

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Founded in 2017, the SUN Movement Pooled Fund has been established as a last resort, catalytic and innovative funding mechanism, providing support to SUN countries and their efforts in scaling up nutrition. Grant-making was identified as the most ideal format to support national non-state actors to pool technical capacity, provide oversight and guide results towards the SUN Movement's Theory of Change. The Pooled Fund supports 85 grant projects across 45 SUN countries. Its objectives are to: 1) build or strengthen the participation of non-state actors in Multi-stakeholder Platforms (MSP); and 2) accelerate the coordinated delivery of high-impact nutrition activities by members of MSPs. The Pooled Fund's focus is on supporting grantees to strengthen their governance and capacity functions to be able to meet in-country donor and government requirements. The strengthened governance and capacity allow grantees to be considered as partners in key decision-making and implementation processes in national development planning and budgeting.

The Evidence Package is a summation of the intermediary results and initial impact of the Pooled Fund since its launch in 2018. This succinct evaluation differs from the traditional annual report, focusing less on the process and instead highlighting the tangible results of those designs. The Pooled Fund Team has begun a critical reflection of its mandate, achievements, and challenges as the Movement transitions from Phase Two to Phase Three of operations. This critical reflection will also take into account the current designs of the Pooled Fund, the needs and expectations of grant beneficiaries and any discrepancies that may have arisen between the two.

This report demonstrates how the Pooled Fund has contributed to country progress along the SUN Movement Theory of Change. It also details examples of progress on several topics of importance to the Pooled Fund ranging from: Capacity Building across CSAs and SBNs; Influencing Nutrition Actors; Implementation at the Sub-national and community levels; Resource Mobilisation; Policy Support; Gender Focus; Nutrition Advocacy; Sustainability; and the Response to COVID-19. Finally, it highlights the challenges the Pooled Fund has faced in Phase 2 and offers basic recommendations which will guide discussions for the visioning of Pooled Fund activity in Phase 3. The Evidence Package is built on the wealth of data we have at hand. It aims to showcase the Pooled Fund's substantial progress to date and potential in the next phase of the SUN Movement. The Pooled Fund Team looks forward to supporting discussions on future action every step of the way.

ABOUT

Founded in 2017, the SUN Movement Pooled Fund was established as a last resort, catalytic and innovative funding mechanism providing support to SUN countries and their efforts in scaling up nutrition. Agility and flexibility are key characteristics of the Pooled Fund, which have ensured efficacious planning and positioning of projects to strategic national nutrition development partners. Grant-making was identified as the most ideal format to support national non-state actors to pool technical capacity, provide oversight and guide results towards the SUN Movement's Theory of Change. Through this process, the Pooled Fund Team has also been able to provide strategic feedback to the SUN Movement on evolving country-level needs.

Striving to reach the strategic objectives of the SUN Movement Strategy and Roadmap (2016-2020), the Pooled Fund is hosted by UNOPS, and managed by a seven-member team with oversight from the SUN Movement Secretariat. The Pooled Fund has grown from an initial USD 3 million investment to a multi-phased budget of USD 18.5 million in just three years. The Fund now supports 85 grant projects across 45 SUN countries. In collaboration with SUN Network secretariats, the contracts are allocated to select SUN country projects according to specific eligibility criteria and through transparent and competitive calls within two funding windows. The Pooled Fund's broad objectives are specified under two funding Windows as follows:

- **Window One Objective:** aims to build, or strengthen, the participation of non-state actors in Multi-stakeholder Platforms (MSPs). Its beneficiaries are national Civil Society Alliances (CSAs) and national SUN Business Networks (SBNs).
- **Window Two Objective:** aims to accelerate the coordinated delivery of high-impact nutrition activities by members of MSPs, encouraging cooperation across core areas, through sharing and learning, to increase impact.

The Pooled Fund's country-led and locally-determined approach enabled grantees to set the foundation for well-governed, organised, and technically-competent nutrition alliance Civil Society Alliances (CSAs) and SUN Business Alliances (SBNs) that can effectively contribute to national Multi-stakeholder Platforms (MSP). supporting grantees to strengthen their governance and capacity functions to be able to meet in-country donor and government requirements, and to be considered as vital partners in national development planning budgeting processes. The foundation is set through institutional capacity-building in new alliances and through improvements in more advanced ones. The Pooled Fund grants thus played a catalytic role by preparing grantees to later qualify for funding from more traditional sources, such as UN and Donors. It has helped grantees establish enabling environments that have a strong network of partners and allow for closer collaboration with government and key national and sub-national level stakeholders. It has also focused on supporting the furthest left behind, through its support of fragile states and/or high-risk recipients.

