

## Scaling Up Nutrition: Write an LTE

Despite progress in preventing child deaths, undernutrition remains one of the world’s most pressing and costly problems – close to 165 million children are chronically malnourished and suffer from serious, often irreversible, physical and cognitive damage. So, though more children are surviving childhood, millions are hobbled for life because they are not getting the nutrition they need to develop properly. And each year, for 2.5 million young children, undernutrition is a death sentence.

While the human and economic costs of under-nutrition are enormous, the solutions are basic, proven, and cost-effective. Nutrition programs – especially those targeting women and children during the critical 1,000 days from pregnancy to age two – offer the best returns on investments; every \$1 invested in nutrition generates as much as \$138 in better health and increased productivity.<sup>1</sup> By contrast, under-nutrition can cost individuals up to 10 percent of their lifetime earnings and countries up to 11 percent of their annual GDP in lost productivity.<sup>2</sup> And an undernourished child will have a diminished capacity to learn and work, undercutting investments in education, health, and economic growth.

The U.S. government has been a leader on food security and global health but its nutrition investments represent less than 1 percent of development assistance despite their cost-effectiveness. With consensus on what works to end undernutrition, growing political leadership in development countries to tackle these issues, and a mandate for existing U.S. programs like Feed the Future to improve nutrition, now is the time to scale up and wise up our approach. In the lead up to the G8 Summit, the UK and Brazilian governments will host the first-ever global *Nutrition for Growth* pledging event on June 8, 2013 to mobilize new policy and financial commitments to fight malnutrition. The June 8th event presents a key opportunity for the U.S. to deepen its commitment to nutrition and enshrine it across all U.S. development, food security, and global health efforts.

**Write a letter to the editor calling on the U.S. to invest \$1.35 billion from 2014 through 2016 in nutrition programs.**

### Sample Letter to the Editor (LTE) & Media Hooks

Check online for the guidelines for LTEs provided by your local papers. Make your letter short (150–200 words) and to-the-point using the EPIC format. To write an LTE through our website: <http://results.capwiz.com/results/dbq/media/>.

<b>Engage</b>	In the past 30 years, the number of children under 5 dying of preventable causes every year has been cut in half. We’ve achieved this through increased access to health care in poor nations, particularly for pregnant moms and their babies.
<b>Problem</b>	But hunger is still a death sentence for 2.5 million kids a year – causing one-third of all preventable childhood deaths. And 165 million survive but are developmentally challenged because a lack of proper nutrition. This is entirely preventable with simple, proven, nutrition programs that yield the highest return on investment for growth and productivity. But progress is stalled by a huge funding gap of approximately \$10 billion annually. The U.S. can do more as less than 1% of our foreign aid funds nutrition programs.
<b>Inform about the solution</b>	Leading humanitarian and advocacy organizations recently called upon the Administration to pledge \$1.35 billion over three years to scale up our nutrition investments at the first-ever nutrition pledging conference on June 8th, 2013 in London before the G8 Summit.
<b>Call to action!</b>	Now is the time for the U.S. government to demonstrate its leadership by increasing and improving its investment in nutrition with a \$1.35 billion pledge at the June 8 <i>Nutrition for Growth</i> meeting.
<b>Additional Hooks</b>	1) Consider fasting on World Hunger Day, May 28, in solidarity those who go hungry, and write about it. 2) Make it local by writing about how RESULTS has been working on this issue for many years.

<sup>1</sup> Hoddinott, Rosegrant and Torero, 2012. Copenhagen Consensus Challenge Paper, Copenhagen Consensus. 2012.

<sup>2</sup> “Scaling Up Nutrition: What will it cost?” The World Bank, 2010.

