

# briefing paper

## Learning from U.S. Nutrition Investments in Tanzania: Progress and Partnerships

by Scott Bleggi

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This malnourished infant's feeding includes micronutrient powder (MNP) fortification under the Tuboreshe Chakula project.

### Key Points

- Major investments to improve nutrition outcomes are being made by the Government of Tanzania, UN agencies, the United States and other bilateral donors, nongovernmental organizations, and local civil society organizations, contributing significant resources but complicating the aid landscape.
- The USAID and whole-of-U.S. government nutrition strategies will provide guidance to better integrate and measure nutrition-sensitive actions in Feed the Future and other Mission-funded projects.
- Donors are working to align their investments and activities to support the National Nutrition Strategy (NNS), but critical institutional and capacity issues in the country need to be addressed.
- Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are a key to building resilience and sustaining nutrition outcomes beyond donor funding cycles, but they must be systematically included in nutrition projects as partners so their capacities can be effectively built.

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### Abstract

A wide range of projects are currently being funded in Tanzania to improve nutrition outcomes, guided by the government's National Nutrition Strategy. Steps are being taken to strengthen internal management and coordination of nutrition affairs through the Prime Minister's office and with support from the global SUN Movement. A key change is that ministries are being asked to recognize and measure their nutrition-sensitive programs in addition to their nutrition-specific interventions. The United States has made significant investments in Tanzania's National Nutrition Strategy through Feed the Future and other programs. Developing nutrition strategies for USAID and for the whole of U.S. government presents an opportunity to complement and reinforce existing efforts to improve nutrition outcomes and to help build the evidence base for actions, as called for in the Lancet series on maternal and child nutrition.<sup>1</sup> This paper looks at efforts to scale up nutrition in Tanzania, identifying successes and challenges in program implementation and coordination that deserve consideration as projects are planned in other Feed the Future countries and elsewhere.

## Background

The 1,000 Days Call to Action was launched in September 2010 by the governments of Ireland and the United States. The World Health Assembly endorsed<sup>2</sup> six targets to help gauge the impact of improving nutrition during the 1,000-day “window of opportunity” from pregnancy through a child’s second birthday.

Governments, the United Nations, civil society, and the private sector committed to specific actions and increased investments to improve nutrition for women and children around the world in support of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN)<sup>3</sup> Movement. The SUN Movement now comprises 46<sup>4</sup> countries that have pledged budgetary resources and committed to changing national policies in order to improve nutrition outcomes for pregnant women, babies, and young toddlers. Tremendous progress has been made in aligning global political momentum with both public and private resources.

In 2011, Tanzania became one of the SUN Movement’s earliest members. The country has enjoyed a rapid expansion of donor support for its nutrition work, including a U.S. investment of nearly \$76.7 million in agricultural development, food security, and nutrition funding. This is 14 times as much as the annual U.S. allocation as recently as 2008. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton’s announcement of this investment, made when she visited Dar es Salaam in June 2011,<sup>5</sup> reflected the strong U.S. leadership in the global movement to scale up nutrition that started with President Obama’s commitment to the L’Aquila Food Security Initiative in 2009 and has continued through subsequent high-level G-8 meetings.

Donors and their implementing partners, complementing Tanzania’s commitments through both the National Nutrition Strategy (NNS) and active engagement in the SUN Movement, have begun to carry out a variety of programs aimed at improving nutrition outcomes. The United States and its development partners are working with the Tanzanian government in innovative ways to counter the multiple causes of malnutrition. The successes and challenges that have emerged thus far can be used to inform ongoing and future U.S. nutrition investments in other SUN countries.

Tanzania has become a priority country for multiple global health and food security initiatives, bringing in significant resources but complicating the assistance landscape. In addition to investments by the United States, Tanzania benefits from sizeable investments through UN agencies (UNICEF, WHO, FAO, WFP, and IFAD) as well as through other bilateral donors and nongovernmental organizations (UKAid, Concern Worldwide, IrishAid, AMREF, Helen Keller International, World Vision International, the World Bank, Save the Children-UK, the AgaKhan Foundation, GAIN).

## Nutrition Status Landscape

Tanzania has a population of about 43 million people who live in 22 administrative regions. Child malnutrition rates vary widely across the country, with high food-producing regions such as Iringa actually recording some of the highest rates of stunting.<sup>6</sup> Children younger than 5 are 17 percent of the population, and nearly half of all Tanzanians are under the age of 14. Women of reproductive age (defined as ages 15–49) comprise 22 percent of the population. The prevalence of stunting (defined as a height more than two standard deviations below other children of the same age) in children under 5 is 42 percent—which adds up to more than 3 million children. The prevalence of anemia among women aged 15–49 is 40 percent.

Although the national prevalence of stunting is 42 percent, 14 of the 22 regions have a rate higher than this, and in four regions (Dodoma, Iringa, Rukwa, and Lindi), the rate exceeds 50 percent.<sup>7</sup> More than half of Tanzania’s regions have had either no change or an increase in stunting between official surveys. The majority of stunted children live in rural areas (2.5 million) rather than urban areas (700,000). Anemia affects more than half of schoolchildren. High rates of anemia among women of reproductive age are common in regions where there are high levels of childhood stunting. Tanzania is on track to meet the MDG 1 underweight indicator, but an increased focus on reducing stunting is needed to meet the country’s own target for 2015.

