



# GLOBAL NUTRITION FINANCING RESEARCH REPORT

Insights and Recommendations from  
Key Nutrition Stakeholders



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This report is authored by Dan Irvine, Global Director of Health and Nutrition at World Vision International; Asma Lateef, Chief of Policy and Advocacy Impact at SDG2 Advocacy Hub; Elizabeth Margolis, Health and Nutrition External Engagement Manager at World Vision International; and Rosalind Cowper, Nutrition Policy and Campaigning Officer at SDG2 Advocacy Hub.

For more information, please contact [health@wvi.org](mailto:health@wvi.org).

Cover photo: Joceline with her 3-year-old daughter, Prefina, now fully recovered from severe acute malnutrition with support from World Vision. ©World Vision/Didier Nagifi Sademoke

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Global nutrition financing continues to be inadequate to scale evidence-based nutrition interventions and to meet growing needs. To better understand this long-standing issue and to inform efforts to catalyse investment in nutrition financing, World Vision International and the SDG2 Advocacy Hub conducted 19 key informant interviews with various nutrition stakeholders at global and national levels. The goal of the interviews was to identify barriers to achieving long-term, predictable, accountable, and coherent donor investment in nutrition and explore solutions. The interviews informed the recommendations presented in this report.

The in-depth interviews with key stakeholders conducted between May 2024 and September 2024 provided dynamic insights into challenges and opportunities. While each stakeholder offered a distinct perspective, there were several shared themes that support some common-sense improvements to scale up and improve the impact of nutrition finance:

1. Nutrition financing must be reoriented to support institutional capacity development at national and local levels and to strengthen national systems, especially countries' capacity to mobilise domestic resources. National political leadership, a national nutrition plan, and a whole-of-government strategy are critical to ensure country-led resource mobilisation.
2. While recognising the critical need for a more coordinated approach to nutrition financing, interviewees' opinions diverged on the feasibility of a new financing mechanism or a vertical fund for nutrition. Existing financing mechanisms should make institutional shifts to follow, respond to, and align with a country's nutrition priorities. There was agreement that much more could be done to enhance existing global mechanisms for financing (e.g. UNICEF Child Nutrition Fund, World Bank investments, and nutrition Global Financing Facility (GFF) country programmes) and for coordination (e.g. the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement as well as national multi-stakeholder platforms). Coordination mechanisms must be adequately resourced and trusted to perform the role of linking priorities from the subnational and national level upwards.
3. There is a pressing need to improve financial tracking and transparency of nutrition investments at the national level. Data systems need greater investment to enable transparency, reporting, and accountability to make visible the results and impact of nutrition funding, to support decision-making, and to evaluate the efficient and effective use of nutrition investments across relevant sectors.
4. Advocacy efforts should leverage simple, compelling, and data-informed messages to make the case for the multi-sector integration of nutrition and that investing in nutrition contributes to progress in other sectors and to broader development goals, especially at the country-level.
5. Interviewees recommended exploring the role of innovative financing, both public and private, as a pathway to new funding opportunities for nutrition, with the potential to enhance predictability and flexibility in financing and to address shocks more effectively.



# BACKGROUND

In the current global nutrition landscape, it is clear that nutrition financing continues to be unable to meet the scale of growing needs. The [2024 World Bank Investment Framework for Nutrition](#) indicated that US\$13 billion per year over the next 10 years is required to scale up nutrition interventions to address undernutrition globally. This long-standing problem of inadequate nutrition financing has been attributed to a lack of prioritisation and significant challenges within the current global architecture for nutrition funding. This challenging financing situation has been further heightened by recent Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) cuts across the globe and the 2025 United States Government funding freezes in particular.

To better understand this pressing issue, World Vision International and the SDG2 Advocacy Hub committed to this research initiative. The effort ultimately aims to make informed recommendations to improve long-term, predictable, accountable, and coherent nutrition financing. This report uses 'nutrition interventions' to encompass the cross-sectoral actions that prevent, manage, and treat malnutrition across health, social protection, agriculture, education, etc., identified in the 2024 Investment Framework, but notes the lack of an agreed standard definition as a significant barrier.

The key informant interviews (KIIs) sought to develop evidence-based recommendations for nutrition financing. Specific objectives for an audience of donors, policymakers, advocates, and other key stakeholders included:

1. Gather insights from diverse nutrition stakeholders on the nutrition financing landscape in terms of barriers and opportunities.
2. Develop recommendations to increase nutrition financing and identify which aspect(s) of the broader financing ecosystem can be leveraged.
3. Identify entry points for advocacy and policy asks to increase nutrition financing ahead of key global nutrition moments.

