

Scaling Up  
Nutrition



SCALING UP NUTRITION (SUN) MOVEMENT

# Pooled Fund Progress Report 2020



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# Acronyms

<b>CFP:</b>	Call for Proposal	<b>NNP:</b>	National Nutrition Plan
<b>COI:</b>	Conflict of Interest	<b>SDG:</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>CSA:</b>	Civil Society Alliance	<b>SDN:</b>	SUN Donor Network
<b>CSN:</b>	SUN Civil Society Network	<b>SBN:</b>	SUN Business Network
<b>CSO:</b>	Civil Society Organisation	<b>SMART:</b>	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound
<b>FAO:</b>	Food and Agriculture Organisation	<b>SME:</b>	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise
<b>FCAS:</b>	Fragile and conflict-affected states	<b>SMS:</b>	SUN Movement Secretariat
<b>GAIN:</b>	Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition	<b>SOP:</b>	Standard Operating Procedures
<b>GFF:</b>	Global Financing Facility	<b>SUN:</b>	Scaling Up Nutrition
<b>GIZ:</b>	The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit	<b>TAN:</b>	Technical Assistance for Nutrition
<b>GSS:</b>	Global Support System	<b>ToR:</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>INGO:</b>	International Non-Governmental Organisation	<b>UN:</b>	United Nations
<b>KPI:</b>	Key Performance Indicator	<b>UNN:</b>	UN Nutrition
<b>M&amp;E:</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation	<b>UNICEF:</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>MEAL:</b>	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning	<b>UNOPS:</b>	UN Office for Project Services
<b>MPTF:</b>	Multi-Partner Trust Fund	<b>USAID:</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>MQSUN+:</b>	Maximising the Quality of Scaling Up Nutrition Plus	<b>USD:</b>	United States Dollar
<b>MSP:</b>	Multi-Stakeholder Platform	<b>WFP:</b>	World Food Programme
<b>NGO:</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation	<b>WHO:</b>	World Health Organisation

# Executive summary

The Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement Pooled Fund is a grant project that was established in 2017 to provide funding to SUN Countries to support their efforts to end malnutrition in all its forms.

Under the stewardship of the SUN Movement, the project is hosted by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). The Pooled Fund supports the delivery of the [SUN Movement Strategy and Roadmap \(2016–2020\)](#) by focusing on strengthening national nutrition governance, joint implementation of national multi-sectoral nutrition plans, and increased capabilities local in all SUN Countries.

The Pooled Fund's mandate is unique in that it supports grantees to strengthen their role and capacity in developing a common voice on nutrition at the national and subnational level – a voice that includes unified messaging across a range of stakeholders and sectors, and helps translate commitments into impact.

2021 will be a year of alignment and opportunity for the Pooled Fund as the SUN Movement transitions into its third Phase under SUN 3.0. The successes, lessons and insight consolidated in this report can inform and support the operationalisation of the SUN Strategy 3.0.

The Pooled Fund can continue to be a source of support to countries in their efforts to achieve the 2021–2025 Strategic Objectives, as well as a resource to face the post-pandemic challenges in nutrition with courage, recognition and resiliency.



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# Introduction: About this report

Now in its third year, the SUN Movement Pooled Fund has compiled its progress and achievements into one in-depth review of the year 2020, including cumulative lessons that the team has acquired from 2018–2020. This annual report is structured into five major chapters.

The **first chapter** provides a summary of the highlights and operational milestones of the Pooled Fund in 2020. While previous reports outlined information on the Pooled Fund’s foundations, governance and team structure, this information has been carried over and is now available on the new [Pooled Fund website](#).

This change allowed the team the space to discuss the grant recipients achievements in depth in **Chapter 2**. In this chapter, grant achievements were organised according to topic, and complemented by a more integrated analysis of achievements for Civil Society Alliances, SUN Business Networks and Multi-sectoral Platforms over two different funding windows. The chapter also includes a plethora of enjoyable spotlights on grant-funded activities, particularly ones at the local level, that illustrate the good work of networks around the world.

With these country achievements in mind, the report then looks back in **Chapter 3** at design decisions, grant recipient performance and the changing landscape in nutrition to outline its lessons learned throughout Phase Two of the SUN Movement. This chapter looks at the Pooled Fund in retrospect, sharing its challenges, lessons and strategic recommendations as the individual, country-based projects come to a close.

Because the release of the 2020 Annual Report coincides with another critical moment for the SUN Movement – the operationalisation of the [SUN 3.0 Strategy](#) – the Pooled Fund team includes a slightly more detailed vision of the Pooled Fund in SUN 3.0 in the **fourth chapter**.

Readers can also turn their attention to two important annexes in the report. **Annexe 1** offers a detailed look into the financial aspects of the Pooled Fund, including contributions and budget-to-actuals as of 31 December 2020. This information complements the official

financial statements attached to this document. **Annexe 2** and **Annexe 3** are the complete sets of global indicators for readers who want a deeper understanding of the numbers and data. Excerpts of this data are presented and elaborated on throughout Chapter 3, should you like more context. Finally, **Annexe 4** is a comprehensive list of opportunities, challenges and recommendations collected and sourced in detail over the lifetime of the Pooled Fund.

<b>CHAPTER 1</b> 2020 SPOTLIGHT ON RESULTS	<b>CHAPTER 2</b> ACHIEVEMENTS, HIGHLIGHTS & RESULTS
<b>CHAPTER 3</b> LESSONS LEARNED	<b>CHAPTER 4</b> ENVISIONING A NEW POOLED FUND
<b>ANNEXES</b>	

We thank all supporters from SUN Countries, SUN Networks and the many partners who contributed to the SUN Movement Pooled Fund in 2020.

# 2020 spotlight on results

The **SUN Movement Pooled Fund Grants** project (aka “Pooled Fund”) was designed to promote the engagement of additional relevant actors in the implementation and monitoring of multi-stakeholder national plans for nutrition at both the national and subnational level. The Pooled Fund supports catalytic and innovative projects which contribute to the strategic objectives of the SUN Movement by supporting national plans to scale up nutrition and reinforce in-country capabilities of stakeholders in SUN Countries.

Throughout 2020, the SUN Movement Secretariat has supported the Pooled Fund team by providing programmatic oversight, team guidance, inter-network coordination and communication on the project. The SUN Secretariat incorporated data collection on the Pooled Fund via the Joint Annual Assessment – a major achievement for knowledge management and data validation between the two groups.

In turn, the **UNOPS** Pooled Fund team tackled an intense workload in 2020 – one that required major collaboration with the SUN Movement Secretariat policy experts and networks, a wave of contract extensions, work plan renegotiations with beneficiaries, a shift in reporting to collect data on the impact of COVID-19, and the launch of the final Call-for-Proposals for Cycle 4 continuation grants. These efforts paid off in the form of the **Pooled Fund’s new website**, which now hosts data from both the Pooled Fund and its predecessor, the **Multi-Partner Trust Fund**. The data collected also formed the basis for the **Evidence Package** and the Impact Summary, both of which have informed the SUN Movement on the value of the Pooled Fund in SUN 3.0.

Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, the Pooled Fund made substantial investments in 2020. From the project’s inception up to 31 December 2020, total expenditures are estimated to be USD 14,980,536: with 67% spent on grants, 7.5% spent on personnel, 0.4% spent on communication and 0.4% spent on travel. These figures are based on the actual received contributions from Pooled Fund donors of USD 18,313,121 and incurred interest of USD 254,773. The total estimated expenditures disbursed in 2020 was USD 8,295,794 and represents 82% of the total budget.





## PROGRESS AT-A-GLANCE: 2020 OPERATIONAL MILESTONES

- In 2020, the SUN Movement Pooled Fund supported SUN Countries and their grant project objectives.
- Through the management of **60 grant agreements**, the Pooled Fund bolstered SUN Civil Society Network (CSN), multi-stakeholder platform (MSP) and SUN Business Network (SBN) efforts in over **44 countries**.
- The Pooled Fund reacted to the COVID-19 pandemic by working with the country partners and grantees to contribute to a **nutrition-sensitive COVID-19 response**. A top-up fund of USD 496,782 was awarded to 12 grantees to ensure that nutrition is a priority in planning and implementing COVID-19 responses. Read more [here](#).
- **Learning4Nutrition was launched**: A series of webinars brought Pooled Fund beneficiaries together to share best practices and experiences from their projects with one another. The October session featured anglophone countries with Zambia and Philippines as the keynote speakers. The November session was specific to francophone countries in which Senegal and Mali led the discussion. These learning sessions increased the capacity and knowledge of Civil Society Alliances (CSAs).

- **Eighteen countries completed virtual monitoring and evaluation (M&E) missions** during which the Pooled Fund team assessed the project's progress, interviewed project partners from various levels and in-country SUN Networks, reviewed financial controls, and deepened the SUN Movement's understanding of in-country network needs.
- **The SUN Movement Pooled Fund [website](#) was launched**, hosted as part of the SUN Supporters in line with the SUN Movement Secretariat. The website stores historical data on the previous grant-making project, the Multi-partner Trust Fund (MPTF), as well as Pooled Fund project governance and tools, and will soon showcase the investment of each and every Pooled Fund recipient.
- The Pooled Fund **scaled up its web presence** through SUN Movement social media channels and [stories](#) that highlight the fascinating activities and achievements of Pooled Fund beneficiaries.
- The Pooled Fund made **significant contributions to the SUN 3.0 Strategy and visioning**. These contributions included a Movement-wide knowledge management presentation, an [Evidence Package](#) of immediate outcomes in the country, and an [Impact Summary](#) on the Pooled Fund that was later annexed to the SUN 3.0 Strategy. Taken together, these products contributed to the development and definition of SUN 3.0.
- The Pooled Fund team processed over **70 interim and final grant reports** in 2020, ensuring data quality and good stewardship of donor funds.
- As the Pooled Fund entered its fourth and final year, the team **completed the closure of 15 grant agreements** after which recommendations and data were turned over to the SUN Networks to help guide their support of country-led activities.
- The Pooled Fund team welcomed a new **Pooled Fund Coordinator** and grew from the expertise from three Regional **Monitoring & Quality Assurance Specialists** based in Ethiopia, Rwanda, and Bangladesh who supplement the M&E Specialist. Visit the website to [meet the team](#).
- There were three [Consultative Group](#) meetings in which the team presented its [2020 Workplan and Budget](#), submitted proposals to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on grant projects, and provided material to inform the Consultative Group of the Pooled Fund's value and potential in SUN 3.0.

## AT-A-GLANCE: WINDOW 1 - CYCLE 3 SUN BUSINESS NETWORK SUPPORT

In February 2020, the Pooled Fund awarded a large UN Inter-Agency Agreement to the World Food Programme (WFP) to support action by the SBN in 15 SUN Countries in the value of USD 2.14 million. The goal was to catalyse and expand private sector engagements and investment on nutrition via SBNs. Through this funding, WFP, and their primary sub-recipient the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), mobilised and expanded private sector engagement and investment on nutrition through country-driven and country-led business networks in 13 countries in 2020. These countries are: Bangladesh, Cambodia, Côte d'Ivoire, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Lao PDR, Nigeria, Madagascar, Pakistan, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and Uganda. The planning activities for Kenya and Malawi started in 2020 and will begin work in January 2021.

As part of COVID-19 mitigation measures, WFP received a non-cost extension to prolong its activities up until 31 June 2021. This extension was a component of a Consultative Group decision made in April 2020 to support countries affected by the pandemic. The Pooled Fund considered an amendment and expansion to include an additional four countries: Guatemala, Honduras, Mozambique and Nepal. As a result, the grant agreement budget was increased by USD 770,204.

## AT-A-GLANCE: CROSS-NETWORK ADMINISTRATION

The Pooled Fund team, together with the SUN Civil Society Network's and the SUN Business Network's global secretariats, worked on country needs and grant administration. Over the course of the year, the CSN team in London and the global Pooled Fund team met monthly to discuss internal technical assistance requests, opportunities for inter-network collaboration, findings from virtual monitoring visits, quarterly technical assistance requests, and the latest movements in the overall Pooled Fund project. Likewise, the Pooled Fund team and SBN team, through the two co-convening agencies GAIN and WFP, devised a new strategy with new work plans to mitigate the COVID-19 pandemic in SUN Countries. The SBN submitted monthly updates to the Pooled Fund team, who then analysed those updates against what the CSA's have reported in jointly funded SUN Countries. The global secretariats of both networks received the analysis of interim and final reports from each direct grant beneficiary by the Pooled Fund team for their own internal use. Finally, the Pooled Fund team and network teams attended Consultative Group meetings and knowledge management webinars together. The Pooled Fund has brought networks and the SUN Movement Secretariat (SMS) even closer to country achievements with regular reporting, joint administration and data sharing. It is with this collaborative spirit that the SUN Movement will continue supporting countries in 2021 and into the next phase of the SUN Movement.

