



NUTRITION STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS: BIHAR



Alive & Thrive is an initiative to save lives, prevent illness, and ensure healthy growth and development through improved breastfeeding and complementary feeding practices. Good nutrition in the first 1,000 days, from conception to two years of age, is critical to enable all children to lead healthier and more productive lives. In its first five years (2009 to 2014), Alive & Thrive demonstrated that innovative approaches to improving feeding practices could be delivered with impact and at scale in three contexts: Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Viet Nam. Alive & Thrive is now supporting others to scale up nutrition by applying and adapting tested, proven approaches and tools in contexts such as Burkina Faso, India, and Southeast Asia. With its emphasis on learning and innovation, Alive & Thrive is expanding its focus in Bangladesh to maternal nutrition and taking a more multisectoral approach in Ethiopia. Alive & Thrive is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the governments of Canada and Ireland and managed by FHI 360.

The Alive & Thrive initiative provides technical support to the Ananya program in Bihar, India, which is also funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Ananya is a multi-partner program with CARE playing an important role in service delivery of key nutrition and health interventions.

Recommended Citation

Alive & Thrive. Nutrition Stakeholder Analysis: Bihar, India. Washington, D.C., USA: Alive & Thrive, 2014.



Alive & Thrive
FHI 360
1825 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20009
aliveandthrive@fhi360.org
www.aliveandthrive.org

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	1
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
ACRONYMS	4
INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES	5
METHODOLOGY FOR STAKEHOLDER NETWORK MAPPING	5
RESULTS	6
Research Links	8
Advocacy Links	8
Support and Influence Levels	11
CONCLUSION	13
RECOMMENDATIONS	13
ANNEXURE 1: SOME RESEARCH LINKS IN DETAIL	15
ANNEXURE 2: SOME ADVOCACY LINKS IN DETAIL	16

Acknowledgements

The stakeholder network mapping exercise was facilitated by Mamata Pradhan, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), and co-facilitated by Shruthi Cyriac (independent consultant). Shruthi Cyriac analyzed the network and summarized key insights from discussions during the mapping process in the first draft of the report.

Alive & Thrive gratefully acknowledges the partnership and support from POSHAN (*Partnerships and Opportunities to Strengthen and Harmonize Actions for Nutrition in India*) for this stakeholder mapping analysis, which was conducted by Shruthi Cyriac and Mamata Pradhan, IFPRI. POSHAN is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and managed by IFPRI.

Alive & Thrive thanks all participants of the Net-Map exercise in Patna for sharing their insights and providing invaluable information on the nature of nutrition networks in Bihar. We thank Pankaj Mishra, Sunil Babu, Indira Devi, and Priya Kekre from CARE for supporting the Net-Map exercise in Patna and for contributing to the design of the stakeholder assessment. We also thank Ishani Sen and Anisha Saxena from CARE for documenting the discussions during the mapping exercise.

Purnima Menon (IFPRI), Nemat Hajeerbhoy (Alive & Thrive), Andy Rigsby (Alive & Thrive) and Debarshi Bhattacharya (CARE) provided useful comments, reviewed previous drafts and added invaluable inputs to the final report.

Executive Summary

The nutrition landscape in Bihar is a complex network of diverse actors across different government departments, civil society institutions, development and research organisations, donors and associations. In order to understand such landscapes, a stakeholder network analysis method is used. This analysis is conducted using a participatory interview technique using a tool called Net-Map, which provides clarity on how the networks function. Net-Map identifies key stakeholders who are relevant to an issue, maps the links among these stakeholders, and describes their power over the specific issue. It has been used widely in policy and stakeholder analyses.

The Net-Map interview in Bihar was conducted by the International Food Policy Research Institute to inform and facilitate the work of the Alive & Thrive program initiative in the state. The results of the analysis are meant to assist in their efforts towards understanding who is, or could be, influential in tackling undernutrition in the state of Bihar. The interview was conducted with a group of 16 participants who focus their work on nutrition issues in the state. The analysis aims to provide a snapshot of the nature of links in the nutrition network and potential champions who push for prioritising nutrition issues and also helps to identify the key influencers of nutrition policy in the state.