## Methodology

The KII research consisted of virtual structured interviews with 19 nutrition stakeholders, including current and former country-level nutrition focal persons and representatives from global humanitarian organisations, international financial institutions, philanthropies, and bilateral and multilateral entities. Purposeful sampling was used to select interviewees to gain a diverse set of perspectives across sectors, agencies, geographies, and gender. A full list of interviewees and their affiliations is included in Annex A.

## Consent

All interviewees agreed to have their insights transcribed and the research analysis published in an external publication. Interviewees were given the opportunity to review the analysis prior to publication and choose to be anonymous or give consent to have their name and organisation listed. No quotes or specific comments are attributed to an individual or organisation.

## Interview questions

Questions were developed by World Vision International and the SDG2 Advocacy Hub, and were shared with interviewees in advance of their KII, along with the terms of reference to explain the objectives of the research. The interview questions were structured according to the following sequence, though flexibility to the question order was permitted to allow fluidity of the conversation and additional questions emerged organically in each interview.

1. What are the principal barriers towards achieving long-term, predictable, accountable, and coherent nutrition donor investment?
2. How can we achieve long-term, predictable, accountable, and coherent donor investment in nutrition?

3. What architecture or system-level changes are needed?
4. What is your view on the role of innovative financing versus a stronger centralised multilateral funding instrument?
5. How important is the global ability to monitor nutrition investments and impacts to realise improved donor investment and policymaker buy-in? What needs to change, if anything, in this regard?

## Data analysis

Automated transcripts and recordings of the interviews were provided to a professional consultant who managed the data for qualitative

analysis and wrote up the findings and recommendations. Data was analysed using a five-phase systematic process that deployed both deductive and inductive coding strategies, guided memoing, and theme development.

## Results

Results were compiled according to primary thematic topics related to barriers and recommendations to address these barriers. Interviewees expressed strong alignment on the main barriers to achieving optimal nutrition investment. This report reflects the principal matters voiced by interviewees, with a few select illustrative quotations, though not all points reached consensus across individuals.



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# NUTRITION FINANCING LANDSCAPE: CONTEXT AND BARRIERS

## Economic factors

### Declining and unreliable donor assistance:

The overall decline in ODA globally limits the availability of funds for nutrition and makes donor funding inadequate to meet global needs. Many donors are not maintaining the historically high ODA levels that were seen 5 to 15 years ago due to new political pressures and priorities, further constraining the potential for increased nutrition investment.

**Strained domestic fiscal space:** Domestic economic constraints, including debt distress, diminish countries' ability and political will to allocate sufficient resources to nutrition. Broader global geopolitical dynamics, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic, have resulted in reduced fiscal resources and increased pressure to invest in areas outside nutrition.

**Risk:** Nutrition financing is complicated because there are many actors – with an increasing focus on small, local actors (e.g. farmers, cooperatives) – making it costly and risky to invest at scale. Some countries that face high burdens of malnutrition have been deprioritised by donors due to geopolitical risk factors. For donors, de-risking nutrition investments at scale is costly.

**Competition for funds:** The global ecosystem is more complex than ever and there is increasing competition for attention and resources. Many agencies compete for limited resources, leading to 'a starved system' where collaboration drops. Nutrition competes with numerous other sectors for funding and political attention, and nutrition investments have been portrayed as separate from global efforts in areas like climate change or humanitarian responses to crises.

**Short-term, unpredictable funding:** Donor funding is often allocated in short-term increments,

unpredictable, and not sufficiently long-term to be transformative and produce generational behaviour changes. There is a need for sustained, predictable investments with a 10+ year investment period. In fragile contexts, building resilience over a sustained period of time is essential to working across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus. Likewise, many key replenishments happen at the same time for global financing mechanisms, leading to dramatic dips and gaps in resources.

## Political factors

**Political cycles:** Short-term political cycles undermine long-term commitments to nutrition. Priorities are tied to electoral cycles, and governments may prioritise immediate concerns and wins over long-term nutritional goals that will not be realised until after their term in office. Lack of institutional and legal frameworks to safeguard nutrition financing, targets, and plans across political transitions can result in resources being diverted away from nutrition. One interviewee recommended ring-fencing financing mechanisms to legally safeguard funds for long-term priorities like nutrition:



*“Nutrition will be a country priority when politicians are able to show return on investment within a political lifespan. So much of the ‘return on investment’ that we see in nutrition is not something any elected official will get to reap the benefits of. What they could reap the benefits from is improvement along process indicators that are globally accepted as being on the right path.”*



**Phased transition:** *'Domestic funding is critical for sustainability,'* said one interviewee. In particular, a transition model with co-financing nutrition plans is needed, in which governments increase their financial commitments to nutrition as donor investments gradually decrease. Co-financing must be designed in consideration of the country's budgetary context. Donor funding is essential for many high burden countries but should be tied to national-level government investment and accountability mechanisms. It was recognised that long-term, consistent *'money in the bank'* is often needed first in order to leverage or catalyse funds for nutrition. Even modest domestic investments can compel donors to fill a country's financial gap.

