



Improving nutrition in Afghanistan

Prevention and treatment of malnutrition and improving nutritional status in Afghanistan

Country

Afghanistan

Location

Nangarhar, Kunar, Kabul City
and Laghman

Duration

Jan - Dec 2023

Donors

UNICEF
World Food Programme

Background

Malnutrition is a major public health concern in Afghanistan. In 2023, it is estimated that two-thirds of the population are food insecure with 55% of the population expected to be in crisis level. The rising cost of food prices, poverty and unemployment make it harder for Afghans to buy food, among other essential goods. Nutritional problems in rural areas are largely driven by drought, flooding and other disasters affecting crops, livelihoods and other income sources.

The nutrition cluster estimates that 27 out of 34 provinces are above the emergency threshold for acute malnutrition. One million children under five live with severe acute malnutrition (SAM), 2.2 million children under five with moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) and 0.7 million pregnant and lactating women (PLW) with acute malnutrition. Stunting also stands at a staggering 41% in Afghanistan.

Objectives

HNTPO's nutrition projects aim to:

- Reduce acute malnutrition in children under-five and PLW in Khost, Laghman, Kabul and Kunar provinces through prevention, screening, detection and treatment using the Targeted Supplementary Feeding Programme (TSFP) in 173 health facilities;
- Increase nutrition awareness and prevent malnutrition by educating communities, PLW and MAM-child caregivers about proper infant and young child feeding practices;
- Distribution of Micronutrient Powder (MNP) targeting children aged 6-59 months, as part of a home-based food fortification to improve the quality of the diet of young children;
- Train community health workers and community members on Community-Based Nutrition Programme, Micro-Nutrient Powder administration and interpersonal communication.

Activities

- Awareness raising to community health workers on TSFP;
- Maintaining community outreach, including regular nutrition screening, referral, follow-up and community awareness on nutrition and health topics in the community;
- Identification of MAM-children age 6-59 months and acutely malnourished PLW and admission to the TSFP for treatment;
- Promotion of systematic referral from health posts to health facilities;
- Provision of food commodities and necessary equipment for sites administering TSFP;
- Coordination with national and provincial stakeholders, and attending nutrition related meetings;

- Capacity building of all health staff administering the TSFP;
- Distribution of MNP to health facilities and community health workers for distribution in the community.
- Screening of children and PLW within all BPHS health facilities for growth monitoring and detection of malnutrition.

Previous results

In 2022,

- 254,715 children were screened across BPHS health facilities, identifying 7,923 cases of SAM and 39,292 cases of MAM.
- 115,041 children under the age of two were closely monitored for growth.
- 64,917 children under five were diagnosed and treated for malnutrition.
- 140,000 children received MNP through two rounds of distribution.
- Essential Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) counselling services was provided for mothers and guardians across BPHS health facilities.

With support from



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is an international non-profit organisation that supports communities in fragile and conflict affected settings to regain control and maintain their own health and wellbeing. We believe that everyone has the inner strength to (re)build a better future for themselves and those around them.

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