



REPORT ON MAPPING OF SECTORAL AND MULTI - SECTORAL COORDINATION MECHANISMS FOR NUTRITION IN KITUI COUNTY

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CASSCOM	County Agriculture Sector Steering Committee
CIDP	County Integrated Development Plan
CNAP	County Nutrition Action Plan
CNC	County Nutrition Coordinator
CNTF	County Nutrition Technical Forum
CSG	County Steering Group
DND	Division of Nutrition and Dietetics
FNSP-IF	Food and Nutrition Security Policy Implementation Framework
KNAP	Kenya Nutrition Action Plan
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoH	Ministry of Health
MSN	Multi-Sectoral Nutrition
NICHE	Nutrition Improvement for Children through Cash and Health Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NDMA	National Drought Management Authority
RMCAH	Reproductive Maternal Child Adolescent Health
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States of America International Development
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Executive summary

Background

Kenya is experiencing a triple burden of malnutrition (co-exist as under-nutrition, micro-nutrient deficiencies, overweight and obesity) and decreasing this burden requires multi-sectoral coordination. Nutrition coordination in Kenya is a key enabler of success in program planning, optimal utilization of resources and ultimately contributing to improved nutrition. Subsequently, multi-sectoral nutrition coordination requires multiple stakeholders to collaborate, implement, and monitor jointly interventions/approaches that address malnutrition. A study conducted in Uganda and Nepal showed that unclear coordination and collaboration across sectors was one of several reasons why multi-sectoral nutrition efforts failed to gain momentum in the past (Levinson, Balarajan, and Marini 2013). Ending malnutrition and hunger requires multi-sectoral actors to work together to establish powerful partnerships that change the global landscape at all levels

The Kitui County Nutrition Action Plan seeks to apply multi and cross sectoral approach in addressing the social determinants of malnutrition in a sustainable way and recognizes that addressing the triple burden of malnutrition requires the involvement of all stakeholders beyond health. As a result, the Ministry of health, Division of Nutrition and Dietetics commissioned a mapping exercise to assess sectoral and multi-sectoral nutrition (MSN) coordination mechanisms. The aim was to establish and document capacities, gaps and opportunities for strengthening MSN coordination in nutrition.

Methods

The mapping exercise was conducted between July to September, 2022 and employed a cross-sectional study design to collate sectoral and multi-sectoral experiences and perspectives on the existing coordination mechanisms. The assessment approach comprised of comprehensive desk reviews and primary data collection through multi stakeholder key informant interviews. Interviews were conducted with key resource persons (directors and program coordinators) from the county departments of health, agriculture, social protection, gender, education, WASH and the National Drought Management Authority. In order to analyze the findings of the assessment, themes were identified through a deductive approach along the following streams; presence of sectoral and multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms, functionality of nutrition coordination mechanisms, motivators and bottlenecks to effective sectoral and multi-sectoral coordination, capacity gaps for sectoral and multi-sectoral nutrition coordination mechanisms

Findings

1. Presence of sectoral and multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms

The multi sectoral coordination mechanism within the nutrition sub sector is the Multi Sectoral Nutrition Platform while the nutrition specific sectoral coordination mechanism is the County Nutrition Technical Forum. Multi sectoral coordination mechanisms within the nutrition sensitive sectors include County Steering Group, County Agricultural Sector Steering Committee, Education in Emergencies technical

working group, gender based technical working group, the WASH forum, County Technical Advisory Committee and the County Project Steering Committee in the National Agricultural and Rural Inclusive Growth (NARIG) Project and the Nutrition Improvement for Children through Cash and Health Education (NICHE) coordination forum. Other coordination mechanisms hosted under the Department of Health and Sanitation include the WASH stakeholder's forum and other technical working groups in the various sub sectors. Some of the proposed coordination mechanisms in the departments of agriculture and education were non-existent such as the County Inter Ministerial Monitoring and Enforcement committee, the school health committees at county, sub-county and ward level, the county food and nutrition security steering committee, county food and nutrition secretariat, stakeholder's technical committee, and the agri - nutrition secretariat

2. Functionality of nutrition coordination

Though currently inactive, the County Nutrition Technical Forum was composed of nutrition specific stakeholders and steered by the nutrition sub-sector. The MSN coordination platform draws its members from various nutrition sensitive and specific state and non-state actors including various county departments (health, agriculture, education, water, social protection, gender) and Civil Society Organizations. The MSN platform is co- chaired by the departments of health and agriculture. Although it has no linkages with the national, the MSN platform has been cascaded to the sub-counties. t.

3. Motivators and bottlenecks to effective sectoral and multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms

Motivators for effective coordination include the presence of a policy document at county level where coordination can be anchored upon, presence of MSN members with different technical skills and capacities thus contributing to acquisition of knowledge, established sectoral and multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms which provide an opportunity to share programs, budgetary allocation and work-plans for harmonization and leveraging of activities along common goals and the presence of partners who fund coordination mechanisms.

