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A multi-sectoral approach to nutrition: Assessing USAID's progress

by Jordan Teague

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**“Optimal nutrition is
fundamental to achieving
USAID’s wider mission.”**

– *USAID Multi-Sectoral
Nutrition Strategy*

Virginia Lamprecht / Photoshare



SUMMARY AND HIGHLIGHTS

Better nutrition is a necessary component of a country's capacity to achieve development goals such as economic growth and improved public health. USAID's Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy provides a roadmap to elevate and integrate nutrition as a priority for all of the agency's work to support countries to achieve these goals. While having the Strategy in place has elevated the profile of maternal and child nutrition at USAID and brought high-level action on nutrition, USAID must build on and strengthen its multisector nutrition efforts to accelerate progress on nutrition. USAID should:

- Ensure sufficient, equitable, and well-targeted funding for global nutrition
- Set and monitor SMART targets for nutrition across the agency
- Provide analysis and guidance on programmatic strategies to maximize nutrition outcomes
- Establish permanent positions for nutrition focal points at headquarters and in missions

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BFWI	Bread for the World Institute	RFP	Request for proposals
CDCS	Country Development and Coordination Strategy	PAHAL	Promoting Agriculture, Health, and Alternative Livelihoods
GFSS	U.S. Government Global Food Security Strategy	POC	Point of contact
GLEE	Global Learning and Evidence Exchange	SMART	Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound
GNCP	U.S. Government Global Nutrition Coordination Plan	SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition
KISAN	Knowledge-Based Integrated Sustainable Agriculture in Nepal	TWG	Technical Working Group
MSNP	Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Plan	USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
MSNS	USAID Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy	WASH	Water, sanitation, and hygiene
OMB	Office of Management and Budget	WHA	World Health Assembly
RFA	Request for applications		

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BOX 1: GLOBAL NUTRITION TARGETS

2025 WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY GLOBAL NUTRITION TARGETS

- 40% reduction in the number of children under-5 who are stunted
- 50% reduction of anemia in women of reproductive age
- 30% reduction in low birth weight
- No increase in childhood overweight
- Increase the rate of exclusive breastfeeding in the first 6 months up to at least 50%
- Reduce and maintain childhood wasting to less than 5%

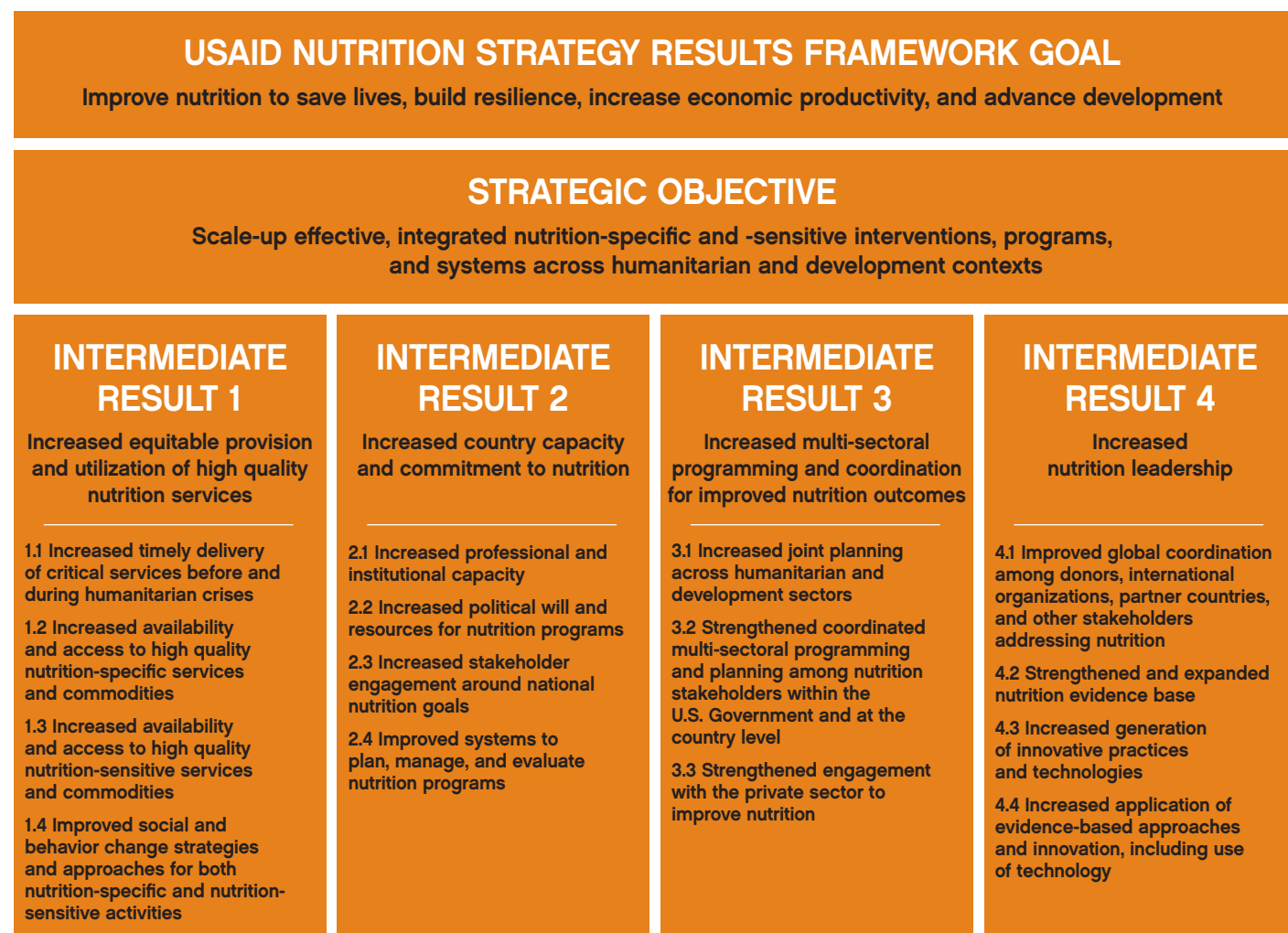


2030 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- End malnutrition in all its forms



FIGURE 1: **USAID Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy Results Framework**



Source: USAID Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy 2014-2025

Background

In 2014, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) launched the first Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy¹ (hereafter called MSNS or Strategy), spanning the years 2014-2025. The Strategy is aligned with the 2025 World Health Assembly (WHA) global nutrition targets (see Box 1).

At USAID, nutrition plays a prominent role in both global health programs and Feed the Future, the U.S. government's flagship global food security initiative. The MSNS provides a roadmap to elevate and integrate nutrition as a priority for all of USAID's work—especially within agriculture, food assistance, health, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) (see Figure 1) programs. The Strategy formally identifies improving maternal and child nutrition as a fundamental aspect of achieving USAID's overall mission of ending extreme poverty and calls for the scale up of “effective, integrated nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions, programs, and systems across humanitarian and development contexts.”

Bread for the World Institute (BFWI) had pressed for and supported the development of this strategy. Our 2012 briefing paper, *Scaling Up Global Nutrition: Bolstering U.S. Government Capacity*,² called for a whole-of-government approach, including a strategy and budget, to improve global maternal and child nutrition. In partnership with others in the Washington, DC, global nutrition advocacy community, BFWI urged USAID to develop a multi-sectoral nutrition strategy as part of a package of commitments at the 2013 Nutrition for Growth summit. Following the summit, then-USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah announced USAID's intention to develop and implement

a multi-sectoral nutrition strategy for USAID during an international maternal and child nutrition meeting co-hosted by BFWI and Concern Worldwide.

