



HUNGER  
TO HEALTH

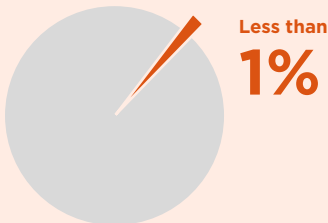
# HUNGER TO HEALTH: A UK ACTION PLAN TO TURN THE TIDE ON MALNUTRITION AND HUNGER



## FOREWORD

# Hunger to Health: A UK action plan to turn the tide on malnutrition and hunger

% of overseas aid invested in the fight against hunger and malnutrition



Malnutrition is one of the biggest killers of children worldwide, claiming the lives of over two million under-fives each year, and blighting millions more.

**Access to good nutrition is foundational to development, but malnutrition receives less than 1% of global Official Development Assistance (ODA).**

Hunger to Health makes the case for a renewed commitment from the UK to help solve this urgent problem. It describes a set of targeted, strategic investments and policy changes that could deliver over 300 million interventions to vulnerable women and children over the next five years, and reaffirm the UK's influence and reputation on the world stage.

The UK's past record of impressive global development leadership and deep expertise is a solid foundation from which to redouble efforts to end the scourge of malnutrition and hunger, prevent millions of unnecessary deaths, and support progress on other development goals, such as education, gender equality and climate change.

At a time of constrained finances, a concerted investment in global nutrition would deliver best value, lasting human impact, enhanced global security, and a legacy of more climate-resilient global food and health systems, of which the UK could be justifiably proud.





"Hunger to Health draws much-needed attention to the fact that good nutrition is essential for achieving the SDGs and promoting the health of children, women and girls. As this work highlights, prevention is just as important as treatment when tackling issues of nutrition at their root, including across food and health systems. The paper also argues convincingly that we must double down on cost-effective interventions, and that the UK is uniquely placed to play a key role. This is a call to action to end global malnutrition, and we look forward to working with our partners to make it happen."

**Kitty Arie – CEO of RESULTS UK**



"I've seen first-hand the outsized impact that UK aid investments can have around the world. Not only does Hunger-to-Health set out an ambitious agenda for global leadership on key interventions that prevent and treat malnutrition, it recognises the importance of improving global food systems and using long-established British expertise to invest in next-generation agriculture."

**Professor Sir John Beddington CMG, FRS, HonFREng – Chair of the Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition and Former Government Chief Scientific Advisor**



"Good Nutrition is a key multiplier in achieving progress across the Sustainable Development Goals, including on education, health and poverty. Hunger to Health makes positive proposals to combat global malnutrition and it should be carefully considered by all those who want to see the UK continue to be a force for good in the world."

**Lord Collins of Highbury – Shadow Spokesperson for International Development and Co-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Nutrition for Development**



"As a nutritionist in Malawi, I've witnessed the terrible effects of malnutrition on children's lives including making vaccines less effective. This double burden threatens the survival of countless children while undermining global health security. Hunger to Health is a crucial step in saving lives and keeping deadly viruses at bay."

**Mike Nkhombo Khunga – Public health and nutrition specialist**



"Access to good nutrition is foundational to the ability of individuals and communities to thrive and prosper. Today however, millions of people, particularly women and girls, are dying every year from malnutrition. Hunger to Health offers bold proposals to address this tragedy and put the UK back at the heart of global efforts to turn the tide against hunger and inequity. Without such remedies, progress on other priorities such as girls education and gender equality will not be unlocked."

**Dr Mairo Mandara – Obstetrician, gynaecologist, and public health physician Founder and Board Chair of Girl Child Concerns**



"The UK has a proud history at the heart of global efforts to tackle malnutrition and hunger. Hunger to Health is an important contribution to what I hope will be the next chapter in this most important of missions."

**David Mundell MP – Co-chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Nutrition for Development**



"Supporting efforts to combat malnutrition and hunger globally is not just a morally imperative act but also a crucial geopolitical move. In an increasingly interconnected world, the health and stability of one nation can have ripple effects across borders. Hunger to Health is a really good report that plots out a practical, ambitious way forward for the UK to regain its leading position and build lasting partnerships in the fight against global malnutrition."

**Rt Hon Baroness Catherine Ashton LG GCMG**



"Johns Hopkins modelled the potential impact of an increase in targeted UK aid for malnutrition as part of the 'Hunger to Health' proposal. A relatively modest investment focused on treating and preventing malnutrition in women and children could save hundreds of thousands of lives and help strengthen countries' health systems."

**Robert Black – Professor of International Health, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health**



"We need to unite to tackle global malnutrition – urgent action is needed. Hunger to Health highlights the vital link between nutrition and the wider SDGs, something that everyone in the UK who cares about ending extreme poverty can get behind. I welcome the emphasis on a holistic approach to address global malnutrition."

**Ryan Henson – CEO of Coalition for Global Prosperity**



"Two million children under the age of five die each year from acute malnutrition. But their deaths are preventable. Proven cost-saving solutions already exist. The need for the UK to play its part fighting malnutrition and hunger has never been greater. Hunger to Health sets out the powerful case for why Britain must act."

**Laura Kyrke-Smith – UK Executive Director, International Rescue Committee**



"After years of progress, global malnutrition and hunger is on the rise. This impacts all of us because when communities cannot feed their children, they are forced to move from their land and instability and unrest often results. Focussing on measures to beat malnutrition such as those set out in Hunger to Health, allows people to thrive in their communities and is one of the best investments the UK can make."

**Layla Moran MP – Liberal Democrat Spokesperson on Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs & International Development**



"It is critical that the UK steps up and shows leadership to alleviate global malnutrition. This plan is an important contribution to strategic thinking on making the world safer for us all."

**Lisa Nandy MP – Shadow International Development Minister**





"Britain should be proud of its legacy in driving global progress against deadly malnutrition. Investing in malnutrition strengthens health systems, and promotes gender equality. It also provides incredible value for money: with a return of over £13 for every pound invested. But the world is way off track. We have turned the tide on malnutrition and hunger before. We must do so again."

**Jonny Oates – CEO, United Against Malnutrition and Hunger**



"The importance of preventing and treating wasting urgently cannot be overstated. Hunger to Health shows how focused investments to scale up interventions we have long known to work, can drive real progress in ensuring that no child dies from hunger."

**Amy Recknell – Innocent Foundation Director**



"The London School for Hygiene and Tropical Medicine is proud to have worked with British and international research institutes to find solutions to global health issues, including malnutrition, for over a century. This work helps us in the UK and helps people around the world. We welcome Hunger to Health's focused proposal to reduce wasting and save lives."

**Professor Liam Smeeth – Director of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine**



"I have served in conflict zones around the world and witnessed the breakdown of law and order due to food insecurity. Lack of food leads to insecurity, migration, it can trigger war and terrorism. The Hunger to Health action plan to beat malnutrition and hunger would avert human suffering on a vast scale and strengthen the stability and security of the UK and the world."

