

# GLOBAL MALNUTRITION

# INITIATIVE REPORT



**Save the  
Children**

May 2020

**Our Global Malnutrition Initiative (GMI) aims to transform the way we treat malnutrition in fragile and conflict-affected states.**

**With your support, in some of the world's toughest places to be a child, we're bringing nutrition care directly into communities.**

**The GMI is built on three key approaches:**

- 1. Develop, pilot and roll out simplified tools to help community health workers and volunteers in Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen diagnose, treat and prevent child malnutrition.**
- 2. Push for more long-term donor funding to address malnutrition, starting with our own funding commitment.**
- 3. Advocate for global progress in tackling child malnutrition – through changes in nutrition policy, practice and funding.**

**This short report looks at our latest work in each of these areas.**



Photo: Mark Njuguna / Save the Children

Matthew, Shadrack and Sheila at home in Turkana, northern Kenya.

## 1 TESTING AND

## SCALING UP

## NOVEL APPROACHES

### Kenya

Your funding is supporting an innovative pilot project in Turkana County, northern Kenya. The project is testing a simplified treatment procedure that allows community health workers to both diagnose and treat children for acute malnutrition close to their homes.

We supported the Kenyan Ministry of Health to provide six rounds of monthly mentoring sessions to 10 community health assistants and 128 community health volunteers, exceeding our targets.

In addition, we helped the Ministry of Health in Turkana train 40 community health volunteers, four community health assistants and two nurses.

These community health workers learned to provide good-quality care to children suffering from malnutrition, diarrhoea or malaria. Since the training, they have supported a total of 870 children – by diagnosing, treating or referring them on for further treatment. Once the pilot phase is completed, we plan to scale up this work to support more children.

We're continuing to evaluate the effectiveness of the GMI community treatment approach compared with treatment in health centres alone. Working with the Ministry of Health, Action Against Hunger, the International Rescue Committee, UNICEF and the World Food

Programme, we've compared the impact of the work of two groups of community health workers. Initial learning indicates that community health workers who are trained to treat as well as diagnose child malnutrition make earlier diagnoses and initiate treatment or referral more quickly, and children recover faster and get better follow-up – all of which help reduce child mortality.

Recently, we secured a research partnership with University College London, bringing additional expertise and rigour to our evaluative research.

In the next stage of the project, we'll formalise our evidence and use it to advocate for changes in nutrition policy, for increased funding to tackle child malnutrition, and for community-based treatment for acute malnutrition in Kenya to be scaled up.

## Somalia

In Somalia, GMI-funded feeding programmes have treated 8,713 boys, 8,713 girls and 5,112 pregnant and breastfeeding women in 30 nutrition centres. In addition, we've provided one-to-one counselling on good feeding practices to 2,766 mothers and have run community sessions to promote key nutrition messages to a further 32,883 parents. And, as in Kenya, we're developing simplified tools that enable community health workers in Somalia to treat malnutrition at the community level, bolstering services provided at health facilities.

## Yemen

In Yemen, in spite of the operational challenges and deteriorating humanitarian situation, as of 31st December 2019, we've provided treatment for acute malnutrition to 3,849 boys, 4,441 girls and 3,289 pregnant and breastfeeding women. Our feeding programmes give out therapeutic foods and medicines, and support children who need more specialised care get to hospital.

Over the next few months, we plan to train 97 community health volunteers to diagnose and refer cases of acute malnutrition.

## South Sudan

Working with UNICEF in South Sudan, last year we supported 61 health facilities. Our project helps to treat and prevent child malnutrition. We train

health workers to screen for malnutrition and treat it early, and to provide nutritional advice to families.

## 2 INCREASING LONG-TERM FUNDING

**Your support for the GMI has been critical in helping us to leverage further funding, including a single seven-figure philanthropic gift. This year, we aim to raise £3 million to make sure children can receive the malnutrition treatment they need.**

Ahead of the forthcoming Tokyo Nutrition for Growth summit, Save the Children will, as a global movement, agree a multi-year funding commitment for nutrition. It will include a substantial financial contribution from Save the Children UK.

Precautions taken to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic mean this summit, originally planned for December, has now been postponed to 2021. We continue to work closely with the government of Japan on summit preparations and will alter our plans as necessary.

We're also working with the UK Department for International Development to ensure Britain commits to continued funding for nutrition that is needed to help reach the Sustainable Development Goals. We're supporting

our target countries to maximise financing and to mobilise domestic resources so that nutrition financing is sustainable.

## 3 ADVOCATING FOR GLOBAL CHANGE

**As a global movement, Save the Children – led by our advocacy and technical experts – has responded to a push by UN agencies to accelerate global progress on the prevention and management of acute malnutrition, or 'wasting'. Following the launch of the Global Action Plan on Wasting, our team will work with key stakeholders – including UNICEF, the World Health Organisation, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the World Food Programme – to translate this plan into action.**

As well as working with the UK and other governments to renew financing commitments at the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit, our advocacy teams have developed policy positions to drive global efforts to tackle malnutrition. The government of Japan has included acute malnutrition and malnutrition in fragile and conflict-affected settings in its five priority areas on the summit's agenda, offering a big opportunity to galvanise support for the GMI's approaches.



A severely malnourished child is cared for at a hospital in Mandera, North-Eastern Kenya.



“Fatima is my  
younger sister,  
I love her.  
When Fatima  
got sick, I cried.”

Fatun, 7, Somalia



## PREVENTING MALNUTRITION AND SAVING LIVES FATIMA'S STORY

Until a few years ago, Fatima's\* family lived as pastoralists. But then disaster struck. Drought followed by flooding devastated their region of Somalia.

“Nearly all our goats drowned and died,” says Fatima's older sister, Fatun\*. “Now we're left with only three goats.”

It meant the family had lost their wealth and their livelihood. As a result, they struggled to get enough nutritious food. Baby Fatima became weak with malnutrition, and suffered from vomiting and diarrhoea.

Fatima's mother, Amina, took her to a Save the Children-supported stabilisation centre. Here Fatima was treated with

nutritional milk, food supplements and medicine. Within ten days, she had put on weight and started to get her strength back. When Fatima came home, Fatun was thrilled.

“When I see my sister happy and healthy, I am happy for her,” says Fatun. “When I saw her, I carried her and gave her a kiss.”

Fatima's recovery is a huge relief for Amina too. Like any mother, she wants the best for her children.

“I wish for my children to live a life of good health, and receive a good education,” she says.

\* Names changed to protect identities.

## THANK YOU

Your unwavering support for the **Global Malnutrition Initiative** is vital – and transformative. By helping to roll out innovative approaches for children who have been left behind, you are helping them access life-saving treatment and the chance of a better future. And in the global fight against malnutrition, you are helping create long-term change for children.

The Save the Children Fund is a charity registered in England and Wales (213890) and Scotland (SC039570) and a limited company registered in England and Wales (178159).