

FANTA III

FOOD AND NUTRITION
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE



USAID
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STRENGTHENING NUTRITION GOVERNANCE: FANTA Achievements and Lessons Learned



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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ABC	activity-based costing methodology
CMAM	community-based management of acute malnutrition
DNCCs	district nutrition coordination committees
FANTA	Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance III Project
HMIS	health management information system
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MINFIN	Ministry of Finance (Guatemala)
MSP	multi-stakeholder partnership
NACS	nutrition assessment, counseling, and support
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister (Uganda)
SDGs	Strategic Development Goals
SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition
PEPFAR	U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development

Photo credit: Jessica Scranton, FHI 360



Introduction

Growing evidence and experience from investments by key donors, like the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), in nutrition, agriculture, and health are cause for optimism in the global effort to prevent malnutrition.

The 2016 Global Nutrition Report described important progress being made on nutrition indicators, including that many countries are on track to meet global targets for stunting and wasting among children under 5. Good nutrition governance is essential for all countries trying to improve nutrition because it forms the foundation from which sustained and quality nutrition services can be provided at scale.

Effective nutrition governance includes strong commitment, leadership, capacity, and accountability at all levels of government to improve nutrition and maintain progress toward nutrition goals, such as those defined by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In its 2013 series on maternal and child nutrition, the *Lancet* noted that good nutrition governance contributes to the enabling environment for nutrition, which in turn can strengthen effectiveness, scale-up, and sustainability of nutrition efforts. Moreover, improving nutrition governance is a priority under USAID's *Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy 2014–2025* and is a central focus of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement.

The Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance III Project (FANTA) has been working to improve nutrition governance in developing countries, in collaboration with national governments, since 2012. Broadly, FANTA's efforts have focused on:

- **Facilitating multisectoral and multi-stakeholder engagement** to ensure collaboration, action, and accountability on nutrition programming
- **Collaborating on advocacy strategies and materials** to put nutrition on the national agenda, strengthen multisectoral linkages for improved nutrition outcomes, and promote investment in nutrition
- **Strengthening the capacity of all levels and multiple sectors of government** to support and promote nutrition through effective leadership, planning, budgeting, and implementation
- **Fostering government accountability** through better financial management, improved collection of nutrition data to gauge the effectiveness of nutrition interventions, and enhanced capacity of journalists and civil society organizations to monitor governments' follow-through on their commitments

Here are some highlights from FANTA's work in these four areas.

Highlights of FANTA's Nutrition Governance Work

Haiti

Collaborated with stakeholders to develop a nutrition advocacy plan based on data generated by the PROFILES tool

Ghana

Engaged the Ministry of Health and the Ghana Health Service to guide integration of community-based management of acute malnutrition into the health service

Uganda

Provided in-depth technical guidance to the DNCC Initiative and to the Office of the Prime Minister to implement the multisectoral Uganda Nutrition Action Plan and strengthen accountability among ministries regarding nutrition

Ethiopia

Provided training and materials to help regional health bureaus improve collection and reporting of nutrition data and establish a strong M&E system

Bangladesh

Worked with the media to create advocacy resources to help journalists investigate and accurately report on the impact of malnutrition in their country

Guatemala

Helped develop a guide, brief, and webinar for municipality leaders on investing in food security and nutrition and on related interventions that municipalities can implement

Côte d'Ivoire

Supported the development of the Multisectoral Nutrition Plan and the country's efforts to identify funds for the plan

Tanzania

Assisted the Prime Minister's Office with engaging donors, civil society organizations, the private sector, and nutrition implementing partners in developing the National Multisectoral Nutrition Action Plan

Zambia

Facilitated a visit to Tanzania by a delegation of Zambian national and district health officials to learn about Tanzania's experience with incorporating NACS into government health services and explore solutions to challenges they faced with NACS integration

Malawi

Helped nutrition stakeholders establish the Nutrition Society of Malawi to share nutrition information and encourage members' professional growth

Indonesia

Supported the rollout of service performance standards that the central government uses to ensure that the country's districts provide quality nutrition and other services

Mozambique

Supported the government's Multisectoral Action Plan to Reduce Chronic Undernutrition by strengthening the nutrition components of food security policy and advocacy initiatives

Facilitating Multisectoral and Multi-Stakeholder Engagement

Involving multiple sectors and multiple stakeholders addresses the many determinants of malnutrition and can enhance nutrition governance.

As reflected in USAID's Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy, engaging multiple sectors and multiple stakeholders not only addresses the many determinants of malnutrition but also can enhance impact. FANTA supported several countries in leveraging the efforts of different sectors and stakeholders to encourage commitment to nutrition and establishment of structures needed to support and sustain effective nutrition activities.

Partnering with Top Levels of Government

Part of FANTA's strategy to strengthen nutrition governance was to engage national governments at the highest levels. FANTA cultivated relationships with prime ministers' offices and influential line ministries, providing technical guidance to equip top officials to develop or improve nutrition plans and budgets and to coordinate the efforts of multiple levels and sectors within and outside their governments.