Some of the bottlenecks to effective coordination are partner exit, over-reliance on partners for financial support, lack of involvement of private sector and the academia as stakeholders in the MSN, minimal information sharing among coordination mechanisms and inadequate resource allocation by the county government for coordination among others.

4. Capacity gaps for effective sectoral and multi-sectoral nutrition coordination mechanisms

Capacity gaps that hinder effective coordination include inadequate awareness among nutrition sensitive stakeholders on nutrition and on policy documents guiding sectoral and multi- sectoral coordination. In addition, there is a lack of agreed upon nutrition sensitive indicators to monitor achievements of nutrition sensitive interventions/ sectors with the MSN platform yet to develop a common results framework.

Conclusion

Kitui County has a good policy environment for nutrition. There are a number of coordination mechanisms within the county of which two are for nutrition, the County Nutrition Technical Forum and the Multi-sectoral Nutrition Platform. However, some of the coordination mechanisms proposed by policy documents in the health, agriculture and education sectors are yet to be established. This has affected the coordination of some nutrition specific and sensitive sectors. The established coordination mechanisms are semi functional demonstrated by lack of meetings for the CNTF, the inadequate inclusion of all relevant sectors as members, lack of a minutes repository and poor linkages with the national level. Multi-sectoral coordination can further be strengthened by incorporating other stakeholders who may have been missed out in the nutrition coordination, fostering adequate documentation and strengthening linkages with the national level and reviving of the CNTF.

Recommendations

To improve multi-sectoral nutrition coordination, there is need to;

- Advocate for establishment of other coordination mechanisms in agriculture and education as outlined in the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy Implementation Framework (FNISP) IF (2017-2022) and School Health Policy Implementation Framework (2018)
- Enhance and streamline MSN platform as the overall overarching coordination structure at the county for food and nutrition with linkages to the other sectoral and multi sectoral technical working groups and committees
- Incorporate other stakeholders who may have been missed out in the nutrition coordination mechanisms such as the private sector and the academia in the MSN platform and other health thematic areas in the CNTF.
- Develop a joint annual workplan for the MSN with activities distributed through the quarters of the financial year.
- Revive the CNTF as a sectoral coordination mechanism for the nutrition sensitive interventions.
- Establish the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) chapter in Kitui County to spearhead nutrition advocacy in regards to resource allocation.
- Conduct high level advocacy with government, targeting key decision makers to resource mobilize for multi-sectoral actions
- Anchor the coordination mechanisms within the county policies, CIDP and in the CNAP to allow for funding from the county government which will enhance sustainability.
- Adopt the national multi-sectoral score card if it's available for review and tracking of multi-sectoral performance

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background and Context

Kenya is experiencing a triple burden of malnutrition characterized by the coexistence of under-nutrition as manifested by stunting, wasting, underweight, low birth weight; micro-nutrient deficiencies; and over-nutrition as evidenced by increasing overweight, obesity and non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, cancers among others. All the three forms of malnutrition occur within individuals, households and populations throughout the life course. Addressing all forms of malnutrition at the three levels of causation (immediate, underlying and basic) concurrently, increases the effectiveness and efficiency of investments of time, energy and resources to improve nutrition. The nutrition policy environment in Kenya is highly favourable with various nutrition-specific and sensitive policies developed with implementation on-going at county level.

The Lancet series reviewed progress towards improving maternal & child health and recognized that tackling under-nutrition requires scaling up proven nutrition-specific interventions alongside strengthening nutrition-sensitive interventions spanning a variety of sectors (Ruel et al., 2013). Nutrition specific interventions implemented with a wide coverage (i.e. above 90%) can only resolve 20% of the burden of chronic under-nutrition. The rest can only be achieved through nutrition sensitive interventions (Bhutta et al., 2013).

The Conceptual Framework of malnutrition, (UNICEF, 2021) and the 2013 Lancet Series on Maternal and Child Nutrition (Bhutta et al., 2013), presents a positive causal pathway with interventions required to achieving optimal nutrition. The framework stresses the multifaceted enabling, underlying and immediate determinants for successful nutrition and ultimately health, human development and growth, educational performance, and economic productivity. Decreasing malnutrition requires coordination and collaboration from multiple sectors. The combined power of high level political commitment and a supportive policy environment across sectors are key ingredients in improving nutrition.

Kenya has a highly favourable nutrition policy environment with key policies and strategic plans linked to nutrition in health and other line ministries. Kenya Nutrition Action Plan (KNAP), MoH- Kenya, 2018, gave clear guidance on sector wide partnership and collaboration. It also promotes stronger institutional coherence and linkages between sectors, at national and county levels. The Kitui County Nutrition Action Plan seeks to apply a multi and cross sectoral approach in addressing the social determinants of malnutrition in a sustainable way and recognizes that addressing the triple burden of malnutrition requires the involvement of all stakeholders beyond health (Ministry of Health and Sanitation, 2019). Coordination allows various stakeholders to see where they fit in the larger system and helps clarify roles and contributions of partners (Garrett & Natalicchio, 2011). Moreover, nutrition-sensitive programs can serve as delivery platforms for nutrition-specific interventions potentially increasing their scale, coverage and effectiveness.

