

Scaling up nutrition

Building a global advocacy agenda



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Disclaimer

The opinions and analysis contained in this report are those of the authors, and are not intended to reflect or represent the opinions of the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, CCS Co., LLC. or the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

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Executive summary

Two billion people, or approximately 30% of the global population, suffer from undernutrition. Despite the magnitude of the problem and the existence of widespread consensus that improving nutrition is one of the best investments for health and poverty alleviation, nutrition has been chronically under-funded and under-prioritized. Increasingly, however, nutrition is rising on the global development agenda supported by two important efforts, the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement and the 1,000 Days partnership. These efforts are coalescing unprecedented international resolve to tackle the problem of undernutrition by underscoring the need for:

- Committed collaboration across health and development sectors; and,
- New and better investment from public, private and civil society actors in donor countries, as well as in lower and middle income countries.

Successfully bridging the gap between what is needed to create sustainable improvements in global nutrition and what is currently being funded requires an understanding of the landscape of potential donors and partners that can be mobilized towards improving nutrition. Analysis of the European and U.S. landscapes reveals four key opportunities to strengthen global advocacy and deliver the objective of improving nutrition at scale:

- Building engagement with the private sector;
- Leveraging and coordinating new and existing investments from bilateral and multilateral donors for nutrition;
- Building effective communication strategies to reach new partners and donors; and,
- Firmly connecting an advocacy agenda to existing and evolving evidence.

Although the scale of the problem is large, so is the potential to mobilize resources and commitments across the U.S. and Europe. Doing so will require action on the part of all stakeholders to translate resolve into resources and results.

Objective

This report is informed by two independent six-month studies conducted by CCS and the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) and commissioned by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The studies provided in-depth analysis of investments and activities targeting undernutrition across U.S. and Europe. The landscape analysis involved desk-based research and stakeholder consultation with private sector industry, private funders, bilateral and multilateral donors, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

The landscape studies were designed to provide the global nutrition community with an assessment of existing opportunities in the U.S. and Europe to scale up investment and engagement in addressing undernutrition in low and middle income countries. This summary report builds on key findings from both studies and intends to contribute to global nutrition advocacy efforts. The basic causes of undernutrition including poverty, conflict and political instability fall outside the scope of this analysis. The focus of this report is to:

- Summarize existing investments and engagement trends in Europe and the U.S.; and,
- Outline key elements to incorporate into an effective advocacy strategy.

Background

The challenge

Undernutrition is pervasive in the developing world¹ and contributes to impoverishment and poor health in a number of significant ways:

- Undernutrition is an underlying cause of 3.5 million preventable child deaths annually;²
- The cognitive and physical damage caused by chronic undernutrition, particularly in the 1000 days between pregnancy and age two, is largely irreversible;
- Undernutrition not only impairs the development of individuals but it also hinders the development of nations. The World Bank estimates that undernutrition significantly impacts lifetime earning potential and reduces gross domestic product by up to 3% annually.³
- The burden of undernutrition is concentrated in lower and middle income countries: 90% of the world's stunted children live in 36 countries, and 80% live in just 20 countries.³

Yet undernutrition is preventable. The 2008 *Lancet Series* on Maternal and Child Undernutrition defined a set of direct nutrition interventions (Box 1) that, if brought to scale, could save millions of lives and contribute to long-term health and development.⁴

Nutrition interventions offer some of the highest development returns on investment and the Copenhagen Consensus Centre recently ranked five nutrition interventions (vitamin A, zinc and iron supplementation/fortification, salt iodization and deworming) in the top ten most cost-effective development solutions.⁵ Despite the proven efficacy and cost-effectiveness of nutrition solutions and the critical impact that nutrition improvements would have on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, investments in nutrition remains low.

As the evidence base supporting the need for increased investment has grown, the scale of global funding targeted at improving nutrition has remained relatively flat and a large gap exists between current funding levels and the estimated requirements to enable effective scale-up of programmes.^{3, 6} The World Bank estimates the full cost to implement and scale-up the 13 direct interventions recommended in the *Lancet Series* to be \$10.6 billion annually.³ Currently, various analyses have estimated that nutrition investments globally are between \$300-\$400 million annually,^{3, 6} a small sum relative to funding levels for other health and development priorities and far from World Bank estimates of need.