USAID committed to periodic assessments to measure progress toward the Strategy's objectives and to review and adjust the Strategy as necessary. At the time of this writing, in mid-2018, USAID is conducting the first of these assessments. This paper explores the Strategy's impact on USAID's nutrition work. Over the past four years, how has the Strategy supported USAID headquarters and missions, along with USAID implementing partners, to make progress toward the global nutrition targets across its programs?

This briefing paper is intended to complement USAID's assessment of the MSNS. It highlights both successes and challenges identified in our interviews and field research, and it offers recommendations for sustaining and strengthening the impact of the Strategy on progress toward the 2025 global nutrition targets and the 2030 goal to end malnutrition in all its forms (see Box 1).

Methods

Between February 2018 and May 2018, the BFWI team conducted interviews with key USAID officials in a wide range of bureaus and offices (see Annex 1). The interviews, conducted via in-person meetings, phone calls, and email, sought to understand progress in implementing the MSNS. The team also explored country-level programs in Ethiopia, Guatemala, and Nepal. In addition to demonstrating political commitment to nutrition (for example, through participation in the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement), all three countries are Feed the Future target countries, USAID nutrition priority countries, and current (2018) participants in Food for Peace non-emergency programs.

After conducting a desk review of key documents on the implementation of USAID and national level nutrition policies and programs in each country (see Annex 2), the BFWI team interviewed key nutrition-related personnel at each USAID mission. Finally, in May 2018, the team traveled to Nepal to conduct field research, which included site visits to USAID nutrition, health, and food security projects (see Box 2).

BOX 2: MAY 2018 BFWI NUTRITION SITE VISITS IN NEPAL

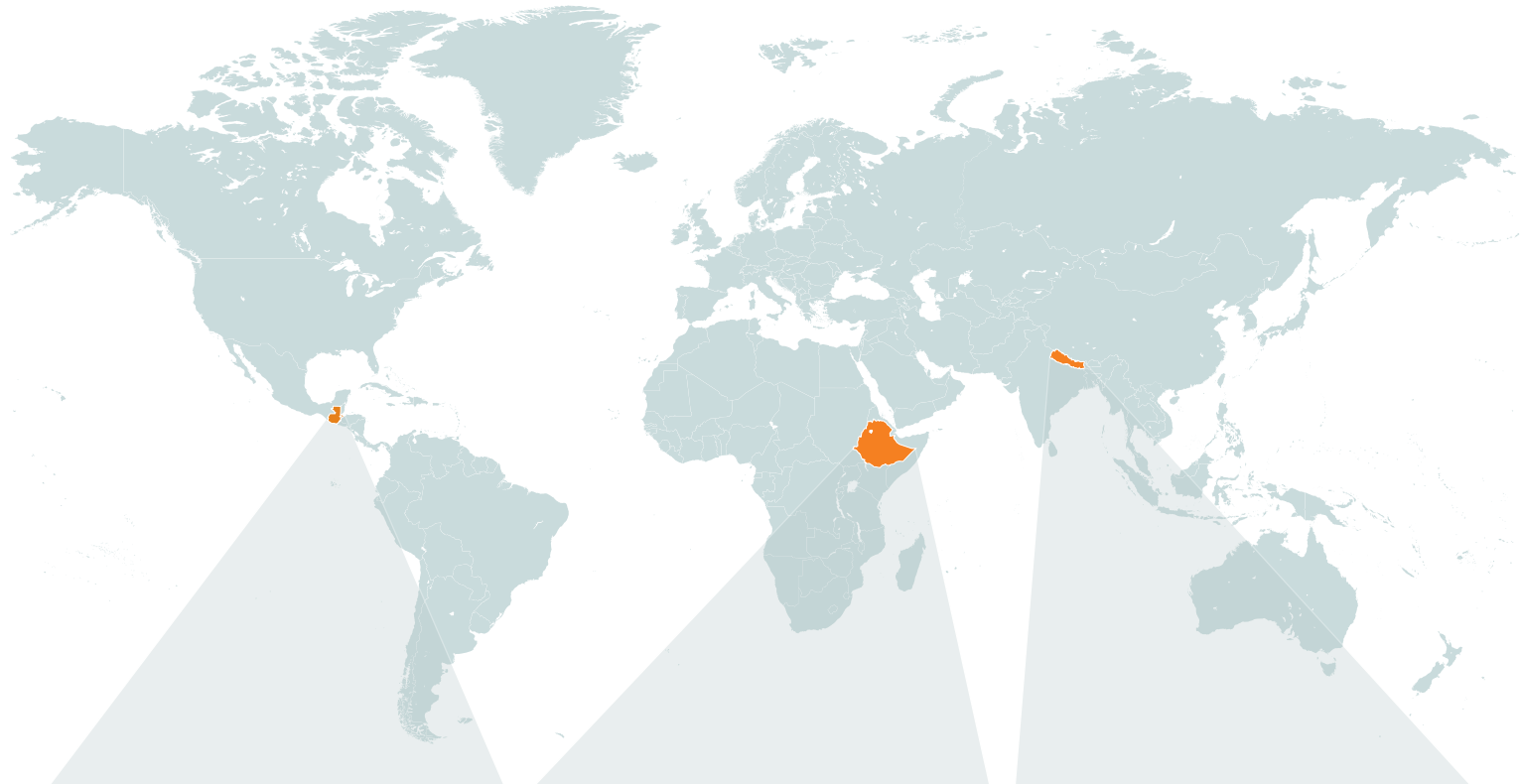
In May 2018, the BFWI team traveled to western Nepal and visited three USAID partners implementing nutrition, health, and food security projects.

The team visited:

- The Suaahara II project, a bilateral multi-sectoral nutrition program led by Helen Keller International;
- PAHAL, a Food for Peace development food security initiative led by Mercy Corps; and
- KISAN II, a Feed the Future program led by Winrock International.



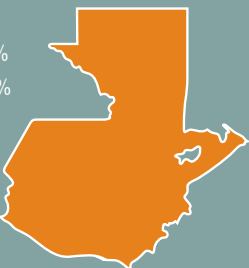
Ekata Women Farmers' Group, a beneficiary of KISAN II, a Feed the Future project in Nepal.



BOX 3: GUATEMALA

Key Nutrition Statistics³

- Stunting: 47%
- Wasting: less than 1%
- Anemia, children: 32%
- Anemia, women: 14%
- Exclusive breastfeeding: 53%



Key USAID Nutrition Efforts in 2018⁴

- **Global Health**
 - Maternal and Child Survival Program
 - Health and Education Policy Plus
 - Health and Nutrition Surveillance System
 - International Food Policy Research Institute
- **Feed the Future**
 - Fomenting Agriculture Incomes and Resilience Projects
 - Cooperative Development Program
 - Buena Milpa
 - Innovation for Collaboration Research on Grain Legumes
- **Food for Peace**
 - Food Security Focused on the 1,000-Day Window of Opportunity
 - Western Highlands Program of Integrated Actions for Food Security and Nutrition

BOX 4: ETHIOPIA

Key Nutrition Statistics⁵

- Stunting: 38%
- Wasting: 10%
- Anemia, children: 57%
- Anemia, women: 24%
- Exclusive breastfeeding: 58%



Key USAID Nutrition Efforts in 2018⁶

- **Global Health**
 - Maternal and Child Survival Program
 - Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance (FANTA) III
- **Feed the Future**
 - Growth through Nutrition
 - Ethiopia Value Chain Activity
 - Agriculture Knowledge, Learning, Documentation, and Policy
 - Smallholder Horticulture Project
 - Land Administration to Nurture Development
 - Environmental Entrepreneurship Program
- **Food for Peace**
 - Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Program

BOX 5: NEPAL

Key Nutrition Statistics⁷

- Stunting: 36%
- Wasting: 10%
- Anemia, children: 53%
- Anemia, women: 41%
- Exclusive breastfeeding: 66%



Key USAID Nutrition Efforts in 2018⁸

- **Global Health**
 - Suahara II—Integrated Nutrition Program
- **Feed the Future**
 - Knowledge-Based Integrated Sustainable Agriculture in Nepal II Project
 - Nutrition Innovation Lab
 - Innovation Lab for the Reduction of Post-Harvest Loss
- **Food for Peace**
 - Promoting Agriculture, Health, and Alternative Livelihoods
 - Sustainable Action for Resilience and Food Security

What has the USAID Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy accomplished in its first four years?

