

Country Profile

Rwanda

Scaling Up Nutrition in Rwanda



Public health in Rwanda has largely improved significantly in the last decade, with a decline in maternal and child health diseases including child malnutrition. Fundamentally, Rwanda's leadership has demonstrated a high level political commitment towards ending all health threatening problems such as child malnutrition. As indicated in the Rwanda demographic health survey (RDHS 2014-2015), the country has made tremendous progress in eradicating child stunting and other forms of malnutrition. Since 2010-2015 under five stunting (height for age) has over time reduced from 44% to 38%. The prevalence of underweight and wasted children has been also reduced from 18% and 5% to 9 % and 2% respectively, correlating with 87% of children less than 6 months who are exclusively breastfed. Food security among households is now at 80% according to the Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis 2015 (CFSVA 2015).

Striking element to note is the important gap between the stunted children and the underweight children. The 2015 Demographic and Health Survey figures of child undernutrition evidence impressive and sustained levels of reduction of underweight children, positioning Rwanda as one of the countries with the lowest prevalence of underweight children in Africa.

The development of the National Food and Nutrition Strategic Plan [2013-2018] and District Plans to Eliminate Malnutrition among other strategies and approaches are



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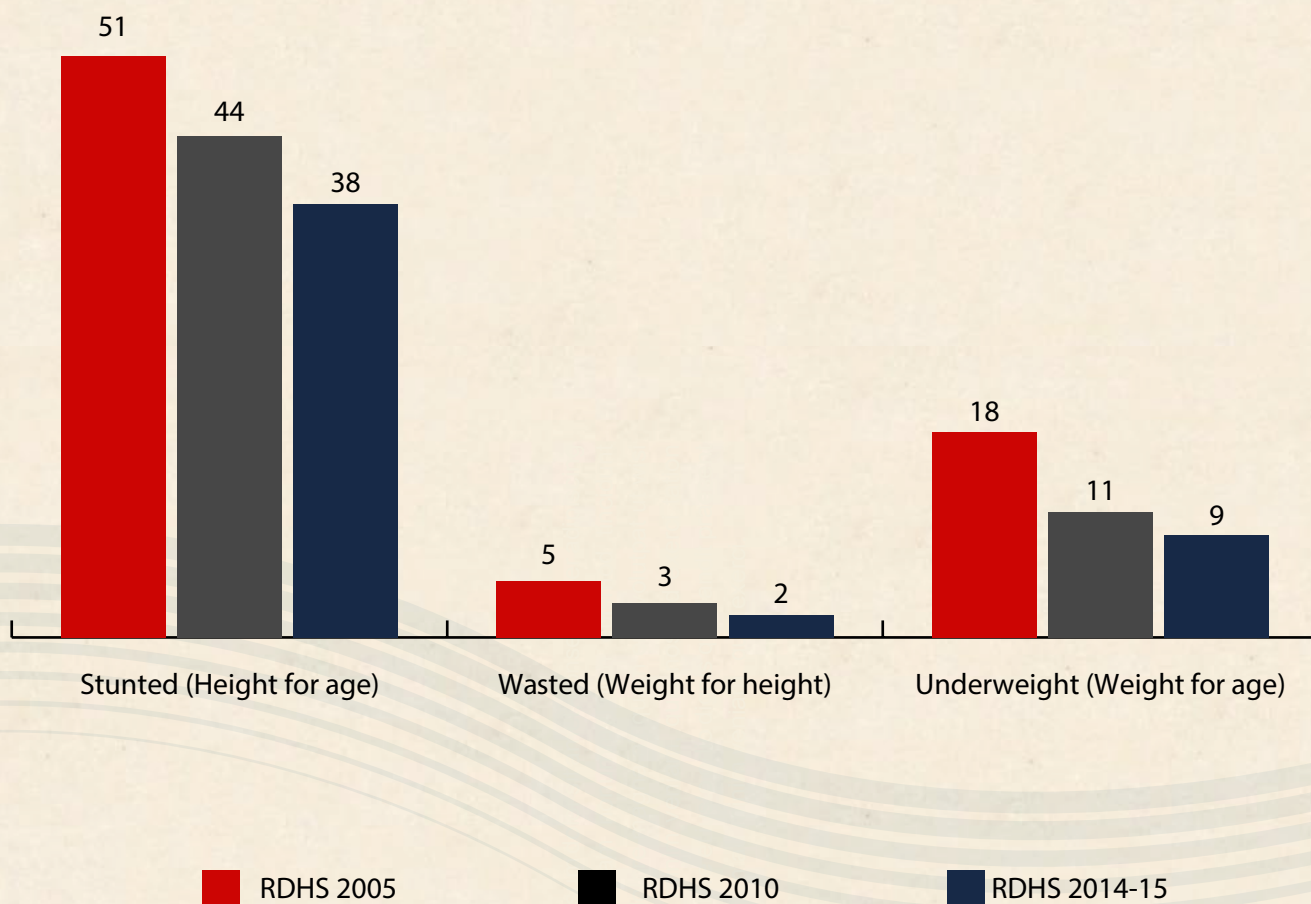
considered vital to achieving sustainable, long-term food and nutrition security in the Country. The fruits of these efforts are the reduction in child undernutrition, particularly in stunting.

