

# WHAT CAUSES MATERNAL AND CHILD MALNUTRITION?

Today, 7,000 young children will die from malnutrition while countless others live out their childhoods in a state of chronic malnourishment. Understanding how this happens is the first step to solving this silent crisis.



## FOOD

**Insufficient access to affordable, nutritious food.**

Without sufficient calories or the right nutrients in their diets, women and children are susceptible to the dire, sometimes deadly, consequences of malnutrition.<sup>1</sup>



## CARE

**Lack of proper care of mothers and children and poor infant feeding practices.** Nearly one million child deaths per year could be prevented if children were breastfed exclusively during their first 6 months.<sup>2</sup>



## HEALTH

**Poor access to health services and unhealthy household environment.** Disease, unsafe water, and improper sanitation contribute to malnutrition, particularly in children.<sup>3</sup>

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children will die from malnutrition by the time you finish reading this infographic. Virtually all of these deaths are preventable.

## AT THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM

### POVERTY



Poverty can lead to malnutrition and malnutrition can, in turn, trap people in poverty. For children malnourished early in life, this trap can last a lifetime.<sup>4</sup>

### STATUS OF WOMEN



Women's lack of access to economic resources and educational opportunities can hinder progress toward eliminating child malnutrition. It is estimated that the odds of a child being severely undernourished are reduced by **50%** if his mother owns land.<sup>5</sup>

## THE SEEDS OF LIFELONG HEALTH & DEVELOPMENT ARE PLANTED IN THE FIRST 1,000 DAYS

The **1,000 days** during a woman's pregnancy and her child's 2nd birthday are critical to long-term human development. The right nutrition during these 1,000 days produces a lifetime of benefits: **healthy growth and brain development • stronger immune systems • higher IQ • better educational performance • greater lifetime earning potential**



**Better nutrition in the 1,000 day window can help families and societies break the cycle of poverty and leads to:**



Savings of **\$20-30 billion annually** in health costs.<sup>6</sup>



**Increases in GDP up to 3% annually.**<sup>7</sup>



**Productivity gains of as much as \$138 for each \$1 invested.**<sup>8</sup>

[www.ThousandDays.org](http://www.ThousandDays.org)



Citations:

1 The World Bank, Global Monitoring Report 2012.

2 Save the Children, State of the World's Mothers 2012.

3 WHO, Safer Water, Better Health: Costs, Benefits and Sustainability of Interventions to Protect and Promote Health, 2008.

4 Effect of a nutrition intervention during early childhood on economic productivity in Guatemalan adults, The Lancet, 2008

5 World Development, Do Women's Land Rights Promote Empowerment and Child Health in Nepal? 2007.

6 FAO, State of Food Insecurity in the World, 2004

7 The World Bank, Repositioning Nutrition as Central to Development, 2006.

8 Copenhagen Consensus 2012, Challenge Paper: Hunger and Malnutrition.