## Institutional factors

**Programme turnover:** When large donor nutrition programmes end, countries experience significant budget disruptions. The transition period between one programme ending and another starting is weakened by the lack of adequate transition planning for a government to take up the activity independently. Nutrition programmes need to be embedded in national systems from the start.

**Top-down approaches:** Nutrition funding is often allocated according to the priorities and preferences of donors or multilaterals, rather than being country-driven. Donor plans, interventions, and investments are often not responsive to the nutrition context or aligned with the national nutrition priorities. Usually, convenience and donor-perceived need is prioritised, which can undermine a country's own strategy and momentum. Further, institutional donor and development agendas and priorities are challenging to shift.

**Sectoral silos:** The multi-sector integration of nutrition remains a significant challenge. Nutrition is often treated in isolation rather than as a core part of broader development efforts. One interviewee explains this by saying, *'we have yet to crack the nut on ... why malnutrition really does matter to those areas [of climate, agriculture, etc.]'*. The lack of multi-sectoral integration with health, agriculture, education, and social protection reduces the effectiveness

of nutrition interventions and the availability of resources. Siloed sectors *'are not really set up to work together'* and lack incentives to collaborate. There is a lack of consensus on what is and is not part of nutrition, resulting in an inability to tap into funding across relevant sectors.



*“One of the biggest barriers is that the world has always seen nutrition as a niche area, as a small area that is dominated by ‘us nutritionists’ and we haven’t been able to break out of that tent we built for ourselves and be able to join hands with the wider development community.”*



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**Fragmentation and lack of alignment:** The current ecosystem of financing for nutrition lacks harmonisation. A lack of coordination and aligned priorities from global to regional to national levels leads to an overcrowding in financing in some areas, with inadequate resources in others. UN agencies can also be fragmented and uncoordinated, competing with one another instead of working together to support country-level action. Fragmentation is acute at the country level, with a proliferation of programmes working across purposes that are not aligned or coordinated, so *'they're less than the sum of their parts'*.



*"If I want to deal with agri-food investments with nutrition, I have to deal with FAO, with IFAD, with WFP, then with UNIDO, then with UNCTAD, then with UNDP – I can't do that."*

Despite global efforts to align nutrition actors – such as the strategies of the SUN Movement – the lack of alignment behind an overarching strategy, agenda, or theory of change hinders coordinated nutrition investment on a global scale. The global nutrition community must shift to aligning behind country nutrition plans, priorities, and needs, and support efforts for more effective coordination and capacity building at the national level.



*"In the UN system, the fact is that agency A only focuses on severe malnutrition, agency B only focuses on moderate malnutrition, and agency C only on micronutrients. I think we are trying to divide the agenda too much, and that leads to these structural barriers."*



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# DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

## I. Investing in country capacity

**Country plans:** Countries that have been more successful in aligning financing have comprehensive national plans or policies for improving nutrition outcomes with specific targets. Without clear plans that are jointly developed with relevant stakeholders, donor investments can be misaligned with national and subnational needs and planning processes. Countries should invest in developing a nutrition strategy, costed priorities, and policy with baselines to measure progress towards a national vision, objectives, and targets.



*“If we really want to plan in the long term, [a first step] is a coherent approach and baselines at the national level to see where we are heading to. So, the national policy is a requirement and also national strategies that are really detailed where we can see the national vision, objectives, targets, and costing.”*

**Administrative capacity:** Many governments are challenged by limited capacity to administer international assistance, with technical gaps related to strategic planning processes, budget planning, resource allocation, implementation, and tracking. Both humanitarian and development funding are largely targeted to direct service delivery, leaving long-term systems-building and strengthening unaddressed.

Donor financing should be used to catalyse national systems strengthening. Interviewees placed a strong emphasis on the need to work with governments on strengthening governance, strategic planning processes, budget planning and resource allocations, and areas like taxation reforms. Interviewees also highlighted the importance of building capacity in countries’

fiscal systems to utilise innovative financing tools and develop accountability structures.