According to the World Bank, micronutrient deficiencies cost Tanzania the equivalent of 2.65 percent of its GDP each year—a negative economic impact of \$500 million.<sup>8</sup> The 2010 Demographic Health Survey (DHS) showed that some of the regions with the highest stunting rates were also among the country’s most agriculturally productive, underlining the point that improving farming productivity alone will not necessarily reduce levels of childhood stunting.

## Tanzania’s Efforts to Scale Up Nutrition

*“The ministries of Agriculture and Health understand the key importance of nutrition to what they do. In Tanzania there are several other ministries whose actions can be considered as nutrition-sensitive. We need to get all equally engaged to improve nutrition outcomes and reduce stunting in this country.”*

– Dr. Wilbald Lorri, Nutrition Advisor  
to President Jakaya Kikwetwe

The “Call to Action on Nutrition” launched by President Kikwetwe in May 2013<sup>9</sup> created new awareness of undernutrition in Tanzania, particularly childhood stunting and maternal anemia. The Call to Action declared that malnutrition is a national emergency. The active engagement



of the president emphasizes to stakeholders that the government takes the problem of malnutrition very seriously and is committed to engaging its various government ministries to achieve national nutrition goals. The Call to Action recommended that local governments and development partners make it a priority to train nutrition officers at the district level in priority nutrition interventions. President Kikwetwe charged each District/Council with establishing a multi-sector, multi-stakeholder committee focusing on nutrition.

The Government of Tanzania has taken action to tackle malnutrition on multiple levels. It has established global partnerships and commitments through the SUN movement and has begun to implement its NNS at the national, district, and community levels. It has established new internal coordination and leadership structures. For example, the government is seeking to strengthen its capacity at the local government authority and community levels by institutionalizing a new cadre of Nutrition Officers within sub-national District Councils. As a result, nutrition officers have now begun to work alongside health, agriculture, education, and rural development officers, encouraging nutrition-sensitive actions.

When Tanzania joined the SUN Movement in June 2011, its Prime Minister made six high-level commitments to fight malnutrition. One of these was to establish a multi-sectoral High Level National Steering Committee on Nutrition (HSCN) with responsibility for deliberating on major nutrition policy decisions and overseeing the implementation of the NNS across government sectors. The HSCN includes the Permanent Secretaries of key line ministries and the Executive Secretary of the Planning Commission.

Tanzania has a SUN focal point in the Prime Minister's office, along with nutrition focal points in each of the line ministries and the Planning Commission. Efforts have been made to secure a nutrition budget line for each ministry to reinforce and document nutrition-sensitive actions that are already being taken. The government has designated a national budget line item specific to nutrition that seeks to "facilitate ministries, regions, and councils to plan and budget for nutrition interventions at their respective levels." Tanzania's Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plan (TAFSIP)<sup>10</sup> and Agriculture Sector Development Plan (currently under revision) have both been amended in an effort to better integrate nutrition into their policies and implementation plans. In 2012, Tanzania finalized and began to enforce national standards on micronutrient fortification of wheat flour. The government continues to work with Helen



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**Tunde and Jafari benefit directly from their mother's diet diversity training under MBNP in Towero.**

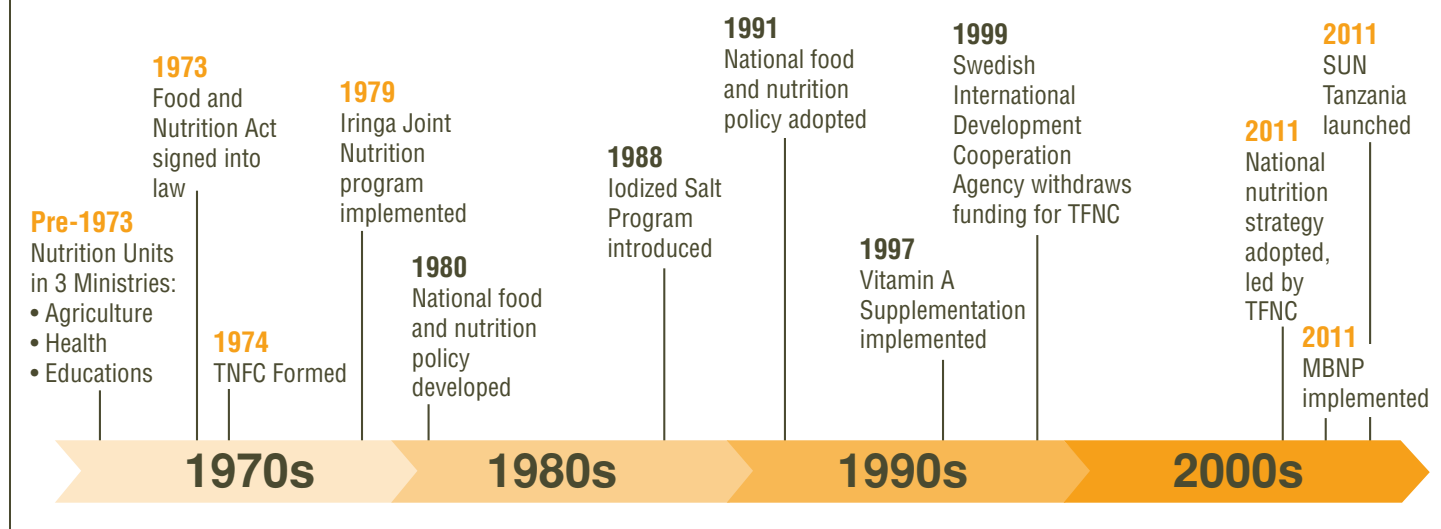
Keller International (HKI) and other partners to enforce the rules and ensure that smaller mills throughout the country fortify their cornmeal and flour (see below).