**Air Marshal (ret'd) Sir Graham Stacey – European Leadership Network**



"At a time of constrained finances, a concerted investment in global nutrition, as set out in Hunger to Health, would deliver the best value, lasting human impact and a legacy of more climate-resilient global food and health systems, of which the UK could be justifiably proud."

**Lord Verjee CBE**



"Hunger to Health calls attention to the scandal that two million children continue to die each year from preventable and treatable malnutrition. It shows the significant impact that the UK could have in reducing child mortality for a relatively modest investment and how by acting in partnership with others, we could help turn the tide on this human tragedy."

**Lord Purvis of Tweed – Spokesman for Foreign Affairs, Development and International Trade**



"Malnutrition is a critical issue across the Commonwealth so I welcome Hunger to Health as a timely and focused proposal for investment in evidence-based interventions that will save lives and tackle the scourge of hunger."

**The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland KC – Secretary-General of the Commonwealth**



"Every child has the right to good nutrition. In the past decade, the world has seen important gains however, progress has halted. Global hunger motivates people to take action. Hunger to Health provides a road map for the UK to step up and re-engage with the global community to protect future generations."

**Gayle Smith – CEO of The One Campaign and Former Administrator of USAID**



"We need to unite on tackling malnutrition so no child dies of this entirely preventable condition. Investment in nutrition is also investing in gender equality. When we prioritise nutrition, it enables a better life for women and girls, who are the hardest hit by malnutrition and food insecurity. Hunger to Health makes an important call for scaling up key interventions that have women and children at the heart of it."

**Baroness Sugg CBE – Co-chair, United Against Malnutrition and Hunger**



"We have proven, cost-effective tools we need to save children's lives. Hunger to Health is a timely call to action showing that by coming together, we can usher in a world where no child succumbs to malnutrition. Investing in scaling up interventions like the Power 4 is great value for money and makes a difference to millions of women and children."

**Zander Woollcombe – UK Director, Eleanor Crook Foundation**

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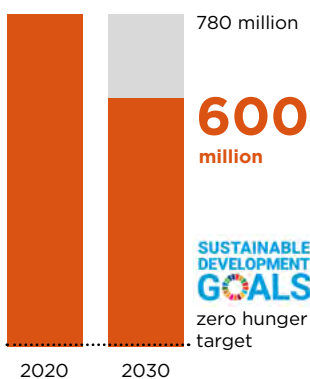
## INTRODUCTION

**The last three years have been a period of intense challenge and hardship for people around the world. The COVID-19 pandemic killed millions and changed the lives of many more. It interrupted livelihoods, damaged people’s health, and put enormous strain on health systems and public finances. This combined with the war in Ukraine, has caused food and energy prices to hit record highs globally, with few households or families unaffected.**

In this context, the amount of attention and money being committed to long-term global development challenges, including hunger and malnutrition, has waned. The UK is one of several countries (though the only G7 member<sup>1</sup>) to have cut ODA since the pandemic, and has also used nearly a third of this budget to support refugees in the UK.<sup>2</sup>

However, the challenges beyond our shores are as great as they have ever been. COVID, conflict, and climate change have created the worst hunger crisis for a generation. Although entirely preventable, malnutrition kills over two million children a year, accounting for almost half of all under-five deaths. Malnutrition is one of the most urgent and foundational development challenges, but it is woefully underfunded and overlooked, receiving less than 1% of ODA.

Number of people who will face hunger in 2030 (projections)



In 2015, the world committed to achieving the interconnected Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, which include Goal Two of Zero Hunger: achieving food security and improving nutrition while promoting sustainable agriculture. However, according to current projections, nearly 600 million people will still face hunger in 2030, which would mean almost no progress during the 2020s.<sup>3</sup> Of these, the majority are women and girls, who are hit hardest by food crises, often eating last and least, even in normal circumstances.<sup>4</sup> As such, stalled progress on malnutrition also undermines the attainment of SDG5 on gender equality and female empowerment.

The second SDG also included commitments to reduce prevalence of wasting, the deadliest form of malnutrition, to less than 3% by the year 2030.<sup>5</sup> The world is dangerously off track here too, with wasting prevalence still at almost 7% of young children worldwide. This is a catastrophic global failure, which requires urgent, ambitious action, which the UK is well placed to catalyse.





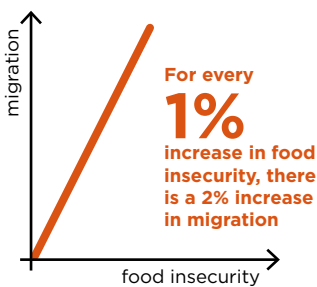
© UNICEF/UN0733576/Naftalin  
 On 2nd October 2022, Somaya, a UNICEF-supported Community Health Worker, educates mothers about the importance of good nutrition in Kitijik, Daikundi Province in central Afghanistan.

### The bedrock of development and peace

Good nutrition is foundational for development and achieving all the SDGs. A well-nourished child is 11 times less likely to die from common infectious diseases such as pneumonia than a severely undernourished one.<sup>6</sup> Good nutrition reduces the risk of obesity, cancer, and other non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease, which are on the rise in many low- and middle-income countries.<sup>7</sup> It also makes vaccines more effective, reducing the risk of infectious diseases, which can spread rapidly and do not respect borders. As such, good nutrition should also be considered a key part of pandemic preparedness and response.

Women who are well-nourished are more likely to give birth to healthy babies.<sup>8</sup> Adequate nutrition is also critical for mental and physical development, directly affecting a child’s learning capacity and in turn their future earning potential. Reducing malnutrition can raise gross domestic product (GDP) per capita by up to 11% and break the cycle of poverty, inequality, and food insecurity.<sup>9</sup> Addressing the gender disparities in malnutrition would also have a positive impact on other forms of gender inequality, including education, earning potential, and wider health.

Correlation between food insecurity and migration



Good nutrition also fosters peace. A hungry world is not a secure or stable one. Where extreme hunger and child deaths fester, so too do anger, instability, and violence, with consequences which ripple out across the world, including the UK. The 2008 food crisis exacerbated the Arab Spring and brutal civil wars in Syria, Libya, and Yemen that continue to rage a decade later.<sup>10</sup> Today, food insecurity and hunger are being weaponised by political actors for their own ends. According to the World Food Programme, for every 1% increase in food insecurity, there is a 2% increase in migration.<sup>11</sup> The 22 countries that faced food crises in 2021-22 also saw greater levels of internal displacement.<sup>12</sup>



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 "Medical services are provided free of charge here, and the hospital is distinguished by its cleanliness."  
 Said Wardah Awad.



