



Nutrition and Health

Nutrition and Health: Central to Effective Development



In Pakistan, girls receive deworming tablets to treat intestinal parasites as part of our School Nutrition Programs.

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Nutrition and health are among the most crucial determinants of how much people can thrive at family, community and national levels. Globally, there are more than one billion people suffering from hunger, with malnutrition contributing to a third of childhood deaths. Poor nutrition increases susceptibility to illness, such as malaria and diarrhea, which is particularly detrimental in countries with weak health systems. Mothers in poor or declining health are typically unable to provide the financial and nutritional resources their children need; while the weak or infirm often struggle to earn economic livelihoods to support themselves. When large segments of a population are grappling with poor health and nutrition, it can have a devastating impact on other development issues, including food security, economic growth and even political stability.

In the developing world, health and nutrition are intrinsically connected to agriculture, with most people relying on the land for both nourishment and incomes. While efforts to increase agricultural production do not automatically translate into improved health and nutrition, effectively designed programs can create mutually reinforcing outcomes that simultaneously improve people's well-being and livelihoods.

Land O'Lakes is working to maximize coordinated agricultural responses to health and nutrition challenges,

as healthy and well-nourished families are also among the most agriculturally productive. Strong health, hygiene and balanced nutrition help to minimize the impacts of food insecurity and infectious disease by strengthening household resilience. Our work also harnesses complementary service delivery points and messaging for animal care and human health, provides targeted nutrition and health capacity building for extension agents, and promotes joint household decision making on livelihoods, nutrition and health.

Gender-Sensitive Programming

Considering young women account for the majority of those grappling with malnutrition and infectious disease across sub-Saharan Africa, we have purposefully structured many of our interventions to specifically target their needs. For example, more than two-thirds of the beneficiaries of our HIV livelihoods programming in Ethiopia and Rwanda are women, and these efforts are enhancing their abilities to be decision-makers both on the farm and at home.

The Land O'Lakes Approach to Improving Nutrition and Health

We bring our solid agribusiness roots in strengthening rural markets and food systems to bear when addressing the health and nutritional needs of our beneficiaries around the world. Land O'Lakes enriches agricultural value chains from farm to market; enhances affordable, safe and nutritious food production and consumption at household, producer group and processor levels; and builds sustainable livelihoods that reinforce healthy choices and access to care.

We are **improving the ability of vulnerable groups to grow, sell and consume nutritious foods** at the household level, and are empowering women to decide what they feed their families, how they spend their money, and when to seek medical advice. Within the most impoverished communities, we have helped **reduce vulnerability to malnutrition and disease** by enhancing productive assets, strengthening producer groups and cooperatives, and linking people to markets where they can regularly sell what they produce. These efforts not only bolster household income and reduce the need for ongoing food assistance, but they provide people in poor health with a regular supply of nutritious food.

One aspect of this work involves actively creating livelihoods and **increasing household incomes for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC), their caregivers, and People Living with HIV (PLHIV)**. This effort reduces impediments to treatment, care and good hygiene, while improving access to healthy foods and quality living standards. Land O'Lakes has developed an *Economic Strengthening Toolkit* specifically designed to engage caregivers and those dealing with health challenges in economic growth opportunities, while building the capacity of agricultural extension workers, the private sector and community organizations to economically support vulnerable households.

As the second largest cooperative in the United States, and given our rich understanding of the dynamic role that producer group structures play in facilitating social services and community education, Land O'Lakes is effectively **expanding access points for nutrition and health messaging, health service delivery and health-focused group savings mechanisms**. We are promoting HIV prevention services along agricultural value chains through rural networks of producer groups and agricultural



✦ *In Madagascar, a child's weight is monitored at a community-based growth monitoring and promotion center that is promoting breast feeding and improved health and nutrition*

extension workers. We also work with local partners to assess unmet family planning and reproductive health needs for the farmers with whom we work.