In Tanzania, FANTA helped the government analyze and update its national Food and Nutrition Policy, with a focus on strengthening the policy's multisectoral approach to nutrition. FANTA worked with the Prime Minister's Office—which has the authority and ability to convene stakeholders across all sectors to take action on nutrition—and key line ministries to improve oversight and coordination of nutrition governance, leadership, and capacity. FANTA also helped the Prime Minister's Office increase the engagement of donors, civil society organizations, the private sector, and nutrition implementing partners in revising the nutrition policy and in developing Tanzania's *National Multisectoral Nutrition Action Plan*.

In Uganda, FANTA provided in-depth technical support to the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) to implement the Uganda Nutrition Action Plan, which guides the country's multisectoral approach



The Right Honorable Prime Minister of Uganda (left) being recognized as a champion in supporting Uganda's multisectoral nutrition implementation.

to addressing malnutrition. FANTA supported the OPM to coordinate nutrition-related efforts by different sectors and levels of government and to strengthen accountability among ministries regarding nutrition.

To help Guatemala plan and budget for nutrition services, FANTA and the Central American Institute of Fiscal Studies collaborated with the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare and Ministry of Public Finances to determine the costs of implementing nine interventions nationally and in each of 10 high-priority departments. The results of the exercise are helping to raise awareness among key government stakeholders about the consequences of inadequate investment in nutrition.

Collaborating with Ministries

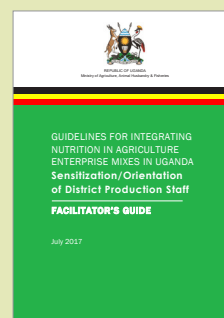
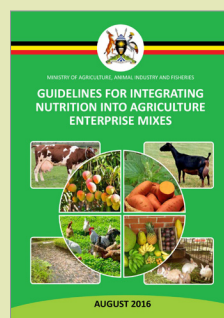
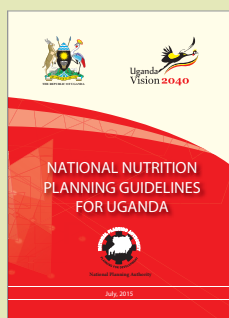
FANTA collaborated with Uganda’s National Planning Authority to develop comprehensive, step-by-step planning guidelines to equip ministries, local government, and civil society organizations to incorporate multisectoral nutrition-related activities into their planning. The project also collaborated with the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development to develop a food and nutrition security community mobilization package and train community development officers from all districts to help communities identify nutrition and food security priorities and develop community action plans. FANTA also helped the Uganda Ministry of

Agriculture, Animal Industry, and Fisheries develop guidelines to strengthen the contribution of agriculture extension and community mobilization to improving household food and nutrition security and train agriculture sector staff, district production officers, and implementing partners on their use.

Working closely with Guatemala’s Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare; Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Food; and other partners, FANTA developed or supported training, materials, and guidance to strengthen collaboration among the country’s agriculture, health, and nutrition sectors. This included producing a technical brief with recommendations on how the agriculture sector can help improve the diets of women and children, especially in the Western Highlands where malnutrition is particularly high. FANTA also partnered with Mozambique’s Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture’s Technical Secretariat for Food Security and Nutrition to support the country’s Multisectoral Action Plan to Reduce Chronic Undernutrition by strengthening the nutrition components of food security policy and advocacy initiatives at the national and provincial levels.

Empowering Districts

In Tanzania and Uganda, district-level committees are integral to nutrition governance, playing a key role in ensuring that nutrition policies and programs are implemented in the districts. FANTA



provided training, materials, and supervision to enable the committees in both countries to coordinate nutrition activities among various sectors, develop annual plans and budgets for nutrition services in target districts, and monitor progress.

In Tanzania, with support from FANTA, the Prime Minister's Office ordered the establishment of District Nutrition Steering Committees, appointed regional and district nutrition officers, issued nutrition guidelines, and required the districts to budget for nutrition. FANTA helped organize annual planning and budgeting sessions for nutrition in all regions of the country. The project also developed two briefs—*A Call to Action on Nutrition for Regional and District Executives* and *Tanzania Malnutrition Factsheet 2016*—and distributed them at the regional planning and budgeting sessions to strengthen understanding of the importance of nutrition for development. All 186 regional and district councils received the briefs and budgeted for nutrition assessment, counseling, and support (NACS) in their Comprehensive Council District Plans.

In Uganda, FANTA supported the strengthening of district nutrition coordination committees (DNCCs) whose members are representatives from government sectors and departments including administration, health, agriculture, gender and social development, education, planning, water, and trade and industry. DNCCs are responsible for planning, implementing, and monitoring multisectoral nutrition activities in their districts. FANTA and the OPM collaborated on an orientation guide, which FANTA, the OPM, and other partners have used to orient all 112 of Uganda's DNCCs on their roles and responsibilities to help achieve nutrition goals. FANTA and the OPM also developed multisectoral nutrition action planning materials that have been adopted by the OPM as the standard approach to nutrition action planning. To date, 25 districts have used the materials to create their action plans. In addition, the project conducted nutrition advocacy training that led to the development of advocacy implementation plans and talking points for use with advocacy audiences in 10 of the 25 districts. (More information on the DNCC Initiative appears on page 14.)