A challenge to increasing funding is that nutrition is a cross-cutting issue, with the contributions to and effects of nutritional status spanning multiple sectors within health, development and social protection. The global response to undernutrition has been

Box 1: Understanding Undernutrition

The focus of this report is **undernutrition**, the term used to describe the inadequate consumption, poor absorption and excessive loss of nutrients. The term malnutrition includes both under and over-nutrition (obesity). **Hunger** is associated with insufficient **quantity** of food, and undernutrition is caused by, among other things, insufficient quantity and **quality** of food.

Targeting Undernutrition

The range of potential activities to tackle undernutrition is broad. Potential actions can be categorized as follows:

Nutrition-specific interventions, such as provision of micronutrient-fortified foods and promotion of breastfeeding (which focus on the immediate causes of malnutrition); and,

Nutrition-sensitive interventions, such as agricultural, education and water and sanitation interventions (which focus on the underlying and basic causes of malnutrition).

The *Lancet Series* interventions

The effective direct nutrition interventions include: breastfeeding and complementary feeding promotion and support; Vitamin A and zinc supplementation; multiple micronutrient powders; deworming; maternal iron-folic acid supplements; iron fortification of staples; salt iodization; and, treatment of moderate and severe acute malnutrition.

fragmented and ineffectively coordinated.⁷ In effect, undernutrition has been an issue that is simultaneously ‘everyone’s problem’ but ‘no one’s responsibility’. In recent years the problem has been exacerbated by the global financial crisis and rising food prices, making the need for coordinated and effective response more urgent, but also more challenging.

The need for global advocacy

Overcoming the funding gap to scale nutrition solutions is achievable but will require mobilizing new sources of funding and partnership and a realignment of resources to target key areas for greatest impact. The opportunity to mobilize new donors and new resources is significant, but will require a strong global advocacy effort.

Recognizing the consequences of a continued funding gap, and supported by the growing evidence base, nutrition has re-emerged as a key focus area on the global health and development agenda. The Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Framework and Roadmap and the 1,000 Days partnership (Box 2) have served to coalesce international resolve to address the problem. The momentum behind these efforts presents the global nutrition community with an unprecedented opportunity to transform this growing interest and enthusiasm for nutrition into concrete action and measurable results.

Improving nutrition outcomes requires actions in numerous domains including food security and agriculture, water, hygiene and sanitation, maternal and child health and poverty reduction. Because of this, a multi-sectoral approach is needed to effectively address undernutrition.

Tackling the problem of undernutrition also requires the sustained engagement of existing and new donors, developing country governments, civil society organizations, businesses, and other stakeholders with interests and investments in global health and development. While coordination presents challenges, it also provides a tremendous opportunity to diversify and more effectively leverage the knowledge, tools and expertise dedicated to improving maternal and child nutrition. It is only through concerted and coordinated global advocacy efforts that the magnitude of resources and participation of all relevant stakeholders can be ensured to respond adequately to the scale of the problem. It must be ‘everyone’s responsibility’ to make this goal a reality.

Box 2: Scaling Up Nutrition and 1,000 Days

Scaling up Nutrition (SUN)

The SUN Framework⁸ is supported by over 100 organizations and outlines a strategic approach to reducing undernutrition through implementing evidence based solutions and ensuring nutrition is a priority across development sectors.

The SUN Roadmap⁹ guides implementation of the framework at country level and aims to ensure strategies are country-led and effective in local contexts. Implementation has begun in several countries and progress is being closely monitored and reported.

‘1,000 Days: Change a Life, Change the Future’

In September 2010 U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, the then Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs Micheál Martin and a community of global leaders launched the 1,000 Days partnership as a way to help achieve measurable benchmarks in improving maternal and child nutrition in the 1,000 days between September 2010 and June 2013.

The initiative is designed to generate awareness and investment in improving nutrition during the critical 1,000 day window starting in pregnancy to 2 years of age.