The results from the network analysis show that in spite of the presence of a large number of stakeholders in the state, certain actors emerge as key influencers. It is encouraging to find that nutrition is a top agenda in the higher levels of government office, but the same vigor for addressing nutrition challenges is yet to trickle down to the focal departments related to nutrition and health policy in the state government. Sustained advocacy is required to involve actors at the district level and stakeholders in nutrition-sensitive areas like education, health and sanitation to play a larger role in becoming champions for nutrition. The power of long standing, well networked development partners and their forums need to be leveraged for influencing the policy making machinery to focus on nutrition priorities. The academic research organisations and the media were identified as potential institutions that can address the vacuum of data needs and the lack of awareness about nutrition in the state.

Acronyms

ADRI – Asian Development Research Institute

ASRA – Association for Social Action and Research

BBC Media Action – British Broadcasting Corporation Media Action

BMGF – Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

BPNI – Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India

BTAST-DFID – Bihar Technical Assistance and Support Team-Department for International Development

CARE – Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere

CS – Civil Surgeons

DHFW – Department of Health and Family Welfare

DM – District Magistrate

DPO – District Program Officers

GAIN – Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition

ICDS – Integrated Child Development Services

IFFCO – Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative

IFPRI – International Food Policy Research Institute

IPRD – Information and Public Relations Department

JSA – Jan Swasth Abhiyan

MI – Micronutrient Initiative

MSF – Médecins Sans Frontières

NGO – Non-Governmental Organisations

NIPCCD – National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development

NRC – Nutrition Rehabilitation Centres

OPM – Oxford Policy Management

PHED – Public Health and Engineering Department

PRI – Panchayati Raj Institution

RSBY – Rashtriya Swasthya Bhima Yojana

RTF – Right to Food Campaign

SAVE – Save the Children

SIHFW – State Institute of Health and Family Welfare

SSUPSW – Society for Ultra Poor and Social Welfare

TAG – Technical Advisory Group

UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund

WASH – Water Sanitation and Hygiene

WHO – World Health Organisation

INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

The nutrition policy space in Bihar has many diverse stakeholders, including government departments, donors, and non-government organisations. With a focus on maternal and child nutrition, many program initiatives in Bihar find it important to understand how knowledge flows in the current policy environment. One of the first steps in this, therefore, is to understand the networks of nutrition stakeholders in Bihar through a network-mapping exercise.

The objective of the stakeholder landscape study is to capture a snapshot of the stakeholders and to develop an understanding of how they interact with each other to achieve nutrition outcomes. The results of the analysis are meant to inform the Alive & Thrive program initiative, supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, about which stakeholders they should engage and how they can facilitate further interaction between these stakeholders in Bihar. In order to develop such an understanding and enable strengthening the stakeholder network of nutrition policies in the state, the Gates Foundation had asked the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), New Delhi to conduct a stakeholder network mapping using Net-Map interview, a method that has already been used by IFPRI to carry out stakeholder network analyses at the national level and in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa.

The results of the analysis are meant to assist in their efforts towards understanding who is, or could be, influential in tackling undernutrition in the state of Bihar. The objective of the exercise is to enable better understanding of key opportunities and the main challenges to overcome, to improve nutrition in the state.

METHODOLOGY FOR STAKEHOLDER NETWORK MAPPING

The stakeholder network mapping is a participatory methodology in an interview-based mapping process combining social network analysis, stakeholder mapping, and power mapping. It helps people understand, visualize, discuss, and improve situations in which many different actors influence outcomes.¹ The Nutrition Net-Map interview was held in Patna, Bihar, on February 11, 2014, with 16 participants. The mapping process, through a facilitated discussion, led the group to identify the key stakeholders who influence nutrition related programs and policy decisions in the state. The participants discussed and mapped the relationships that link the listed actors to each other in a network map, and built influence towers to reflect the relative power of each actor in the map.

The overarching question on which the discussion focused was *“Who is influential in shaping nutrition related program and policy decisions in the state of Bihar in the last 5 years?”* The stakeholders who were related to the overarching question were listed on the map. These were individuals or institutions important in shaping nutrition related decisions at the state level. The participants stated the reasons for including the listed actors, the capacities in which they were influential, and how they were connected to the larger nutrition network. This network was mapped by linking the actors to each other based on two relations. The first of the two relations was the *‘Research’* link where *‘research’* was defined as *“either the actor is involved in generating research or disseminating it or both.”* The second link captured *‘Advocacy’* wherein *‘advocacy’* meant *“either the actor is actively involved in advocacy or they are directly linked to a group that engages in advocacy.”*

The interview was facilitated by two trained and experienced Net-Map interview facilitators from IFPRI. Detailed notes were taken during the interview process to capture the group discussion. The resultant network and influence data from the group exercise was entered into Microsoft Excel and analysed using Visualyzer, a social network analysis tool. The results reflect the opinions and perceptions of a key group of nutrition-focused individuals and should not be considered as the complete definitive network of stakeholders, their links, or their influence.

