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# Nutrition-specific and nutrition sensitive interventions and programmes:

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# Definitions

- Nutrition specific interventions: are those that address immediate and some intermediate causes of malnutrition (especially caring for children)
- Nutrition sensitive interventions: are interventions of other sectors that incorporate nutrition objectives

# Nutrition specific interventions\*

- Addressing immediate causes of malnutrition:
  - Treatment of severe acute malnutrition
  - Disease management (e.g. oral rehydration salts for diarrhea)
  - Maternal and child micronutrient supplementation
- Addressing some intermediate causes:
  - Infant and young child feeding practices
    - Exclusive breastfeeding
    - Minimum dietary diversity, minimum acceptable diet\*
    - Responsive feeding
  - Access to health services
  - Hygiene and sanitation

Indicators and country data:

[http://www.unicef.org/nutrition/files/IYCF\\_Indicators\\_part\\_III\\_country\\_profiles.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/nutrition/files/IYCF_Indicators_part_III_country_profiles.pdf);

# Nutrition sensitive interventions and programmes

- Address intermediate causes of malnutrition:
  - Food security
  - Caregiving resources at maternal, household and community level
- Address underlying causes: diverse sectors
  - Agricultural interventions and programmes
  - Social safety nets
  - Schooling

***They explicitly incorporate nutrition goals and include indicators to monitor nutrition impact***

***They can serve as delivery platforms for nutrition specific interventions***

# Nutrition sensitive agricultural interventions and programmes

Pathways by which Ag can influence nutrition:

- Increase own production and household food availability: dietary diversification
- Increase income and access to food in markets: access to more diverse foods
- Impact on food prices (differential impact for net sellers and net buyers)
- Women's empowerment\*

\* women's involvement in agriculture can also carry risks

# Examples of nutrition sensitive Ag interventions (1): home gardens

Home gardens and homestead food production:

- Examples: Production of vegetables, small livestock rearing (poultry, dairy), orange-fleshed sweet potato
- Effectiveness on maternal and child malnutrition status proven only for vit A
- Effectiveness on dietary diversity

# Examples of nutrition sensitive Ag interventions (2): biofortification

- Biofortification: breeding staple crops specifically rich in micronutrients
  - Useful to prevent micronutrient deficiencies outside the 1000 days
- Conditions for effectiveness:
  - Target concentration in crop
  - Retention of micronutrient & bioavailability
  - Farmer adoption and consumption by targeted populations

For the time being only vitamin A biofortification (OFSP) has shown effectiveness at population level. Studies underway for iron and zinc fortified crops (cereals, legumes) (See HarvestPlus program of IFPRI).

# Women's implication in agriculture: opportunities and risks

- Women's participation in agriculture:
  - Can increase their control over assets and resources
  - Increase their decision making power regarding food allocation, health & care
  - Can affect their time allocation and balance with time devoted to care
  - Affect their health: exposure to diseases, increase in energy needs



# Nutrition sensitive interventions: Social safety nets

- Have been in existence for a long time:
  - Ethiopia, Brazil and Mexico
- Goal is to augment income in order to provide access to better diets, education and health care
- Conditional cash transfers:
  - Target vulnerable households, target mothers
  - Include nutrition-specific interventions (conditionality = use of nutrition and health services)
  - Effectiveness:
    - Some small effects on child malnutrition, micronutrient deficiency, child development
    - Effect on poverty reduction
    - Improve dietary diversity at household level
    - Increase use of nutrition services
    - Effect on women's empowerment

# School feeding programmes

- Is a type of conditional transfer
- Effect on child anthropometry not expected
- Iron-rich school meals improve iron status (containing animal foods, fortified foods or micronutrient sprinkles)
- Usefulness of associated deworming

# In-kind Household food distributions

- More prominent in the past
- Possible unintended effect on overweight and obesity in countries with nutrition transition
- Where food insecurity is high: positive effect especially when fortified staples are distributed
  - Example: Haiti addition of iron sprinkles reduced anemia in young children (Menon et al, 2007)

# Schooling

- Schooling experience of children can be a strong determinant of nutrition in the next generation
- Parental schooling is associated with better child nutritional status (lower stunting), especially mothers' education
- Currently only 1/5 adolescent girls receive secondary education in Sub-Saharan Africa and 2/5 in South Asia
- Mechanism of action not clear, multiple pathways

# Impact assessment of nutrition sensitive interventions

- Why have nutrition sensitive interventions not yet shown a significant impact on nutrition outcomes ?
- Large variety of interventions makes impact assessment difficult
- Specificity of contexts makes it difficult to do meta-analyses of interventions or programmes
- Difficult to show impact on nutritional status because of multiple determinants of stunting and time lag
- Design of impact assessments often inadequate
- Rigorous methodology needed:
  - Regarding sampling or randomization
  - Presence of a control group

See review of Nutrition sensitive interventions and programmes (Ruel & Alderman, 2013)

Concluding remarks

# Optimal mix of interventions

- Mix of interventions (nutrition specific and sensitive) increases chances of success
- Important to find the right mix depending on the context
- Importance of institutional capacity
- Need to avoid competition between different sectors: Decide on choice between multi-sectoral approach or colocation of multiple sector activities