Tools to inform global advocacy

I. Observations and lessons from key sectors and stakeholders

Bilateral and multilateral donors^{*}

Donor governments and multilateral organizations have increasingly made nutrition a development and health priority:

- Bilateral donors have started to approach nutrition in a more lateral and integrative fashion within and across development programming.
- France, Ireland, Spain and the UK have made concerted efforts to prioritize nutrition across development assistance strategies.
- Germany and the Netherlands are making efforts to address nutrition as part of their food security and agricultural development investments.
- U.S. investments in global nutrition can be found within:
 - health through the Global Health Initiative, a \$9B+ per year commitment that serves as an umbrella over most of U.S. global health programs;
 - food security through the Feed the Future effort, a 3-year \$3.5B initiative focused on reducing poverty and hunger; and,
 - food assistance through programs such as McGovern-Dole and Food for Peace Title II non-emergency aid.
- The World Food Programme, the World Bank, the Food and Agriculture Organisation and the International Fund for Agricultural Development have been actively strengthening their strategic focus on nutrition outcomes.
- The European Commission (EC) is increasingly operational in nutrition programming across development programs in health, agriculture, food security, rural development and emergency humanitarian relief with a current nutrition portfolio of existing and planned investments at \$604m (€418m).¹²

Box 3: Spotlight: UK DFID and USAID

UK DFID

DFID's nutrition strategy developed in early 2010 highlights commitment to impact evaluation and to building the evidence base across nutrition interventions.¹⁰ DFID was the largest European bilateral donor to basic nutrition in 2009. Additionally, considerable investments across health, water and sanitation, education and social protection are areas where DFID's development assistance can also impact nutrition.

USAID

The U.S. is the single largest bilateral donor in nutrition and its nutrition programming, led by USAID, resides at the nexus between the Global Health Initiative and Feed the Future. Accordingly, USAID's approach to nutrition is evolving toward one that is more horizontal and better integrated across priorities, focused on prevention and targeted on the 1,000 day window of opportunity. U.S. funding requests for nutrition interventions within these two key initiatives is estimated to be \$225 million in the latest FY2012 budget.¹¹

Though progress is being made, overall, there is still a need for bilateral and multilateral donors to integrate nutrition effectively into their global health and development strategies, especially if these strategies are to be comprehensive in nature. This integration must also be accompanied by a strong political and financial commitment to achieving nutrition outcomes.

Private sector

Improving nutrition at scale requires the active and sustained engagement of the private sector. Understanding where business and social goals converge can help unlock financial and non-financial resources from the private sector to address the challenge of undernutrition.

- The private sector, whether at the village-level or at a global scale, 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 business case for investing in nutrition is strong. Promoting better nutrition can be useful for companies in several important ways, including: product development

^{*} Note that budget figures represent requested commitments rather than amounts appropriated or disbursed.

that is, or can become, commercially viable; new market development; stimulating innovation within the company; developing a healthy and productive local labor force; building long-term markets by improving physical and mental development of future generations of consumers; and, enhancing corporate reputation.

- Broadly speaking, engaging corporate and industry stakeholders in order to improve nutrition can be done in three main ways: through a company's core business operations, corporate philanthropy and, public policy and advocacy activities. Both in the U.S. and in Europe, there are a number of examples of industry partners that are actively engaging in nutrition across all these areas.
- There is a shift away from Corporate Social Responsibility toward Creating Shared Value – an approach in which achieving economic or profit objectives are done so in a way that also creates value for society by addressing its needs and challenges.¹³⁻¹⁴
- The private sector has significant non-financial resources that can be leveraged including research and product development capabilities, technical skills and expertise in marketing, distribution and consumer behavior.
- For many multinational companies, future growth will come from consumer markets in low and middle income countries. Often referred to as the Base of the Pyramid (BOP), the world's 3.7 billion poor people represent a largely untapped market for the private sector and a demographic that, in totality, has considerable purchasing power. It is estimated that BOP consumers spend \$2.3 trillion on food annually.¹⁵ As their income grows, BOP consumers are more likely to demand higher value, more diverse foods: a nutrition *and* market opportunity.
- Global food companies are increasingly aware of the need to link agriculture and nutrition at the farm level. Two noteworthy areas in which companies are beginning to invest and transfer existing technology are biofortification to improve the nutritional characteristics of crops at the seed level; and improvements in post-harvest storage and transport in order to preserve the nutritional content of food.
- Public-private partnerships (Box 4), have served as useful mechanisms to begin to align corporate and social interests in support of improved nutrition.
- Building engagement with private sector industry is not without challenge: There is distrust between public and private sector stakeholders that often impedes constructive engagement in developing solutions to undernutrition.
- Although the business case overall for investing in nutrition is strong, there are constraints when it comes to “niche” markets, such as complementary foods aimed at narrow age group, e.g. children under 5 years. Finding innovative ways to overcome such constraints may be key to help realize the potential of the private sector to make a difference in undernutrition.

