



The recipe for success: how policy-makers can integrate water, sanitation and hygiene into actions to end malnutrition

Country profile: Ethiopia



Key statisticsⁱ

- 38.4% of children under five are stunted
- 9.9% of children under five are wasted
- 39% of the population have access to at least basic drinking water services
- 7% of the population have access to at least basic sanitation services
- 1% of the population have access to basic hygiene

Background

Ethiopia is not on course to meet the World Health Assembly (WHA) targets for under-five stunting, wasting and anaemia, although it has made some progress on stunting. The Government is both a member of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement and Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) partnership. It joined the SUN Movement in 2010, and pledged seven commitments at the 2014 SWA High Level Meeting, five of which have been considered to be in 'good progress', in terms of political prioritisation, national planning processes, and evidence-based decision-making. The country's National Nutrition Plan has been updated recently, while the One WASH National Program (OWNP) will continue to 2020 and is being reviewed at the time of writing.

Is water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) integrated within national nutrition plans?

National Nutrition Plan (2016–2020)

The plan provides a comprehensive overview of how it sets out to improve nutrition in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and emphasises nutrition-sensitive as well as nutrition-specific interventions. WASH has been well integrated into the plan, and one objective refers to strengthening implementation of nutrition-sensitive interventions across sectors, including water and sanitation. WASH interventions are mainly considered at household and community levels, and include a mix of both infrastructure and behaviour change components such as access to safe water, use of household water treatment practices, food hygiene, handwashing with soap, clean household environments,

and community and household latrines.

Within the plan are attempts to strengthen integrated approaches across sectors, such as working with the agriculture sector to encourage schools to promote and transfer school gardening models at community level, and linking with school feeding and WASH programmes. It explicitly mentions the need to strengthen and coordinate water, sanitation and hygiene activities through the ONE WASH programme.

The plan's monitoring and evaluation framework includes three WASH indicators (% of households with clean and safe drinking water; proportion of schools with water supply; proportion of households with handwashing facilities), and the Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Electricity is involved in the National Nutrition Coordinating Body (NNCB).

Is nutrition integrated within national WASH plans?

One WASH National Program, 2013

This programme is designed to be implemented in two phases: July 2013–June 2015, and July 2015–June 2020. Although it emphasises the importance of a multi-sectoral approach, it makes little reference to nutrition. The proposed interventions for sanitation and hygiene will take place in schools and healthcare facilities. The programme suggests that WASH activities can be combined with other activities, such as vegetable gardening, to provide additional benefits to schools and potentially support nutrition education. This needs to be further developed to ensure nutrition-specific interventions are fully incorporated.

The decreased percentage of children under five with diarrhoeal disease is a key indicator mentioned to track progress, and it is important to consider nutrition interventions that can contribute to reduction of diarrhoeal disease. Although the programme's coordination mechanisms have been clearly set out, including involvement of the Ministry of Health, nutrition representatives from within the Ministry of Health have not been considered, as with other departments such as environmental health. Greater collaboration between WASH and nutrition stakeholders is required to strengthen this programme.

Recommendations for the Government of Ethiopia

- The nutrition plan should incorporate indicators on sanitation, in addition to those on water and hygiene.
- Behaviour change strategies are an important link to integrate nutrition and WASH programmes, but should involve the delivery of comprehensive hygiene practices. For example, the integration of hygiene into health extension workers programmes is encouraged, but this should include the promotion of key water quality and sanitation behaviours, such as latrine construction, in addition to handwashing at critical times.

- WASH programmes should integrate nutrition objectives and nutrition-related outcomes from the outset, focusing on areas that have high nutritional vulnerability and strengthening integration in terms of geographical areas and beneficiaries. This will involve engaging the nutrition team in the Ministry of Health in the coordination mechanism of the ONE WASH National Program, ensuring opportunities to incorporate nutrition promotion into hygiene promotion and community-led total sanitation (CLTS) at the community level are utilised.
- One WASH National Program's efforts to improve WASH in institutions should also include nutrition centres and school feeding centres.
- The ONE WASH National Program could reinforce WASH and nutrition integration in emergency situations in addition to that in development contexts, with a focus on meeting the immediate humanitarian needs of the populations through an integrated approach.
- Nutrition and WASH stakeholders should be involved in both the planning and implementation phases to strengthen integration within the plans and to build long-lasting cross-sectoral collaborations.

Recommendations for all national governments

- Ensure policies align with the SDGs and their interconnected targets to strengthen WASH and nutrition coordination and collaboration, using opportunities such as policy reviews and joint sector reviews.
- Establish effective cross-ministerial coordination mechanisms championed at the highest level by heads of state, to support sharing of information and joint planning and implementation of policies.
- Ensure cross-ministerial coordination structures incorporate meaningful participation of and consultation with civil society and affected communities.
- Ensure up-to-date national WASH and nutrition plans and progress reports are easily accessible online, to allow civil society to monitor progress and hold governments to account.

Nutrition policy-makers and practitioners should:

- Prioritise nutrition-sensitive WASH interventions and include specific objectives to improve WASH within nutrition plans and policies. Clear entry points to integrate WASH and nutrition include: behaviour change promotion; improvement of provision of WASH in healthcare facilities and schools; and co-location of interventions to areas with lowest WASH access and highest prevalence of undernutrition.

WASH policy-makers and practitioners should:

- Increase the 'nutrition-sensitivity' of policies and programmes, including by: targeting geographical areas where undernutrition is most prevalent; prioritising women and children; and including nutrition-relevant interventions, such as improving WASH in health and nutrition centres.

This country profile is drawn from the global report ‘*The recipe for success: how policy-makers can integrate water, sanitation and hygiene into action to end malnutrition*’ produced by ACF, the SHARE Consortium and WaterAid. Read the full report at www.wateraid.org/recipeforsuccess

ⁱ To ensure consistency and cross-country comparability, we have used the most recent figures published by global monitoring reports. In some countries, more up-to-date national statistics are available. Nutrition statistics from UNICEF, WHO & World Bank Group (2017) *Child malnutrition estimates*. Available at www.who.int/entity/nutgrowthdb/jme_dataset2017_final.xlsx?ua=1 WASH statistics from UNICEF/WHO Joint Monitoring Programme (2017) *Progress on Drinking Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene: 2017 update and SDG Baselines*. Available at washdata.org/report/jmp-2017-report-launch-version1