FANTA has contributed a lot in making a difference in nutrition implementation in Tanzania. Working together with Government and other partners has resulted in a revised National Nutrition Policy, National Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Action Plan 2016/17–2020/21 and a number of guidelines for nutrition in Tanzania. These are among the key areas in which FANTA has assisted, and these are going to make a huge difference by 2020, if well applied. From the government side, it was a pleasure to work with committed FANTA staff for results!

*Dr. Vincent Assey, Assistant Director
Nutrition Services Section – Ministry of Health, Community Development,
Gender, Elderly and Children, Tanzania*

Collaborating with Stakeholders on Nutrition Advocacy

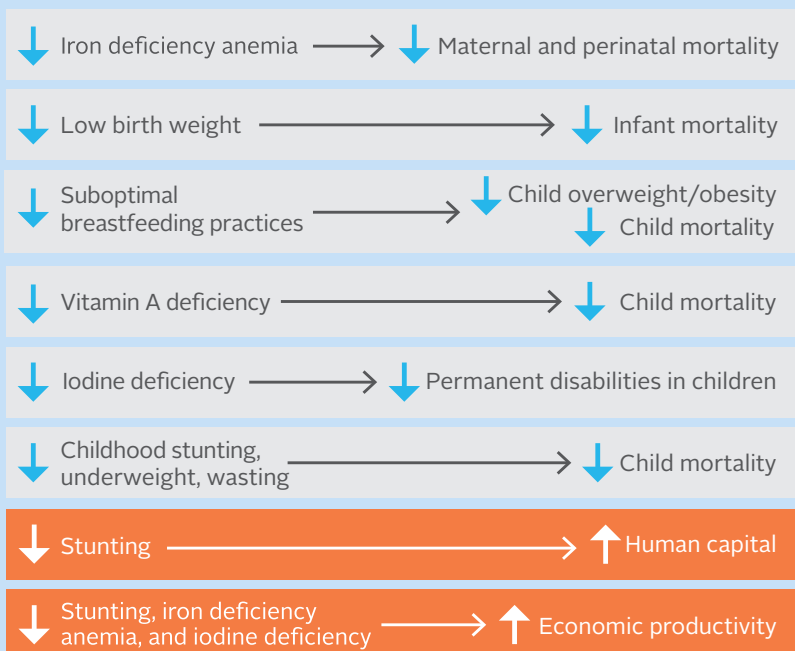
Nutrition advocacy can create movement toward greater political and social commitment for nutrition.

Nutrition advocacy is an important tool for promoting and strengthening nutrition governance. It is a platform to create movement toward greater political and social commitment for nutrition in a country. For example, it can support the development of a nutrition policy, investment of resources to strengthen and expand implementation of nutrition services, and greater coordination between government and nongovernmental organizations that play a role in providing nutrition services across a country. FANTA collaborated with governments, nongovernmental organizations, and other stakeholders in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, Haiti, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia to develop evidence-based strategies, action plans, training, and audience-specific materials to equip these countries to advocate for stronger commitments and more resources for nutrition.

Facilitating Advocacy Planning and Outreach with the PROFILES Tool

FANTA has facilitated nutrition advocacy processes using PROFILES—a spreadsheet-based tool that calculates both the consequences if malnutrition does not improve over a specific period and the benefits of improved nutrition over the same period—and country-specific nutrition costing models the project developed to estimate the costs of implementing a comprehensive set of nutrition interventions in several countries. Using a collaborative approach, country teams developed nutrition advocacy plans and targeted materials, and disseminated PROFILES results to audiences such as policymakers, parliamentarians, development partners, the media, civil society, and the private sector. In Uganda, these advocacy efforts contributed to the adoption of the multisectoral Uganda Nutrition Action Plan. In Bangladesh, PROFILES and nutrition costing

Nutrition Problems Addressed in PROFILES and the Benefits of Their Reduction



Estimates of future lives saved, economic productivity gained, permanent disabilities averted, and human capital gained, 2014–2025, Tanzania PROFILES, 2014

LIVES SAVED		ECONOMIC PRODUCTIVITY GAINED	PERMANENT DISABILITIES AVERTED	HUMAN CAPITAL GAINED
120,633 lives of children under 5 saved related to a reduction in stunting	101,859 lives of children under 5 saved related to improvements in vitamin A status	6.2B TSZ (US\$3.9 million) gained related to a reduction in stunting	869,800 children saved from irreversible brain damage related to a reduction in maternal iodine deficiency	24.7 million equivalent school years of learning gained related to a reduction in stunting
85,519 infants' lives saved related to decreased suboptimal breastfeeding practices	72,739 lives saved in the perinatal period related to a reduction in maternal anaemia	611B TSZ (US\$381.7 million) gained related to improvements in iron deficiency anaemia among adult, non-pregnant women		
20,460 infants' lives saved related to increases in birth weight	15,484 womens' lives saved related to a reduction in maternal anaemia	767B TSZ (US\$479.1 million) gained related to improvements in iodine deficiency		

were completed during a government planning year to advocate for adequate resources for the implementation of national nutrition services.