Box 4: Public Private Partnerships (PPP)

Project Laser Beam (PLB)

PLB is a \$50 million, five-year pilot PPP between WFP, Unilever, Kraft, DSM and GAIN to address child undernutrition in Bangladesh and Indonesia. As a proof-of-concept model it hopes to establish evidence that multisectoral partnership focused on food, hygiene and behavioral change can improve nutrition and that the partnership model is scalable and replicable.

Amsterdam Initiative against Malnutrition (AIM)

The AIM partnership comprises AkzoNobel, DSM, Unilever, Wageningen University and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Its goal is to expedite the implementation of nutrition programs in Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa, Ethiopia, Ghana and Mozambique to eliminate undernutrition by 2015.

Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN)

GAIN partners with business, governments, NGOs, academia and others in the nutrition sector to deliver greater access to improved nutrition in the developing world. GAIN has leveraged strategic partnerships for large-scale food fortification efforts at the country level in the form of National Fortification Alliances which have enabled GAIN and its partners to reach 400 million people with fortified foods. Through innovative partnerships, GAIN helps provide an enabling business environment for companies investing in nutrition in the developing world and works with the private sector to overcome many of the institutional, cultural and technical barriers that inhibit scaling up investment in nutrition.

Private philanthropy

Private funding represents a large opportunity for new revenue for nutrition, especially in the U.S. where overall philanthropic giving reached \$290 billion in 2010.¹⁶

- Individual philanthropy is the largest source of giving in the U.S. and represents a significant, yet largely untapped source of support for nutrition. Fund raising from individuals can provide an important stream of unrestricted revenue that can help finance nutrition innovation and interventions that are not easily or reliably funded by other types of donors. Harnessing the scale of U.S. individual philanthropy in support of nutrition requires various approaches, multiple channels and strong messaging.
- International grant-making has grown in the last decade; this has been fueled in part by sizeable investments in global health and agriculture development made by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation which has served as a catalytic force in these areas.
- U.S. foundations working in global poverty alleviation, agriculture development, education and health can lead the way in incorporating better nutrition as an outcome of their grant-making. Better nutrition can also be a key input into the programmatic activities that foundations support in a way that strengthens investments; e.g. when a child, farmer, or patient has access to more nutritious foods, the result is a healthier, more productive individual and society.
- Giving by high net worth households, which represents the largest segment of U.S. individual philanthropy, also constitutes an important source of potential funding for nutrition. High net worth donors can place a premium on achieving both impact and return on investment. Because investing in good nutrition has a multiplier effect in improving the long-term health and development of people and their communities, it can tap into the desire of major donors to make the most of their philanthropy.
- Mobilizing the U.S. grassroots in support of scaling up nutrition can take many forms including: galvanizing U.S. faith-based communities to support better nutrition in the critical 1,000 day window; engaging membership organizations in large-scale undernutrition awareness and fund raising campaigns; and, mobilizing child sponsors to fund nutrition interventions. Innovations in the area of sponsorship such as those promoted through Kiva.org and Heifer International can be applied to nutrition in order to appeal to a broader base of funders interested in sustainable approaches to the delivery and promotion of better nutrition
- In Europe, the opportunity to raise resources from private funders is smaller. A core group of funders for nutrition and global health exists, and philanthropic foundations express interest in exploring new areas for involvement.
- Innovative models for investment (Box 5) are being developed and evaluated for their efficacy, but may provide investments frameworks for new private funding with potential applications to nutrition.

Box 5: Innovative Finance Models

Impact Investing: Investing in businesses that generate both financial *and* social returns. Also referred to as *Blended Value*.

Social Impact Bonds: A contract between a private investor/company and the public sector to achieve specified social outcomes. Repayment to investors is contingent on achieving specified social goals.

Venture Philanthropy (VP): Sometimes referred to as 'philanthrocapitalism' VP takes concepts from venture capital finance and applies them to philanthropic goals. VP is characterized by openness to experimentation, capacity building and a focus on results.

Non-Governmental Organizations

The work of NGOs in the field is important in ensuring the relevance and linkages between evidence, advocacy, policy development and implementation. NGOs engaged in nutrition and health are increasingly active in advocacy efforts and there is strong engagement from NGOs in the SUN movement and the 1,000 Days partnership.

- In Europe, several NGOs are actively engaging the European Commission and other member states to increase priority and investments for nutrition.
- In the U.S., there is an opportunity to build a cross-sectoral coalition of U.S.-based NGOs to help shape a nutrition advocacy agenda, particularly around the 1,000 day window of opportunity.

