

Reducing Stunting in Madagascar (2014)



South-South Facility Development Outcome Story

Giving children in Madagascar a better chance in life

THE CHALLENGE:

In Madagascar, chronic malnutrition is the biggest impediment to a child's potential—and to long-term economic growth. In Madagascar, one child in two is stunted. While significantly shorter than other kids their age, stunting does not only manifest as slower physical growth: stunted children are more likely to do

poorly in school, thus decreasing lifelong income and labor productivity. Madagascar's annual costs associated with malnutrition are estimated at 7 to 12 percent of GDP¹.



AT-A-GLANCE

CHALLENGE

Chronic malnutrition in Madagascar where 47 percent of children are stunted

SSF GRANT: \$48,999

KNOWLEDGE RECIPIENT

Madagascar

KNOWLEDGE PROVIDER

Bangladesh

SDGS SUPPORTED



IMPACT

The South-South knowledge exchange identified cost-effective nutrition interventions. Tested and adapted for the Malagasy context, some of the interventions are now being scaled up under a ten-year, \$200 million IDA program expected to prevent stunting in about 600,000 children.

THE EXCHANGE:

The Malagasy Government asked for World Bank assistance to understand and address child stunting, so the Bank supported a knowledge exchange between the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) and Madagascar National Community Nutrition. Bangladesh had faced similar challenges as Madagascar but was able to drastically and rapidly decrease chronic malnutrition through targeted interventions. In reflecting on the exchange, Jean Francois, then Acting National Director of the National Nutrition Office of Madagascar, said, "In Bangladesh, the first thing that struck us was the way they convey messages to the mothers...directly by visiting homes. We were also impressed by their level of community mobilization".

THE DEVELOPMENT OUTCOME, THREE YEARS AFTER:

Shortly after the knowledge exchange in 2014, the Government of Madagascar and the Bank began a pilot program. Financed by an ongoing IDA project, the program incorporated two best-practices from Bangladesh: Intensified, individualized nutritional counseling to mothers; and home visits for early stimulation to children. To inform future investments, the pilot conducted a five-arm, randomized control trial to identify the most cost-effective and scalable community-based approaches for reducing stunting and promoting early child development. The pilot refined the two interventions to inform a ten-year, \$200 million Multiphase Programmatic Approach focused on reducing stunting. By 2028, this program will reach nearly 75 percent of Malagasy children under the age of five and is expected to reduce the number of stunted children in targeted regions by 30 percent—giving about 600,000 Malagasy children a better chance in life².

¹ UNICEF, 2017. Madagascar Nutrition Investment Case. UNICEF: Antananarivo. Richter L., Daelmans B, Lombardi J, Heyman J, Boo F, Behrman J, et al. 2016. Investing in the Foundations of Sustainable Development: Pathway to Scale up for Early Childhood Development. The Lancet 389(10064):103-118.

² World Bank. 2017. Report No: PAD2336