

Analysing Nutrition Governance Learning Event Programme

Day 1: Thursday 19 January 2012

Session 1: Goals and Expectations

9:30 – 10:30

- Anna Taylor (DFID)
- Lawrence Haddad/Andrés Mejía Acosta (IDS)
- Opening remarks from country participants

The first session started with some opening remarks from Roger Williamson (IDS) and Anna Taylor (DfID) welcoming special guests. Taylor stressed DfID's commitment to exploring intra-sectorial and multi-stakeholder approaches to nutrition programmes and addressed the challenges of scaling-up programmes in different countries. She mentioned the current momentum around nutrition, with 23 countries all over the world aiming to implement nationwide nutrition programmes and that this workshop was an opportunity to share experiences and best practises from the different case studies and beyond. DfID itself has changed its approach to nutrition considerably, away from a focus on health-only towards a multi-sectorial perspective which embeds nutrition into different areas of its bilateral programmes, such as agriculture, livelihoods and political economy issues.

Following this Lawrence Haddad gave a small welcoming speech pointing out that this was the first workshop he ever attended, which connected the issues politics, governance and nutrition in one title. He stated that *"We often know what to do, we know what to measure – but we are not quite sure on how to do it. And that is when the political analysis comes in. It is the elephant in the room we don't want to confront head-on."* This event, so Haddad, should hopefully be an opportunity to approach nutrition from a different angle, bringing in the governance perspective and establish a way forward, without getting trapped in the terminology.

In the last part of the first session participants had the opportunity to introduce themselves and share briefly their background and expectations with the group. One of the main themes emerging from this was the hope that the workshop will generate ideas and tools to develop sustainable responses towards nutrition programmes, based on government partnerships (from the local to the national level) and moving away from a technical towards a political approach.

Session 2. Analysing nutrition governance: a framework

11:00 – 12:30

Chair: Lawrence Haddad (IDS)

- Presenters: Andrés Mejía Acosta and Jessica Fanzo
- Commentators: Stuart Gillespie (IFPRI) and Dolf te Lintelo (IDS)

In the first half of this session Jessica Fanzo and Andrés Mejía Acosta presented the analytical framework on which the fieldwork for the 6 case studies on nutrition governance was based. Following this presentation, Stuart Gillespie commented on the framework and how it is well designed to capture the dynamics of political processes, which have been overlooked in previous attempts to

understand the effectiveness of nutrition programmes. Moving from a concept of political willingness to political choice, it is important to take the notion of neutrality away from policy implementation, data collection and monitoring and evaluation efforts. The vertical coordination component of the model is vital for this purpose. Furthermore, Gillespie said that undernutrition needs to be turned into a “feel-good and look-good” issue, in order to incentivise political commitment. The second commentator Dolf te Lintelo built on this stressing the importance to understand the implementation dynamics of nutrition programmes and shed light beyond the institutional settings on the underlying ideas, concepts and interests driving political action. He questioned whether the methodology of the framework was too static and whether it left enough room to incorporate more dynamic indicators. Te Lintelo mentioned the Hunger Reduction Commitment Index (HRCI) as an example of indicators which emerged during fieldwork, taking into account the views of local actors.

In a Q&A session, following this discussion, the need to provide numbers to work on and the challenges related to retrieving these from research was raised. Beyond the collection of data it is necessary to look at how it is interpreted and when it can be subject to manipulation. This links also to the question of how to interpret and define nutrition itself and how policy change preceded fundamentally by a change of ideas.

The participants also discussed the issue of budget processes and how these should be designed in a way to prevent funding failures. The provision of data can assist in convincing policy-makers to invest in nutrition initiatives that will work. This interlinks with the importance of sequence of policy processes and how to build a potential sequence of events into the analytical framework. On the issue of how continuity can be achieved the Minister of Bangladesh suggested that donors could take the lead on evaluating successful programmes to incentivise incoming governments to adopt them, despite having been initiated by the previous administration.