- Many NGOs are extremely effective in mobilizing their base of supporters in fundraising and advocacy efforts.
- NGOs are a crucial link in evaluating interventions and best practices and implementing new delivery mechanisms (e.g. methods for the community-based management for acute malnutrition). Some NGOs are also exploring linkages and beginning to build an integrative evidence base between agricultural development, health and nutrition.

II. Opportunities to accelerate action and impact

1. Leverage and coordinate bilateral and multilateral investments

Bilateral and multilateral donors can and should increase funding and target investments more effectively for nutrition outcomes. Priority areas for advocacy include targeting U.S. government funding through better leveraging, focus and harmonization, pushing for strong financial commitments from European donors, and targeting the European Commission to secure its nutrition activities within policy.

Leverage U.S. government investments in nutrition

U.S. government investments in global health, food security, food aid and the multilateral system can be better utilized, prioritized and coordinated in support of improving nutrition. While improved nutrition is one of the two pillars of the U.S. Feed the Future strategy and is increasingly seen as a key precondition for the success of other significant U.S. global health investments, more can be done across the board to integrate nutrition better into health, agriculture and relief and development priorities. Within the U.S. Global Health Initiative, a greater focus on improving nutrition can amplify the impact of investments in other key health priorities such as HIV/AIDS and malaria. For example, there is an opportunity to leverage funding for President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), which accounts for almost 75% of the Global Health Initiative budget per year, in order to strengthen nutrition programming and support for people on anti-retroviral medication.

Harmonize U.S. food aid policies and practices to achieve better nutrition outcomes

Given the scale of the U.S. investment in overseas food assistance, in-kind food aid represents a significant opportunity to help improve nutrition of people in developing countries. U.S. food aid, whether provided directly to recipients or sold to generate funding for development activities, should contribute to improving the quality of food available to people in the developing world. Harmonizing U.S. food aid policies and practices with global health and food security goals, especially around the 1,000 day window, can also serve to amplify U.S. commitment to nutrition.

Target investments for maximum impact

By specifically focusing funding on nutrition interventions during the 1,000 day window of opportunity, the U.S. and European donors can achieve the greatest health and development impact for each new and existing dollar spent. Similarly, donors can be encouraged to target nutrition through incorporating 'nutrition sensitive' programming into other development efforts in a way that uses nutrition outcomes as a key success metric.

Strengthen agriculture and nutrition linkages in partnership with the private sector

There is opportunity to leverage resources from donor commitments to agricultural development for improved nutrition. For example, in the U.S. Feed the Future investments in nutrition call for an improvement of diet quality and diversification by improving nutrition across the value chain; in Germany strategic efforts are underway to identify how best to link the large existing commitments to agriculture to support improved nutrition; and, the International Fund for Agricultural Development now uses nutritional status as a key outcome indicator. The sizeable donor investments in agricultural development can be leveraged to accelerate nutrition impact but will require building a stronger evidence base to show that efforts to improve agriculture in the developing world can lead to improved nutrition outcomes. It will also require engaging the private sector in strengthening value chains to make nutritious foods more readily available and affordable.

Push for strong financial commitments from European donors

Several European donors are putting increased strategic priority on nutrition and there is a need for advocacy efforts to push for strong financial and political commitments that are integrated into specific budget lines and sustained over time. The Irish government provides an example of strong financial commitment dedicating 20% of their development budget to hunger and nutrition; other donors merge nutrition funding with maternal and child health and food security budgets making the scale of financial commitments to nutrition less clear. Advocates should push donors to develop strong strategic plans and strong financial commitments for nutrition which are transparent and clearly articulated.

Target the European Commission to develop a nutrition policy

The largest global source of funding for development comes from the European Union including both member states and the European Commission (EC).¹⁷ While the EC has been increasingly operational in its nutrition programming, it does not have a formal nutrition policy to guide investments and enshrine commitments. On-going advocacy efforts by NGOs and member states pushing for an EC nutrition policy should continue with increased vigor and attention to coordination. High-level dialogue at the leadership level is an effective strategy for targeting EC action. In-country aid requests to the EC are also an important element and ensure national priority for nutrition and by extension highlight nutrition as a crucial element of development assistance.

