



CASE STUDY: UGANDA

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT FOR IMPROVED NUTRITION IN UGANDA

Country: **Uganda**
Year: **2013**
Technical area: **Nutrition**
Good Capacity Development practices: **Capacity Assessment; Multi-stakeholder Processes**

BACKGROUND

Although the number of people living below the poverty line in Uganda has decreased by 50% in the last decade, malnutrition has increased from 27% to 30%. In the same period, per capita daily food consumption fell by 9.5%, representing a decline in dietary energy supply. While there are several reasons for this, Uganda's Nutrition Action Plan (UNAP) for 2011-16 has identified a lack of capacity as one of the five main factors driving persistent malnutrition.

CAPACITY GAPS PERSIST DESPITE THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

At the national level, there is strong political commitment for nutrition activities.¹ Indeed, all nutrition initiatives fall under the Office of the Prime Minister. Furthermore, there are many non-governmental programmes operating in the country, including the Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger and Malnutrition (REACH) programme.

In 2013, with support from the EU-FAO Improved Global Governance for Hunger Protection Programme, FAO and its partners in Uganda launched a Capacity

Needs Assessment (CA). The assessment highlighted that at the district level, where most nutrition activities take place, the capacity to fully implement nutrition intervention needs to be strengthened.

HOW THE CAPACITY ASSESSMENT WAS CONDUCTED



"Uganda has successfully addressed poverty in the last ten years, but malnutrition is still a major problem. FAO contributes to overcoming underlying institutional capacity constraints through a structured assessment and continuous development approach."
- *Alhaji M. Jallow, FAO Representative in Uganda*

The CA's main objective was to identify capacity gaps in implementing nutrition programmes as highlighted in the UNAP. FAO worked with a consulting firm (RECAPIP) and REACH staff members to interview stakeholders in thirty-one districts. **Capacity assessment questionnaires and templates** had been customised for different stakeholders such as the media, community members, decision makers, etc. FAO CD tools, such as the **Stakeholder Analysis Tool**, were also used. The latter was especially successful in identifying people who were not aware of existing nutrition policies, as well as those who needed to be empowered to take action.

Findings were analyzed by a wide group of stakeholders in a series of participatory workshops. Participants also discussed and gained consensus on next steps and priorities for action.

¹ *The 2011–2016 Uganda Nutrition Plan (UNAP), the 2013 Uganda Food and Nutrition Policy, the 1990–2015 Health Sector Investment Plan and the National Development Plan (2010–2015). Uganda is also one of the lead countries for the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement.*

FINDINGS FROM THE CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Workshop participants realised that technical solutions were not enough and that institutional issues were keeping malnutrition levels high despite increased food productivity and higher incomes.

Capacity gaps they identified included:

1. **Communications:** National nutrition policies (such as the UNAP) have not been communicated - in appropriate formats - to different stakeholders.
2. **Expertise:** There is a lack of nutrition professionals at the district level. Members of the District Nutrition Coordination Committees (DNCC) come from related sectors such as health and agriculture but often do not have any specific training in nutrition.
3. **Monitoring:** District monitoring and evaluation systems lack nutrition objectives and performance indicators.
4. **Funding** for nutrition programmes appears to be a low priority among development partners and the government of Uganda.
5. **Information sharing:** Nutrition professionals share information mainly with each other through workshops and seminars. Nutrition information is rarely shared with communities and other key users.
6. **Coordination:** There is a lack of coordination among different sectors in terms of implementing activities.

CONSENSUS REACHED ON NEXT STEPS

Participants identified the following next steps for enhancing capacity to improve nutrition:

1. Raise awareness of the national nutrition plans among local government staff, donors and NGO's.
2. Strengthen the capacity of public, private and civil society stakeholders to include and monitor nutrition objectives in their core programmes. Their capacity to advocate for meeting these objectives should also be boosted.
3. Improve DNCCs' capacity to communicate nutrition information to different stakeholders - especially to community members.
4. Support nutrition training programmes in colleges and other academic and research institutions.

5. Strengthen fora and networks so that nutrition information can be shared widely, and collaboration among different stakeholders strengthened.

FAO's Capacity Development Approach

For FAO's work to have a lasting impact, there should be a realistic assessment of a country's capacity in terms of:

- **Individuals** - their knowledge, skills, behavior and attitudes;
- **Organizations** - their mandates, priorities, processes and structure; and
- **The enabling environment** - including political will as well as policy and legal frameworks.



CONCLUSION

The Uganda case study shows the value of tackling nutrition challenges by identifying capacity needs using FAO's Capacity Assessment tools and involving a wide range of stakeholders. Indeed, in late 2014 the Office of the Prime Minister of Uganda recognized the work's value by recommending that districts conduct additional Capacity Assessments and prepare Capacity Development action plans for improving nutrition.

To learn about the capacity assessment tool, refer to: http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/capacity_building/FAO_CD_LM2.pdf

