

Operations Research on Addressing Stunting in Tanzania Early (ASTUTE)

Strengthening Multi-sectoral Nutrition Capacities among Council Officers

CLOSING THE GAP BETWEEN NUTRITION POLICY AND ACTION

Achieving nutrition's full impact on health and development requires a multi-sectoral approach. Sectors such as agriculture, education, and community development all contribute to the nutrition and health of communities. Promoting teamwork and shared accountability strengthens the kinds of activities that meet the health needs of community members.

There is strong national support to bring different kinds of expertise together to promote good nutrition. However, there are many challenges to turning key nutrition policies into action.

District Nutrition Officers (DNuOs) play a vital role in coordinating across sectors (like agriculture and education) and working closely with frontline workers to reach the community. There is opportunity to learn how to enhance DNuO capabilities to work in a team and reach those most in need, especially women and children.

This study will explore what capacity building innovations, including skills development and mentoring, could strengthen current relationships to maximize collaboration for improved nutrition outcomes.

WHAT ARE THE PROJECT AIMS?

- ▶ Strengthen relationships among regional and council officers, community stakeholders, and frontline workers and facilitate and promote multi-sectoral nutrition action.
- ▶ Support development of core capacities of council officers including advocating, collaborating, and planning for multi-sectoral nutrition activities.

STRENGTHENING MULTI-SECTORAL COLLABORATION

This study complements the new National Multi-sectoral Nutrition Action Plan (NMNAP) by exploring approaches for creating an enabling environment at the council level for improved nutrition. Innovative approaches will be used to support and strengthen the capacities of council officers in areas like agriculture, health, and education to effectively and



A Regional Nutrition Officer and council officers from different sectors discuss actions outlined in the National Multi-sectoral Action Plan.

efficiently plan and coordinate interventions. Officers will be supported to collaborate among each other and reach out to stakeholders, including civil society organizations and community health workers, to develop common objectives and priorities, laying the groundwork for scale up of locally relevant nutrition actions. Project success in strengthening knowledge, skills, capabilities, beliefs, motivations, and goals related to multi-sectoral nutrition efforts will be assessed.

“Aligned implementation across sectors achieves results far greater than what could have been achieved alone.”

[Tanzania National Multi-sectoral Nutrition Action Plan]

COLLABORATIVE SOLUTIONS

Collaborative solutions will draw upon existing knowledge and resources at the regional level to strengthen the capacity of a multi-sectoral team of 3 to 4 council officers over 10 months.

- ▶ RNuOs participate in a learning exchange workshop to discuss capacity building approaches and plans.
- ▶ ASTUTE Regional Coordinators support RNuOs linking them to useful guidance and materials.
- ▶ RNuOs provide tailored guidance to one council team.

This research will be shaped by Regional input as well as the needs, challenges, and opportunities of each region. Findings will feedback to inform multi-sectoral nutrition efforts, capacity building of council officers, and community-level implementation.

WHO CAN WE LEARN FROM?

In 2016, as part of the *Building Strong Nutrition Systems project*, Lecturers of Community Nutrition at Universities around the country supported DNuOs in two pilot districts over one year. The Lecturers met with DNuOs and other officers monthly to provide expertise, advice, and encouragement. They helped officers access and use the knowledge and resources needed to improve multi-sectoral nutrition efforts. Officers were supported to map community stakeholders and convene stakeholder engagement workshops.

“The guidance I received changed my attitude about nutrition issues because I realize I can start to plan myself by reviewing nutrition guidelines and national plans”

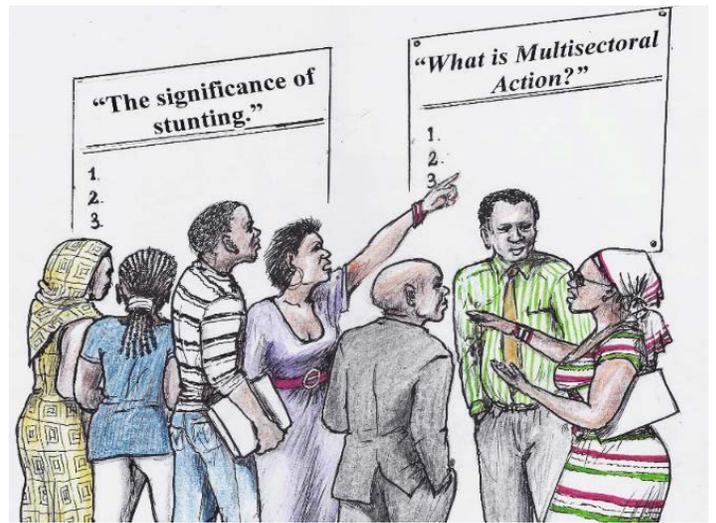
[District Nutrition Officer]

A DNuO from this project was invited to present results at the 4th Joint Multi-sectoral Nutrition Review held in Dodoma in Sept 2017. At this meeting the Prime Minister launched the new National Multi-sectoral Nutrition Action Plan. Meeting participants were encouraged to see the multi-sectoral nutrition approach being implemented at local levels and were eager for other districts to implement similar activities.

WHAT ACTIVITIES ARE PLANNED?

This project is participatory and exploratory. Specific goals and activities will be adapted to fit the needs, priorities, and capacities in each district. As a framework, RNuOs and council officers may use the following checklist to guide their activities:

- ✓ Set goals for the project and a plan to reach goals within the timeframe.
- ✓ Discuss national action plans, terms of reference, and guidance for supporting nutrition across sectors.
- ✓ Assess council challenges and opportunities to collaborate and plan multi-sectoral nutrition actions.
- ✓ Identify community stakeholders and their activities, and how to collaborate for strengthened action.
- ✓ Facilitate an engagement workshop with stakeholders to share knowledge, create new partnerships, and identify priority areas for action.
- ✓ Present lessons learned from the project to the multi-sectoral Council Nutrition Steering Committee.



Council officers bring key multi-sectoral stakeholders together to share knowledge and strengthen the linkages between nutrition and other sectors.

Working closely with national and regional government, IMA World Health is partnering with the Tanzania Food and Nutrition Centre and Cornell University to explore ways to strengthen multi-sectoral nutrition capacity among council officers. Ethical approval for this study has been granted by the Tanzania National Institute for Medical Research and the Institutional Review Board at Cornell University. Funding for this research is provided by UK aid from the UK government through the Department of International Development.

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