Beyond government actors, the HSCN also includes UN agencies, academics, donors, civil society organizations, private companies, faith-based organizations, and national and international nongovernmental organizations. This important Tanzanian nutrition body meets twice a year and is chaired by the Permanent Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office.

Among other nutrition bodies is the government-led, multi-sectoral Technical Working Group (TWG), which provides oversight and guidance for the smaller working groups that manage challenges that arise in NNS nutrition interventions. Also, a group of 36 members of Parliament have formed a Food Security and Child Rights working group to bolster support within the government and in their constituencies for actions to improve nutrition.

An Implementation Plan (IP) for the NNS that included a detailed budget was completed in 2012. Because overall responsibility for delivery of nutrition services remains with the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, the overall emphasis of the NNS to date has been heavily health-focused. However, the IP has broadened the scope of activities to encourage a collaborative effort among all ministries

## A History of the Tanzania Food and Nutrition Center (TFNC)



to improve nutrition outcomes. The next stage of the NNS (2015-2020) will benefit from further broadening its scope of nutrition activities and more formally involving additional ministries in implementing specific activities.

*“Since placing Nutrition Officers at the district level alongside agricultural extension and community development officers, the government has in place a team of experts to help implement nutrition actions at the ward and village level, where the need is greatest.”*

– Obey Assery, Permanent Secretary in the Prime Minister’s Office, and country SUN focal point

### Tanzania Food and Nutrition Centre (TFNC)

TFNC was established in 1974 under the Tanzania Food and Nutrition Act to oversee and coordinate nutrition across sectors and ministries. In the 1970s, Tanzania was one of many countries that sought to establish coordinated policies and actions on nutrition, primarily between agriculture and health. Nutrition efforts were at that time coordinated by TFNC across the Ministries of Health, Agriculture, and Education.

The Food and Nutrition Act did not specify which agency or other office would administer TFNC. It was initially housed in the Ministry of Agriculture and later in the Prime Minister’s Office. It then moved to the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, where it remains today. It is governed by a Board of Directors and managed by a Managing Director (currently acting). The Board Chairperson and Managing Director are appointed by the Minister of Health and Social Welfare.

Over the years, changing approaches to nutrition and developments such as the global HIV/AIDS pandemic have

meant that TFNC’s influence on nutrition policy has waxed and waned. However, the global food price crisis of 2007-2008, along with the 2008 Lancet series on maternal and child nutrition, shifted government and donor attention back to food security and agriculture. Nutrition’s key role in many development sectors gained prominence on the global development agenda.

The involvement of President Kikwetwe, Tanzania’s status as an “early riser” country in the SUN Movement, and the increasing numbers of nutrition activities funded by external donors have all meant increasing expectations of TFNC as the oversight institution for integrated nutrition.

TFNC is the secretariat of both the HSCN and the multi-sector Technical Working Group, and it is tasked with coordinating efforts toward a multi-sectoral approach for nutrition in the country. Donor-funded institutional assessments of TFNC have been conducted, and the government’s response to their recommendations is pending. The government recognizes that improving nutrition outcomes on a large scale is dependent on coordinated actions across development sectors, and is discussing the best placement and specific responsibilities to enable TFNC to accomplish this goal. The issue of how to resolve questions of leadership and organizational alignment has been discussed at the HSCN since it is responsible for implementing the NNS. Decisions by this high-level group are important in order to enable donors, line ministries, and civil society efforts on nutrition to organize around a lead agency.

Donors work with TFNC to coordinate program activities, but the organization’s human, financial, and system capacities are limited, since it receives little direct support. USAID is proactively working to support TFNC’s institutional capacity building, and there is a history of

donor investments in capacity building, most recently by the Swedish International Development Agency. TFNC's critical coordination role in the NNS is recognized, but its role in supporting the SUN country focal point is not well defined. Yet this role is important, both to scaling up nutrition efforts on a national level and to encouraging a growing role for SUN civil society organizations such as the Partnership for Nutrition in Tanzania (PANITA—see below).

*“TFNC has a long history of leading nutrition policy and program discussions in Tanzania. We have the institutional knowledge, the resources, and the ability to reach to rural areas in matters of nutrition. We have the necessary technical capacity, but not a permanent source of funding. And we are prepared to work with all the line ministries on nutrition.”*

– Dr. Benedict JeJe, Acting Director, TFNC

### Development Partners Group (DPG) on Nutrition

Although not formally recognized under the government's nutrition structure, DPG-Nutrition was granted informal status by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare in 2010. This is a group that has grown and changed in the past few years. Originally, its goal was to coordinate the efforts of donors and UN agencies so as to help develop and present a unified position to the government on nutrition issues. Members planned to discuss issues as a technical group and then present their findings to the formal Development Partners Group, DPG-Health.