SUPPORT FOR CAPACITY BUILDING

The technical capacity-building offered through the Pooled Fund Team, the SUN Civil Society Network (CSN), SUN Business Networks (SBNs), and MQSUN were very important in enabling grantees to support technical roles such as budget analysis and policy development. Strong governance structures and technical capacity at the national and sub-national level allow SUN Movement countries to move towards the implementation of national nutrition plans. It is these very institutions and networks that will contribute to fast-track country-owned and country-led nutrition results in Phase three.

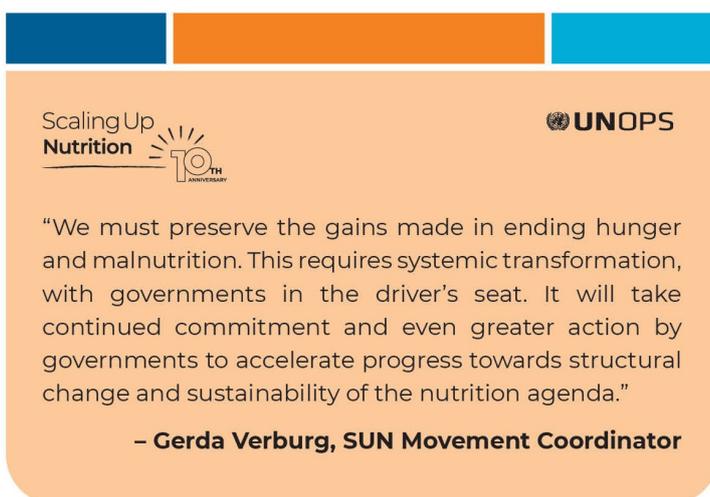
Grantees have benefitted from capacity-building, due diligence and quality assurance activities. These efforts have strengthened their governance, institutional framework, and regulatory compliance. Capacity-building sessions have covered topics such as financial reporting and internal controls, results-based reporting, peer support, and cross-learning opportunities with similar projects in other SUN countries. The Pooled Fund Team has hosted one virtual country exchange and two virtual lesson-learning sessions in French and English. It has plans to continue with the series in 2021 as part of Phase 3 of the SUN Movement.

Knowledge-sharing has been a key activity for Pooled Fund beneficiaries.

Many grantees underwent mapping exercises, uncovering a network of community organisations in understudied regions of their countries and providing valuable insight into the services and health networks in rural areas. Others, like the CSA in Myanmar, teamed up with Yale University to publish their “Becoming Breastfeeding Friendly” manuscript in the *Nutrition Journal of the American Society for Nutrition*.

The CSA of Niger is no stranger to nutrition policymaking. Their local expertise has inspired several learning exchanges with Burkina Faso, Senegal, and Ghana, which proved helpful in the Civil Society Network’s regional conference in Abidjan in February 2020. In summary, the Pooled Fund has given in-country networks a voice to address critical nutrition issues and support to create nutrition impact.

Institutional capacity was strengthened through the transfer of CSA leadership from international NGOs to national NGOs. For example, the Pooled Fund supported Cote d'Ivoire and Namibia CSAs, and they are now at a level where Action Against Hunger and Synergos are transferring the leadership to local organisations. In each case, their project incorporated political advocacy training, budget analysis training, and public governance training. This type of initiative is what will contribute to systemic change in terms of the institutionalized capacity of local NGOs to convene and coordinate the nutrition agenda at national and sub-national levels.



Scaling Up Nutrition  

“We must preserve the gains made in ending hunger and malnutrition. This requires systemic transformation, with governments in the driver’s seat. It will take continued commitment and even greater action by governments to accelerate progress towards structural change and sustainability of the nutrition agenda.”

– Gerda Verburg, SUN Movement Coordinator

The increased capacity has enabled some beneficiaries, such as those in the Philippines and El Salvador, to provide technical assistance to their public partners in drafting nationwide nutrition-sensitive programs for the government, and by training local school districts, households, and farmers on nutritious community food production. Working at sub-national levels has increased community ownership - a crucial component for structural change.