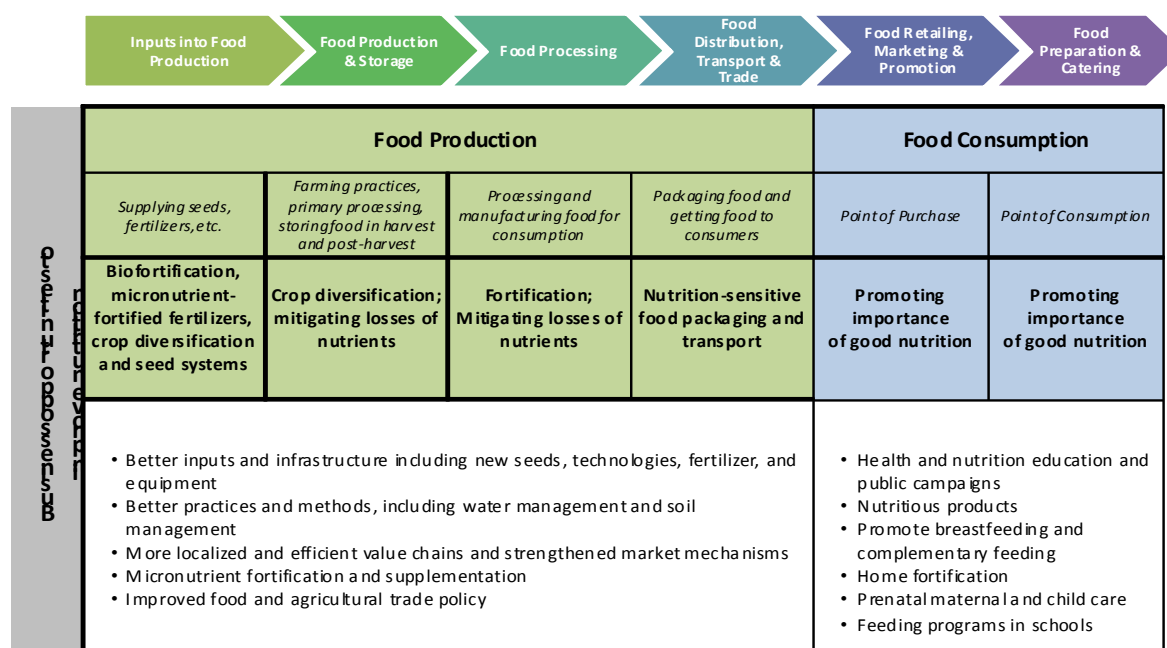
2. Engage the private sector across the food value chain

Private sector stakeholders express a strong interest in engaging in efforts to scale-up nutrition, and the nutrition community must not miss this opportunity. Areas for action include using the food value chain as an engagement tool and developing effective partnerships.

Using the food value chain as an engagement tool

Understanding how to strategically leverage the reach and resources of the private sector to improve nutrition is essential to achieving scale. One potentially effective tool that can be used to guide private sector engagement efforts is value chain analysis. Analyzing the food value chain – the process by which food goes from farm to consumer – provides insights into the kinds of actions, activities and actors that are needed to encourage the production and consumption of more nutritious food. This understanding can form a basis for effective communication to reach and partner with relevant stakeholders. In addition, using value chains as roadmaps for private sector engagement can help mobilize activity beyond project-based efforts to more systemic solutions. Figure 1 illustrates the opportunities for better nutrition along the food value chain and the types of private sector activity that can be engaged to increase access to nutritious food.

Figure 1: Value chain approach to improve nutrition¹⁸



On the production side, improving nutrition means working with farmers and agricultural producers to not only increase agricultural productivity (*food quantity*), but also to increase and preserve the nutritive value of food (*food quality*) through the use of biofortified crops, the use of better fertilizers, and improving food harvesting and storage practices. On the consumption side, improving nutrition means viewing the undernourished not just as potential nutrition beneficiaries, but as consumers who buy some or much of their food. Accordingly, there is a market opportunity for enterprises in the business of making and selling food to build a customer base for affordable products that provide greater nutritional value.