More recently, NGOs have been participating in DPG-Nutrition; in fact, it has become a non-governmental forum for many nutrition stakeholder partners to discuss coordination and technical matters. As currently constituted, it is a coordination group for donors, UN agencies, and NGOs working in Tanzania. Its informal status does not prevent it from providing recommendations to the government and helping to coordinate program implementing partners. DPG-Nutrition has become an important clearinghouse for ideas among nutrition groups, and has the potential to become an effective liaison with the government to facilitate efforts to scale up programs.

### Recommendations

- In order to scale up sustainable nutrition interventions and implement a National Nutrition Strategy, donor nutrition investments in Tanzania must reach to community levels and be supportive of TFNC and its local partner organizations.
- TFNC's capacity, structure, and technical assistance mechanisms need to be strengthened in order to meet the objectives of the NNS. Its coordination role in nutrition policy also needs to be clarified.

### The Untapped Potential of Civil Society Organizations

The Government of Tanzania and external donors increasingly recognize that CSOs working in the country—especially those active in rural areas—play an important role in the delivery of community development services, including nutrition. Many CSOs are established and working in wards and villages, which are often below the level at which the government is able to provide a range of outreach services. CSOs are a trusted presence in the local communities where they operate. Effective relationships among such decentralized stakeholders are critical to scaling up nutrition efforts.

The government agricultural extension, health, community development, and now nutrition officers in districts have responsibility for multiple communities. They face big program delivery challenges: budget shortfalls, weak systems, lack of equipment, and lack of transportation top the list. Many CSOs have long-standing relationships with village councils and influential community groups and leaders, and know district council officials and their staff. They are experienced in health, HIV/AIDS, agriculture, nutrition, rural development, conservation, and/or water and sanitation, but weak capacity and funding shortages present barriers to their growth.

There are many small but effective CSOs in Tanzania that need additional capacity and skills in administration, organizational development, monitoring and evaluation, and financial systems. This describes, for example, many of the CSOs in the country's SUN civil society nutrition network, PANITA (see the section below). As yet, though, there is no systematic engagement with CSOs to offer them guidance, assistance in building capacity, and/or support in coordinating their critical network. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is an especially important area where small CSOs and the government alike will benefit from additional training and capacity building.

Generally, implementing partners – often not Tanzanian organizations—take sole responsibility for reporting and disseminating project results, which misses an opportunity to engage smaller CSOs. When this happens, data on a project's results and outcomes often is not shared with the communities where it was collected, and valuable lessons are lost. When CSOs are supported in developing their M&E skills, they can collect and share data and information upward into government systems as well as downward to communities in which they live and work. This helps provide transparency in project results as well as enabling all stakeholders to benefit from the data, conclusions, and lessons learned. Africare is one example of an implementing partner in Tanzania that is working to build the capacity of its local NGO partner, COUNSENUTH, as well as that of smaller CSOs in its project. Additional efforts to encourage



this type of partnering among other projects and sectors are being made and can be expanded further. These efforts will ultimately build and strengthen local organizations to become more effective partners and to eventually continue donor-funded efforts.

*“We are a small member of PANITA that is well-positioned to deliver nutrition training and services to villages in rural areas. Our message is one of diet diversity by encouraging small landholders, usually women farmers, to plant traditional fruits and vegetables that have been forgotten. We can increase health and incomes of families, but need to build our capacity in order to be an effective partner to an NGO.”*

– Freda Chale, Regent Estate Senior Women Group (RESEWO)

### Partnership for Nutrition in Tanzania (PANITA)

Formed in 2011, PANITA includes more than 300 CSO members working on nutrition strategies and projects across Tanzania, aided by nine regional coordinators. Originally funded by IrishAid through Save the Children and UNICEF, the organization was registered as an independent civil society network in 2013.

PANITA’s mission is to advance advocacy efforts and improve mobilization and coordination of CSOs to contribute to a more effective response in addressing malnutrition. It is Tanzania’s national alliance for the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement’s civil society section. It also has a seat on the HSCN (described above), which is the body formally responsible for coordinating nutrition actions. PANITA engages members of the Tanzanian Parliament and the House of Representatives in Zanzibar in its advocacy efforts, seeking to persuade them to act as “nutrition champions” in funding and policy deliberations. So far, PANITA is one of the few CSO groups in Feed the Future countries to work directly in legislative advocacy.

PANITA members from nearly every district in the country have joined district nutrition steering committees, and can now influence the government in setting budgets and determining activities. Ranging in size from large, well-established organizations with a strong history of success in nutrition to small village-level organizations, they are united behind the cause of improving nutrition outcomes to bolster the health of women and children. Some are actively engaged as sub-contractors in projects, but many others simply make themselves available to assist in capacity building, training, and project implementation at the village level.

PANITA faces difficulties in connecting with and mobilizing its members. One major challenge is the cost of bringing together 300 members on a regular basis. Most CSO members do not have Internet access, so they cannot

be easily reached via email with updates on nutrition policy, plans, and priorities. Thus, PANITA must find other ways of keeping its membership informed and active on nutrition developments.

### Recommendations

- Efforts to build nutrition technical capacity in the Mission, as well as in TFNC and nutrition CSOs (through PANITA) should be increased so that local partners are equipped to sustain nutrition initiatives beyond project funding cycles.
- In SUN countries, building CSO systems (e.g., accounting, management) and skills (e.g., human resources) is especially important, since this will accelerate efforts to “scale up” national nutrition efforts.
- Increasing opportunities for CSOs to partner on projects is important, because the capacity they build will help sustain successful outcomes, increase the potential to expand the coverage of nutrition actions, and create resiliency at local levels.

