumer segments towards the BOP through strategic partnerships.

Food retailers

Two food retailers were consulted as part of this research. This small sample is not large enough to make generalisations about the sector, but it provides insights into how these retailers think about and approach undernutrition in LMICs. Food retailers generally have core business activities that target the health and well-being of consumers in their primary markets. Food retailers have vast food value chain reaches into sourcing food and ingredients from LMICs. Their extensive supply chain reach may be a channel to influence nutrition interventions for people working in the supply chain. The role of food retailers in addressing undernutrition through their supply chains is a potential area for further research.

Public-private partnerships

PPPs provide a clear opportunity to increase private sector engagement in efforts to reduce undernutrition in LMICs. PPPs can assist and direct private sector activities and innovation to reach beyond market boundaries and effect change in vulnerable populations. PPPs enable increased collaboration across different sectors (such as telecommunications, mining, oil and gas) and can provide a valuable tool for the public sector to learn from private sector skills, including product development, distribution systems and programme management. The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) has been an important player in forging public-private sector relationships for undernutrition via its Business Alliance.

Opportunities

To build on the private sector's awareness of the untapped market potential in LMICs

The private sector has begun to develop valuable consumer insights to produce new product offerings and to test new delivery channels for the BOP (Box 6). It can be difficult for companies to create sustainable business models for BOP markets and PPPs are often viewed as the best model to target this segment.

To build effective PPPs

Most companies interviewed were enthusiastic about working in partnerships. PPPs are often a driver for companies in advancing market-based solutions in new markets. Effective PPPs must have both social and business benefits for the public and private sector actors involved. The role of each PPP partner is important and solutions need to be strategically linked to national development priorities. To date, many companies have developed effective interventions that address specific issues (such as farmer training programmes, improvements in input technologies, fortification of staple foods, etc.) at various points along the food value chain. However, activities sometimes lack coherence and may not align with

Box 5: Project Laser Beam

Project Laser Beam (PLB) is a \$50 million, five-year pilot PPP between WFP, Unilever, Kraft, DSM and GAIN to address child undernutrition in Bangladesh and Indonesia. The PPP was announced in 2009 by the Clinton Global Initiative. The initial fieldwork was completed in 2010 and implementation of activity is expected to begin in 2011.

This PPP is unique for two reasons. Firstly, it takes a holistic approach to undernutrition. This approach is established through PLB's three main activity pillars – food, hygiene and behavioural change – to comprehensively address undernutrition. Secondly, the partnership brings together international and local multi-sectoral actors. The PPP partners a hygiene specialist (Unilever), a food specialist (Kraft), a specialty chemicals business (DSM), a UN humanitarian agency (WFP) and an alliance that supports food fortification (GAIN) to integrate cross-sectoral solutions.

PLB is a proof-of-concept model. By the end of the pilot period, it hopes to establish:

- Evidence that a multi-sectoral, holistic partnership approach can improve undernutrition; and,
- A new partnership model that is scalable and sustainable and provides lessons that can be replicated in other country contexts.

Box 6: Doing business at the bottom of the pyramid

The 'bottom of the pyramid' (**BOP**) comprises 3.7 billion people who spend an estimated \$1.3 trillion annually on food.²² Low-income markets represent an untapped business opportunity for multinational companies (MNCs), but are not 'business as usual'. To successfully operate in BOP markets, MNCs need to change the way they approach innovation. BOP business models must consider issues related to awareness, access, affordability and availability.

In addressing the issue of undernutrition, some MNCs across the food value chain have developed BOP strategies. The high undernutrition burden in BOP populations highlights an opportunity to harness MNCs' business interests in these markets towards simultaneously developing solutions to undernutrition. One of the main challenges that many MNCs face is developing sustainable models in BOP markets due to this market's lack of purchasing power.

national priorities. National, regional and local governments as well as multilateral/bilateral institutions can play a strong role in working with the private sector to coordinate and identify key priorities.

Several companies interviewed indicated that developing strategic partnerships with a few key players at different levels of engagement (global, country business, local employee groups) was important to obtain support and share risk across partners and sectors. Companies collectively highlighted that collaboration in LMICs is necessary because investment decisions in creating a transformative agenda are dependent on a country's stability (internal and external threats), policy environment (government and trade relations), and level of infrastructure and market orientation (demand/supply/price). Current investments in developing sustainable local markets are progressing, but a greater private sector understanding of the drivers of food security is still required to enable comprehensive multi-sectoral approaches to undernutrition in LMICs.