SUPPORTING SUN MOVEMENT THEORY OF CHANGE

The SUN Movement Theory of Change (ToC) (2016-2020) aims to create a transformational pathway for nutritional change through the following steps:

1. Stakeholders to come together to tackle malnutrition and build an enabling environment for improving nutrition with equity
2. Behavioural change and commitment to achieving common nutrition results
3. Mobilisation of resources for nutrition-sensitive and specific interventions
4. Alignment of implementation efforts to achieve greater results together
5. Collective end to malnutrition amongst women, children, adolescents and families
6. The achievement of all the SDGs

The Pool Fund focused on bolstering steps 1 - 4 as follows:

The Pooled Fund underpinned Step 1 of the ToC through a focus on strengthening the individual and collective voice of CSAs towards influencing nutrition actions. Strengthened CSAs helped develop 145 key nutrition documents at the sub-national level for government approval. Pooled Fund grantees also identified 448 Nutrition Champions committed to nutrition advocacy at the political, academic, and technical levels, thus contributing to elevated national nutrition objectives.

Relationships are critical in maintaining political engagement across appointments, election cycles, and national emergencies. CSAs were able to maintain and increase the pressure for national and sub-national nutrition policy and public dialogue. With Pooled Fund support, SUN CSAs organised a total of 191 roundtable meetings at both national and sub-national levels by December 2019 for 3,096 stakeholders, 44 percent of whom were women. The roundtables often included participants from the government and were able to solidify commitments or develop joint strategic actions to collectively advance the nutrition agenda.

Additionally, the SBN and the CSA conducted joint advocacy and capability-building initiatives for non-profit and for-profit members alike. The SBN also promoted cross-network collaboration amongst its members leading to sustainable linkages between smallholder farmers and buyers with national SUN Business Networks. In sum, Pooled Fund beneficiaries strengthened their network capacities, local nutrition impact and ownership, and the promotion of inclusivity across multiple, hard-to-reach levels.

Scaling Up Nutrition 10th Anniversary
UNOPS

Perspective from Mali, Centre Sahélien de Prestation, d'Etudes, d'Ecodéveloppement et de Démocratie Appliquée (CSPEEDA) and the Malian Civil Society Alliance

"The project has enabled greater trust between the government and civil society. Civil society is now far more involved and invited to take part as a full player in evaluations and assessments, and other joint projects."

CSN/SBN Grantee	Implementation Action in Communities	Outcome in Policies
Malawi	Collective policy action	At the national level, the CSA partnered with Save the Children and Civil Society Agriculture Network (CISANET) and 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, and Communication Strategy. Their efforts were successful: the strategies were reviewed and finalised in February 2020. Through this project, adolescent nutrition will be incorporated as a baseline for all future nutrition programmes to be implemented in the district.
Indonesia	Collective policy action	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 active collaboration and implementation aligned with other stakeholders, the CSA provided technical contributions to the development of RAN-PG's guidelines for provincial level nutrition action plans (RAD-PG).
Niger	Collective policy action	Niger's 2019 SUN Movement Joint Annual Assessment (JAA) highlighted the lack of network dynamism as a limiting factor in scaling up nutrition. Thanks to the Pooled Fund, the Civil Society Alliance (CSA) 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	Collective policy action	The CSA is a major player in nutrition efforts, alongside government and other stakeholders, in the formulation of the Pakistani 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 stakeholders nationwide to review the implementation status of nutrition programmes and resulted in Pakistan's top scientific health journal dedicating an entire edition on nutrition. The CSA has boldly lobbied for Food and Nutrition Security to be embedded within the Pakistan constitution as a fundamental right.

The Pooled Fund reinforced Step 2 of the ToC through its support of behavioural-change efforts at the community level. The expansion of SUN CSA networks allowed for an increase in implementation efforts in communities. This subsequently led to enhanced capacity and increased knowledge on nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive initiatives. So far, their collective efforts reached over 400,000 women, men, and children. Community-level actions were important in influencing attitudes and practices that have had long term impacts on nutrition, such as breastfeeding. There was a specific focus on adapting to evolving needs at the community level and supporting innovations while reaching vulnerable community members with high impact solutions.

Actions were effectively delivered by local CSA members in local contexts/languages, with a strong gender equality component that ensured the participation of both men and women. This was in recognition of the need to engage both men and women in co-creating nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive solutions for communities. Local champions, including religious leaders and celebrities, have been very committed and active to engage communities and communicate with specific target groups such as youth.

Pooled Fund Grantee	Implementation Action in Communities	Outcome in 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.
South Sudan	MUAC Training; Innovative advocacy	The CSA worked with mothers' groups by teaching the mid-upper-arm circumference (MUAC) methodology for detecting malnutrition. A local celebrity also produced a song in a local language that championed child nutrition and made the subject fun for all involved.
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 2019 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 (LGU) included the community crop museum (food garden) and nutrition education in its action plan. The unit budgeted a total of 740,540 Php (approximately 14,595.11 USD) for nutrition projects and activities within 2019-2020.

