The 'enabling environment' for scale-up refers to all political and policy processes that shape and maintain momentum for the effective implementation of actions that reduce undernutrition. Such factors can include: advocacy strategies, coordination, accountability, incentives, regulation, legislation, leadership programmes, capacity investments, rigorous evaluations and domestic resource mobilisation. The importance of such factors is now widely recognised. Country actors are motivated to both share and to learn from national and sub-national experiences in creating conducive environments for nutrition. At the same time, stakeholders are aware of the specific context of each setting and the resulting need to adapt efforts to create an enabling environment accordingly.

Since 2015, a total of 42 articles from ENN publications have covered themes that contribute to building an enabling environment.
A number of countries have seen a significant increase in momentum and funding for nutrition in recent years. The act of joining the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement has prompted countries to formulate multi-sector nutrition policies and nutrition action plans, either building on or adapting existing legislation, or creating new plans from scratch (Indonesia, Malawi, Somalia). In Nigeria, the act of signing up to the SUN Movement in 2011 gave impetus to reshaping nutrition policy to reflect emerging issues such as the importance of the first 1,000 days and the rise of diet-related non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

However, joining the SUN Movement is a first step: commitment to nutrition also needs to be built at the system/institutional level and underpinned by budgetary/financial allocations. High-level government ownership was key to success in creating enabling environments to improve maternal nutrition in two SUN countries, Nepal and Bhutan.

Nutrition is just one of the areas competing for a Government’s attention – and budget. Advocacy and social mobilisation are increasingly seen as an integral part of the national strategy to put nutrition on the agenda in a wide range of SUN Movement countries (Haiti, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Kenya, Senegal, Tanzania, Zambia). Countries have employed a variety of approaches and techniques, from organising high-level nutrition events and engaging parliamentarians, to developing country-specific advocacy tools and establishing SUN civil society alliances (CSAs). Workshops have been used to ‘sensitise’ political leaders, government actors, and journalists (Burkina Faso, Chad, Haiti, Kenya, Zambia).

Multi-sector advocacy and integration of nutrition objectives into other relevant sectors were cross-cutting themes in workshops to build advocacy capacity of CSAs and parliamentarian networks in West Africa. Advocacy efforts have transformed media coverage of nutrition in Haiti, Kenya and Zambia with the creation of networks of journalists interested in nutrition. Sensitising national social protection and agriculture policies and developing an all-party parliamentary group on food and nutrition has resulted in an increase in spend on nutrition-sensitive programming in Zambia (although it still remains low).

One mechanism to generate government buy-in within different ministries is through providing robust evidence and data on malnutrition to encourage multi-sectoral engagement. Technical and operational support to countries from partners such as the UN-REACH (Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger) project has provided analysis of the nutrition situation to raise awareness among various actors (Burkina Faso, Burundi, Myanmar). Tanzania’s CSA has provided parliamentarians with evidence-based information and technical tools, such as nutrition data in simple language. Indonesia’s stunting ‘bootcamps’, known as Rembuk Stunting, aim to accelerate stunting reduction by providing health-related data to sub-national government leaders in target districts with high prevalence of stunting and wasting in children under five.

Financial arguments have also proved persuasive with high-level leaders in a number of countries (Ethiopia, Gabon, Kenya). Gabon’s Minister of Agriculture
became a nutrition champion when he linked the impact of improving nutrition on the country’s gross domestic product with a 1:16 return on every dollar invested in nutrition\(^1\). Parliamentarians are often well placed to put the case for increasing budgetary spend on nutrition, framed as an investment in a country’s human capital (Chad, Burkina Faso)\(^4\).

**DEVELOP LEADERSHIP AT ALL LEVELS FOR CHAMPIONING NUTRITION**

Strong leadership for nutrition is essential for gaining support to successfully promote action on nutrition globally, regionally, and within countries. There is a need for both high-level political buy-in and champions. High level political and popular nutrition champions, including First Ladies, Prime Ministers, celebrities, athletes and religious and traditional leaders, have been identified in a number of SUN countries (Ethiopia, Gabon, Indonesia, Kenya, Uganda)\(^2\),\(^10\)-\(^23\). A less traditional level of leadership is that of influencers. These can be donors, mid-level bureaucrats, or civil society actors, who can create networks of nutrition champions and supporters. Vibrant alliances of civil society organisations, with the reach to mobilise communities, have been set up in many SUN countries (Pakistan, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia)\(^12\),\(^13\),\(^24\),\(^25\). There are a number of initiatives to build leadership capacity at a working and grassroots level, including: the UN-REACH partnership in 12 SUN countries; the African Nutrition Leadership Programme; Action Against Hunger’s (ACF) support for nutrition champions in West Africa; and the SUN global CSA’s Youth Leaders initiative.

**CASE STUDY**

**Committing to nutrition: Advocacy strategies during Senegal’s elections**

National elections present an important opportunity to raise the profile of nutrition on the political agenda. ENN interviewed Abdou Diouf, Executive Secretary of the SUN Movement Civil Society platform in Senegal, about the network’s advocacy with presidential candidates during the country’s election in early 2019.

The SUN CSA developed a 'call to action' that included an assessment of the country’s nutrition situation and a strategy to address this, for the presidential candidates. Due to time pressures (the election campaign period is only three weeks in Senegal), the CSA organised a press conference and focused on online media, posting the call to action on the candidates’ social media pages and feeds. The main lessons learned from the advocacy are to start early for any successful activity and that it requires a high level of preparatory technical work.

The network now plans to conduct similar activities to address prospective candidates at local elections, working through platform members that have reach to the community.