¹<http://netmap.wordpress.com/about/>

RESULTS

The discussion during the Net-Map interview resulted in rich information about the network and the stakeholders within it. The results of this interview are to be viewed as a snapshot of the important and commonly perceived interactions and roles in the network, rather than a decisive complete map of all the stakeholders and their links. Given the complexity of this nutrition Net-Map, it is important that the network emerging through links drawn is cross-verified using detailed stakeholder interviews as a next step approach. The highlights learned in the mapping process—including some key stakeholders and groups of stakeholders, stakeholders with potential power or influences, and implications of mapping the nutrition landscape in the state of Bihar—are discussed below.

Figure 1 depicts the complex landscape of actors involved in the state of Bihar's nutrition policy and program landscape. Each circle on the map reflects the actors named by the interview participants, and the lines in between actors depict the links related to research and advocacy. The size of the circle for each actor on the map depicts their potential influence in relation to shaping policy and program decisions about nutrition in the state. The links connecting actors in the graph have directions (i.e. the relation between two actors can be understood by looking at the direction of the arrow that connects them). There are unidirectional and bi-directional relations in this map. The stakeholders in the network include government officials and departments, as well as development partners, civil society organisations, academic/research organisations, media, and others (such as corporate houses, nutrition forums) who shape and influence the discourse related to nutrition in Bihar. The categorization of stakeholders into these broad categories was also based in consultation with the participants of the interview.

The resultant network, as captured by the Net-Map, has 409 total links where 357 are *research* links and 52 are *advocacy* links. The network includes 79 actors and is highly centralized (i.e. a few actors have many links while most actors have few). The density of graph captures the level of connectedness between the actors in the map. The higher the number of actors that are connected to each other, the higher the density of the graph. In this case of nutrition Net-Map in Bihar, the graph exhibits a low density.

Development agencies such as United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE) have as many as 92 and 51 links respectively. Other stakeholders with significant number of links (Refer to Table 1) are Save the Children and government stakeholders like Directorate Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), Department of Health and Family Welfare (DHFV)- Executive Director of the State Health Society and Development Commissioner. An examination of the highly and significantly linked stakeholders in Figure 1 reveals that Directorate ICDS is the most influential stakeholder followed by Development Commissioner and UNICEF. Government actors at the district level [District Magistrate, Civil Surgeons and District Program Officers (DMs, CSs and DPOs)], state level (Department of Social Welfare- State Society for Ultra Poor, Manav Vikas Mission) and at the Centre [Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Women and Child Development- National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCID)] were seen to be highly influential in the network, but had relatively fewer links than other stakeholders in the network.

At the district level, it is possible to identify champions who can push the nutrition agenda. The participants agreed during the mapping process that the District Magistrates and District Program Officers have a lot of potential in contributing to this. At the state level, it was discussed that the Department of Social Welfare, which together with ICDS becomes a crucial stakeholder, does not focus on as much nutrition related activities as the former does. However, the department has a set up an organisation, '*Saksham*', i.e. Society for Ultra Poor and Social Welfare (SSUPSW), which includes anemia as one of its focus areas, among other goals of poverty reduction and improving health outcomes. Another stakeholder discussed during the mapping exercise was the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on nutrition. TAG is

a forum that brings together most development partners working in Bihar. The group is highly effective in advocating for policy changes and is frequently approached by the government for consultations on nutrition issues. Among all the government departments discussed as stakeholders, Manav Vikas Mission, set up in Bihar and chaired by the Chief Minister, is another important stakeholder in the state nutrition map. All the departments and ministries are part of it and the mission involves itself in the policy formulation process for nutrition.

It is to be noted that given the intricacy of the map and the large number of stakeholders working in the nutrition space, only the most influential actors with a long standing presence in the state and a breadth of partnerships emerge as highly linked in the map. However, in the context of the overarching question, some stakeholders were identified as a key players or potential partners during the discussions. For instance, the participants noted that the nutrition agenda in the state kept moving because Nitish Kumar, the then Chief Minister of Bihar, made a huge difference (*“designation is effective only if there is a good person to move it”*). Regular updates are provided to the Chief Minister’s office and any question related to the ICDS in the assembly or parliament requires everybody up and down the chain to respond. Similarly, the judiciary had links only with the Right to Food Campaign (RTF) at the state level, but was considered an important potential actor because of its influence at both state and national levels. RTF has been generating research and remained influential in the policy space. The advisors to the Supreme Court, under RTF, have focused on taking the state issues to national levels. The Department of education, too, emerged as a strong potential actor especially in the context of midday meal schemes at schools and provision of iron folic tablets to adolescent girls.

