

Scaling Up Nutrition

The 1,000 Days that Decide Everything

What our kids should eat has been the subject of every pediatrician’s visit, parenting class, and talk show in recent memory. The perfect answer is still up for debate, but in the meantime **we’ve collectively, consistently failed to secure even the most basic nutrition for many of the world’s most vulnerable children.** Almost half of all under-five childhood deaths are linked to some form of malnutrition. And a staggering one out of every four children globally is stunted – failing to grow well because as babies and young children they didn’t get the nutrients needed to thrive. Stunting happens in a child’s earliest days and months, but its consequences last a lifetime.

Ensuring kids get a healthy start to life is about more than food aid or adding calories to their diet. It’s about making sure pregnant women and children have access to the *essential micronutrients and vitamins like iron, iodine, and vitamin A* – not just the calories – they need. Proper nutrition during the window starting with a woman’s pregnancy and ending with a child’s second birthday sets children on a path toward reaching their full potential. These “1,000 days” have a profound impact on a child’s life, from their brain development to their IQ to their immune system to their growth. During pregnancy, infancy, and early childhood, the nutrition a child receives has an irreversible effect – for good or for bad. Once this essential window for physical and cognitive development closes for an individual child, it does not reopen.

Childhood malnutrition goes hand-in-hand with poverty globally: it is both a devastating consequence and a key driver of poverty. Its effects often follow a child throughout her lifetime – from her basic health to how far she’s likely to get in school to how much she’ll earn. The consequences of early childhood malnutrition are devastating and permanent, but they are also entirely preventable.

Investing in the 1,000 Days

The economic and societal implications of malnutrition are also immense. Malnutrition drains billions of dollars in lost productivity and health care costs from poor countries. Increased nutrition is proven to have enormous macro-economic impact, boosting a country’s GDP through greater workforce productivity and health care cost savings. The costs are not only in lost potential. The direct costs of treating nutrition-related issues have been estimated between \$1 and \$2 trillion dollars globally.¹ Yet, globally, less than 1 percent of Official Development Assistance (ODA) is for nutrition efforts. Worldwide, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations report that hunger has been on the rise for the last three years. While UNICEF reports stunting has decreased globally – it has increased in Africa with 8 million more children stunted annually since 2000.

Economic Impact of Stunting
Findings in a study of 15 African countries found that a 40 percent reduction in stunting would add \$83 billion to their collective national incomes in the following years.¹

¹ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). (2013). *The state of food and agriculture*. Available at <http://www.fao.org/3/i3300e/i3300e.pdf>

Additionally, their research shows coverage of the standard two doses for Vitamin A supplementation, a basic indicator for quality nutrition efforts, has decreased annually over the past seven years. **Political will is urgently needed for meeting the twin goals to end preventable child and maternal deaths and to reduce stunting.**

Global Momentum for Nutrition

Alongside the 2020 Summer Olympics in Japan, world leaders will come together at a Japan hosted summit to commit to building political will and increasing investments in the fight against malnutrition. As Olympians – the healthiest, strongest peak performers from around the world – gather to compete, global leaders will make political pledges to ensure all children have access to quality nutrition and the ability to reach their full potential. But **Congress has the power to act now to be on the record in support of U.S. leadership on global nutrition** and to invest in these early years that are so critical to both physical and cognitive development.

Building Congressional Support for Nutrition – H. Res. 189 and S. Res. 260

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Representatives Roger Marshall (R-KS) and Jim McGovern (D-MA) introduced [H. Res 189](#) in March, followed by Senators Susan Collins (R-ME) and Chris Coons (D-DE) who introduced the companion bill [S. Res 260](#) in June. The resolutions recognize the importance of sustained U.S. leadership in accelerating global progress against maternal and child malnutrition and supporting USAID's commitment to global nutrition through its multi-sectoral nutrition strategy.

The resolution will strengthen our government's efforts to accelerate progress against maternal and child malnutrition in developing countries by:

- Recognizing the importance of the U.S leadership to improve maternal and child nutrition
- Calling for reform to ensure there are improved and clear methods to track nutrition funding and outcomes across all United States Government global nutrition programs
- Accelerating progress using innovative, scaled-up approaches to end maternal and child malnutrition, with an emphasis on the 1,000 days between pregnancy and her child's second birthday

Now is the time to build on our previous work and accelerate our efforts to fight against global maternal and child malnutrition. These bipartisan resolutions will help ensure continued U.S. leadership in providing critical nutrition interventions in an efficient, integrated and strategic manner, and reaching some of the world's poorest and most marginalized populations.

Senate Follow up for RESULTS' FY20 Request

We urge the Senate to increase FY20 funding for the Nutrition account in Global Health over the House's FY20 level, which flat-funds the account at \$145 million. We ask that Senate offices follow up on RESULTS' FY20 funding request of \$250 million for Nutrition in Global Health with the State and Foreign Operations subcommittee of Appropriations Chair Lindsay Graham (R-SC) and Ranking Member Patrick Leahy (D-VT).