Improving financial systems at national and subnational levels requires more than quick-fix, short-term investments and involves a country’s own reform processes, which go beyond nutrition and can be hard to achieve through external nutrition programme-focused financing modalities and technical assistance. Nutrition-related grant financing could however help generate countries’ demand for concessional financing designed to support reform efforts to maximise investment returns and enable a path towards sustainable financing.

In some countries, financial systems at the national and subnational levels are rapidly developing; in others, they are underdeveloped. Often there are power dynamics between national and subnational administrations, resulting in inefficiencies in administering assistance and in failure to reach the target beneficiaries.



*“The higher the malnutrition burden, the greater the amount of humanitarian funding compared to development funding available. And if no part of that humanitarian funding is building up systems – not UN coordination systems, but national systems – then it’s not going to address this longer-term issue.”*

**Country-level prioritisation and leadership for nutrition:** Leadership at both national and subnational levels is needed to coordinate multi-stakeholder actors and to sustain financing. In many countries, nutrition is not seen as a political priority, resulting in low political ownership. Decentralised ownership of nutrition often makes it unclear who is responsible for nutrition. The majority of countries do not have a ministerial



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body mandated to manage nutrition across government ministries that is reporting to national leadership, leading to a de-prioritisation of nutrition.

Countries that have had success in mobilising nutrition financing have strong government leadership, articulating nutrition as a whole-of-government priority and what is needed from donors, and managing resources to support their long-term financing needs. Successes in countries like Nepal, Bangladesh, and Indonesia lie in the coordination of investments between donors and government through multi-stakeholder platforms for nutrition. High-level political commitment from national governments, such as efforts to engage Heads of State, can mobilise more significant investments.



*“The nutrition governance structure places the Vice President as the overall nutrition coordinator. So, we are riding on her convening power to bring all the sectors together. ... We’ve decided to move as one government. So, every other Ministry and Government department has a role to play, and they have identified what they can do in the different action tracks or pathways that we have.”*

Interviewees suggested identifying champions in each sector to showcase nutrition as a multi-sectoral domain, in addition to the creation of multi-sectoral nutrition budget line items that intentionally integrate nutrition activities into existing sectoral budget areas such as education, social protection, or agriculture. Ring-fencing these line items can lead to sustainable funding for the long-term.

## II. Global mechanisms for coordination and financing

**Coordination challenges:** The lack of effective coordination across actors was the most commonly cited barrier to nutrition financing by interviewees, with varied responses on how to address it. The existing global coordination mechanisms, such as the SUN Movement, have not been adequately empowered to effectively coordinate global nutrition financing and ensure that different actors are working towards common goals and coherent programming.

Interviewees were largely aligned on the need for strengthened global coordination to address the disconnect between conversations at the global level and conversations at the country and subnational levels, and the need for fluidity in connecting the dots. As one interviewee said, *‘[We need to] figure out a way for country priorities to be elevated to the global level instead*



*of what I see sometimes, which is the global level trying to coordinate down.'*

**Global nutrition financing mechanisms:** In addition to better coordination, an independent broker is needed to generate more funds from donors or other sources, to enhance effective use of funds, and to provide targeted resource mobilisation to fill a country's capacity gaps. However, interviewees differed on the feasibility of a new global financing mechanism – some noting that this was discussed when the SUN Movement was envisioned, but due to the existence of several global vertical health funds and the multi-sectoral nature of nutrition, the idea was not pursued. Interviewees put forward a number of possible approaches: to add nutrition as a fourth pillar of the Global Fund, attach a fund to the World Bank, empower and enhance SUN to be a resource-mobilising mechanism, have a joint UN model like UNAIDS, expand or reform the Child Nutrition Fund to have a broader mandate, or create a new vertical fund for nutrition.

Interviewees noted several issues:

- A dedicated nutrition fund *'needs to have a wider tent'* of ownership
- A neutral, independent coordination and financing entity is needed
- Nutrition is too large, complex, and multi-dimensional for a stand-alone fund
- Actors should operate within the current constrained ecosystem, but strengthen the degree of coordination and integration.



