SUPPORT TO NEW AND IMPROVED SOCIAL PROTECTION AND LABOR SYSTEMS

STRENGTHENING THE EARLY WARNING SYSTEM FOR MALNUTRITION

RSR helped the regional health bureaus to improve data collection and quality to better track malnutrition in the wake of seasonal shocks. Early warning information, as a result of RSR’s support, is now flowing from villages to regional administrations and line ministries, enabling a united and timely response.

CHALLENGE

In Ethiopia, the effects of the 2008 Food Crisis were exacerbated by droughts, and by significantly reduced levels of remittances from Ethiopians living overseas. Then in 2011, the rains failed again over the Horn of Africa and new droughts pushed the already vulnerable deeper into poverty and put millions in need of emergency food assistance.

This cycle of seasonal shock and often-resulting famine recurred, in part, for lack of an efficient system to predict looming food crises. Up until recently, the reporting system only collected indicators on the food supply-side, such as, rainfall and crop productions, while data on malnutrition were captured separately and sporadically. And, ad hoc surveys were the only reliable source for detecting problems with nutrition, which made timely response difficult.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population, total</th>
<th>84.73 million (2011)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poverty headcount ratio at $2 per day (PPP) as percent of population:</td>
<td>78 (2005)</td>
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<tr>
<td>GNI per capita, Atlas method (current US$)</td>
<td>370 (2011)</td>
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RSR Funding: US$ 1,021,496

Associated IDA Project: Nutrition Project (US$ 30 million)

Partner: UNICEF
APPROACH

In 2009, the Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH) launched the new National Nutrition Program (NNP) supported by a US$ 30 million grant from IDA that aims to improve the nutritional status of young children and mothers. As part of the program, and with support from RSR, the government embarked on a reform to improve nutrition data management and utilization. The reform makes way for evidence-based decision-making through a strengthened Nutrition Information System (NIS).

RSR, in collaboration with UNICEF, supported the development and implementation of the NIS in 11 particularly pastoral regions where malnutrition is high but data is scarce. Here, RSR helped the regional health bureaus establish better data collection procedures and improve the quality of data from the existing sources. Examples of such sources include the Community-Based Nutrition (CBN) Program, which actively involves families and community members in assessing the health- and nutrition-related problems of children and women, and the Therapeutic Feeding Program, which provides life-saving services to severely malnourished children.

Funds from RSR also helped the Ethiopian Health and Nutrition Research Institute (ENHRI) build a central database to monitor and supervise the regular information flow from the woredas (the smallest unit of local government) to the districts to the regions, and across to the Emergency Nutrition Coordination Unit in the Disaster Risk Management and Food Security Sector (DRMFSS) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. This flow of information enables a triangulation of food security data for increased validity and agreement on thresholds for response.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND RESULTS

- Cultivated intra-government collaboration, representing a paradigm shift in structures and reporting
- Strengthened health and nutrition management information systems, resulting in information flowing across federal, regional, district and woreda levels to support better program implementation
- 2,380 health personnel trained on data collection, quality, management and utilization, representing 100 percent of target
- Associated IDA Project: Nutrition Project (US$ 30 million)
  - 9,750,000 people provided access to basic package of nutrition services covering infant and young child feeding, micronutrients and women's nutrition
  - 41 percent of children 0-23 months participated in monthly growth monitoring and promotion (GMP) sessions, with prevalence of malnutrition (underweight) decreasing from 31 to 14 percent as of mid-term
  - 54.5 percent of woredas providing monthly nutrition data to federal level (exceeding end target by mid-term)
  - National Nutrition Coordination Body established, with high-level membership from sectors