PPPs can also help companies reach consumer segments at the BOP by sharing risk or creating market demand for products, services and solutions (e.g. products sold or subsidised by governments or multilateral organisations). A properly structured PPP, with aligned incentives and transparency amongst partners, provides a strong basis for building trust, not only among the actors involved, but also among the employees of a company, who may be motivated to learn more about the issues and contribute to developing solutions for the PPP.

To leverage diversified functional and technical expertise

Harnessing the capabilities of the private sector to contribute to the development, management and implementation of innovative and sustainable approaches to address undernutrition can utilise the private sector's diversified technical expertise. Functional capabilities that can be leveraged include scientific R&D knowledge, sales and marketing expertise, consumer insight/market intelligence, supply chain management, financial transformation and technology. Knowledge capital can also be harnessed through innovation and collaboration. Establishing a solid foundation for progress requires private sector involvement to build the capacity and commitment of local organisations (government, NGOs, small businesses – i.e. farmers) through skills-based training, organisational development and governance mechanisms.

To support the private sector in thinking creatively about problems and solutions

The private sector is naturally entrepreneurial. It has the ability to think creatively about problems and devise potential solutions. With the necessary support, incentives and guidance, the private sector can develop commercially viable new business models to help address undernutrition in LMICs and drive local economic development. A few of the companies interviewed have focused on innovation in LMICs through partnership models that support local food production, encourage rural development and foster employee engagement.

Key considerations

The need for a business model

Over the past two decades, the corporate-societal relationship has evolved from a complete separation of corporate and societal interests to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) – the responsibility of the corporate in society, and currently to the concept of Creating Shared Value (CSV) (Box 7). Several companies interviewed highlighted that CSV afford opportunities to align core business practices towards improving nutrition.

NGOs and the donor community are motivated by societal values in addressing undernutrition in LMICs. It can be difficult for these organisations to understand that the private sector's motivations for generating both economic and social value are not mutually exclusive. The CSV concept provides a framework for the private sector to be transparent about its motivations. The framework can also be used as a tool to help the public sector understand the private sector's rationale for involvement in addressing undernutrition and to help define mutually beneficial goals. Companies highlighted the need for a business rationale for sustained involvement in targeting undernutrition in LMICs due to the potential issues of slim profit margins; lack of product demand; limited consumer purchasing power; and the economic and political issues facing the market. The international

Box 7: Creating Shared Value (CSV)

The **CSV** concept, developed by the business strategists Michael Porter and Mark Kramer at Harvard Business School, proposes that economic and societal values are not mutually exclusive.²³⁻²⁴ The goal of CSV is not to share the value created by firms, but rather to expand 'the total pool of economic and social value'.

Mechanisms for companies to create shared economic and societal value include:

- Reconceptualising products and markets;
- Redefining productivity in the value chain; and,
- Building supportive industry clusters.

nutrition community needs to understand that the majority of private enterprises require some form of business rationale to build a case for sustained engagement.

Establishing a clear role for the private sector

Companies develop new products and enter new markets when they are able to see a clearly defined role and a visible market for their goods and services. Many FPPs see market growth and opportunities to market products to the (wealthier) A, B, C consumer segments in LMICs. These consumer segments struggle more with overnutrition issues than the undernutrition issues of the (poorer) D and E consumer segments. For European corporations, it is more difficult to see a clear role and route to market products for the D and E consumer segments due to lack of demand from consumers. Demand creation must be driven by in-country health authorities and international organisations addressing undernutrition. Without demand, the private sector is unlikely to engage with poorer consumer segments.

Some AIPs and food retailers do not fully understand the connection between their activities and the potential to influence undernutrition in LMICs. For some companies, there is a lack of clarity surrounding the problem of undernutrition in LMICs, the role that the private sector can play in addressing these problems and the feeling that undernutrition is beyond their corporate remit.

The private sector's short-term view on investment horizons

The private sector is challenged to build a business case that justifies development of products that target undernutrition in LMIC markets. Investment often requires a longer time horizon before a return on investment (ROI) is realised. Companies have an ROI 'hurdle rate', or a minimum rate of return, against which they must measure their expenditures on R&D, marketing, product launch and new market entry. Some multinationals have one business model across the organisation with one time horizon on which to evaluate returns. This short-term time horizon to evaluate ROI makes it difficult for companies to finance products targeting undernutrition in LMICs.

Challenges associated with PPPs

PPPs provide a valuable path for the private sector to contribute to addressing undernutrition, but are not without challenge. Several stakeholders highlighted challenges in defining a common goal, partner selection and roles and responsibilities. Accountability, governance and differing working cultures across partners and sectors also pose challenges that must be addressed for PPPs to be effective. Additionally, there is a sense of lingering scepticism and distrust between public and private sector motivations that can pose barriers to engagement.

