



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

Online Version: <https://feedthefuture.gov/sub-approach/improved-nutrition>

Improved Nutrition



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A healthy, productive life requires adequate nutrition. Yet millions of people around the world are undernourished, stunting the growth of both children and economies.

Poor nutrition perpetuates the cycle of poverty and hunger, leading to poor health, lower levels of educational attainment, and reduced productivity and wages in adulthood. Tackling undernutrition requires strong leadership and high-impact interventions at scale in both health and agriculture.

The good news is we're making **progress**. Through efforts like the Feed the Future initiative, the U.S. Government supports country-owned programs to address the root causes of undernutrition and accelerate improved nutrition.

Feed the Future works with a host of partners, including the **Global Health Initiative** and USAID Office of **Food for Peace**, to help families in more than 20 countries improve their nutrition and provide adequate nourishment for their children, especially in the 1,000 day window from pregnancy to a child's second birthday. The right nutrition during this critical time can have a profound impact on a child's health and his or her ability to grow and learn to achieve their full potential.

Through an integrated approach that spans sectors, we:

- Train community health workers to counsel families with appropriate nutrition information
- Support the cultivation, storage, processing and consumption of nutrient-dense crops
- Provide trainings that help families grow and safely prepare more nutritious foods at home
- Increase access to nutrition services and social and behavior change messaging
- Support policy making aimed at improving nutrition
- Develop and share new and improved varieties of nutritious foods with farmers, such as **orange-fleshed sweet potato**, which is rich in vitamin A
- Build the capacity of governments, local communities and health workers
- Empower women in agriculture

Feed the Future also contributes to the [growing evidence base](#) around improving nutrition and we monitor how our efforts to integrate agriculture and nutrition affect rural families' diet, nutrition and health.

Collaborating for Lasting Success

Nutrition bridges many areas, involving aspects of human health and development, as well as economic growth, agriculture, education, resilience and humanitarian assistance. Recognizing this, Feed the Future takes a comprehensive approach to helping families and communities prevent undernutrition.

Launched in 2014, the [USAID Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy](#) provides a roadmap for reducing maternal and child mortality, stunting, and severe acute malnutrition through coordinated efforts across Feed the Future, the Global Health Initiative, Food for Peace and others across USAID. It reconfirms the agency-wide goal, [shared by Feed the Future](#), of reducing stunting of children under 5 years old by 20 percent across the areas where we work.

The U.S. Government is working on a broader, government-wide nutrition coordination plan as well.

Sensitive and Specific

In 2013, the United States [announced](#) that it anticipates it will spend more than \$1 billion on nutrition-specific interventions and more than \$8.6 billion for nutrition-sensitive interventions between 2012 and 2014. As part of its comprehensive approach, Feed the Future integrates a wide array of these interventions into its programs.

Nutrition-specific interventions address the immediate causes of undernutrition, such as a poor or inadequate diet, disease, and related underlying factors such as lack of access to food, sub-optimal feeding practices, inadequate health care, and an unhealthy environment. *Example:* In Cambodia, Feed the Future provides cooking demonstrations to families to help them increase the variety of nutrient-rich foods they eat.

Nutrition-sensitive interventions address the basic underlying causes of undernutrition, incorporating nutrition goals and activities into efforts in other areas such as agriculture, education, water supply, and sanitation and hygiene. These efforts can even serve as delivery platforms for nutrition-specific interventions, such as introducing agricultural as well as nutrition best practices at farmer trainings. *Example:* In Bangladesh, Feed the Future is introducing low-cost cold rooms that can increase the shelf life and safety of nutritious foods like fish, fruits and vegetables.

Did You Know?

- Undernutrition [underlies](#) nearly half of all deaths of young children.
- When mothers are well nourished, they are more likely to have healthy, well-nourished newborn babies.
- Mothers tend to invest more of their income in health and nutrition.
- Poor nutrition costs low and middle-income countries up to eight percent of their potential economic growth.
- Improving a child's nutrition is the most cost-effective investment we can make to advance global progress and prosperity: Return on investment is as high as [138 to 1](#).

Nutrition in Action

In collaboration with the Global Health Initiative and USAID's Office of Food for Peace, Feed the Future [reached](#) more than 12.5 million children globally last year with interventions designed to improve their nutrition.

Feed the Future helped nearly 91,000 women farmers grow home gardens in 2013, which improves their families' access to nutritious foods while also increasing women's income.

The United States signed the [Global Nutrition for Growth Compact](#) in 2013, through which 90 governments and organizations have committed to reach 500 million women and children with nutrition services, reduce the number of children under 5 suffering from stunting by 20 million, and save the lives of at least 1.7 million children through improved nutrition by 2020.

The U.S. [McGovern-Dole Food for Education Program](#) works to improve the nutrition and food security of school-aged children, pregnant and lactating women, and infants. It also provides training to community members on child health and nutrition.

The U.S. Government is a strong supporter of the [1,000 Days Partnership](#) and global [Scaling Up Nutrition Movement](#).

Additional Reading:

- [Building Uganda's Next Generation of Nutrition Leaders](#)
- [Lessons in Nutrition Save Young Lives in Rwanda](#)
- [President of Honduras Honors Community Health Workers for Achieving Results in Nutrition](#)
- [Growing Momentum on Improving Nutrition](#)

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