## U.S. Government Nutrition Investments in Tanzania

The United States is an important donor partner and is supporting Tanzania’s NNS in many ways. As earlier mentioned, Tanzania hosts an increasing number of global health and food security initiatives. The main U.S. government-funded programs for nutrition-specific interventions and other nutrition-sensitive actions are Feed the Future (FtF), the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) as part of the Global Health Initiative (GHI); the McGovern-Dole International School Feeding and Nutrition Program; Peace Corps; and other USDA-funded projects.

FtF nutrition efforts are being coordinated with PEPFAR’s nutrition investments, which have broad reach in the country. Coordination helps increase the impact of both initiatives. One example is the use of NACS (Nutrition Assessment, Counseling, and Support) materials for service delivery at the health facility and community levels (see below). PEPFAR implementing partners have taken the lead in rolling out the NACS package through facility-based health centers, but not yet at the community and village levels, where much of the Mwanzo Bora Nutrition Program (MBNP), the flagship U.S.-funded nutrition program in Tanzania, will be implemented. Another effort to coordinate nutrition efforts is FtF’s initiative to bring school feeding and Peace Corps projects into a focused four-region “zone of influence.” In addition, the Peace Corps has been proactive

in placing more volunteers in nutrition projects, including with the World Food Program.

## Nutrition in Feed the Future

Mwanzo Bora is Kiswahili for “Good Beginning.” MBNP, funded at \$30 million over five years under FtF and GHI,<sup>11</sup> is an integrated, multi-sectoral nutrition program that operates in three regions of the country as well as Zanzibar. It reaches people in 20 districts, adding more as the project expands. Its overarching objective is to assist the Tanzanian government in implementing the NNS. It focuses on strengthening government and local institutional capacities to scale up and sustain nutrition interventions, with reducing childhood stunting and maternal anemia as priority goals.

MBNP focuses its work in social and behavioral change communication (SBCC), delivery of nutrition services in health facilities, and community-level nutrition interventions. It has developed two SBCC kits, one for community and health workers and the other for farmers and agricultural extension workers, and supports the Tanzanian government in developing its own national SBCC strategy. MBNP trains health workers in communities and facilities that deliver nutrition services to thousands of children. It disseminates nutrition and health education messages to health workers, agricultural extension staff, and rural communities using a variety of communication approaches, including Short Message Service (SMS) technology and local radio stations. As part of the National Social and Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) Strategy, it is envisaged that the MBNP SBCC toolkit and locally developed training programs will be adapted and used across other regions of the country by the government, NGOs, and donor implementing partners. It takes time to develop good SBCC and related information, education, and communication materials, but through MBNP, the stage is set to increase collaboration and share data and materials with other projects. Projects funded through GHI have incorporated nutrition education to some extent, and additional work is being done to connect these projects to MBNP, its SBCC materials, and PEPFAR’s NACS approach.

In addition to supporting the government’s implementation of the NNS, over the past two years MBNP has improved maternal and children’s nutrition services through health facility and community interventions. It has engaged 10 local CSO grantees to implement community nutrition programs in 10 districts, with additional grantees to follow.

MBNP has identified increased capacity—in both human resources and systems and organization—as critical to sustaining its work after project funding ends. To strengthen local institutional capacity and sustainability, MBNP is working closely with both TFNC and its local NGO partner COUNSENUTH (the Center for Counseling, Nutrition, and Health Care). Another effort to improve capacity is a study, funded through MBNP, with recommendations to the Tanzanian government in four broad intervention areas: governance, strategy, and leadership; program delivery, performance management, and organizational culture; systems, processes, and resources; and organizational structure, human resource capacity, recruitment, and development.

*“I like the Mwanzo Bora communications kit very much and hope that it will be made available to the government and other donors so that we can use it to scale up behavior changes with consistent messaging across the country.”*

– Country Director, USAID Implementing Partner

## Nutrition-Sensitive Actions in Other Feed the Future Projects

Tuboreshe Chakula (Let’s Improve Food), an agriculture project, works to create demand for improved nutrition by developing businesses and markets, adapting existing technologies, and training food processors and oversight institutions in technical skills.<sup>12</sup> It has worked closely with the government to develop a locally branded, affordable micro-nutrient powder comprising 10 vitamins and five minerals that have been identified as deficient in the diets of rural Tanzanian children younger than 5. It has already been pilot tested. Consumers consider it affordable at a price of 6 cents per packet.

Most households in rural Tanzania grow their own maize and mill it locally rather than purchasing pre-packaged,



The Wanawake Kwanza (Women First) growers association in Morogoro participate in a Feed the Future project that aims to boost incomes and improve nutrition.

milled flour from stores or local markets. Thus, expanding the coverage and consumption of milled flour enriched with vitamins and minerals entails enabling local millers to fortify flour brought in directly by rural farmers. Tuboreshe Chakula is working to develop local manufacturing capacity for nutrition by supporting the local production of machines that can add precise amounts of micronutrients to corn flour and corn meal as they are produced in small mills.

Two other USAID-funded programs in Tanzania that are working to improve nutrition are the Tanzania Agriculture Productivity Program (TAPP) and the NAFKA Staples Value Chain project. TAPP is a horticulture program. Since 2009, it has been working to develop clusters of commercial farms, smallholders, and agribusinesses in areas with high agricultural potential. It is also working with farmers and producers to integrate nutrition education and training into their work, helping communities recognize the importance and value of local fruits and vegetables in improving nutrition.<sup>13</sup> TAPP is now developing indicators to measure improvements in nutrition.