Lack of evaluation for private sector activities

Most companies interviewed highlighted that they conducted very little impact evaluation of their activities targeting undernutrition in LMICs, due at least in part to a lack of ability and capacity to complete such evaluations. Impact evaluation is a key ingredient to inform strategy development and enhance transparency of activities and is a largely missing element in the private sector's involvement in activities addressing undernutrition in LMICs.

5. Private funders

Key findings	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private funders represent a potential new resource base for nutrition but require targeted advocacy efforts to spread messaging and elicit support • Potential enablers to increasing private funding flows into nutrition include tools such as a nutrition advisory service and a nutrition fund • There is a growing trend among some funders towards funding and promoting small-to medium-sized enterprises, which could potentially be channelled towards nutrition solutions
	<p>Key considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not all private funders are interested in investing abroad • Private funders like to have ‘magic bullet’ solutions. The complexity of the nutrition sector and lack of linear solutions is a barrier

Background

Private funders can be broken down into the following categories: traditional grant-making foundations, venture philanthropy (VP) organisations, high net worth individuals (HNWIs), and financial institutions. Private funders differ from large, institutional donors because they are less bureaucratic, have more flexibility and have the ability to move quickly. Private funders, by definition, provide financial resources. However, how they fund (type of finance used, level of engagement with grantee, time horizon for investment) and what they fund (NGO vs. social business vs. social investment funds, immediate causes vs. structural causes, Asia vs. Africa) varies significantly. Each individual funder therefore has a unique financing role to play in tackling undernutrition across LMICs.

Opportunities

Shift in investment approach

Over the past decade, with the rise of VP, there has been a shift from using grant funding for NGOs to providing innovative financial tools to NGOs as well as SMEs who typically lack access to traditional capital markets (Box 8). Furthermore, the use of long-term or ‘patient capital’ may help to unlock the potential of SMEs, particularly those working in agriculture or food production. Interest in hybrid business models using blended capital methods can potentially translate innovation in top-tier markets to applications in low-income or BOP markets.

Increasing private funding for nutrition

Private funders expressed openness to funding nutrition related work in the future. However, certain enablers would need to be in place to facilitate the expansion into this new funding area. In addition, existing funders stated a renewed commitment to tackling hunger and nutrition. Private funding for nutrition shows potential to increase over the next decade.

Box 8: Examples of innovative investing

Voxtra, a Norwegian VP organisation, plans to launch a specialised impact investment vehicle focused on agribusiness in East Africa. It has already raised \$7 million and hopes to raise a further \$3 million, which will be invested in eight to ten commercially viable and scalable enterprises that empower smallholder farmers to increase their incomes. Through this fund it expects to reach at least 200,000 farmers and by extension one million people.

Oxfam Enterprise Development Programme (EDP) is a social investment fund that invests in SMEs typically working in agriculture and focused on women. In 2010, the fund stood at £3.1 million. EDP provides its investees with non-financial support (mentoring, technical and business assistance), as well as financial resources (loans and grants). Last year EDP supported 11 enterprises, producing a range of products in a number of different countries.

Creating enabling factors for nutrition funding

A number of interviewees indicated that a nutrition advisory service could potentially encourage more investment in this field. An expert advisory group, available to anyone looking to fund this area, might be a way of increasing both the quantity and quality of funding for nutrition. The Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council was cited as a useful model to follow. Additionally, interviewees highlighted that a nutrition fund, run by independent experts who would make investment decisions may help to enable more investors. A collaborative fund is a possible vehicle for leveraging more funds into the area. It would also prevent duplication, and encourage replication of successful initiatives and the effective targeting of resources.

Utilising membership and umbrella bodies may be an effective way to reach new private funders. Organisations such as the European Venture Philanthropy Association and the European Foundations Centre have broad membership bases and can be a valuable resource in spreading educational and promotional materials about investing in nutrition.

Key considerations

Private funding for nutrition is limited

Formal quantification of funding flows from European private funders into nutrition related activities is not possible as foundation databases which list funding priorities and funding flows do not exist in most countries (Guidestar UK is an exception). However, through interviews with private funders and NGOs, and a report on international development funding by a UK foundation²⁵ it is apparent that there is currently very little European private funding flowing into nutrition related work in LMICs.

Only two European private funders, CIFF and the Wellcome Trust, were identified as nutrition funders (Box 9). Other funders of international development selected for interview funded related sectors such as poverty alleviation, health and agriculture. While there may be some nutrition components within these projects, interviewees confirmed that there are very few European private funders working in this space.