Individuals like Shaibal Gupta from the Asian Development Research Institute (key policy advisor to the government), Jean Dreze and Reetika Khera from RTF (who provide field level evidence to assist policy making), S.P. Srivastava (eminent pediatrician) and Parveen Amanullah (former Social Welfare minister) also emerged as important potential partners to engage with in the map. It is to be noted that the Net-Map analysis does not include stakeholders that are identified as not having any links. They are however perceived to be important potential active stakeholders for the network. These include the Anganwadi Associations, IFFCO Kisan Sanchar Ltd., Association for Social Action and Research (ASRA), Oxford Policy Management (OPM), World Health Organisation (WHO), FMs and Radio Stations, All India Radio, Mobile Based Technology, Flour Millers’ Associations, Milk Cooperatives, Britannia, Department of Food Processing, Department of Horticulture, and Department of Animal Husbandry and Fisheries.

The participants felt that there are some stakeholders who need to be engaged with more. Mid-level training centers and Anganwadi training centers were stakeholders who do not emerge as influential or well-connected in the map. However, the participants stated their role in training any ICDS functionary on nutrition issues a crucial one. Similarly, the role of mass media in Bihar to deliver nutrition messages was discussed and participants agreed that it needed to expand from its current limited scope. There are some innovative media and communication strategies in the state, like the collaboration between Rashtriya Swasthya Bhima Yojana (RSBY) and Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative (IFFCO) Kisan Sanchar Ltd. call centers, BBC Media Action’s mobile academy, event coverage by Information and Public Relations Department (IPRD), media fellowships by UNICEF and Das ka Dum. RSBY, the government health insurance program, works with the farmer group IFFCO in Bihar to send health and nutrition messages using mobile phones to its patrons. BBC Media Action, as a partner in the Ananya program (a Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation funded initiative to reduce child mortality, improve maternal health and reduce infectious diseases in Bihar), developed a training course called ‘Mobile Academy’ for frontline health workers. IPRD, a government agency, has been covering policies, programs and events and designing a media plan related to nutrition. UNICEF has conducted organized rallies for event coverage and provided media fellowships to promote issue based coverage on nutrition topics. Das ka Dum is a state-owned, state-led communication plan which focuses on 10 essential interventions in health, nutrition and other social components with social and behavior change communication central to it. The potential of these strategies and that of community radios in reaching out to the primary members of the household was suggested.

Currently, the need to pressure the government is very minimal. With national guidelines and several states already implementing most of the programs, there are results from different pilots available to guide policymaking in Bihar. On the whole, the participants agreed that state authorities were willing to listen and be guided by evidence presented to them, and with a national mandate to work on nutrition as well as necessary guidelines present, what is required is to bring the evidence to state-level authorities.