The Strategy has increased coordination on nutrition activities among the main relevant bureaus and offices at USAID (the Bureau for Global Health, the Bureau for Food Security, and the Office of Food for Peace) in Washington, DC, and, to a certain extent, in USAID missions. This improved coordination has elevated the profile of nutrition, and, in certain contexts, facilitated coordination among implementing partners to improve nutrition outcomes.

USAID/Nepal Nutrition Coordination in Western Nepal

The work of USAID/Nepal implementing partners is a good example of coordination among partners and programs for nutrition. In western Nepal, the BFWI team visited three programs whose activities overlap in 11 districts: Suaahara II, PAHAL, and KISAN II (see figure 2). In these 11 districts, representatives from each of the implementing partners meet for monthly coordination meetings.

Suaahara II provides specific support for coordination, designating a Regional Linkages Manager to coordinate Suaahara II activities with the work of other USAID implementing partners in the area. This is by USAID design. Suaahara II has been designated as the flagship nutrition project in Nepal, supporting the efforts of the other two programs—KISAN II and PAHAL—to incorporate a nutrition lens into their planning and implementation. For example, Suaahara II works with the other programs to ensure that all three projects are using similar nutrition materials and messages. Suaahara II offers nutrition and health perspectives to help the other programs make their activities more nutrition-responsive. For example, Suaahara II worked with PAHAL in the Salyan district to train PAHAL's resilience facilitators on nutrition, including nutrition-related growth monitoring.

COORDINATION MECHANISMS

To develop the MSNS, USAID established a Technical Working Group (TWG) consisting of at least one representative from all bureaus at USAID/Washington and led by the Nutrition Division of the Global Health Bureau. Following the launch of the Strategy, the TWG oversaw its implementation, provided guidance and education, and supported learning opportunities for USAID Missions. The TWG has continued to attract interest and participation from across the Agency and still has representation from all bureaus.

This formal coordination mechanism serves several additional purposes as well. For example, in 2016, Congress was considering legislation related to U.S. global food security and nutrition efforts. With the TWG already established, USAID was able to respond more rapidly and effectively to nutrition proposals, thereby speaking with one voice to ensure that effective policies on improving nutrition continued to be a priority.

While formal mechanisms such as the TWG are not always in place in USAID missions, staff from various offices

still coordinate on nutrition-related efforts, albeit on an ad-hoc basis. USAID/Guatemala has a formal Nutrition Committee, composed of representatives from each technical team, which meets monthly. This may stem from the mission's previous experience using formal working groups in implementing their Western Highlands Integrated Program (WHIP) Strategy, an initiative for which all USAID-funded programs closely coordinated on their work in Guatemala's Western Highlands. The USAID/Nepal mission also has a Nutrition and Food Security Working Group that, in June 2018, agreed to meet once each month. The USAID/Ethiopia mission previously had formal nutrition working groups, but due to staffing gaps at the time of this writing, the coordination is mostly ad-hoc.

FOCAL POINTS

A critical step in enabling efficient coordination among offices and bureaus is to identify focal points, or points of contact (POCs), within each team or office. These personnel serve as their group's liaison with coordination mechanisms such as the TWG. Nutrition focal points or coordinators can help ensure that nutrition is adequately incorporated into the work plans of relevant offices or teams, such as agriculture or health. The reverse also applies—they can represent the interests of these other sectors or teams during meetings and other coordination efforts on nutrition.

USAID/Washington has completed this step by including at least one representative from each bureau in the TWG. Some, but not all, USAID missions have also identified nutrition focal points. Within USAID/Ethiopia, for example, one staff person in the Economic Growth and Transformation Office, which oversees Feed the Future investments, is the Nutrition Coordinator for the mission overall. This person manages the mission's flagship multi-sectoral nutrition activity and coordinates with both internal and external stakeholders regarding nutrition.

FIGURE 2: Suaahara II, KISAN II, and Food for Peace Districts in Nepal



Source: USAID

In Nepal, a Nutrition Specialist sits in the Health Office as the focal person for nutrition at the mission and manages a flagship multi-sectoral integrated nutrition program. The Nutrition Specialist closely coordinates with the other relevant teams, such as those overseeing Feed the Future, Food for Peace, and WASH projects, and coordinates the Nutrition and Food Security Working Group. This person is essentially the informal nutrition coordinator at the USAID/Nepal mission.

DEVELOPING RELEVANT STRATEGIES

Since 2014, the U.S. government has developed multiple strategies and plans related to nutrition. These include the U.S. Government Global Nutrition Coordination Plan (GNCP), the USAID Food Assistance and Food Security Strategy, the U.S. Government Global Food Security Strategy (GFSS), and Country Plans for each of the 12 countries that are part of the GFSS. Having the above coordination mechanisms and POCs in place enabled efficient and effective coordination in developing nutrition-related plans, as noted previously at the USAID/Washington level.

At the USAID mission level, having a focal point or nutrition POC has proven to be useful in ensuring incorporation of nutrition in diverse development strategies and plans. For example, Nepal was selected in 2016 as one of Feed the Future's second phase target countries. USAID/Nepal and the other 11 USAID missions were tasked with developing Country Plans that made improving nutrition a key objective. As noted earlier, the Nutrition Specialist in the USAID/Nepal mission sits in the Health Office. Nonetheless, this informal nutrition coordinator contributed significantly to the Country Plan for Feed the Future, particularly in developing specific work activities to meet the nutrition objective.

ENABLING FACTORS

This analysis identified some enabling factors for positive results in implementing the Strategy, which are important to note for the future.

USAID leadership

If a strategy such as the MSNS, which reaches across multiple sectors with various funding sources and levels, is to succeed, leadership “buy in” is imperative. Leadership must support the strategy’s goals and be willing to direct agency staff to dedicate time to its activities. The Strategy has had some success in engaging leadership and garnering support and action on nutrition at both the headquarters level and the USAID mission level.

When the effort to implement the USAID nutrition strategy was first starting, in 2014, then-Administrator Rajiv Shah endorsed the MSNS and encouraged USAID/Washington staff to coordinate nutrition initiatives across agriculture, health, WASH, and food assistance programs. This enabled the TWG to continue its work and enabled staff to develop and disseminate technical guidance in implementing the new MSNS.

At the mission level, the degree of support from the Mission Director has proven to be a significant factor in whether missions embrace the Strategy. The USAID/Ethiopia Mission Director is clear in her support for making nutrition a higher priority and coordinating efforts to produce better outcomes. This helps to strengthen the currently ad-hoc coordination of nutrition programs in Ethiopia. Similarly, one of the top priorities of the USAID/Nepal Mission Director in Nepal is to reduce stunting, and nutrition has been one of the primary priorities of the USAID/Nepal mission since 2012.