Despite the success and progress, Despite the success and progress, a study conducted in Uganda and Nepal showed that unclear coordination and collaboration across sectors

was one of several reasons why multi-sectoral nutrition efforts failed to gain momentum in the past (Levinson, Balarajan, and Marini 2013). Coordinating agencies meant to serve multiple functions have limited value to ending malnutrition due to their inability to maintain continued political commitment and lack of joint work-planning, attainable through optimal multi-actor coordination and leadership. The ability to monitor coordination efforts and processes remain critical due to renewed focus on multi sectoral actions and collaboration. The Ministry of Health- Division of Nutrition and Dietetics (MoH-DND) with support from USAID Advancing Nutrition therefore prioritized and commissioned a mapping exercise to assess sectoral and multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms at county level.

1.2 Objectives

The main aim of the mapping exercise was to assess the existing coordination platforms across the nutrition specific and sensitive sectors to inform alignment of MSN in Kitui County. Specifically, the exercise sought to;

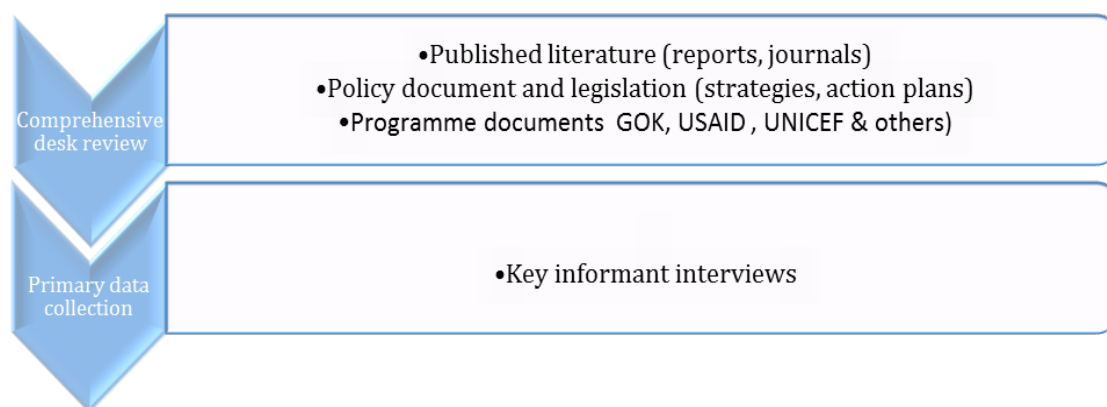
1. Establish the presence of the coordination mechanisms in nutrition specific and sensitive sectors in Kitui County.
2. Assess and describe the functionality of the coordination mechanisms (membership processes, terms of reference, frequency of meetings, work plans and documentation in terms of minutes and action plans among others) in Kitui County.
3. Assess the bottlenecks and motivators for effective coordination and sustainability of the coordination mechanisms in Kitui County.
4. Assess the capacity gaps of the coordination mechanisms and stakeholders in Kitui County.
5. Provide recommendations on strengthening the coordination mechanisms including addressing capacity gaps in Kitui County.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Mapping of sectoral and multi - sectoral approach

The mapping exercise was conducted between July and September, 2022 and employed a cross sectional study design to gather rich sectoral and multi - sectoral experiences, perspectives and views on the exiting coordination structures. The assessment approach comprised of comprehensive desk reviews and primary data collection through multi stakeholder key informant interviews with the county departments of health, agriculture-(Agri-nutrition, livestock, fisheries), social protection, gender, education, water and National Drought Management Authority (NDMA). Figure 1 below shows the approach for the mapping of existing sectoral and multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms

Figure 1: Approach for mapping of existing sectoral and multi-sectoral coordination mechanism



2.1.1. Comprehensive desk review

The consultant developed a scoping and mapping tool to aid in identification of the documents to be reviewed and to provide guidance on the standards that define functionality of coordination mechanisms. The comprehensive desk review involved the examination of existing policy documents, studies and program documents from the national and county levels. The review provided information on the existence and description of the coordination structures, membership, processes of coordination and levels. A total of 23 policy documents from both nutrition specific and sensitive sectors were reviewed. The desk review findings assisted in identification of the mentioned coordination mechanisms already formed and/or to be established and gaps in guidance on formation and processes of the coordination mechanisms. A comprehensive list of the documents reviewed is in annex 1 while the results have been integrated into the findings of the mapping exercise

2.1.2. Primary data collection

County Multi-sectoral Nutrition Secretariat with leadership from the county nutrition coordinator provided guidance on the sampling criteria. Those sampled were secretariats, chairs and/or heads of department within the various sectors. The consultant developed key informant interview guides in English in consultation with the division of nutrition and dietetics and USAID Advancing Nutrition. Seventeen key informants were then purposively sampled comprising respondents drawn from the county departments of health, social protection, education, water, gender, agriculture and NDMA as mapping participants (2 Females, 15 Males). Interviews were conducted both face-to-face and virtually in English and audio recorded. COVID-19 containment measures were observed for the face-face interviews. The lead consultant was in charge of the overall execution of the mapping exercise.