*“The question is, does the G7, G20 want to have a centralised multilateral funding instrument for nutrition? Everyone speaks about Gavi and the Global Fund. I have not seen any appetite for the nutrition equivalent. We would be open, but someone has to take the lead.”*

### III. Gaps in data and financial tracking

**Data for decision-making:** There are gaps in data systems both in terms of tracking nutrition outcomes and nutrition investments. Countries and donors need high quality data to understand nutrition trends, identify nutrition priority areas for action, monitor outcomes, inform decisions and national-level resource mobilisation efforts, and evaluate efficiency and effectiveness of nutrition investments across relevant sectors. It is vital to have data that quantifies how nutrition is affected by other systems and externalities, as well as makes clear the effects of malnutrition on national economies, educational attainment, social development, etc., in order to demonstrate the impact of nutrition investment. Disaggregated process indicators and outcome data are also needed to motivate continued investment and gain political capital. Prevalence indicators alone do not automatically convince stakeholders to invest in nutrition.

Data is also fragmented, compartmentalised, and not integrated into a central system, weakening alignment with national reporting. Nutrition financial and outcome data needs to be in a usable, live form for implementers, not only technical specialists, *'both in terms of actually being able to find it and then being able to make something of it.'*

Efforts to enhance data collection for nutrition are ongoing but still require further investment, e.g. the GAIN-Gallup partnership to track global dietary diversity by leveraging large-scale survey mechanisms, the inclusion of a Minimum Dietary Diversity for women indicator under SDG2, and the addition of progress indicators to the Global Nutrition Targets. More needs to be done to strengthen data systems to capture household-level realities.

**Strengthening national data systems:** National data systems must be strengthened to close gaps in financial data and data collection to measure progress towards nutrition outcomes. Subnational data is especially important to

*'ensure that money follows the burden'* down to the community level to reach target geographies and vulnerable populations and then monitor progress. Strengthened data systems are vital for transparency and accountability, to link nutrition investments with results, and to evaluate the efficient and effective use of integrated nutrition investments across sectors.

**Improved financial tracking:** Tracking how much governments and donors are investing in nutrition, and in what areas, remains a significant challenge. Additionally, national financial data systems are set up by sector, making it sometimes impossible to know how much is spent on nutrition across sectors and to integrate this data into a central national financial data system. This lack of nutrition spending data is a significant barrier to transparent, accountable financing and national reporting, and also limits data-informed decision-making.

Investing in national financial systems that are designed to track against the budget – *'where resources are, how much is going to nutrition, where and how they are utilised at the national and subnational levels'* – would improve transparency and bring visibility to the contribution of nutrition investments to outcomes in other sectors, and vice versa. Adding budget codes for nutrition or tagging nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive line items in an existing system could help countries to better track domestic investments.



*“Unless you build the capacity and system to look at the budget in that way – where resources are, how much is going to nutrition, where and how it’s utilised at national and subnational levels – the normal budgeting system doesn’t allow that because it’s sectorally divided. Nobody really knows how much is spent on nutrition across sectors. So, nobody knows, nobody pays attention to it, nobody improves.”*



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There is a need for donor investments to be similarly tracked and designed. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Nutrition Policy Marker is a global tool that supports the monitoring of donor investments by identifying investments with a nutrition objective or indicator in any sector and tracking investments to projects with a nutrition objective or indicator over time. Increased uptake of this policy marker can support better nutrition tracking at the global level, but solutions are also needed for standardising budget tracking in national systems. One interviewee suggested the development of a nutrition marker at the national level to track what governments are investing in nutrition.

**Transparency and accountability:** Improved visibility is needed between development partners and governments to monitor and track nutrition investments and impact, while noting the tension between increased transparency without overburdening donors and governments with documentation requirements. Nonetheless, budgetary data must be made available to ensure transparency and accountability.



## IV. Advocacy: Nutrition as a multi-sectoral development imperative

**Gaps in evidence for advocacy:** Gaps in comprehensive nutrition proof points and implementation evidence are barriers to advocating for the importance of nutrition to the wider sustainable development agenda and for cross-sectoral financing for nutrition, especially in areas other than health. An interviewee emphasised the utility of convincing *'in your face'* data sets, demonstrating the link between limited country GDP growth, losses in human capital potential, and a lack of investment in nutrition.

Data can reinforce advocacy messages, facilitating dialogue with donors and other sectors. Stronger dietary data is needed, including aspects of availability and affordability, to compel other actors (e.g. climate adaptation, agriculture) to notice gaps in the nutrition space. There is a need to strengthen partnerships between advocates and academia to enhance adequate documentation and data collection, and publish rigorous results that reach outside of the nutrition sector. At the same time, there is a need to package and market nutrition data and proof points to be understood by a public audience.

**Simplifying the narrative:** Despite the breadth of evidence, the importance of nutrition to economic and social development is not well understood. The pathways to improved nutrition outcomes are not always straightforward, making it harder to demonstrate the immediate impact of interventions. Disagreement between short-term, intermediary markers of nutrition success (e.g. intervention coverage rates) versus long-term gains (e.g. reductions in stunting) gets in the way of aligning actors.