**” It often comes up in our team meetings how grateful we are to UNOPS and the SUN Pooled Fund team for their extra understanding, flexibility, and resources to help us with implementation. The templates are particularly helpful, as is the way leadership helped us pivot to integrate COVID response.**

*CARE International,  
South Sudan  
(Window 1-Cycle 1 & 4)*

## **AT-A-GLANCE: COVID-19 RESPONSE ACTIVITIES**

Since the beginning of 2020, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been felt in the Pooled Fund supported countries. There was a noticeable shift in the national focus away from nutrition. In many countries, field level interventions, such as public gatherings, meetings and events, etc., were stopped due to COVID-19 related restrictions. Activities were delayed, and some staff were affected by the pandemic as many had to change their work modality to work from home. To adapt to this, Pooled Fund grantees extended the duration of their projects, mostly up to 30 June 2021. The grantees also made adjustments to their existing budgets and work plans to align with the situation. New activities related to COVID-19 response efforts were also added. Proposals for top-up and/or extension were reviewed by the Pooled Fund team together with relevant stakeholders (SMS, CSN). A total of 12 grantees (Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Nepal, Pakistan, Peru, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe) received top-up funds, and the total top-up amount totaled USD 496,782.

## **AT-A-GLANCE: WINDOW 1 - CYCLE 4 CONTINUATION GRANTS**

The Pooled Fund went beyond the top-ups and contract extensions to respond to COVID-19. Some grant recipient's contracts had ended right as COVID-19 was threatening lives, logistics and food supplies. In July 2020, a competitive Call for Proposal (CFP) for small grants was solicited for CSAs who had previously received a Pooled Fund grant. In their applications, CSAs had to demonstrate how they planned to respond to the COVID-19 crisis, noting gaps in national response plans or noting how they intended to collaborate with their government's efforts. They also had the option to address any other unexpected crisis which may have challenged recent national nutrition progress, (re)building a “fit-for-purpose” civil society network and national ecosystem that is better positioned to contribute to joint implementation of national multi-sectoral nutrition plans in the next phase of the SUN Movement.

A total of 15 small continuation grants were awarded to Cambodia, Cameroon, Chad, El Salvador, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Namibia, Pakistan, Peru, Senegal, South Sudan and Sri Lanka with the grant value of USD 50,000 each. The activities were started as soon as their existing Window 1 projects were completed, with the aim to close the projects by the end of June 2021.

## MONITORING MISSIONS AND #LEARNING4NUTRITION

The Pooled Fund recognises the importance of on-the-ground field monitoring and evaluation. This was incorporated into the project as a direct response to the [Independent Evaluation of the Multi-Partner Trust Fund](#), where “the extent and quality of programme and financial monitoring was limited” in the Pooled Fund’s programmatic predecessor (p. 31). The Pooled Fund M&E team aimed to visit each beneficiary where safety and feasibility allowed. However, in 2020 due to global travel restrictions and national lockdowns, virtual missions were used in place of on-the-ground missions. The team covered 18 grantees virtually.

The initial plan was to undertake 21 field missions (seven from every region). Mission planning was put on hold from March to August to allow grantees to focus on mobilising and responding to COVID-19. After some level of stability was achieved, virtual missions were planned for the countries whose operations were still ongoing. Monitoring missions were completed for 17<sup>1</sup> countries (18 grantees) in 2020 and are ongoing or scheduled for 17 countries in 2021. The monitoring missions focused on eight priority areas – programmatic achievements and assessments of capacity, sustainability, governance, partnership, risk, gender and youth, and finance.

Based on each validation meeting, the Pooled Fund team made specific joint recommendations for each country based on the progress it saw. Progress on project-based recommendations will be tracked by the Pooled Fund team, while recommendations that went beyond the grant project period were shared directly with the CSN and SBN global secretariats. The virtual monitoring missions were more time and cost effective and permitted more participants to join the teleconferences. Participants and observers included high-level government officials, donors, UN entities and national SBNs. A shortcoming of the virtual missions was the inability to physically verify information or meet with beneficiaries. To deal with this significant challenge, most documents had been scanned or shared and the focus of the sessions was on policy development and coordination rather than on community engagement. Happily, internet connections were less of a hindrance than anticipated. The team was able to communicate with the grant beneficiaries quite well for monitoring missions.

The lesson learning sessions provided an opportunity for grant beneficiaries to connect and share their direct experiences on how the Pooled Fund grant contributed to their organisational and national nutrition objectives. These sessions also helped grant recipients understand how others are working through the Pooled Fund to catalyse nutrition change even though the fund is limited

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1 Mozambique, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Nepal, Afghanistan, Côte d'Ivoire, Burundi, Kenya, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Mali, Malawi (2 grantees), Zambia, Vietnam, Burkina Faso and Madagascar

in amount. The catalytic role of investments made with the Pooled Fund, cross-network collaboration in-country, and inter-network collaboration between countries, at regional levels or South/South was highlighted as well. The #Learning4Nutrition workshops showcased that the Pooled Fund enabled grantees to strengthen their capacity and thereafter engage and deliver at a level that would not have been possible without the concerted capacity building through the Pooled Fund. The workshops also strengthened subnational level capacities, allowing for a wider reach with more technical competencies. This translated to more effective engagement, contribution and implementation of nutrition programmes at subnational level and enhanced community engagement and accountability.

## GETTING THE WORD OUT: COMMUNICATION & VISIBILITY

Good communication is a major component of the Pooled Fund project. Over the past year, the Pooled Fund issued a competitive Call for Proposal, delivered several onboarding and reporting webinars in various languages, drafted impact statements for the visioning process and donor presentations, and developed official reports on the achievements of the project. The focus in 2020 was to generate content about beneficiaries and their achievements, communicate COVID-19 responses with beneficiaries and the Consultative Group, as well as create a common platform of knowledge about the Pooled Fund.

The visibility of the Pooled Fund is aligned with the SUN Movement Secretariat. In 2020, the Pooled Fund delivered on its promise and launched its [website](#). The Pooled Fund team exceeded its 2020 targets and increased the visibility of the beneficiaries in social media by strengthening the grant recipient's use of #SUNPooledFund and by promoting [stories](#) on country achievements each month within the SUN Movement's e-Newsletter and on both the SUN Movement and SUN Pooled Fund websites. The team will continue to showcase country accomplishments and the visibility of national non-profits and networks that support their sustainability after the grant funds have been exhausted.

Although 2020 was a challenging year to showcase the Pooled Fund at international and regional events, the team created its own space to promote cross-learning. Two iterations of its [#Learning4Nutrition series](#) were hosted in 2020, with plans for several more in 2021. The richness of information from the virtual field visits was showcased and will be transferred to inform the SUN Movement Secretariat and Networks for SUN 3.0. Finally, as 2020 came to a close, the Pooled Fund team hosted a Movement-wide [knowledge management webinar](#) that took stock of the country and grant-making experiences since the start of the project in 2018. This helped to inspire and inform the visioning process for SUN 3.0.

## Record of external communications

The following schedule lists formal external reports from the Pooled Fund in 2020.

Delivery Date	Ext. Communication Action	Notes
20 February 2020	2020 Pooled Fund Workplan	Presented at the <a href="#">1st Consultative Group meeting of 2020</a> and then to the SUN Executive Committee. Available <a href="#">here</a> .
30 June 2020	2019 Pooled Fund Annual Report	Circulated to the Pooled Fund Consultative Group. Available <a href="#">here</a> .
30 April 2020 31 July 2020 31 October 2020	Consolidated Monthly Updates	*Provisional based on the time of close-out for the project.
29 April 2020 17 July 2020	Communication to beneficiaries on COVID-19 related extensions and top-ups	Eligibility varied based on funding window, grant performance and/or needs assessment of the amendment request.
1 October 2020	Knowledge Management Webinar on the Pooled Fund	Hosted via the SUN Movement Secretariat with more than 40 participants and representatives attending.
23 October 2020	Pooled Fund Impact Paper	Attached as an Annexe to the SUN Strategy 3.0. Available <a href="#">here</a> .
10 November 2020	Pooled Fund website launch	Circulated through direct email and featured in the SUN Movement Newsletter.
22 December 2020	Pooled Fund Evidence Package	Released to the Consultative Group members and observers. Available <a href="#">here</a> .



*Ceremony with the communities in Marahoué on the launch of village saving schemes and civil registration system, Côte d'Ivoire, Pooled Fund, Window 1 - Cycle 2.*

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*A mother's testimony on exclusive breastfeeding at a local educational event, Côte d'Ivoire, Pooled Fund, Window 1 - Cycle 2.*

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## PROJECTS CLOSED IN 2020

In 2020, the Pooled Fund team closed the grant projects listed below. Project closure is a process that comes after the grant implementation period has ended. At this time, the final narrative and financial report is approved; the final payment, reimbursement, or reconciliation is made; the grant recipient receives a deobligation letter from UNOPS; and the project is archived.

Country	Grantee Name	Window	Cycle	Grant Amount Paid (USD)	Year Closed
South Sudan	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere International, Inc. (CARE)	1	1	166,690	2020
Burundi	Concern Worldwide	1	1	151,522	2020
Bangladesh	Concern Worldwide	1	1	114,000	2020
Myanmar	Save the Children Myanmar	1	1	103,997	2019
Sri Lanka	World Vision Lanka	1	1	200,000	2020
Liberia	Action Against Hunger	1	1	200,000	2020
Namibia	Synergos Namibia Trust	1	1	111,309	2020
Papua New Guinea	Save the Children in Papua New Guinea Inc.	1	1	113,344	2020
Nigeria	Civil Society Scaling Up Nutrition In Nigeria	1	1	196,364	2020
Kyrgyzstan	Alliance of Civil Society for Nutrition and Food Security	1	1	190,895	2020
Ghana	Hunger Alliance of Ghana	1	1	198,555	2020
Cameroon	Helen Keller International	1	1	198,822	2020
Region of Somaliland	ANPPCAN-SOM (SDG)	1	1	113,889	2020
Sudan	Addition for Disasters assistance and Development (ADD) (SDG)	1	1	107,513	2020
Philippines	International Institute of Rural Reconstruction	1	2	200,000	2020
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>USD 2,366,898.97</b>	



# Achievements, highlights & results

## CIVIL SOCIETY ALLIANCES

SUN Movement countries have improved nutrition and fostered change with the Pooled Fund in order to help make all forms of malnutrition a thing of the past. The Pooled Fund team noted that the organisational capacity of grant recipients in 2020 was higher than in previous years. The capacity of grantees was tested and even advanced as they collaborated effectively and identified strategic entry points in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of the 2020 results stem from Window 1 - Cycle 2 and Window 2 - Cycle 1 grant recipients; while results reported in 2019 came mainly from the initial Cycle of grant recipients that were new or small CSAs.

Better capacity, particularly at the subnational level, has also improved the ability to independently engage with key political actors and establish networks and partnerships at both national and subnational levels. This stands in contrast to 2018 and 2019, where the grant recipients' capacity was primarily at the national level and focused on fortifying nutrition networks' structures. The Pooled Fund's emphasis on partnerships and Nutrition Champions played a key role in enhancing the CSAs access to key political and technical processes.

Another factor that contributed to richer data in 2020 was the focus on lessons learned from the design phase and throughout implementation. The focus on incorporating lessons learned throughout the grant-making lifecycle helped the Pooled Fund team, the SMS, the SCN, the SBN, and the SUN Donor Network (SDN) to facilitate partnerships and apply pressure within their country and global networks.

Last but not least, good data, improved support to countries and systematically incorporating lessons learned were realised in part by adequate staffing within the Pooled Fund team. Together, team members could review reports in a timely manner, provide one-on-one consultations to recipients in French, Spanish and English, and tease apart the quantitative and qualitative data from the field. The agility of the Pooled Fund was evident in its response to the COVID-19 requests in ensuring a detailed quality assurance review

**” The SUN-Costa Rica project is not only able to generate well-designed food guidelines; it works towards generating food environments, improving the food and nutrition of the maternal and child population with a focus on the poorest population.**

*Freddy Miranda,  
2nd Interim Report, Costa Rica, Window 2 - Cycle 1*

process. This process supported grantees in revising projects with the activities needed in-country so that Pooled Fund beneficiaries could respond in a timely and well-coordinated manner.