To help expand nutrition advocacy, FANTA is developing a comprehensive manual with step-by-step instructions on country-level nutrition advocacy using PROFILES and nutrition costing. The web-based manual will include planning guidance, session plans for workshop and meeting facilitators, presentations with scripted notes, handouts for workshop and meeting participants, and templates for use in each step of the process, including PROFILES spreadsheet workbooks.

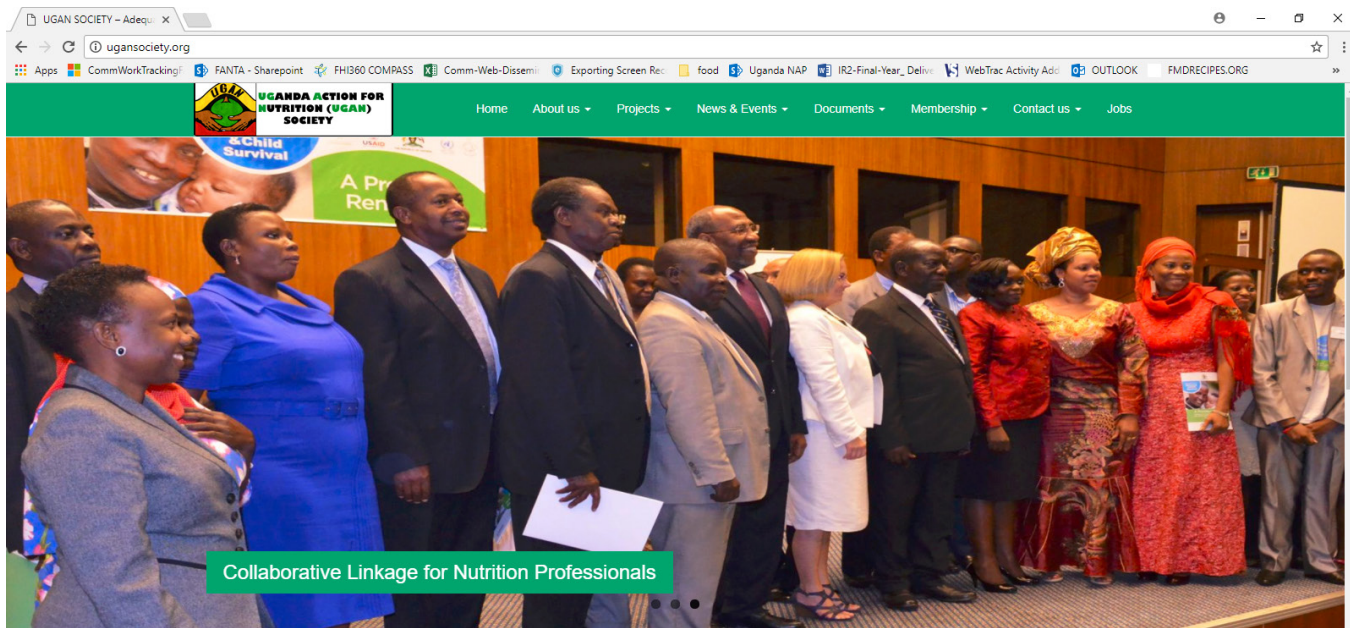
Working with Civil Society

It is important to include civil society in efforts to make advocacy sustainable and help hold governments and other stakeholders to their commitments. FANTA strengthened civil society efforts through several approaches. Drawing on PROFILES results, FANTA worked with journalists and media houses in Bangladesh and Ghana to create advocacy materials such as fact sheets, handbooks for reporting on nutrition, and other resources; conducted trainings; and established a journalist fellowship in Bangladesh and reinvigorated the Health Journalists' Association,

including a mentoring program, in Ghana, to help journalists understand, investigate, and accurately report on the impact of malnutrition in their countries. In Bangladesh, media monitoring and analysis revealed a 19 percentage point increase on average in news coverage of health and nutrition after working with the media, as well as an increase in the clarity and depth of reporting.

In Bangladesh and Uganda, FANTA worked with stakeholders to develop materials for civil society working in food security and agriculture, family planning, and education, and held a series of meetings and workshops on how improved nutrition can support their work and what they can do to support improved nutrition in their countries. Work with civil society also included creating a common advocacy platform for nutrition and promoting greater coordination with the government to ensure that all partners were speaking with one coordinated voice. In

Guatemala, FANTA developed a short video on the medium- and long-term consequences of chronic malnutrition to encourage and equip civil society organizations and government staff to advocate for adequate funding for nutrition interventions. In addition, to better understand and advocate for improved nutrition in Guatemala, representatives from several civil society organizations in the country's Western Highlands participated in a maternal and child nutrition distance learning course that FANTA helped develop. The project also supported several professional nutrition societies, including Uganda Action for Nutrition and the Nutrition Society of Malawi, to better equip them to serve as a platform for nutrition professionals to advocate for nutrition. This support included helping the societies establish nutrition charters and action plans and launch websites for information sharing.



The Uganda Action for Nutrition (UGAN) website serves as a platform for nutrition professionals to advocate for nutrition.

Strengthening Capacity for Nutrition Planning, Leadership, Budgeting, and Implementation

Improving in-country capacity for nutrition governance can contribute to sustainability.

