

# Turning pledges into pounds:

Ensuring accountability for 'Nutrition for Growth' commitments

**RESULTS**  
the power to end poverty

## The issue

On June 8<sup>th</sup> 2013, RESULTS was celebrating the success of the 'Nutrition for Growth' event; world leaders had come together in London and pledged \$4.1 billion for tackling the global scourge of undernutrition, with the UK alone promising £655 million in new money.

We were delighted, never before had such a grand statement of intent been made for ending the global scourge of undernutrition. And it couldn't have come at a more pressing moment: globally undernutrition is responsible for 45% of all under five deaths; and over 165 million children have stunted growth due to poor nutrition.

So we celebrated, but our work didn't end on June 8<sup>th</sup>. We now have a collective responsibility to hold those who pledged to account for delivering every penny of their pledges; and to ensure that every pound spent brings positive outcomes for vulnerable children. This month we'll be working to build political pressure on the UK to deliver.

## The impact of undernutrition

Undernutrition is the single largest killer of children under five, responsible for 45% of all under 5 deaths; taking around 3.1 million children's lives every year. More broadly poor nutrition negatively impacts almost every aspect of a child's early development; from making them more susceptible to deadly illnesses to stunting their growth to reducing their ability to learn at school.

## Growing momentum around nutrition

Despite the enormous negative consequences of widespread undernutrition, it has been a relatively neglected area of focus over the past 10 years. Major efforts have been made to reduce 'hunger' but without a specific focus on nutrition. However that has slowly changed over the last few years.

In 2008, the Lancet –Europe's foremost medical journal- published a series on the subject detailing the impact of undernutrition globally; and listing 13 high impact interventions that could be deployed to tackle it. Then, in 2012, a group of Scandinavian economists examined the issue in great depth and concluded that nutrition-specific interventions deliver some of the best value for money of all development interventions and recommended that preventing undernutrition in young children should be a top priority for policymakers.

In the same year the UK Government held it's 'Olympic Hunger Summit' in July setting out a commitment to tackling undernutrition the world over.

## Nutrition for Growth

Following the Hunger Summit the UK Government announced that it would be convening a major international 'pledging moment' in June 2012 to bring together business leaders, scientists, governments and civil society working to bring an end to hunger and undernutrition, and for them to pledge new resources in the fight. The event was titled 'Nutrition for Growth: Beating Hunger through Business and Science' and took place in London on June 8<sup>th</sup> 2013. The same day, 45000 campaigners –including a bus load from RESULTS- rallied in Hyde Park to make a loud a clear call for the event to be a success.

## What were the outcomes of 'Nutrition for growth?'

It was a major success. \$4.1 billion was pledged, a substantial accomplishment. The UK Government led the way with a pledge of £655 million, while many developing countries 'pledged' implement policy or practice changes to reduce undernutrition. **You can read more detail about the promises made on June 8<sup>th</sup> in Background Sheet 1.** Now that the money –and policy change- has been pledged, the role of civil society is to ensure that the money is delivered quickly and effectively to those who need it most. This is referred to as 'accountability'.

## The importance of accountability

While discussions around accountability can sound technical, this is one of the most important pieces to get right, so that we can ensure that pledges turn into money well spent. Moreover, strong accountability

keeps the Government honest and allows the public and civil society to see the full picture of the work they doing –or not doing- and to use advocacy and campaign into keep them on track.

### What is the UK currently doing on accountability?

The UK Department for International Development (DFID) is leading on developing a global accountability framework that will monitor progress on 'Nutrition for Growth' pledges from all who pledged; and will track global progress on reducing undernutrition.

This framework must be as strong as possible to ensure that the money pledged at 'Nutrition for Growth' is used in the most effective way possible, that political and public interest generated by the event is maintained, and that the outcomes for children are achieved. It is currently still in a draft phase and so we have the opportunity to influence it.

### What does a good framework look like?

1. **Ensures that money is used for programmes which have a strong evidence base** - while an unacceptable number of countries are struggling to tackle the burden of undernutrition, many countries have made significant progress. We should be focusing efforts on programmes which are known to be effective. **You can read some case studies of effective programmes in Background Sheet 2.**
2. **Includes all countries with high rates of undernutrition** - the framework needs to measure

nutrition spending and progress for all high burden countries.

3. **Uses up to date information** – Almost all nutrition monitoring data comes from surveys which only occur every 5-10 years. This simply isn't practical for measuring changes in undernutrition annually or every 2 years. We need to push for a practical method of gathering information and using it to monitor changes in undernutrition over shorter time scales.
4. **Is equitable and transparent** – because undernutrition disproportionately affects the poorest and most vulnerable, we want to make sure that these groups are reached.

### Why are we acting now?

We're now nearly five months on from Nutrition for Growth and the celebrations of June 8<sup>th</sup> and we're still not sure how and where DIFD is going to spend its amazing pledge. Time is of the essence; the pledge only runs until 2016 so the money needs to have been used and used well by then.

While DFID has made reference to the development of its accountability framework, not enough is being done quickly enough. Our MPs need to understand their role in holding DFID to account and Justine Greening and the ministerial team need to know that the public –and members- are keeping a close eye on progress.

#### **Take action**

**Write a letter to your MP. Use the EPIC format (Engage your reader, explain the Problem, Inform of the solution, make a Call to action).**

- **E:** Explain the impact of global undernutrition on children all over the world. Mention that the UK has stepped up to meet this challenge by holding Nutrition for Growth and pledging £655 million in new money.
- **P:** Tell them why it is important that the Government are held to account for their pledges; and that the UK public and MPs care about this money being spent and spent well.
- **I:** Highlight the importance of the implementation of the accountability framework;
- **C:** ask them to **EITHER** write to Justine Greening, Secretary of State for International Development.
  - Start by thanking her for the UK's commitment to ending undernutrition with our fantastic pledge;
  - Ensure that DFID develops and implements the accountability framework as soon as possible to enable civil society and the public to monitor progress towards 'Nutrition for Growth' pledges;
  - Ask her to ensure that the framework includes all countries, addresses data gaps and is equitable and transparent.

**And/or** if your MP is already a champion on these issues you can ask them to submit a parliamentary question on the issue. **You can find your MPs details at [www.theyworkforyou.com](http://www.theyworkforyou.com)**