



CLASSROOM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Chapter 1. How Nutrition Improves: Half a Century of Understanding and Responding to the Problem of Malnutrition

1. What are some of the fragmentations that have split the nutrition community over the past 50 years?
2. How did the focus on multisectoral nutrition planning in the 1970s and subsequent isolation of nutrition in the 1980s inform current thinking about the need for both nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions?
3. How does the UNICEF framework reflect the evolution of nutrition thinking from the 1950s to the 1990s?
4. Given the history of the private sector's involvement in nutrition, what do you think is an appropriate role for private companies to play in reducing malnutrition?
5. What do you think is most needed to translate high-level commitment to nutrition to action at scale on the ground?

Chapter 2. On the Front Line: Community Nutrition Programming

1. What are the tradeoffs between coverage and targeting with which community nutrition programs have to grapple?
2. How did elements of *context* – one of the factors found to contribute to successful community nutrition programming – shape the Iringa program experience?
3. What lessons from TNIP could be applied to ICDS to improve outcomes?
4. How did the four sets of factors (*context; process in developing program; program design and content; and program management and implementation*) contribute to success in the SHOUHARDO case?
5. In a time of increasing resource constraints and demand for development impact, how would you make the case to a policymaker to support community nutrition programming?

Chapter 3. Off to the Best Start: The Importance of Infant and Young Child Feeding

6. Why is breastfeeding considered an IYCF best practice?
7. What elements made breastfeeding promotion initiatives successful in Brazil, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka?
8. What challenges did efforts to improve breastfeeding have to address? What challenges remain?
9. What components of the Alive & Thrive program helped improve breastfeeding and complementary feeding in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Vietnam?
10. What challenges could be associated with implementing IYCF in a humanitarian crisis?

Chapter 4. Hidden Hunger: Approaches to Tackling Micronutrient Deficiencies

1. What are the “big three” micronutrient deficiencies? What causes contribute to these and other micronutrient deficiencies in developing and industrialized countries?
2. What specific actions on the part of the Chinese government enabled the scale up of its universal salt iodization?
3. What are the recent concerns expressed about high-dose vitamin A supplementation and what alternative strategies could address these concerns?
4. How did adjustments to the pilot phase of Mongolia’s micronutrient powder program contribute to successful scale up at the national level?
5. The cases of universal salt iodization and micronutrient powders demonstrate the importance of effective advocacy in persuading policymakers to support micronutrient interventions. How might this lesson be applied to strategies such as fortification or food-based initiatives that are coming to the forefront?

Chapter 5. Addressing a Neglected Problem: Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition

6. How did the CMAM approach change the treatment of SAM?
7. What are the elements of the CMAM model?
8. How did Malawi’s approach lead to its high level scale-up of the CMAM model? What factors differed for Niger and Ethiopia, and how have those impacted the level of CMAM scale-up in these countries?
9. What is the controversy surrounding ready-to-use therapeutic foods (RUTFs)? What is your position on the use of RUTFs versus local foods, as well as the role of commercial versus local producers of RUTFs?
10. What role do you think NGOs should play in scaling up CMAM? Does this differ by country or context? If so, how?

Chapter 6. From the Ground Up: Cultivating Agriculture for Nutrition

1. What lessons did Helen Keller International learn through the first phases of the homestead food production project, and how did the organization build on these to improve subsequent versions of the project?
2. How did a focus on gender contribute to the success of homestead food production projects?
3. What are the steps required to consider biofortification successful in reducing micronutrient malnutrition?
4. Using an example of a specific crop or food, what changes could be made to improve or retain nutrition throughout its value chain?
5. Can you think of other development interventions that would benefit from a stronger focus on nutrition-related behavior change communication?

Chapter 7. Reducing Risk, Strengthening Resilience: Social Protection and Nutrition

6. What are the pathways through which social protection programs can impact nutrition?
7. What three factors may have contributed to the positive impacts of PROGRESA/Oportunidades/Prospera in Mexico and three factors that may have contributed to the positive impacts of social protection initiatives in Bangladesh? Are there similar lessons that can be drawn from these cases? How do they differ?

8. How does Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme seek to reduce dependence on annual emergency food aid? Can you think of other contexts in which a similar program or initiative might work? Explain why.
9. Given the mixed evidence of the impact of social protection on nutrition, what advice would you give a policymaker looking to develop a social protection initiative?
10. How might social protection programs increase positive nutrition-related health impacts?

Chapter 8. Clean Is Nourished: The Links between WASH and Nutrition

1. What are the three pathways between WASH and nutrition outcomes?
2. What elements of Mali's CLTS campaign contributed to its success?
3. What was the government's role in Bangladesh's experience of tackling hygiene and sanitation? In your opinion, could this model be used in other countries or contexts? Why or why not?
4. The chapter describes a number of studies underway to explore the synergistic effects of links among water, sanitation, and hygiene on nutrition. What are three research questions that you can think of that would contribute to this growing evidence base?
5. Drawing on the lessons from Mali and Bangladesh, where should governments, NGOs, and communities focus their efforts to improve hygiene and sanitation for better nutrition?