Recently, a National Food and Nutrition Secretariat was established under the Ministry of Local Government to coordinate all activities and actors in nutrition; the emphasis on decentralization and the strengthening of a multi-sectoral approach have proven to be successful strategies to address nutrition and to fight stunting.

Currently, the multi-sectoral/stakeholder platform, which coordinates efforts of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement at the national and district levels, includes the high-level coordination committees of the Social Cluster Ministries and the Inter-ministerial Coordination Committee, hosted within the Prime Minister's office, with participation from key Ministries. UN agencies likewise conduct regular meetings to join efforts in supporting the Government of Rwanda (GoR) to eliminate malnutrition. So far only the private sector has not established a formal coordination mechanism for its involvement in the fight against malnutrition.

Undernourished Children

All measures of nutrition are improving among children less than 5 years





SUN Movement

On 22 December 2011, the Republic of Rwanda joined the SUN Movement with a letter of commitment from the Minister of Health. At the time, the President of Rwanda had launched an initiative to address malnutrition, followed by the first National Nutrition Summit in November 2009 and multi-sectoral nutrition committees had been established at central and local levels. In 2014, thanks to a startup grant from the SUN Global Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF), the SUN Alliance was created, bringing together a number of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) working on nutrition in the country. A launch event brought together 150 participants to introduce them to the concept of working as a coordinated Alliance of CSOs, presented draft Terms of Reference and request their participation. After the launch, the SUN Alliance General Assembly elected its Executive Committee. The Alliance Executive Committee then worked to develop an Action Plan, register the SUN Alliance as an umbrella organization, bringing together Nutrition Actors in the Civil Society, draft organizational statutes, form additional committees, and elect Committee advisors for six nutrition-sensitive sectors (Agriculture, Health, Women empowerment, Education, Social protection and Poverty reduction). To

date, SUN Alliance includes 70+ civil society members from both local and international CSOs who are actively engaged in scaling up nutrition at country level, whether through programs directly focussing on nutrition (known as “nutrition-specific” programs) or programs that revolve around other sectors but that integrate nutrition aspects (known as “nutrition-sensitive” programs).

The aim of the SUN Alliance is to amplify the voices of communities affected by malnutrition and to focus on the need for greater accountability to them.

SUN Alliance Objectives

Main objectives of SUN Alliance are: 1) Actively contribute to the design, implementation and monitoring of effective accountable national multi-stakeholder /multi-sectoral policies and plans for scaling up nutrition at national and sub-national levels; 2) Encourage and facilitate coordination among all civil society actors, including academia, international, national and local Civil Society Organizations and ensure alignment of their strategies, programmes and resources with national nutrition priorities.



