

Improving Nutrition Services in the Care of the Ill and Vulnerable Newborn and Child Workshop

30 October–2 November 2018
Accra, Ghana

Ghana
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photo by Kate Holt/MCSP

Ghana Country Delegation

- Ghana Health Service (Director FHD, Dep. Director for RCH, Programme Officers, Paediatricians, Nutrition Officers)
- Japanese International Collaboration Agency (Expert in Nutrition)
- Ministry of Health (Director, PPME)
- Pediatric Society of Ghana (President)
- USAID Ghana (Mission Director, Director and Dep. Director of Health Office, Nutrition Specialists, etc.)
- USAID - Maternal and Child Survival Project (Country Director, Communication Specialist)
- USAID - Systems for Health (Performance-Based Grants Adviser)
- USAID - Strengthening the Care Continuum Project (Chief of Party)
- USAID - Resiliency In Northern Ghana Project (Sr. Nutrition Officer)
- UNICEF (Nutrition Specialist, Health and Nutrition Specialist)
- WHO (National Programme Officer)
- University of Ghana School of Public Health (MPH Students)

INS Workshop Highlights

- **Integrating nutrition into other health services is important – use every opportunity to identify malnutrition.**
- Countries should be assertive in having their needs met in donor-funded programmes to ensure alignment with country priorities and policies.
- **Nutrition is multi-sectoral.**
- **Considering when and where integration would be most effective is important – this should be done based on implementation research for scale-up. Better coordination is needed.**
- Assessing nutritional status can be complicated.
- **Communities must own solutions and actions, and providers must share results and progress with them.**

Strengthening Nutrition Services in Ghana: Successes



- Ghana Health Service integrated promotion of Early Childhood Development (ECD) into mother support groups, infant and young child feeding (IYCF) training materials, and the maternal and child health record book by:
 - training Community Health Officers
 - raising awareness at the national level
 - reviewing relevant national policies and plans.
- Advocacy on the importance of nurturing care and the need to integrate early stimulation and responsive care practices into health services has raised awareness at various levels.
- This awareness influenced policy/strategic plans supporting cross-sectoral action to ensure nurturing care for ECD reaches more families.

Strengthening Nutrition Services in Ghana: Successes

Developed a KMC Regional Center of Excellence at Eastern Regional Hospital

Outcomes:

- No post-discharge hospital deaths after introduction of KMC outpatient clinic in 2015 and 2016.
- Reduced admission of post-discharge morbidities after 2015.

Conclusion:

- Regular follow-up of preterm babies post discharge at KMC OPD clinic (with the full complement of KMC) reduces morbidity and mortality in preterm.
- Home Neuro-Sensory Stimulation may improve infant development.



Strengthening Nutrition Services in Ghana: Challenges

- **Inadequate nutrition commodities, supplies, and equipment:**
 - Equipment, e.g. weighing scales, length boards
 - Supplies, e.g. counseling cards, food models
 - Commodities, e.g. RUTF, ReSoMal, F-75, F-100
- **Limited staff capacity, knowledge, and numbers:**
 - Limited skills and competency
 - Inadequate supervision and accountability
 - Workload



Strengthening Nutrition Services in Ghana: Challenges

Weak linkages between facilities and communities:



- Cultural beliefs and practices negatively affect use of services and adoption of optimal IYCF practices
- Poor attitude of health workers
- Weak linkage between preventive and clinical care

Strengthening Nutrition Services in Ghana: Country Action Plan

- **Advocate** to include nutrition commodities in the essential medicines list.
- **Improve** accountability and quality of supportive supervision (health staff and community health volunteers).
- **Harmonize** nutrition-related process indicators to be reported regularly.
- **Clearly define** roles/responsibilities for staff and task shifting/sharing.
- **Strengthen** community groups.
- **Use quality improvement** approaches at facility and community levels.

Strengthening Nutrition Services in Ghana: Country Action Plan

- Build capacity in logistics management information systems at various levels of the GHS, including for nutrition commodities.
- Purchase and distribute weighing scales and length boards in all regions to build capacity in the use of recently launched combined maternal and child health record books funded by DFID, World Bank, JICA.
- Conduct training-of-trainers for integrated IMNCI/CMAM modules.
- Conduct BCC community mobilization on breastfeeding and other child care practices.
- Apply quality improvement approaches in health facilities in 6 regions as part of Quality of Care Network activities for improving maternal, newborn, and child health.

Country Action Plan Progress

Priority Intervention	Progress to Date
Conduct advocacy for essential nutrition commodities to be included in the EML	Weighing scales and length boards purchased and distributed in all regions as part of capacity building for effective use of the recently launched combined maternal and child health record books funded by DFID, World Bank, JICA
Improve accountability and quality of supportive supervision (both health staff and CHVs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• TOTs conducted for integrated IMNCI/CMAM modules• QI approaches in health facilities in 6 regions as part of QoC Network activities for improving maternal, newborns and child health

Next Steps



- Engage with private sector/private service providers.
- Increase advocacy and resource mobilization skills of health managers and providers.
- Establish cross-sectoral linkages, referral, and support.
- Raise community awareness while strengthening systems, services, and care.