*“We have to build a narrative that is going to shift global messaging. The narrative that we build is critical. If we are building a narrative that investment in nutrition is a development imperative, then we are going to see interest in the nutrition agenda.”*

Several interviewees indicated that *'nutrition needs a rebrand'* with global champions and the general public supporting an outcry to solve the problem of malnutrition. Having a strong public nutrition narrative is essential for advocacy and securing long-term commitments to nutrition financing. Advocacy campaigns should target high-level political leaders, multi-sectoral decision makers, and the general public to ensure that nutrition remains a political priority.

**Key messages:** Public advocacy and education are key to creating pressure for political and financial commitment on nutrition, and nutrition advocates must work with communications experts to develop key messages to persuade target audiences. Avoiding the technicalities of nutrition, simplified messaging should focus on how nutrition investments will impact the big picture, e.g. the economy and future productivity, disease prevention, and educational attainment.

Messaging to development actors must garner buy-in and position nutrition investments as a development imperative: the lack of investment in nutrition harms outcomes across all sectors, especially social protection, economic productivity, and social development. To reach a public audience, awareness of the malnutrition epidemic must be communicated in an understandable, relatable way.

## V. Innovative and diversified finance

Innovative financing – a range of non-traditional mechanisms to raise additional funds and diversify funding – was seen by interviewees as a pathway to new funding opportunities for nutrition, with the potential to enhance predictability and flexibility in financing and to address shocks more effectively. Historically, the nutrition community has focused mainly on donors and domestic financing, while innovative financing opportunities often remain unexplored.

**Potential benefits:** Innovative financing is about *'going the step further,'* creating more funds to get the nutrition space to where it needs to be. Interviewees expressed interest in exploring underutilised models and new financial architectures as potential sources of predictable

and sustainable nutrition funding. Ultimately, adapting to the changing funding landscape means it is essential to diversify funding among all sources of financing donors, civil society, private sector, bi-laterals, multilateral development banks, innovative finance, and domestic resources – with a dual approach of introducing new sources of funds while maximising or blending existing available funds. However, several interviewees cautioned that innovative finance is a potential distraction: innovative finance cannot substitute core public funding, which is essential for large-scale development challenges.



*“We don’t have any magic bullets. We need to cobble together a strategy that brings in all these opportunities. ... Innovative financing will work in some contexts and not in others, but it shouldn’t stop us from trying.”*

There are multi-dimensional benefits of innovative financing – empowering local community governments and being opportunistic to tap into other sector funding sources. Innovative financing is also seen as a way to bring in the private sector and unlock commercial finance for nutrition commodities and services that lend themselves to a private sector model and complement the work of the public sector through innovative private–public partnerships.

Examples of innovative financing approaches for nutrition include taxation, working with private sector venture capital, social impact and development bonds, debt swaps, repurposing agricultural subsidies, and leveraging social protection financing. Interviewees discussed debt swaps to free up more funds for nutrition, matching mechanisms, and concessional funding such as the World Bank’s International Development Agency (IDA) or the Global Financing Facility.

Countries can also be encouraged to develop their own financing mechanisms, (e.g. through taxation, local markets), empowering them to address funding needs independently and simultaneously nudge positive behaviour patterns. However, it is important to note that innovative models likely work best for middle-

income countries but may not be able to ‘reach the furthest behind first’ or be implementable in countries facing high levels of indebtedness.

**Nutrition sector challenges:** Some interviewees expressed scepticism about the effectiveness of innovative financing in the nutrition sector, suggesting that it has not worked well due to the time required to build the necessary mechanisms and support structures and the obligations that come with innovative mechanisms. Nutrition remains a ‘hard-to-sell sector,’ and it often takes longer to see results. Additionally, as food security and nutrition are complicated and carry more risk for private investments, innovative financing models need to be well crafted, with risks addressed for effective implementation.

**Long-term sustainability:** Concerns arise over the long-term sustainability and scale of some innovative financing models in a high-risk sector like nutrition. Some innovative approaches (e.g. social impact bonds) will not work for issues such as stunting reduction because of its unpredictability. And while innovative models like taxation may bring new funds, there is uncertainty in its ability to drive sufficient levels of investment.

The way forward includes identifying innovative funding mechanisms that have potential for nutrition and building evidence of their efficacy in addition to a strong core of public investments. This includes adapting to reduced traditional donor support by leveraging international financial institutions and multilateral development bank funding, and considering taxation.