Table 1: Sample respondents reached against the proposed sample size

County	Department	Proposed sample size	Respondents reached
Kitui	County	1	0
	Health	7	4
	Agriculture	5	3
	Livestock	1	1
	Fisheries	1	1
	Education	6	3
	Social protection	1	1

	Gender	1	1
	Water	1	2
	NDMA	1	1
Total	10	25	17

2.2. Data analysis and ranking mapping aspect levels

The qualitative data underwent in-depth processing and analysis. All audio recordings were transcribed verbatim and the quality of the transcript checked against the audio recording by the consultant. Initial qualitative data coding framework was developed deductively based on the key informant interview guides. Subsequently, consensus on code usage, code definitions and structure were used to refine the codebook after reviewing a sub set of the transcripts by the consultant. The data were analyzed using in-depth thematic analysis. Review of findings was conducted through revisiting the data and research questions per objective, as part of internal validation of findings, before interpretation of the overarching lessons and recommendation. To ensure confidentiality, codes were used to maintain anonymity of the respondents. All audio recorded interviews were safely stored in password protected devices. A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis was used to determine the motivators and bottlenecks to effective sectoral and multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms.

The findings were ranked with a view to establish the status of the mapping aspects under each objective. To reflect these varying degrees, each mapping aspect is scored ordinally (1-4) as shown in the subsequent tables.

Table 2: Mapping scoring matrix

Score	Mapping level description	Colour code	Interpretation
1	Low	Red	Nascent *
2	Medium	Yellow	Establishing #
3	High	Light green	Consolidating †
4	Very high	Dark green	Sustaining §

* - Red means nascent

- Yellow means establishing

† - Light green means consolidating

§ - Dark green means sustaining.

3.0 Findings

The findings of this assessment are shown in a table for each of the mapping aspects followed by textual explanations which highlight mapping status, main gaps and recommendations. These mapping markers provide useful reference points for opportunities for leveraging on inter-actor synergies across multiple partners and actor network. They also provide a feasible objective and sound framework for prioritizing actionable mapping recommendations.

3.1 Presence Sectoral and Multi- Sectoral coordination mechanisms

The coordination mechanisms in Kitui county include a County Steering Group (CSG), County Agricultural Sector Steering Committee (CASSCOM), County Technical Advisory Committee (CTAC) and the County Project Steering Committee (CPCS) in the National Agricultural and Rural Inclusive Growth (NARIG) Project, Education in Emergencies Technical Working Group, gender based technical working group, WASH forum and the Nutrition Improvement for Children through Cash and Health Education (NICHE) coordination forum. Coordination mechanisms hosted under the Ministry of Health and Sanitation includes the Multi Sectoral Nutrition (MSN) platform, County Nutrition Technical Forum, WASH stakeholders forum and other technical working groups in the various sub sectors such as Reproductive Health, HIV, Tuberculosis and Child health among others.

While the County Inter Ministerial Monitoring and Enforcement (CIMEC) committee had been proposed, it was non-existent (MoH- Kenya, 2021). In addition, other proposed mechanisms that had not been established are the school health committee at county, sub-county and ward level (MoE-Kenya, 2018) including the county food and nutrition security steering committee, county food and nutrition secretariat, stakeholder’s technical committee for food and nutrition, and the agri - nutrition secretariat (MoALF-Kenya, 2017). The gaps identified from the respondents of the KIIs can be found in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Sectoral and multi-sectoral coordination mechanism

Mapping Aspect	Score	Gap
Sectoral and multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms	2	The coordination structures/committees proposed within the policy documents that were not in existence at county level includes. school health committee at county, sub-county and ward level including the county food and nutrition security steering committee, county food and nutrition secretariat, stakeholder’s technical committee for food and nutrition, and the agri - nutrition secretariat

3.2 Functionality of nutrition coordination mechanisms (MSN AND CNTF)

3.2.1 Multi - Sectoral Nutrition Platform

The multi-sectoral nutrition platform consists of both state and non-state, nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive stakeholders bringing on board the departments of agriculture (agri - nutrition, livestock and fisheries), water, gender, social protection, education, the county treasury, the National Drought Management Authority (NDMA) and Civil Society Organizations. While the platform is yet to incorporate the private sector and academia, there are plans to engage and include the private sector as part of the membership as attested to by the quote;

“But we also need bring the private sector on board...so far we do not have membership on the private sector...we still have that gap of their involvement. So we will be engaging them soon so that we can build up the portfolio of stakeholders from the private sector.” MoA

The draft ToR is available and it stipulates that the forum is co-chaired by the directors in the departments of health and agriculture while the secretary is the office of the CNC with support from the agri- nutrition unit. The MSN has a workplan and meetings are held every quarter.