The following subsections are outlined according to Window 1's three key outcomes. The data presented are 2020 results, and are therefore not cumulative, with analysis that combines quantitative indicators and qualitative information gathered from CSAs. A detailed results matrix covering all indicators for Window 1 Cycle 1 and 2 and some selected indicators from Window 2 Cycle 1 is included in the [Annexe 2](#).

### **Outcome 1: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound (SMART) Planning**

*By the end of the grant period, the grantee SUN Countries have SMART, costed, multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral nutrition plans in place.*

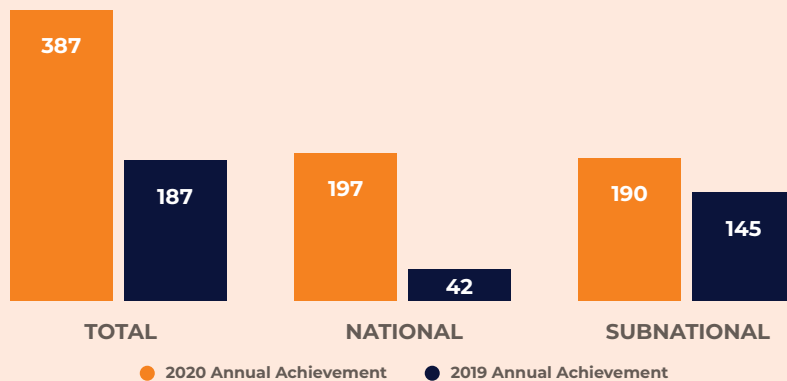
CSAs have made significant progress in achieving the targets set out in Outcome 1. Through intense advocacy, engagement, negotiation and high-quality technical assistance, as well as case studies, the Pooled Fund has enabled grantees to contribute significantly to the shape of nutrition plans in several SUN Countries. CSAs are progressing towards being considered key stakeholders in nutrition dialogue and planning at both national and subnational levels.

The Pooled Fund grant has played a key catalytic role by empowering CSAs to lobby, engage and contribute to government development agendas, including enhancing the sustainable and effective implementation of plans, policies and programmes on nutrition. This was achieved through diverse strategies that included technical and institutional capacity building, advocacy through Nutrition Champions, peer-to-peer learning and networking. The CSAs in most Pooled Fund grant countries are now considered key stakeholders who are called upon regularly as expert witnesses and to provide independent analysis on nutrition policies, plans and action.

Key achievements by the CSAs through the Pooled Fund grant include contributing to 387 (197 national and 190 subnational) plans, policies and strategies in 2020. This is more than twice the contribution of 187 reported in 2019.

Gender is mainstreamed and well addressed in the policy and strategy documents. The CSAs endeavoured to be gender inclusive, with 379 national and subnational nutrition plans including inputs from CSAs regarding gender inequality and women's empowerment in 2020. This is an important increase from the 134 policies and strategies reported in 2019. The CSA of Burundi, for instance, was instrumental

**Number of nutrition plans/policies/laws/drafts that clearly incorporate contributions provided by SUN CSAs**

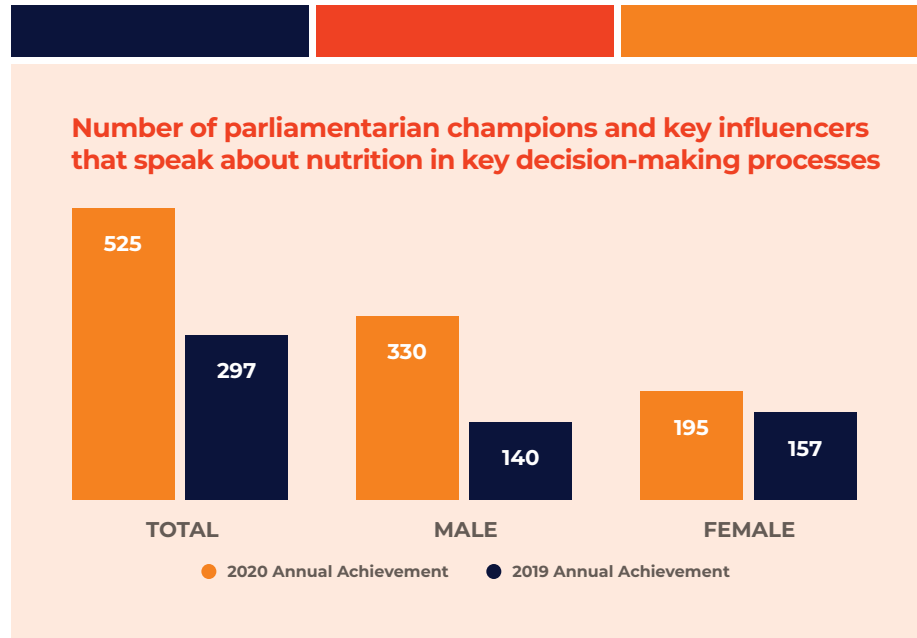


in advocating for the inclusion of a strong gender component, with a focus on the empowerment of rural women, into the design of the budgeted National Nutrition Plan (NNP), PSMSAN II.

Overall, the proportion of CSAs’ contribution to plans and policies at the subnational level has reduced from 77% in 2019 to 49% in 2020. This has mainly been due to an increase in contribution to national level plans in 2020. The ability of grantees to have a powerful influence on plans and policies at national and subnational levels is evidence of their technical and operational capacity, and consequently their relevance in the nutrition dialogues at the country level. CSAs have played a particularly important role in the development of subnational level plans, policies and strategies aligned to the national plans, policies and strategies (190 (49%) in 2020, an increase from 145 in 2019 and 0 in 2018). They have also in tandem supported the implementation of the plans and roll out of policies. Some of the documents include budgets, national and subnational nutrition plans, policies, strategies, and roadmaps.

Through the Pooled Fund, CSAs were able to provide technical inputs or advocacy on key issues that may not have been prioritised without their direct and consistent engagement. This was particularly important at the subnational level where citizen’s engagement on plan and policy development and implementation is in most cases low and inadequately coordinated. Pooled Fund grant recipients acted as liaisons between policymakers and local communities. Together, and often working with Nutrition Champions, CSAs ensured that community voices were represented in regional and national planning documents. Partnerships with 525 (37% female) additional champions and decision makers were established in 2020 – an increase from 297 in 2019. The CSAs’ close engagement with

the champions ensured that the champions were well informed when addressing key processes related to legislation, policymaking, planning and budgeting.



Based on lessons from 2019, CSAs expanded their scope and definition of nutrition influencers to ensure there was adequate representation at national, subnational, technical and political levels. Influencers were selected based on their ability to engage with other decision makers and to help to change mindsets and increase buy-in on key agenda items. In most cases, this led to more detailed dialogue on key issues and decisions that were more aligned to global standards and best practice. This was particularly useful in advocating for and providing relevant inputs as to why nutrition should be given its own budget line and why nutrition funds need to be secured. The influencers were primarily from the political cadre (parliamentarians, local administration, ministers and in some cases presidents and prime ministers). In a few cases, academia was also used to provide technical inputs and help to influence decisions or challenge pre-existing ideas on nutrition. By engaging more technical champions, there was more stability and more technical engagement on policies and plans.

The grants gave CSAs the convening power necessary for participatory and joint action. To this end, CSAs organised 211 roundtables (physical and virtual) in 2020 – 120 of these were at the regional, municipal or community level. Overall, this is a major increase from 148 in 2019 – even in the backdrop of the pandemic. The roundtables engaged 2,928 diverse participants (42% female) to advance an important agenda and fast track impacts and commitments on nutrition. This was an increase from 1,722 participants in 2019.

## *Collective policy action: spotlight on civil society's political impact*

### **Malawi**

#### **Raising the profile on adolescent nutrition**

The CSA lobbied for the finalisation and dissemination of the Malawi Nutrition Policy. They also influenced the government to open a review of the Adolescent Nutrition Strategy and the Nutrition, Education, & Communication Strategy. Their efforts were successful: the strategies were reviewed and finalised in February 2020. Now, adolescent nutrition will be incorporated as a baseline for all future nutrition district level programmes.

### **Niger**

#### **Bringing politicians and youth leaders together**

Niger's 2019 SUN Movement Joint Annual Assessment highlighted the lack of network dynamism as a limiting factor in scaling up nutrition. Thanks to the Pooled Fund, the Civil Society Alliance of Niger has grown to 43 member organisations and associations, including a "Youth Nutrition Champions" group that was recognised by the High Commissioner for 3N as an important nutrition implementation partner.

### **Pakistan**

#### **Supporting nutrition policy with science**

The CSA, alongside the government and other stakeholders, helped formulate the National Nutrition Action Plan. The CSA elevated the topic of nutrition policy by hosting a National Nutrition Conference, chaired by the President of Pakistan in February 2020. Their efforts convened a review on the implementation status of nutrition programmes. It prompted Pakistan's top scientific health journal to dedicate an entire edition on nutrition.

### **Indonesia**

#### **Sharing local knowledge for guidelines fit-for-purpose**

The CSA has engaged effectively and collaborated with the government in support of the National Food and Nutrition Action Plan (RAN-PG) 2020-2024 development. Through cross-collaboration, the CSA provided technical contributions to the development of RAN-PG's guidelines for provincial level nutrition action plans.

## Outcome 2: Financial Resourcing

*By the end of the grant period, international and domestic resources are better mobilised to finance national nutrition plans.*

The CSAs made use of the grant to strengthen their members' technical and institutional capacity at both national and subnational levels. Many of the CSAs chose budget analysis activities in their projects. Budget analysis can be an analysis of an existing national nutrition budget or governmental ministries that affect nutrition at the national scale. This same exercise can also be carried out at a local level through the lens of municipal or provincial budgets. It is valuable for civil society to conduct its own budget analysis on nutrition allocations and to participate in multi-platform budgeting exercises. This helps keep partners accountable and helps factor nutrition into government budget discourse and exercises. As a result of Pooled Fund support, the team noted that civil society inputs in budget analysis for nutrition plans increased from 14 in 2019, to 123 in 2020. The inputs included budget analysis and tracking, presenting positions and notes during key meetings, technical analysis of the contents of budgets or allocations to nutrition, and following up on allocation of actual funds and expenditures as per the budget. All these and other inputs were important in contributing to more effective decision-making on resource allocation.

Finally, it is important for civil society to conduct or participate in budget analysis activities because it highlights gaps in resources for nutrition. Civil society actors, like the CSA of El Salvador, use this information to inform presidential candidates and government officials to help strengthen their rhetoric on nutrition-related issues in their country. Civil society can campaign effectively at the popular level and can provide valuable inputs on how and where public money could be spent. Thanks to civil society's inclusion in national processes, CSAs highlighted and addressed budget and/or financing gaps in 130 national nutrition plans and policies in 2020. It takes time to get to this level of policy engagement – a mere six gaps were reported in 2019. This shows that budget analysis is a worthy investment for countries because it is a key step required for resource mobilisation in-country and through platforms like Nutrition for Growth (N4G) and the Global Financing Facility (GFF). This has also led to more nutrition-sensitive budgeting and direct interventions for pre-existing funds at both national and subnational levels.

With regards to resource mobilisation, the investment from the Pooled Fund generated additional funds from external sources, resource mobilisation plans, and generally elevated the profile of nutrition as a worthy investment for national growth and resiliency. In 2020, eight CSAs managed to mobilise additional funding during the Pooled Fund grant period for their continued network operations and/or activities. The opportunity to manage a medium-sized grant from the SUN Movement enhanced the beneficiaries' capacities to manage such projects and increased their attractiveness to donors. A combination of Pooled Fund support and direct technical assistance

## Resource Mobilisation & Budget Alignment

### Peru

The CSA contributed to highlighted gaps that led to two national and 25 subnational budgeted nutrition plans addressing the funding gap. In addition to this, there were 25 "Performance Allocation Agreements (CAD)" signed between the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion, the Ministry of Economics and Finance and subnational governments. The CADs will be used as management and planning tools for regional governments with quantitative nutrition indicators. If goals are met, regional governments receive additional transfer of funds from the public treasury. The CSA partners and youth helped define those goals.

### Senegal

The CSA supported nutrition budgeting activities by grouping parliamentarians (députés) within the ReParMENus (Parliamentary Network for Scaled Nutrition) where they act as Nutrition Champions within the Senegalese National Assembly. These 23 women and 14 men support budget advocacy at the national and community level to improve the nutritional profile of Senegal.

### Madagascar

The CSA made contributions to budget workshops for three national programmes to ensure that those programmes' financial decisions are a good fit for household nutrition. Thanks to their involvement, CSA members are now included in the drafting process of the 2021 Initial Finance Law. The CSA conducted advocacy roundtables with journalists and members of the Malagasy Parliament in four regions of Madagascar. The purpose of the roundtables was to increase the budget allocated for nutrition in the 2021 Initial Finance Law (la loi de finance initiale 2021).