Session 3. Gathering political commitment: the cases of Peru and Zambia

14:00 – 15.30

- Chair: Richard Jolly (IDS)
- Presenter: Jay Goulden (CARE) and Linnet Taylor (IDS)
- Commentators: Elizabeth Chizema Kawesha (MoH-Zambia);
 - Silke Seco-Grutz (DFID – Zambia)

Elizabeth Chizema Kawesha (MoH-Zambia) commented on the Zambia presentation and underlined the importance of giving nutrition the same priority on the government agenda, as for example HIV/AIDS has received. The NFNC’s mandate and responsibility has been formalised by the Nutrition Act, and it is mainly a question of leadership to act upon it and take its place as a high-level coordinating body. Furthermore it is a priority by the government to empower government at the local level to implement the nutrition programme. Much can be learned from the Peru programme and the current post-election momentum in Zambia should be used to establish political commitment and create multi-stakeholder coalitions like in the Peruvian case. Furthermore, it is necessary to unify and homogenise the existing funding mechanisms and develop one coherent strategy which accommodates the efforts made by different national and international actors. Initiatives around the eradication of Malaria could serve as an example of how to implement similar programmes on a national level. She also suggested to not only raise the priority level of nutrition on a national level, but also to use regional bodies such as the African Union to sustain political commitment and push a regional agenda.

The second commentator Anna Taylor concluded that three main themes struck her in both case studies. The first theme was financing and the strong case made for results-based budgeting in Peru and the lessons that can be learned from them in relation to the planned pooling mechanisms in Zambia. The second theme addressed the interrelation between poverty and nutrition, how these are linked and what the benefits/trade-offs are of linking nutrition more with a poverty agenda. Civil society was the third theme identified by Taylor, which in the case of Peru played a crucial role to

legitimise the national nutrition programme. She posed the question of what international donors and local actors could do to stimulate the engagement of civil society on this issue.

In the Q&A session questions were raised around the role of different actors such as donors, civil society and the private sector, as well as how the lack of qualified nutritionists in Zambia can be overcome. Whilst civil society in Peru was an aspect that contributed to sustainability, in other contexts such as Zambia it might not work since it does not exist to the same extent. It was also asked who exactly formed the ‘civil society’ in Peru and how sustainable this approach might be, if crucial monitoring and evaluation responsibilities are transmitted to civil society actors. The apolitical nature of the Peruvian case was considered striking and atypical for a Latin-American country, and Goulden confirmed that the programme “*was apolitical but tried to change the politics of how nutrition was being managed*”. Much interest was expressed in the example of results-based-budgeting as well as consensus-based monitoring in the case of Peru and how this might be applicable in different contexts. A further issue that was raised and was repeated throughout the conference was the interrelation between poverty and nutrition, as well as on a programme level the relation (and potential for complementarity) between e.g. CCTs and nutrition programmes.

Session 4. Government and donor coordination: the cases of Bangladesh and Ethiopia

16:00 – 17:30

- Chair: Deepta Chopra (IDS)
- Presenter: Linnet Taylor (IDS)
- Commentators: Ferew Lemma (MoH – Ethiopia);
 - Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury (WCA-Bangladesh);
 - Khandoker A. Rohman (Bangladesh)

Following Linnet Taylor’s presentation of the case studies of Ethiopia and Bangladesh, Minister Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury complemented the presented facts with more details on the different components of the government’s HPNSEP programme, as well as its governance structure. She pointed out that the government has a strong social safety net programme (incl. programmes for children and elderly) which is coordinated effectively between different ministries. These coordination structures are not working as effectively in the case of nutrition, and the reasons for this need to be investigated. It also has to be decided which ministry should focus on nutrition, and whether it should be placed within the food or health agenda. The Minister welcomed any contributions made by external actors to provide evaluations and reports on which kind of constellation would be most effective in the case of Bangladesh. A further point raised was the special attention that has to be paid to reducing stunting, which has not been addressed sufficiently.

Ferew Lemma commented on the Ethiopian programme pointing out that there have been several initiatives to increase vertical coordination by involving communities. At a community level there are too many volunteers working on different issues and financed by different donors. There have been advances made in creating an intra-sectorial voluntary workforce that gathers households to address different issues (such as nutrition, maternal health etc.) in the same group, rather than duplicating volunteers’ work. In general, communication should be strengthened towards the ministries, rather than to individual donors. M&E systems should be put in place to improve inter-sectorial communication and make sure all ministries work towards the same objectives. He suggested that a Memorandum of Understanding could be signed to work towards this.