© UNICEF/UNI361788/Sobecki VII Photo  
 On 8 August 2020, Rebecca Akamasi carries her child Akal Akamasi across a small inlet off Lake Turkana beyond Kalokol town.

### Cost-effective with high returns

Addressing hunger and malnutrition at source is far more cost-effective than allowing it to fester and exacerbate conflict, inequality, displacement, underdevelopment and poor health.

Return on investment in nutrition



**Every pound invested in nutrition can result in a return of over £13, making it one of the best value-for-money development actions<sup>13</sup>**

As the UK faces fiscal difficulties with a notable impact on development spending, it is critical to acknowledge the wide and productive impact of investing in nutrition. In a cost-constrained context, spending money on saving children's lives and preventing the spread of malnutrition and hunger would pay dividends far beyond the place where the money was spent.

Not only would the Hunger to Health plan set out in the following pages enable the UK to deliver over 300 million life-saving interventions to vulnerable women and children, reduce child deaths in target countries by almost 5%, and save over 700,000 lives, it would also reassert Britain's leadership and reputation on the world stage, and demonstrate the positive impact of targeted ODA, of which the UK public could feel proud.



Scaling-up the fight against malnutrition and hunger would improve educational outcomes, amplify investments in health and food systems, and promote peace, security, and equality. It would make the UK safer, and in a period of more frequent high-impact weather events and other climate impacts, reduce instability, insecurity and the displacement of people.

The world faces an enormous and multifaceted malnutrition and hunger challenge but it is not insuperable. We have turned the tide on malnutrition and hunger before. We must do so again. The UK is uniquely positioned to influence both the problem and other countries' willingness to tackle it. The upcoming summit on food security and nutrition, due to be hosted by the UK in November 2023, would be a great moment to signal renewed commitment and kick off the Hunger to Health plan.

## **HUNGER, MALNUTRITION, STUNTING AND WASTING**<sup>14, 15</sup>



**Hunger** is an uncomfortable or painful physical sensation caused by insufficient consumption of dietary energy. It becomes chronic when the person does not consume a sufficient amount of calories on a regular basis to lead a normal, active, and healthy life.



**Malnutrition** refers to deficiencies or excesses in nutrient intake, imbalance of essential nutrients or impaired nutrient utilisation. Malnutrition consists of undernutrition and overweight and obesity, as well as nutrient deficiencies regardless of weight. Undernutrition manifests in four broad forms: wasting, stunting, underweight, and micronutrient deficiencies.

- **Wasting** is defined as low weight-for-height. It often indicates recent and severe weight loss, although it can also persist for a long time. It usually occurs when a person has not had food of adequate quality and quantity and/or they have had frequent or prolonged illnesses. Wasting in children is associated with a higher risk of death if not treated properly.
- **Stunting** is defined as low height-for-age. It is the result of chronic or recurrent undernutrition, usually associated with poverty, poor maternal health and nutrition, frequent illness and/or inappropriate feeding and care in early life. Stunting prevents children from reaching their physical and cognitive potential.
- **Micronutrient deficiencies** are a lack of vitamins and minerals that are essential for body functions such as producing enzymes, hormones and other substances needed for growth and development.
- **Underweight** is defined as low weight-for-age. A child who is underweight may be stunted, wasted or both.



**Food insecurity:** A person is food insecure when they lack regular access to enough safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development and an active and healthy life.

## THE CHALLENGE



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*Football legend Pelé, Vice-President of Brazil Michel Temer, Prime Minister David Cameron and Olympic double gold medallist Mo Farah at the Olympic hunger summit on Downing Street, 12 August 2012.*

**Between 1990 and 2015, the number of people suffering from undernourishment halved. Under successive governments, the UK provided indispensable leadership, building on a long history of British action on tackling malnutrition, hunger and wider development. The UK is home to world-leading Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), think tanks, and academic institutions that do first-class malnutrition programming, research and advocacy.**

As a centre of international businesses and global finance, the UK also has outsized economic influence and the potential to catalyse global policy change. It has pioneered effective partnerships across the world, driving progress through international cooperation and capacity building. From Live Aid in 1985, to Make Poverty History in 2005, the UK has played host to some of the biggest global moments on poverty and international solidarity to drive shared progress.

In 2012, the UK hosted a Global Hunger Summit during the Olympic Games in London, and then the first-ever Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summit the following year, at which donors collectively committed \$23 billion for nutrition between 2013–20, with the UK pledging a total of £1.2 billion for that period.<sup>16, 17</sup>

With this investment, the UK reached over 50 million people with nutrition services between 2015 and 2020.<sup>18</sup> In that period, it also contributed critical financing to the Sustainable Development Goals and other complementary initiatives. The UK has also been a valued development partner for a number of countries around the world. Between 2013 and 2019, UK Aid funding through CGIAR also allowed partners to deliver vitamin A-rich, orange-fleshed sweet potato varieties to more than two million families in Bangladesh and five African countries, including Kenya and Mozambique.<sup>19</sup>

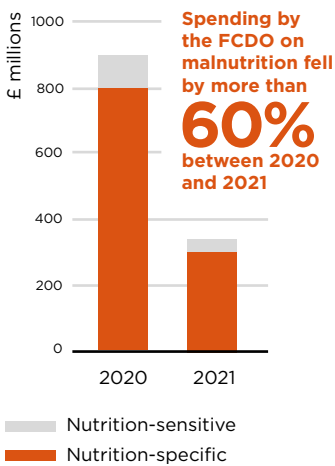
In 2019 Uganda, in partnership with the Met Office and Department of International Development, now Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), reached over 200,000 people with improved weather and climate information resulting in over 160,000 farmers adopting new practices to increase their resilience to climate hazards.<sup>20</sup>



## Slipping back

However, UK leadership has slipped in recent years, with cuts to the country's Official Development Assistance (ODA) budget of 27%, and a suspension of the legislative commitment to spend 0.7% of gross national income (GNI) on ODA.<sup>21</sup> Disappointingly, the proportion of this money spent on malnutrition has fallen by even more.

FCDO's ODA spending for nutrition 2020-2021



A recent report from Development Initiatives showed that in 2021, total bilateral ODA spending by the FCDO on malnutrition fell by more than 60% to £347 million. Of this, the vast bulk was classed as 'nutrition sensitive'<sup>22</sup> spending whereas directly-targeted 'nutrition specific'<sup>23</sup> spending was cut by 57%, to £41 million, the lowest level since 2011.<sup>24</sup>

Nutrition-specific interventions are key to ensure direct and targeted impact for the most vulnerable, and complement nutrition-sensitive interventions. Around the world, nutrition-specific investments are not prioritised as they should be.