While the MSN platform has no linkages with national level, it is replicated at sub-county level which also holds quarterly meetings. The sub county MSN was yet to appoint office bearers and the sectors are currently in the process of incorporating the ToR in the county MSN TOR. Some stakeholders felt that coordination should be in a higher office to ensure commitment to meetings, high level political support as well as resource allocation as expressed in the following quote;

“One of the strengths is that when the coordination structure is very powerful, when they call for meetings no one hesitates to attend unless with a very reasonable apology” MoE

The coordination mechanism is semi-functional. The gaps identified from the respondents of the KIIs can be found in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Functionality of MSN coordination mechanism

Mapping aspect	Score	Gap
Membership	3	Lack of inclusion of other sub sectors within the health department, the private sector including the chamber of commerce and industry and the academia.
Availability of ToR	3	The TOR is yet to be finalized. Draft ToR available
Chair and Secretariat	3	Co-chaired by health and agriculture with the nutrition unit as the secretariat
Frequency of meetings	3	Meetings are held quarterly which may be far apart as the forum is still new. Funding is donor dependent
Documentation	2	No repository for minutes
Workplan availability	2	Though a joint workplan is available, it is not well integrated and the process of development was not inclusive
Follow up on action points	2	Non structured way of following up on action points
Communication channels	3	Communication is done by the secretariat through email with follow up phone calls.
Linkages	2	No systematic clear linkages with the national level

3.2.2 County Nutrition Technical Forum

The membership of the CNTF consisted largely of the nutrition-specific stakeholders including the County Nutrition Coordinator (CNC), sub county nutrition officers and nutrition implementing partners. The forum had a ToR with the chair of the forum as the CNC while one of the nutrition partners was the secretariat. There were no linkages with the national and there was no workplan specific to the CNTF but would implement through the larger department of health workplan. The County Nutrition Technical

Forum is currently not a functional coordination mechanism due to the formation of MSN platform and unavailability of funding to support the meetings. The quote below explains how the functionality of the CNTF was affected.

“When we functionalized the MSN, we kind of altered the CNTF because we thought it’s more of a parallel structure. We thought that most of the objectives that were on the NTF could be handled in the MSN. So for now we will just deal with MSN as it’s more inclusive in terms of even addressing our issues. The CNTF is not an existing coordination structure; it has been overtaken by the MSN.” MoH

“Right now actually we have not been meeting. Of course we don’t have a partner who is actually specifically supporting the CNTF. The one who was doing it left.” MoH

The county nutrition technical working group is non-functional based on the gaps highlighted in table 5 below.

Table 5: Functionality of CNTF coordination mechanism

Mapping aspect	Score	Gap
Membership	2	Membership did not include other health sub sectors and other sectors
Availability of ToR	3	ToR available
Availability of chair and secretariat	2	The secretariat is not a county department stakeholder which affects the functionality of the mechanism upon their exit
Frequency of meetings	2	No meetings held over the last year due to inadequate funding
Documentation	1	No clear repository for minutes
Workplan availability	1	No workplan available
Communication channels	3	Communication was done by the secretariat through email with follow up phone calls.
Follow up on action points	2	Some action points were followed up on during review meetings
Linkages	2	No coordinated linkages with the national level

3.2.3 Other multi- sectoral coordination mechanisms

County Steering Group

It’s hosted by the National Drought Management Authority (NDMA) which is mandated to coordinate all the sectors that conduct activities towards either food security, nutrition, and any other related activities. It is chaired by the governor, co-chaired by the county commissioner with the NDMA as the secretariat. The CSG has a ToR and the membership is broad to include all players in drought risk management including county departments, donors, development partners, implementing partners and other state actors and non-state actors. Under the CSG, four technical working groups have been formed in the different sectors of health, agriculture, livestock and water. CSG meetings are held monthly though more frequent meetings may be held depending on the drought situation in the county, the technical working groups meet as often as they need to.

County Agricultural Sector Steering Committee (CASSCOM)

The County Agricultural Sector Steering Committee (CASSCOM), adapted from the national level Joint Agricultural Sector Committee (JASCOM) has been formed as a

mechanism under the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Irrigation to coordinate the livestock, fisheries, and agriculture departments including implementing and development partners in those sectors. The CASSCOM meets on a quarterly basis. The sector is currently in the process of finalizing the CASSCOM policy which will formalize the coordination mechanism and enshrine it in the county legislation hence attracting funding from the County Government and enhancing its sustainability. The chair of the committee is the sector's County Executive Committee Member while the secretariat is Agriculture Sector Development Support Program (ASDSP), one of the key programmes designed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Cooperatives and implemented by the national and county government. Once the CASCOM policy is finalized and approved, the secretariat will be shifted to the department of agriculture.

Education in Emergencies Technical Working Group

This Technical Working Group is domiciled in the MoE and is mandated to plan for response during disasters or emergencies. Membership of the TWG includes sub-county directors of education, non-state actors, other sectors such as health, agriculture and livestock, children services, gender, members of the County Education Board Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Kenya Primary Schools Heads Association- (KEPSHA) and the Kenya Secondary Schools Association. Currently, the TWG meets on needs basis and has no ToR. The nutrition unit is represented by the department of health whenever meetings are held.