Given Land O'Lakes strength as a leading processor and marketer of dairy-based food products, we are also **uniquely positioned to build the trust and confidence of local, regional and multinational businesses** to better serve the food needs of those with inadequate nutrition or compromised health. We help support local manufacturers to develop and market high quality supplemental food products appropriately designed to meet the nutritional needs of PLHIV and undernourished children. We assist processors in developing viable business models that enable the private sector to expand product marketing to humanitarian and institutional markets serving PLHIV and other vulnerable groups, while maintaining their bottom line. We have also been working with food processors in 10 countries to develop nutritious food supplements and new product formulations, **enabling us to feed 1.7 million children worldwide** through our USDA-funded School Nutrition Programs and Local and Regional Procurement Pilots.

Bolstering Nutrition and Health Around the World

Community-Based Nutrition and Health

As one of the partners implementing the Strengthening and Accessing Livelihoods Opportunities for Household Impact (SALOHI) Multi-Year Assistance Program in **Madagascar**, funded by USAID, Land O'Lakes is supporting efforts vital to nutrition and public health. Working with health workers, women's groups, community volunteers, nongovernmental organizations and other stakeholders, we are helping to improve hygiene and sanitation, promote infant and young child feeding and care, prevent and treat child malnutrition and illness, and strengthen maternal health. In addition to these efforts, which are assisting a total of 591,000 food insecure people in 120 counties, Land O'Lakes is also leading efforts focused on agriculture, income generation, emergency preparedness, resource management, social protection and governance for more than 100,000 people living on the country's eastern coast.

Developing Specialized Food Products

In **Zambia**, Land O'Lakes has played a leading role working with local processors to develop commercially viable, nutrient dense foods to better nourish some of the country's most vulnerable residents. Meanwhile, our USDA-funded school nutrition programs have provided 1.6 million children in **Bangladesh, Pakistan, the Philippines, Indonesia** and **Vietnam** with daily food and beverage nutritional supplements, while helping processors to develop new product formulations and strengthen their quality control systems. These programs also incorporate robust nutrition education and health messaging for students, parents and teachers, to raise community awareness at-large. We have also piloted USDA-funded local and regional procurement programs that are providing vulnerable groups with local foods made by local processors. In **Bangladesh**, we are reaching 110,000 schoolchildren with fortified, locally processed cereal bars. Meanwhile, in **Zambia**, we are targeting 10,000 OVC households (60,000 people) with food baskets that include maize meal, beans and cooking oil, as well as high energy protein supplements for children under two.

Linking Nutrition, Health and Agriculture

Land O'Lakes facilitates nutrition and health communications and services through multiple channels, ranging from women's groups to farmer cooperatives, and from community health workers to agricultural extension agents. This ensures messages reach larger numbers of vulnerable groups – including those responsible for childcare and household livelihoods. Moreover, it facilitates innovative, community-based nutrition and health referrals to health facilities and providers. In **Malawi** and **Kenya**, we are working with local partners to assess our farmers' unmet family planning and reproductive health needs, and to support access to these critical health services through cooperatives. In **Zambia**, we are also developing business-centered nutrition and hygiene-focused social and behavior change communication messages and materials that are being integrated into our animal health and milk hygiene training.

Building Vulnerable Populations' Incomes

With support from the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, Land O'Lakes is promoting health and nutrition for OVC and PLHIV in **Ethiopia** and **Rwanda** by creating livelihoods and improving household incomes with lucrative economic opportunities in the agricultural and dairy sectors. Working with the private sector, local governments, community organizations and health services, Land O'Lakes identifies PLHIV in need of livelihoods support; facilitates market assessments by beneficiaries to select income generating activities along agricultural and dairy value chains; trains PLHIV and OVC caregivers in business development and technical skills; facilitates access to credit to purchase inputs; and links beneficiaries to markets and local cooperatives to sell their products or services. More than two-thirds of our beneficiaries are women. We are on track to increase the household incomes of about 13,000 PLHIV and OVC in both countries by approximately 50 percent.



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