

2017 Technical Consultation Series on Nutrition Financial Analysis

Summary: Investing in Nutrition-Specific Interventions

Co-hosted by SUN, SPRING, R4D, MQSUN

Date: January 27, 2017

Time: 9:00-10:30am

Present: *Helen Connolly, Mary D'Alimonte, Sascha Lamstein, Amanda Pomeroy-Stevens, Alexis D'Agostino, Alam, Gwyneth Cotes, Elaine Gray, Anne Penniston, Hugh Bagnall-Oakley, Jakub Kakiemek, Kaia Engesveen, Maren Lieberum, Meghan O'Connell, Monica Kothari, Nicolas Bidault, Patrizia Fracassi, Zack Knechtel, Ferew Lema, Heather Viland, Farah Abou Merhi, Joyce Seto*

This first call of the 2017 series focused on the state of the art for tracking nutrition-specific investments at the country level. The agenda included presentations and discussion on three topics.

Regarding the **potential for linking cost estimates of nutrition-specific interventions with financing (both on- and off-budget)**, Dr. Ferew Lema provided one example from Ethiopia. His team at the Federal Ministry of Health (FMoH) have been tracking both on- and off-budget nutrition-specific funding since 2013. After using the WHO and REACH tools to estimate funding from 2013-2015, they linked up with R4D to develop a different approach with the launch of their latest National Nutrition Plan (2016-2020). This new approach is based upon the System of Health Accounts (SHA). They created a sub-component of the SHA that looked specifically at nutrition activities, collecting data from donors, NGO's and government ministries. Coding was restricted to activities listed within the national nutrition plan. The advantages of this are that the results are comparable with the rest of the activities collected in the SHA, giving a way to compare allocations within health. Disadvantages were that SHA doesn't have intervention-level data. Also, in terms of data collection, it would have been helpful to expand the SHA team to include someone with nutrition expertise to help with identification of activities (this echoes findings from SPRING's data collection and validation process in Nepal and Uganda – budget and planning staff can be paired with nutrition technical staff to get best information). There were several questions about how they will be validating these data, so Dr. Lema and R4D mentioned they can report back to this group on the final methodology. R4D will also share an example of the new SHA module once work has completed.

Next, Mary D'Alimonte of R4D and Aurore Gary of ACF presented the progress made on a **revised definition of the DAC purpose code for basic nutrition 12240** and requested feedback prior to their finalization of the proposal, to be submitted to the World Bank leading up the donor consultations happening in July 2017. The conversation on revision of this code started in 2016, with the goal of bringing greater transparency to the system. The key proposed changes include:

1. Revising guidelines for what to include in the code to align with 10 Lancet nut-specific interventions
2. Creating a sub-code under food aid to allow for breakout of household food security
3. Creating a sub-code under basic education to allow for breakout of school feeding

4. Introduction of a policy marker for nutrition which would enable tracking of both nut-specific and – sensitive activities on a project-by-project basis. This would mimic the other cross-cutting themes in DAC, like climate change and biodiversity, and could include a quantitative element to allow for rating by intensity.

If approved, these revisions would take effect in 2018, affecting reporting for 2016 aid flows. They said they would circulate the 1st draft of the technical proposal to this consultation group for comment. During the meeting, members asked for more details on the policy markers and about sub-code breakouts for other nutrition-specific activities such as SAM/MAM in emergency and obesity prevention and management.

Finally, Patrizia Fracassi of the SUN secretariat opened discussion on **institutionalizing the process: how to ensure that nutrition-specific data are collected, analyzed and used in a sustainable way and owned by the country**. She summarized what countries have accomplished so far in terms of financial data collection and reporting, and then noted that additional data sources could be made available to countries to advance their analysis on nutrition-specific interventions. In particular she mentioned two important data sources that could be further utilized for nutrition-specific financial analysis: 1) the unit costs of interventions from the Investment Framework for Nutrition (World Bank 2016) and 2) the OECD DAC Creditor Reporting System (CRS) Aid Activity Database. It would be particularly helpful and timely to develop guidance for nutrition-specific financial analysis, as there is less ambiguity on what to include, but still gaps in how to include it. So how can we collaborate going forward to meet these needs? Several members noted they had also received requests for TA from countries, not just on analysis of allocations and expenditures, but also on costing and comparison of costs to spending. It would also be helpful to match the nutrition stakeholder mapping to financial analysis, especially sub-nationally. Another comment related to how low absorption capacity is at the district level – if the funding is not absorbed, this affects the accuracy of national level allocation figures, and commitments from donors. Finally, another member reiterated a point from the 2016 consultation series which was as we move toward institutionalizing resource tracking, the reasons for the tracking should be well defined. If it is for monitoring, a clear framework must be defined. If it is for advocacy, then clear plan is needed for how this data will be used for that purpose.

The call concluded with notes on next steps and a request to share all recent tools, so they can be added to the SUN online repository. SPRING shared that they are developing briefs on how nutrition budget data are being used in decision-making in several countries. They can also share the final journal articles from the Pathways to Better Nutrition financial analysis.

The next consultation meeting will be a small group discussion on the guidance note for nutrition-specific financial analysis, and the third 2017 call will shift gears to focus on leveraging Nutrition-Sensitive Investments.