The Pooled Fund upheld Step 3 of the ToC by mobilising resources to fund nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive actions. An important intermediary result has been successful advocacy by CSAs, securing national and sub-national resource allocation for nutrition. The completion of 19 budget analyses demonstrates strong CSA engagement at national or regional levels. The role of the CSAs varied from advocacy for dedicated nutrition lines, follow up on commitments made on nutrition funding and detailed budget analysis in collaboration with other nutrition stakeholders.

The results from the budget analyses were used to inform effective advocacy. For example, Cameroon successfully lobbied for national and sub-national domestic budgets to feature a line item specifically for nutrition. Other grantees were successful in increasing domestic allocation for nutrition, even against difficult political backdrops (e.g. South Sudan, Malawi). This would not have been possible without funding for MSPs and their networks to map local nutrition stakeholders and vulnerable groups and translate their voices into hard, financial commitments. What is less visible, but nonetheless tangible, is the role that the Pooled Fund has played in getting CSAs involved in innovative financing mechanisms like the [Global Financing Facility](#) (GFF). In Mali and Zambia, grant beneficiaries served as the co-chairs to the financial planning committee. In others, the CSA acted as a conduit between the non-governmental sector's perspective on nutrition gaps and the government-led investment case (e.g. Senegal, Cambodia). Both Mali and Mozambique are looking towards non-traditional sources of funding, such as earmarking taxes on the extractive industry, while Zimbabwe is applying public pressure on the national government to make SMART-er commitments at the [Nutrition for Growth](#) (N4G) Summit in 2021. The Pooled Fund support has provided aligned and harmonised resources while promoting mutual accountability between government and network representatives to create a public demand for nutrition.

Country	Instances of project alignment	Achievements in budget alignment and resource mobilisation
South Sudan	Resource mobilisation & budget alignment - national level	In less than two years, the newly-formed CSA mobilised parliamentarians to successfully create a budget line for national nutrition. This achievement is, in part, credited to the 33 parliamentarians from the health and agriculture & food security committees who underwent the CSA's nutrition advocacy training.
Senegal	Resource mobilisation & budget alignment - national level	The CSA supported nutritional 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 advocacy at the national and community level to improve the nutritional profile of Senegal.
Madagascar	Resource mobilisation & budget alignment - national level	The CSA contributed to budget workshops for three national programmes to ensure that those programmes' financial decisions were fit for household nutrition. Thanks to their involvement, CSA members are now a part of 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.
Burundi	Resource mobilisation & budget alignment - national level	Using the SUN Movement Pooled Fund as a catalytic role player, the grantee worked closely with the government and UNICEF on the recruitment of an international consultant for the costing of the multi-sectoral plan. As a result, the costing exercise of the five-year plan was completed, highlighting financing gaps. The CSA ensured that the contributions of the Civil Society Organization (CSOs) were included in the review process.

The Pooled Fund supported Step 4 of the ToC by aligning nutrition efforts at the national and subnational level for greater impact. Cumulatively, over 242 new organizations have joined their national CSAs (77% of those organisations were local non-profits) and 127 new businesses have joined SBN. This network growth significantly increased the private sector and the non-profit sector's participation in national nutrition policy making. The Pooled Fund has supported CSAs collective and joint contributions to 187 public nutrition plans at the national (42) and sub-national (145) level through partnership, advocacy, and/or lobbying. This alignment works both ways. Thanks to grant support, there are now at least 189 CSA action plans, grassroots strategies, sustainability plans, etc., that clearly show alignment and collective CSA support to National Nutrition Plans. Finally, MSPs demonstrated that they are more active when a CSA is engaging with them. In just 1.5 years, the number of national MSP meetings in beneficiary countries increased from 26 (baseline) to 124 - in cases such as Pakistan, the beneficiary was critical in formalising the MSP secretariat into a government-led body. In conclusion, the Pooled Fund has supported CSAs and SBNs in aligning with national nutrition priorities while increasing national coordination by MSPs in a participatory manner.

