Community Stakeholder Mapping: An Approach to Explore District Challenges and Opportunities for Multi-sectoral Nutrition Action in Tanzania

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Background

- Stunting, a form of malnutrition, currently affects 34% of children under five years in Tanzania.
- Multi-sectoral nutrition (MSN) involves many sectors and is essential to address the underlying causes of malnutrition and stunting.
- District Nutrition Officers (DNuOs) were deployed by the government in 2011 to coordinate implementation of multi-sectoral nutrition actions.
- The Tanzania National Multi-sectoral Nutrition Action Plan provides guidance to improve focus on nutrition in key sectors; however implementation is challenging.
- Stakeholder Mapping involves identifying, understanding and prioritizing potential collaborators for nutrition-related activities.

Study Setting

Location: One rural pilot district in Morogoro Region where:
- 19% of children under 2 years are not breastfed; 88% under 6 months are not exclusively breastfed.
- Nearly half of children under 2 years do not receive the minimum meal frequency.
- 66% of children between 5-59 months are anemic.
- 33% of children under 5 years are stunted.

Academic mentors from Sokoine University of Agriculture and Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences supported the DNuO to collaborate with district colleagues to map community stakeholders.

Goals and Objectives

- Identify community-based, nutrition-relevant activities, target populations, delivery channels, and resources at the local level.
- Foster relationships to expand the district network for nutrition.
- Encourage responsibility and collaboration among current stakeholders.
- Understand challenges and opportunities for multi-sectoral collaboration.
- Identify potential actions for scaling up.

Methods

Academic mentors supported the District Nutrition Officer (DNuO) to:
- Adapt the REACH mapping tool to include open-ended questions that encouraged relationship building between the DNuO and community organizations. (http://www.reach-initiative.org).
- Conduct in-depth interviews with 7 stakeholders at their workplaces, May - Aug, 2016.
- Use Microsoft Excel software for data organization and analysis.
- Write up a report of key findings and recommendations.
- Facilitate a participatory workshop with stakeholders to discuss mapping results.

Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Key findings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholders</td>
<td>- All stakeholders were non-governmental organizations (NGOs)</td>
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<td>- Half of stakeholders (4 of 7) worked in all the wards in the district</td>
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<td>- The DNUO identified 4 of 7 new stakeholders, respectively unknown.</td>
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<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>- Most stakeholders (5 of 7) were aware of at least one other stakeholder</td>
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<td>- A few stakeholders (3 of 7) were already collaborating with each other</td>
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<td>Activities in the health sector</td>
<td>- General nutrition education and counselling (3 of 7)</td>
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<td>- Knowledge and behavior change for exclusive breastfeeding and complementary feeding (2 of 7)</td>
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<td>Activities in other sectors</td>
<td>- Training on optimal agricultural practices (3 of 7)</td>
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<td>- Facilitating school and community gardening pilot programs (3 of 7)</td>
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<td>Target Populations</td>
<td>- Women of childbearing age and their children, orphans, people living with HIV/AIDS, and small-holder farmers</td>
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<td>Delivery Channels</td>
<td>- Women’s groups, health facilities, health volunteers, CHWs, local influential leaders, schools, places of worship, mass media, and farmer’s cooperatives</td>
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"When the Agricultural extension officers and social welfare officers go together to the community, we can identify problems together."

-District Nutrition Officer

Challenges for MSN Action

- Low community awareness on optimal nutrition and agricultural practices
- Low economic status, poverty and stigmatization of groups targeted
- Uncoordinated implementation of activities in the district
- Gaps between local activities and policy specifications
- Lack of an independent budget for nutrition

Opportunities for MSN Action

- Promote stronger collaboration between community representatives and NGOs.
- Utilize local mass media (i.e. radio programs) to disseminate messages and encourage participation in local activities.
- Have supportive government leaders promote local activities.
- Link the NGOs that have shared goals to increase collaboration.
- Create a platform for stakeholders to share optimal practices and achievements.
- Reduce bureaucracy in NGO registration with the district.
- Include stakeholders in district planning and budgeting to share and pool knowledge.

Conclusions

- Stakeholder mapping improved district awareness of nutrition-relevant activities beyond the health sector.
- Mapping enabled the DNUO to create a database on the current community nutrition workforce, resources and activities.
- Mapping showed pre-existing collaboration between some of the stakeholders.
- Stakeholders were interested in further collaboration and in obtaining more nutrition resources and support.
- Mapping helped the DNUO understand the challenges and opportunities stakeholders encounter in the district.
- Mapping enabled the DNUO to facilitate a workshop on the value of multi-sectoral engagement and discuss how to increase collaboration on nutrition-relevant activities.

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