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# RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on this research, the SDG2 Advocacy Hub and World Vision International make the following recommendations.\*

**System-wide recommendation:** As financing challenges intensify, the world is at risk of losing years of progress made to reduce malnutrition. A system-wide shift is more urgent now than ever to focus on strengthening countries' capacity to mobilise, administer, and track sustainable, coherent, and predictable financing that delivers on national priorities. Now is the time to come together and place people and communities at the centre.

## Recommendations at global and national levels

### Improve the quality, predictability, and sustainability of nutrition financing:

1. Ensure alignment of funding with country nutrition plans, priorities, and the malnutrition burden down to the subnational level in financing frameworks for an integrated approach across donor investments.
2. Leverage concessional funding to increase sustainable, predictable, coherent, and long-term investments in nutrition to ensure generational behaviour change.
3. Leverage the Global Nutrition Targets and progress indicators to track the impact of nutrition funding and interventions to assess effectiveness and intermediary progress.
4. Strengthen transparency by participating in national and global coordination mechanisms.

### Enhance existing mechanisms to better deliver and coordinate nutrition financing:

1. Fund existing mechanisms (e.g. the Child Nutrition Fund, World Bank IDA and GFF, Power of Nutrition) to reach the most vulnerable children with financing for nutrition.
2. Ensure that resources for the direct implementation of nutrition activities are accompanied by technical assistance at the country level for strengthening the function of local financing, data, and budget tracking systems.
3. Increase nutrition financing levels and the pace of disbursements in coordination with multi-stakeholder platforms at the national level.
4. Resource and support the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement to:
  - a. Fund and empower the SUN Movement to play its coordination role more effectively and to perform the role of linking priorities from the subnational and national level upwards.
  - b. Lead the coordination of donors to align financing with national plans, priorities, and needs.
  - c. Support capacity building at the national level for the administration of finance, subnational planning processes, and sectoral strategy alignment.
  - d. Design SUN 4.0 with this suite of recommendations at its core to enhance the coordination and effectiveness of nutrition financing.

\* These recommendations have not been endorsed by interviewees.



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### Advocate for nutrition as a development imperative:

1. Take up the recommendations of this report to enable a system-wide shift towards country priorities and to increase the amount of and effectiveness of financing for nutrition.
2. Develop a simplified, coherent, and consistent narrative for nutrition with key messages that will land with key target audiences: governments, donors, development actors outside of the nutrition sector, and the general public.
  - a. Advocate with clear messages on the importance of nutrition investments for economic growth, future productivity, disease prevention, and educational attainment.
  - b. Communicate the seriousness of malnutrition and the importance of access and affordability of healthy diets to a public audience in an understandable, relatable way.
  - c. Collaborate with communications and marketing experts to develop messages that will resonate with target audiences.

### National level recommendations

#### Identify nutrition as a government priority:

1. Develop and/or implement a comprehensive and costed national multi-stakeholder nutrition plan and policies for improving the burden of malnutrition with baselines to measure progress towards a national vision, objectives, and specific targets.
2. Identify nutrition champions within the government who can cultivate country leadership to set nutrition as a national priority, coordinate multi-sectorally, and garner buy-in for the implementation of a national nutrition plan.
3. Establish a designated multi-stakeholder nutrition office with appropriate authorities and responsibilities, reporting to the president, vice president, or prime minister.
4. Develop country-level mechanisms, such as a multi-stakeholder platform, for improved coordination, intelligence sharing, advocacy, transparency, and accountability across all stakeholders.
5. Provide direct technical guidance to align donors to their nutrition priorities and plans.