Country	Instances/Project of alignment	Outcome of the Activity
Kyrgyzstan	Policy alignment - National	As part of the MSP's decentralisation efforts, the CSA developed a joint action plan on Food Security and Nutrition that aligns local and national objectives. The government accepted 11 out of 14 proposals from members of the CSA to include in the plan.
Cambodia	Policy alignment - National	The CSA supported the Council for Agriculture and Rural Development (CARD) – the government coordination body for multi-sectoral nutrition platform – to finalise Cambodia's National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition (NSFSN) 2019-2023 by submitting eight case studies to CARD focused on key evidence, lessons learned and best practices from civil society members to influence decision making. The strategy is now more inclusively aligned with local needs.
Cameroon	Policy alignment - Sub-national	Cameroon's 2017-2030 National Nutrition Policy proposes a multisectoral and multilevel approach. The CSA focused on alignment at the sub-national levels. As a result, 27 Local Councils signed letters of engagement committing at least 1% of Local Council budgets to actions aimed at fighting malnutrition in their respective constituencies.
Mali	Policy alignment - National	The CSA supported the organisation of vital nutrition events at the national level, such as the Second National Forum on Nutrition and nutrition-implicated ministries to discuss the development of the 2020-2024 Multi-sectoral Nutrition Action Plan on Nutrition (PAMN). As a result of the CSA's hosting and advocacy, the Prime Minister made a financial commitment during the Second National Forum on Nutrition of 2019 to double the national budgets allocated to nutrition and to finance the purchase of nutritional inputs worth CFAF 600 million in 2020, and CFAF 1.2 billion in 2021. So far, the Government of Mali has financed the purchase of nutritional inputs registered on the list of essential drugs worth CFAF 600 million as planned.

SUPPORT FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability considerations have been integrated from the proposal stage onwards. Projects were screened to determine if deliverables were country-driven, or in-line with national objectives and the SUN Movement. This alignment implies that project activities would receive the buy-in required to safeguard their sustainability.

Thus far, Civil Society Alliances formalised external partnerships to promote nutrition issues in 10 SUN countries. These partnerships focused on building legitimacy at the national level, strengthening resource mobilisation, and forming donor relationships.



For the SUN Movement, sustainability is defined in two different but interrelated ways:

- » Sustainability is defined as the durability beyond the project's duration of initial activities, such as nutrition budget tracking, advocacy for nutrition-related issues during election cycles, public awareness campaigns and various activities that deliver on goals outlined in national multi-sectoral nutrition plans.
- » Sustainability in the Pooled Fund grants project is also defined as the durability of SUN Civil Society Alliances and, in the context of other Calls for Proposals, multi-stakeholder platforms and SUN Business Networks, exemplified by their continued financial capacity, stable membership, regular meetings with partners and their own staff, and expansion of grassroots networks.

Country	Instances/Project of alignment	Project Deliverables
Côte d'Ivoire	Sustainability - Institutions	Thanks in part to the CSA's advocacy, the African Development Bank is providing up to CFAF 5 billion in financial support to the government through the National Council for Nutrition, Food and Early Childhood Development for the promotion of exclusive breastfeeding in the 31 regions. The Alliance also benefited from USD 21,000 in financial support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to organize several activities including the National Breastfeeding Day and to distribute hygiene kits to mothers of children aged 0-6 months. Besides, two other funding sources were successfully mobilised by the CSA, including USD 5,000 in microfinance from the global SUN Movement and funding of more than EUR 30,000 from the EU, 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).
Ghana	Sustainability - Institutions	The CSA improved its institutional capacity with an advocacy and communications strategy, conflict of interest guidelines, resource mobilisation/fundraising strategy, and an action plan. The CSA undertook an analysis of the 2018-2019 Ghanaian national budget and used those findings to advocate for an upward adjustment in the 2020 budget provisions and allocations. The CSA is now well-positioned, both in capacity and reputation, to be a key stakeholder in national and sub-national dialogue.

Liberia	Sustainability - Institutions	With a 2020-2022 CSA Work Plan, a fundraising and sustainability strategy, and a donor database the CSA of Liberia has regained its strength and is now in a stronger position for the future. With the help of membership fees and partnerships with Save the Children and UN-REACH, the CSA has the means to continue its good work.
Namibia	Sustainability - Institutions	With the Pooled Fund grant, the CSA started from scratch (recruiting membership, mapping thematic areas) and within 18 months, was able to establish the CSA as a well-coordinated institution, with a clear mandate and work plan. This, in turn, has contributed to the legitimacy of the CSA as a newly-formulated national nonprofit and garnered other sources of institutional funding. The CSA secured EUR 80.000 from GIZ (German Corporation for International Cooperation) for one year, designed as organisational development support and to advance work on NAFSAN's sustainability strategy.

GENDER FOCUS

As an important component of the SUN Movement's Strategy and Roadmap 2016–2020, grantees have championed gender equality and diversity. These values have been factored into both the Pooled Fund programme management and project activities.

