



Using Monitoring and Evaluation to Maximize Impact for Stunting Prevention in Malawi

Background

Since January 2013, the Government of Malawi with the support of WFP and World Vision has been implementing a stunting prevention program in the district of Ntchisi in central Malawi, funded by the Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), and line with efforts towards Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) in the country. Over 4.5 years (until June 2017) this pilot program will target children under two and pregnant and lactating women in order to:

- reduce stunting in the district
- gather lessons to inform future WFP chronic malnutrition programming
- generate tools and guidance that can be used in other contexts and programs within WFP, and to influence the global scale-up of prevention programming by documenting best practices, models, and evidence of impact.

To achieve this, WFP and partners implement the following activities:

- Provision of specialized foods: lipid-based nutrient supplement (LNS)

to children aged 6-23 months and Super Cereal to PLW with moderate acute malnutrition, through health centres

- social behavioral change communication and nutrition education
- support to standard health practices, such as deworming and the provision of vitamin A
- support to complementary interventions, such as sanitation and hygiene practices.

Monitoring and evaluation is a critical component of this intervention, to ensure course correction as needed during implementation. WFP and World Vision are supporting the Government of Malawi in the monitoring of the project.

Who is involved?

- The sponsor — The Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF)
- Government of Malawi
- World Vision

Ntchisi district in central Malawi has an average stunting prevalence of 53 percent. In 2013, WFP, the Government of Malawi, and partners launched a programme to tackle stunting prevention—backed by an innovative, real-time monitoring and evaluation system that allows valuable course correction for the ultimate benefit of all beneficiaries.



A mother collects her nutritious supplements as her SCOpe card is used to record her attendance.

Required resources

M&E solution costs are 6% of the total programme costs, but almost half of these are one-off investments for functionality development:

- SCOpe functionality: USD 106,000
- GRASP functionality: USD 55,000
- Business Intelligence Tool: USD 63,000
- IT equipment: USD 218,000

Further reading

SCOPE in 5 minutes: documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/communications/wfp258555.pdf
ciff.org/grant-portfolio/malawi-stunting-prevention/wfp.org/news/news-release/progress-stunting-prevention-Malawi
youtube.com/watch?v=6OYFlcwpVYI

What was done?

Initially, in January 2013, a Logic Model was developed to demonstrate the logical relationship between inputs, outputs, outcomes and impact. Based on this Logic Model, a detailed M&E plan was developed and a WFP cross-functional ICT and VAM (Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping) team established to adapt IT solutions to the needs of the intervention. The objective was to create near real-time situational and operational awareness enabling evidence-informed corrections.

WFP developed an innovative monitoring system consisting of electronic beneficiary registration and distribution tracking, as well as periodic post-distribution monitoring surveys through handheld devices.

Beneficiary registration: Project beneficiaries are registered using WFP's digital platform SCOpe (System for Cash Operations) and issued a unique bar-coded beneficiary card (the SCOpe card) that is presented during distributions to record attendance. This is the first time SCOpe has been used to monitor in-kind transfers.

Post-distribution monitoring: Every four months, post-distribution monitoring surveys are carried out using handheld tablets which convey data to WFPs' Geo-referenced Real-time Acquisition of Statistics Platform (GRASP).

Data analysis: A Business Intelligence Tool was developed to enable access to and analysis of information to improve and optimize decisions and performance. This tool gathers information from SCOpe and GRASP and enables the real-time synchronization of data to improve and optimize decisions and performance throughout the implementation.

What happened?

The use of near real-time M&E solutions enabled the provision of performance-based support to the Government of Malawi and World Vision. For example, in August 2014, the data collected showed that some 5,000 children did not show up at health centres to receive their nutrition supplements. Using the information collected, WFP and partners were able to track and visit the mothers and find out the reasons. Once the information was analysed, a number of course corrections were implemented:

- To ease access, the number of delivery points where women could collect nutrition supplements was increased from 27 to 80 which also reduced the required walking distance by an average of 1.5km;
- To raise awareness, cooperating partner staff profiles were changed to Field Facilitators, who spread targeted messages about the programme to more women in the area.

By May 2015, attendance at health centres had increased from 65.6 to 82.9 per cent.

Lessons learned

This intervention was the first time SCOpe has been used to monitor in-kind transfers, having been developed for cash and voucher programming. This experience has shown that the system can be leveraged by other WFP in-kind transfer programmes for its eventual mainstreaming in the WFP programme portfolio. Innovation and technology can improve program efficiency and effectiveness, particularly in M&E, and can provide results for better communication and increased programme engagement.

Sustainability

This intervention and corresponding M&E solutions are replicable in other districts of Malawi, now that the initial cost of setting up the IT systems are in place. Additionally, improvements in programme efficiency and effectiveness have succeeded in increasing donor confidence in the intervention, as it is clear the actions are results and data-driven. These factors lay the foundations for expansion to other areas of Malawi, and for the use of the IT systems in other WFP programme portfolios. This intervention has also enabled the development of capacity for monitoring and evaluation, commodity and supply chain management, and SBCC in the government health system, and in the partnering NGOs.

Zero Hunger

This intervention contributes directly to the Zero Hunger challenge to achieve zero stunted children under two. Furthermore, the near real-time M&E solutions help WFP and partners to better ensure all vulnerable children under two in the targeted district are reached, and that any issues preventing them and pregnant lactating women from receiving their regular nutrition supplements are tracked and tackled.