

# A Critical Need for Allocating Resources to Address Malnutrition in Tanzania

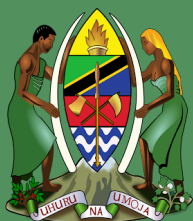


## Executive Summary

Malnutrition is one of the greatest human development challenges facing the developing world. It is estimated that over 50% of child deaths under 5 years of age in developing countries are a result of undernutrition. In Tanzania, stunting affects an average of 34.4% of children under 5 years of age. Severe stunting affects 11.5% of children under 5 years of age and 58% of children under 5 years of age are anemic. A staggering 45% of women between the ages of 15-49 are anemic, posing a significant effect on the health of women during pregnancy, child rearing and fueling intergenerational malnourishment which results in lower resistance to diseases, low weight and lack of necessary nutrients for newborns.<sup>2</sup> Based on the results of the Fast Track project funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, this policy brief outlines the key challenge of resource allocation and presents urgent priority-setting policy recommendations for all nutrition stakeholders to effectively address malnutrition and chronic child under nutrition in Tanzania

## Economic Implications of Malnutrition

For decades combating malnutrition has been in the government's top health and development priorities. In recent years, there have been encouraging results such as the decrease in stunting among children under 5 which fell from 50 to 34 percent between 1992 and 2015 and acute malnutrition which fell from 7 to 5 percent.<sup>3</sup> However, poor nutrition remains a critical developmental challenge in Tanzania and has a direct result on economic growth. The 2.7 million Tanzanian children under age 5 who are stunted represent a staggering loss of both human and economic potential.<sup>4</sup> UNICEF estimates that stunting in early life is linked to a 7 month delay in starting school and between 22 and 45 percent reduction in lifetime earnings.<sup>5</sup> Malnourishment ultimately keeps people from reaching their full potential. The FAO cites malnourishment as a major cause of poor social and economic development, as malnourished adults are less able to work, contribute to local economies and provide





If there is no improvement in the nutrition situation by 2015, Tanzania's estimated economic productivity losses will total some 20 Billion USD (18 USD related to stunting) (Unicef, Tanzania Nutrition Budget Brief 2016)

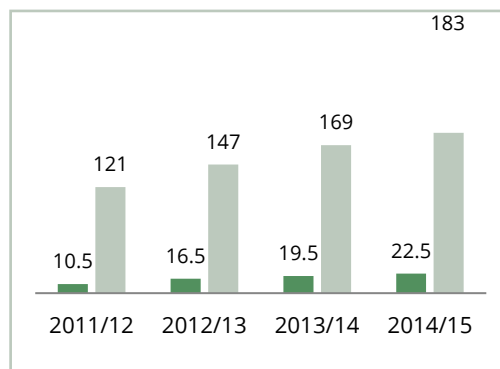
for their families which perpetuates the vicious circle of poverty.

## Nutrition Budget Analysis

Despite the government's commitment to fight malnutrition, required results have not been achieved. Due to the rate of population growth outstripping the rate of reduction, the absolute numbers of stunted and wasted children are high and in some instances increasing.<sup>7</sup> Funding in recent years has been constrained by the gap between the estimated cost of implementing National Nutritional Strategy activities and the allocated budgets. Figure 1 shows that for every year budgetary allocations fell far short of NNS implementation plan, with a gap of 88 per cent in FY 2013/14 and FY 2014/15.

**Figure 1**

Trends in actual spending and estimated cost of implementation of implementing nutrition activities (TSHs Billion)



■ Actual Spending  
■ Estimated Cost of Implementation

Tanzania Nutrition Policy Brief, 2016

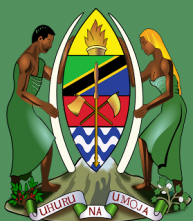
Another key challenge is represented by the weak association between the level of needs in the various areas and allocations. Evidence indicates that the 11 regions with the highest prevalence of stunting planned and spent less than those with a lower prevalence.

Kagera which has four times the number of stunted children as Singida region, spent just one quarter of the amount spent in Singida in year 2013/14.

Within East Africa, Tanzania allocates relatively less of its own budget to nutrition than others. In 2015, Rwanda spent 1.12% of its national budget on nutrition versus Tanzania who spent only 0.95%. Rwanda and Malawi also passed Tanzania in the amount of own source allocated with 0.80% and 0.48% of their national budgets.

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The new National Multi - sectoral Nutrition Action Plan (NMNAP) aims to inject \$268 million into nutrition spending. However, total resources available from Government, development partners and private sector is only US\$70.5 million leaving a gap of 73.7% which is yet to be mobilized. For NMNAP to succeed, an increase in national prioritization of malnutrition, increasing resources and ensuring better prioritization and targeting of these funds at groups and geographical areas with the greatest need should be mandated to attain maximum impact. In national prioritization of malnutrition, increasing resources and ensuring better prioritization and targeting of these funds at groups and geographical areas with the greatest need should be mandated to attain maximum impact. Kenya spent 1.12% of its national budget on nutrition versus Tanzania who spent only 0.95%. Rwanda and Malawi also passed Tanzania in the amount of own source allocated with 0.80% and 0.48% of their national budgets



## Policy recommendations

- Recognition of investment in nutrition as an investment in the national economy. Government should increase mobilization of internal resource spending on nutrition by adopting pathways that can increase allocation from national sources to ensure sustainable results.
- Increase investment in nutrition especially the spending per child to US\$30 to meet the N4G commitment through nutrition sensitive planning and implementation
- School gardens supplements ongoing school feeding programs, where children consume OFSP, generally healthy food with high levels of  $\beta$ -carotene level [100 -1600  $\mu\text{g}$  retinol activity equivalent (RAE)/100g (Low et al.2007).
- Make food and nutrition security a national development agenda to be implemented from national to local level.
- Investment into the generation of timely and reliable nutrition data through harmonized tools and new technologies for data management country wide.

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## Acknowledgement

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## Referer

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