Beneficiaries strived to mainstream gender and inclusion issues into the design, implementation, monitoring, and reporting of projects. During the design of the project, applicants were asked to prioritise project activities that would benefit women, children and vulnerable groups while ensuring adequate engagement by boys and men. Civil society's role in elevating the voices of women in national plans cannot be understated. The grantees specifically advocated for a gender-sensitive lens in public policies, strategies and action plans at the national and sub-national level. For example, beneficiaries in Myanmar, Mali, Papua New Guinea, and Somalia brought gender considerations to the forefront during the development/renewal of their national nutrition plans. In Sri Lanka, for example, the grantees implemented a school-level nutrition programme with boys and girls to make them nutrition-aware and to promote a mutual understanding of their equal rights to nutrition.

The Pooled Fund beneficiaries have prioritised women's participation in key decision-making processes related to legislation, policymaking, planning and budgeting. Most notable were their efforts to recruit and diversify Nutrition Champions, thereby mainstreaming gender in both the method and in the nutrition advocacy strategy. By the end of 2019, 109 (35%) of the 312 champions and key influencers were women. This demonstrates a noteworthy acceleration from 2018, where only 19 champions and key influencers had been mobilized.

Country	Instances/Project of alignment	Project Deliverables
Mozambique	Gender-mainstreaming	During the setup of the CSA's provincial platforms in Mozambique, and in subsequent needs assessment and planning, all stakeholders demonstrated a commitment to mainstreaming gender into multi-sectoral nutrition activities. The provincial plans' outputs and outcomes were designed in a gender-sensitive manner, ensuring inclusivity of all. Women represented 34% of Helen Keller International's Mozambique office, with majorities of women in senior roles.
Nepal	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 50:50 male to female ratio.
Zambia	Gender-mainstreaming	Recognising that there will be no sustainable improvements in nutrition unless women and girls are empowered as agents of change, the CSA emphasised gender mainstreaming in media and advocacy. The CSA created four women's groups in Lukulu by targeting women caregivers of malnourished children and expanding the village chicken programme to that area.
Guinea (Republic of)	Gender-mainstreaming	The CSA recognised that community nutrition is mainly driven by women's groups, so they elevated awareness of nutrition within these groups. Activities included nutrition education and social mobilisation for behavioural changes. Over 80 women groups were supported by the CSA, and behavioural changes were already noticeable in breastfeeding and personal hygiene habits.

ADVOCATING FOR NUTRITION & AWARENESS

One of the focus areas for grant recipients has been advocacy for long-term systemic change in attitudes and commitments towards nutrition - particularly the demand for better nutrition coming from communities themselves. Examples of advocacy are in Afghanistan, Zambia, and Cambodia where Nutrition Champions played a vital role. In Afghanistan, strong advocacy messages were shared through a press release in local language by the Director of Public Nutrition Department of Public Health, a former member of the Kabul provincial council, and a television journalist.

A Call for Action tagged [#NutritionCan'tWait](#) and was released on World Food Day by the CSA to public stakeholders, while a press release and video clips from Nutrition Champions discussed anaemia and stunting. In Zambia, the CSA engaged in [high-level advocacy](#) with the political and technical arms of government. They also [composed a song on nutrition](#) and by working with local artists, that has been effective in reaching the youth and children in particular. Finally, the CSA in Cambodia worked in close collaboration with the government and UN partners to [raise awareness on local violators](#) of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes. Grantees through Pooled Fund technical support have built strong relationships that will influence decisions, community practices and resource allocation on nutrition.

Country	Instances/Project of alignment	Project Deliverables
Pakistan	Nutrition Advocacy Campaign/ Journalist Training	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	Nutrition Advocacy Campaign	Thanks to the CSA and its member organisations, over a thousand 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	Nutrition Advocacy Campaign/ Journalist Training	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, fifteen Nutrition champions mobilised four community meetings and increased community knowledge on the root causes of stunting.
Chad	Nutrition Advocacy Campaign/ Journalist Training	The CSA improved the knowledge and inter-network connections of 35 Chadian journalists and community radio presenters who helped conduct mass sensitization 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.