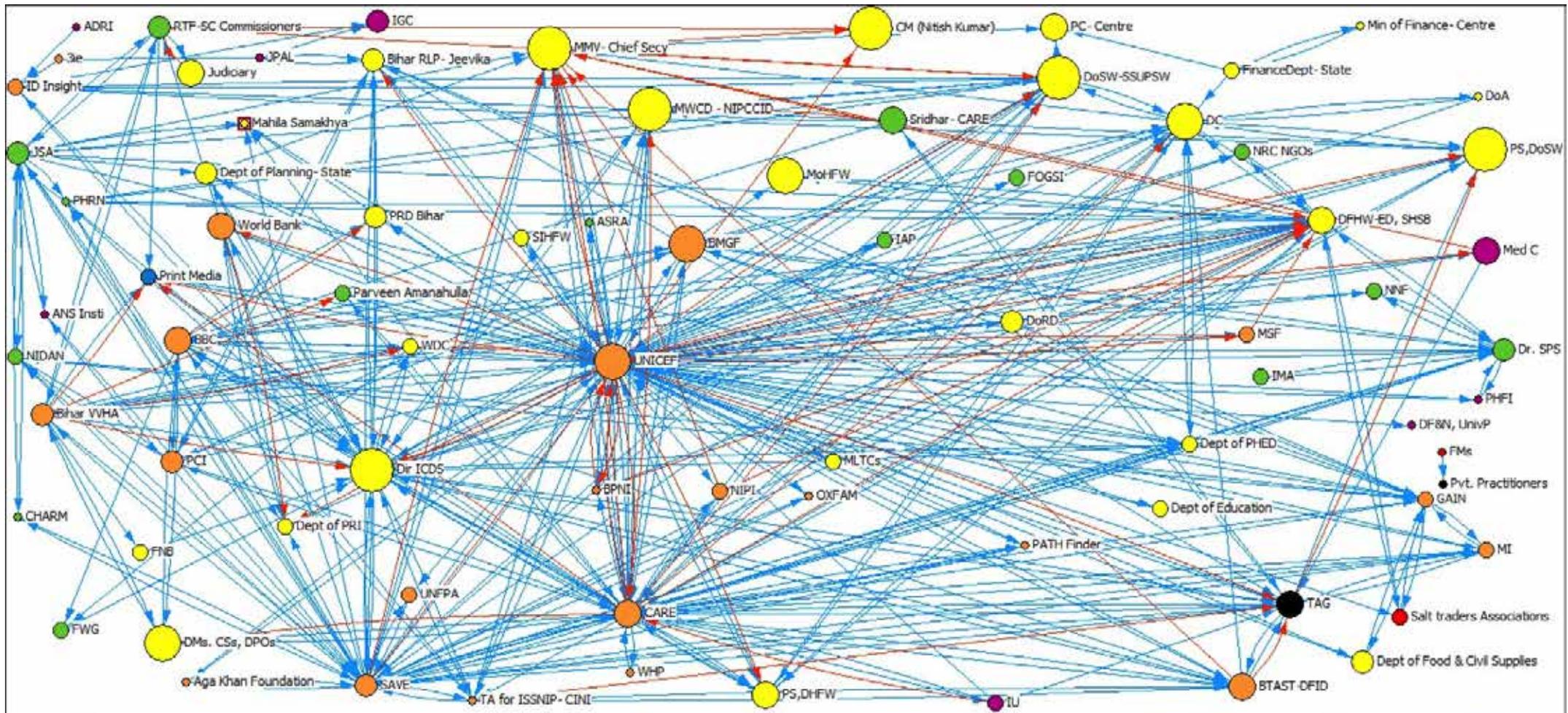
Research Links

The Net-Map of **research** links indicates that UNICEF and CARE are the dominant recipients and generators/disseminators of research. Among development partners, Save the Children is another stakeholder with a significant number of research links in the nutrition network in Bihar. Among academic/research organisations, A.N Sinha Institute has a higher number of research links along with some other academic institutes. Among civil society organisations, Jan Swasth Abhiyan (JSA) has significant research links on the nutrition map. Other stakeholders too are fairly active in exchange of research information. While Figure 1 captures all the research links, some of this activity is detailed in Annex 1.

Advocacy Links

In the case of the **advocacy** link, UNICEF and CARE had the highest number of outgoing advocacy links and Manav Vikas Mission received the maximum advocacy links being the Chief Minister's nodal government division tackling overall human development. A consortium of most active development agencies in Bihar, the Technical Advisory Group for Nutrition (TAG), was another actor with high advocacy links. Other than TAG, the Department of Health and Family Welfare (DFHW), Department of Social Welfare, Bihar VVHA, Print Media, and the Right to Food Campaign were other actors leading the advocacy for nutrition agenda in the state. While Annex 1 captures all the research links, some of this activity is detailed in Annex 2.

Figure 1: Complex Multiplex Map – Nutrition policy and program landscape in Bihar



LINKS- Research, Advocacy

STAKEHOLDERS – Government, Development Partners, Academic/Research Organisations, Civil Society Organisations, Others