WASH Forum

The forum brings together all the WASH stakeholders in the county including partners. It has no ToR but is chaired by the County Executive Committee Member for water with the secretary being the county WASH coordinator. Meetings are supposed to be held quarterly though they have not been consistent due to inadequate funding for the coordination meetings

Gender Based Technical Working Group

The TWG is domiciled in the department of gender with membership from health, agriculture, finance, gender, sports and culture, implementing partners, representation from people living with disabilities, the police and the judiciary. The chair and the secretary for the TWG are on a rotational basis while meetings are held thrice in a year though some meetings may be held on need basis.

Other project-based coordination mechanisms

Nutrition Improvement for Children through Cash and Health Education (NICHE) coordination forum

This is a coordinating structure for the UNICEF-funded NICHE project whose membership includes the social development department, National Council for Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Health, NDMA and implementing partners. The forum is chaired by the county coordinator for children services with the secretariat being the children's department. The NICHE coordination forum has a ToR and is supposed to meet quarterly but the meetings have not been consistent.

National Agricultural and Rural Inclusive Growth Project (NARIG) Coordination Mechanisms

County Technical Advisory Committee (CTAC) and the County Project Steering Committee (CPCS) are coordination mechanisms in the National Agricultural and Rural Inclusive Growth Project (NARIG), a World Bank-funded project implemented through the department of agriculture. The committees have ToRs and meet on a quarterly basis. Directors from the sectors relevant to agriculture form the membership of the CTAC while the CPSC membership includes representation from the departments of agriculture, education, livestock, health, finance, economic planning, social services and trade. Other members are representatives from NEMA, people living with disabilities, youth, business community, women leadership and farmers.

3.3 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats - Bottlenecks and motivators to effective sectoral and multi-sectoral nutrition coordination

The Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis was used to synthesize information on the bottlenecks and motivators to effective sectoral and multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms.

The motivators for effective coordination identified include;

- Presence of a policy document at county level where coordination can be anchored upon.

“We are guided by the common goal of improving the nutrition status in the county where each player has a mandate and we are also guided by County Nutrition Action Plan which is also multi sectoral.” MoH

- Availability of financial support from partners to support the coordination activities in the different sectors.
- Availability of coordination platforms provides an opportunity to share programs, budgetary allocation and work-plans for harmonization and leveraging of activities along common goals
- Sharing of leadership between government departments enhances ownership and team work

“The issue of leadership within the government which is already there, and it is already established. We have the health as chair and the co-chair from agriculture. And we have also the County Nutrition Coordinator from Health who is the secretariat for the MSN meeting” MoA

- Broad representation from various resourceful personnel drawn from different sectors with different technical capacities.

“The good thing with MSN it looks beyond nutrition specific to nutrition sensitive. The composition of it, it’s well represented in terms of what you want to address in nutrition” MoH

- Increased synergy in the implementation of activities among different stakeholders and provides a platform for information sharing

“With the establishment of the MSN, I have come to realize that there are so many departments which are implementing issues concerning nutrition such as gender and social protection. There are also so many other organizations I never knew, but now the MSN is bringing the issue of synergy. We are getting to know what each of us is doing and we all participate in most of the activities that other partners are implementing. I think that is a plus for MSN.” MoA

“I would say the MSN platform has also been good for us in the sharing of experiences and best practices either between state and non-state actors, within the county and also between other counties.” MoA

“There is a lot of information that comes through the MSN and also the opportunity to leverage on what other actors are doing... both state and non-state. So, I feel information and synergies are key” MoA

The bottlenecks hindering effective coordination identified include.

- Inadequate financial support for coordination
- Inadequate financial resource allocation for nutrition in other sectors
- Inconsistent meeting attendance due to delayed or poor communication and competing activities.

“All the sectors should be involved throughout so that the coordination succeeds. Today you are in the meeting, tomorrow or some three meetings later you are not invited. When you finally attend, there is no coordination because you were not there in the previous meetings.” MoE

- Partner exit with government not taking up the support threatens the sustainability of coordination structures

“The CNTF is more for on nutrition specific. And partners on nutrition specific and of course MOH...and then one of the partners used to be the secretariat. We had a ToR but actually we have not been meeting. Of course we don't have a partner who is actually specifically supporting the CNTF. The one who was doing it left.” MoH

- Inadequate involvement of private sector and the academia as stakeholders in the MSN
- Lack of policies or anchoring the coordination structures in the law limits their sustainability and their funding by the county government

“Once we have the policy, we will be able to allocate the resources in the budget so that we can be able to meet, to have the stakeholder forum meetings, also the technical working groups can work fully wherever you want them to work, whatever they are required to do, But for now we cannot do that fully the way we want to because of inadequate resources.” MoA

“The issue of how sustainable it is, is what probably is lacking. We need to anchor it in ... even if it is not by law, but at least be put as part of a policy, part of a bill, so that by the end of the day, even after what the partners are supporting, when they pull out, we can have the MSN going on” MoH

“A coordination structure must be anchored in the laws and structures of the county government so that even if we have a partner who is going to chip in, they are already putting into an existing structure in the county. So we need these structures anchored in law, recognized in law and incorporated in the county structures so that's for sustainability. This way, the county government will allocate some funds to ensure that the activities of this unit are funded and are proceeding well” MoA