**Improve the quality of and increase domestic funding for nutrition:**

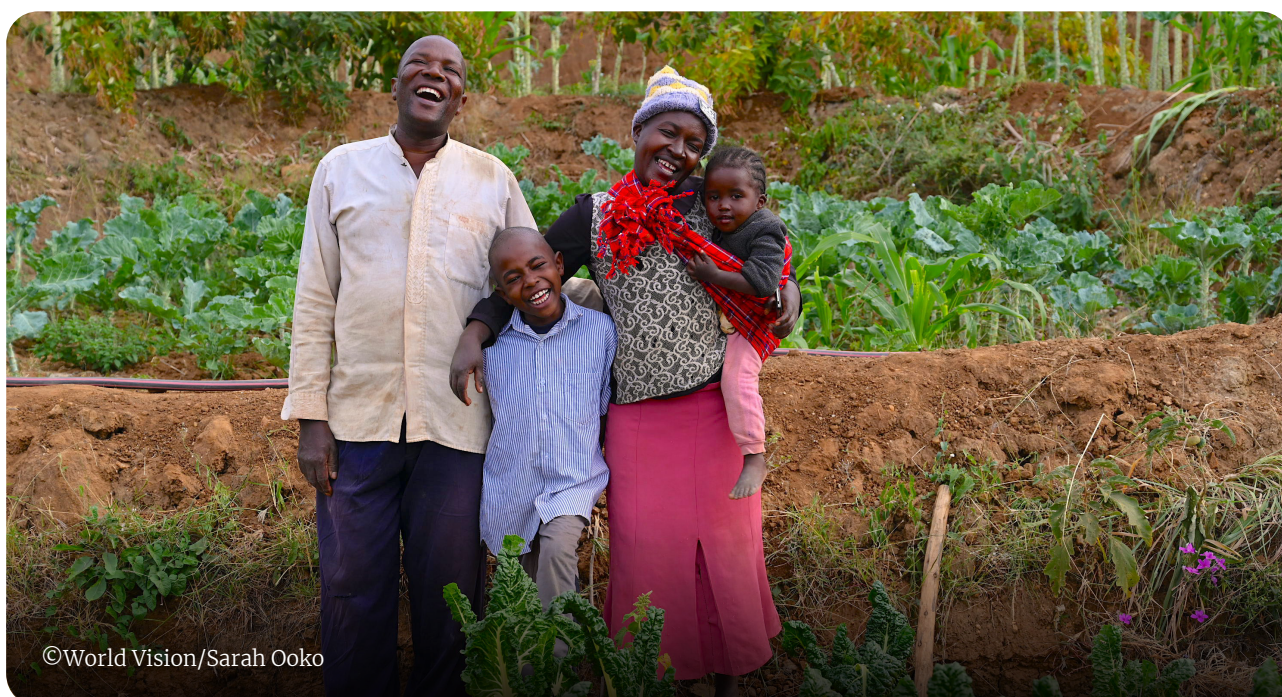
1. Develop locally tailored solutions and ensure alignment of funding with the malnutrition burden down to the subnational level.
2. Embed nutrition programmes in local governments from the start to ensure a sustainable and gradual transition of programme financing from donors to government.
3. Transition to the co-financing of national nutrition plans where they exist, in collaboration with governments and in consideration of the country's budgetary context.
4. Create clear transition plans from a reliance on donor funding to strong domestic resource mobilisation.
5. Explore context-appropriate innovative financing tools for nutrition, such as taxation, social impact bonds, or repurposing agriculture subsidies.

**Strengthen national financing, data, and budget tracking systems:**

1. Strengthen the capacity of national financial systems for nutrition

financial administration spanning the establishment of budget line items for tracking and accountability.

2. Integrate nutrition objectives, activities, and budget line items into existing budget areas across sectors, including setting measurable targets and outcomes.
3. Leverage ring-fencing mechanisms to dedicate long-term sustainable funding for nutrition, beyond the changes of political cycles.
4. Adopt and embed standardised budget codes and tagging systems for nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive line items across countries and sectors within expenditure frameworks or development plans.
5. Enhance comprehensive nutrition data collection and implementation of scientific evidence.
6. Invest in building the capacity of national systems for nutrition financial administration, including budget tracking, strengthening data collection and monitoring at the subnational level, and harmonisation to evaluate the efficient and effective use of nutrition investments across sectors.



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# ANNEX A: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES WITH AFFILIATIONS

*Note: Some interviewees have requested to remain anonymous.*

Name	Organisation
Abdoulaye Ka	World Bank
Abigail Perry	United Nations World Food Programme
Anna Hakobyan	Children's Investment Fund Foundation
Augustin Flory	Gavi, The Vaccine Alliance
Felix Phiri	The Shamba Centre for Food and Climate/Former Deputy Director of Nutrition, Malawi
George Ouma	African Development Bank and Coordinator of the African Leaders for Nutrition
Gladys Mugambi	Scaling Up Nutrition Focal Point of Kenya and Chair of Executive Committee
Hugh Bagnall-Oakley	Save the Children UK
Lydia Darby	Save the Children UK
Jim Emerson	The Power of Nutrition
Josh Levens	Scaling Up Nutrition Movement Secretariat
Kyoko Shibata Okamura	World Bank
Mary D'Alimonte	Results for Development
Mathews Mhuru	Zambia Food and Nutrition Commission
Matt Freeman	Stronger Foundations for Nutrition
Meera Shekar	World Bank