Improving in-country capacity at all levels is vital to effective nutrition governance and sustainable progress in nutrition. FANTA worked in several countries to strengthen the planning, coordination, budgeting, and implementation skills of policymakers, implementing partners, local health officials, health care providers, and community workers through developing technical assistance, training, and guidelines; establishing professional fellowship programs; strengthening professional organizations; and sponsoring exchange visits and other forums for information sharing.

Enhancing National, Local, and Community Capacity

FANTA worked with the Government of Bangladesh and development partners to create and use the Country Investment Plan, a road map for investment in food security, nutrition, and agriculture, and supported development of an operational plan for mainstreaming and scaling up nutrition services throughout the country. In Ghana, to foster an enabling environment for addressing severe acute malnutrition, FANTA engaged the Ministry of Health and the Ghana Health Service to guide the integration of community-based management of acute malnutrition (CMAM) into the health service. FANTA helped the Ghana Health Service and partners establish national and regional technical support teams; develop tools such as guidelines, job aids, and training materials; strengthen the capacity of thousands of health care providers and community health workers; ensure that CMAM was included in national policies, strategies, and

plans; and ensure that quality CMAM services were scaled up in Ghana. In addition, in Côte d'Ivoire, the project developed training strategies, tools, and guidelines to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Health and AIDS Control to integrate NACS into HIV and tuberculosis services.

In Indonesia, where governance is decentralized to the district level, FANTA developed technical guidance that supported the rollout of the Minimum Service Standards, which are performance standards that the central government uses to ensure that the country's 504 districts provide quality services. The standards, which also cover nutrition, define what services the government must provide to citizens at health care centers; continued funding for each district is contingent on meeting these standards.

FANTA's work at the local level includes collaborating on the development of a guide to help municipalities in Guatemala improve nutrition. Targeting municipal leaders, the guide explains the impact of food insecurity, describes the responsibilities of municipalities regarding food security and nutrition within the country's legal framework, spells out steps for municipal investment in food security and nutrition, and lists food security and nutrition interventions that municipalities can implement. In Uganda, FANTA developed a community mobilization guide and trained district community development officers in community mobilization for food security and nutrition.

Supporting Information-Sharing Forums and Professional Organizations

Another method for strengthening capacity and supporting nutrition governance is creating forums and other platforms where government and nongovernment partners can share information, experiences, and best practices related to nutrition. FANTA facilitated a visit to Tanzania by a delegation of Zambian national and district health officials to learn about Tanzania's experience with incorporating NACS into government health services and to explore solutions to challenges they faced with NACS integration. The visit provided the Zambia delegation with new ideas for strengthening NACS implementation and integration. For example, they are considering developing a social and behavior change and communication kit on health and nutrition, and they resolved to advocate for training of more nutritionists. The officials also found Tanzania's progress with transferring planning and budgeting of nutrition services to local government authorities encouraging for their own decentralization efforts.

In Uganda, FANTA organized collaborative learning- and experience-sharing events for USAID nutrition implementing partners aimed at strengthening the country's multisectoral nutrition programming and coordination. At one event, several implementing partners visited a project that was integrating water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) and livelihoods activities into its nutrition programming in the Karamoja region. Afterward, the implementing partners shared their observations about the project and their experiences with multisectoral integration. The partners then developed recommendations to help them improve integration of WASH and livelihood activities, including empowering women to own assets.

Professional organizations can play an important role in supporting, developing, and sustaining effective nutrition governance. As noted, FANTA helped nutrition stakeholders establish the Nutrition Society of Malawi to share nutrition information and encourage members' professional growth. In Uganda, FANTA established the Uganda Nutrition Fellowship in addition to providing financial and technical support to Uganda Action for Nutrition for the redesign, development, and maintenance of the society's website, where members and non-members can access health and nutrition information.



The Zambia delegation meet with Acting Local Government Administrator, Mr. Francis D. Kilar (center) of Ilala District in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Photo: Jemmy Musangulule

The Uganda Nutrition Fellowship

FANTA established the Uganda Nutrition Fellowship (UNF) to develop a skilled cadre of future nutrition leaders for the country. The UNF placed recent graduates in nutrition with host organizations where they were provided with a unique mix of work experience, professional development, and mentorship to promote skill-building in leadership, teamwork, communication, and nutrition technical topics.

Working with their host organizations, the fellows engaged in a variety of activities, including NACS, policy development, advocacy, and behavior change communication with target audiences. They also learned about various nutrition initiatives and had access to networking opportunities and online courses.

Since the fellowship's launch in 2013, FANTA supported 19 fellows through an orientation, mentorship, site visits, team-building retreats, and professional development workshops. The fellows also received mentorship, supervision, and career support from staff at their host organizations. Through this experience, fellows developed strong skills in program design and implementation, coordination, advocacy, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting, as well as in accountability and leadership. Moreover, the fellows provided their host organizations with highly motivated, well-qualified young professionals to support their nutrition work.



Fellows from Round Two of the Uganda Nutrition Fellowship.

Accountability

Solid financial management, data collection, and engagement of civil society and journalists strengthen government accountability.

