

Working Together for the Future of Uganda

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Media and Nutrition Fact Sheet

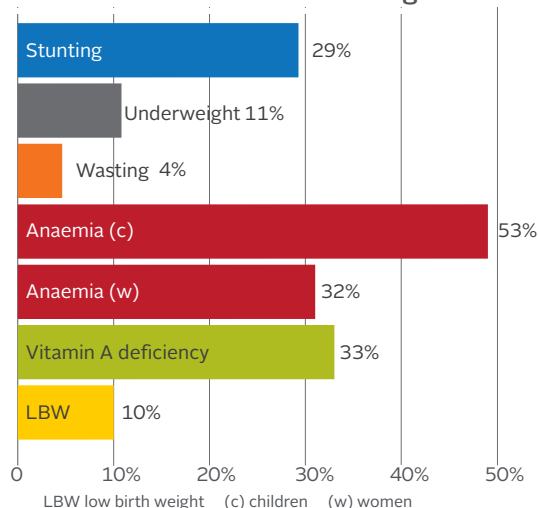
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Today in Uganda, almost one-third of children are malnourished. Despite continued investment by the Government of Uganda and donors, malnutrition remains a serious problem. Malnutrition in Uganda can take many forms, including chronic malnutrition (stunting, or low height-for-age), underweight (low weight-for-age), acute malnutrition (wasting, or low weight-for-height), anaemia, vitamin A deficiency, iodine deficiency, and low birth weight (< 2.5 kg). Malnutrition in Uganda affects poor families disproportionately more than wealthy families: 32% of the poorest children are stunted. But even among wealthy families, 17% of children under the age of 5 are stunted.¹

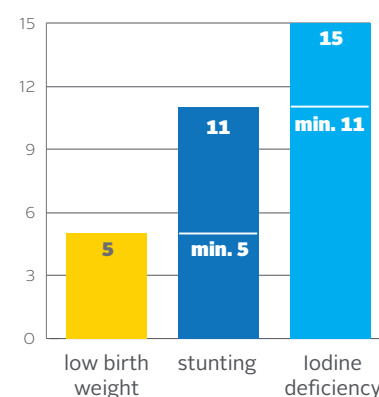
Why does this matter?

- Malnourished children are more likely to have repeated illnesses and infections, which can result in a significant financial burden, especially for poor families.^{2,3}
- Malnourished children have an increased risk of chronic diseases (such as diabetes and heart disease) in adulthood.²
- Malnutrition in childhood impairs physical growth and cognitive development, decreasing IQ points and undermining potential.^{2,3,4}
 - Malnourished children under 2 learn to sit, stand, and walk later than their well-nourished peers.
 - Malnourished children enrol in school later, miss more days of school due to illness, perform worse in school, and complete fewer years of schooling.
 - Because of this, malnourished children become adults who earn less compared to their well-nourished and better-educated peers.
- By 2025, with no additional investment or effort to prevent and treat malnutrition at the community level, the number of infant and child deaths will be approximately half a million.⁴
- If there is no improvement in nutrition, economic productivity losses for the country will be more than 19 trillion Ugandan Shillings (US\$7.7 billion) by 2025.⁴
- Uganda simply cannot afford not to act.

Prevalence of Malnutrition in Uganda¹



IQ Points Lost to Malnutrition⁵



But malnutrition is *preventable and treatable*. The children of Uganda can be free of all forms of malnutrition if we act now.

- Investing in expanding comprehensive quality nutrition services to communities across the country could change this reality by significantly reducing the number of deaths of children under the age of 5 and improving school performance of children, leading to a better quality of life. For a country like Uganda, nutrition is a smart investment: For every US\$1 spent on nutrition, there is a US\$16 return in health and economic benefits.⁶
- Sustained intra- and inter-sectoral collaboration and coordination between the health directorates of the Ministry of Health, other ministries, development partners, United Nations bodies, and international non-governmental organisations is a precondition for expanding and sustaining quality nutrition service delivery at the community level across the country.
- There is a need to raise public awareness of malnutrition to increase the demand for quality nutrition services to be provided in communities.
- More importantly, there is a need to increase accountability for nutrition in Uganda.

How can you, as members of the media, help?

You decide what is news and what should be reported on. Reporting on the nutrition situation in Uganda is important and you can play a key role.

- Nutrition is an issue of personal interest to readers and viewers, and, as such, reporting on nutrition can expand readership and viewership to reach new audiences.
- The media can raise public awareness of the importance of nutrition in Uganda. Every family looks to their children as their future, and every parent wants her child to have the best start in life. Report on nutrition services and products that are available, why families should access them, and how.
- The media plays an important role as a voice for the public, and, in this role, the media can hold government and non-government institutions accountable for improving the nutrition situation of Uganda, promoting good governance for nutrition.
- Make nutrition a priority for reporting by including nutrition in your editorial policy, and give journalists opportunities to improve their capacity to report on nutrition issues.



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations



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