These ODA cuts and suboptimally targeted spending, combined with the external context and pressures, are taking their toll. The latest figures from the World Food Programme (WFP) indicate that around 258 million people across 58 countries and territories faced acute food insecurity at crisis or worse levels in 2022, up from 193 million people in 53 countries and territories in 2021.<sup>25</sup> WFP chief David Beasley, has described these people as "knocking on famine's door," and warned of the associated risks of "unmatched migration," and destabilisation of societies.<sup>26</sup>

## Meanwhile, more than three billion people – or 42% of the global population – cannot afford a healthy diet.<sup>27</sup>

This lack of access to key nutrients, including fruit, vegetables and protein, is entrenching the negative impacts of long-term undernutrition, including stunting.

In 2017, the World Bank called for an average annual increase of \$2.3 billion globally to finance a priority package of interventions to help meet targets on nutrition, but the world is far off that target.<sup>28</sup> Children and vulnerable families around the world are paying the highest price of this failure to prioritise malnutrition and hunger. But the costs will accrue to all of us, as inequality, unrest and suffering foment, with far-reaching and long-lasting impacts.

## **THE OPPORTUNITY**

**Hunger to Health is a five-year plan for the UK to scale-up the most cost-effective and lifesaving malnutrition interventions in priority countries and catalyse a revolution in nutritious, affordable, climate-resilient food. It sets out clear solutions that are proven, highly cost-effective, scalable and, currently, highly neglected. It makes the case for the UK to invest in long-term, predictable and multi-year nutrition programmes which build resilience and address underlying causes of malnutrition and hunger such as conflict and climate change.**

The plan recognises the importance of taking a sustainable approach through integrated efforts that focus on scaling up treatment as well as timely detection and prevention of malnutrition. Hunger to Health seeks to guide the most cost-effective and impactful allocation of the UK's limited development assistance budget while aspiring towards an overall increase in line with the suspended commitment to spend 0.7% of GNI on ODA.

It also acknowledges that the UK cannot do this alone; it recognises the importance of partnership with other donors (multilateral and bilateral) and the private sector, and of working with national governments to ensure ODA spending aligns with and is complemented by their domestic spending and policy agendas. As such Hunger to Health seeks to maximise the impact of UK ODA at a time when financial constraints demand best-value approaches.

This proposal would allow the UK Government to build on its long history of leadership on hunger and malnutrition, including via strengthening health systems, and use the expertise of British institutions like the NHS to alleviate suffering. It would help build resilient communities and productive economies at a time of great global uncertainty. Like the best British development initiatives, Hunger to Health would reach families and communities at their time of greatest need.

**NUTRITION  
FOR GROWTH**  
Food, Health, & Prosperity for All

Hunger to Health offers a way to build on and realise the UK's pledge made at the 2021 Nutrition for Growth Summit to spend £1.5 billion between 2022-30 on malnutrition, and ensure this commitment is safeguarded and includes transparent and efficient disbursement of funds.<sup>29</sup>



# THE PLAN: FROM HUNGER TO HEALTH

Implementing this plan would save over 700,000 lives over five years, and deliver more than 300 million interventions to vulnerable women and children around the world. It would also set the world on track for a more sustainable, equal and climate-resilient future.



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Nurayim, 3 years old, poses for a photo with a plate of fruit at her home in Kurshab village, Kyrgyzstan.

1

**Treat severe malnutrition and help prevent future cases:** Scale up treatment of severe malnutrition with therapeutic foods, and prevent more cases of malnutrition from occurring by expanding coverage of life-saving, cost-effective interventions for mothers and children.



The first step in the Hunger to Health plan is to address hunger's cruellest outcome – child deaths from starvation – by expanding access to treatment of severe malnutrition with therapeutic foods, while reinvigorating efforts to prevent malnutrition from occurring in the first place. This part of the plan is known as The Power 4 – a set of actions that has been identified using the Lives Saved tool (LiST) as among the most cost-effective and lifesaving malnutrition interventions ready to be scaled today.



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Women's Farming cooperative in Chikando Chipata where members farm fish, sunflowers and maize.

2

**Invest in more sustainable, climate-resilient food systems to enhance food security:** Increase research and development into affordable, nutritious, and climate-resilient crops, helping to enhance food security and address the root causes of malnutrition.



**Prioritise Research & Development (R&D) for better food systems:** The UK could identify and fast-track game-changing interventions, such as next-generation crops and innovations in livestock farming.



**Support small and medium enterprises:** In most low- and middle-income countries, people purchase their food predominantly from small- and medium-enterprises but the majority of these businesses lack the financing, incentives, and technical expertise to prioritise nutritious foods.



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Woman and children at a malnutrition screening session in the village of Ngolo, Burkina Faso.

3

**Build a global movement to beat malnutrition:** put the policies and structures in place in the UK to address malnutrition, leverage British influence and improve coordination around the world to ensure our partnerships catalyse greater and more sustainable impact.



Invest in and support initiatives that encourage collaboration



Leverage influence at the multilateral level



Optimise UK governance structures for impact



Harness the power of the private sector

## The Importance of Partnerships

Hunger to Health is predicated on the belief that strategies to defeat malnutrition and hunger will not be successful unless they have partnerships at their heart. It was developed through consultations with nutrition, health and agriculture experts across national governments, donors, academia and civil society organisations.

The UK has a track record of global influence and leadership; this plan sets out how coordinated efforts could reignite a global movement of governments, donors, businesses, and civil society to turn the tide on extreme hunger and malnutrition.

## **1** Treat severe malnutrition and help prevent future cases

The first step in the Hunger to Health plan is to address hunger's cruellest outcome – child deaths from starvation – by expanding access to treatment of severe malnutrition with therapeutic foods while reinvigorating efforts to prevent malnutrition from occurring in the first place. This part of the plan is known as the Power 4 – a set of actions that have been identified using the Lives Saved tool (LiST) as among the most cost-effective and lifesaving malnutrition interventions ready to be scaled today.<sup>30, 31</sup>

While there is no one-size-fits-all solution to malnutrition, the Power 4 stands out for its evidence base, cost-effectiveness, scalability, and life-saving potential. These interventions are emergency therapeutic food, prenatal vitamins and minerals, breastfeeding support, and vitamin A supplementation. Spanning the critical window of pregnancy and early childhood, they are proven to greatly reduce rates of malnutrition while delivering a host of other benefits that help children thrive. Each of these four solutions can be delivered by adequately trained community health workers (CHWs) to mothers and children right in their own communities. However, despite their potential, coverage of these interventions is quite low in most countries, due primarily to lack of funding and prioritisation.



### **Emergency therapeutic food**

When children suffer from severe wasting, ordinary food alone is often not enough to help them recover. Treatment with ready-to-use therapeutic food (often known as RUTF or Plumpy'nut) can bring children back from the brink of death in a matter of weeks.



### **Prenatal vitamins and minerals**

Multiple micronutrient supplementation (MMS) is a prenatal multivitamin and mineral that combines 15 essential vitamins and minerals in a single pill that protects the lives of millions of mothers and their children during pregnancy and at birth.

