



EU funded nutrition project implemented by UNICEF. Nutrition-specific interventions are key to accelerating progress. However, it is also critical that other sectors – such as agriculture, education and social welfare-develop nutrition-sensitive interventions. A truly multi-sectoral approach will achieve optimal nutrition outcomes through greater synergy, while also helping other programmes achieve more powerful results and demonstrate their own potential for impact. (Photo courtesy of EU and UNICEF)

Ethiopia: EU+ Joint Strategy on Nutrition

Context

Ethiopia is the second-most populous country in Africa with a population of 87 million. In just over 20 years Ethiopia has reduced the prevalence of stunting (chronic under nutrition) in children under five years of age from 67% to 40%. This has been a major contributing factor to Ethiopia's impressive performance in reducing child mortality. However, even if this trend continues, Ethiopia will still fall short of its own commitment to reduce stunting to 20% by 2020 and 0% by 2030.

The European Union with the 20 EU Member States plus Norway (EU+) share a long-term vision for supporting Ethiopia's development. In preparation for the joint programming of their development cooperation, the EU+ partners agreed to launch a pilot joint action in a priority sector of common interest. The theme of nutrition was selected as the pilot joint action to test the feasibility of joint, collaborative programming for enabling coordination, coherency and complementarity of their interventions.

Objectives

The overall objective of the EU+ Joint Strategy on Nutrition is to help develop a coherent and cohesive response of the EU+ partners to Ethiopia's key

development challenge of reducing child stunting prevalence to 26% by 2020 and to 0% by 2030.

The EU+ Joint Strategy on Nutrition 2016-2020 offered an opportunity for harmonisation of the EU+ programmes and initiatives into national nutrition planning, resourcing and implementation, evidence-based documentation and monitoring and evaluation. Formulation of the EU+ Joint Strategy on Nutrition helped to improve alignment, harmonisation, results, predictability and transparency. It also helped to avoid overlapping and fragmentation of EU+ and other development partners' interventions.

Impact

The greatest impact of joint programming in nutrition is reflected in increased transparency, complementarity, coherence and predictability of support for the sector. Therefore, joint programming led the participating EU+ partners towards more strategic engagement, better complementarity across sectors, harmonisation where additional investment was required, and in some cases delegation of funding to be implemented by another partner.

The first step of the joint programming was forming the *EU+ Nutrition Group* and it added value at the outset by helping to complement and harmonise the

EU+ partners' interventions and synchronise them with the national planning cycle.

The sound *Joint Analysis* of under-nutrition helped to form the common understanding of the causal factors of stunting prevalence amongst children. It also highlighted the critical importance of preventing under-nutrition in the window from conception to two years of age (also referred to as the “first 1000 days”). Beyond this “window of opportunity”, it is almost impossible to recover from the human development deficits. The joint analysis also emphasised that micronutrient deficiency, also known as “hidden hunger”, because it is less visible to the naked eye is also an issue in Ethiopia.

The *joint mapping exercise* of nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions and the *gap/opportunities analysis* helped to identify the gaps in interventions and where EU+ resources might be more strategically and effectively allocated to achieve better gains in maternal and child nutrition. It also informed a more effective *division of labour*.

EU+ partners communicated challenges of under-nutrition through meetings, workshops and producing a newsletter. The EU Delegation also designed a dedicated webpage on nutrition on its website. This information sharing led to formulation of joint positions, stronger advocacy and policy engagement. EU+ partners also established linkages between the nutrition-related coordination mechanisms and EU+ joint engagement through their participation in the nutrition donors' meetings and in the working groups on rural development, food security and nutrition.

Nutrition is also integrated into thematic projects and calls for proposals, such as the Resilience Building and Creation of Economic Opportunities in Ethiopia Reset II that was co-funded by EU, ECHO, Austria and Netherlands.

EU Delegation mobilised additional thematic assistance in support of the group on nutrition such as the Nutritional Advisory Services (NAS) which provided technical support and capacity building for European projects, ensuring that nutrition is properly incorporated as a cross-cutting issue across all programmes. For example, NAS team helped to make the Reset II guidelines nutrition-sensitive and subsequently did a systematic analysis of the inclusion of nutrition in the projects that were selected. A specific training on nutrition was also provided to the eight consortium members who were tasked with the implementation.

How is this joint initiative making Ethiopian peoples' lives better?

Joint Nutrition Strategy helped to mobilise multiple sectors, in contrast to the usual reliance on health only, so as to sufficiently address the underlying and basic causes of under-nutrition. Correspondingly, a coordinated and coherent response by EU+ partners raised the profile of nutrition as a development issue across different sectors and helped identify existing sector programmes through which it can be addressed.

EU+ group has influenced the Government actions and policies, and helped to bring all nutrition services into one package (e.g. community-based nutrition services, infant and young child nutrition) and link them with

Full name: EU+ Joint Nutrition Strategy 2016-2020

Start date/end date: 2016-2020

Partners: EU, 20 Member States, Norway

Lead European partner: Italy (Gender, Pastoralist Areas, WatSan & Hygiene), Germany (Agriculture & Food Systems), Spain (Health, Environment), Ireland (Social Protection), Sweden (Education), ECHO (Humanitarian-development nexus), EU (Human Rights)

Modality: Combination of modalities (Budget Support, project interventions, policy engagement, capacity building technical assistance)

Value of the initiative: Nutrition is addressed as a cross-sector issue and therefore spans the entire EU+ portfolio which is estimated at EUR 4.3 billion for the period 2017-2020

Website: https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/ethiopia/31077/european-union-support-scaling-nutrition-ethiopia_en

nutrition-sensitive interventions. EU+ partners have also influenced the development of the national information platform on nutrition to help exchange the information and linkages between programmes.

EU+ aims to directly strengthen service delivery in agriculture and livestock by acknowledging the multiple underlying causes of malnutrition and enabling pathways from agriculture to nutrition. For example, recognising that the education sector plays an essential role in reducing under-nutrition in a sustainable, long-term and equitable manner, the EU+ works to increase enrolment and retention of pupils, and particularly to improve female adolescent access to education up to secondary level.

Ethiopian women in particular are benefitting from the EU+ Joint Strategy as it puts women at the centre of nutrition-related interventions, both in rural and in urban setting, promoting gender equality and women's decision-making.

Pastoralists are almost entirely directly dependent on their livestock for health and nutrition. The EU+ support will strengthen service delivery to pastoralists, the lack of which is widely acknowledged to be one of the most evident processes of marginalisation and exclusion by governments and policy makers.



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