Specific objectives:

- Mobilize resources for enhanced coordination, partnership and synergies among SUN Alliance members and other stakeholders for sustainable and equitable reduction of malnutrition;
- Strengthen CSOs' capacities for improved nutrition programming, planning, monitoring and performance;
- Strengthen dialogue and accountability at all levels to implement National policies and regulations addressing nutrition;
- Empower its members to put in place effective systems that contribute to increased investments in the area of nutrition;
- Defend members' professional interests and strengthen relations between SUN Alliance and other organizations with similar objectives at the global level;
- Conduct research to inform policy design and implementation and to improve on quality of information in the nutrition sector

Coordination's mechanisms

SUN Alliance ensures high-level cooperation on rolling out strategies and consistent alignment of effort to reduce malnutrition through the General Assembly. The SUN Alliance General Assembly is a body which consists of representatives of all organizations involved in the Alliance.

The assembly was first convened in March 2015 and then again in October 2015 and it has, through these meetings, officially adopted organizational statutes and elected the members of the Executive Committee, as well as the Audit and Dispute Resolution Committees. The assembly meets approximately twice per year to discuss overall progresses and resolve the Alliance function. The General Assembly's meeting also provides a forum for the discussion of high-level issues concerning all members of the Alliance. A communication strategy was developed to provide consistent communication between the Executive Committee, CSOs and their partners. In this framework, the district committees play a key role in bringing the local community' demands to the national platform.

Main Achievements of SUN Alliance:

1. Organizational Establishment and Sustainability: Structures and legal status
2. Information gathering for Advocacy : Mapping exercise
3. Participation in national nutrition events and the Global SUN Movement
4. Direct community mobilization activities: Awareness campaign on nutrition
5. Formation and Implication of District SUN Committees
6. Nutrition advocacy campaigns at national and district decision makers with our committees for increased coordination and investments.
7. Learning Route Program
8. Grant attainment: Secured a grant under New Venture Fund through SFH Rwanda.

SUCCESSFUL EXPERIENCES IN SCALING-UP NUTRITION

Decentralization and operationalization of nutrition interventions at district level: the case of SUN Alliance in the Gisagara district.

In Gisagara district provides a good example of decentralization's strategy of the SUN Alliance and operationalization of nutrition policies at local level through the implementation of the District Plan to Eliminate Malnutrition (DPEM). In this District, SUN Alliance is collaborating within the DPEM and the Joint Action Development Forum (JADF) to focus on nutrition interventions and strategies to best operationalize the DPEM to eradicate child malnutrition.

Recently, Gisagara was among districts that recorded high level of child malnutrition in the country, despite the richness of natural resources of that county. One of the first actions of the SUN CSA was to "understand the causes of malnutrition", by developing an in-depth research at community level; the research, led by Catholic University of Rwanda, revealed the strong linkage between malnutrition and "bad" habits or behaviours of the population as one of the main causes. Furthermore, the discrepancy existing between the nutrition policy at national level and the implementation of this policy at local level aggravated this situation. To respond to this challenge, SUN Alliance, through its local CSOs, engaged in a communication campaign for behavioural change with local population; as part of the DPEM, communities were mobilized to promote correct approaches towards nutrition, including change in habits or behaviours that can negatively affect child nutrition. At the same time, CSOs actively involved in advocacy and lobbying with policy makers through social mobilization to foster nutrition initiatives at district level.



Family's garden in Gishuba sector (Gisagara)

The achievements have been the positive change of communities' behaviours towards dietary practices, increased coordination mechanism of DPEM and its improved operationalization.

Learning areas: social mobilization, advocacy, communication for behavioural change, multi-stakeholder coordination.

Strengthening Pro-poor Public Private Partnership to fight malnutrition, the experience of DUHAMIC-ADRI and SOSOMA.