Index for Stakeholder Names

AIR	All India Radio	FMs	Food Manufacturers
AWW Asso.	Anganwadi Associations	GAIN	Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition
ANS Insti	AN Sinha Institute	IAP	Indian Academy of Pediatricians
ADRI	Asian Development Research Institute	IMA	Indian Medical Association
ASRA	Association for Social Research and Action	IGC	International Growth Centre
BBC Media Action	British Broadcasting Corporation Media Action	IU	International Universities
Bihar RLP- Jeevika	Bihar Rural Livelihoods Program	JSA	Jan Swasthya Abhiyan
BMGF	Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation	JPAL	The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab
BPNI	Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India	MMV- Chief Secy	Manav Vikas Mission- Chief Secretary
BTAST-DFID	Bihar Technical Assistance and Support Team- Department for International Development	PHFI	Mathematica-Public Health Foundation of India
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere	Med C	Medical Colleges-AIIMS, Patna
CHARM	Centre for Health and Resource Management- Dr. Shakeel	MoHFW	MHFW- Centre
CM-Nitish Kumar	Chief Minister (Nitish Kumar)	MI	Micronutrient initiative
DoA	Department of Agriculture	MLTCs	Mid-level training centres-Anganwadi training centres
DAHf	Department of Animal Husbandry & Fisheries	Min of Finance-Centre	Ministry of Finance- Centre
DoE	Department of Education	MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
Finance Dept-State	Department of Finance- State	MWCD - NIPCCID	Ministry of Women and Child Development- National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development
Dept of Food&Civil Supplies	Department of Food & Civil Supplies	NIPI	The Norway- India Partnership Initiative
DF&N, UnivP	Department of Food and Nutrition, Patna University	NNF	Neo Natal Forum
Dept of Food Processing	Department of Food Processing	NRC	Nutrition Rehabilitation Centres
Dept of Horticulture	Department of Horticulture	PHRN	Public Health Resource Network
Dept of PHED	Department of PHED	PC-Centre	Planning Commission- Centre
Dept of Planning	Department of Planning- State	PS, DoSW	Principal Secretary, Department of Social Welfare
Dept of PRI	Department of PRI	PS, DHFW	Principal Secretary, Directorate of Health and Family Welfare
PRD Bihar	Department of Public Relations	Pvt. Practitioners	Private Practitioners
DoRD	Department of Rural Development	RTF-SC Commissioners	RTF Campaign- SC Commissioners and advisors
DoSW-SSUPSW	Department of Social Welfare- State society for Ultra Poor	SAVE	Save the Children
DHFW-ED,SHSB	Department of Health and Family Welfare- Executive Director, State Health Society	SIHFW	State Institute of Health and Family Welfare
DC	Development Commissioner	TA for ISSINIP-CINI	Technical Assistance agency for ICDS Systems Strengthening & Nutrition Improvement Program (ISSNIP) -Child in Need Institute (CINI)
Dir ICDS	Directorate Integrated Child Development Scheme	TAG	Technical Advisory Group for Nutrition
DMs, CSs, DPOs	DMs. Civil Surgeons, DPOs	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
Dr. SPS	Dr. S.P. Shrivastava	UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Fund
FWG	Federation of Women's Groups	WDC	Women Development Cooperation
FOGSI	The Federation of Obstetric and Gynaecological Societies of India	WHO	World Health Organisation
FNB	Food and Nutrition Board	WHP	World Health Program

Table 1: Stakeholders who are Highly Likned and Their Influence Score

Stakeholder	Total Links	Total in-links	Total out-links	Influence (Score: 1-5)
UNICEF	92	42	50	4
CARE	51	23	28	3
Save the Children	49	22	27	2
Directorate, ICDS	40	22	18	5
Department of Health and Family Welfare-ED, State Health Society	31	19	12	3
Development Commissioner	22	12	10	4
Jan Swasth Abhiyan	20	7	13	2
BBC Media Action	20	8	12	3
Technical Advisory Group for Nutrition	19	11	8	3
Department of Social Welfare-State society for Ultra Poor	19	10	9	5
Manav Vikas Mission- Chief Secretary	17	10	7	5
BMGF	16	7	9	4
GAIN	16	8	8	1
Bihar VVHA	16	6	10	2
Dr. SP Srivastava	16	8	8	2

Support and Influence Levels

Figure 2 depicts the degree of support each stakeholder was thought to have for nutrition related policies and programs, and the degree of relative influence over shaping nutrition related decisions. Here, the relative influence level also includes the *potential* influence that specific stakeholder might have. On the other hand, the support level shows the support that the stakeholder was perceived to have for nutrition in the state. The following categories describe stakeholders according to support and influence levels:

Influential and very supportive: The Ministry of Women and Child Development at the Centre falls in this category. Others who are equally supportive to pushing the nutrition agenda in the state are the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare at the Centre and the development agencies – UNICEF and the Gates Foundation.

Moderately influential and very supportive: The World Bank, CARE, Bihar Technical Assistance and Support Team-Department for International Development (BTAST-DFID), Technical Advisory Group for Nutrition, and the BBC Media Action group are highly supportive but less influential compared to the ministries and UNICEF or the Gates Foundation.