Day 2: Friday 20 January 2012

Summary and expectations for Day 2

9:00 – 9:15

- Roger Williamson (IDS) and Jessica Fanzo (REACH)

Roger Williamson and Jessica Fanzo shared their reflections on the previous day before initiating the last presentation on the case studies of India and Brazil. Williamson stressed the importance of moving from what is written on paper to formalising policy and that the feedback of government ministers to the case studies presented during the first day was vital to come closer to practical implementation. Fanzo cited Stuart Gillespie's comment from the previous day, when he said that there is the need to *"get away from the artefacts of government and move towards the dynamics of government"*. For this the motivations, champions and triggering factors for political commitment have to be understood. Previous multi-sectorial efforts to promote nutrition governance failed due to a focus on technicalities, without looking at the causal links leading to undernutrition. The relevance of political processes is now understood, but how to encourage and sustain political commitment and multi-sectorial coordination still has to be understood. The role of external actors in this process needs to be analysed, as well as how funding mechanisms, effective advocacy and simplifying and homogenising the message around nutrition to secure political support play a role in the process of scaling up nutrition programmes.

Relating back to di Lintelo's remarks the day before, Fanzo concluded saying that *"hopefully today we will not only talk about the "Why's" but about the "How to's"."*

Session 5. Nutrition strategies and federalism: the cases of Brazil and India

9:15 – 10:45

- Chair: Rob Hughes (DFID)
 - Presenter: Andres Mejia Acosta and Shandana Mohmand (IDS)
- Commentators –Júnia Valéria Quiroga da Cunha (MDS, Brazil)
- Alison Dembo Rath (Government of Orissa, India)

In this session chaired by Rob Hughes, the case study of Brazil was presented by Andrés Mejía Acosta followed by the India case study presented by Shandana Mohmand. Following the case studies, Júnia Valéria Quiroga da Cunha from the Ministry of Social Development and Fight Against Hunger (MDS) commented on the Brazil presentation. She pointed towards some aspects which could be further elaborated on in the report, such as including the new calculations of food baskets to measure household food insecurity, as well as the CONSEA as a prime example of establishing social commitment and partnerships. Its regular national conferences on nutrition provide a platform to influence policy-making directly and manage to attract high numbers of participants. Despite Brazil's well-recognised advances in the fight against hunger there are still many challenges to be faced to reduce malnutrition and poverty. In the nutrition programmes it is particularly crucial to work on strengthening the links, within the programme management framework, between the national and the state-level. At the moment the coordination with the municipalities is working well, but the incorporation of the state-level is still deficient in the implementation of the programme.

On the Indian case Alison Dembo Rath made several observations related to the state of Orissa. Taking up Rob Hugh's point on the need to focus more on cast, she stated that 25% of the population of Orissa belongs to the scheduled tribes. Despite being disproportionately affected by malnutrition and not showing the same level of progress as other groups of the population. Although the nutrition outcomes with this group are lower, it is noteworthy that uptakes of nutrition (ICDS) services have gone up among scheduled tribes. She also questioned whether a universal approach might bring with it problems of quality in the delivery of services (high number of Anganwadi centres), as well as a focus away from targeting the most vulnerable groups.

When talking about governance nutrition, the governance of procurement is a “hot topic”. Dembo Rath mentioned the example of the corruption case around dahl procurement at the district level, known as the “dahl spam”, which led to a decentralised approach to procurement. Dahl is now directly purchased at the Anganwadi level. It was believed that this decentralisation would lead to a transfer of the risk associated with procurement (e.g. being accused of corruption) to the local level. However, risk reduction mechanisms, like the use of e-payment reduced the risk of direct procurement and led to the empowerment the community level. The potential of e-payment mechanisms for food governance should be further explored.

Anne Philpott followed up with some general comments on India from a country level perspective, and compared the two case studies to see whether key lessons from Brazil could be applied to India. She pointed out that some of the key determinants of success in Brazil are already in place in India (e.g. political continuity, presence of the civil society), yet the same level of success has not been achieved. Certain key factors might have been left out of the analysis, such as gender, caste and religious issues, which might explain some of the pitfalls. It would also be interesting to look at other factors in the Brazil case, like the share of the budget allocated to human resources. In the case of India this tends to be rather low, which disincentivises Anganwadi workers in India to show up to work. Hence, it would be interesting to look at system-related expenditures in the Brazil case, like the HR budget, resources and quality of M&E and make a comparison on these issues. It would also be worthy to do a comparative analysis of judicial activism and advocacy in Brazil and India and how this impacted the implementation of the programme in comparison to other factors, like e.g. economic growth, rise in income. In the case of India it might also be worth exploring how advocacy plays out on the state level, e.g. the impact of the Global Hunger Index in Andhra Pradesh. What about non-food determinants of malnutrition and the political economy effect of Food Security Bill issued by the cabinet on the purchase of cheap rice before the next election?