DUHAMIC-ADRI is a Rwandan not-for-profit organization, founded in the 80s that support rural population in the development of productive activities. DUHAMIC adopts an integrated approach to enhance rural livelihood, which involves: Agriculture, WASH, Nutrition, Social Protection and Rural Finance. DUHAMIC-ADRI also works to strengthen producers' associations and cooperatives in agricultural production and to link



Member of SOSOMA Industries Ltd explains the different properties of the fortified products.

them to markets. In 1989, the SOSOMA processing unit was established within DUHAMIC-ADRI; in 2008 the SOSOMA separated from DUHAMIC-ADRI becoming a private industry with strong corporate responsibility. Today, DUHAMIC-ADRI partners with SOSOMA Industries Ltd. for the development of highly nutritious products to reduce acute malnutrition, as the Imvange-Sosoma containing soybeans, sorghum and maize. In this framework, 50% of the products from the processing unit are sold at convenient price to the Government and other humanitarian organizations (to be distributed in hospitals and clinics), while the other 50% is sold directly to supermarket. SOSOMA Industries Ltd. produces fortified sorghum, soy flour and maize to cope with the increasing micronutrient deficiency.

In this context, SOSOMA contributes to the welfare of population; in fact, the dividends distributed annually to DUHAMIC-ADRI and the main shareholder are reinvested in rural development programs to support local farmers (that are responsible for the supply of the agricultural production).

SUN Alliance ensures the sustainability of its members by integrating or partnering with private sector for income generation especially through the production of nutritious products.

Learning areas: social mobilization towards nutrition, marketing, integrated approach, involvement of the private sector.

Milk way to enhance nutrition from the producer to the consumer passing through the national policy framework: the successful experience of Nyanza's dairy production

Milk is the entry point for nutrition at policy level in Rwanda. Many campaigns such as “one glass of milk per child”, and “one cow per poor family” have been carried out to encourage the consumption of milk and dairy products among the population.

In a first moment, attention was given to increasing milk production; however, even if milk availability was ensured, the consumption of quality dairy products was still very low. To respond to this challenge, the Civil Society together with the public sector worked to improve the quality of the milk, to certify products (higher standards) and to

sensitize the population on the importance of consuming quality milk and dairy products. In this context, the Rwanda's Consumers' Rights Protection Organization (ADECOR), a NGO member of SUN Alliance, provided evidence-based advocacy to partners including FAO, MINAGRI among others in order to create a conducive environment to promote safe dairy products. Thanks to the training of farmers and sensitization campaigns on milk's nutrition properties, the consumption of milk increased, as well as and the price per litre. Furthermore, women are now more involved in selling milk and aware on nutrition values of milk and milk products.



Today, through an integrated value chain approach, farmers in Nyanza contribute but also benefit through improved productivity, health and education. The experience of Nyanza shows how this integrated approach has been mainstreamed by many organizations and institutions that set the enabling environment for the local farmers and cooperatives to flourish.

Farmers, Processors, CSOs, government institution and international organizations' representatives, in Nyaza district visiting the milk production.

SUN Alliance ensures the certification and quality standards of highly dairy nutritional products.

Learning areas: *advocacy, social campaign, and marketing.*

Rwanda Nutrition Stakeholders & Action Mapping

A Mapping exercise conducted in 2014, including mapping of key nutrition stakeholders and their actions, was instrumental to the Government of Rwanda and Development partners to all levels for programming and coordination. The Mapping intends to improve nutrition coordination and scale-up discussion by providing an indicative overview of who are the key stakeholders in nutrition at Country level, where they are working, how many people they are reaching through their activities, based on selected Core Nutrition Actions. Although this exercise has been led by ONE UN REACH, SUN Alliance has been vital in sensitizing its members to provide required data through its national coverage and

communication strategy. Moreover, tools have been customized to improve mapping of CSOs.

Most of the actors working on nutrition in Rwanda are now using the mapping information as a decision making tool to decide where and how to intervene and to prepare the framework of their projects.

SUN Alliance has been vital for feeding data in mapping tool with more than 90% of its mapped organizations.

Learning area: *coordination at national level to foster nutrition.*