Nutrition-sensitive Interventions and Programmes: How Can They Help Accelerate Progress in Improving Maternal and Child Nutrition?

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- 165M children stunted (1 in 5 children)
- Malnutrition is responsible for 45% of < 5 deaths (3.1M)
- 32.4M babies born SGA (27% births in LMICs); responsible for 20% of stunting
- Childhood obesity is on the rise
- MN deficiencies persist (Zinc, VA, iodine, iron): affecting survival, growth, health, cognition, development, productivity
34 Countries Account for 90% of Global Burden of Malnutrition

Scaling up 10 nutrition-specific interventions to 90% coverage in 34 high-burden countries would reduce stunting by 20%
We need to find solutions beyond targeted nutrition-specific interventions and beyond the health sector.
We Need to Leverage Relevant Sectors

GOVERNANCE
- Agriculture & Food Security
- Social Protection
- Poverty Reduction
- Health

GENDER
- Water & Sanitation
- Environment & Climate Change
- Private Sector
- Trade/Fiscal Policies

Work Multi-Sectorally

Source: World Bank 2011
Conceptual Framework

Benefits during the life course
- Adult stature
- Work capacity and productivity
- School performance and learning capacity
- Cognitive, motor socioemotional development
- Morbidity and mortality in childhood
- Obesity and NCDs

Nutrition specific interventions and programmes
- Adolescent health and preconception nutrition
- Maternal dietary supplementation
- Micronutrient supplementation or fortification
- Breastfeeding and complementary feeding
- Dietary supplementation
- Dietary diversification
- Feeding behaviours and stimulation
- Treatment of severe acute malnutrition
- Disease prevention and management
- Nutrition interventions in emergencies

Optimum fetal and child nutrition and development
- Breastfeeding, nutrient rich foods, and eating routine
- Feeding and caregiving practices, parenting stimulation
- Low burden of infectious diseases

Nutrition sensitive programmes and approaches
- Agriculture and food security
- Social safety nets
- Early child development
- Maternal mental health
- Women’s empowerment
- Child protection
- Classroom education
- Water and sanitation
- Health and family planning services

Knowledge and evidence
- Politics and governance
- Leadership, capacity, and financial resources
- Social, economic, political, and environmental context (national and global)

Building an enabling environment
- Rigorous evaluations
- Advocacy strategies
- Horizontal and vertical coordination
- Accountability/incentives regulation, legislation
- Leadership programmes
- Capacity investments
- Domestic resource mobilisation
Definition:

Nutrition-sensitive Interventions and Programs

Interventions or programs that address the underlying determinants of fetal and child nutrition and development—food security; adequate caregiving resources at the maternal, household and community levels; and access to health services and a safe and hygienic environment—and incorporate specific nutrition goals and actions

Nutrition-sensitive programs can serve as delivery platforms for nutrition-specific interventions, potentially increasing their scale, coverage and effectiveness

Examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agriculture and food security</th>
<th>Social safety nets</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Early child development</td>
<td>Maternal mental health</td>
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<td>Schooling</td>
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Nutrition-sensitive Programs Can Impact Nutrition: Through Increases in Income

A 10% increase in GDP/PC leads to a 6% reduction in stunting.
Income Growth Can Have Unintended Consequences of Increasing Risks of Overweight and Obesity

A 10% increase in GDP/PC leads to a 7% increase in overweight and obesity in women.
Nutrition-sensitive Programs Can Impact Nutrition: Through Empowerment of Women

There is evidence that men and women allocate food and other resources differently

**Evidence shows:**

- Positive associations between dimensions of women’s empowerment and improved maternal and child nutrition
- Negative associations between disempowerment (e.g. domestic violence) and child nutrition outcomes
- Positive impacts of cash transfers and agricultural programs on measures of women’s empowerment
Evidence Review of Programs from 4 Sectors

✓ Agriculture
✓ Social safety nets
✓ Early child development
✓ Schooling

Selected based on:

Relevance for nutrition
Availability of evaluations of nutritional impact
High coverage of the poor
Targeting: programs that are or could be targeted to reach nutritionally vulnerable groups
Targeted Agricultural Programs

Have impacts on several underlying determinants of nutrition:

- Livelihoods and income
- Household food security
- Diet quality
- Women’s income and empowerment

...and complement global efforts to stimulate agricultural productivity – increasing producer incomes while protecting consumers from high food prices
Nutritional Impacts of Targeted Agricultural Programs

**Evidence of nutritional impact is inconclusive**

Although there is some evidence of impact from home gardens and homestead food production systems on vitamin A intake and status of children

Strong evidence from roll out of biofortified vitamin A rich orange sweet potato on vitamin A intake of mothers and children and vitamin A status of children

**Limited evidence likely due to**

Weaknesses in program goals, design, targeting, implementation

Lack of rigor in impact evaluation, including lack of theory-based program impact pathway analysis
Social Safety Nets

Are important poverty reduction tools:

- Provide transfers to a billion poor people and reduce poverty; are often implemented at scale and achieve high coverage of the poor; increase demand for health and education services
- Help mitigate negative effects of global changes, conflicts, shocks; protect income, food security, diet quality, assets and human capital investments among the poor
- Enhance women’s empowerment when targeted to women and when they include specific gender-focused interventions

Key findings:

- Strong evidence of impacts on health care utilization, but limited impacts on child nutrition; some studies show impacts in younger, poorer children, with longer exposure
- Lack of clarity in nutrition goals, weaknesses in design and poor quality health services likely responsible for the limited nutritional impacts
### Early Child Development

<table>
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<th>Stunting and poor cognitive development share many risks factors:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Nutritional deficiencies</td>
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<td>Intra-uterine growth restriction</td>
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<td>Social and economic conditions such as poverty and maternal depression</td>
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<td>Also share period of peak vulnerability: the first 1,000 days</td>
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<td>Evidence from small-scale programs targeted to at-risk children suggests additive or synergistic effects on child development and in some cases on nutrition outcomes</td>
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<td>Combining early child development and nutrition interventions makes sense biologically and programmatically and could lead to significant gains in both nutrition and child development outcomes</td>
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How Can we Enhance the Nutrition-sensitivity of Programs from Different Sectors?

- Improve targeting, timing and duration of exposure to interventions
- Use conditions to stimulate demand for program services
- Strengthen nutrition goals, design, implementation – use programs as delivery platforms for health and nutrition services
- Optimize women’s nutrition, time, physical and mental health and empowerment

See new guidance from WB, FAO and others
Nutrition-sensitive programs in agriculture, social safety nets, early child development and education have enormous potential, yet to be unleashed, to enhance scale, coverage and effectiveness of nutrition-specific actions.

Targeted agricultural programs and social safety nets play a key role in mitigating negative effects of shocks and global changes, supporting livelihoods, food security, diet quality, and women’s empowerment, and reaching nutritionally at-risk populations.

Incorporating nutrition in early child development programs and in school curricula can benefit both nutrition and child development and have long-lasting impacts into adulthood and for future generations and nations.

Investments in nutrition-sensitive programs can play a pivotal role in preventing excess undernutrition and impaired child development that scale-up of nutrition-specific interventions cannot resolve on its own.