

COGNIZANT OF THE INEXTRICABLE LINKS BETWEEN GENDER AND NUTRITION, THE UN NETWORK IS COMMITTED TO PLACING GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AT THE CENTRE OF ITS WORK AT ALL LEVELS.



FAO/R. Grisolia

UN Network and Gender Action at a Glance

THE **UN NETWORK** IS PROMOTING GENDER-SENSITIVE NUTRITION ACTION ACROSS ITS OUTCOMES AS PART OF GREATER EFFORTS TO OPERATIONALIZE A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER, MULTI-SECTORAL APPROACH TO NUTRITION

Reaching optimal results for all requires deconstructing the gender-related barriers that impede progress for girls, boys and women. The **UN [Nutrition] Network** uses a 'gender lens' in its multi-sectoral programming areas to analyze gender-related bottlenecks and develop multi-sectoral solutions to specifically address them.



OUTCOME 1

INCREASED AWARENESS OF THE CAUSES OF MALNUTRITION & POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

UN Network calls attention to gender inequities through its Multi-sectoral Nutrition Overviews (MNO) by including gender indicators and making its nutrition dashboards more gender-sensitive

The MNO tool identifies, compiles and synthesizes available nutrition data, trends, gaps and key messages on the severity and magnitude of the malnutrition situation as well as major trends in the country. For example, in Lesotho, Mozambique and Rwanda, the use of the MNO tool has identified data gaps, stimulating demand for increased gender-sensitive data.

A participatory film in the Satkhira district of Bangladesh

Community activists and nutrition workers were equipped with basic video skills and equipment to tell their stories about how different aspects of their lives impact their nutrition status. The UN Network's catalytic arm, REACH¹, set this into motion, intent to make noise about the stark gender disparities and how certain gender dynamics can be detrimental to nutrition.

The film is a call to action for the government and other stakeholders in-country, urging them to intensify action. Community members, including adolescent girls, speak out about the role of: women's status and rights; dietary diversity, including during pregnancy and local food taboos; infant and young child feeding practices, acknowledging the social norms that influence them; food availability; income and livelihoods; water, sanitation and hygiene.



OUTCOME 2

STRENGTHENED & INCREASINGLY RESOURCED NATIONAL POLICIES & PROGRAMMES

UN Network's Policy and Plan Overview (PPO) helps visualize the landscape of sectoral and multi-sectoral policies, strategies, plans and legal frameworks that exist in a country

In Mozambique, the PPO exercise revealed that there is scope to better reflect nutrition in the majority of governance frameworks on gender and youth. The overview encompassed

national policies, strategies and plans, such as: Gender Strategy of the Agricultural Sector; the Ministry of Women and Social Action's Strategic Plan; the Family Planning and Contraception Strategy; and the Youth Integral Development Strategy. This was crucial for portraying women's empowerment and adolescent nutrition as levers for addressing stunting as well as for the country's broader development.

The findings have fed into advocacy work undertaken with nutrition champions such as Graça Machel. The UN Network has supported similar work in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Nepal, Niger, Sierra Leone and Tanzania, through REACH, which has helped to position nutrition as an entry point for addressing gender inequities.

1. REACH stands for Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger and undernutrition.



OUTCOME 3

INCREASED HUMAN & INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY TO SUPPORT THE SCALING UP OF NUTRITION ACTIONS

Nutrition capacity for scaling-up action in countries

Through its Nutrition Capacity Assessment Guidance package, the UN Network supports countries to comprehensively assess multi-sectoral and sectoral capacity needs for effective scale-up of nutrition actions as well as the subsequent design of a capacity development response that is integrated into a broader national capacity development agenda for nutrition.

In 2018, Burkina Faso carried out a nutrition capacity assessment, adapting a guidance package developed by the UN Network Secretariat in collaboration with the founding UN Network agencies. The assessment identified capacity gaps – both institutional and individual. While the assessment primarily focused on national nutrition coordination mechanisms, it also assessed the structures or technical directorates of sectors, including social protection and gender. It found that nutrition focal points within the different sectors:

1. *Do not always participate in the multi-stakeholder platform;*
2. *Do not always share information within their sectors; and*
3. *Often do not hold a strategic position in the ministry and thus exert little influence.*

The assessment also led to the formulation of a capacity development plan to address these findings. Similar assessments have been conducted in Chad, Ghana, Lesotho, Nepal and Senegal with UN Network support.



OUTCOME 4

INCREASED EFFICIENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY OF NATIONAL EFFORTS

Nutrition Stakeholder & Action Mapping collects data from both government and development partners providing a comprehensive view of which stakeholders are supporting the country-defined 'core nutrition actions'

In response to country demand, the UN Network recently conducted a second round of multi-sectoral mapping in Senegal, which has served as a baseline for the country's new multi-sectoral

action plan on nutrition and to monitor the implementation status of the plan. The exercise engaged thirteen ministries (e.g. Women, Family and Gender; Health and Social Action; Good Governance and Child Protection; and National Education), and a range of nutrition actions. These include gender-sensitive actions such as iron and folic acid supplementation for adolescent girls, literacy training for women and the provision of credit accounts for women.

The inclusion of these actions affirmed the central role of women in nutrition, starting from conception. The exercise used the UN Network mapping tool, developed by REACH, and integrated mapping data into the national M&E nutrition platform to support periodic implementation tracking of the country's nutrition action plan. Ministry-specific coverage dashboards are helping to ensure that those most in need are receiving the support they need for good nutrition.



OUTCOME 5

HARMONIZED & COORDINATED UN NUTRITION EFFORT

Engagement with UN agencies committed to gender equality

The UN Network is engaging with UN agencies beyond the five founding agencies (FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO) in an effort to harness the full potential of the UN System. In particular, the engagement of non-traditional nutrition actors, such as UNFPA and UN WOMEN, in the UN Network is helping to bring gender parity to the forefront of country-level nutrition action.

UN Network's Joint Programming

The collective UN Network approach and support to a country's nutrition needs are embedded in its joint programming. Through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) it promotes coordination and harmonization of United Nations efforts on nutrition and serves as a resource or input for joint nutrition outcomes. The UN Network is increasingly implementing adolescent-focused joint programming, focusing

on nutrition-specific and sensitive programmes that target adolescents in Costa Rica, Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Myanmar and Sri Lanka. In Myanmar, the joint programme focused on nutrition-sensitive emergency preparedness and response, targeting at-risk populations such as mothers, children and adolescents, within the larger humanitarian development context.

→ KEY MESSAGES



1. **Gender equality is enshrined in the 2030 Agenda** as part of the pathway to sustainable development.
2. **The UN Network embraces gender equality as being central to achieving positive nutrition outcomes** at the country level, appreciating that it can drive as much as 25% of child nutrition gains.
3. **Improving the nutritional status of girls, adolescents and women presents a win-win situation.** It enables them to perform better in school and boost their lifetime earnings, which further supports gender equality and women's empowerment.



UN Network

To learn more about how the **UN Network** is supporting country-level action visit <https://www.unnetworkforsun.org/> or write to unnetworkforsun@wfp.org

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