NAFKA's goal is to reduce poverty and food insecurity in three regions by working with rural communities and the Tanzanian government to increase the incomes of smallholder rice and corn farmers. It seeks to do this by improving farmer productivity and competitiveness, facilitating local and regional trade, supporting economic development all along the rice and corn supply chains, and improving household nutrition by introducing more nutritious local diets. NAFKA integrates agricultural, gender, environment, and nutritional development efforts to most effectively raise smallholder farmer productivity and profitability.<sup>14</sup> NAFKA is also developing indicators to measure improved nutrition outcomes.

#### Recommendation

- The USAID Nutrition Strategy needs to inform and provide guidance to FtF projects as they begin to include nutrition objectives in their planning. Technical support for developing objectives and targets for nutrition-sensitive actions within M&E frameworks is needed from Mission managers.

## USAID Mission Technical Capacity

In 2010, the Mission identified the need for a senior level nutrition advisor with a mandate to coordinate nutrition actions across offices and departments. It placed the position in the Economic Growth team. A Locally Engaged Staff Nutrition and Safety Nets Specialist was also hired to develop and oversee the implementation of the MBNP and other nutrition projects. Another contract nutrition advisor was hired in 2012 for one year, and subsequently a senior

agriculture officer with nutrition responsibilities was hired.

Technical guidance was provided by USAID's Bureau of Food Security and Global Health Bureau as well as by technical staff from the Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance Program (FANTA III) project to develop USAID Tanzania's nutrition portfolio under FtF, and in the design of the MBNP and nutrition-related components of the FtF Tanzania Results Framework. The Mission nutrition portfolio is currently managed by the Office of Economic Growth and the FtF Team Lead, with primary funding from the Global Health Bureau and other funding for nutrition integration from FtF agriculture projects. The Mission Director attends the HSCN meetings with the government on behalf of USAID.

In Bread for the World Institute's July 2012 briefing paper "Scaling Up Nutrition: Bolstering U.S. Government Capacity," we discussed ways of increasing and strengthening nutrition capacity at headquarters and overseas. The paper's recommendations included:

*Appoint full-time nutrition staff in USAID missions in target countries.*

*Discussion: These Mission Nutrition Coordinators (similar to the recently filled Mission Gender Advisor positions) would help develop a coordinated nutrition strategy at the mission level to support country-led nutrition strategies and would contribute to the joint planning and management of integrated nutrition portfolios. They would be the key liaisons with the Nutrition Coordinators at headquarters and would coordinate with the host government, local and international civil society organizations, and other donors who support SUN activities in-country. Working with technical staff, the Mission Nutrition Coordinator will help the mission address nutrition policy issues across the portfolio. This may include developing in-house nutrition capacity, providing technical assistance, reporting on nutrition, and guiding policy and programs. The coordinators need not be formally trained nutritionists, but they should have sufficient knowledge, skills, and abilities in nutrition technical interventions—perhaps based on field experience or collaborative work with implementing partners or other donors—to fulfill these responsibilities.*

#### Recommendations

- Missions with high profile nutrition programs need a permanent, full-time senior-level nutrition advisor on staff who can help facilitate the coordination of internal and external efforts to integrate nutrition-sensitive actions. The advisors will also be able to support the staff of other U.S. government agencies as nutrition objectives are included in their new project solicitations.



## Coordination and Support for Nutrition Programs

The Mission uses nutrition technical support provided by the USAID headquarters-funded FANTA III, as do PEPFAR implementing partners in their rollout of the NACS approach. This is a good platform for delivering both direct (nutrition-specific) interventions and indirect (nutrition-sensitive) actions at health facilities and in communities. The development of nutrition-sensitive actions (as well as the identification of indicators and measures) in FtF and other programs has been slow because of the difficulty of “retro-fitting” projects that have already been approved and funded. Each project’s scope of work has already been defined, funded, and staffed. Thus, although agriculture and food security projects with significant funding are being implemented, they do not have the technical capacity or the dedicated resources to effectively implement nutrition-sensitive interventions.

Since language about nutrition-sensitive actions and targets has not been routinely included in solicitations, many health, HIV/AIDS, and agriculture program implementers do not yet have a strong mandate to integrate nutrition in ways that will significantly contribute to the high-level nutrition objectives of FtF and GHI and of the NNS. One consistency in FtF Missions operations, certainly true in Tanzania, is that staff resources are stretched. With large portfolios to manage, it is difficult for staff to take on additional project management responsibilities related to nutrition over and above what they are already managing.

The New Alliance for Food and Nutrition (NAFSN)<sup>15</sup> was launched in 2012, a joint effort of G-8 countries to accelerate investment in African agriculture. Country Cooperation Frameworks that include policy reforms, private investment intentions, and donor commitments to align funding with recipient country priorities have been negotiated. Nutrition is an important component in NAFSN, and U.S. commitments will be channeled through FtF. Tanzania is a Phase 1 country in the USAID-funded New Alliance Partnership Program (NAPP) initiative, aimed at strengthening the organizational and financial capacity of civil society to engage in food security and agricultural development policy processes. These two initiatives have significant nutrition components that will require additional time and attention from Mission FtF staff.