It is important to note that the USAID missions in Ethiopia and Nepal are currently managing the implementation of two of USAID’s largest nutrition programs, Growth for Nutrition in Ethiopia and Suaahara II in Nepal. The two countries identify nutrition as a priority in their current Country Development and Coordination Strategies. It remains to be seen whether nutrition will be a stated priority in the next phase of the Country Development and Coordination Strategies.

Political will

USAID is currently restructuring itself to better support countries in their efforts to become self-reliant, so that one day they will no longer need donor assistance. USAID defines a “self-reliant” country as one that can “plan, finance, and implement solutions to solve [its] own development challenges.”⁹

Many low- and middle-income countries have joined together in the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement, which is led by countries with high burdens of malnutrition. SUN is an effort to bring to scale strategies that have already been proven effective in reducing malnutrition. SUN

continues to grow, with 60 member countries at the time of writing. The movement encompasses national governments, civil society, business, donors, international organizations, and researchers.

Upon joining the SUN Movement, countries commit to “developing or revising national policies, strategies, and plans to scale up nutrition.” All three countries in

this analysis—Ethiopia, Guatemala, and Nepal—had nutrition policies in place before they joined SUN; they also have current national nutrition plans or strategies. Their prioritization of nutrition means that USAID can align its nutrition activities with country plans, which both helps improve nutrition and supports country ownership. A large part of the work of a USAID mission, including technical staff and the Mission Director, is working with the country’s government to support officials in their role of improving maternal and child nutrition (see Box 6). The Ambassador is often engaged in this effort as well.

What have been the challenges?

Adopting a new strategy should change the way work gets done. While, as described above, this has happened at the USAID headquarters level, and to a certain extent at the USAID mission level, the MSNS has not always meant change in the design and implementation of relevant programs.

BOX 6: NEPAL’S MULTI-SECTORAL NUTRITION PLAN AND SUAAHARA II

One of the Suaahara II program’s objectives is to accelerate the rollout of Nepal’s Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Plan (MSNP). Suaahara staff, as well as USAID/Nepal staff, helped to ensure that the lessons learned from the first phase of Suaahara were incorporated into the second phase of the MSNP. Suaahara is a key partner in implementing the MSNP in the 42 districts where it operates.

The barriers to making these improvements range from political decisions in Washington, to the priorities of USAID mission leadership, to personnel capacity.

FUNDING

One of the main challenges to implementing the MSNS is budget decisions that do not allow for sufficient funding. This is a problem at multiple levels. The president's budget request for global nutrition for fiscal year 2019 (FY2019) was \$78.5 million¹⁰—a proposed cut of \$46.5 million from the previous year's appropriated level of \$125 million. At the time of this writing, in mid-2018, the House and Senate Appropriations Committees have rejected this proposed cut and have tentatively appropriated \$145 million¹¹ and \$135 million,¹² respectively, for global nutrition. While this is positive news, these amounts are still inadequate to achieve the Strategy's nutrition goals.

“One of the main challenges to implementing the MSNS is budget decisions that do not allow for sufficient funding.”

Moreover, Congress often confronts internal barriers to increasing nutrition funding. While there are a few members of Congress who have acted to support maternal and child nutrition, nutrition has not yet become a signature or legacy issue for any member of Congress. This means that the political will to ensure sufficient nutrition funding is still lacking. Funding for the specific nutrition account has been stagnant since 2015.

If the appropriations processes of the past few years are any guide, it is likely that the final FY2019 funding level for global nutrition will not be known for some months. While Congress makes the final funding decisions for these programs, USAID and its missions must plan ahead. They cannot make detailed, realistic plans without knowing their funding levels. The repeated proposals to cut funding for programs, coupled with the delay in finalizing appropriations, prolong uncertainty and hamper USAID's efforts to plan and implement its MSNS.

For example, the Suaahara II program in Nepal is a 5-year, \$63 million program funded through USAID's Global Health Programs account.¹³ When Helen Keller International was named the implementing partner and implementation began in 2016, the Suaahara II team already had a 5-year budget and general work plan laid out for the life of the project, with flexibility to adapt to changing conditions on the ground. But in May 2018, near the end of the second year of the project, Suaahara II learned that it would not receive the full amount of funding originally agreed for year 2 of the project.

Not being able to carry out all of Year 2's planned activities creates a barrier to achieving the goals of the entire project, since each year of a nutrition project builds on previous years. A Year 2 funding shortfall or delay will likely prevent Suaahara II from reaching its goals of reducing stunting by 2 percent each year for years 3 to 5 of the project.

MANDATES AND PRIORITIES

USAID's funding structures pose barriers to implementing the Strategy as well. When funding streams are siloed, this creates incompatible mandates—meaning that USAID missions are not able to integrate their nutrition programs or possibly even coordinate them. For example, funding for an agriculture program might include objectives such as increasing agricultural production or income without necessarily focusing on nutrition-sensitive outcomes.¹⁴ Funding to reduce the rate of maternal mortality at birth may mean that only the 24- to 48-hour window around the birth of a child receives attention. Important causal factors before or after labor and delivery—for example, women suffering from anemia before and during their pregnancies—may be largely ignored. USAID has worked hard to ease some of the restrictions that create siloed programs, but separate and often inflexible funding streams may still block change.

Staff who are specialists in one area can sometimes show some reluctance to integrate new objectives into their programs and way of doing things. The BFWI team heard accounts indicating that agriculture teams were, on occasion, hesitant to include or integrate nutrition. Sometimes this was

USAID/Nepal Nutrition Coordination Mandates

One alternative to integrating nutrition-specific activities into programs in other sectors, such as agriculture, is to look for opportunities to “layer” programs that operate in the same geographic areas. This is currently the case in Nepal.

KISAN II does not include nutrition outcomes as a main project objective, nor does it receive any nutrition funding, though improving nutrition is listed as a cross-cutting objective. KISAN II is a value chain activity, working to strengthen the entire process or “chain” of agricultural production and to forge links among farmers, processors, market sellers, and so on. One aspect of its work that is relevant to nutrition is the process of selecting agricultural commodities, such as rice, maize, lentils, and vegetables. To help achieve the cross-cutting objective, KISAN II made “potential for improving nutrition” one of the selection criteria for these commodities.

Here are some other KISAN II activities that incorporate nutrition:

- A program to enhance literacy and business skills for vulnerable groups includes a Nutrition Education Module that uses key nutrition messages from Suaahara II.
- KISAN II draws from the MSNS to implement a nutrition-sensitive approach to integrating nutrition into efforts to develop agricultural market systems.

The Suaahara II program has a mandate to collaborate with related USAID activities in Nepal, including KISAN II. The two programs must collaborate in areas of geographic overlap to achieve the twin Feed the Future objectives of reduced poverty and improved nutrition. By USAID/Nepal’s design, the two programs and PAHAL are largely co-located, so that people in the districts where the programs operate receive a comprehensive package of investments to achieve overall development objectives.

This is not to say that collaboration is always easy. KISAN II and Suaahara II target different populations: KISAN II works with households engaged in commercial agriculture, while Suaahara II works with households whose members include people in the 1,000-day period between pregnancy and age 2. Often, these two groups are distinct. But KISAN II has the potential to use a nutrition-sensitive value chain approach to enable the regional food system to ensure greater availability and access to more nutritious and diverse foods. This, in turn, is a critical component of enabling 1,000-day households to improve their nutrition.

due to a lack of understanding of the role agriculture can play in nutrition and vice versa. Sometimes teams resisted using agriculture funds to reach improved nutrition outcomes if nutrition was not a stated objective of their programs. Sometimes specialists were not sure of exactly how to go about integrating agriculture and nutrition. It is very important to note, however, that education and promotion activities within and outside USAID continue to help program staff adapt their mindsets and gain new knowledge.