In the Q&A session following the comments, it was asked in how far a comparative analysis can be drawn between countries like India and Brazil, which differ considerably in terms of size and GDP. The political economy analysis is a vital part of explaining different impacts of nutrition programmes, particularly to complement rankings like the WHO analysis which ranks India 11/11 despite its shortcomings nutrition rates. The question around the lack of data in India and the politics behind it recurred in the discussion, as well as the need to convince Indian politicians of the usefulness of data for the formulation and justification of policies. In the case of India it is also necessary to obtain more high-level political support and make nutrition one of the Prime Minister’s priorities, according to Shandana Mohmand.

On the coalition-style in Brazil Mejía Acosta said that it is more of a “marriage of convenience”, rather than political altruism. It stems from an acknowledgement that different actors need to be included in the process to obtain positive results in the fight against hunger and malnutrition. In relation to this a participant from Ethiopia said how in his country different parties firstly need to *recognise* that malnutrition is a problem, before one can even consider building political coalitions around the issue.

Concluding, Mohmand points out that the two cases of Brazil and India reveal different pictures and that as a bottom line of the comparative analysis one can say that the Indian response to malnutrition is a bureaucratic, judicial one, whilst the Brazilian is a political one.

Round Panel Discussion. The political implications for Scaling Up Nutrition

11:15 – 13:00

- Chair: Anne Philpott (DFID)
- Comparative Implications. Andrés Mejía Acosta (IDS)
- Transforming Nutrition. Stuart Gillespie (IFPRI)
- Implications for the SUN Movement. Patrizia Fracassi (UNDP)
- The role of external actors. Michael McManus (Irish Aid)/ Animesh Shrivastava (World Bank)
- Scaling up, from a country perspective: Júnia Quiroga da Cunha (MDS, Brazil)

The panel discussion was phrased around the issue of the politics of scaling up nutrition programmes. Franzo started the discussion, by saying that the current momentum around nutrition governance bears a great potential, but what is currently missing in the discussions and also in the SUN framework is a more systematic integration of governance issues. Although it is difficult to synthesise and compare the case studies presented, due to their contextual uniqueness, it is necessary to come to an agreement on how strengthen and sustain nutrition governance. Nutrition-sensitive interventions for example are at the core of politics, but it is still very unclear which position and priority nutrition has within these.

Gillespie presented the Transforming Nutrition Consortium, a 6-year project led by a coalition of different bilateral, multilateral and research institutions with the aim to detect determinants for different types of child nutrition interventions. For this the Consortium looks at the interplay of direct and indirect nutrition sensitive interventions, as well as the main characteristics of an enabling environment across the cross-cutting issues of governance, inclusion and crisis and fragility.

This was followed by Patrizia Fracassi's presentation of the SUN movement and framework, with a main focus on the country level component. Reflecting on the discussions of the last two days Fracassi concluded that the need of executive leadership seemed to have emerged as one of the key factors for successful nutrition governance. External actors can push this by providing data on successful initiatives (country- and regional) and encourage cooperation with civil society, as well as private sector actors. The SUN movement can play an important role in this by providing the space for horizontal and vertical coordination and collaboration at all levels (country, global, country networks).

Animesh Shrivastava from the World Bank looked at the role of external actors in providing support for good nutrition governance. Based on his experience with the South Asia Food and Nutrition Security Initiative (SAFANSI) (an initiative led by DfID, AusAid and the World Bank) he said that external actors can trigger a bigger national commitment towards nutrition by bringing in a comparative analysis and experiences from different countries. The three main areas identified for this were: 1) evidence and analysis, 2) awareness, advocacy and advisory and 3) capacity building. External actors can play a crucial role in these three areas, starting from setting the national agenda, over to designing policy and towards adopting and implementing the policy. The main problem in South Asia is the "voicelessness of the issue" and external actors can trigger action to put it on the agenda.