Efforts to further develop nutrition programs, indicators, and measures will require additional resources in projects and the support of senior managers. Coordinating meetings that share project updates and experiences are being held, but improving nutrition outcomes is just a piece of USAID’s overall development assistance efforts. There is a growing



Eating chicken is a rare occurrence but offers early introduction of protein to children.

Scott Bleggi

knowledge of nutrition linkages in different projects, and an interest in expanding nutrition discussions among Peace Corps, PEPFAR, GHI, and FtF staff. But without a sustained push from Mission and headquarters managers, it will be difficult to advance nutrition efforts (especially M&E) among busy operations staff.

## Recommendations

- Guidance on coordination across U.S. government nutrition investments, as well as with others working toward improving similar objectives in Tanzania, is needed to ensure that actions are complementary, sustainable, and providing assistance that enables the government to meet its National Nutrition Strategy goals and objectives.
- Program implementing partners and contractors need to be encouraged to apply existing M&E guidance, nutrition objectives, and measures to current projects. Future FtF proposals need to incorporate nutrition-sensitive approaches and measures to maximize nutrition outcomes in all sectors.
- Chiefs of Party, project managers, and implementing partners can be better connected with technical support mechanisms (FANTA III; Strengthening Partnerships, Results, and Innovations in Nutrition Globally-SPRING) to assist them in selecting high-impact nutrition interventions within their respective programs.

## Conclusions

The NNS and its Implementation Plan serve to focus dialogue among government and donor stakeholders and to frame actions and investments around a set of agreed priority areas and nutrition interventions. However, funding

from both government and donor sources is expected to fall short of what is needed to fully implement the NNS and “scale up” nutrition on a national scale by 2016. This funding gap will require the government and its partners to work together closely to identify potential resources and new collaborative efforts. Doing more with less to achieve nutrition targets, build sustainable efforts, and improve community resilience entails improving the efficiency of program delivery.

It has been a significant challenge to bring ministries, donors, and other development assistance partners together to work on a common plan for improving nutrition in Tanzania. Coordination of nutrition efforts is improving under new and evolving coordination structures—both within the Tanzanian government (within and across ministries, TFNC, the President’s Office, and the Prime Minister’s Office) and between the government and its development partners (donors, NGOs, and CSOs), but continued improvements in coordination require sustained efforts by all involved. A push to re-focus government and donor activities on scaling up programs at the district and community levels is helping to mobilize a nutrition agenda with added resilience and, hopefully, sustainability.

There is much to learn from the implementation of MBNP thus far and the challenges that the Mission and its implementing partners are facing in effectively integrating nutrition into its development projects. The most important of these include encouraging collaboration among projects and persuading “non-nutrition” projects to start viewing nutrition-sensitive actions as an important area that needs objectives, targets, and measureable indicators. MBNP is providing technical support to strengthen the capacity of local partners while also measuring results so as to build an evidence base of effective approaches. These lessons, if well documented and widely shared, can inform other Feed the Future Missions as well as the implementation of the USAID and whole-of-U.S.-government Nutrition Strategies.

Tanzania has made multiple awards for projects with significant nutrition components. These include social and behavioral change communication, service delivery, community-level interventions, food fortification, nutrition education, and training to improve value chains in horticulture and staple crops. These cover a significant portion of USAID’s Nutrition Strategy Intermediate Results and complement Tanzania’s own NNS and Implementation Plan. It will be essential to continue efforts to coordinate nutrition targets and measures, confirming that projects are working in a synchronized way to achieve their overall objectives and help countries scale up their own nutrition actions.

As Missions create or build on flagship nutrition projects, supporting the agency’s nutrition strategy by inte-

grating clear objectives and common indicators should be a primary consideration. Collaboration among donors can be improved by sharing work plans, tools, educational materials (e.g., Behavioral Change Communication kits), monitoring and evaluation frameworks, and reporting on nutrition-sensitive actions. Undertaking more operational research and more regular sharing of program successes and challenges will enable the development of a nutrition “community of practice” among USAID project staff and implementing partners. USAID centrally-funded projects, such as SPRING<sup>16</sup> and FANTA, can be more extensively used to strengthen both global and country efforts to scale up high-impact nutrition practices and policies—efforts that are taking place at the intersection of FtF and GHI efforts.

When projects that have already been awarded attempt to retrofit nutrition elements, it is difficult to get the best mix and coverage of nutrition-specific interventions and nutrition-sensitive actions. It is important, however, to use feedback from current experiences to inform future rounds of nutrition procurements. Integrating nutrition objectives and measures in nutrition-sensitive FtF projects will build an evidence base of successful outcomes that can guide nutrition investments.

## **Annex 1: Other International NGO and Donor-Funded Nutrition Efforts**

In addition to USAID, the Irish Government (Irish Aid) has been a strong supporter of nutrition in Tanzania over the past four to five years. Along with USAID, Irish Aid currently serves as the SUN Donor Co-Convenor; in this role, they represent the wider donor community and help to facilitate work with the government. The United Kingdom Agency for International Development (UKAid) has also recently started to invest in nutrition in Tanzania, particularly in the area of food fortification. Save the Children, Concern Worldwide, Helen Keller International (HKI), the Ifakara Health Institute, and several other local and international NGOs have also been working with the government and the broader nutrition community through the Development Partners Group (DPG)-Nutrition to support activities within the National Nutrition Strategy and its Implementation Plan.

