

Action brief

Cascade training strengthens coordination of Nepal multisectoral nutrition plan

Country: Nepal

Date: October 2022

Themes: Coordination of action through improved functional capacities

Sub-themes: Strengthening skills of key actors (communication, negotiation, leadership, planning, coordination)



Overview



Political will and commitment drive nutrition agendas, but nutrition capabilities and understanding of cross-sector work are essential for implementation.



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Objectives of the action brief

The objective of this brief is to provide an example of a government-led cascade training approach to strengthen the skills of multi-stakeholder nutrition plan (MSNP) implementers and improve multisector, multi-stakeholder coordination.



Period covered

The period covered is from 2013–2015.



What action was taken?

Nepal was an “early adopter” SUN Country with the political will and commitment to improve nutrition. The prevalence of stunting fell from 57 per cent in 2001 to 36 per cent in 2016. Adopted by the Government of Nepal in 2012, the MSNP defined roles and responsibilities for the management, coordination and implementation of activities supporting national nutrition goals. A key strategy applied by the MSNP was cascade training.

The cascade training model, a “trickle down” mechanism of delivering training from trainers at the central level to trainees at the local level through several layers, was used by the Government of Nepal for in-service training. The aim of the training was to increase knowledge and awareness among civil servants and service providers at national and subnational levels, including at the community level. The training also focused on a multisector, multi-stakeholder approach to tackling malnutrition, focusing on linkages across sectors and the delivery of nutrition services and messages.

Key processes involved:

- Cascade training, starting with experts training a cadre of “master trainers” who would serve as trainers of trainers at various levels of government, were conducted in pilot MSNP districts. This included the training of a group of

national-level master trainers by experts in the capital city; these trainers would then train civil servants at the district level, and training would proceed to village and community levels.

- Using adult learning principles, the training focused on building skills rather than transferring knowledge.
- Harmonized communication materials and tools from across various sectors – health; agriculture; education; social protection; and water, sanitation and hygiene – were developed and used.
- Bringing civil servants, service providers and extension workers together from the onset of the training helped improve awareness and knowledge about the linkages between nutrition and the various sectors, clarify roles and responsibilities expected from each sector, and outline coordinated strategies between and among sectors at the various levels.

Cascade training was identified as a good practice in Nepal given the focus on linking vertical collaboration across the wider system (from the national to the local level) and horizontal collaboration across various sectors and stakeholders at the same level. The approach to cascade training helped institute the multi-stakeholder, multisector ways of working envisaged in the MSNP.





What would the country do differently?

The challenges of conducting multi-stakeholder, multisector training at scale are many: commitment and buy-in required from stakeholders at the various levels of government, financial and human resources, navigating through linguistic and entrenched gender

and sociocultural norms, coordinating across sectors and partners, and many others. The challenges associated with this multisector work on nutrition – joint advocacy, monitoring and evaluation, linking services – were also noteworthy.



Adaptation and applicability

- Even the best-designed policies do not implement themselves. The capabilities of those implementing the identified activities and the support structure provided to them determine the outcomes of the policies.
- Trainings that aim to improve knowledge and awareness on nutrition problems and solutions are critical to the nutrition landscape. Similarly, human, technical and financial resources need to address nutrition challenges effectively. Enhancing collaboration and coordination across sectors to achieve nutrition goals and incentivizing field-level workers and partners in other sectors have contributed greatly to the success of the MSNP.



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Next steps

Cascade trainings were conducted with government and non-government officials across sectors. Refresher training should be provided, factoring in the lessons learned. Dialogue with government stakeholders and the SUN Movement would help package the findings in formats that would serve other countries best.

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