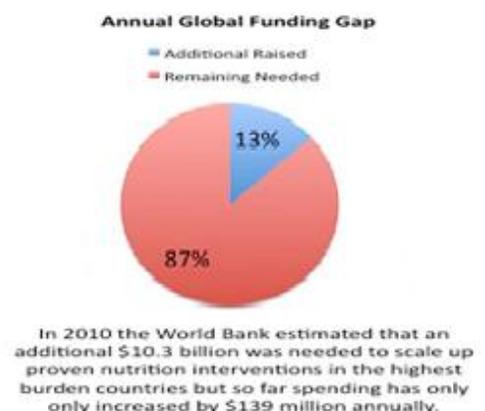
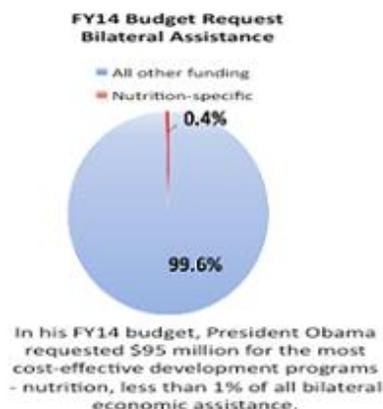
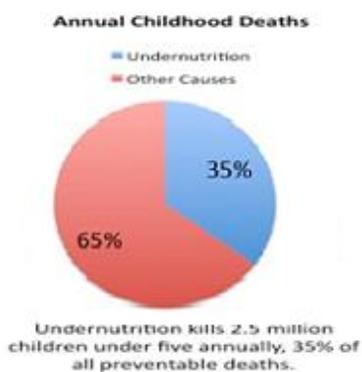
## Now is the Time to Scale Up Nutrition

- **The problem is costly:** Hunger is the biggest cause of illness and death around the world; one in eight people go to bed hungry every night and 2.5 million children die from undernutrition every year.
- **The solutions are clear:** Improving access to nutritious food, vitamins, and minerals for pregnant moms and children in their first two years of life (the 1,000 Days window) is the most cost-effective development intervention. Thirty-four countries battling malnutrition have signed up to join a new movement to scale up nutrition through the SUN Initiative (<http://scalingupnutrition.org>), develop national action plans, and invest their own resources – but they need our help.
- **Our investments save lives:** No child should die for lack of access to nutritious food. Luckily, we know what works to prevent and cure malnutrition. Last year, leaders from around the world set new nutrition targets through the World Health Organization and 34 countries have signed onto the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) network for national action; and the U.S. government’s existing programs have the mandate and potential to improve nutrition outcomes in the first 1,000 Days. The pre-G8 nutrition pledging meeting on June 8<sup>th</sup> marks an opportunity for the U.S. to demonstrate its leadership with a bold pledge to increase its nutrition investments and ensure their effectiveness with one coordinated strategy and results framework.

**Country Example:** Nepal has made remarkable progress in child nutrition. Data shows that stunting in children under age 5 has dropped from 49 to 41 percent from 2006 to 2011. Similarly, sustained high coverage of vitamin A supplementation, iodized salt, and increasing coverage iron/folic acid and deworming coverage have all resulted in improved micronutrient status and health outcomes for women.

## U.S. Leadership is Crucial

- Following the food and fuel crises of 2007-2008, at the G8 Summit in 2009, the U.S. government pledged to invest \$3.5 billion to improve food security over 2009 through 2011. This helped leverage another \$18 billion in commitments from other governments. Last year, the U.S. announced it fulfilled its pledge – mostly through emergency food assistance and the President’s flagship agricultural development program – Feed the Future.
- Improving food security remains one of four global development priorities set by the Administration in its FY14 budget request for foreign relations and operations. President Obama himself called for ending preventable childhood deaths in his State of the Union Address to Congress in February. Despite these intentions, the U.S. is proposing to spend less than \$100 million in FY14 for nutrition, less than 1% of all development assistance, with no common strategy and framework to measure results.
- Several existing programs provide opportunities for the U.S. to improve the effectiveness of its investments and directly improve nutrition - the Global Health Initiative, Feed the Future, international food assistance programs, resiliency programs to help communities deal with climate change and natural disasters, and school feeding safety net programs to name a few.
- Aligning \$450 million in annual funding from these existing programs and funding amounts to just 10% of the total cost to scale up behavior change, de-worming, and micronutrients in a set of the highest burden countries, according to World Bank costing estimates. A three-year pledge of \$1.35 billion would double the amount of nutrition funding available each year to help countries implement their plans and respond to crises and leverage additional funding from other donors counting on the U.S. to continue their leadership.