## **THE POWER 4**



### **Breastfeeding support**

Although breast milk is proven to protect newborns from malnutrition, infections, disease and death, only 41% of babies around the world are exclusively breastfed. Not every woman can breastfeed, but women who would like to often cannot access the support they need.



### **Vitamin A supplementation**

Nearly half of all children under five in sub-Saharan Africa and southern Asia suffer from vitamin A deficiency, which weakens the immune system. Reaching young children with two high doses of vitamin A supplements every year can reduce a child's overall risk of death by up to 24%.



As noted by FCDO’s Position Paper on Health Systems Strengthening for Global Health Security and Universal Health Coverage, improving the coverage, access, and affordability of health services, like the Power 4, is inextricably aligned with a health systems strengthening agenda.<sup>32</sup> The integration of these interventions into national primary health systems could also strengthen health systems by building the capacity of community healthcare workers and increasing access to treatment.<sup>33</sup>

Johns Hopkins University modelled the scaling-up of the Power 4 in seven priority countries to illustrate the potential impact for this paper.<sup>34</sup> They found that a UK investment of £200m annually, could support national governments to bring the coverage of the three preventative interventions in the Power 4 to 90% nationwide and reach nearly two million children with wasting treatment.<sup>35</sup>

According to this modelling, implementing Hunger to Health would allow the UK to deliver over 200 million prenatal nutrition and breastfeeding interventions to mothers worldwide, and take nearly 100 million preventative measures to protect vulnerable children. (See box below for the full impacts.)

## IMPACT OF HUNGER TO HEALTH OVER FIVE YEARS

**OVER 300 MILLION**  
Power 4 interventions delivered to vulnerable women and children



**156 MILLION**  
Multiple Micronutrient Supplementation



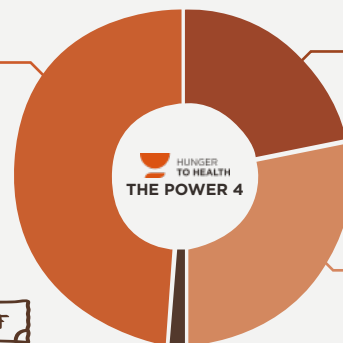
**63 MILLION**  
Breastfeeding



**91 MILLION**  
Vitamin A



**2 MILLION**  
Wasting treatment



**718,000**  
Total Lives Saved

**4.7%**  
Reduction in deaths of children under 5

**38%**  
Reduction in anaemia among pregnant women

**1.4%**  
Reduction in rates of stunting

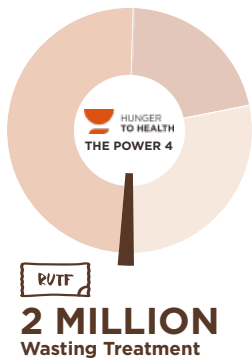
**4.6%**  
Reduction in rates of severe wasting

**£2 BILLION**  
Increased lifetime earnings

**1.3%**  
Reduction in rates of wasting

The modelling should be seen as illustrative only, as it is unlikely that the UK's whole nutrition portfolio would focus on just seven countries. But it shows the potential of concerted, targeted investment to tackle malnutrition and hunger as proposed by Hunger for Health. How to reach the most vulnerable populations, where the impact would be greatest, should be determined by the FCDO, in partnership with recipient countries and other donors.

Impact of Hunger to Health over five years: Emergency therapeutic food interventions



### 1. First Power 4 intervention: Emergency therapeutic food

When children suffer from severe wasting, ordinary food alone is often not enough to help them recover. Treatment with ready-to-use therapeutic food (often known as RUTF or Plumpy'nut) can bring children back from the brink of death in a matter of weeks.

RUTF is inexpensive, costing less than 80p per child, per day. It's also highly effective: recovery rates range between 70% and 90% of children treated. However, of the millions of children suffering from wasting in the world, fewer than one in four have had access to treatment in recent years. With a child dying every 14 seconds from malnutrition, this first-line emergency relief should be a priority life-saving intervention for the UK to invest in.

### Supporting the Child Nutrition Fund as one part of the solution to wasting

The Child Nutrition Fund (CNF) was launched in 2021 with the UK as a founding donor, alongside UNICEF, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and Children's Investment Fund Foundation. It is an innovative partnership designed to incentivise domestic resource allocation to combat malnutrition. For every pound invested in the match instrument by a country's government for its population, the Fund contributes one additional pound from donors.



© UNICEF/UNI403550/Karimi  
A child receives RUTF from a UNICEF-supported mobile health and nutrition team.

The Fund seeks to pool public and private money to deliver high-impact interventions through government systems, with greater scale and coordination than individual investors could achieve. It has three main goals to help build resilience to famine and ensure the early prevention, detection and treatment of child wasting:

1. Strengthen global resources and their allocation through transparent tracking of progress;
2. Increase domestic resources; and,
3. Ensure greater access to essential supplies.

If funding to treat wasting was channelled through CNF's match instrument, it would leverage equivalent funding from national governments. For example, an investment of £40 million from donors would result in a total of £80 million for this effort, potentially doubling the impact and allowing real progress in the fight against malnutrition and hunger.

It is worth noting that CNF is still in its infancy and needs to ensure accessibility by fragile and conflict-affected states, where its match fund mechanism may be more difficult to set up and sustain. It should be seen as complementing existing investments in wasting, with the aim of supporting national leadership.

### **Change the way malnutrition treatment is delivered**

WHO, 2023, 'WHO guideline on the prevention and management of wasting and nutritional oedema (acute malnutrition) in infants and children under 5 years', [www.childwasting.org](http://www.childwasting.org)

In addition to investment in scaling up treatment for severe wasting, the UK should support efforts to streamline and improve treatment processes and maximise value. Currently, children whose lives are threatened by malnutrition have to travel to the nearest health facility, often over long distances, in challenging conditions and at great cost. And yet, evidence suggests that they could be treated safely and effectively by adequately trained health workers in the communities where they live.



The World Health Organization (WHO) recently released new global guidelines for improved approaches to wasting treatment, which the UK supported.<sup>37</sup> Uptake and implementation of these guidelines will require dedicated diplomacy in-country, which the UK would be well-placed to support.

The guidelines highlight the importance of community health workers, 70% of whom are women, and who play a central role in delivering global health services, especially in under-served areas. To realise their potential, they must receive equitable remuneration, regular and dedicated supervision, training, and have consistent access to necessary supplies and equipment. The UK should make community health worker led delivery a priority in its development programmes, and encourage broader uptake through diplomacy.

Likewise, the UK should continue to support research into, and implementation of, improved treatment for wasting, including optimal doses and different approaches depending on the severity of the case, to increase the effectiveness, efficiency, and coverage of service. The UK could also do more to support national-level procurement, storage, distribution, and management of RUTF and other essential treatments.





