

# Better nutrition for Malawian Children



## South-South Facility Development Outcome Story

### *Fighting the vicious cycle of poverty and malnutrition*

#### THE CHALLENGE:

Poverty and malnutrition remain widespread in Malawi. In 2010, 47% of Malawian children were stunted (low height-for-age)<sup>1</sup>. Stunted

children are more likely to do poorly in school. Stunting negatively affects lifetime earnings and thus increases the likelihood of being poor also later in life, a potential vicious cycle of malnutrition and poverty. To fight malnutrition, the Malawian government planned to increase

nutrition interventions and was one of the first countries to join the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement in 2011. Malawi however, lacked implementation capacity, fell short in multi-sector coordination and could benefit from learning about best-practice approaches before launching a multi-million investment program for fighting malnutrition.



#### AT-A-GLANCE

##### CHALLENGE

In 2010, 47% of Malawian children were stunted. Malnutrition has a negative impact on lifetime earnings and potentially traps people in a vicious cycle of malnutrition and poverty.

##### SSF GRANT

US\$44,515

##### KNOWLEDGE RECIPIENT

Malawi

##### KNOWLEDGE PROVIDER

Senegal

##### SDGS SUPPORTED



##### IMPACT

A South-South knowledge exchange provided Malawians with first-hand insights in Senegal's best-practice on community-based nutrition interventions.

Consequently, this approach was adopted and scaled-up through a \$57 million investment program in Malawi after which stunting came down by 10 percent, representing good nutrition for 295,000 Malawian children who would otherwise have been stunted.

#### THE EXCHANGE:

In response, the World Bank organized expert visits and a study tour in 2011 through which Malawians learned from their Senegalese peers. Senegal had successfully decreased stunting prevalence through community-based nutrition interventions and was eager to share its experience. Malawian participants learned about the importance of inclusive approaches for community participation, decentralized management structures, and downstream communication. They also improved their understanding of monitoring, results-based management and resource mobilization.

#### THE DEVELOPMENT OUTCOME, SEVEN YEARS LATER:

Following the knowledge exchange, the Malawian government adapted and applied the Senegalese best-practice on community-based nutrition interventions in a US\$57 million program (financed by the World Bank, Canada's International Development Agency and the Government of Malawi). As of January 2018, the program helped form 4,586 care groups which deliver community level maternal and child nutrition services in 14 districts. They reach 72% of caregivers of children under the age of two. Additionally, 17,558 households established backyard gardens providing direct access to nutritionally-rich and diverse food. Since the start of the program in 2012, stunting has come down by an impressive 10 percentage points from 47% to 37%. This represents a better chance in life for about 295,000 Malawian children. Malawi's commitment to fight malnutrition also triggered other development partners (including UNICEF, WFP, KfW, USAID and the European Union) to provide financial and technical support to the nutrition program.

<sup>1</sup> Global Database on Child Growth and Malnutrition at [www.who.int/nutgrowthdb/database/en/](http://www.who.int/nutgrowthdb/database/en/)