## Sample Oped and LTE Hooks

- Remember on World Hunger Day (May 28) that not everyone has enough food or the right food, and let's act, because this doesn't have to be. Consider calling on the community to fast on World Hunger Day and write about it.
- Consider using a local RESULTS angle: RESULTS has been working child survival since the 1980s, and we've seen child deaths go down from 40k preventable child deaths per day to 19k, even as the population of the planet has increased dramatically. Though there are still many starving people, there are fewer of them. But we aren't done, there are 165 million chronically undernourished children, many who will experience stunted growth and improper brain development that will affect them for the rest of their lives. We can do something about this. Last year world leaders gathered in DC to create a roadmap to ending preventable child deaths by 2035. If we are to accomplish this goal, seems we want to start with the most basic of things—adequate nutrition.
- Do you have a personal experience you can use as a hook—something you saw or witnessed? Another person's story that touched you that you can share?
- Read a story that started, "The 2011 Somali famine killed an estimated 260,000 people, half of them age 5 and under" or Recently it was determined that 260,000 people died in the 2010-12 famine in Somalia, nearly twice earlier estimates. Half of them were kids under 5. And if this many died, how many of the surviving children will be damaged for life because of a lack of proper nutrition during their critical first 1000 days of life? How does this happen in a world where computers allow us to talk with people around the globe and people measure budgets in trillions of dollars? We need to get our priorities straight. We need to do more for emergency situations, and chronic malnutrition.
- Create a scenario: Imagine being a parent, knowing you could not provide the nutrients your child needs to develop properly in life—what would that feel like. Why do we allow parents to be in this situation?
- At the recent Congressional Gold Medal ceremony, the award recipient, Dr. Muhammad Yunus said there is nothing wrong with people—more it is the systems we create that keeps them from becoming who they can become. Each person is like the see of a giant oak tree, but some people, poor people, are like Bonsais, not because they came into the world that way, but because of the pot they were put in. Imagine starting life without the proper nutrients for your brain and body to develop—this is the fate of 165 million children—to become Bonsai people because they can't get the very basic nutrition they need for development. This is a tragic waste of human resources and unfair.
- Earlier this year in the President's State of the Union he talked about ending extreme poverty by 2030. And we recently heard the same goal from the new World Bank President, Dr. Jim Kim. On April 17, as he was receiving the Congressional Gold Medal, Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus reiterated his believe that we can put poverty in poverty museums. Now is the time to back these ideas. More than ever, it is evident that we possess all of the tools and resources necessary to end extreme poverty. The only thing standing in the way of the solutions is a choice by our government decision makers, and ultimately each of us because our government officials work for us.
- News coverage has been plentiful about the several dozen prisoners in Guantanamo going on a hunger strike, but where is the news coverage for those who have no choice in the matter of food or nutrition? Where is the in depth coverage of the 165 million kids who are chronically malnourished and who will suffer because of that for the rest of their lives. Because of lack of proper nutrients, these children's brains and bodies will not develop properly, making them smaller, and cognitively underdeveloped. Is that any way to start life?
- We all take the nutrients we find in our food for granted. We have vitamins B and D in milk, iodine in our salt, fortified grains, and other supplements. Some would call it a government plot, but most of us know that these nutrients are necessary for proper development and health. These nutrients are particularly important to the proper development of young children. So what happens when children don't get proper nutrients?
- There is a lot of discussion now about the Farm Bill and how the US should provide food aid to countries struggling to produce enough food. Our policies should support food independence and proper nutrition for all children.

- Farmers markets are starting to pick up and we see all sorts of great, fresh vegetables jam packed with the nutrients we need for life. Many people, here and around the world, do not have access to proper nutrition. In the US 1 in 5 children are food-insecure, and around the globe 165 million children experience chronic malnourishment. We can do something about both of these. In the US we can protect our SNAP and school lunch food safety net programs. Does it really make any sense to cut programs that provide the basic building blocks of life? Also, in June the US has an opportunity to rally with the rest of the world to ramp up commitments to the 165 million experience malnutrition at the Nutrition for Growth Summit in the UK...