A culture that emphasizes program integration has simply not been widespread and consistent at USAID in the past. While integration is not always the solution, the agency has also missed opportunities to incorporate nutrition activities or at least nutrition objectives into relevant programs for greater impact. The shift in mindset needs to come from leadership.

For example, USAID/Ethiopia had had technical consultations with USAID’s Bureau for Food Security about integrating nutrition into the program’s work on agricultural value chains, but nutrition personnel reported that little progress had been made. It was suggested that although the agriculture team understood that the evidence supports links between agriculture and nutrition, staff may not have the capacity or the technical knowledge to incorporate nutrition while also continuing to implement the agriculture activities. As mentioned earlier, one barrier may be that the program’s stated objectives—and therefore evaluation criteria—do not explicitly include improving nutrition.

TRANSLATING EDUCATION INTO ACTION

Following the launch of the MSNS in 2014, USAID staff from many bureaus and offices worked together to produce comprehensive, wide-ranging technical briefs and implementation guidance for the Strategy. USAID/Washington has released 16 technical briefs and two discussion papers. The topics of these resources range from WASH and nutrition and nutrition-sensitive agriculture, to gender considerations and nutrition in emergencies. Another resource is the half-day of the USAID food security and agriculture core course that is now dedicated to nutrition (see Box 7).

The briefs and other resources were sent to a USAID internal email list for nutrition focal points in Washington, DC, and relevant mission staff. Typically, new information or resources are distributed through this list as they are released. The Bureau for Global Health also hosts an internal website that brings together all these resources accessible to USAID staff.

USAID also funded two legacy projects that focus on technical assistance to improve nutrition for implementing partners and other stakeholders: Strengthening Partnerships, Results, and Innovations in Nutrition Globally (SPRING), hosted at JSI Research & Training Institute, and the Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance (FANTA III), hosted at FHI 360.

After the launch of the Strategy, both SPRING and FANTA hosted USAID-sponsored Global Learning and Evidence Exchanges (GLEEs). The GLEEs were designed to update program man-

agers on the new MSNS and the latest evidence on nutrition. The two series—one focused on Multi-Sectoral Nutrition and the other on Agriculture and Nutrition—included both regional and global events.

These efforts, though extensive, have not yet translated to full uptake of the MSNS by missions and implementing partners. The staff of both are generally already stretched in capacity. An increased number of dedicated nutrition staff in the Bureau for Food Security, combined with email contacts to introduce new resources or information, are efforts to encourage missions to adopt multi-sectoral approaches to nutrition. But it remains difficult to ensure that nutrition resources are understood and embraced by staff who design and implement relevant programs.

HOST GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

The MSNS commits USAID to ensuring that its nutrition programs support the nutrition strategy of each country. USAID must continue to focus on strengthening a governments' capacity to provide essential nutrition services.

Membership in the SUN Movement is a positive sign, but national governments may sometimes have competing priorities. For example, in 2012, the president of Guatemala started the Zero Hunger Plan, which was intended to fight both acute malnutrition or wasting, and the longer-term damage of chronic malnutrition, chiefly stunting. Reports indicate, however, that in actual implementation, those overseeing the program were likely to prioritize addressing immediate, visible problems, such as monitoring and treating acute malnutrition, at the expense of laying the groundwork for longer-term success in reducing stunting. This is true even though stunting is far more common in Guatemala than wasting, which affects less than one percent of children younger than 5, and stunting has irreversible long-term effects on physical and cognitive development. Both acute malnutrition and stunting are public health issues that must be addressed simultaneously. The Guatemalan government's commitment to ending chronic forms of malnutrition, such as stunting, is vital to the success of any USAID efforts to do so.¹⁷

One of Suaahara II's stated intermediate results is to achieve "accelerated rollout of [Nepal's] Multi-sector Nutrition Plan (MSNP) through strengthened local governance." Nepal was an early adopter in the SUN Movement, and the national government has been very focused on nutrition. Most recently, it launched the second phase of its national nutrition strategy. After the Suaahara II program had been designed and launched, however, Nepal ratified a new constitution that calls for decentralization of government functions. This means that the authority and responsibility for allocating budgets for nutrition and implementing the MSNP has now moved from the national government to the local government level.

It is a positive step that these decisions will be made closer to the communities they affect, but the transition comes with a steep learning curve for local government officials. Suaahara II must work intensively to educate local governments on the crucial role of nutrition and to persuade them of the need to implement MSNP policies and allocate resources for nutrition. Government plays such an important role in sustained improvements in maternal and child nutrition that it is vital not to allow the decentralization process to slow or reverse progress in improving nutrition.

Summary of findings

The MSNS has catalyzed progress in coordination at the USAID/Washington level, which has led to positive results in terms of policy-making and the development of program implementation

BOX 7: USAID FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURE CORE COURSE

USAID developed, and then revised under the whole of government Global Food Security Strategy (GFSS), a five-day intensive educational course for USAID staff who oversee Feed the Future activities in-country. The course is designed to enable participants to better implement the GFSS results framework, which requires the ability to identify linkages between the GFSS and USAID's theory of change. Capitalizing on these linkages can increase the program's impact on reducing poverty and stunting, create market-led growth strategies with emphasis on partnerships, and promote a strong emphasis on cross-cutting themes when strategies are being developed and programs planned.¹⁵

Half of Day 2 of this core course focuses on helping participants:

- Further develop their understanding of nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive programs.
- Improve their ability to identify and apply nutrition-sensitive "best practices" in designing agriculture programs.
- Increase their knowledge of the Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy and learn how to locate relevant resources.¹⁶

guidance at the global and national levels. Having the Strategy in place enabled the agency to help elevate nutrition as a key objective of the Global Food Security Act and its associated strategy, the GFSS. Because of this, participating countries have increased focus on nutrition to achieve

“Having the Strategy in place has elevated the profile of maternal and child nutrition at USAID and brought high-level action on nutrition.”

the Feed the Future objective of reducing stunting. Since the launch of the Strategy, USAID has held multiple regional and global learning events, designed to increase knowledge among USAID staff and partners of the Strategy, its multi-sectoral implementation, and best practices in nutrition. In addition, USAID produced more than a dozen educational briefs that dive deeper into specific topics and are designed to help USAID missions and implementing partners increase their nutrition impact. It is unlikely that all of this would have been accomplished without the MSNS. Having the Strategy in place has elevated the profile of maternal and child nutrition at USAID and brought high-level action on nutrition.

The question of whether these high-level commitments have been translated into widespread or systematic action in USAID missions and projects deserves a more mixed response. All three of the countries in this paper already had multisector nutrition activities at the time the MSNS was adopted. The MSNS validated this work and encouraged USAID missions to continue it. There is, however, a great deal of room to expand strategic, comprehensive multi-sectoral nutrition planning and programming in USAID missions and greater integration of nutrition into other relevant health and development programs.

Some USAID missions have embraced the MSNS goals and worked to develop strategic portfolios of investment that reflect a multi-sectoral approach to nutrition—for example, Nepal’s Feed the Future Country Plan and RFA/RFPs¹⁸ for nutrition-related investments (see sidebar on page 10). The design of RFAs and RFPs is one of the main ways for USAID missions to spur increased multi-sectoral nutrition programming in-country.

Other USAID missions have not taken such a comprehensive approach, but instead concentrate their nutrition investments in one office, team, or program—usually either health or agriculture, but not always both. There is more work to be done to ensure that all relevant sectors systematically contribute to improving nutrition as appropriate and to document whether and how the different sectors plan to do this.