Effective and sustainable nutrition governance requires accountability to help ensure that planned interventions are implemented and managed well. FANTA has worked to support government accountability by helping governments and other stakeholders strengthen management of financial resources for nutrition, the collection and quality of data used in decision making and in assessing the effectiveness of nutrition efforts, and the capacity of civil society and journalists to monitor governments' nutrition activities.

Strengthening Financial Management

The international community and individual governments have shown growing interest in nutrition costing as a result of high-level initiatives such as the SUN movement. FANTA assisted the governments of Bangladesh and Guatemala with costing nutrition interventions at a national scale using the activity-based costing approach (see sidebar). FANTA developed a tool for costing CMAM activities and assisted Ghana and Malawi with using the tool. In Côte d'Ivoire, FANTA supported the development of the Multisectoral Nutrition Plan and participated in the country's roundtable event to identify funds for the plan. The event, which included global partners and officials from multiple government sectors, helped increase financial commitments to the plan by 77 percent. Côte d'Ivoire's national nutrition office also invited FANTA to participate in a follow-up committee to help the country manage the funds, establish a clear process for their disbursement, and generally ensure their optimal use in support of the plan.

Improving Data Collection and Use

In Ethiopia, FANTA provided training and materials to help regional health bureaus improve collection and reporting of nutrition data and establish a strong monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system. The project also worked with the Federal Ministry

of Health to integrate NACS-related indicators into the country's routine health management information system (HMIS) to help evaluate and ultimately improve NACS services. FANTA assisted Uganda with incorporating nutrition data into its HMIS and developed a training package to improve the quality of data capture, reporting, and use in health facilities. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, FANTA revised M&E tools, such as a nutrition indicators worksheet, to strengthen collection of data needed for program and strategic planning and for decision making.

To provide guidance on data collection efforts in a broader context, FANTA conducted a landscape analysis to document the types of nutrition indicators collected at the national level in 16 countries funded by the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) that were implementing NACS activities. The project identified 321 nutrition-related indicators, analyzed them, and organized them by country in an analysis report. The findings should help national and international stakeholders supporting government-led nutrition M&E systems make better indicator choices and streamline nutrition data collection.

Supporting Civil Society and Journalists

FANTA equipped civil society organizations in Guatemala to monitor nutrition activities via visits to health facilities and households and to share their results with the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare and other national and local authorities. In addition, the advocacy materials that the project helped develop in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Zambia, Ghana, and Uganda encouraged journalists to monitor nutrition issues and provided them with data they could use to hold government and other institutions accountable for improving nutrition.

Costing Approach Raises Awareness of Malnutrition in Guatemala

Guatemala faces alarming levels of chronic malnutrition, which manifests as childhood stunting. Nearly half of boys and girls under 5 years are stunted. The Government of Guatemala has made addressing chronic malnutrition a priority and is committed to reducing it among children under 2 years by 10 percentage points by 2020.

To help Guatemala plan and budget for nutrition services, FANTA and the Central American Institute of Fiscal Studies (ICEFI in Spanish) collaborated with the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare (MSPAS in Spanish) and the Ministry of Public Finances (Minfin) to determine the costs of implementing nine priority nutrition interventions nationally. The costing exercise used the activity-based costing methodology (ABC), marking its first use in Guatemala. Broadly, the ABC methodology estimates the cost of a program by costing each activity (interventions, or cost centers) within the program.

Results from the costing exercise showed that nutrition was severely underfunded in Guatemala. For example, in 2013, the government invested 637.2 million quetzals (about US\$80 million) in nutrition, only about a third of the 1.8 billion quetzals (about US\$230 million) required for that year. The results also showed that if the government continues to increase its nutrition budget by only 5 percent a year, the nutrition investment gap could reach nearly 3 billion quetzals (about US\$380 million) by 2021. Based on these results, several recommendations were made for increasing investment in nutrition as well as in the health sector overall, promoting policies that support nutrition, and strengthening nutrition programming.

The results from the exercise are helping to raise awareness among key government stakeholders of the consequences of malnutrition for Guatemala. Minfin took a leading role in conducting the costing exercise, which deepened the ministry's commitment to and understanding of the importance of investing in nutrition and made it an influential champion for nutrition given its key role in preparing the national budget for approval by the Guatemalan Congress.

The costing exercise is of growing interest outside Guatemala, due in part to initiatives, such as the Scaling Up Nutrition movement, that promote adequate, sustainable funding for nutrition. FANTA has presented the costing exercise's results at international conferences, contributing to a global dialogue that will help promote and improve nutrition costing in developing countries. All of this activity could lead to greater investment in nutrition to improve nutrition service delivery.

“The most important public health problem in Guatemala is chronic malnutrition, and the FANTA III Project dedicated itself to strengthening the capacity of the Government of Guatemala to focus in an integrated way on nutrition, agriculture, and human resources to address this problem... at the local and national level. The project produced materials, information, and online courses that are available for the country to continue using.”

—German González, Secretary, Guatemala Food Security and Nutrition Secretariat

Uganda's DNCC Initiative Embodies Key Aspects of Nutrition Governance

With FANTA Support, Effort Combines Multisectoral/Multi-Stakeholder Approach, Advocacy, Capacity Strengthening, and Accountability

Multisectoral and multi-stakeholder engagement, nutrition advocacy, capacity strengthening at all levels, and efforts to improve government accountability form the core of FANTA's support for effective nutrition governance. Uganda's DNCC Initiative is one illustration of how these four factors work together to help strengthen nutrition governance.