The last presentation was made by Júnia Quiroga da Cunha (MDS, Brazil) who presented Brazil's strategy to scale up its social policy programmes to eradicate hunger. Some of the crucial aspects of the Brazilian strategy were the combination of different social policy programmes (incl. CCTs, inclusive production programmes), inter-ministerial collaboration and coordination, a significant increase in the budget and the introduction of a legislative framework. Although substantial progress has been achieved Quiroga da Cunha points out that the state-level implementation of programmes such as the PPA Food Purchase Programme, still needs to be improved.

In the brief Q&A session different participants mentioned the need to develop strategies to identify and incentivise private sector actors efforts to scale up national nutrition programmes.

Robert Chambers

A slight change to the agenda was made when Robert Chambers agreed to talk on the need to include seasonality and sanitation in any discussion related to nutrition. He observed how policymakers remain season-blind in the formulation of policies and nutrition indicators, leaving out of account seasonal poverty and the detrimental impact of poor sanitation on the spread of faecal/oral infections particularly on women and children.

Session 6. Break out groups: Key Lessons for scaling up Nutrition - What do you take back in terms of concrete action?

WG One: How to make government-donor partnerships more effective? - Shyam Raj Upreti

The first working group reported back saying that donors should support government-led nutrition programmes in a coordinated manner, channelling it through one designated focal point and committing to fixed-term funding. Donors should avoid the duplication and fragmentation of efforts and refrain from having their own monitoring systems. Different aspects of intra-sectorial and inter-ministerial coordination should be managed by the focal point or convening body, to make sure that the approach to nutrition is mainstreamed throughout the government. Donor funding should be pooled towards the finance ministry, which will then allocate it to the different ministries in a national budget allocation procedure. Rather than imposing a new nutrition strategy on existing structures, one should map the existing programmes and executing bodies to then see which gaps need to be filled to coordinate these effectively.

WG Two: How to generate sustainable political commitments around nutrition? – Elizabeth Chizema Kawesha (Zambia)

In order to generate and sustain political commitment, it is pivotal to identify the problem and find a “nutrition champion” to push the agenda. This entails generating indicators and data to make the case for stronger political and budgetary commitments towards nutrition. It is necessary to secure high-level commitment within the government, as well as at the donor level and with the inclusion of the private sector. International nutrition champions like the Brazilian Ex-president Lula da Silva or the Ghanaian Ex-president John Kufour could provide some international support for nutrition programmes.

WG Three: How to improve coordination between national and local governments? – Alison Dembo Rath

This group started off saying that multi-sectorialism might work in theory, but not necessarily on the level of implementation. The analytical framework assumes in a way that replicating the national agenda at all levels is a good thing – yet it is necessary to evaluate whether in a country as big as India the programmes might have to adjust to local/regional structures. The group also asked if the framework could be implemented in fragile states, where the most vulnerable people are located, or if it is too focused on having functioning government institutions in place. In order to adapt to different contexts, it might be recommendable to identify different policy issues, which can then be applied and adjusted to different countries, depending on the context.

WG Four: How to improve data collection and nutrition monitoring?- Beyene Haile Negewo (Ethiopia) (Room SCI/2)

The collection of data was one of the emerging key issues for sustaining political commitment for nutrition. This group pointed out that working closely with communities to obtain data is crucial, and

can be supported through funding from international development partners. This should be done in a bottom-up and participatory way and communities should be informed about how the data will be used. It is necessary to build capacity on all stages of data production, validation and analysis and research should be done on the effective use of indicators to advocate for nutrition.

Session 7. Closing remarks and next steps

17:00 – 17:15

- Anna Taylor - DFID Nutrition
- Lawrence Haddad and Andres Mejia Acosta - IDS Transforming Nutrition

In the closing remarks Anna Taylor summarised the 8 main themes that emerged for her from this workshop. These were 1) agenda setting and reaching a consensus on a national level, 2) the importance of leadership for sustainability, 3) public demand and the media, 4) coordination (on the federal, legislative and local level), 5) provide technical assistance for capacity building, 6) vertical linkages, 7) funding (different funding models, e.g. results-based budgeting, CCTs), 8) monitoring, transparency and tracking.

The next steps following this workshop are the publication of a policy brief, the case studies, a synthesis paper, and podcasts and audio interviews.