Less influential but supportive: Academic institutions such as the International Universities, civil society organisations such as NRC NGOs in Bihar, and Development Agencies like Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), Micronutrient Initiative (MI), and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) though with low level of influence, appeared as highly supportive of the nutrition agenda in the state.

Figure 2: Layered Map According to Influence and Support Levels: Nutrition in Bihar



Support Level: Low to High →

CONCLUSION

The nutrition network in Bihar has a fair representation of diverse stakeholders namely government, civil society, development partners, and academia. There is clearly a vigorous exchange of information related to research and advocacy leading to a very complex nutrition landscape in the state. UNICEF and CARE appear to be at the core of research and advocacy flow, but the presence of several other stakeholders in the network makes it a complicated setting to function in. While several government departments appear on the network, most are of low relative influence or have lesser links connecting them to the overall network. Even though the influence levels of stakeholders on the nutrition landscape varied, most stakeholders were largely supportive of nutrition.

Given the number of stakeholders on this map and the networks that spin around them, the nutrition landscape in Bihar is large and complex. Most of the stakeholders emerge to be relatively less influential while looking at the Net-Map in its entirety. However, there are a few actors (namely UNICEF and CARE) in the map who are central to the network and are critical in the diffusion process because of their capability to promote and diffuse ideas and encourage information flow. They are marked by a high influx of links from other actors in the map. This makes the opinion leaders capable of steering the groups to work towards their goals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing on the results of the Net-Map interview in Bihar, we offer the following recommendations to strengthen the nutrition network in the state:

- » The strong interest in nutrition related policy and programs by the Chief Minister is encouraging and has highlighted the importance of having support at the highest levels of state government. However, given recent political shifts in state leadership, the new Chief Minister and other political leadership need to be sensitized on nutrition and are invited to become champions of the issue. This clear political will needs to trickle down to the key departments that address nutrition interventions, namely the Directorate ICDS, the Department of Health and Family Welfare and the Manav Vikas Mission. With high levels of influence and support for nutrition, these nodal departments are to move forward the nutrition agenda in the state. There needs to be a continued and sustained effort to engage with the Department of Social Welfare on nutrition policies. The potential of these departments should be realised and they should be made central to the nutrition network in the state.
- » Advocacy and research links need to be strengthened with specific organisations, including:
 - Government actors at the district (District Magistrate, Civil Surgeons and District Program Officers), state (Department of Social Welfare- State Society for Ultra Poor, Manav Vikas Mission) and centre (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Women and Child Development- NIPCCID) levels need to be more connected and coordinated with other stakeholders and research generators. If better equipped, they each hold potential to advocate for nutrition internally within the government system.
 - The advocacy focus on District Magistrates and District Program Officers at the district level needs to be increased, to encourage them to become champions for nutrition.
 - The Department of Social Welfare has the potential to be influential, and should be an advocacy target with the goal of increasing focus on nutrition. One potential starting point for this discussion would be their current focus on anaemia, which would benefit greatly from increased focus on nutrition and infant and young child feeding (IYCF) issues.

