

NO WASTED LIVES

Accelerating action
for children with
acute malnutrition



Photo: Courtesy of Action Against Hunger



ACUTE MALNUTRITION RESULTS IN

5 MILLION PREVENTABLE CHILD DEATHS EACH YEAR



ACUTELY MALNOURISHED CHILDREN ARE

UP TO **9X**

more likely to die from common infections than their better-nourished peers

MORE THAN

90%

of children who complete treatment for acute malnutrition are cured

BUT LESS THAN

20%

of children suffering from it are able to access the treatment they need



IT DOES NOT HAVE TO BE THIS WAY:

WE HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE, THE ABILITY AND THE RESOURCES TO CHANGE THIS

MALNUTRITION

THE KILLER FACTS

Global efforts to address diseases such as malaria and pneumonia have led to a dramatic decline in the number of children dying each year.

In 2015, 5.9 million children under five died, compared to 12.7 million in 1990. However, the world still missed the Millennium Development Goal target of reducing child deaths by two thirds by 2015.

Malnutrition contributes to almost half of all deaths in children under-five years of age. Failure to treat it undermines the effectiveness of efforts to tackle other diseases such as malaria, diarrhoea and pneumonia. Malnourished children are more likely to get sick: their immune systems don't develop properly and they can't defend themselves against illness and infectious disease.

As part of the new Sustainable Development Goals, set in New York in September 2015, global leaders have committed to eliminating all preventable child deaths by 2030. This will not be possible without more concerted & coordinated action to tackle the main underlying cause of child mortality: malnutrition.



ACUTE MALNUTRITION AFFECTS APPROXIMATELY 50 MILLION CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

DEADLY BUT CURABLE

Yet, in spite of the lives it claims, even the most extreme and lethal form of malnutrition is curable via effective and scalable interventions. In the last two decades, increased understanding of the problem, the development of specialised, nutritious food products and the implementation of innovative delivery mechanisms have improved survival prospects and pushed down costs.

However, making these new approaches and services widely available has been a challenge. Today less than 20% of the children suffering from acute malnutrition are able to access the care they needⁱ. Scale up is possible, and progress has indeed been made; however, treatment coverage will not be good enough until we manage to lower the number of cases. Immediate and concerted action is necessary to address key policy, practical and financing challenges across a range of inter-related sectors.

A PIECEMEAL APPROACH

Historically, acute malnutrition has been understood as a consequence of humanitarian emergencies. This has led to specialisation and a 'silo' approach whereby those working in longer-term development have focused more on chronic malnutrition and its effects and remedies.

And yet, it is increasingly clear that all forms of malnutrition are interrelated, often occur in the same communities and individuals, and should be addressed as consequences of the same problem. Acute malnutrition has many triggers and is a recurring issue in many communities. Failure to consider it as part of the development context and to make efforts to prevent and treat it threatens to undermine overall efforts to reduce poverty and promote child survival.

UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL FOR CHANGE

The impact of acute malnutrition on overall child mortality means that scaling up prevention and treatment should be an indispensable part of global efforts to meet the Sustainable Development Goals and other global health and development targets. Early detection and treatment does not just save lives but increases the success of other health interventions and improves children's overall prospects. Research suggests treatment for acute malnutrition has the potential to save more lives and be more cost-effective than any other nutrition intervention. However, high caseloads and limited (mostly short-term) financial resources make this impossible. We need to address acute malnutrition to prevent as many cases as possible, so that we can better treat those most in need.ⁱⁱ

The World Bank estimates the cost for scaling up treatment for acute malnutrition to be \$6.2bn annually with \$2.6bn for SAM treatment (achieving 80% coverage). In 2014, donors provided only \$450 million,ⁱⁱⁱ or less than 25% of funding needs. Screening, monitoring, prevention of and treatment for acute malnutrition has not been systematically integrated into most country's health systems, and initiatives to tackle malaria, pneumonia and diarrhoea have failed to recognise or address acute malnutrition as an underlying cause of death.

ⁱ UNICEF (2014) *Nutridash Global Report 2014* (UNICEF, New York, p. 41)

ⁱⁱ Bhutta, Z. et al. (2013) *Evidence-based interventions for improvement of maternal and child nutrition: what can be done and what cost?* (*The Lancet*, Volume 382, Issue 9890, p. 452-477)

ⁱⁱⁱ Kakietek et al. (2016) *Investing in Nutrition: The Foundation for Development* (World Bank, Results for Development, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Children's Investment Fund Foundation and 1,000 Day; Washington DC, 2016)

A NEW COALITION TO CATALYSE GLOBAL ACTION

Recognising the scale of the challenge and the opportunity for change, Action Against Hunger, the Children's Investment Fund Foundation, the European Commission, UNICEF, the UK Department for International Development, the UN World Food Programme and their partners have joined forces to accelerate collective global action to reduce the number of children affected by acute malnutrition and more effectively reach those in greatest need.

No Wasted Lives will promote an integrated approach to child health and nutrition, which builds on the excellent work already being done, while supporting governments, donors and NGOs to realise the synergies of cooperation.

In this, the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition, *No Wasted Lives* will put the prevention and treatment of acute malnutrition back on the mainstream health and nutrition agenda, and keep it there.