### Malawi

National budget analysis has proved effective in unearthing financial gaps on specific nutrition indicators and government commitment to the nutrition agenda. Continuous budget analysis at national level has strengthened CSA voices in presenting evidence for positive policy change and nutrition prioritisation. The government has been checking and appreciating its efforts through this approach.

## Resource Mobilisation & Budget Alignment

### Indonesia

As a result of advocacy through key stakeholders including the SUN CSA, the Government of Indonesia has increased its financial commitment from USD 8.5 billion in 2019 to USD 9.17 billion in 2020. The CSA raised an additional USD 20,000 (target was USD 70,000) fund from UNICEF, WFP, the Government of Australia and some business entities (corporate social responsibility funds) to finance nutrition-sensitive interventions at the national level. The CSA is on track to raise another USD 30,000 by the end of the project.

### Vietnam

The CSA of Vietnam successfully convened non-governmental and multi-national organizations to advocate and expand traditional public funding to cover nutrition. Thanks to the CSA's advocacy the subject of nutrition was integrated as a component in the National Targeted Program for Ethnic Minority Development (2021-2025). Vietnam's National Assembly voted unanimously to approve an allocation of at least USD 6 billion to this Ethnic Minority Development programme.

from the CSN helped 32 grantees develop sustainability strategies, an increase from three in the previous year.

The investment in countries has been catalytic. Six CSAs secured more than USD 450,000 in contributions for nutrition activities in 2019 and eight countries mobilised approximately USD 2.46 million in contributions in 2020. The funding commitments took the form of cash contributions, partnerships, cost-sharing opportunities or sub-grants with funds that ranged in size from USD 5,000 to USD 1,145,000. The Pooled Fund team noted that resource mobilisation varied throughout regions. CSAs in the Asia region secured only USD 25,000 and no additional funding was secured in Latin America. In Africa, however, CSAs secured over USD 1 million. The CSA of Mali alone secured more than USD 1 million in its 2020 national budget (already materialised) to finance the purchase of nutritional inputs, and USD 18,000 for the financing of nutrition at community level, through lobbying and the establishment of regional Alliances and MSPs. Overall, progress has been made since the beginning of the grant and more importantly in the capacity of CSAs to develop long-term sustainability strategies, to establish partnerships and productive relationships, and to effectively engage donors for resource mobilisation.



### Outcome 3: Effective Implementation & Accountability

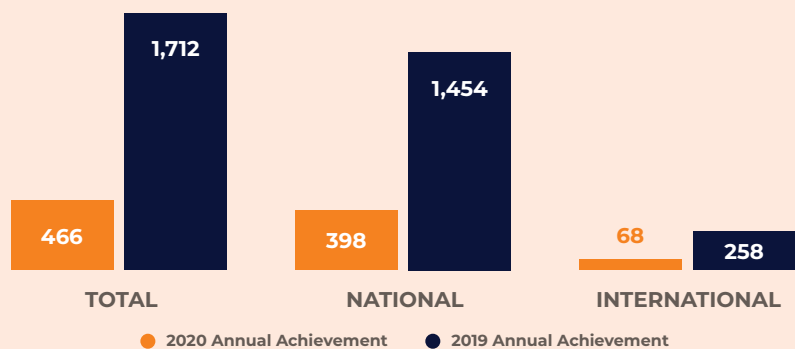
*By the end of the grant period, the SUN Country CSA is on track in implementing their nutrition commitments and is making a demonstrable contribution to reducing malnutrition at subnational levels.*

In spite of the pandemic, civil society organisations (CSOs) in 2020 managed to advocate and implement change in the nutrition landscape. A common objective among CSAs was to increase their alliance membership and coordinate approaches that strengthened civil society and community voices on nutrition. Since the start of the Pooled Fund project in 2018, the functionality of CSAs has increased. They developed their capacity for effective lobbying at national and subnational levels for SMART, costed, multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral nutrition plans. Most of the work of mobilising new CSOs to join national alliances was undertaken in 2018 with 1,712 (85% non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and 15% international non-governmental organisations (INGOs)) new members registered. An additional 466 new organisations were registered in 2020.

In the first two years of the Pooled Fund, alliances focused on their internal governance and procedures. In the third year, CSAs focused on activities that built their technical capacity and provided opportunities to share ideas and partner for joint action. In the move towards joint action, for example, the Tanzania CSA strengthened coordination of parliamentarians as Nutrition Champions to increase their involvement in nutrition and advocate for increased resources for the sector, and promote coordination of CSOs for effective participation and contribution in the Multi-sectoral Nutrition Platforms at the subnational level. Benin advanced their technical engagement and participated in the development of several sectoral nutrition strategies. For example, in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, the CSA contributed to the development of the Agricultural Orientation Law of Food and Nutrition Security, the National Strategy for Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture, and the National Conservation and Storage Strategy for Food Security. The CSA was also integrated into the Technical Advisory Group - Health Nutrition (GCT-NS) and participated in the evaluation and development of the 2021 annual work plan. These processes ensured that the CSAs' voice was amplified, enhancing their impact and influence in decision-making processes, implementation and influence with the community and government. The pandemic-related restrictions in 2020 reduced the number of national level events. Nevertheless, the CSAs participated in 21 national review processes and maintained the focus on achieving national Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets.

The expanded civil society and grassroots networks that the CSAs built helped them respond effectively during the COVID-19 response period. Through the network of CSOs, grantees were able to reach

**Number of national and international CSA member organisations – disaggregated by national and international NGOs**



**” The support from the Pooled Fund is very critical and makes it possible to bring civil society organisations and other stakeholders together to address all forms of malnutrition in Cambodia. We have learnt the importance of having a united voice for a stronger impact from the many successful initiatives undertaken collectively by SUN CSA Cambodia.**

*Mr. Hou Kroeun, Deputy Country Director of HKI and Acting Chair of SUN CSA Cambodia*

over 9.6 million people with COVID-19 related behavioural change messages and over 800,000 people with general nutrition-related behavioural change messaging. The ability of the grantees to respond to such a high number (compared to 47,000 in 2019) under the constrained circumstances, and with limited funding, was partly attributable to their wide and well organised network presence.

Civil society can represent the diversity of social groups in a country. That diversity is reflected in national SUN CSA membership and has become an innovative mechanism for community outreach and advocacy. Madagascar and Burkina Faso granted micro-financing to member CSOs to implement small projects at the local level and to reach out to communities in a more efficient manner. SUN CSAs engaged with media outlets, journalists, youth leaders, national and local celebrities, religious figures, pageant queens, and parliamentarians to get the word out on nutrition. Some examples of the results of the diversity are outlined in the community action table below.

## Outcome in the local communities

### Sierra Leone

#### Traditional leaders; Innovative advocacy

The CSA and its partners developed a manual with key nutrition messages, supported with relevant scriptures from the Quran and Bible as a guide to facilitate health and nutrition promotional activities. They worked with imams, pastors and traditional healers, and formed connections with market women. They also ensured a close (and visible) relationship with religious leaders and traditional healers through televised messages on nutrition and child health. The strategy reduced rumours or misconceptions about health issues and enhanced community trust in the health system.

### El Salvador

#### School Curriculum; Innovative advocacy

Five schools in the municipality of Ahuachapán participated in food education events in which 58 girls and boys in elementary school were selected as young Nutrition Champions. The CSA launched campaigns during National Breastfeeding Week under the global motto “Let's make breastfeeding possible”. By engaging school-aged children, educating multiple generations of women, and engaging with men in every educational format, the CSA was able to develop a durable continuum of knowledge and support.

### Philippines

#### School Curriculum; Innovative advocacy

With the endorsement of the Secretary of Agriculture and the National School Health Division Chief, the CSA advocated for nutrition-sensitive interventions such as the establishment of community food gardens and nutrition education sessions. As a result, the Guinayangan's Local Government Unit included the community crop museum (food garden) and nutrition education in its action plan. The unit budgeted a total of Php 740,540 (approximately USD 14,600) for nutrition projects and activities within 2019-2020.

### Cameroon

#### Community level monitoring

In a bid to encourage member CSOs to integrate nutrition activities into their work plans and report progress data on their nutrition activities in an innovative manner, the CSA developed a detailed dashboard to monitor each CSO's progress in meeting its commitments, which is being updated through reports made by the CSOs. So far, 8 out of the 33 local member CSOs submitted at least one progress report on their commitments to nutrition. The approach is being rolled out to more CSOs as capacity building efforts are completed.

## *Campaigning for nutrition: spotlight on local advocacy*

### **Pakistan**

#### **Journalistic discipline on nutrition**

The CSA increased technical knowledge of nutrition for more than 300 electronic and print media journalists. This resulted in more nutrition-sensitive media content and policies. The CSA also managed a behavioural change communication campaign that reached more than 241,000 Pakistani citizens, demonstrating the nation's embodiment of the SUN Movement principles: coordination and collaboration.

### **Philippines**

#### **Reaching the household level**

Thanks to the CSA and its member organisations, around 1,200 individuals (1,154 female; 62 male) received training on nutrition, kitchen gardens, food production, and/or household financial management. Together, they designed and popularised nutrition-sensitive interventions, such as the establishment of community food gardens and nutrition education sessions.

### **Zimbabwe**

#### **District level campaigns on stunting**

At the subnational level, the CSA developed nutrition action plans in two (out of 59) districts in Zimbabwe (the Mutasa and Chipinge districts). In conjunction with the Youth Network, CSA members also conducted a "Kick Out Stunting" campaign in the Chipinge and Chimanimani districts. There, 15 Nutrition champions mobilised four community meetings and increased community knowledge on the root causes of stunting.

### **Chad**

#### **Delivering the nutrition news we need**

The CSA improved the knowledge and inter-network connections of 35 Chadian journalists and community radio presenters who helped conduct mass sensitisation nutrition campaigns. These campaigns included television segments and radio talk shows in six provinces, thereby expanding public knowledge on the causes and consequences of malnutrition.

With civil society's expanded sphere of influence and improved capacity at the subnational level, CSAs reported a higher rate of local policy alignment with those at the national level. In 2020, 673 nonprofit

organisations (85% of which were locally based) identified and reported on commitments aligned to national or local government commitments. This is a significant increase from 177 organisations in 2019. The exercise and confirmation of policy alignment between varying levels of government strengthens the trust and relationship between nonprofits and governments. This alignment in nutrition policies and interventions was achieved mainly by developing CSOs knowledge of government policies and procedures. With these tools, they were able to identify access points to add value to government policies and plans.

In addition to mobilising and enhancing the capacity of the CSAs, there was also specific focus on building partnerships for more collaboration and a strengthened purpose and community around nutrition. Pooled Fund beneficiaries reported that they established over 296 new partnerships in 2020. There was significant contribution from W2 grantees (215) where partnership development for proper functioning of the MSPs was a priority. This is up from 20 partnerships in 2019 and 51 partnerships in 2018. Most of the partnerships were established with academia, private sector and the media. The role of partnership development was fast tracked in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic where collaboration to avoid duplication of effort was emphasised through the Pooled Fund grant. Overall, the Pooled Fund's investment in CSAs has resulted in more national level partnerships with and among civil society which, in turn, supports their participatory approach to address the challenge of malnutrition.

## MULTI-SECTORAL & MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PLATFORMS

The strong support to the Pooled Fund opened the opportunity to support improved multi-stakeholder collaboration for improved nutritional impact at the subnational level. The Consultative Group decided in **January 2019** to open and define the strategic focus of the “Window 2” category. The Pooled Fund enabled support to a variety of eligible entities within multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs) to focus on concrete nutrition actions, with particular focus on knowledge sharing and activities at the subnational level. The MSP was required to link its nutrition actions to their NNP and the Joint Annual Assessment. In spite of the pandemic-related challenges of 2020, countries have made some outstanding achievements that this chapter will highlight.

Beneficiaries of Window 2 grants started their projects in late 2019 and early 2020 and will run until June 2021. Recipients of funds in this window were no longer restricted to just the CSN or SBN. A variety of networks, governments, nonprofits or UN entities took the lead in the following countries: Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Vietnam and Zambia.