The next four years

As explored above, the MSNS has made significant progress during its first four years, but all stakeholders have more work to do to scale up nutrition in sustainable, equitable, and effective ways to reach the 2025 global nutrition targets and the 2030 goal of ending malnutrition in all its forms. Moving forward, USAID must build on and strengthen its multisector nutrition efforts. Below are some recommendations for next steps; ideally USAID would accomplish these by its next scheduled MSNS assessment in 2022.

WHAT TO CONTINUE

USAID has put in place mechanisms and processes for accelerating progress on nutrition. These should remain in effect to maintain the gains of the past four years and continue progress.¹⁹

Continue to lead at the global level and at the country level

Previous USAID Administrators have participated in the SUN Movement Lead Group, which provides oversight for the Movement and is responsible for ensuring that it meets its overall objectives. Continued USAID leadership engagement in the SUN Movement is critical to continuing to build political and programmatic momentum on nutrition. This engagement at the highest level would help steer global action on nutrition. It could be a platform to amplify USAID’s vision of supporting countries on a “journey to self-reliance” by aligning with other influentials in the global nutrition community, with the objective of helping to strengthen national and local capacity, including the capacity of SUN civil society alliances at the country level.

In addition to high-level leadership at USAID/Washington, both understanding of and commitment to nutrition on the part of USAID Mission Directors are factors in ensuring that achieving the goals of the MSNS are a priority at the USAID mission level. USAID/Washington should continue to engage and educate USAID missions, especially Mission Directors, as an outreach priority for the MSNS.

Make nutrition focal points/coordinators permanent and official positions

When planning and designing multi-sectoral nutrition policies and programs, a focal point for nutrition in each relevant office or team is essential to ensure that all areas and perspectives are represented and to improve coordination. The Bureau for Food Security, the Bureau for Global Health, and the Office of Food for Peace at the USAID/Washington level, as well as the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance and the regional bureaus through their participation in TWG, all have clear nutrition points of contact. The TWG should continue to serve as the main USAID headquarters coordination mechanism, in support of the newly proposed Nutrition Leadership Council.

Most USAID missions, including Ethiopia, Guatemala, and Nepal, also have nutrition points of contact. Some, such as Ethiopia, have official positions established to coordinate nutrition throughout the USAID mission. It is critical that USAID missions continue to host these coordinator positions or to identify nutrition focal points, as particular staff come and go. Each USAID mission that receives nutrition-related funding (e.g., agriculture, food security, global health, disaster assistance, resilience), and all USAID missions in countries with a high burden of malnutrition, should have a permanent position (or designated time within a position) with formal responsibility for filling this role (see Box 8).

Use the MSNS goals and principles in project development

The nutrition focal points should also be tasked with ensuring that nutrition interventions are incorporated into the full range of USAID investments in any particular community or country. To produce the maximum nutrition impact, interventions must be comprehensive, coordinated, and, as appropriate, integrated.

There are some good examples of this in the USAID/Nepal mission. The RFA for Suaahara II²¹ includes a “mandate for collaboration.” It states that it is essential that the Suaahara II program implementer work closely with other relevant USAID projects, including KISAN II and PAHAL. In particular, the Suaahara II RFA notes that KISAN II does not implement nutrition-specific activities because the USAID mission has designed the KISAN II and Suaahara II programs to complement each other in a given geographic area. Thus, it is not necessary for every program to include every element of a comprehensive approach.

In turn, the KISAN II RFP²² includes several references to the need to coordinate with other nutrition-related USAID investments, especially Suaahara II. KISAN II’s literacy and business skills program contains a nutrition module required to incorporate key messages on nutrition from the Suaahara II program. Both the KISAN II and Suaahara II awards include a results framework that includes measurable indicators for coordination and collaboration.

The KISAN II RFP also directs its staff to explore opportunities to layer, sequence, and integrate programs with Suaahara II for more nutrition impact. It requires KISAN II to draw from the MSNS

BOX 8: MISSION NUTRITION ADVISORS

BFWI’s analysis²⁰ is that establishing USAID Mission Nutrition Advisors in each USAID mission that receives nutrition-related funding, and in all USAID missions in countries with a high burden of malnutrition, is the best way to ensure improved nutrition outcomes for USAID missions’ policies and programs.

The Mission Nutrition Advisors should have the authority to oversee all nutrition programming across funding streams in the Mission. They would serve as conduits for information on nutrition from USAID/Washington, and they would have the responsibility for ensuring adequate and appropriate multi-sectoral nutrition programming. The Advisors would also be the primary liaison on nutrition policy and issues with the host country government, civil society, other donors, and the SUN Movement.

The Advisors do not need to be formally-trained nutritionists, but they should have a working knowledge of and experience with nutrition technical interventions, both nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive.

“To produce the maximum nutrition impact, interventions must be comprehensive, coordinated, and, as appropriate, integrated.”

as it implements its nutrition-sensitive approach to agriculture—specifically, to use the pathways of improved incomes, diverse diets, and women’s empowerment to improve nutrition. The RFP also specifies how the program can do this—for example, by including the potential to impact nutrition in the selection criteria for purchasing commodities.

“The United States can work in partnership with other donors, national governments, the private sector, and other stakeholders to speed up progress.”

Incorporating into RFAs and RFPs such specific direction on nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive actions helps ensure that implementing partners will prioritize them.

WHAT TO STRENGTHEN

Of course, the positive results of the Strategy alone are not enough to put the world on track to reach nutrition goals. If present trends continue, the world will miss the 2025 global nutrition targets and the 2030 goal to end malnutrition in all its forms. The United States can work in partnership with other donors, national governments, the private sector, and other stakeholders to speed up progress.

USAID can promote faster progress by taking the following steps to strengthen and fully implement the MSNS:

Establish multi-sectoral nutrition action plans at the USAID mission level

Part of implementing the Strategy should be documenting which pathways to nutrition have been tried, which have been successful in improving nutrition, and what program staff can learn from efforts that did not work well. All USAID missions that receive funding relevant to nutrition²³ should participate in this effort to identify the specific combinations of programming that will produce the best nutrition outcomes.

As the MSNS states,

“Ultimately, the success of USAID’s Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy will depend on dedicated Mission leadership, and the deliberate integration of the Strategy’s directions and priorities throughout the Program Cycle for Missions with nutrition-relevant funds.”

One way to catalyze the fuller adoption of the MSNS approach at the USAID mission level would be to incentivize missions, not only to demonstrate the nutrition impact of their projects, but also to plan ahead and indicate, from the beginning of a project, how they will achieve its goals. USAID missions and their implementing partners already report on and evaluate nutrition indicators such as stunting, wasting, anemia, minimum dietary diversity, and exclusive breastfeeding, and this should continue. But to help mission staff think through which investments and activities are most likely to contribute to maximizing nutrition outcomes, USAID missions with nutrition-relevant funding should prepare multi-sectoral nutrition action plans to demonstrate how they plan to achieve improved nutrition outcomes through programs in health, agriculture, WASH, and food assistance as a comprehensive package of investments.

These action plans should be updated annually as needed since many of the relevant investment categories have different project timelines. The plans would make deliberate efforts to align closely with the host country’s national nutrition plan. These action plans would also help to clarify the range and effectiveness of USAID nutrition-sensitive investments.

Ensure sufficient and well-targeted funding for nutrition

As explained above, the uncertainty caused by proposals to cut the budget for programs that improve nutrition and related programs, such as Feed the Future, have a significant negative impact on the ability of implementing partners to achieve their program’s desired nutrition outcomes—and therefore also on whether USAID as an agency can reach its nutrition objectives. Delays in the congressional appropriations process have a negative impact as well.

