

The Opportunity

Every year, millions of children die and many more fail to realize their full potential because of undernutrition in the critical 1,000 day period between their mother's pregnancy and their second birthday. Malnutrition is responsible for nearly half of all under-5 child deaths each year. Children who miss out on good nutrition during these 1,000 days never achieve full physical or mental growth, limiting their ability to learn in school and reducing their productivity as adults.

For too long, nutrition has been an underinvested area of health and development—in large part because of its underlying and often hidden role in child deaths.

In their 2015 Annual Letter, Bill and Melinda Gates laid out a new vision: to cut under-5 child mortality by half in the next 15 years. This goal will not be achievable unless the global community significantly increases investments in nutrition and gives women and children the tools and opportunities they need to survive and thrive.

2015-2020 Gates Foundation Nutrition Strategy

We are increasing our financial commitment to nutrition with the launch of a new strategy, guided by our vision that all women and children have the nutrition they need to live healthy and productive lives.

Our estimates show we can address half of the malnutrition burden through proven tools and approaches that are available now, so our efforts will be directed at both helping scale-up effective interventions and developing new solutions. We will maintain a focus on optimal nutrition during the critical 1,000 day window for mothers and children. To help spark rapid progress, we will expand upon our past efforts to: increase our focus on nutrition for women and adolescent girls; increase advocacy and technical assistance to support intervention scale-up; improve data measurement systems; and strengthen agriculture and nutrition linkages through improved food systems. These interventions will be scaled up in high-burden countries to demonstrate what is possible at scale.

Our strategy will center around five key initiatives:

1 Country Impact

To maximize our impact, the cornerstone of our new strategy will be partnerships with a set of priority high-burden countries. In these countries, we will demonstrate what is possible when existing interventions are brought to scale, and provide a platform to accelerate development and uptake of new solutions.

- In each country, we will work with partners to demonstrate effective scale-up of context-specific, proven interventions throughout the life cycle, including early and exclusive breastfeeding, complementary feeding, micronutrient supplementation, food fortification, biofortification, and emerging interventions.
- We will then apply successful models and learning to a wider set of countries, expanding impact while continuing to build the knowledge base.

Our Goals

Goal 1: Increase effective coverage of proven nutrition interventions to avert deaths and to improve cognitive development.

Goal 2: Develop and test new solutions in interventions, implementation approaches, and data measurement systems to effectively tackle the unaddressed burden of undernutrition.

Our Ambition

By 2020:

- 1.8 million child deaths averted
- Delivery platforms and implementation knowledge established to accelerate scale-up of current and emerging nutrition interventions
- Global nutrition community will know and understand the full set of causes of undernutrition
- New solutions developed and tested to address 50 percent of the unaddressed burden (90 percent by 2030)

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New Solutions

To tackle the nearly half of the global burden of undernutrition that we cannot address through current solutions, we will:

- Invest in research to understand the full set of causes of undernutrition, to identify the right packages of interventions, and to establish optimal times to intervene;
- Develop, test, and roll-out new solutions; and
- Address the challenges and bottlenecks that impede effective implementation (including delivery systems and in-country capacity) via research, particularly for reaching women and girls and addressing social and gender norms.

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Food Systems

To bolster our efforts to address dietary deficiencies, our new strategy will work across the entire food chain—from how food is produced to how it’s sold and consumed—to ensure families have access to safe, nutritious, and affordable food year-round. We will:

- Invest in common metrics for agriculture and nutrition and increase adoption of data-driven food systems policies and programs;
- Leverage agriculture production and extension systems to increase access to inputs that can improve nutrition, such as seeds for biofortified crops;
- Ensure that nutrient-rich foods are safe and affordable through market-oriented approaches;
- Boost demand for safe, nutritious food and support effective behavior change on diet quality; and
- Empower women in and through agriculture by increasing their decision-making power regarding agriculture production, expanding control of resources, and reducing workload.

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Data, Analytics, and Evidence

Currently, we lack much of the data needed to define the problem of malnutrition, diagnose its root causes, design interventions, and track progress. Nearly half of all countries do not have enough data available to measure progress against four of the six World Health Assembly global nutrition targets. Better data is key to informing policy and programming and tracking progress. To catalyze a “data revolution” for nutrition, we will:

- Develop new tools and platforms to enable timely collection of data, its analysis, and use (including nutrition status, behaviors, intervention coverage);
- Support global efforts to develop a consensus on a “blueprint for nutrition data” to fill gaps and track progress and accountability; and
- Ensure data and information lead to impact by translating evidence into actionable policy and operational guidelines for stakeholders.

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Advocacy, Policy, and Alignment

Currently, donors direct less than 1 percent of Official Development Assistance to nutrition; national budget allocations in high-burden countries are similarly low. Increased, better coordinated, and better executed spending of domestic and donor resources for nutrition is a cornerstone of achieving long-term impact. We will:

- Mobilize both financial and human resources for nutrition, particularly in high-burden countries and through donor funding;
- Improve spending effectiveness by supporting efforts to improve donor coordination and ensure funding is directed to high-impact approaches;
- Strengthen capacity of key institutions that advise and support countries in developing and executing plans to tackle undernutrition; and
- Support the global effort to build capacity and political will of low- and middle-income countries to accelerate action on nutrition policies, programs, and commitments for national funding.

Our vision is a world where all women and children have the nutrition they need to live healthy and productive lives. By increasing our investment in nutrition over the next five years, we are working to spur continued commitment and accelerated action on nutrition.