Country	Instances of project alignment	Nutrition action at subnational level, MSP consolidation and knowledge sharing
<b>Sierra Leone</b>	Innovative advocacy and behaviour change strategy	Through the Kombra Network, a volunteer media coalition of religious leaders, traditional healers, NGOs and media practitioners reached over 2.6 million women and children on nutrition topics such as breastmilk substitutes. This has been particularly useful in reaching vulnerable communities. The Kombra Network is reliable and trusted in communities which, in turn, has increased the uptake of factual information. The Pooled Fund grant complemented this extensive advocacy through joint action with the MSP, in which they drafted a Code of Breastmilk Substitutes bill that is under final review by parliament.
<b>Vietnam</b>	Effective MSP advocacy and legislation	The CSA in Vietnam provided technical and financial support to conduct the qualitative assessment of the Labor Code and other policies that pertain to female employees (including breastfeeding mothers). Due to the policy advocacy supported by the Pooled Fund, it is now mandatory in the new Decree No. 145/2020/ND-CP to install a lactation room at the workplace for companies employing more than 1,000 female workers. Almost 2.5 million female workers in Vietnam are expected to benefit from workplace lactation areas due to this new policy.
<b>Nigeria</b>	Effective MSP advocacy on legislation	CS-SUNN championed engagement with policymakers on exclusive breastfeeding and maternity protection, which led to approval of an extension of maternity protection bill from 4 months to 6 months.

### Theme 1: Multi-sectoral nutrition interventions

SUN Countries implemented nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive activities for the benefit of communities with focus on women, children and at-risk communities. The activities that countries selected were rooted in their NNP, country contexts and related policies.

The Window 2 grantees focused on working closely through a multi-sector and multi-stakeholder approach to lobby for legislative

#### Spotlight on Zambia

Zambia picked an innovation that would pilot a concept of a nutrition convergence center in one of the districts under the first 1,000 Most Critical Days Programme. The grantee is in the process of establishing a demonstration of different crops and fruit trees for the implementation of a nutrition-sensitive intervention, an innovative alternative from common kitchen garden projects.

**” Before it was just an encouragement for factory owners to install lactation rooms for female workers... but through this pooled fund project we, the CSA members, have advocated and influenced the Government to approve a new decree which makes it compulsory for factory managements to set up lactation rooms if they have more than 1,000 female employees.**

*An, Nguyen Thi, Country Director-Health Bridge and the SUN CSA Co-Chair in Vietnam*

commitments that would have a long-term impact on the nutrition landscape particularly on the first 1,000 days. These commitments covered a range of topics such as investment in nutrition, codes of practice, workers' terms conditions, working mechanisms for nutrition, etc. Advocacy was conducted through innovative approaches that were either being piloted or replicated in other areas. Concurrently, the beneficiaries targeted the local members through community networks and the media, reaching over 5 million people with specific behaviour change messages.

Several grantees are in different stages of advocating for institutionalisation of policies related to the special protections for pregnant and lactating women and children, including school-going children. This has started the process of ensuring strengthened food environments and improvement of the food and nutrition status for vulnerable groups.

### Spotlight on Ethiopia

The grant's value-add was focused on addressing specific gaps in the effective roll out of a multi-sectoral, policymaking, cross-learning, convening agenda referred to as the Seqota Declaration. The funds enabled the Ministry of Health to pilot innovations and address specific areas needed to enhance the effectiveness of the Seqota Declaration. The Pooled Fund was used to mobilise and organise the 40 woreda level (subnational) MSP's towards joint multi-sectoral initiatives. Specifically, they worked on developing participatory, costed district level plans, establishing community labs, and designing resource tracking and partnership management tools. The funds were also used to leverage a partnership with UNICEF that resulted in piloting a robust data management system (web-based) to track nutrition Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).



## Theme 2: Capacity strengthening of MSPs

The Pooled Fund has helped different stakeholders work together and build a stronger domestic environment for nutrition. Countries have established and/or operationalised national SUN Networks primarily at the subnational level, they have elevated the role of Nutrition Champions and have generally improved MSP functionality through membership management.

Beneficiaries of the Window 2 grants applied a multi-stakeholder and multi-sector approach to collectively lobby through the MSPs at the national and subnational levels to integrate undernutrition into national development plans and economic growth strategies. There was a specific focus on strengthening the MSPs for more coordinated and collaborative action. This took many forms depending on the country's context with expanded multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder engagement. Most grantees engaged between 3 to 5 sectors, such as health, agriculture, or education, while others engaged between 8 to 13 sectors. In addition to these engagements, grantees worked through the MSPs to contribute to 322 national and subnational nutrition plans, policies, and strategies (189 national level, 133 subnational level).

Nearly all the Window 2 beneficiaries managed to establish or enhance engagement of MSPs, with a particular emphasis on local platforms.<sup>2</sup> By the end of 2020, 85 subnational MSPs in the 12 Window 2 countries were established or strengthened with approximately 129 partnerships formed for a collaborative and coordinated campaign against malnutrition. Of the partnerships, 47 were with government partners at the central, decentralised and ministry level; 11 were with private sector groups; 7 were with academia partners; and 64 were with civil society organisations.

Countries used targeted advocacy techniques, provided technical inputs to policy and planning processes, and engaged with a diversity of stakeholders to grow and animate their platforms' memberships. This approach was necessary to ensure that the legislation had buy-in from key implementers, such as the private sector, and users of the output, such as community and health workers.

## Theme 3: Strengthening of sharing & learning

The Pooled Fund has helped MSPs share their knowledge nationally and with the global community. Together, they have improved the documentation of field data and best practices, shared their lessons with others through ongoing peer-to-peer learning and experience

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<sup>2</sup> This was an optional theme for Window 2 MSP applicants which all but one country selected.



sharing, and undertaken field visits and international exchanges to enhance their understanding and potential.

Beneficiaries focused on identifying specific lessons and sharing these across and outside the network. The focus on learning and exchange was greatly affected by COVID-19 related restrictions. Despite these challenges, grantees managed to develop and share specific knowledge products that were utilised by 78 nutrition actors (government, private sector and/or civil society) in the development of their policies, responses, business interventions or programmes. Countries established 24 different experience sharing and learning platforms. The Pooled Fund supported nutrition exchanges as well. Most of the twinning happened at the country level. For example, beneficiaries conducted 23 twinning exercises where members from different districts traveled to other districts to learn from their experiences. Beneficiaries also developed 16 knowledge products, such as technical guidelines or reports, that have improved the knowledge base for the entire MSP.

### Spotlight on Rwanda & Kyrgyzstan's country exchange

With the help of the Pooled Fund, a delegation from the CSA SUN Kyrgyzstan – consisting of representatives of regional administrations and representatives of local NGOs – went to Kigali, the capital of the Republic of Rwanda, to exchange experiences on the work of their respective MSPs. Rwanda shared their national development plan and nutrition improvement strategies to the Kyrgyz team. Rwanda's model for nutrition M&E can be easily adapted to a subnational food security and nutrition plan for Kyrgyzstan.

In the coming months, after translating Rwanda's nutrition plan into Russian or Kyrgyz languages, the plan will be presented to all stakeholders at the national and provincial level. Kyrgyzstan then plans to adapt the score card, smart room frameworks, and other Rwandan M&E methods in their provincial workplans for SMART indicators and budgeted activities.



*Assessing Rwandan mapping and scorecards.*  
© SUN



*Sharing tokens of appreciation.*  
© SUN

## BUSINESS NETWORK

The Pooled Fund supports all networks, including the [SUN Business Network](#). The SBN seeks “to engage and mobilise business at a global and national level to act and invest responsibly in improving nutrition.” Like the SMS and the CSN, the SBN is aligned with the 2016–2020 SUN Movement Strategy and Roadmap. The Network facilitates collaboration at the global level and helps SUN Countries develop business engagement strategies at the national level.

Through the Pooled Fund mechanism, the SUN Movement has invested in inspiring and supporting the private sector’s critical role in nutrition. The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition and the UN WFP serve as the SBN co-conveners and manage the USD 2.14 million grant across 15 SUN countries, the majority of whom are also recipients of Pooled Fund grants to support CSAs. This particular grant for national SBN support falls under [Window 1 - Cycle 3](#). This section highlights what has been achieved in 2020 according to its three overarching objectives: enhanced governance, scaled response and knowledge sharing.

The SBN implementation period began in February 2020 – not long before COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic. And yet, despite a tumultuous year for the private sector in SUN Countries, the SBN has made some notable achievements in establishing or enriching existing networks and using the pandemic-related interruptions as an opportunity to gather and educate businesses on the role they can play during such a critical time. Most importantly, the pandemic also illustrated why investments in the SBN are important and can offer a good return on investment.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the fragility of local food systems in ensuring the adequate supply of safe and nutritious foods, which is now more essential than ever to build immunity and improve health. In many SUN Countries, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of food economies. However, the pandemic put a strain on the operations of SMEs with national lockdowns driving up food production and distribution costs, often resulting in price shocks, unemployment, bankruptcies and food shortages.

The value proposition for the private sector to engage and invest in nutrition has not always been clear, nor has the link between individual business models and national nutrition priorities. The pandemic has shone a light on the critical need to support and increase investment from and to the private sector in ensuring safe, nutritious food is available for all. Platforms such as the SBN can help fill this convening and sensitisation role for business, and many SUN Countries have identified the SBN as the key platform for building and supporting greater engagement with business at the national level to achieve their national nutrition priorities, including during the pandemic.

## Outcome 1: Enhanced Governance

*By the end of the grant period, countries supported by the Pooled Fund will demonstrate enhanced governance and accountability for nutrition through functional SUN Business Networks.*

The first outcome contributes to the achievement of Strategic Objective 1 and 3 of the SUN Movement Strategy 2.0, 2016–2020. These objectives include bringing relevant stakeholders together under the principle of common accountability. One of the most important and fundamental characteristics of a truly multi-sectoral response to nutrition is a private sector that is interested and engaged in, and accountable to, the nutrition of their consumer and labour “markets”. The SUN Movement model is to organise and sensitise national private sector actors to establish SBNs in SUN Countries. Under this investment, national level SBNs organise businesses to engage with MSPs. This ensures the SBN can sensitise MSPs of the potential for greater collaboration with business, while increasing awareness among businesses at the national level on the role they can play in supporting the achievement of both government and MSP nutrition plans.

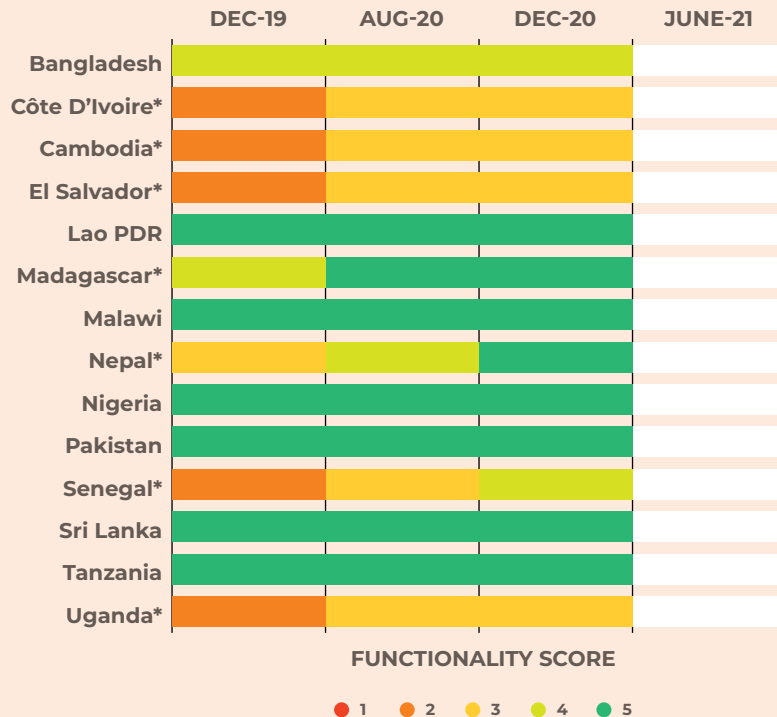
In the first 11 months of this project, the Pooled Fund team and the SBN noted a real excitement from countries who were keen to join their networks. Establishing a national network, whether it is around businesses or civil society, is no easy endeavour – even in good times. A fully approved strategy, formal partnerships and seed funding take time to launch. National business networks face an added challenge in mobilising membership – individual businesses do not form associations in the way that nonprofit organisations are accustomed to. Furthermore, national networks must help businesses recognise the intersection between their individual profit motives and business practices that can be aligned to national nutrition policy to improve nutrition outcomes, e.g., front-of-package nutrition labeling. In spite of these challenges – in addition to the pandemic and a short period of implementation at the time of this report – the cooperation and interest shown by the private sector to join forces to end malnutrition is so far noteworthy.

### *Results in 2020*

Outcome 1 of the SBN-Pooled Fund investment is all about establishing and strengthening the formation and operation of national SBNs. By the end of 2020, fully or well-established SBNs were present in 7 of the initial 13 countries and in the early-to-middle development stages in 6 of the initial 13 countries (more about these national networks and their membership process can be found on the [SBN website](#)). Overall, each network demonstrated sustained or increased functionality since the project started in February 2020. The table below offers a glimpse of the countries whose functionality scores have increased since the start of the Pooled Fund grant.