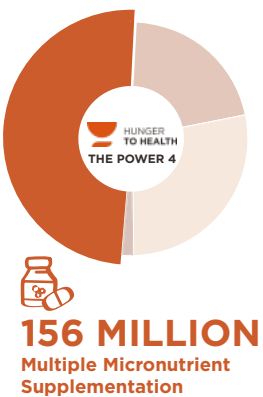
© UNICEF/UN0792388/Ayene  
*Multiple Micronutrient Supplementation is particularly useful for pregnant women living in rural areas where a diverse range of nutritious food is either unavailable or unaffordable.*



© UNICEF/UN0792391/Ayene  
*With partners, UNICEF is rolling out supplements which are helping improve pregnant women's nutrition and improve the chances of a safe delivery and a healthy baby.*

## 2. Second Power 4 intervention: Prenatal micronutrients

Impact of Hunger to Health over five years:  
 Prenatal micronutrients

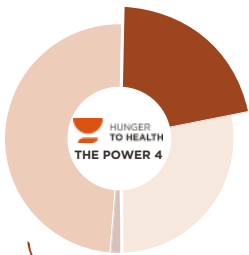


Over 40% of pregnant women globally suffer from anaemia and two-thirds of non-pregnant women of reproductive age worldwide have micronutrient deficiencies.<sup>38</sup> Multiple micronutrient supplementation (MMS) is a prenatal multivitamin and mineral that combines 15 essential vitamins and minerals in a single pill that protects the lives of millions of mothers and their children during pregnancy and at birth.

When anaemic women take MMS in pregnancy, compared to traditional iron and folic acid, infant mortality is reduced by 29%, stillbirths are reduced by 21%, and low birth weight is reduced by 19%. Yet, despite the proven benefits, most women in low- and middle-income countries do not have access to these low-cost supplements, and no country is currently delivering MMS at scale through their health system. In 2019, about 195 million pregnancies needed MMS in low- and middle-income countries, but just five million women received them.<sup>39</sup>

Hunger for Health envisages the UK government playing a leading role in driving global action on three fronts: making MMS the standard of care for pregnant women in all programmes; ensuring high quality MMS is available at affordable cost; and mobilising financing to support sustainable scale-up of MMS production.

Impact of Hunger to Health over five years:  
Breastfeeding support



**63 MILLION**  
Breastfeeding support

### 3. Third Power 4 intervention: Breastfeeding support

Children get the best start in life when they are fed only breast milk until six months of age and continue to breastfeed until at least age two.<sup>40</sup> Although breast milk is proven to protect newborns from malnutrition, infections, disease and death, only 41% of babies around the world are exclusively breastfed.

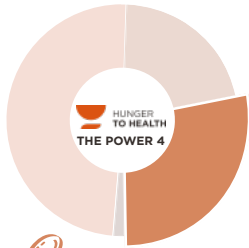
Not every woman can breastfeed, but women who would like to often cannot access the support they need. The Lancet reports that achieving optimal breastfeeding practices globally could prevent 820,000 child deaths each year.<sup>41</sup> The UK should promote optimal breastfeeding practices as part of the Hunger for Health plan, and the provision of appropriate support, such as skilled breastfeeding counselling.



© UNICEF/UN0741890/Zehbrauskas  
On 11 October 2022 in Hajlmak village, Kadugli town, South Kordofan state of Sudan, pregnant women, lactating mothers, and grandmothers attend a mother support group session delivered by the nutrition team from Mugamaa Elbahar Health Centre.



Impact of Hunger to Health over five years: Vitamin A supplementation



**91 MILLION**  
Vitamin A supplementation

#### 4. Fourth Power 4 intervention: Vitamin A supplementation

Nearly half of all children under five in sub-Saharan Africa and southern Asia suffer from vitamin A deficiency, which weakens the immune system. Maternal vitamin A deficiency is also a problem in many countries, which can also result in babies being born vitamin A deficient.

Reaching young children with two high doses of vitamin A supplements every year is one of the most cost-effective ways to protect children from blindness and fatal illnesses. It can reduce a child’s overall risk of death by up to 24%. One dose costs less than 2p to manufacture and is typically delivered through existing routine health services, annual health events, and/or alongside vaccination campaigns.

##### A plan to harness the Power 4

To help increase access to all of the highly effective and affordable Power 4 interventions in priority countries the UK should:

- Set ambitious coverage targets in collaboration with bilateral partners;
- Offer UK bilateral ODA to support the delivery of these interventions through routine health systems, including by providing support for community health workers and other essential infrastructure; and,
- Support Ministries of Health to ensure that relevant commodities are included in national health systems budgets and on essential medicine lists.



© UNICEF/UNI335345/Bhardwaj  
4 years old Lakhan reacts as he plays with his sister at his house in Kundaal, Rajasthan.



## 2 Invest in sustainable, climate-resilient food systems to enhance food security



© UNICEF/UNI212672/Tremeau  
On 14 September, 2019, Maman  
Véronique Etima, 26, prepares dinner in  
Mbandza, Republic of the Congo.

The second step in the Hunger to Health plan focuses on sustainable interventions to prevent malnutrition from taking hold. With accelerating climate change impacts, global demand for food is projected to increase by more than 50% by 2050 and crop yields are projected to decline by up to 30%.<sup>42</sup> There are urgent changes needed to set the world on track for a more sustainable, climate-resilient, and well-nourished future.

These are investments that will benefit Britain by boosting its reputation and influence globally and unlocking gains for the planet in the short and long term.

### Prioritise Research & Development (R&D) for better food systems

The last 70 years have seen impressive gains in agricultural productivity and economic growth but improvements to the quality and nutritional value of food have been much slower. Today, billions of people across the globe survive on mostly empty calories—plates of rice, cassava, or maize—with very little of the protein and other nutrients that bodies and brains need to function.

It is estimated that by 2050, poor diets could cost the world \$16 trillion per year, and climate change is poised to make things even worse by harming food security, quality, value, and diversity.

It is crucial that the UK maintains and increases political support to tackle climate change and make improvements in nutrition surveillance systems in countries hardest hit by climate impacts. This would help improve early detection and action on malnutrition as well as support longer-term action to develop more climate-resilient food and health systems.

The UK has world-leading research and innovative practices in food systems and next-generation agriculture across academia, NGOs and the private sectors. University College London's research on women's diets, and foodborne diseases; FCDO-funded Drivers of Food Choice research programme; Queen's University, Belfast's world-leading Institute for Global Food Security; and other significant investments have ensured a leadership role for UK institutions in improving food systems. The government's 2017 Industrial Strategy committed to spending 2.4% of GDP on R&D by 2027, and the 2020 R&D Roadmap acknowledged the commitment to develop the R&D ecosystems in ODA-eligible countries.<sup>43</sup>

Hunger for Health recommends that the UK identifies and fast-tracks game-changing interventions, such as next-generation crops and innovations in livestock farming. This would involve prioritising malnutrition in its food and agricultural research and innovation agenda, and aligning investments with partner countries' needs and priorities, as well as complementing or supporting their domestic research agendas.