MITIGATING RISK AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF COVID-19

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 permitted beneficiaries to revise their budget and refocus activities to mitigate the effects of the pandemic and align with governmental efforts to respond to the crisis. The Pooled Fund team examined all revision and extension requests for non-duplication and local need. Almost all beneficiaries realigned their activities to either support their governments in developing or aligning national response measures including nutrition. This is exemplified in the case of the Philippines, Tanzania, and Kyrgyzstan. Others, such as Guatemala, Afghanistan, and Nepal, chose to address gaps in national response clusters. Due to the flexibility of the Pooled Fund, Peru, Kenya, and Afghanistan 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 & hygiene for community organisations in local languages, e.g. Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, and Zimbabwe. 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 SUN Movement Secretariat, including the grant recipients themselves, the SUN UN Network, SUN Business Network, and UN REACH partners, etc.

Country	Examples of COVID-19 Response Actions
Zimbabwe	In February 2020, the CSA held two parliamentary engagement meetings with the Health and Childcare Committee and the Labour and Social Protection Committees to advocate for issues such as 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.
Peru	Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the Pooled Fund enabled the CSA to adapt to the circumstances and to create a virtual learning platform for youth organisations. It enabled youth to participate in policy processes, accountability, and monitoring commitments of subnational governments. The virtual learning platform and classroom workshops also reinforced the concept of the importance and roles of equity in child nutrition. To ensure sustainable impact, the trained youth representatives will continue to receive support to influence the sub-national authorities with a strong commitment for actions against anaemia and growth delay.
Burkina Faso	The CSA quickly expanded its existing advocacy objectives to include pandemic-related messaging and local education to five regions with populations most at risk of being left behind. Integral to their efforts was educating the regional and local focal point to lend legitimacy to the health and safety measures.

LOOKING BACK WHILE LOOKING AHEAD: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUN 3.0

During Phase 2.0 of the SUN Movement, the Pooled Fund has evolved towards a catalytic, innovative, and action-oriented mechanism that supports in-country SUN members, networks and groups through actions and impact that are focused on reducing malnutrition in all its forms. Its agility and capacity to quickly undertake course correction where necessary in a timely and effective manner has been one of its greatest assets. Pooled Fund grantees have supported country-driven and country-led strategies to scale up nutrition. However, the Pooled Fund still faces challenges that will need to be addressed in Phase 3. Furthermore, it will need to identify avenues for continuous improvement and systemic change, in order to allow for stronger impact, ownership and embedding of nutrition in national structures. The final chapter concludes the evidence package with an exploration of the programmatic and implementation challenges, lessons, and recommendations for the future of the Pooled Fund.

Challenges and recommendations in future grantmaking

Networks & Partnering	Challenge #1:	Limited collaboration amongst in-country networks, leading to lost opportunities for enhanced impact.
	Recommendation:	Support the development of in-country strategies that strengthen strategic collaboration and joint implementation by the networks at country level.

Very few countries have achieved the right degree of collaboration between networks. Lessons from the first phase of implementation indicate that deliberate action is needed to encourage collaboration.

The Pooled Fund should encourage and support specific strategies to ensure more formal and strategic collaboration between networks at country level. For certain countries, these strategies may include focusing support around interventions, rather than a specific network. In other instances, the support could focus on building networks up to similar levels of capacity. For example, some in-country SBNs are in their early stages and as such require further investment to consolidate membership and formalise relationships with national nutrition platforms via intra-network agreements.

Tailored Approach	Challenge #2:	Political instability, environmental degradation, and human-caused disasters in fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS).
	Recommendation:	The Pooled Fund defines a Call for Proposals with tailored oversight for high-risk countries. Grant-making and technical assistance provision in those countries should be coordinated by networks and complementary to implement technical support and institutional oversight that is specifically tailored to high-risk countries.

Countries in high risk and fragile contexts face difficulties in collaborating effectively, securing funding or garnering trust with international organizations. For such countries or regions, sustaining nutritional advocacy efforts and engaging with non-profit institutions is a huge result.

The SUN Movement should consider the risk involved in awarding low-capacity organisations as well as the risk posed to successfully addressing network participation in volatile environments. Nevertheless, it is FCAS that are most in need of grant support and technical assistance, and who often face the highest rates of malnutrition. The agility of the Pooled Fund would help to ensure that responses to FCAS needs are contextualized and that no state is left behind in the fight against malnutrition.

Tailored Approach	Challenge #3:	Realising sustainable change and developing innovations within short-term projects.
	Recommendation:	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 CSA's, 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 recommended a minimum of 3 years to establish durable relationships.

Knowledge Management	Challenge #4:	Limited knowledge sharing between TA providers, national networks secretariats, and in-country platforms.
	Recommendation:	Strengthen peer-to-peer collaboration and knowledge management at the country-level by providing national networks with the means to communicate effectively through forums, webinars, visitations, and/or knowledge management tools.