## SUN BUSINESS NETWORK FUNCTIONALITY INDEX

Baseline to mid-implementation



\*FX score = Functionality index to measure; counting as Fx of 4 or above (see functionality index table below).

### Outcome 2: Scaled Response

*By the end of the grant period, countries supported by the Pooled Fund will have scaled up their business responses in an effective, equitable, sustainable, and resilient manner, thanks in part to increased SUN Business Network capacity.*

The second outcome relates to SUN Movement's Strategic Objective 3 (implementing nutrition-related actions) and Strategic Objective 4 (mobilising resources for nutrition). This outcome, rather than being concerned with the operational features of a network, instead focuses on mobilising the private sector to respond in a collective manner.

Accordingly, national SBNs surveyed and assessed businesses for opportunities to act and invest in nutrition. This process facilitated partnerships at national and global levels to those who were interested in using SMEs to scale up nutrition. For example, to support national scale up and action, the SBN mapped the technical assistance on offer from the 25 multi-national companies in its

global membership platform. These businesses then offered their technical assistance to **business members inside SUN Countries**. In addition, the SBN provided a range of tools and guidance via the **SBN Country Resource Library** that supported businesses to address ways they can improve access to nutrition – and advocated for businesses to adopt best practice standards on nutrition, such as workplace nutrition policies.

### *Achievements in 2020*

With Pooled Fund support, the SBN has accelerated the capacity of national level networks to respond to national nutrition priorities. SBNs have focused on member recruitment and engagement by demonstrating a clear value proposition for participating in the SBN and in investing in nutrition. The number of SBN members in Pooled Fund-supported countries increased from over 450 to over 650 businesses, exceeding the target for the grant period of 620.

Even with the postponement of the **Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summit**, countries have kept to the same commitments, which include the private sector, in hopes of illustrating those commitments at the revised N4G date in 2021. Pledges also went global and 13 companies made nutrition commitments as a result of the SBN's Pitch Competition. This includes: Cargill, DSM, and 11 finalists (Baby Grubz, eFarms, Mealimeter, Danish Care Foods, Mai Savanh, Nutri'Zaza, Feed Me, Saaraketha Holdings, Sanavita, Poulta Inc.)

In spite of the pandemic, the SBN will be in an even better position to showcase its improved technical capacity and business participation in 2021. By the end of 2020, the SBN nearly reached its target on responsiveness to **national level network requests**. Most of the requests were related to data products and tools to increase business effectiveness. Furthermore, the global network has developed guidelines on common values and principles for all national business networks to abide by. These products include the SBN gender report, national whistleblower mechanisms and front-of-pack labeling tools, amongst others, all of which will be piloted in 2021.

The SBN shares the activities and best practices of their networks globally. Much of this is done via web-based **news, quarterly newsletters and social media**. In turn, the information sharing is giving much-deserved visibility to the hard work of SUN Countries. Activities also included hosting six recorded webinars with investor and technical assistance providers that outlined their support mechanisms for SMEs. Together, they shared best practices on various technical topics such as food fortification, nutritional value marketing and cash-flow management. These webinars demonstrated the commitment of certain private corporations to the fight against malnutrition. Investors and providers included Incofin, Unilever, Cargill, Food Fortification Initiative, Common Fund for Commodities and the Elea Foundation.

**At the Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Accountability Working Group, the SUN Business Network partnered with ACTION, RESULTS, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, FAO, Save the Children UK (SUN Civil Society Network), UNICEF, USAID (SUN Donor Network), and the WHO to unlock the power of nutrition worldwide.**

One of the most rousing activities in 2020 was laying the groundwork for the upcoming Pitch Competitions in many national SBNs. The global SBN updated and disseminated the SUN Pitch Competition training materials on nutrition awareness and investment readiness. They included templates for SMEs to use for soliciting investment from commercial and impact investors (i.e., business plan, pitch deck, investment teaser, nutritional impact statement). The [winners from the 2020 Global SUN Pitch Competition](#) were inspiring and have whet SUN Movement members' appetite for more in 2021.

Next, the global SBN paired up with selected national networks to nurture partnerships and develop amendments to national network strategies. Amendments require a large investment of time and knowledge to identify and make linkages with CSAs, in-country donors and UN networks. This is a country-led approach, so the impetus to start on the journey of amending agreements must be initiated by the country first. The project is on track to meet its targets by 2021.

Nurturing partnerships is another way to increase inter-network collaboration. WHO was linked to SBN Pakistan and SBN Nigeria to support [a pilot project on trans-fat elimination](#). The FAO shared several events for African SMEs in cooperation with African national SBNs.

Finally, to understand national network needs, the SBN conducted two surveys with over 300 participating SMEs on the impact of COVID-19. The survey and results permitted the SBN to engage businesses during the pandemic – maintaining the hope, momentum and solidarity of the past year.

### **Outcome 3: Knowledge Sharing**

*By the end of the grant period, countries supported by the Pooled Fund will have improved knowledge management and information sharing to national multi-stakeholder platforms. This SUN Business Network knowledge will inform nutrition policy development and implementation.*

The final outcome is closely aligned to Strategic Objective 1 and Strategic Objective 2, which both place importance on bringing actors together and making decisions based on sound knowledge and evidence. This outcome area emphasised the documenting and sharing of experiences, processes, best practices and lessons learned with national SBNs to other SUN Networks, including in SUN Countries where a national SBN does not yet exist. In 2020, the SBN made it easier to access evidence among national SBNs and other SUN Networks and stakeholders at all levels and in all locations.

In 2021, the SBN will increase its focus on cross-network collaboration with national civil society alliances and other networks. It will also create greater opportunities for collaboration between mature and emerging networks to learn from one another. Again, while COVID-19 has threatened businesses worldwide, it has also raised the profile of SMEs to governments and civil society who rely on nutrition, local food production and distribution more than ever before.

### *Achievements in 2020*

Bangladesh, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Tanzania submitted their national data through the SBN database, with additional country-based submissions received for the January 2021 submission deadline.

The SBN further promoted knowledge sharing and development within SBN Networks. In 2020, there was clear collaboration on technical issues, such as the development of terms of references (ToRs) and other requirements for the framework of new and emerging national networks. The new guidance materials helped fill knowledge and capacity gaps around fostering the convergence of SUN Networks, facilitating dialogue and navigating processes of nutrition advocacy. Some of the information generated in 2020 was the [workforce nutrition handbook](#), a SME survey, in-country SBN newsletters to members, quarterly SBN workshops, and visibility materials on the role of business and nutrition. Together with the CSN, the networks also co-developed global conflict of interest guidance in 2020.

The SBN turned the interruptions caused by the pandemic into an opportunity to learn and build momentum. Recognising the unprecedented impact of COVID-19 on food systems, the SBN [undertook a survey](#) of SMEs across 17 SUN Countries. Over 300 SMEs reported being negatively impacted by the pandemic, mainly via decreased sales, difficulty accessing inputs and difficulty accessing financing. Informed by the survey results, the SBN leveraged existing and new partnerships with the government, development sector, SUN Networks and the broader investment community to support SMEs in accessing critical technical assistance and financial support.

The SBN Global Secretariat hosted a range of joint webinars held with other SUN Movement actors and FAO. The SBN also invited other SUN Networks to join workshops on special topics (e.g., business and gender, partnerships, financing and sustainability, and front-of-pack nutrition labelling). National SBNs invited other national networks to knowledge-sharing events for good cross-network collaboration. National SBNs also conducted virtual business-to-business knowledge exchanges to maintain the momentum during COVID-19 lockdowns. In this way, government members of the MSP and civil society members had an opportunity to better understand the importance of the SMEs in the nutrition sphere.

## SUN Business Network: Spotlight on achievements

CSN/SBN Grantee	Implementation Action in Communities	Outcome in policies
<b><u>Bangladesh</u></b>	Workforce Nutrition	SBN Bangladesh organised a webinar in September 2020 to discuss the nutritional challenges, such as anaemia, that Readymade Garment (RMG) workers are facing and the actions that can be taken in collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh and national networks. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Labour and Employment shared that they are generating nutritional guidelines for the RMG industry with the support of GAIN. Dr. S M Mustafizur Rahman, the Line Director of the National Nutrition Services, restated the 2nd National Nutrition Plan's inclusion of the private sector in the policy implementation. SBN Bangladesh also highlighted that they are co-designing products and services with SMEs for facilitating access to safe and nutritious food that is both affordable and appealing for RMG workers.
<b><u>Pakistan</u></b>	Consumer Awareness	SBN Pakistan and partners are conducting a pilot project with the <b><u>International Food and Beverage Alliance</u></b> to support the replacement of industrially-produced trans-fatty acids (iTFA). They produced a technical report on sources and replacement solutions for iTFA specific to Pakistan's country context. This report has laid the groundwork for a multi-sectoral approach to educate and generate popular demand for iTFA reduction. It also outlined ways to regulate the production of the main source of iTFA consumption (vanaspati ghee) and alternative production methods.
<b><u>Madagascar</u></b>	International Day of Awareness of Food Loss & Waste	The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated already high levels of food loss and waste in the food value chain – lockdowns limited food logistics and nutrition, yet perishable foods went to waste in the process. Hasina Ralay, a Malagasy entrepreneur, launched <b><u>Lycheeland</u></b> as a solution to reduce food loss and waste resulting from surplus fruit production that could not be absorbed by the market. In addition, Hasina has created local fruit roll-ups, which are a healthy snack using overripe, locally-available fruits that would otherwise go to waste. Lycheeland's example demonstrated how the public and private sectors can work together with SMEs like that of Hasina's to find innovative solutions to reduce the costs of drying and preserving highly perishable and nutritious goods.
<b><u>Nigeria</u></b>	Inter-network collaboration	2020 saw the subnational roll-out of Nutrition and Food Safety training in Nigeria, implemented in partnership with State Chambers of Commerce. Amongst the beneficiaries of these training courses are members of the SUN Civil Society as well as representatives of the National SUN Secretariat.



## COUNTRY LEVEL CROSS-NETWORK COLLABORATION

2020 saw varied levels of inter-network collaboration at the national level. Some common features in countries where there was good collaboration included well established CSAs and SBNs. Countries that have strong network governance systems, as well as an SBN or CSA coordinator in place, appear to also have active and collaborative members at national and subnational levels. Inter-network collaboration at the national level was particularly strong in Bangladesh, Kenya, Sierra Leone and Tanzania. The Pooled Fund team noted less collaboration in Window 1 - Cycle 1 countries, but this is likely due to the fact that many Cycle 1 recipients were focused on establishing or formalising their CSA and its subnational chapters. This was also the case where the SBN was still at initial stages.

Countries with mature CSAs were able to assist other national networks to collaborate effectively. For example, the SBN of Madagascar (Window 1-Cycle 3) stated that the Malagasy CSA has been critical in helping them connect with local government officials and identify community farmers and producers. The SBN's comparative advantage in local entrepreneurship was complemented by the CSA's comparative advantage in local politics and nutrition policy. In Nigeria's case, the CSA helped formalise a national SUN academic network. Both groups recognised the important role that academic research and expert testimony can play in nutrition advocacy. In Bangladesh, the SBN has helped sharpen their member's business acumen. For example, the SBN aided its business members to develop skills in basic documentation and in financial literacy so that they may qualify to receive government assistance. In a complementary manner, the MSP of Bangladesh (Window 2-Cycle 1) established a partnership with Bangladesh National Nutrition Council. As a result of this multi-network collaboration, 5 of the National Nutrition Council's district level committees are now paired up with 5 district level SBNs to help bridge the gap between local business needs and national nutrition initiatives.

In spite of all the great cooperation, the Pooled Fund team noted from monitoring missions that national networks need to formalise their joint efforts in the form of MOUs, joint ToRs or joint work plans. A common approach to engagement would create efficiencies and would avoid potential gaps or duplication of efforts. The findings were shared with grantees after the virtual monitoring missions and with both the CSN and SBN global secretariats. Due in part to this feedback from the Pooled Fund team, the CSN and SBN global secretariats have met to enhance collaboration at all levels.

## Spotlight on Tanzania

The SBN, CSA and government partners made food fortification a priority in Tanzanian schools. The Tanzania Food and Nutrition Center monitored the performance and delivery of this project by two implementing partners: Partnership for Nutrition in Tanzania (PANITA) and ONA Enterprise Limited. Together, they worked with the Tanzania Bureau of Standards, President Office Regional Administrative, and local government; Kagera and Tanga regional secretariats; schools; and private sector millers to improve access to fortified school meals by school-going children in two regions in Tanzania (Tanga and Kagera).