- Over-reliance on partners for financial support of sectoral and multi sectoral coordination meetings

“Sustainability is an issue. Because when a partner pulls out, it’s like the coordination mechanisms are not very strong. The moment you have partners on board, they are usually active.... But we cannot afford to continue relying on partners forever.” MoH

“Bringing people to meet, there are costs involved... At the moment, we need to push for the inclusion of these costs into the county budget. So, at the moment we are relying mostly on partners.” MoH

“As it is, most of the resources currently that we are using are from partners. But if we can have that legislation, we will be rest assured that we will have government commit their resources for the MSN” MoH

- Lack of prioritization by budget holders (preference for hardware projects)

“The issue of nutrition is not given a lot of support by the county governments; much of the support is in the infrastructural projects. So when you are talking about nutrition, you’ll hear people asking what is this nutrition. We are supposed to be talking about bridges, roads, class rooms, you see?” MoA

- Shortage of staff in all the nutrition specific and sensitive sectors in the county

- Changes in the government priorities e.g addressing drought emergencies. Therefore, the MSN has to adapt to the dynamics in the county.

“Sometimes government priorities change when it comes to response to emergencies... So, if MSN again doesn’t respond in terms of the existing changes in the way things are, sometimes priorities will change and we will lose focus in terms of MSN. So again, it should also be taking cognizance of the dynamics within the county” MoH

- Minimal information sharing among coordination mechanisms

3.4 Capacity gaps for sectoral and multi-sectoral nutrition coordination mechanisms

The main capacity gap that hinders effective coordination is inadequate awareness among nutrition sensitive stakeholders on nutrition and on policy documents guiding sectoral and multi- sectoral coordination. In addition, there is a lack of well-articulated nutrition-sensitive indicators to monitor achievements of nutrition-sensitive interventions/sectors. Further, the MSN forum is yet to develop a common results framework or a joint workplan which has contributed to the lack of a clear M&E framework. Monitoring is done through the review of previous meeting minutes and follow-up of action points.

“We are having challenges in M&E. We are yet to handle the issue of monitoring and Evaluation as there are so many things that we need to put in place. So we are yet to get there.” MoA

“...have every department involved in the joint working plan. So if everybody comes on board in the joint work planning and we have our tasks clearly defined then we will achieve much more.” MoA

4.0 Discussion

Various coordination mechanisms have been stipulated within the policy documents for the health, agriculture and education sectors. At County level, the Nutrition Action Plan proposes the need to strengthen multi-sectoral collaborations and coordination to address the multifaceted drivers of malnutrition (Ministry of Health and Sanitation, 2019). The Kitui County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) prioritizes interventions aimed at addressing malnutrition under various sectors including health and sanitation, agriculture, education, and social protection (County Government of Kitui, 2018). Although the CNAP proposes multi-sectoral collaboration, it was domiciled and signed by the health department, resulting in minimal ownership among other nutrition sensitive sectors despite their contributions in the development of the document. While the CNAP acknowledges the need for multi-sectoral collaboration and coordination, it does not clearly outline any specific coordination mechanisms to be established or strengthened (Ministry of Health and Sanitation, 2019).

The multi sectoral nutrition platform has been established in Kitui County as one of the coordination mechanisms to bring together nutrition-sensitive and -specific sectors. The MSN platform developed a joint plan for implementation of county priorities for the financial year 2022-2023 which incorporates the departments of health, education, social protection, gender and agriculture (MSN - Kitui, 2022). However, there is need for increased commitment by the various departments to further strengthen multi-sectoral coordination linkages and ensure continued integration of nutrition interventions during joint work planning by MSN sectors (USAID - Advancing Nutrition, 2022).

The formation of the MSN in Kitui resulted in taking over the mandate of the County Nutrition Technical Forum. Coupled with inadequate funding for coordination meetings, the forum has been rendered inactive. Inadequate funding for multi-sectoral coordination and lack of multi-sectoral M&E framework has been highlighted as one of the challenges faced in multi-sectoral nutrition programming (FANTA, 2016). The County Nutrition TWG is a nutrition-specific coordination mechanism while MSN platform coordinates nutrition-sensitive interventions. It would be important to revive the County Nutrition TWG to coordinate nutrition-specific issues with linkages to MSN. Monitoring and Evaluation gaps were also highlighted in this mapping exercise where the forum is yet to develop a joint framework to monitor MSN actions. In addition, there was a lack of multi-sectoral review meetings at the county level to assess the extent of implementation of the MSN workplan. In light of this, there is need to adopt the national multi sectoral score card for review and tracking of multi sectoral performance.

Knowledge and skills gaps identified from the key informant interviews were similar to those highlighted in the land-scale analysis conducted in six counties in Kenya. (USAID, Advancing Nutrition, 2021). Similar to the Kitui County Rapid Organizational Capacity Assessment findings (USAID - Advancing Nutrition, 2022), inadequate resources for advocacy was also highlighted. Therefore, there is need to build capacity of nutrition-sensitive sectors for nutrition actions (FANTA, 2016).

