

# Research questions

*Transform Nutrition research programme aims to strengthen the content and use of nutrition-relevant evidence to reduce undernutrition*

We're focusing on the 1,000-day period from pre-pregnancy to 24 months of age. This is the window of opportunity, where interventions are most effective at reducing undernutrition, and the benefits of doing so are most enduring.

Our research is structured around three questions:



***How can interventions targeted at the window of opportunity be appropriately prioritised, scaled up and sustained in different settings?***

Considerable progress has been made in recent years in understanding the causes and consequences of undernutrition. However, approaches for scaling up direct interventions are not well understood. In particular, we need to know more about scaling up programmes that offer adequate quality and intensity, and that are targeted at the 1,000-day window of opportunity.

***How can social protection, agriculture and women's empowerment interventions become more nutrition-sensitive? How can they have a greater impact on improving nutrition during the window of opportunity?***



Estimates suggest that direct interventions will only address one-third of stunting prevalence. Broader-based indirect interventions are needed to tackle the underlying drivers of undernutrition. We need to know how to maximise interventions such as agriculture, social protection and women's empowerment, so they are more nutrition-sensitive.



Madhuri Dass / Save the Children



## ***How can enabling environments be promoted?***

## ***How can existing and enhanced political and economic resources be used most effectively to improve nutrition?***

The basic causes of undernutrition have been neglected for too long. This is partly due to the perceived intractability of development policy processes to nutritional considerations and a lack of known traction points. It's also partly due to undernutrition's invisibility.

'Enabling environments' can be created, as we've seen with HIV over the last decade. We now need to learn more about how enabling environments can be created for nutrition, using innovative approaches to policy research.

In addition, 3 cross-cutting themes permeate our work: governance, inclusion and fragile contexts.

### **Governance**

Direct interventions can fail to scale up because of weak incentives, institutions and infrastructure.

Indirect interventions are often under-leveraged for nutrition because of failures in commitment and coordination.

The environment for nutrition is often disabling due to the invisibility of undernutrition and weak leadership from the state and civil society.

### **Inclusion**

Asymmetries in power between men and women constrain women's health and social status, and thus, their ability to care for children in their critical early years.

Empowering women is a key way of strengthening the nutrition impacts of direct and indirect interventions and creating a policy and action environment that is more enabling for nutrition. Depending on context, power asymmetries along ethnic, caste and class lines are similarly important.

### **Fragile contexts**

Fragile contexts are most vulnerable to adverse changes such as conflict, natural disasters, global economic crisis and climate change.

Enhanced vulnerability to such events generates the perfect storm of increased demand for nutrition services and the diminished ability to deliver them.

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