Currently, knowledge sharing and learning is focused within the specific networks. There appears to be limited cross-network learning and support at the country level. Simultaneously, the plethora of information from external TA providers, network secretariats, historical data, etc. can pose a challenge to pull together. The Pooled Fund suggests that future support should continue to prioritize cross-learning opportunities, especially through regional platforms, and enhanced knowledge management at all levels.

At the global level, Pooled Fund could significantly contribute to network knowledge by transferring its detailed data directly to CSN and SBN databases. Regionally, the Pooled Fund could work through the existing networks or directly with beneficiaries to manage peer-to-peer learning sessions across networks. This would, in turn, maximize the different areas of the Global Support System and ensure more robust knowledge management systems. Finally, and fundamentally, the Pooled Funds can continue to act as a last resort source of funds for beneficiaries with no other means to get to decision-making tables at the national, regional, and international level.

Capacity Building	Challenge #5:	Alliance members with institutional capacity that is too weak at national and sub-national levels to manage multi-donor projects.
	Recommendation:	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.

A CLEAR VISION FOR SUN 3.0

The SUN Movement Strategic Review, conducted in 2019, was mandated to assess and provide strategic recommendations on the Direction and use of the SUN Movement Pooled Fund. Whilst the Phase 3 Roadmap is under development, country consultations have shown that there is a strong and definite need for specific, catalytic and innovative support mechanisms to fulfil countries' nutrition priorities during SUN3.0. The Pooled Fund, through its catalytic, innovative and last-resort character would serve as a catalyst for nutrition impact and or systems change.

The current Pooled Fund mechanism already incorporates the following elements into its design:

- **Catalytic Funding** - Financial support that allows the grantee to enhance their activities to an extent where they can attract subsequent funding, partnerships, and assistance.
- **Last Resort Mechanism** - Supporting nutrition advocacy and/or interventions where no other option is available.
- **Innovation** - Reaching community level, non-traditional and furthest-left-behind actors.

A renewed, innovative and catalytic Pooled Fund design should in addition to the abovementioned criteria also take into consideration the following **3 elements** listed below:

Tailored Approach - Phase 1 Multi-Partner Trust Fund and Phase 2 Pooled Fund experiences have shown that projects that are tailored to country needs have a stronger impact on nutrition actions. A Phase 3 Pooled Fund instrument must consider tailored funding windows to respect the fragility or complexity of country needs. For example, these considerations could include implementing and mobilising local resources for national nutrition plans at the sub-national level; costing nutrition plans and identifying resources; and strengthening governance and capacity functions to meet in-country donor and government requirements.

Networks and Partnerships - The long-term success of grantee projects depends on broader, stronger partnerships and collaborations. The SUN Movement and Pooled Fund have emboldened local actors to hold their governments and multinational corporations to account, by questioning their vision of the future. Networks play an essential facilitation role and will need to be better equipped to respond to and continue their work, once grant cycles end. Increased country network participation will help identify specific bottlenecks, support needs and develop opportunities. However, this implies stronger ownership of project results by all country networks, regardless of whether they are direct grant recipients. The development of regional coordination spaces can further enhance the catalytic effect of national networks.

Knowledge Management - Effective delivery of nutrition actions and systemic programming requires that knowledge management, technical assistance, and existing institutional memory are leveraged and merged into a single, coherent system accessible by all relevant actors across the SUN Movement. The Pooled Fund has a wealth of data that has been generated in Phase 2 that should be shared and integrated into the Movement in Phase 3. The Pooled Fund could be explored as a potential mechanism that feeds into the Movement's overall Knowledge Management infrastructure through a requirement that all its grantees partake in formal SUN Movement learning and sharing activities during and before the closure of grant cycles.

Inspired by the new SUN 3.0 Strategic Objectives, Roadmap, and operationalisation timeline, it is evident that 2021 will be a year of major transition and great opportunity. The Pooled Fund is a component of the SUN Movement that has proven itself to be an effective country support tool. The wealth of success stories detailed in this Pooled Fund Evidence Package demonstrates the critical need to continue and expand the Pooled Fund's activities in Phase 3.0. This Evidence Package has provided concrete lessons and recommendations that should be taken into account in the visioning of the Phase 3.0 Pooled Fund. Amongst the recommendations are tailored window cycles; the need for complementary partnerships; accountability; and knowledge management. The incorporation of these new innovations with existing modalities in Phase 3.0 will ensure the continued contribution of grantees towards a world free from malnutrition.



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