5.0 Conclusion

Kitui County has a good policy environment for nutrition. There are a number of coordination mechanisms within the county of which two are for nutrition, the County

Nutrition Technical Forum and the Multi-sectoral Nutrition Platform. However, some of the coordination mechanisms proposed by policy documents in the health, agriculture and education sectors are yet to be established. This has affected the coordination of some nutrition specific and sensitive sectors. The established coordination mechanisms are semi functional demonstrated by lack of meetings for the CNTF, the inadequate inclusion of all relevant sectors as members, lack of a minutes repository and poor linkages with the national level. Multi-sectoral coordination can further be strengthened by incorporating other stakeholders who may have been missed out in the nutrition coordination, fostering adequate documentation and strengthening linkages with the national level and reviving of the CNTF.

6.0 Recommendations

In response to the gaps identified, the following are key recommendations for sectoral and multi sectoral nutrition coordination mechanism per each theme;

Table 6: Key recommendations for sectoral and multi sectoral nutrition coordination mechanisms

Capacity dimension	Key recommendation
Establish the presence of coordination mechanisms in nutrition specific and sensitive sectors in Kitui County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for establishment of other coordination mechanisms in agriculture and education as outlined in the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy Implementation Framework (FNISP) IF (2017-2022) and School Health Policy Implementation Framework (2018) • Enhance and streamline MSN as the overall overarching coordination structure at the county for food and nutrition with linkages to the other sectoral and multi sectoral technical working groups and committees.
Assess and describe the functionality of the coordination mechanisms (membership processes, terms of reference, frequency of meetings, work plans and documentation in terms of minutes and action plans among others) in Kitui County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate other stakeholders who may have been missed out in the nutrition coordination mechanisms such as the private sector and the academia. • Develop a joint annual workplan for the MSN with activities distributed through the quarters of the financial year. • Foster adequate documentation and establish repository for institutional memory • Define how linkages between the national and county can be enhanced • Finalize and fully operationalize the terms of reference for MSN with clear county linkages with other coordination mechanisms, frequency of meetings, chair and secretariat, duration of office bearers, and the mandate for the various coordination mechanism. • Advocate for the inclusion of nutrition as a participant in all relevant sector and county level coordination mechanisms. • Strengthen linkages for coordination mechanisms at all levels (national, county and sub-county) • Strengthen CNTF as a sectoral coordination mechanism for the nutrition sensitive interventions.
Assess the bottlenecks and motivators for effective coordination and sustainability of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct high level advocacy with government, targeting key decision makers to resource mobilize for multi-sectoral actions

the coordination mechanisms in Kitui County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anchor the coordination mechanisms within the county policies, CIDP and in the CNAP to allow for funding from the county government which will enhance sustainability. Establish the SUN chapter in Kitui County to spearhead nutrition advocacy in regards to resource allocation. Utilize virtual technology as an opportunity for coordination mechanisms
Assess the capacity gaps of the coordination mechanisms and stakeholders in Kitui County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt the national multi-sectoral score card when it's available for review and tracking of multi-sectoral performance Sensitize stakeholders on the conceptual framework of malnutrition and the roles of each sector in addressing the causes of malnutrition to address the question of why MSN?

Annex 1: Desk Review Documents

SECTOR/ PROJECT	DOCUMENT TITLE
Overarching Documents	National food and nutrition security policy (2012)
	Multi-sectoral national food and nutrition security policy implementation framework (FNSP) IF (2017-2022)
Health Sector	Kenya Nutrition Action Plan (2018-2022)
	Kitui County Nutrition Action Plan (2019-2022)
	Kisumu County Nutrition Action Plan (2021-2023)
	Kakamega County Nutrition Action Plan (2018-2022)
	National Framework for Implementation of Breast Milk Substitutes (Regulation and Control) Act, 2012 (2020-2025)
	Implementation Framework for Securing a Breastfeeding Friendly Environment at Workplaces, (2020-2024)
Agriculture Sector	Kenya Agri-Nutrition Implementation Strategy (2020 – 2025)
	Ministry Of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Co-Operatives Strategic Plan (2018 – 2020)
	Food Safety Policy 2021 (Draft)
Education Sector	School Health Policy Implementation Framework (2018)
	The national early childhood policy development

	framework (2006)
	National school meals and nutrition strategy (2017-2022)
	National pre-primary education policy standard guidelines (2018)
Labour and Social Protection Sector	Ministry Of Labour and Social Protection Strategic Plan 2018-2022
	Kenya Social Protection Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (2018-2022)
Water Sector	Ministry of Water strategy plan (2018-2022)
Projects and Program Reports	USAID Multi-sectoral nutrition strategy (2014-2025)
	USAID Advancing Nutrition Kenya Concept Paper
	SUN Strategy Kenya (2021-2026)
	Preparatory Survey for The Initiative for Food and Nutrition Security in Africa (IFNA): Harnessing Multi-sectoral Synergies for Nutrition Improvement-Final Report. JICA 2018
	Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Global Learning & Evidence Exchange East and Southern Africa (2016)

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