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**SEEK NEW ALLIES**

Countries are increasingly looking further and wider to form alliances with new influencers (Haiti, Myanmar, Philippines)\(^8\),\(^9\). A programme to build leadership capacity via parliamentarian networks in ten West and Central African countries with support from SUN CSAs has borne fruit\(^15\),\(^16\). Parliamentarians in Burkina Faso and Chad have shown leadership within their countries in supporting legislation to promote nutrition, contributing to the development of national food and nutrition plans and increasing government spend on nutrition\(^14\). In an initiative to harness the power of young people, the Youth Leaders for Nutrition Programme has trained 13 young activists from around the world on subjects such as fundraising and communications\(^26\). The youth leaders have participated
in high-level discussions and offer a youth perspective on issues such as adolescent nutrition, using social media to share progress in their respective country campaigns and to lobby for support.

**CONSIDER DIFFERENT MODELS FOR COORDINATION**

Strengthening the enabling environment at the national level may be achieved via the creation or reform of institutions such as coordinating structures, seen in Senegal and Mali. Senegal’s CLM (Cellule de Lutte Contre la Malnutrition) is a specific unit set up to combat malnutrition and attached to the Prime Minister’s office. The structure and position of the CLM has been an important factor in high level coordination and mobilising resources through the national budget.

Models for inter-sectoral collaboration range from sectors working together on projects (Ethiopia), to coordination while maintaining sectoral remits (Kenya), to full integration and merger (Indonesia). Efforts to strengthen agriculture-nutrition linkages are evident in the realignment of nutrition units in Kenya’s Ministries of Health (MoH) and Agriculture (MoA). Through the food and nutrition linkages technical working group, the two ministries have jointly developed strategies such as the National Healthy Diets and Physical Activities Guidelines, and Kenya Food Composition Tables. Sub-national coordination mechanisms are not functioning well in Chad, despite the progress made in nutrition coordination at the national level. To address this, focal points have been recruited to coordinate and facilitate implementation of the National Food and Nutrition Policy in five regions of the country with high prevalence of undernutrition.

**CONTEXTUALISE POLICIES TO THE NATIONAL AND SUB-NATIONAL CONTEXT**

In an initiative to harness the power of young people, the Youth Leaders for Nutrition Programme has trained 13 young activists in high-level discussions and offer a youth perspective on issues such as adolescent nutrition, using social media to share progress in their respective country campaigns and to lobby for support.

Both horizontal and vertical coordination are needed since nutrition requires action from a range of sectors and stakeholders at different levels. ENN’s work on sub-national, multi-sector coordination in three districts in three ‘high-achieving’ SUN countries (Kenya,
Exploring multi-sector programming at district level in Senegal, Nepal and Kenya

A series of three country case studies and accompanying synthesis by ENN describe multi-sector programme implementation at sub-national level in Ethiopia, Kenya and Nepal. In each country, two districts were explored in depth, and within each, a specific multi-sector programme examined.

They identify five types of programme or adaptations that can render an intervention increasingly sensitive to nutrition:

- **Multiple sectors converge on nutritionally vulnerable households or demographic groups to offer programme services;** e.g. targeting of services to first 1,000 days households.
- **Multiple sectors converge at the level of village or commune believed to be vulnerable to undernutrition;** e.g. agriculture and health workers use the same list of target beneficiaries to deliver complementary agriculture and nutrition inputs within the same village commune.
- **Nutrition messaging is incorporated into the work and activities of other sectors;** e.g. education curricula changes to include nutrition components, nutrition behaviour-change communication (BCC) within a social protection programme.
- **Nutrition-sensitive sectors change or add inputs into programmes;** e.g. replacing poultry with milk-producing animals, introducing seeds for fortified crops, changes in hardware.
- **Nutrition-specific platforms utilised to introduce nutrition-sensitive messaging from other sectors;** e.g. food and personal hygiene, need for dietary diversity, etc.

The studies find that devolution is changing the nutrition landscape, with implications for programmes, policies and funding arrangements. There is a lack of robust data on household’s receipt of comprehensive sector support. None of the programmes examined collected data on the additional cost of implementing multi-sector nutrition sector programming and have not yet developed robust monitoring systems able to demonstrate their nutrition impact. There are diverse understandings of what ‘nutrition sensitivity’ means among the many stakeholders consulted.

www.ennonline.net/fex/57/msprogramminsengalenepalkenia
in many countries, UN actors have engaged and supported local NGOs, developing their capacities to effectively roll out nutrition interventions. Local actors in Somalia and Yemen provided a rich resource of local knowledge with access to affected populations and are able to reflect on key needs of local populations.\textsuperscript{36, 37}

ENSURE SUFFICIENT FINANCING

Nutrition financing and budget tracking are crucial to both advocacy for increasing nutrition funding and holding governments accountable for current spending commitments. Some countries, such as Bangladesh, Nigeria and Senegal, have developed costed national nutrition plans.\textsuperscript{38-40} Next steps are to mobilise domestic resources to ensure financing. Successful efforts to increase government budget for nutrition involved a long process of advocacy in Senegal, and pressure from parliamentarians in Burkina Faso and Chad.\textsuperscript{14, 27} However, research in Nepal and Uganda on multi-sector nutrition planning found that increased funding allocation for nutrition did not necessarily translate into higher nutrition spend, although lack of clear accounting mechanisms for nutrition-related allocations and spending, limited analysis.\textsuperscript{41}

Budget tracking presents challenges. A review of seven West African countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Mauritania and Togo) found significant discrepancies in methods for categorising and weighting budget-line items.\textsuperscript{42} Further actions are needed to strengthen methodologies for tracking domestic budgets for nutrition. Government ownership and leadership are critical to successful budget analysis, including developing in-country capacity for this process and ensuring annual nutrition budget tracking.\textsuperscript{42}

Successful efforts to increase government budget for nutrition involved a long process of advocacy in Senegal.
REFERENCE LIST


