

# World Bank funding for nutrition

Help the UK influence World Bank policy on investment in global nutrition programmes.

Since 2013, the UK has played a big role in the global fight against malnutrition, helping to establish the 'Nutrition for Growth' ('N4G') agenda, which raised \$23 billion over 7 years for nutrition programmes, increasing nutrition spending worldwide by 33%. But the money pledged in 2013 is insufficient to meet global nutrition targets. 2020 will be an important year as existing funding for nutrition is coming to an end, and new resources are needed. The Department for International Development (DFID) has a strong record of funding nutrition programmes. But in a turbulent political climate, spending on vital nutrition programmes cannot be taken for granted. Much of the UK's influence on global nutrition spending is exerted through its role as a leading donor to multilateral institutions including the World Bank. By influencing investment decisions at the World Bank, additional millions of pounds could be unlocked for nutrition programmes. This month, we are asking you to write to the UK's representative at the World Bank, to influence spending policy and priorities that will be discussed in June.

## The scale and impact of malnutrition

Millions of lives around the world are [blighted by malnutrition](#), caused by not having enough to eat, not eating enough of the right foods, or being unable to absorb nutrients from food. Around half of all under-5 deaths are linked to malnutrition, and children who survive often suffer permanent effects such as stunted growth and mental development, and are more susceptible to disease and illness. In 2017, 151 million children under the age of 5 were stunted. Undernourished children have lower educational and employment prospects, holding back the economic development of communities and countries. Undernutrition in childhood [reduces an individual's earning](#) potential by an estimated 10% and has a total global economic cost of \$3.5 trillion.

## Prevention and treatment

There are many ways to tackle malnutrition, including 'nutrition specific' interventions such as vitamin or mineral supplements, and 'nutrition sensitive' programmes such as water, sanitation and hygiene or agriculture programmes, which indirectly improve nutrition. Target 2.2 of the Global Goals aims to end all forms of malnutrition by 2030. This means meeting the [2025 WHO targets for nutrition](#), including a 40% reduction in the number of under-5s who are stunted.

## Nutrition is severely under-funded

The world is off track to meet the WHO targets, and financing to tackle malnutrition has been alarmingly low. Donor support for nutrition makes up under 1% of

total development aid, and governments only spend just over 1% of their national budgets on it. To transform the lives of millions of women and children worldwide, more investment in nutrition is needed. The [World Bank has estimated](#) that an extra US \$7 billion is needed each year to address stunting, wasting, anaemia and breastfeeding through nutrition-specific interventions by 2025.

## Investing in 'Human capital'

Human capital consists of the knowledge, skills, and health that people accumulate in their lives, enabling them to be productive members of society. Investing in people through nutrition, health care, education, jobs and skills helps develop 'human capital' that is key to creating economic growth, ending poverty, and creating more equitable societies. The World Bank's '[Human Capital Project](#)' aims to accelerate investment in people. In October, it released its 'Human Capital Index', which shows countries how much income they are losing in human capital, and how much they could gain if they take action. Reduction in stunting of children under 5 is one of the indicators used by the Human Capital Index as a measure of progress.

Former World Bank President Dr. Jim Kim called human capital 'a key driver of sustainable, inclusive economic growth'. His recently appointed successor, [David Malpass](#), must show the same commitment to investing in human capital. The international community has set itself ambitious targets to ensure healthy lives for all, aiming for 'Universal Health Coverage' (UHC) by 2030. This means that people have access to essential health

care without suffering financial hardship, requiring countries to invest in their people through nutrition, health care, education and social protection.

### **UK leadership on 'Nutrition for Growth' (N4G)**

In June 2013, then Prime Minister David Cameron established the 'Nutrition for Growth' ('N4G') agenda, leading efforts to bring together governments, businesses, scientists and civil society to raise US \$23 billion of funding for nutrition over 7 years, increasing nutrition spending worldwide by 33%.

The UK is a leading donor for nutrition. At the 2013 N4G Summit, the UK government committed an extra £375 million for nutrition-specific programmes and an extra £604 million for nutrition-sensitive programmes up until 2020. The current government made a further commitment to improve nutrition for 50 million people by 2020, a target it is on track to achieve. The next N4G moment will come in 2020, when the funding pledges from 2013 end. Japan will host a summit in Tokyo to seek further donor funding, which will be an important moment for the UK to increase its funding for nutrition.

However, the current political uncertainties could put UK leadership on nutrition at risk, with Brexit, attacks on overseas aid, and a redefinition of the role of 'Global Britain' on the world stage. And a spending review later in 2019 could also put pressure on how much we spend on nutrition and on wider global health initiatives.

### **The UK's role at the World Bank**

As a leading donor, the UK has a seat on the World Bank's Board of Executive Directors, with a civil servant (the UK Executive Director) representing the UK. The World Bank is one of the world's largest sources of funding for developing countries. Its explicit mission is to reduce poverty and increase shared prosperity. One of the World Bank's constituent institutions, the '[International Development Association](#)' (IDA), is the part of the World Bank that helps the world's poorest

countries. Overseen by 173 shareholder nations, IDA aims to reduce poverty by providing loans and grants for programmes that boost economic growth, reduce inequalities, and improve people's living conditions.

IDA is one of the largest sources of assistance for the world's 75 poorest countries. It is the single largest source of donor funds for basic social services, and is currently the largest source of global nutrition funding. IDA is set to be replenished in December 2019, when donors will be expected to pledge new funds. The UK's current contribution to IDA is over £2.5 billion for the period 2017-2020, making it the largest contributor.

As well as funding its own nutrition programmes, UK financial support for IDA, together with its membership of the World Bank's Board of Executive Directors, enables the UK to wield significant influence on its investment priorities. In June, policy and priorities for IDA will be discussed. This will be a great opportunity for the UK to persuade fellow Board members to focus IDA investments on developing human capital, including financing for nutrition programmes to support N4G.

RESULTS campaigners have been raising the profile of nutrition this year, contacting the Government about the importance of continued leadership on N4G, and asking them to ensure that nutrition programmes funded by the UK are as effective as possible. Several of you have shared replies from former DFID Minister Alistair Burt MP, in which he acknowledged the UK's strong ongoing support for combating malnutrition. Thank you if you have taken action!

### **This month...**

If you can, please write to the UK Executive Director at the World Bank [Richard Montgomery](#), asking him to help ensure that investments in human capital, including investments in nutrition programmes, are a priority for IDA in the run-up to the next N4G summit.

#### **Take action**

**Please write to the UK Executive Director to the World Bank [Richard Montgomery](#)** asking him to make the case at the Executive Board's next meeting for human capital investments such as nutrition to continue to be a priority for IDA, in the run-up to the Nutrition for Growth Summit. Please also ask him to contact the new World Bank President David Malpass, urging him to support the Bank's promotion of investing in human capital.

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