- The Technical Advisory Group is an effective convener of relevant nutrition stakeholders in Bihar, but its collective power needs to be leveraged in support of more specific advocacy/policy “asks” and goals.
 - In relation to nutrition, the judiciary is currently only responsible for addressing the Right to Food and its implementation in Bihar. This focus should expand to include nutrition, but doing so will require supporting groups to file public interest litigations on issues related to nutrition and its impact on social welfare (e.g. nutrition-related deaths).
 - Greater focus should be placed on nutrition-sensitive actors—both to initiate more nutrition-sensitive interventions, and to build on the currently foundation. For example, the Department of Education currently focuses on school feeding programs and iron supplementation; these interventions should be broadened to incorporate more nutrition-sensitive components.
- » The forum of development partners has been identified as a key platform for providing data as well as influencing nutrition policy—especially UNICEF and CARE. Some key actors across different partners, namely Shaibal Gupta from ADRI, Jean Dreze and Reetika Khera from RTF, Sridhar from CARE, eminent pediatrician S.P. Srivastava and former Social Welfare minister Parveen Amanullah, emerged in the network as strong policy influencers. It is important to engage with all these individuals to guide nutrition policy making in the state.
 - » With the complexity of the nutrition network in Bihar that consists of not only a large number of development partners but also several donors, media, nutrition champions, government departments, NGOs, and associations, it is imperative that a common platform for all stakeholders is created. This can serve as a platform to merge the efforts of the diverse stakeholders and to discuss the key priorities and challenges that nutrition policy should address and engage with in the state.
 - » The nutrition network currently consists of some key stakeholders who are very supportive of the nutrition agenda but have low levels of influence at the state level. These include NRC NGOs, the Right to Food Campaign, and MSF. Creating spaces for more supportive, albeit less influential, actors to engage with the nutrition discourse will help to amplify overall support for nutrition in the state. Similarly, there are several stakeholders key to the nutrition agenda at the state level (the Mid-Level Training Centres, the Department of Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI), and the Development Commissioner) who have a neutral approach to pushing forth issues but could be a great potential if strengthened. Furthermore, there remains a need for some national networks like Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI) to have a better state presence, as there is a need for a stronger advocacy on IYCF issues.
 - » Currently, the media is not perceived to be very influential in supporting nutrition in Bihar. There are sporadic efforts to use the media effectively by the state departments as well as by development agencies. However, strengthening media interest in, and capacity for, reporting on nutrition could help in bringing more attention to how nutrition is improving within the state. This is particularly true if media engagement is paired with specific other activities—such as increasing pressure on the judiciary to address nutrition-related deaths. The potential of community radios and effective innovative communication strategies were discussed. Examples of specific actions related to the media include media fellowships to target issue based reporting, nutrition knowledge workshops for journalists, and use of mobile based technologies to spread nutrition awareness.
 - » The need for robust data and field level evidence has been indicated as key to the policy making process in the state. Some state-level academic institutions are supportive of moving forward nutrition in the state policy agenda and providing research and technical support to nutrition stakeholders in Bihar. Medical colleges and Home Science colleges need to be strengthened to contribute actively towards this. Their capacity to do so effectively should be examined so that they may continue to be a technical resource for the government and other stakeholders.

Annexure 1: Some Research Links in Detail

Stakeholder A	Stakeholder B	Nature of research link from A to B
UNICEF	DMs, DPOs, Civil Engineers	UNICEF supports the setup of Nutrition Rehabilitation Centres in all the districts.
UNICEF	Department of PHED	Discussions on the linkage of sanitation; UNICEF is consulted on WASH matters
UNICEF	Aga Khan Foundation	UNICEF provides regular inputs to their work at the block level.
UNICEF	SIHFW	SIHFW is part of the NRC related training organised by UNICEF and part of the team developing NRC guidelines
SAVE	ICDS	SAVE and ICDS share evidence and seek the support of each other in system strengthening and capacity building activities.
Chief Secretary (Manav Vikas Mission)	Planning Commission	The Department of Planning operates through the Chief Secretary's office to provide inputs to the Planning Commission. These inputs are mainly evidence from the state to support policy making.
BMGF	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare	BMGF engages with the Ministry at the Centre to enable an environment at the state level which is free of any bottlenecks, they generate evidence on state level activities and share the field level data with the officials of the ministry.
Food Manufacturers	Private Practitioners	The food manufacturers provide a lot of communication materials to the private practitioners.

Annexure 2: Some Advocacy Links in Detail

Stakeholder A	Stakeholder B	Nature of advocacy link from A to B
UNICEF	Directorate ICDS	Advocacy to focus on IYCF issues
UNICEF	Department of Social Welfare	Pushing the agenda of IYCF by sharing national guidelines
UNICEF	Mahila Samakhya	Discussions on working with self-help groups to focus on maternal nutrition
UNICEF	Jeevika	Advocated on similar things as with Mahila Samakhya, pushed for creating the ideal training package for Jeevika on nutrition components
UNICEF	DMs, DPOs, Civil Surgeons	Provided nutrition training packages to them tailored specifically to them
UNICEF	State Health Society	When the government is reluctant to hear about evidence from other states or take role models from global evidence, UNICEF pushes them to make evidence-based policies by providing them, where possible, with relevant district level data from the best and worst performing districts of Bihar.
Technical Advisory Group	State Departments	The forum which brings together all development partners is a major source of advocacy in the state, and pushes the nutrition agenda in all the relevant state departments. Even though all the organisations do their advocacy individually, the TAG is very powerful in pushing forth the nutrition focus.
Right to Food	Judiciary	The RTF campaign is primarily an advocacy group.
International Unizes	CARE	The universities have been invited as a technical partner to care under the Anaya grant; inputs have been sought from the university to CARE which further influences TAG in advocacy issues.
MSF	Department of Health and Family Welfare	Advocacy on community-based management of nutrition