Strong international coordination would enable UK researchers and innovators to strengthen existing and forge new, global partnerships, bridging gaps between concept and application, and preventing duplicative efforts. This approach is critical in realising the UK's goals of making the most of British capabilities and institutions to improve global food systems and agriculture practices, while also benefiting British citizens.<sup>44</sup>

There is no one-size-fits-all solution to the challenge of achieving food security and good nutrition in a world where populations are growing and climate change impacts are increasingly manifest. To help tackle the global hunger and malnutrition crisis, the UK government should direct investment towards, and work with others to explore, a range of possible technologies and approaches:

**Crop production practices**

Climate-resilient and nutrient-rich (including biofortified) varieties of staple crops can deliver triple impact for climate adaptation, better diets, and improved livelihoods. Improved crops can better tolerate fluctuations in temperature or water availability; nutrient-dense crops can translate into improved diets; and higher-value crops can also support nutrition indirectly through improved farm incomes.

**Food processing, including food fortification**

Ultra-processed foods are widely consumed across the income spectrum due to cost, convenience and taste, but often have low nutritional value which can lead to obesity and other forms of malnutrition. Food fortification, alongside other key efforts, can be a cost-effective way to improve micronutrient intake. Smaller-scale processing of already nutritious foods can also help make them more convenient or otherwise desirable. Disseminating knowledge on food fortification could reduce prices and bring more nutritious foods to a wider set of people, while additional research on small-scale food processing could help enhance diets and consider local food preferences.

**Reducing food waste**

Nearly one-third of food produced for human consumption globally is lost. Reducing food loss is essential to improve the availability and affordability of nutrient-dense foods for low-income households, strengthen food security, increase incomes, and reduce pressure on climate and the environment. UK R&D could enhance understanding of where food loss occurs, help develop technology for better storage, and encourage data sharing to reduce food loss. Government action could in turn spur the private sector to invest in ways of reducing food loss. More effective and efficient storage and transportation for perishable nutritious foods would benefit producers and consumers, as well as reduce emissions. Some technologies are ready; additional innovation, and evaluation of the ultimate impact on nutrition outcomes, could generate more tailored solutions and inform further investments.

**Demand generation for nutritious foods for low-income households**

As national food systems change under the influence of globalisation, urbanisation and other macro trends, individuals face a more complex set of choices. From a policymaker perspective, supply-side interventions to increase the availability of nutritious foods may be ineffective if consumers don't choose them. Expanded research is needed to understand decision-making among low-income households and design appropriate demand-side interventions to complement supply-side expansion of nutritious food options. The UK could support initiatives that develop, test, and evaluate demand-side interventions that increase consumption of safe, healthy, sustainable diets.

**Sustainable and regenerative agriculture**

Supporting the development and expansion of sustainable and regenerative practices anchored in local culture and ecosystems, such as agroecology and indigenous agricultural knowledge, would help strengthen local food systems, create sustainable livelihoods, reduce the environmental impact of farming, and cut emissions from production and transport of food. It would also increase resilience and soil health, benefitting smallholder farmers and local communities.

**Support small and medium enterprises**

In most low- and middle-income countries, people purchase their food predominantly from small- and medium-enterprises but the majority of these businesses lack the financing, incentives, and technical expertise to prioritise nutritious foods.

In addition to enhancing its R&D agenda to advance the fight against malnutrition, the UK should support investment, including through increased commitment by the British International Investment, the UK's Development Finance Institute, in small and medium-scale food producers, processors, and retailers to enable them to bring more affordable, nutritious foods to markets.



© UNICEF/UN0664032/Schermbrucker

*"I really appreciate the knowledge I have been taught in both growing and preparing meals for the family. I really hope that the program will continue." Kamana Mundia (43 yrs)*



### 3 **Build the infrastructure and a global movement to beat malnutrition**

The UK has a proud history of diplomacy and influence on the world stage. With a seat at the UN Security Council, an active role in the G7 and G20, and a track record of bringing countries together to tackle shared problems, Britain has diplomatic heft that belies its size. With the world in the grip of the worst hunger crisis in decades, and global progress tackling malnutrition stalled, now is the time to leverage that influence again.

With renewed focus on this critical development issue, the UK could send an important signal and start to build a movement and leverage limited ODA funds to turn the tide on malnutrition and hunger again. With deliberate, concerted action along the lines set out in this plan, the UK could save over 700,000 lives, set an example to others, and reinvigorate efforts to meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

In a world where there is enough food to feed everyone, hunger on the scale seen today is not acceptable. By implementing Hunger to Health, and demonstrating its effectiveness, the UK could start a sea change in global action on this neglected but utterly critical challenge.

#### **Invest in and support initiatives that encourage collaboration**

The Hunger to Health plan illustrates why investments should be prioritised in vehicles and initiatives that encourage collaboration, such as the CNF. Since its foundation in 2021, the fund has generated clear demand from national governments, who have responded by investing significant domestic resources. To date, Cambodia, Kenya, Mauritania, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal and Uganda have contributed almost £5 million to address child wasting via the fund, thereby accessing the same in matched donor funds.

Demand is higher than the fund can currently meet. As one of the founding donors for the CNF, the UK should also encourage strong governance structures with robust accountability and transparency mechanisms within the CNF. This includes:

- Calling for a governing board that is multi-sectoral and ensures actors from governments with high burdens of wasting, donors and civil society organisations;
- Asking that CNF's funding flows as well as progress towards targets and indicators be publicly available;
- Encouraging complementarity between CNF and the N4G pledging and accountability processes, to ensure funding streams support each other and maximise impact of additional commitments.

The Child Nutrition Fund, 2022, 'Accelerating the scale-up of sustainable policies, programmes and supplies to end child wasting', [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)



Founding donors:



The N4G summit is another forum for collaboration and mutual accountability that the UK should continue to support. This Summit provides a crucial opportunity to galvanise world leaders to take action to meet global targets on nutrition and work together to end the devastating impact of malnutrition. It is also one of the few mechanisms that allow for more transparency and accountability of global commitments. The UK Government should look to renew and increase its commitment to this issue at the next N4G Summit in Paris in the coming years.