Box 9: Private funders in the nutrition sector

The Wellcome Trust is the largest foundation in the UK, and one of the biggest funders of global health research in Europe. Its asset base currently stands at £13 billion. Wellcome has recently published its ten-year strategic plan (2010–2020). Undernutrition features explicitly for the first time. The trust states that it will develop strategic research initiatives to address undernutrition by supporting basic, clinical and population studies.

The Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF) is a UK-based foundation. It is linked to a hedge fund that contributes a proportion of its management fees and profits to the foundation. Despite being just six years old, it has grown to become the second biggest foundation in the UK, with an asset base of £3 billion. Nutrition and hunger alleviation are priority areas. It currently funds a number of NGOs working in this area (such as GAIN), and is focused on the -9 to 24 months window of opportunity for young children.

There are perceived risks with funding abroad

Some private funders are unable to shift their funding strategy to funding nutrition outside Europe. In many cases this is for historical reasons. For example, a number of foundations in the UK were founded in the nineteenth century to fund almshouses and tackle domestic social problems and this is reflected in their mission statements. In addition, some VP organisations, because of the engaged nature of their work, are reluctant to fund overseas. Persuading them to fund any type of overseas work would require changes to their investment approach, or the identification of in-country partners to take on the in-depth business/technical support they currently provide their investees.

There is a lack of understanding of the problem and how to tackle it

A number of interviewees felt that nutrition was a challenging sector to work in because it is difficult to define, and there is a lack of understanding about the causes, consequences and solutions of undernutrition. As a consequence, private funders are deterred from financing this sector. The nutrition community should respond to this firstly by simplifying the message. Private funders like to have quick and effective 'magic bullet solutions' and to-date this has not been provided by the nutrition community.

6. Discussion

Thematic analysis

This report provides a high-level view of the European landscape of existing and potential actors involved in improving nutrition in LMICs. Analysis of data collected through stakeholder interviews across sectors highlights several key thematic areas which provide a useful framework for action.

The private sector is an important partner in addressing undernutrition. Whether at the local level or at a global scale, private sector industry plays a crucial role in driving the supply and demand for food, one that is expanding as a result of growth in population and urbanization in the developing world. The private sector can bring a wealth of expertise and innovation to developing and scaling nutrition solutions through its core business investments, philanthropic investments or public policy dialogues. The private sector has a strong expressed interest in engagement and the nutrition community must not miss the opportunity to leverage private sector expertise and resources towards solutions for undernutrition.

There is significant distrust between public and private sectors that deters effective partnership and action. The public sector is sceptical of the motivations of the private sector in relation to addressing undernutrition in LMICs. The private sector is hesitant to become involved with the public sector when there is distrust surrounding their activities. Moving forward will require significant efforts to clarify the environment for public-private sector collaboration and develop effective tools to guide engagement and build trust.

There is growing interest in integration across agriculture, food security, health and nutrition. Stakeholders across sectors highlighted the increased dialogue and the challenges associated with integration. This area is recognised as one where considerable work is needed in order to build robust evidence and effective models for working and measuring impact in multi-sector programming.

Further impact evaluation remains important. It is vital to continue to build a strong evidence base across a range of nutrition interventions and especially important to develop the understanding of how agriculture and food security initiatives best support improved nutrition. Additionally it is necessary to begin building an evidence base for the impact of private sector activities on nutrition in order to understand what works, in which context and what works at scale. Similarly, evaluating PPP effectiveness is important to ensuring efficient and impactful partnerships that reach the most vulnerable.

The nutrition community needs stronger and clearer messaging and targets. To date, communications around the issue of undernutrition have been fragmented and unfocused and have failed to generate the level of global attention and resources that are needed. In addition, largely absent from existing efforts targeting undernutrition are clear and achievable targets. Building a coordinated global movement for nutrition and engaging diverse partners will require clearly articulated goals which everyone collectively works towards and which can be used to hold stakeholders to account.

Unexplored issues

The focus and scope of this research was necessarily limited and we highlight two important unexplored issues. First, activities such as agricultural subsidies, large scale land purchases and biofuel production may impact on undernutrition. Efforts being made to feed the world sustainably, affordably and nutritiously are integrally intertwined with nutrition security and on-going food price volatility and fast-growing populations highlight the importance of these issues for undernutrition. Second, it is crucial that actors across all sectors are mindful that the global response to food and nutrition insecurity does not create future problems of obesity and higher burdens of non-communicable disease as countries experience a dietary transition. Joined-up development, nutrition and health policies will be required.