While Uganda's DNCCs are responsible for all aspects of multisectoral nutrition activities in their districts, the Uganda Nutrition Action Plan only provides a broad mandate for DNCCs and does not include specific roles and responsibilities or benchmarks for DNCC performance. Additionally, while DNCCs were formally established by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) through the Uganda Nutrition Action Plan, they were created as a parallel system and not formally integrated into existing local governance structures. Because of this, there was inconsistency in the way that DNCCs operated, were supported by partners, and fulfilled their multisectoral mandate.

Addressing Accountability, Advocacy, and Capacity

Recognizing the challenges faced by DNCCs, and understanding that improving nutrition outcomes at the district level is a long-term challenge requiring investment in local government systems and frameworks, the OPM Nutrition Secretariat and the Ministry of Local Government—in collaboration with USAID and with technical support from FANTA and Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation (CDI)—worked together

to strengthen nutrition leadership and governance at the national and district levels. This partnership, known as the DNCC Initiative, had three main objectives:

- To strengthen the national oversight and support structure for the DNCCs
- To enhance awareness of and commitment to nutrition among local level stakeholders including technical and political leaders, implementing partners, and community members
- To strengthen DNCC capacity to plan, budget, leverage existing resources for, advocate for, and monitor nutrition activities

The DNCC Initiative focused on 10 districts in the Feed the Future zones of influence in the southwest (Kamwenge, Kasese, Kisoro, Ntungamo, and Sheema) and north (Amuru, Dokolo, Lira, Masindi, and Oyam) regions.

Bringing Together Multiple Sectors and Stakeholders

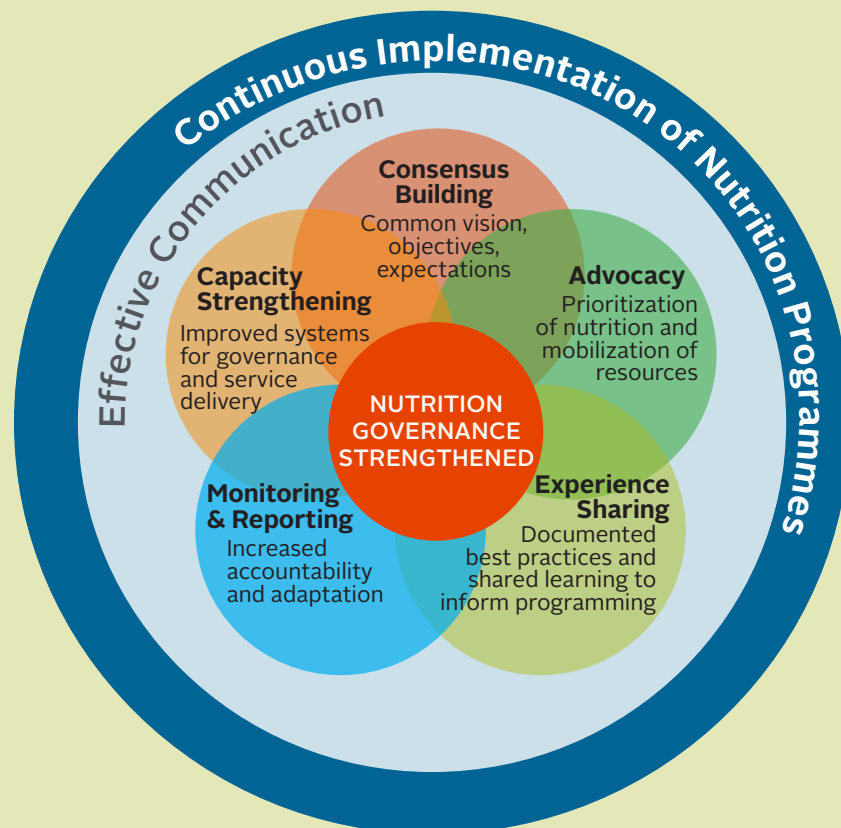
Strong coordination, collaboration, and buy-in from stakeholders were needed to achieve the DNCC Initiative's objectives and ensure sustainability. A multi-stakeholder partnership (MSP) approach was taken to bring together the diverse community of multisectoral nutrition stakeholders that have differing mandates and levels of experience with nutrition programming. The MSP approach works by engaging different perspectives and points of view in order to clarify and agree on common objectives and

expectations, leading to plans to improve nutrition that are locally owned and sustainable. (More information on the MSP approach is available at <http://www.mspguide.org>.)

The experience gained by strengthening nutrition governance through the DNCCs was used to inform an approach that can be applied to nutrition coordination committees at all levels of local government, including districts, municipalities, town councils, sub-counties, and divisions (see figure below). This approach shows the key processes and outputs required to achieve lasting institutional change.

The OPM has adopted the initiative's methods and is now expanding them to other districts. To facilitate this expansion, FANTA and its partners developed an online Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Toolkit, which provides guidance on the approach, the key steps to strengthening nutrition governance, and access to key resources and tools to support the advocacy, planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of quality multisectoral nutrition interventions.