In 2016, a World Bank analysis found that reaching four of the six global nutrition targets for 2025 will require an additional \$70 billion in funding.²⁴ Since 2016, global funding for nutrition has essen-

tially held steady, so the resource gap remains. The donor community, including USAID, should contribute a portion of these resources for the next several years. A first step toward a fair U.S. contribution would be for the administration to propose, and Congress to appropriate, annual increases in resources for nutrition, rather than proposing funding cuts every year. The administrator and other USAID officials should work together on a proposal to expand both nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive investments. With their firsthand knowledge, they could help the leadership of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) understand why nutrition investments are so important to meeting other foreign assistance objectives and protecting the U.S. national interest.

Additionally, USAID should conduct an analysis of its own nutrition spending, exploring how the funding is disbursed in relation to evidence-based high-impact nutrition interventions²⁵ and the geographic areas (both countries and communities) with the highest burdens of malnutrition. Moving forward, USAID needs to know to what extent its nutrition investments are being spent on the most effective nutrition actions and whether funding is going in an equitable way to the areas with the highest burden of malnutrition (see Box 9).

Study MSNS education efforts and adjust accordingly

Much time and effort has been spent on global and regional learning events and producing technical briefs to guide Strategy implementation. USAID should assess the effectiveness of these efforts to produce change in how nutrition and other relevant programs are implemented. As part of this study, USAID should investigate the most cost-effective ways to disseminate information, guidelines, and updates to the USAID mission level that encourage uptake and improve implementation.

This would include measuring the cost—both financial and personnel-hour—to produce or host learning resources and events, and measuring the desired behavior change results through desk reviews of RFAs or RFPs, project budgets, and evaluations over time, looking for maximized nutrition inputs and outcomes. These would be assessed to explore which actions produce the most results for the inputs of time and money. Meanwhile, USAID should continue to innovate in disseminating this information, as has been done with its internal resource web page, email exchanges, and field visits.

ELEVATING NUTRITION IN USAID'S TRANSFORMATION PROCESS

Under the leadership of USAID Administrator Mark Green, the Agency is undertaking a reorganization process, aiming to improve coordination and the effectiveness of USAID's efforts in coordination with Administrator Green's vision for USAID.

The Journey to Self-Reliance

USAID Administrator Mark Green's vision for USAID is that the Agency will orient itself and conduct its investments in a way to support countries on their "journeys to self-reliance," meaning a point at which they no longer need foreign aid in the traditional sense and partnerships with the United States shift away from a traditional donor/recipient paradigm.

Better nutrition, as a necessary component of a country's capacity to achieve development goals such as economic growth and improved public health, is critical to the success of this approach. As USAID moves toward using this framework for its work, it must be aware that nutrition cannot be overlooked. Nutrition needs to be at the heart of the development assistance strategy.

A first step should be **to include childhood stunting in the metrics used** to assess a country's progress toward "graduation" from development assistance. Childhood stunting is an indicator

BOX 9: THE 2030 AGENDA: LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

In 2015, 193 countries signed on to the Sustainable Development Goals—17 global goals with 169 targets whose achievement will create a better world by 2030. Central to achieving these goals is the principle of leaving no one behind. The world cannot end malnutrition if efforts do not extend to communities that are hardest to reach and most severely affected. For nutrition, as for other 2030 goals, the people in these communities should be a fundamental part of the strategy to improve maternal and child nutrition, while also not losing sight of the need to support those who are closer to achieving the goal of ending malnutrition.

The Suaahara II project in Nepal is working to leave no one behind. The program targets all households in its districts that include people in the 1,000-day window, but it also uses specialized and more intensive strategies for households that belong to disadvantaged groups (DAGs). The government of Nepal identifies these DAGs, which are typically isolated from the rest of society, whether geographically, socially, or economically. Suaahara II, as the successor to the first phase of Suaahara, builds on what has been accomplished thus far and tailors programs to DAG households' needs. Additional, more intensive interventions in DAG communities may include, for example, a strong focus on WASH (ensuring that communities have safe drinking water and adequate sanitary facilities) or on more closely linking households to local government.²⁶

What Can Congress Do?

While the administration's annual budget requests are important since they facilitate annual planning for nutrition programs, Congress ultimately makes the funding decisions. Congress should continue to **propose and appropriate increased investments** for global nutrition programs, especially direct programs such as the Nutrition in Global Health Programs sub-account, but also nutrition-sensitive investments such as those in some Feed the Future, Food for Peace, and other global health programs. Congress should begin a conversation with USAID to establish a **common understanding of how appropriated funds are used in nutrition-sensitive ways** and how to maximize their nutrition outcomes.

Congress should also have an **ongoing conversation with USAID on the implementation of the MSNS**. When the findings from USAID's own 2018 assessment are available, Congress should hold hearings or briefings to discuss these findings and explore further how Congress can support USAID nutrition efforts. This conversation will be especially important as USAID conducts its second and third assessments of the Strategy, scheduled for 2022 and 2025.

both of pervasive inequality and inadequate public health systems. It is a reflection of country capacity, which USAID has identified as a core component of self-reliance.

USAID Nutrition Leadership Council

As part of USAID's transformation process, a Nutrition Leadership Council has been proposed to ensure coordination across the agency. At the time of writing, the responsibilities and scope of the Council have yet to be determined. BFWI recommends that representatives from the Bureau for Resilience and Food Security and the Bureau for Global Health have equal oversight of nutrition efforts at USAID. The Council could also fulfill several of the roles identified in this paper as necessary to improve nutrition.

The Council should be responsible for **engaging leadership** at USAID to prioritize nutrition across the agency, and to continue encouraging the use of staff time and effort to coordinate on improved nutrition. The Council, with representation from multiple bureaus, must work to ensure that the integration of nutrition, when appropriate, is enabled and encouraged.

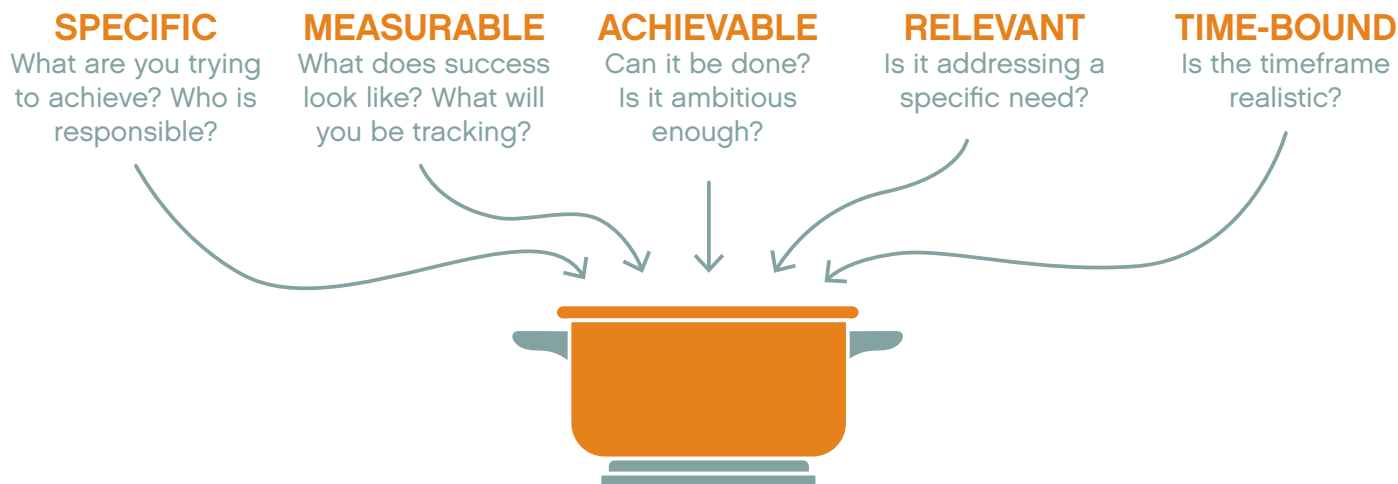
The Council should also take on the task of **ensuring adequate annual budget requests** for nutrition. This would entail analysis of current spending as measured

against costing projections. Costing evidence that details how much it would cost to reach specific nutrition targets is now available, so the Council could analyze current spending against these cost projections. It would then use the results to make the case both within USAID and with the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for increased annual budget requests.