HKI, for example, has been working to scale up the production and consumption of orange-fleshed sweet potatoes in two districts in the Mwanza region. This is an evidence-based way to improve the nutritional status of vulnerable populations, increase household income, and reduce livelihood insecurity. The project provides training in storage, drying, processing, and marketing and links producers to market opportunities. Focal groups within the project pro-

vide nutrition education. HKI also manages a number of other projects, including food fortification and a program seeking to improve the health and nutrition curriculum in 40 Tanzanian schools.

The World Bank has focused its nutrition efforts on micronutrient malnutrition, largely through investments in food fortification. The World Bank, Helen Keller International, DFID (the U.K. government), GAIN, USAID, and others are working with government and the private sector to enable rural “hammer mills” that mill locally grown corn and sorghum to fortify their grain cost-effectively. Similar to the USAID-funded Tuboreshe Chakula project, this rural food fortification program is working alongside the national food fortification program and aims to make fortified foods more accessible and acceptable. It also focuses on demonstrating how hammer mill and home fortification programs can be designed and implemented through existing government programs; plans are for it to collect data on how such programs can be sustained and scaled up in different regions of the country.

## UN Agencies

The United Nations Development Assistance Plan (UNDAP) is the five-year business plan for 20 UN agencies in Tanzania, covering their funding and programs. It is designed to support the achievement of the Tanzanian government’s development goals as well as the MDGs. In nutrition, UNDAP focuses on strengthening community health structures for promoting better local health and nutrition behaviors. The UN supports a review of these structures and expansion of training and quality accreditation to strengthen community health services and equip them to respond to increased demand across the country. UNICEF, as the lead agency on nutrition, works with the Tanzanian government to integrate nutrition into policies, plans, and budgets, and to strengthen the abilities of institutions to deliver nutrition services. WFP works on food supplementation and food fortification; it also supports dialogue on nutrition within the agriculture sector. WHO has become increasingly involved in nutrition in Tanzania, with efforts focused on building capacity to produce technical guidelines on nutrition and on integrating nutrition interventions into health programming.

REACH is an inter-agency consortium comprised of FAO, WHO, UNICEF, WFP, and partners from the NGO community, academia, the private sector, and donors. It is not an implementing agency but a catalyst for building in-country multi-sector nutrition capacity governance that creates a space for government and donors to scale up nutrition interventions. It has identified priority nutrition outcomes and at this writing is completing an extensive mapping

project. This shows nutrition conditions, stakeholders, and all nutrition interventions in the country being conducted by development donors and their implementing partners.

### Nutrition Objectives Identified by REACH in Tanzania

Increased awareness of the problem and of potential solutions  
Strengthened national policies and programs  
Increased capacity at all levels for action  
Increased efficiency and accountability

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> The Lancet’s first series on MCN is accessible at <http://www.thelancet.com/series/maternal-and-child-undernutrition>, and the second at <http://www.thelancet.com/series/maternal-and-child-nutrition>

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization global targets to improve maternal, infant and young child nutrition accessible at [http://www.who.int/nutrition/topics/nutrition\\_globaltargets2025/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/nutrition/topics/nutrition_globaltargets2025/en/index.html)

<sup>3</sup> The SUN Country Framework is accessible at [http://scalingupnutrition.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/SUN\\_Framework.pdf](http://scalingupnutrition.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/SUN_Framework.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> The 2014 New Year Message from the SUN Movement Coordinator is accessible at <http://scalingupnutrition.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/2014-SUN-Movement-New-Year-Message.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Secretary Clinton’s comments are accessible at <https://blogs.state.gov/stories/2011/06/12/travel-diary-secretary-clinton-visits-tanzania>

<sup>6</sup> Tanzania Demographic and Health Survey, 2010

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> World Bank data on nutrition in Tanzania is accessible at <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/NUTRITION/Resources/281846-1271963823772/Tanzania.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> President Kikwetwe’s Call for Action is accessible at <http://scalingupnutrition.org/news/president-of-tanzania-sets-out-his-call-for-action-on-nutrition#Uvpax2JdUfU>

<sup>10</sup> The government’s investment plan is accessible at <ftp://ftp.fao.org/tc/tca/WEB/FTP/TC/TCA/CAADP%20TT/CAADP%20Implementation/CAADP%20Post-Compact/Investment%20Plans/National%20Agricultural%20Investment%20Plans/Tanzania%20CAADP%20Post-Compact%20Investment%20Plan.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Details on MBNP are accessible at [http://www.africare.org/documents/MBNPBrief\\_goal\\_objectives\\_beneficiaries.pdf](http://www.africare.org/documents/MBNPBrief_goal_objectives_beneficiaries.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> The “Let’s Improve Food” project is accessible at <http://www.abtassociates.com/noteworthy/2013/simple-commercial-solutions-to-reduce-malnutrition.aspx>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.tanzania-agric.org/>

<sup>14</sup> The Staples Value Chain project is accessible at <http://www.acdivoca.org/site/ID/tanzania-staples-value-chain-NAFAKA>

<sup>15</sup> Details of NAFSN are accessible at <http://feedthefuture.gov/article/new-alliance-food-security-and-nutrition-0>

<sup>16</sup> Background and information on the SPRING project is available at <http://www.spring-nutrition.org/>





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