The project raised awareness among local government authorities, school management teams, the private sector and children on the importance of child and adolescent nutrition and the value of fortified ingredients in achieving these results. They signed fortification agreements, reviewed regional policy, then got to work.

Through their efforts, they trained a total of 40 millers, delivered 10 milling machines, and linked their production to 30 schools with approximately 12,000 students. The training included quality assurance and quality control methods, formal business registration, and handling to address aflatoxin. Additionally, the project conducted cooking demonstrations at the school with students and parent groups for shared understanding and ownership of fortified lunch foods.



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## GENDER & YOUTH

In line with the SUN Movement’s Strategy 2.0 and Roadmap 2016–2020, Pooled Fund grant recipients championed and in many cases prioritised gender equality and diversity as a core part of all their projects. During the design of their projects, applicants prioritised activities that would benefit women, children and vulnerable groups while ensuring adequate engagement by boys and men. Civil society’s powerful role in elevating the voices of women in national plans cannot be understated. A gender lens was used to specifically advocate for a gender mainstreaming and gender-sensitive programmes, policies, strategies and action plans at national and subnational levels. This has become the standard practice for all grants where gender is mainstreamed and prioritised in planning, advocacy, policy and implementation. For example, beneficiaries in Burundi, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, Indonesia and Senegal ensured gender considerations were at the forefront

Country	Instances/ Project of alignment	Project Deliverables
<b>Nepal</b>	Gender-mainstreaming	The Pooled Fund supported gender balance across various project activities, confirming the CSA’s way of working in the project’s four rural municipalities. At least 30% of workshop participants are required to be women, and the CSA has encouraged the participatory approach in decision-making at the local level by developing capacity and encouraging women. Finally, the result of the Nutrition Champion recruitment demonstrated gender parity, with a 50:50 male to female ratio.
<b>Cameroon</b>	Gender-mainstreaming	The CSA supports 721 women’s nutrition support groups in the Far North, North, and East regions. As part of capacity building, 891 health personnel (52% female) and 246 community members (78% female) were trained on essential nutrition and hygiene actions, among them were opinion leaders, lead mothers and traditional birth attendants.
<b>Niger</b>	Youth engagement	High involvement of the Young Ambassadors (many of them being women) in sensitisation campaigns at community level had a significant impact on the quality of the interactions and grassroots feedback collected by the CSA. The “Youth Nutrition Champions” group was recognised by the High Commissioner for 3N (“Nigeriens feeding Nigeriens”) as an important nutrition implementation partner.
<b>Malawi</b>	Youth engagement	The CSA empowered the youth and created an enabling environment for them to champion awareness of nutrition at the community, district and national levels. The CSA empowered 30 youth members as local Training of Trainers in nutrition. In return, they are coaching new Nutrition Champions in five youth clubs in Karonga.

during the development/renewal of their NNPs. The Pooled Fund beneficiaries have prioritised women's participation in key decision-making processes related to legislation, policymaking, planning and budgeting. In 2020, 195 (or 37%) of all reported Nutrition Champions who testified on policy matters were women. This is an increase from 157 women who testified in 2019 and a noteworthy acceleration from 2018, where only 65 female Nutrition Champions testified.

There is still a lot more that can be done to increase and systemically engage youth. However, in 2020, a number of grantees including in Cambodia, Kenya, Peru, Niger, Sri-Lanka and Zambia had programmes that specifically focused on youth and collaborated with youth as ambassadors for change. In these cases, youth were seen to be more effective in reaching the younger target groups in behaviour change messages in general, and specifically during COVID-19 responses. Youth ambassadors made good use of the media to expand the reach of nutrition messaging to target groups and lobby for specific commitments from parliamentarians. Youth leaders are the future change agents in nutrition, and through the Pooled Fund, they have demonstrated an important place in the SUN Movement.

## COVID-19 & BUILDING BACK BETTER WITH THE POOLED FUND

### Situation

Grantees were able to support countries to flexibly and nimbly react to, adapt, mitigate and “build back better” systems during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Pooled Fund Consultative Group encouraged beneficiaries to revise their budgets and refocus activities to mitigate the effects of the pandemic and align with governmental efforts to respond to the crisis. The Pooled Fund team's due diligence processes ensured that there was no duplication in pandemic response activities between the networks and the national government. A rapid but coordinated review and approval process was undertaken in collaboration with the SMS, including the grant recipients themselves, the CSN, UN Nutrition via UN REACH, and the SBN, etc.

### Risk

Due to the high number of interventions in response to COVID-19, risk management and due diligence were high priorities of the Pooled Fund team. Some of the key risks assessed were lack of alignment

with guidelines and protocols, minimal but potential reputational risks if not aligned or in contradiction to national and global guidelines, delayed and therefore somewhat irrelevant responses, duplication of effort, and nutrition benefits being undermined and not considered as key contributors to COVID-19 responses. Other risks involved beneficiaries being unable to meet their deliverables, lack of access to policymakers and interruption of key activities at the local level.

## Response

To address the risks, the process for requesting funds was made shorter, context-specific and involved more stakeholders at the country level. All grantees were required to undertake a mapping exercise and provide evidence of what other stakeholders were doing to justify the gap that they would be addressing. This helped to ensure that there was no duplication of effort and that responses were in areas where the grantees had comparative advantage and would have high impact. This rigorous and rapid review process permitted Pooled Fund beneficiaries the agile support they needed to build back responsibly and equitably.

## Results

Almost all beneficiaries realigned their activities to support their governments in developing or aligning national response measures to include nutrition. This is exemplified in the case of Kyrgyzstan, the Philippines and Tanzania. Others, such as Afghanistan, Guatemala and Nepal, chose to address gaps in national response clusters. Due to the flexibility of the Pooled Fund, Afghanistan, Kenya and Peru mapped and monitored interventions by their civil society partners and by national donor networks. In Madagascar and Côte d'Ivoire, alliances conducted or participated in impact studies on COVID-19 and nutrition. Other countries developed media campaigns to raise awareness and provided training on nutrition and hygiene for community organisations in local languages (e.g., Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and Zimbabwe).

The Pooled Fund invested in a successful country-led response. Beneficiaries reached over 9.6 million people through behaviour change campaigns on factual virus prevention, nutrition and health-related matters. Message development was conducted in accordance with government and WHO regulations. Thanks to CSAs and their diverse members, they were able to reach communities at risk of being left behind. Another 600,000 people in SUN Countries were aided through other forms of innovative pandemic prevention and response measures. The table below provides details on their inspiring stories.

## Examples of COVID-19 Response Actions

### Zimbabwe

In February 2020, the CSA held two parliamentary engagement meetings to influence them on nutrition-sensitive programming related to COVID-19 cash disbursements. For example, the CSA encouraged the Government to distribute nutritious food assistance with fortified cooking oil and a beans/maize mixture instead of low-value cash assistance with non-fortified oil and maize. Additionally, the CSA developed two position papers on [Socio cultural influences on Infant and Young Child Feeding \(IYCF\)](#) and on the [impact of COVID-19 on Food and Nutrition Security](#).

### Peru

The Pooled Fund enabled the CSA to adapt to pandemic restrictions by creating a virtual learning platform for youth organisations. It enabled youth to participate in nutrition monitoring and policy processes of local governments. To ensure their activities were sustainable, the CSA trained youth representatives who will continue to influence local authorities to combat anaemia and growth delays.

### Burundi

CSOs from six provincial networks were supported in conducting three behavior change campaigns for the promotion of good nutritional practices and the prevention of COVID-19, which reached 139,320 people, including 89,164 women.

### Sierra Leone

Pre-recorded messages on COVID-19 prevention measures as well as the benefits of sustained nutrition practices (breastfeeding, IYCF) and the use of essential services was aired through megaphones after Subar prayers at 6:00 AM and Asr prayers at 8:00 PM and in marketplaces. This was essential during lockdowns to get information to communities on a regular basis.

### Philippines

As part of a coordinated pandemic response, families with lactating mothers, pregnant women and parents with young children received food packages containing root crops and fresh vegetables from local, at-risk farmers. Together, the CSA provided nutrition-sensitive food aid to the families of 200 marginal farming, fishing and ambulant vendors in five districts.

### Guinea

The CSA participated in five virtual meetings coordinated by the Ministry of Health, some of which were focused on the implementation of planned activities during the COVID-19 period. As a result, the CSA, in collaboration with the National Agency for Health Security, organised awareness sessions as part of the national COVID-19 response. Together, they reached approximately 50,000 people, distributed 10 million masks and issued 7,000 hand washing kits.

## PROGRESS TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

The Pooled Fund provides support to activities that are catalytic: those that spur other interested parties to take actions or contribute to the continuation of the project after Pooled Fund resources expire.

Sustainability, therefore, takes on several different meanings.

- 1.** Organisational and governance sustainability: In partnership with the CSN, the Pooled Fund supports a CSA's operations with adequate human resource capacity, technical capacity, governance and financial resources to be inclusive, transparent and accountable, and hopes that the CSA will remain as strong in the future.
- 2.** Sustainability in operations: In partnership with the CSN, the Pooled Fund encourages continued contributions to national and local multi-stakeholder platforms using a robust Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) reporting system, even after the grant contract has concluded.

A true test of sustainability cannot be conducted with certainty until a certain period of time after the Pooled Fund investment has passed. It is already possible, however, to take a glimpse of certain indications of durability. Some of these indications include the membership strength of a CSA or SBN, their governance structure and relationship with policymakers or administrators, and their ability to effectively advocate additional resources. As demonstrated earlier in the Annual Report, the Pooled Fund investment has strengthened both the CSAs' institutional capacity and fueled their nutrition activities globally. The grant funds supported a percentage of sustainability/transition planning, indirect costs and beneficiary-initiated audits all to help raise the profiles of CSAs vis-a-vis donors.

Another measure of sustainability is the extent to which grantees have contributed to being part of the national development structure addressing nutrition, including being part of national nutrition committees. CSAs contributions are now seen as an important part of the nutrition agenda, and they are therefore integrated in the long-term planning process. CSAs are thus able to influence decisions and continue to engage and contribute. This has been achieved in some countries, including Pakistan where the grantee was critical in formalising the MSP secretariat into a government led body. In Côte d'Ivoire, the CSA is now a statutory member of the National Council for Nutrition, Food and Early Childhood Development (CONNAPE) and of the coordination platform for health financing in Côte d'Ivoire, based in the Cabinet of the Prime Minister.

There has been extensive effort to contribute to budget analysis and to lobbying for increased resource allocation for nutrition with significant progress being made. This alignment works both ways. There is generally better understanding, ownership and alignment to support national SUN alliances with domestic funding and partnerships.

Grantees have engaged in fundraising through membership fees and external funding from donors and government. Raising funds from membership fees has been difficult due to low resource capacity of CSA members. Eight grant recipients were able to mobilise additional funding for their activities in 2020, demonstrating the role the Pooled Fund can provide in catalysing additional SUN Network contributions at country level. Specific examples of efforts towards national network sustainability are outlined below.



## Sustainability

### Côte d'Ivoire

Thanks in part to the CSA's advocacy, the African Development Bank is providing up to USD 9.3 million (CFAF 5 billion) in financial support to the Government of Côte d'Ivoire through the National Council for Nutrition, Food and Early Childhood Development for the promotion of exclusive breastfeeding in the 31 regions. The CSA benefited from USD 21,000 in financial support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, USD 5,000 in microfinance from the global SUN Movement, and more than EUR 30,000 from the European Union via the Inter-Professional Fund for Agricultural Research and Advice (FIRCA) to support the development of the cassava and vegetable Sectors in Côte d'Ivoire (PRO2M).



*Cote d'Ivoire MUAC Demonstration.  
© SUN*

### Liberia

With a 2020–2022 CSA Work Plan, a fundraising and sustainability strategy, and a donor database, the CSA of Liberia has regained its institutional capacity and is strongly positioned for the future. With the help of membership fees and partnerships with Save the Children and UN-REACH, the CSA is in a better position to continue its good work.



*Liberia Members of MSP Speaker of House Dr. Chamber. © SUN*

### Burkina Faso

The CSA continues to leverage multi-donor funds for its overarching “CAP” project (Changer-Agir-Progresser pour un Burkina Faso sans malnutrition). The Pooled Fund investment is complemented by USD 1.1 million from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and an additional USD 100,000 by Action Against Hunger. The CSA's good management and local prominence is growing. It was selected as the local implementing partner for a five-year project called “Right 2 Grow” in partnership with Save the Children, Action contre la Faim and the Center for Economic Governance and Accountability in Africa. Finally, the CSA's membership fees USD 93 annually (FCFA 50,000) continue to fund a portion of the CSA's daily operations.