Finally, the Council should take charge of **setting and monitoring SMART targets** (see Figure 3) for nutrition outcomes for the entire agency. There are currently specific targets to reduce stunting and wasting, but they are not the same for all USAID initiatives and strategies. Timelines are particularly different from each other. The Council would work to set targets for additional nutrition

FIGURE 3: SMART Targets

Making SMART commitments for nutrition...



Source: Global Nutrition Report

outcomes such as reducing anemia and increasing exclusive breastfeeding, align nutrition targets and timelines, and specify which efforts will count as activities that help meet the nutrition targets.

USAID Center for Nutrition

Also as part of USAID's proposed redesign, a Center for Nutrition will be established within the Bureau for Resilience and Food Security. The scope and responsibilities of this Center for Nutrition have yet to be determined, but the Center could fulfill some of the roles described in this paper.

The Center for Nutrition should **establish and lead USAID's nutrition learning agenda** in coordination with the Bureau for Global Health and the Office of Food for Peace, building on the MSNS as well as the GNCP. In particular, the Center should lead efforts to **identify best practices in multi-sectoral nutrition planning and programs and also provide case studies to illustrate their use.** The Center should **produce guidance on the impact of co-location, coordination, and integration** of programs for improved nutrition. This guidance should include a decision tree or decision matrix for mission staff to use to help determine which pathway would produce the best results in a given context—and thus lead to the best possible nutrition outcomes.

Conclusions

The MSNS has made a substantial difference in raising the profile of nutrition within USAID. Despite the development of the plan and the work done to improve nutrition programs throughout USAID, however, the resources dedicated to nutrition are insufficient. The world is not on track to reach the agreed 2025 global nutrition targets or the 2030 goal to end malnutrition in all its forms.

The evidence is very clear: investments in maternal and child nutrition are foundational for a country's sustained economic development. Good nutrition in early childhood saves lives and ensures that all children have a strong start, improving health and earning potential throughout the life cycle. The United States has a role to play in supporting the efforts of countries with high burdens of malnutrition to improve their people's nutritional status, and in reaching the global 2025 targets and 2030 goal endorsed by the U.S. government. USAID must reinvigorate its commitment to fully implementing the MSNS with adequate financial and personnel resources needed to accelerate progress on global nutrition.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

For USAID/Washington:

- Continue high-level engagement in the SUN Movement
- Engage and educate USAID missions, especially Mission Directors, on nutrition efforts
- Establish permanent positions for nutrition focal points or coordinators
- Study MSNS education efforts and adjust them according to the findings
- Ensure that budget requests for nutrition are sufficient and that funding is well-targeted. This should be based on an equity analysis of disbursements: which activities and geographies need additional resources for equitable outcomes?
- Include the rate of childhood stunting among the metrics used to assess a country's progress on the Journey to Self-Reliance
- Set and monitor SMART targets for nutrition across the agency
- Identify and offer case studies on best practices in planning multi-sectoral nutrition programs
- Provide analysis and guidance on the impact of co-location, coordination, and integration of programs for improved nutrition, including a decision tree or matrix tool

For USAID missions:

- Establish permanent positions for nutrition focal points or coordinators
- Use the MSNS goals and principles to develop projects
- In missions with funding relevant to nutrition, establish multi-sectoral nutrition action plans
- Ensure equitable and well-targeted funding for nutrition

For Congress:

- Propose and appropriate increased investments for global nutrition programs
- Establish a common understanding with USAID of how its appropriated funds are used in nutrition-sensitive ways
- Engage in ongoing conversation with USAID on the implementation of the MSNS

Annex 1—Interview List

Alefia Merchant	USAID/Guatemala	Melanie Thurber	USAID/Ethiopia
Anne Peniston	USAID/Washington	Michael Heller	USAID/Washington
Antoinette Sullivan	USAID/Guatemala	Mike Manske	USAID/Washington
Debendra Adhikari	USAID/Nepal	Omar Dary	USAID/Washington
Elaine Gray	USAID/Washington	Sally Abbott	USAID/Washington
Elizabeth Bontrager	USAID/Washington	Sarah Leonard	USAID/Washington
Ingrid Weiss	USAID/Washington	Suaahara II Dang District	Nepal
Jeniece Alvey	USAID/Washington	Suaahara II Salyan District	Nepal
Judy Canahuati	USAID/Washington	PAHAL Surkhet District	Nepal
Katherine Dennison	USAID/Washington	KISAN Bardiya District	Nepal
Larisa Mori	USAID/Ethiopia	KISAN Banke District	Nepal

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Endnotes

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³ Guatemala Demographic and Health Survey 2014-2015.

⁴ This is not an exhaustive list of USAID programming in Guatemala. It includes only key efforts that are closely related to nutrition.

⁵ Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey 2016.

⁶ This is not an exhaustive list of USAID programming in Ethiopia. It includes only key efforts that are closely related to nutrition.

⁷ Nepal Demographic and Health Survey 2016.

⁸ This is not an exhaustive list of USAID programming in Nepal. It includes only key efforts that are closely related to nutrition.

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¹⁴ USAID agriculture funding must adhere to the provisions of the Global Food Security Act, including the objective of improving nutrition, and must work together with other efforts toward the Feed the Future goal of reducing stunting by 20 percent. It is not the only funding stream working toward these goals, however.

¹⁵ <https://www.agrilinks.org/training/food-security-and-agriculture-core-course>

¹⁶ https://www.agrilinks.org/sites/default/files/day-2_foodsecuritycourse_508.pdf

¹⁷ This is an example of why technical assistance from the SUN Movement and USAID remains essential to improving nutrition: stakeholders, including governments and civil society, still need stronger nutrition capacity.

¹⁸ RFAs (requests for applications) and RFPs (requests for proposals) are mechanisms by which USAID invites implementing partners to submit program proposals for funding. RFAs and RFPs are typically highly detailed in terms of objectives and activities that must be included in the program. They often include directives as to how to implement required partner collaboration or program coordination activities.

¹⁹ The coordination mechanisms are not listed here because their presence is essentially guaranteed due to multiple strategies and plans in place (MSNS, GNCP, and GFSS).

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²³ Nutrition-relevant funding refers to investments that have the potential to impact the basic, underlying, or immediate causes of malnutrition. These investments include, but are not limited to, nutrition, agriculture, food security, health, WASH, social protection, disaster assistance, and resilience. A USAID mission does not need to receive nutrition-specific funding to be categorized as a recipient of nutrition-relevant funding.

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²⁵ Results for Development has begun this work at a global level by using OECD data to track donor disbursements aimed at achieving the WHA nutrition targets. More information can be found here: <https://www.r4d.org/resources/tracking-aid-wha-nutrition-targets-global-spend-ing-2015-roadmap-better-data/>

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