Malnutrition is a growing development priority for Germany

Tackling malnutrition, especially in pregnant women, mothers, and young children, is one of Germany’s key development priorities, as part of its larger focus on agricultural and rural development for food and nutrition security. It is an explicit focus of the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)’s Special Initiative ‘One World - No Hunger’, which was launched by Development Minister Müller in 2014 to advance food and nutrition security as well as rural development. Further, the 2017 to 2021 coalition treaty emphasizes that Germany will continue to support nutrition and just access to land, as well as oppose speculation on food that artificially inflates prices.

Germany was the driving force behind the G7’s ‘Broad Food Security and Nutrition Development Approach’, which was developed in 2015. This is another manifestation of the growing importance of nutrition for Germany’s development cooperation. In June 2013, Germany committed US$260 million for nutrition (2013 to 2020) at the Nutrition for Growth Summit and is currently considering topping up its pledge.

Germany’s nutrition-sensitive support focuses on improving the quality and diversity of food and to improve access to nutritious food. Additional priorities related to nutrition include improving access to safe drinking water, to health care, to social protection, and to knowledge on food storage and preparation.

According to OECD DAC data, Germany spent US$20 million on basic nutrition in 2017 (latest year for which bilateral data is available) – however, it is much more difficult to quantify donor support for nutrition-sensitive interventions due to their multi-sectoral nature. According to the 2018 ‘Global Nutrition Report’, which relies on figures reported by donors themselves, Germany spent an additional US$187 million on nutrition-sensitive interventions in 2016.

BMZ shapes Germany’s policy on nutrition

The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) shapes Germany’s policy on nutrition. It applies a multisectoral approach, combining nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions. Germany focuses its nutrition-specific interventions primarily on maternal and child health.

The Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) is also a relevant actor in Germany’s engagement in the fight against malnutrition. It represents Germany at the UN’s Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and hosts the annual international conferences ‘Policies against Hunger’ and ‘Global Forum for Food and Agriculture’.

Nutrition-specific:
interventions with primary objective to improve nutrition (i.e., support for exclusive breastfeeding, supplementary feeding, etc.)

Nutrition-sensitive:
interventions addressing underlying causes of malnutrition and consider cross-sector impacts (i.e., improve access to diverse diet, etc.)