



THE GLOBAL NUTRITION FOR GROWTH SUMMIT – DECEMBER 2021

MP BRIEFING – OCTOBER 2021

What MPs can do to support this issue:

Please, write to the Foreign Secretary to raise concern about rising malnutrition and urge her to make a strong pledge at the December N4G summit by:

Renewing the UK's commitment to reach 50 million people with nutrition services between 2021-25

Committing £120 million per year for nutrition-specific programmes which help tackle malnutrition. This is broadly equivalent to 2018 funding levels.

WHY NUTRITION MATTERS

Good nutrition is one of the most basic human needs, underpinning at least 12 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Despite being completely preventable, malnutrition is still the leading cause of ill health and death worldwide¹. Undernutrition is linked to 45% of all under-5 child deaths. 149 million children are also too short (stunted) due to poor nutrition in their early years, causing irreversible physical and brain damage, reducing life chances and weakening long-term health.² Nutrition is even more important in the context of covid-19, as good nutrition is essential for maintaining a strong immune system.

Malnourishment also has wider societal impacts. Malnourished children at age 8 are 20% less likely to be able to read simple sentences and are 13% less likely to be in the correct school year for their age.³ Businesses in developing countries collectively lose up to \$850bn/year through malnutrition related productivity losses⁴. Malnutrition costs some countries up to 11% of GDP annually.⁵

Yet the problem is not insurmountable. We know what works and we have seen progress in recent decades. For example, between 2012 and 2018 childhood stunting decreased by 10%⁶. This progress is now at risk.

¹ [2020 Global Nutrition Report 2hrssKo.pdf](#)

² [Fact sheets - Malnutrition \(who.int\)](#)

³ [Food for Thought \(savethechildren.org.uk\)](#)

⁴ [2020-07-08-business-case-investment-nutrition-wellesley-et-al \(chathamhouse.org\)](#)

⁵ [Nutrition Overview \(worldbank.org\)](#)

⁶ [2020 Global Nutrition Report 2hrssKo.pdf](#)

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON RATES OF MALNUTRITION

Following decades of decline, malnutrition is rising again. The pandemic is set to cause an additional 283,000 malnutrition-related deaths in children under-5 and 3.6 million additional children are likely to suffer life-long health issues due to disrupted nutrition services.⁷

THE IMPACT OF UK AID CUTS ON NUTRITION PROGRAMMES

Since 2018, there has been a 70% reduction in funding for nutrition programmes; from £121 million in 2018 to just £37 million in 2021. This has resulted in the closure of programmes that provide essential nutrition services to children and families that desperately need them.

Nutrition has been disproportionately impacted by the cuts to the overall ODA budget, which has dropped from 0.7% GNI to 0.5% - a reduction of approximately 30%.

The table below shows UK aid allocations for nutrition-specific programmes from 2018 to 2021.

Year	2018 (actual)	2019 (actual)	2020 (actual)	2021 (projected)
Total ODA	14,552,000,000	15,197,000,000	13,692,497,000	10,167,500,572
Nutrition specific spend	121,296,000	95,849,120	100,464,568	37,300,000
Nutrition specific spend as % of total ODA	0.83%	0.63%	0.73%	0.37%

*Note, the figures above were produced using a combination of OECD DAC and IATI data.

⁷ [Nature Food Releases Two New Publications — Standing Together for Nutrition \(ST4N\)](#)

WHY NUTRITION FOR GROWTH?

N4G is a summit where governments, private sector and others make commitments to reduce malnutrition. The first summit was held in London in 2013, raising over £17bn.⁸ The next summit is in Tokyo this December.

The summit was due to take place last year but was postponed due to the pandemic. Because of this, the UK's commitments to tackling malnutrition ran out at the end of 2020. Since then, we have seen a sharp decline in the UK's support for nutrition programmes, as evidenced above.

In 2013, the UK recognised the human and economic scourge of malnutrition, which resulted in the first ever N4G summit. Now more than ever, we need to ensure nutrition does not fall off the global radar.

Tokyo N4G is an opportunity for the UK to turn this situation around and make new commitments to tackle malnutrition. As the original hosts of the N4G in 2013, the UK also has tremendous convening power and a strong UK pledge at N4G would catalyse commitments from other donors.

WHAT WE ARE ASKING THE UK GOVERNMENT TO DO

The FCDO should confirm that it will make a new and additional commitment at N4G 2021 that demonstrates its continued support for nutrition.

The FCDO should commit to improve the nutrition of at least 50 million people between 2021-2025 by ensuring the most vulnerable women, girls and children access a package of support designed to prevent and treat malnutrition. This is a commitment the UK made and exceeded between 2015-2020.⁹ To meet this goal, the FCDO should:

Commit £120 million per year to nutrition-specific programmes from 2021-25 - roughly 1% of ODA. This includes services such as breastfeeding support, micronutrient supplementation and wasting treatment.

Nutrition objectives should be integrated into other areas of the FCDO's work that can address the underlying causes of malnutrition, such as agriculture, health and economic development - improving the effectiveness of these investments and driving value for money

Commit to monitor and report against key nutrition targets as part of the FCDO's International Development and Ending Preventable Deaths strategies.

⁸ [About : Nutrition For Growth](#)

⁹ [News: Assessing DFID's results in nutrition - new ICAI results review \(independent.gov.uk\)](#)



CONTACT

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