*Burkina Faso Journalism Training.  
© SUN*

# Lessons learned

## THE MULTI-PARTNER TRUST FUND AND THE POOLED FUND IN RETROSPECT

Looking back at the success of the SUN Movement Pooled Fund, it is important to recognise that it was a project built upon the foundations set by its predecessor, the [Multi-Partner Trust Fund](#). The MPTF and the Pooled Fund were similar in many respects. Components of both grant mechanisms sought to mobilise civil society to support the SUN Movement and to improve knowledge sharing between national MSPs. However, there were three main differences: MPTF funds administration was different than that of the Pooled Fund; the funds primarily supported CSAs, and country level networks within the SUN Movement were still quite new. The Pooled Fund took a hybrid approach to funds administration, expanded support to CSAs and SUN Business Networks, and built upon the groundwork laid by the previous programme. Regardless of the similarities and differences, the SUN Pooled Fund built upon the foundations that countries established with the MPTF and expanded its support to reach new country priorities.

The administration for the MPTF and the SUN Pooled Fund varied but demonstrated some valuable lessons on country support. Firstly, the MPTF awarded grants to support civil society through UN organisations. Since the MPTF helped finance the establishment of CSAs, the Pooled Fund was able to identify those CSAs (or their fiscal agent) a few years later and provide grants directly to those nonprofit organizations. Secondly, the MPTF helped SUN Countries establish their CSAs over the course of approximately 24–36 months and with awards of between USD 250,000 to USD 400,000 each. In later Calls for Proposals, and with COVID-19 amendments, the Pooled Fund prolonged the grant implementation period to 18–24 months, learning a lesson that future grant-making should be designed with at least 24 months of implementation. Thirdly, at this intermediary stage, the Pooled Fund beneficiaries have shown a better rate of absorption for similar awards over similar implementation periods than the MPTF. This may be attributed to the direct instalments of fund tranches from UNOPS to beneficiaries, improved capacity of the CSAs over time, integrated M&E support, or due to the fact that CSAs were no longer a nascent concept to government stakeholders in most Pooled Fund beneficiary countries. Fourth, certain beneficiaries of the Pooled Fund lamented the slow disbursement of funds, which

is similar to the claim made in the MPTF. However, the turnaround times and reporting requirements in the Pooled Fund appear to be lower than those described in the MPTF Evaluation Annexe. Very few Pooled Fund grant recipients experienced delayed start dates or long turnaround times for grant amendments, contrary to those referenced in the MPTF. Contracting directly with CSAs with a dedicated grant administration team directly contributed to improved processing speeds.

Grant awards varied between the MFTP and the Pooled Fund, however, each with their specific benefits. The MPTF issued funds via in-country UN agencies, which worked with nonprofit implementing partners to animate civil society to scale up nutrition. In contrast, the Pooled Fund granted directly to the CSOs, as well as to UN agencies and government entities. The major takeaway from both experiences is that it is best to adopt a flexible approach that fits a country's needs. The Pooled Fund reached a wider scope of SUN Countries than the MPTF under its civil society window. Due to the fragility of certain country contexts, however, it is necessary to grant to a member of the SUN Movement who can provide the local technical assistance that CSOs need in a challenging environment. A UN/INGO agency can be more resilient to volatile environments and can impart greater technical capacity on local partners. Considering that the CSN Secretariat did not have the capacity to conduct on-the-ground capacity assessments in SUN Countries with new CSAs, granting a UN/INGO partner could be the most viable option for occasional high-risk contexts in the future. Overall, the process of granting to non-profit organisations has been direct, efficient and institutionally supportive of the alliances that were established in the MPTF.

Countries have been able to grow and expand their networks and local nutrition actions under the SUN Pooled Fund. Thanks to the MPTF, SUN Countries organised nutrition nonprofits and INGOs around nutrition or connected existing national nutrition coalitions to the SUN Movement. Alliances who participated in the MPTF realised a closer relationship with their governments, organised their work primarily around breastfeeding and IYCF practices, and built their capacity for national level advocacy. Nevertheless, sustainability would continue to be a concern. The MPTF stated that CSAs would “need to continue to access at least 45% of their total funding needs over the next five years from donors at the global level for both start-up and running costs” ([MPTF Final Report](#), page 2). The Pooled Fund was able to step in and continue CSA efforts as a last resort source of funds. The Pooled Fund revitalised some alliances that had slowed due to lack of funding and supported others to mature their memberships and activities on more sensitive topics such as nutrition expenditure tracking and other “watchdog” activities. In addition, the MPTF predicted that funding would be needed to “catalyse SUN Business Networks” ([MPTF Final Report](#), page 2). Thanks to its generous donors, the Pooled Fund was able to support new and developing national

SBNs in 15 countries. The role of the SBNs in diversifying funding for nutrition and strengthening SME capabilities will be paramount for achieving the direction of the SUN Movement in its next phase.

In conclusion, the MPTF supported the initial and organised approach to forming national SUN Networks in phase 1 of the SUN Movement. The Pooled Fund built upon what the MPTF initiated with CSAs and expanded support to SBN and MSP pilot projects globally. Both projects had the SUN Movement's strategic goals of their respective phases in mind. They were country-led projects, albeit with different administrative approaches. It remains important to learn from both approaches and to recognise and document what countries have taught the SUN Movement over the years. This process will enable the SUN Movement to design a form of support that is both accessible and catalytic for nutrition worldwide.

## THE POOLED FUND IN RETROSPECT

Based on the Pooled Fund's implementation process in 2020, the Pooled Fund team identified the following key opportunities, challenges and lessons:

- 1. Increase grant duration to 24 months in standard cases and 36 months in FCAS cases and ensure grantees work with in-country international partners like CSAs, SBNs and/or UN entities.** It is possible to achieve a lasting impact through short-term catalytic projects. However, with certain realities on the ground – such as shifting political priorities, changes in capacities, disasters, conflict, inadequate funding, disease outbreaks, and cultural and behavioural practices – there have been numerous requests for extensions and adjustments of grants. Long implementation periods would allow time for intermediary project results to become visible, and allow time for beneficiaries to test and replicate innovative approaches. A longer implementation period would also help the grant recipients risk mitigation and recovery surrounding political calendars, such as election cycles. Beneficiaries in fragile and high-risk states (FCAS) recommended a minimum of three years to establish durable relationships.
- 2. Continue improving knowledge management between countries and networks at the global and country level, for coordinated technical assistance and grant support.** Countries stay connected to the SUN Movement through a variety of individual SUN network strategies and mapping exercises, Joint Annual Assessments, Country Action Plans, etc. Therefore, they need to feel that their budget and financing data, their current and historical technical assistance, and their grant proposals are being considered in a collective, integrated

manner. It is a tall order to amass and organise such an amount of information, but it is necessary to make effective grant decisions that complement other internal or external technical assistance. When countries speak to the Pooled Fund team or other SUN Movement stakeholders, they often speak with the assumption that their data is known equally by all parties. While 100% knowledge integration will be unattainable, it should continue to be the ideal. The challenge of data silos was tackled head-on in the SUN 3.0 Strategy, and the Pooled Fund looks forward to integrating grant data directly to CSN, SBN and SMS knowledge management platforms.

**3. Support medium to long term organisational capacity-building for better coordination, improve the due-diligence process, and/or expand the variety of eligible entity types.**

The aim of the SUN Movement is to create an enabling environment for a country-led, locally-sustained nutrition leadership. For CSAs, that leadership is generally embodied in the chairing organisation. This often resulted in Pooled Fund grants going to national NGOs that had weaker institutional capacity than their INGO counterparts. The Pooled Fund has subsequently had to assume extra risk and exert extra oversight to ensure the financial compliance of these beneficiaries. Grant-making should continue to be considered a capacity-building mechanism with a ratio of risk acceptance to opportunity. As such, support should be made available to support the institutional capacity of national chairing organisations CSAs to enhance their ability to deliver on results. This support could include technical assistance, grant-making, or additional global network involvement. Finally, future grant-making could imply expanding eligibility to UN entities, simultaneously contracting TA providers, and/or conducting a market assessment of medium/low-risk national NGOs that can effectively take on grant responsibilities.

**4. Maintain flexibility in projects while staying focused on key objectives.**

With the pandemic's restrictions on movement and the subsequently limited access to resources, including communication, countries needed to devise new advocacy methods and alternative/innovative ways to realise their project outputs. Decisions on resource allocation needed to be made quickly through collaboration and in-depth knowledge of the country's context and the ability of the beneficiary to demonstrate the significance of their proposed (revised) activities. Looking ahead, the future Pooled Fund should factor in a contingency for contract extensions, as it did here, and clearly delineate the scope of those changes. Thanks to this flexibility, the beneficiaries prolonged their projects, demonstrated some innovative ways to support the MSP's response to the pandemic and deepened their media partnerships. As a result, countries far exceeded their original targets for outreach and behaviour change campaigns.

**5. Invest in national SUN Business Networks for a successful, sustainable Multi-sectoral Platform.** Whether it is through the Pooled Fund or through other means, nutrition actions go further when there is an active private sector network involved. The COVID-19 pandemic has created an environment for businesses to collaborate more effectively with civil society, government recovery programmes and new markets.

**6. Youth engagement in nutrition.** Youth leaders are future change agents in nutrition, and they have demonstrated an important place in the SUN Movement. Specifically in the Pooled Fund projects, young people are the end beneficiaries of the project activities, or act as leaders in political campaigns, or form a part of the CSA's or SBN's local outreach activities. The lesson learned from the Pooled Fund experience is to issue separate, small grants to country networks to support youth activities and include young people.<sup>3</sup> As a separate small grant, reporting on activities could include pitch competitions, local projects, internships, training and/or formal advocacy would be easier to extract.

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<sup>3</sup> According to UNOPS, a “small grant” refers to any grant award that is valued at USD 50,000 or less.

# Envisioning a new Pooled Fund

Over the course of 2020, the SUN Movement has undertaken a major refresh of its strategy to set the course for the third phase of its operations and delivery for the years 2021–2025. Key findings of the [2018 Midterm Review](#) and the [Strategic Review](#) of the SUN Movement indicated the need for the Movement to be more country-led, country-driven and action-oriented. In the next phase, the Movement must be rooted in country structures, supported by a global system that is equally country-focused and supporting countries to finance national nutrition priorities. The Pooled Fund, too, could play a role in realising this vision.

Over the course of 2020, the Pooled Fund team has contributed to the SUN Movement’s visioning process by sharing its data, results, recommendations and vision. The team produces its [Evidence Package](#) and [Impact Statement](#) as condensed illustrations of the Pooled Funds achievements. Simultaneously, the Pooled Fund team, the CSN and the SBN hosted a webinar on the SUN Pooled Fund successes and lessons-learned in a [knowledge management session](#) for donors and partners. These three products touch upon the Pooled Fund’s potential in SUN 3.0.

In January 2021, the Lead Group shared the final [SUN 3.0 Strategy](#) and endorsed the existence and importance of a Pooled Fund to “catalyse progress” in Phase 3 of the SUN Movement<sup>4</sup> (SUN 3.0 Strategy, page 29). Afterwards, in the Pooled Fund’s first Consultative Group [meeting](#) of 2021, members decided that the Pooled Fund should continue to support the Visioning process of future grant-making via the SUN 3.0 Executive Committee’s Operationalisation Group and gave the “green light” to outline a more concrete grant design.

In April and May 2021, the SUN Movement Secretariat and SUN Networks participated in a visioning exercise to explore the possibilities of a future Pooled Fund. SUN 3.0 prioritises country leadership and focuses on supporting systemic change at the country level – a refreshed Pooled Fund would do the same.

Wherever the Pooled Fund will be placed in SUN 3.0, it is important to recognise that it is joint collaboration and implementation between all of the Movement’s members that will improve nutrition at the country level and elevate the importance of nutrition globally. The Pooled Fund could play an important, catalytic, innovative and last resort role to make SUN 3.0 come through.

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4 Under Strategic Objective No. 3, the Pooled Fund is referenced as a last resort funding mechanism to support in-country partners where no other funding or technical assistance is available (SUN Strategy 3.0, page 20).

# Annexes

ANNEXE 1: 2020 BUDGET & EXPENDITURES

ANNEXE 2: CSA GLOBAL RESULTS FRAMEWORK

ANNEXE 3: SBN GLOBAL RESULTS FRAMEWORK

ANNEXE 4: LESSONS & RECOMMENDATIONS





# 10

Scaling Up  
Nutrition



**UNOPS**