Framework for Strengthening Nutrition Leadership in Uganda





FANTA also was a key partner in establishing Uganda’s Parliamentary Forum on Nutrition, an advocacy forum created to champion nutrition issues in Parliament and to generate greater Parliamentary awareness, discussion, and commitment to promote nutrition and increase resource appropriation for nutrition. The forum provides an opportunity for members of

Parliament and development partners to discuss nutrition priorities and resource prioritization and allocation. The forum reflects Parliament’s commitment to support and promote the implementation of ongoing nutrition activities in line with the multisectoral approach to the Uganda Nutrition Action Plan and the Uganda Nutrition Advocacy and Communication Strategy.

Lessons Learned

Several lessons emerged from FANTA's extensive experience working to strengthen nutrition governance in developing countries around the world:

- High-level multisectoral and multi-stakeholder steering committees with the authority to oversee and coordinate efforts toward meeting nutrition objectives can improve the effectiveness of nutrition actions and sustain progress.** Top-level officials, particularly those who serve as nutrition champions, can help keep the committees engaged and accountable. Participation of stakeholders from a range of sectors within and outside the government—such as civil society and the private sector, as emphasized by the SUN movement—can broaden buy-in, extend the reach of nutrition efforts, provide different approaches to problem solving, improve coordination, and help maintain momentum. Governments might need support in developing appropriate relationships with the private sector. Ongoing dialogue and transparency are vital to these relationships, especially to avert unintended consequences or potential conflicts of interest. In addition, strong facilitation of steering committee meetings is essential. Facilitation should focus on not only keeping discussions on track but on building consensus on a vision and objectives for nutrition, setting national and sub-national targets to support M&E and accountability, and ensuring that committee members follow up on action steps and commitments.
- Advocacy efforts to increase attention to nutrition across sectors are more effective when they identify benefits for non-nutrition sectors, rather than just try to persuade other sectors to adopt nutrition goals.** For instance, nutrition advocacy that presents gains related to health, human capital, economic productivity, and education is more likely to obtain the commitment of ministries of finance, labor, education, agriculture, and social services. In addition, advocacy should be ongoing to ensure that nutrition remains a priority. This is especially important at the sub-national level, where the often high turnover among administrative, political, and technical personnel requires continuous advocacy to reach new leadership and staff.
- Efforts to improve nutrition governance often end at the national level.** It is important to bring efforts related to multi-stakeholder engagement, advocacy, costing, capacity strengthening, and accountability to leaders and staff at the sub-national level, particularly for countries with decentralized systems for decision making. Countries like Malawi and Tanzania have strengthened sub-national governance by placing district nutritionists who are responsible for both technical guidance and accountability in every district. In Uganda, districts with strong administrative leadership did better at meeting nutrition goals. Consequently, tools created to support nutrition governance should be designed for use at national and sub-national levels.
- Nutrition governance tools should be designed in partnership with national stakeholders and with an eye toward ensuring long-term use.** For example, user manuals or toolkits should be easily accessible to new stakeholders and available in additional locations as a country's nutrition efforts expand. It also is helpful to design tools that are easily updated as new information becomes available.
- In SUN countries, linking nutrition governance activities to SUN efforts helps avoid duplicating or undermining efforts already underway and strengthens countries' efforts to meet the objectives they set as part of their commitment to SUN.** This may mean ensuring that the designated SUN country focal

point is part of discussions and decision making on all nutrition governance activities or that all such efforts are regularly reported out to ensure transparency.

- **Costing how much investment is needed for universal or targeted nutrition services is a powerful tool to shape commitment to and funding for nutrition.** However, estimates of costs and the level of effort required must be realistic and attainable: In some cases, national and sub-national governments have lost their motivation because of unattainable estimates. Governments also need to know what interventions are the most critical for their specific context; situational analyses, assessments, and formative research can help governments identify priorities for implementation and improve progress toward nutrition goals.
- **Sustained capacity strengthening and resources—including technical assistance, training, guidelines, and forums for information-sharing—are needed for all levels of government, civil society, and all other in-country actors.** This will promote ownership and support implementation of effective, high-quality nutrition interventions and maintain progress, especially as demand for services grows. Emphasizing skills such as action planning, budgeting, accounting, knowledge management, and communication may be of particular value in countries where academic degree programs mainly focus on technical skills.
- **National nutrition professional societies can serve as platforms for sustaining capacity strengthening and as hubs for sharing information and resources.** Ensuring that these organizations have legal charters, defined mandates, and well-designed, functioning websites and other knowledge management vehicles can position them to meet the needs of nutrition professionals in their countries.
- **Cross-border exchange visits by government officials are important for sharing knowledge and experiences.** This type of learning can be sustained and expanded by ensuring follow-up communication after the visits and by providing ongoing opportunities for discussion and relationship building.
- **Strong nutrition governance depends not only on strengthening systems for collecting nutrition data but also on using the data to guide decision making and investments.** It is critical to ensure that countries have the systems and support they need to use the data to track the progress, effectiveness, and trends of their multisectoral activities, particularly at the sub-national level.

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