



breadfortheworld
HAVE FAITH. END HUNGER.

Fortified for Life

How the U.S. Government Supports Global Nutrition

Why is Nutrition so Important?

Good nutrition is a critical part of ensuring that all human beings can use their bodies and minds to live an active life and reach their full potential. Good nutrition during the 1,000 days from a woman's pregnancy to her child's second birthday is crucial to ensuring the child's health, physical growth, and brain development. Assisting mothers and children with nutrition must be accompanied by good bodily and household care practices, clean environments, and access to health services.

A great deal of progress has been made globally in reducing malnutrition, but there is still a long way to go. Nearly half of all preventable child deaths are linked to malnutrition¹, and in 2015, 159 million children were physically stunted, a consequence of chronic malnutrition.² Early childhood malnutrition also stunts a child's future, limiting his or her ability to grow, learn, earn a living, become self-sufficient, and move out of poverty, due to malnutrition's harmful effects on cognitive growth as well. Children suffering from poor nutrition are more vulnerable to illnesses in their early years and into adulthood. Expectant mothers who are malnourished are at higher risk of bearing malnourished children, perpetuating an intergenerational cycle of malnutrition.

Given the relationship between nutrition and a child's health and learning abilities, there are economic impacts as well as health impacts. Studies have shown that improved nutrition can increase a person's lifetime earnings by 46 percent.³ Scaling up nutrition assistance



Laura Elizabeth Pohl for Bread for the World

can boost a country's GDP by 11 percent each year⁴, and research shows that every dollar invested in nutrition generates as much as \$166 in benefits related to better health and productivity.⁵

As one of the largest donors to global maternal and child health programs, the U.S. has long led the international community in efforts to improve child survival. Through the 1,000 Days Partnership, the U.S. has helped raise awareness about the devastating impact of malnutrition and mobilized support for the global Scaling Up Nutrition Movement. The Sustainable



Experts in economics agree that fighting malnutrition should be the top priority for policy makers and philanthropists.*

*Copenhagen Consensus, 2012

Development Goals adopted by all nations in September 2015 aim to end hunger, malnutrition, and preventable child deaths by 2030. To help achieve these ambitious and transformative goals, the U.S. must demonstrate continued leadership in improving global nutrition.

U.S. Government Funding for Nutrition

The funding for nutrition within the U.S. government's Global Health Programs provides life-saving nutrition assistance to women and children around the world. Nutrition assistance can take many forms, from education and behavior-change programs to providing specific foods and health care and managing cases of acute malnutrition. Examples of nutrition assistance:

- Education and guidance for mothers on early and exclusive breastfeeding
- Supplementing and fortifying food with micronutrients, including vitamin A, iron, folic acid, calcium, and iodine
- Nutrition counseling for mothers and families and support groups, such as mothers groups and care groups
- Management, in places such as hospitals, of acute malnutrition using food rations and therapeutic foods, which provide the necessary protein, energy, fat, vitamins, and minerals for survival

U.S. government funding for global nutrition programs has seen modest increases over the last few years, from \$95 million in fiscal year 2013 to \$125 million in FY 2016. However, this funding is low compared to the need, and given the enormous impact that nutrition has on the health and economic growth of entire nations. Nutrition represents only 4 percent of the total global health spending through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and USAID's global health spending is less than a tenth of a percent of the whole federal budget.

The World Bank, Results for Development Institute, and

1,000 Days recently released data showing that it will cost approximately \$49.6 billion over the next 10 years to reach the global target of reducing stunting by 40 percent.⁶ Reaching the global targets for nutrition will require commitment from both countries and donors. For FY 2017, Bread for the World is asking Congress to fund nutrition in global health programs at \$230 million. This additional \$105 million from the U.S. government could help it reach more than 12.3 million⁷ more women and children, based on the cost estimates from the World Bank and partners. The total \$230 million investment could reach more than 27 million⁸ women and children with nutritional support to reduce stunting in FY 2017. Increased funding and effective policies would be an investment in the health, well-being, and economic security of many countries.

The world has agreed to work toward a goal of ending all forms of malnutrition by 2030. The U.S. plays a critical role in achieving these goals along with other donors and national governments. Alongside other investments in agriculture, health, water and sanitation, and economic development, ending malnutrition is possible by 2030. The U.S. government must do its part to improve nutrition and health among mothers and children.



Joseph Moller/Bread for the World

TAKE ACTION: Call (800/826-3688) or email your representative and senators today and tell them to increase funding for nutrition in global health programs to at least \$230 million in fiscal year 2017.

Endnotes

¹ Black RE, Victora CG, Walker SP, et al. (2013). Maternal and child undernutrition and overweight in low-income and middle-income countries. *The Lancet* 382 (9890): 396.

² UNICEF/WHO/World Bank (2015). Joint child malnutrition estimates – Levels and trends (2015 edition). Accessed at www.who.int/nutgrowthdb/estimates2014/en/.

³ Hoddinott J, Maluccio J, Behrman J, et al. (2008). Effect of a nutrition intervention during early childhood on economic productivity in Guatemalan adults. *The Lancet* 371 (9610): 411-416.

⁴ Horton S and RH Steckel. (2013). Malnutrition: Global Economic Losses Attributable to Malnutrition 1900-2000 and Projections to 2050. In *How Much Have Global Problems Cost the Earth? A scorecard from 1900 to 2050*, edited by B. Lomborg, 247-272.

New York: Cambridge University Press.

⁵ Hoddinott J S Horton. (2014). Perspective Paper: Benefits and Costs of the Food Security and Nutrition Targets for the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Copenhagen Consensus 2014. Accessed at www.copenhagenconsensus.com/publication/post-2015-consensus-food-security-and-nutrition-perspective-horton-hoddinott.

⁶ World Bank, R4D, 1,000 Days. (2014). Reaching the Global Target to Reduce Stunting: How Much Will it Cost and How Can We Pay for it?

⁷ Based on the estimated annual investment of \$8.50 per child necessary to reach the global stunting target. From Reaching the Global Target to Reduce Stunting: How Much Will it Cost and How Can We Pay for It? Accessed at <http://thousanddays.org/tadays-content/uploads/Stunting-Costing-and-Financing-Overview-Brief.pdf>.

⁸ Ibid.