Opportunities for action

Analysis of the research findings illustrates several opportunities that the nutrition community should prioritise in order to scale funding, focus and activity for nutrition solutions across the European landscape.

Engage the European Commission and bilateral donors to increase funding/activity

Multilateral and bilateral donors are a potentially high impact area for advocacy efforts focused on leveraging resources. Activities should be directed towards improving EC funding strategies and mobilising the evident leadership of a handful of European bilateral donors. Although the EC's nutrition programming has been increasingly operational, it remains important to push for a nutrition policy in order to guide and protect investments. NGOs and bilateral donors have a strong role to play in pushing the EC to develop such a policy. Similarly, high-level advocacy at leadership level can have an influence on EC priority setting. Finally, efforts at country level will also be important as increasing national attention to population nutrition will influence the type of development assistance sought from the EC. The nutrition community can also engage bilateral donors in Europe to make increased and targeted nutrition investments. Donors should be pushed to make not only strong strategic commitments, but also strong financial commitments that are clearly articulated. Targeted messaging linking nutrition to success in other development priorities can also reach bilateral donors who have less strategic nutrition agendas at present.

Facilitating increased public-private sector dialogue

The private sector is a high impact area for resource generation, both financial and technical. However, there exists an attitude of scepticism and distrust among many public sector actors about its motives. This lack of trust has significantly hampered dialogue to date. Actions aimed at facilitating future dialogue between actors, specifically in clarifying the environment for partnerships, are urgently needed. An equally important element of building trust between public and private sector stakeholders will be attention to the evaluation of private sector impact on nutrition. As more private sector partners are brought into the response to undernutrition it will be important to understand where private sector activity works, how it works and how to ensure effectiveness and equity of impact at scale.

Mobilising new resources from European private funders

Private funders have a potential role to play in tackling undernutrition. Increasingly they are using more innovative financing tools, which may offer creative solutions for nutrition investments. However, a lack of knowledge on the causes of undernutrition and its potential solutions among European private funders are current barriers to engage in the issue. This study did not find private funders in Europe to be a high impact area for resource generation in the near term, though there may be ways to begin to increase appetite for engagement and investment in nutrition over the medium to long-term by coordinating meetings and seminars to raise awareness and interest in nutrition.

Increase the evidence for improving nutrition through agricultural development

Across all sectors, stakeholders indicated an increased interest in addressing the problem of undernutrition in a more holistic manner, through working across the health, nutrition and agriculture sectors. What is lacking at present is a clear evidence base linking large scale interventions in agriculture to nutrition outcomes. Building this evidence base is necessary for the adoption of substantive policies across sectors. The nutrition community should prioritise the development of a robust evidence base linking the impact of agriculture and other nutrition sensitive interventions on health and nutrition security. Academic and research institutions should be urged to maximise internal cross-disciplinary resources

Developing targeted advocacy messaging

Nutrition messaging must be simplified. Although undernutrition is a complex, multifaceted problem, it is essential to succinctly convey the issue and solutions. The nutrition community should develop a set of clear, simple, yet powerful messages that connect both emotionally and intellectually with targeted partners and donors. Messages should articulate the high return on investment in nutrition, the connection to other development goals and the crucial window for improving nutrition in the first 1,000 days from conception to age two. Strong messages can educate and inspire new private funders and institutional donors and increase resources for nutrition. In addition, setting targets will be an important element of inspiring action and partnership in Europe and beyond. Clear, measurable targets are largely absent from existing nutrition advocacy efforts. Identifying a measurable set of programmatic, funding, and timeframe targets will be crucial to building a global movement to combat undernutrition and holding stakeholders accountable for results.

Looking forward

Undernutrition continues to burden population health and economic productivity in many countries. Although the causal pathway can be complex and solutions sit across multiple sectors, undernutrition is largely preventable. Concerted effort and action across a wide range of partners will be required to identify long term solutions.

Current engagement trends show promise. There is an increasing amount of attention and activity across the European landscape targeting solutions for undernutrition in low and middle income countries. But more work is required and new sources of partnership and funding are needed. There are clear opportunities in working across public and private sectors, bringing in new partners and integrating solutions along the continuum of agriculture, food security, global health and human nutrition. There are also opportunities for bilateral and multilateral donors to better leverage, coordinate and prioritize development assistance for increasing nutrition. The window of opportunity is open. The nutrition community must seize the opportunities to direct the growing momentum into scalable and tractable impact. Fighting undernutrition must become everyone's responsibility.

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