Developing effective partnerships with the private sector

Private sector engagement is often met with resistance from public sector stakeholders and in return, the private sector often views the public sector as an impediment to doing business. Public-private partnerships are one way to forge collaboration and utilize cross-sector skills and expertise in developing and implementing solutions for undernutrition. The significant level of distrust between many of the actors across the public and private sectors are an impediment to progress and considerable efforts are required to begin to clarify the environment for partnership.¹⁹ Some actions that will help in building trust include:

- Prioritizing increased private sector involvement in the SUN Roadmap and 1,000 Days Partnership;
- Conducting participatory learning sessions;
- Ensuring nutrition is a priority topic at high-level meetings with wide private sector attendance such as the World Economic Forum or Clinton Global Initiative as well as at industry association meetings such as FoodDrink Europe (formerly the CIAA) and the American Peanut Council and others.
- Developing tools to help guide partnership including accountability mechanisms, measures of private sector effectiveness, and independent audit and evaluation.

3. Develop clear and impactful messaging

Effectively communicating the case for investment in nutrition is crucial to attracting greater levels of funding and scaling impact. Strong messaging focused on the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of nutrition solutions and disseminated through multiple communication channels can inspire advocates and stimulate action.

Create strong and clear message points

Nutrition messaging must be simplified. Although undernutrition is a complex, multifaceted problem, it is necessary to succinctly convey the issue and how it can be addressed. Connecting with audiences emotionally as well as intellectually is important. Messaging that speaks to both the life-saving impact and the high return on investment of nutrition interventions is essential. The nutrition community should agree on a set of clear, simple, yet powerful messages:

- Undernutrition is a solvable problem: there are powerful, proven solutions that work;
- The 1,000 day window of opportunity from pregnancy to age two years is the most critical time period to ensure healthy nutrition. The consequences of poor nutrition in the first 1,000 days are irreversible;
- Nutrition is a high return investment providing a lifetime of benefit;
- The most sensible investment to make in improving global health and development is in nutrition; and,
- We can't afford not to invest in nutrition. It is everyone's responsibility.

Set targets

Clear and measurable targets are largely absent from existing nutrition advocacy efforts. Setting bold targets can help galvanize activists and attract greater international commitment. Successes in building momentum for other global health issues such as HIV/AIDS and malaria have relied on the articulation and promotion of strong targets (e.g. "3 by 5" HIV/AIDS anti-retroviral treatment targets, bednet distribution targets). Within the SUN or 1,000 Days context, identifying a measurable set of programmatic, funding, and timeframe targets i.e. do what, with how much, by when, is essential to building a global movement to combat undernutrition and holding stakeholders accountable for results.

4. Continue to build the evidence base for advocacy

Continuing to build an evidence base that nutrition is central to the success of many other global health and development efforts and that nutrition interventions can be scaled-up successfully is of enormous importance to building cross-sector linkages and increasing donor investments. There is a firm understanding of the direct interventions that work and the cost-effectiveness of nutrition investments, however there is still a need to further evolve our understanding in two key areas: the intersection between agriculture investments and nutrition outcomes and evidence of private sector impact at scale.

Strengthening evidence base across agriculture-health-nutrition intersects

There is strong interest in the intersections between agricultural development, food security, health and nutrition. Building cross-sector action is important but there remains a need to develop an evidence base for action in order to focus investments appropriately. Increased understanding of the pathways from agricultural productivity, food availability and household incomes to nutrition outcomes will be invaluable to bringing in new areas of partnership, leveraging funding sources and ensuring that investments have the intended results.

Building evidence of private sector and public-private partnership impact

Involving the private sector in the nutrition agenda is important but so is evolving our understanding of how and where private sector investments are best positioned to reach target populations and have the greatest nutrition impact. Many private sector initiatives and partnerships have formed but there has been very little in the way of formal evaluation of how these initiatives are producing improved nutrition at the household level. This evidence will be important to efforts to detoxify the environment between public and private sectors, build effective collaboration and ensure that market based solutions are designed and implemented for greatest nutrition impact.

Conclusion

Undernutrition continues to burden global health and economic productivity. Although the underlying causes of undernutrition 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 U.S. and Europe targeting solutions for undernutrition in low and middle income countries. But more work is needed and new sources of partnership and funding are critical. There are clear opportunities to work across public and private sectors, bringing in new partners and integrating solutions along the continuum of agriculture, food security, global health and nutrition. There are also excellent opportunities for bilateral and multilateral donors to leverage, coordinate and prioritize development assistance for improving nutrition.

The window of opportunity is open. Efforts around the 1,000 Days and SUN initiatives are helping to raise awareness for a global nutrition agenda and ongoing advocacy is crucial. The time to act is now in order to direct the current momentum into scalable progress for nutrition.

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