THE *NO WASTED LIVES* COALITION HAS THREE CLEAR OBJECTIVES

01

MAKE ADDRESSING ACUTE MALNUTRITION A POLITICAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH PRIORITY

Articulate a clear case for action based on demonstrable and quantifiable potential for impact. Fill gaps in data and evidence needed to define the problem and describe viable solutions and support national governments, donors and other key stakeholders to act.

02

DISCOVER & DISSEMINATE EFFECTIVE WAYS TO PREVENT & TREAT ACUTE MALNUTRITION

Invest in and accelerate the roll-out of the best approaches to preventing and treating acute malnutrition, and help ensure new ideas get put into practice quickly.

03

MOBILISE MORE MONEY & MAXIMISE EFFECTIVENESS OF CURRENT SPENDING

Invest in and test new ways of reducing the cost of prevention and treatment, to make existing resources go further. Use this information to support and encourage national governments and donors to increase investment and target existing funds strategically.

To achieve the objectives, the Coalition will develop three key work streams: **AN ADVOCACY AGENDA, A TECHNICAL ACCELERATOR AND A DONOR FORUM**



TECHNICAL ACCELERATOR

The Coalition will invest in cutting edge ideas to drive forward global learning and action on addressing acute malnutrition. We will convene and coordinate the first-ever permanent technical panel of global experts on acute malnutrition, with a view to increasing knowledge and speeding up the time it takes for good ideas to be put into widespread practice.

The independent Council of Research & Technical Advice on Acute Malnutrition (CORTASAM) will review new and existing ideas and support UN agencies and other leading policymakers and practitioners to incorporate the most successful ones into policy and practice. The Council will review the options for treatment and prevention, provide donors with the evidence and information they need to release funding, and work with NGOs and governments to implement new approaches at scale.

The advice and findings of the Council will be publicly available. Council experts will seek out evidence and contributions from those operating on the ground. Communities, practitioners, and donors will be invited to request advice and feed back on how easily the new methods are integrated into different health systems and contexts.



DONOR FORUM

We will convene and host a Forum for governments and other donors involved in funding efforts to address acute malnutrition. The group will bring together traditional and non-traditional donors and recipient governments with a view to increasing the overall amount of money available, improving coordination of existing investments, unlocking new health and long-term funding, and bringing new donors and businesses to the table.

The Forum will provide a place to share the latest intelligence on impact, current funding, and projected needs. It will help donors compare their messaging, approaches and priorities to ensure they are coherent with each other. It will encourage better integration of funding for acute malnutrition into global health budgets and will give donors, governments and service providers the best chance of driving down costs and maximising economies of scale.



ADVOCACY AGENDA

The Coalition will engage governments and other actors to support them in making the best decisions about addressing acute malnutrition. First and foremost, the Coalition will ensure that key stakeholders understand exactly what acute malnutrition is, where and why it happens, and how to effectively address it. We will support governments, donors and implementing agencies to develop policies and practices that realise the potential to increase global child survival rates.

We will provide the evidence, intelligence, and data that governments and other key actors need to make informed decisions. The Coalition will work with national governments in high burden countries to inform practical action and policymaking and help them set national targets for reducing acute malnutrition and for treatment coverage. It will provide NGOs and other agencies with support to inform their programming and advocacy, and will help identify and remove challenges in programming so that good and proven ideas can be quickly rolled out.

DELIVERING SUCCESS

The overall aim of the Coalition's work is to support global efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal of reducing acute malnutrition to <5% amongst children under five years of age

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Ensure that all children suffering from acute malnutrition have access to treatment services by 2030

In order to realise this overarching goal, the Coalition will pursue the following outcomes by 2020

DOUBLE THE PROPORTION OF CHILDREN ANNUALLY RECEIVING TREATMENT FOR SEVERE ACUTE MALNUTRITION BY 2020

The cost of curing a child suffering from acute malnutrition is reduced to

\$100 or less
i.e. by at least 20%

The cost of Ready to Use Food per child cured is reduced by

50%

New treatment approaches prove capable of reaching over

70%

of cases in areas of intervention

5

key high burden countries adopt reduction & treatment coverage targets

THE COALITION WILL WORK WITH PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS TO ENSURE THAT



The nutrition policies of all key bilateral donors support scale-up of essential nutrition action to address acute malnutrition



All key high burden countries have national nutrition policies that promote prevention and community-based management of acute malnutrition



New financial pledges are made that support addressing acute malnutrition

JOIN US

Ending unnecessary deaths from acute malnutrition is not just possible, it is achievable. And the actions to do so would yield benefits far beyond their immediate target. Scaling up efforts to address this neglected disease, could save 5 million lives a year, and lay the foundations for progress in many other areas, from child health, to education, and development.

To start with, governments and donors should scale up proven and costed interventions that have already benefitted children in many countries around the world. ***No Wasted Lives*** aims to catalyse the financial, technical, and political support they need to do so.

Secondly, we need to increase our collective knowledge and capacity to act on it. By investing in and identifying the most cutting-edge ideas the ***No Wasted Lives*** Coalition will help governments adopt new policies with confidence, and support those on the ground to roll them out effectively and efficiently.

Finally, we need to act together. ***No Wasted Lives*** will build on existing efforts, create and maximise synergies, and bring new players on board to accelerate progress and overcome the challenges. We have convened a coalition of partners to kick-start this journey.

BUT WE CAN'T DO THIS ALONE. JOIN US.



TO FIND OUT MORE VISIT :
www.nowastedlives.org