### **Leverage influence at the multilateral level**

As well as playing active and influential roles in fora like N4G and initiatives such as the CNF, the UK can also use its influence to shape more sustainable and effective policies to address food and nutrition security at the multilateral level. As the fifth largest stakeholder in the World Bank, regularly the largest donor to African Development Fund replenishment, and a major contributor to multilateral efforts such as the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program, the UK has significant influence and a track record of engagement which would give its recommendations credibility and weight. Proposed reforms could include:

**Promoting healthy trade partnerships and improving regulatory practices to prevent exacerbating food crises**

The UK should work with multilateral and bilateral partners to reaffirm commitments to rule-based, open, fair, transparent, predictable and non-discriminatory trade, thereby preventing the type of food crisis escalation seen when countries deploy export restrictions.

**Continue to support reform of Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) via initiatives such as the Bridgetown Agenda**

The UK should support Lower Middle Income Country-led calls to reform the global financial system to leverage additional resources for the poorest and most indebted countries, ensuring inclusive and resilient finance so the world can better respond to current and future crises, including malnutrition and hunger. The UK should encourage MDBs, including the World Bank, to increase their risk appetite to expand lending. It should also explore creative use of the International Monetary Fund Special Drawing Rights (SDRs), additional to ODA, and encourage other bilateral donors to do the same to support multilateral lending for food and nutrition security projects, and broader needs including climate change mitigation and adaptation.

**Expanding multilateral lending capacity and innovative use of climate finance**

As lending needs and calls for greater climate financing grow, MDBs need to explore options to expand their lending capacity to respond to climate change and related crises, including hunger, even without large capital increases. Looking at ways to ensure climate finance also delivers for food and nutrition security will also be key. Following the recent commitment by UK Export Finance (UKEF), which allows partner countries to defer debt repayments if hit by high-impact weather events, the UK should play a leading role in sharing learnings and deploying wider risk-sharing tools.

**Ensuring greater collaboration between MDBs and related agencies**

Global food crises are not limited to national borders, and their impact cuts across sectors. Greater collaboration on tackling food insecurity and resilience would allow more effective preparedness and mitigation approaches, and provide for more holistic responses when crises hit.

The UK government could also usefully advocate the following actions and reforms:

- **The creation of national Food Security Crisis Preparedness Plans**, via support from the World Bank and other stakeholders, including under the Global Alliance for Food Security framework.
- **Expanded multi-year financing from MDBs for food and nutrition security projects**, and topline impact indicators for child wasting in their results frameworks. The FCDO could encourage the World Bank to disaggregate codes for nutrition and food security and allow for greater transparency and accountability in tracking nutrition investments.
- **Reform of the World Bank's Early Response Financing** for the prevention of malnutrition, including expanding the financing ceiling, providing greater flexibility, and reforming the triggering mechanism so that countries do not need to descend to crisis levels before being able to access funding.
- **Encourage a gender-sensitive approach** in nutrition interventions across key sectors and disciplines by ensuring at least 80% of all nutrition spending entails a gender policy objective.

### **Harness the power of the private sector**

The UK should also look to leverage The City of London, a world-leading financial centre, and leading global hub in innovative financing, to attract more investment in hunger and malnutrition.

Trillions of dollars have flowed into so-called ESG 'Environment, Social and Governance' investments in recent years, with a range of innovative financing categories, including impact investing, results-based financing, blended finance, insurance, guarantees and capital market bonds. Some sectors in international development, especially health, education and environment, have developed instruments and mechanisms in these categories that have ultimately led to additional financial resources beyond traditional grant funds.

By comparison, the nutrition sector lags far behind in accessing innovative finance. For example, there have been more than 650 capital market Green Bonds launched but only two nutrition-related bonds; and there are five impact funds in global health, accessing more than £220 million, but only one in nutrition. Through Hunger to Health the UK could do more to catalyse new finance flows into the fight against malnutrition and hunger.

### **Optimise UK governance structures for impact**

If the UK is to make a meaningful contribution to the fight against malnutrition in the next five years it will also need to put structures in place that enable those working in and with the government on this issue to share best-practice and take advantage of synergies.



The UK should create a Centre of Expertise on Hunger and Malnutrition, like the already-established Centres of Expertise on Technology; Democratic Governance; Education; Green Cities; and Inclusive Growth. This Centre could carry forward the momentum from the planned UK-hosted summit on food security and nutrition in November 2023. It should draw on the expertise of scientists, policymakers, researchers, and advocates in the UK and partner countries, to review evidence, analyse data, and conduct research. It should gather insights into the effectiveness and efficiency of interventions and advise governments accordingly.

Building on the creation of the Special Envoy for Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Affairs in 2020, a new Special Envoy for Malnutrition and Hunger should be created — reporting directly to the Minister for International Development. This position would ensure the FCDO’s global health and food and agriculture programmes were equally focused on bringing high-impact malnutrition programmes to scale while leveraging the UK’s diplomatic influence in-country.

The UK should also create a nutrition lead in priority countries<sup>45</sup>, who would work closely with national governments and other partners to oversee the implementation of country strategies. This would help ensure matched domestic resource investments and overall alignment with national malnutrition, health, and agriculture planning.



© UNICEF/UN0826368/Dejongh  
Children in the vegetable garden of the ‘Pays-Bas’ school in Niamey, the capital of Niger.

## **CONCLUSION**

**Investment in nutrition will never be misplaced. At a time when budgets are strained, spending money on tackling malnutrition will result in greater impact to save and improve millions of lives and revive progress towards the SDGs. Implementing the Hunger to Health plan would help reassert the UK's positive role in the world at a time of heightened geopolitical tensions. It would produce dramatic, tangible results on a global scale, building on the UK's history of leadership in the fight to end hunger and preventable child deaths.**

There is no doubt that any government leading the UK in the coming years will face difficult choices and find few easy answers. The situation at home and abroad presents multiple, complex and urgent challenges across all sectors, from health to energy, to the environment, and national security.<sup>46</sup> It will not be possible to do everything.

However, neglecting our commitments to the world's poorest is neither morally acceptable nor in our ultimate best interests. Malnutrition is one of the biggest killers of children globally, and progress made in the past has tragically been reversed. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) recently announced that 122 million more people are facing hunger worldwide than in 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic and conflict in Ukraine.<sup>47</sup>

Food insecurity has consequences that go far beyond the individual. It hampers educational attainment, exacerbates inequality, stymies economic development, and disproportionately affects women and girls. Hunger drives political instability and mass displacement, with consequences that ripple out across the world. In the face of accelerating climate change, the imperative to make long-term sustainable investments in food systems and agriculture, alongside action to address acute food insecurity, has never been greater.

The Hunger to Health plan sets out an affordable and effective way for the UK to help meet the most basic needs in priority countries, saving nearly three-quarters of a million lives over five years. It will also reduce need in the long run by putting in place the measures necessary to prevent future malnutrition and enhance resilience globally.

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Convened by the Eleanor Crook Foundation, Hunger to Health is an initiative for an effective and actionable proposal for how the UK can lead the world in tackling hunger and malnutrition, with contributions and support from policy makers, academics, NGOs and charitable foundations.

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