

Case Study 3A.

Uganda — Subnational planning

Context

According to the situational analysis of children in Uganda (2015), the proportion of children without access to safe water has decreased from 39% in 2010 to 30% in 2013. Despite this progress, access to safe water remains a significant hurdle to improved sanitation and hygiene. It is estimated that every year over 8,000 Ugandan children die from diarrheal diseases caused by unsafe water and poor sanitation. Nationally, safe water access remains below 70% (64% in 2014), and nearly two thirds of children live more than a 30-minute round trip from the nearest source of water. This state of affairs is further compounded by the functionality of water sources, which appears to have stagnated at 85%, five percentage points below the national target (GoU, 2015). With regard to sanitation, cultural beliefs and social norms continue to impede the construction and use of latrines and this negatively affects service coverage and utilization, especially in the pastoral and nomadic region of Karamoja (GoU/UNICEF, 2016).

Progress in nutrition has remained slow, being more visible in the reduction of stunting levels from 38% to 33% against the target of 13%, compared to the wasting rate, which only decreased from 6% to 5% and underweight from 16% to 14% (against a target of 10%). UDHS (2011) data showed a decline in children born with low birth weight over the past 10 years, from 13% in 2006 to 10% in 2011. Underlying and structural causes of undernutrition include

- Ineffective mainstreaming of Nutrition in other sectors beyond the planning stages
- The slow scale-up of proven high-impact and cost-effective nutrition interventions that would effectively contribute to reducing stunting
- A multi-sectoral approach and coordination mechanisms set up at district and community levels but limited to pilot districts, presenting challenges in sustainability
- Infant and young child nutrition (IYCF) integration at facility level generally focused on curative service provision, with limited skills for promoting and supporting IYCF
- Inadequate resource allocation for scaling up proven high-impact nutrition interventions
- The limited scale of the community model coupled with weak community capacity development and limited involvement in preventive and promotive nutrition programming and implementation
- Lack of sufficient staffing for Nutrition at all levels

Activities

In view of the above situation, UNICEF and the Ugandan government have spearheaded the formation and rolling out of subnational planning and coordination mechanisms through the district nutrition coordination committees. These committees are active in every district and they comprise representatives of key ministries (Agriculture, WASH, Health and Gender) at district level. The committee is chaired by the chief administration officer (CAO) of the district. Their activities focus on the coordination and planning of multi-sectoral actions. With the establishment of these committees, Nutrition has been included in the district development plan.

Results

The activities of the district nutrition coordination committees are synergized in some districts and not in others. They are especially successful in areas that are supported by a common funding partner, for example Karamoja, where the joint donor group supported the development of a multi-sectoral adaptation of the Uganda Nutrition Action Plan (UNAP). An indication of the success of this initiative is the ‘early riser’ districts — those that started first have common partner support. The scale-up of synergized WASH and Nutrition to other districts has been informed by the lessons learned from these model districts.

Lessons learned

In order for synergized planning to be effective there has to be strong coordination and motivation for joint planning and synergized actions, as well as a clear mandate or authority to coordinate and plan together. Table 3.4 below provides an example of how WASH interventions can be incorporated in nutrition programs. The need for funding is the major challenge facing WASH and Nutrition coordination. Therefore, the need for WASH and Nutrition to lobby for joint funding is paramount.

Table 3.4. An example of WASH interventions to support the Uganda Nutrition Action Plan (UNAP) in Karamoja

UNAP Objectives	UNAP Strategies	Recommended Interventions	Other Sectors and Partners Responsible
WATER AND ENVIRONMENT SECTOR			
Objective 1 Increase access to and utilization of nutrition promotion and preventive services in order to improve maternal, infant and young child nutrition	1. Promote access to and utilization of nutrition and health services for all women of reproductive age, infants and young children	1. Promote use of integrated behavior change communication as part of nutrition and health services, including messaging on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good hygiene in breast feeding and complementary feeding • safe disposal of children’s feces • use of safe drinking water Target communication through	Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development

<p>during the first 1,000 days</p>	<p>2. Address gender and socio-cultural issues that affect maternal, infant and young children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutrition workers • Village health teams • Community leaders, including religious leaders • School health clubs <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focus on water supply development to reduce distance to fetch water, thereby reducing women’s workload and allowing more time for good care practice 2. Sensitize mothers, caregivers and household heads on key hygiene and nutritional practices affecting infants and young children 3. Scale up community-led total sanitation (CLTS) to improve sanitation practice 	<p>(MoGLSD), civil society organizations (CSOs), Ministry of Local Government (MoLG), local governments development programs (LGDPs)</p>
<p>Objective 2 Promote household food and nutrition security to ensure consumption of safe, nutritious and diverse diets for all people</p>	<p>1. Increase access to and consumption of safe and diverse nutritious foods at the household level</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scale up development of multiple-use water systems and promotion of water conservation techniques, alongside promotion of production of nutritious crops and milking herds, such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watershed management, with training through FAO agro-pastoral field schools (APFS) or farmer field schools (FFS) • Planning for strategic water supplies to allow livestock to access dry season grazing and allow households to keep milking animals close to homestead • Use WFP Food for Assets (FFA) programs to create strategic water supplies • Plan for irrigation where reliance on rain-fed agriculture is not feasible for crop production 	<p>Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), MoH, MoGLSD, MoLG, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), CSOs, development partners (DPs)</p>
<p>Objective 3 Protect households and other vulnerable groups from the impact of shocks or other humanitarian and emergency situations</p>	<p>2. Develop preparedness plans for shocks</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthen and scale up early warning systems for water shortage and related increase in diarrheal disease at local level to strengthen emergency preparedness and response 2. Promote sustainable management of natural resources to ensure reliable water supply for multiple use and adequate grazing 	<p>Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), MoLG, MoH, FAO, UNICEF, MoGLSD, CSOs, local governments (LGs), DPs</p>

Objectives 4 & 5 Create awareness and strengthen nutrition coordination mechanisms and functional capacity to plan, budget and monitor nutrition interventions at all levels	1. Undertake high-level advocacy for increased commitment to improving nutrition across sectors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Include information on links between Nutrition and WASH in nutrition-related events or vice versa 2. Emphasize technical limitations of reliance on rain-fed agriculture for nutritious crop production in arid and semi-arid lands 	Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), MoLG, MoH, FAO, UNICEF, MoGLSD, CSOs, local governments (LGs), DPs
	2. Strengthen the policy, legal and institutional framework at all levels	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integrate Nutrition into WASH and environment or climate change strategies or plans for the region 2. Participate in district nutrition coordination committees 	
	3. Strengthen human resource capacity to plan, monitor and evaluate food and nutrition programs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify nutrition focal persons from the water office in each district 2. Train identified focal persons on relevant aspects of nutrition programming 	
	4. Enhance operational research for Nutrition	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct research studies on best practices for nutrition-sensitive WASH 2. Disseminate research findings to all relevant stakeholders 3. Incorporate key lessons from research in ongoing and future WASH and Nutrition programs 	

References

GoU, Ministry of Water and Environment. *Water and Environment Sector Performance Report for the 2014/15 Financial Year (SPR 2015)*

GoU, UNICEF (2015). *Government of Uganda-UNICEF Country Programme Action Plan 2016–2020*. Kampala, UNICEF.