



NUTRITION



Since 2008 there has been a renewed interest in improving nutrition in young children among collaborating international partners in Haiti. The Ministry of Health and Population (MSPP) strengthened the Coordination Unit of the National Program for Food and Nutrition within the Ministry of Health and Population (MSPP - UCPNANu as per its acronym in French). The World Bank (WB) led an initiative to create the Nutrition Consultative Group ("*Groupe Consultatif de Nutrition*") to coordinate nutrition activities in Haiti among the larger partners and agencies in Haiti, such as: UNICEF, World Food Program (WFP), PAHO/WHO, USAID, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the UCPNANu, at the Ministry of Health.

In addition, a Nutrition Technical Group (NTG) exists in Haiti that is comprised more broadly of all nutrition stakeholders, including smaller NGOs. Right after the earthquake, the NTG became the Nutrition Cluster, led by the MSPP and supported by PAHO/WHO. The Nutrition Cluster benefitted from the previous work and coordination done in 2008 and 2009.

In June of 2010, UNICEF and the MSPP conducted an anthropometric nutrition survey in earthquake affected areas as well as in the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince, including the displaced populations. The study showed a relatively low rate of acute malnutrition (5.31% with less than 1% severe cases). This is the result of strong cooperation among nutrition partners to prevent the spread of acute malnutrition. However, the proportion of children at risk (10%) remains high and the impact of the cholera epidemic on malnutrition rates is still unknown.

PAHO/WHO will continue to work together with the MSPP to strengthen its leadership, and continue to coordinate with other key partners to maintain the progress made so far and to continue the fight against malnutrition. PAHO/WHO reinforced its technical cooperation in nutrition by hiring a full time expert on nutrition based at the Haiti Country Office.

Activities carried out:

Post-earthquake activities:

- 108 Baby Tents were established throughout the country to promote breastfeeding, counseling was provided as well as ready-to-use infant formula for infants who were not breastfeeding (mainly orphans, etc.)
- The Blanket Supplemental Feeding Program provided an energy-rich biscuit to children between 6 and 59 months, pregnant and breastfeeding mothers to prevent malnutrition.

Regular Technical Cooperation Program activities:

- As part of the Free Obstetrical Care (SOG) project, PAHO/WHO has trained 120 health workers from 65 different institutions on key nutrition improvement actions including: promotion of breast-feeding, dietary supplements of key micronutrients including the prevention of anemia through iron-folic acid supplements; deworming; as well as referral and case management practices for cases of malnutrition among pregnant and breastfeeding women.
- Twenty-three (23) health workers from partner NGOs have been trained in nutrition related counseling for babies and their mothers.
- PAHO/WHO has been assisting the MSPP to develop protocols for acute malnutrition treatment. With the onset of the cholera epidemic the protocol was revised, providing additional instruction for the proper care of malnourished children suffering from cholera (which includes the provision of zinc supplements). In collaboration with UNICEF, 1000 copies were produced and distributed both within the MSPP and to partnering agencies and NGOs.
- Together with UNICEF, PAHO/WHO has trained more than 175 health care providers from seven different departments regarding the appropriate care for children suffering from severe acute malnutrition. Seven Nutrition Stabilization Units were established, one in each department represented, to care for children suffering from complications stemming from severe acute malnutrition. PAHO/WHO also provides essential drugs and materials for the treatment of severe malnutrition in these centers.
- PAHO/WHO has encouraged the adoption of new Child Health Growth Standards by the MSPP. The MSPP, key nutrition partners and professional health associations in Haiti and all have been supportive and active in the implementation of the new growth standards. The MSPP is revising its "Healthy Growth Path" (Chemen Lasante) and drafting a new workbook on nutrition and children's health.



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Activities carried out: (continued)

- PAHO/WHO has provided technical and financial support, in collaboration with other partners, to commemorate Children's Health Week in November of 2010. Activities included: provision of Vitamin A supplements, deworming, provision of oral rehydration salts, and zinc supplements for diarrhea treatment and vaccinations.
- An annual operating plan for 2011 was established with key partners: UNICEF, PAHO / WHO, WFP, USAID, IDB, WB. In addition, a five year strategic plan is being drafted.
- PAHO/WHO together with the MSPP is reviewing the National Policy on Nutrition and is also monitoring the implementation of the Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI) in Haiti.
- As of April 2011, the Nutrition Technical group together with the MSPP is discussing the possibility of fortifying wheat flour with iron-folic acid and/or other micronutrients still to be determined.

Challenges and next steps:

- Monitor and oversee training of the SOG institutions in their implementation of essential nutrition interventions.
- Together with UNICEF, supervise the departmental Nutrition Stabilization Units.
- Continue to review the implementation of the Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI) approach.
- Finalize the National Nutrition Policy.
- Finalize the formulation of the 5-year strategic plan for nutrition.
- Mobilize resources to continue nutrition related activities in 2011.