Chapter 9. Malnutrition's New Frontier: The Challenge of Obesity

1. What challenges do low- and middle-income countries face in tackling overweight and obesity alongside undernutrition?
2. Why is a systems approach necessary to prevent obesity?
3. What elements of the NOURISHING framework were evident in the examples from Mexico and Ecuador?
4. In your opinion, would the soda tax have been successful without the efforts of the Nutritional Alliance? What role should consumer advocates play in other countries to tackle the problems of overweight, obesity, and NCDs?
5. What elements of the ACTIVITAL program could be used in a broader health promotion program for communities?

Chapter 10. Local to National: Thailand's Integrated Nutrition Program

1. How did the Basic Minimum Needs approach contribute to Thailand's national nutrition development?
2. In your opinion, could the gains made in Thailand have been possible without the integration of nutrition in other sector activities? Why or why not?
3. Why were community mobilizers a key factor in Thailand's reduction of malnutrition?
4. How was action coordinated across different levels – national, district, sub-district, and community – in Thailand?
5. What actions could be taken to address Thailand's simultaneous challenges of rising obesity and noncommunicable diseases alongside undernutrition persisting in some populations?

Chapter 11. Nutrition and Equality: Brazil's Success in Reducing Stunting among the Poorest

1. What role did national policies play in Brazil's nutrition gains?

2. How did decentralization change the health sector and what implications did this have for nutrition in Brazil?
3. What are three examples of Brazil's multisectoral approach to nutrition?
4. How did Brazil apply the concepts of targeting and coverage (see Ch. 2) in its efforts to improve nutrition? What challenges remain?
5. What lessons can Brazil build on from earlier successes to address the growing problem of overweight and obesity?

Chapter 12. Getting to Specifics: Bangladesh's Evolving Nutrition Policies

1. What challenges has Bangladesh faced in delivering nutrition-specific interventions?
2. How has declining poverty contributed to health and nutrition in Bangladesh?
3. Why might education – especially for girls – be an important driver of nutritional improvement?
4. Do you think Bangladesh's nutrition gains are the result of synergies between a number of indirect factors, or were one or two nutrition-sensitive drivers the key? Explain.
5. Moving forward, how could Bangladesh improve nutrition-specific interventions to address the gaps left by indirect drivers such as education and sanitation?

Chapter 13. Reaching New Heights: 20 Years of Nutrition Progress in Nepal

1. From the community perspective, what factors may have contributed to nutrition improvements in Nepal?
2. What role did female community health volunteers play in Nepal's expansion of access to and use of health services?
3. How did Nepal improve sanitation and education, and what impacts may these have had on nutrition?
4. What positive impact has migration had on nutrition in Nepal? What negative nutrition impacts could there be from migration?
5. What challenges and opportunities will Nepal face as it seeks to align its multisectoral coordination of nutrition efforts with the decentralized governance structures of the new federalist constitution?

Chapter 14. Commitments and Accountability: Peru's Unique Nutrition Journey

1. How did programs across multiple sectors cooperate to help improve nutrition in Peru? Provide examples of specific programs.
2. What role did the Child Nutrition Initiative play in Peru's nutrition gains? What lessons could be drawn from this experience for other countries?
3. How did political will at the highest levels of Peru's government support the nutrition efforts of other actors (civil society, NGOs, etc.)? Do you think nutrition in Peru could have improved without this? Why or why not?
4. How did Peru use results-based budgeting to monitor and improve programs? What challenges remain as the country expands this approach?
5. How can Peru use its strategy of accountability to address persisting malnutrition in the poorest regions of the country?

Chapter 15. On the Fast Track: Driving Down Stunting in Vietnam

1. What actions did the Vietnam government take to prioritize nutrition?
2. How did a focus on infant and young child feeding contribute to Vietnam's improvements in nutrition?
3. What steps could Vietnam take to address ongoing micronutrient deficiencies?
4. What challenges has Vietnam faced in translating national nutrition priorities to action at the local level and what can different actors do to improve this moving forward?
5. What strategies would you suggest to Vietnamese policymakers to address the growing challenge of overweight and obesity while maintaining efforts to reduce the persistent malnutrition among some groups?

Chapter 16. Agriculture, WASH, and Safety Nets: Ethiopia's Multisector Story

1. What are three examples of the government's efforts to address the immediate determinants of undernutrition in Ethiopia?
2. What developments in agricultural production have contributed to Ethiopia's nutrition gains?
3. How could Ethiopia's sanitation programs and activities be improved to involve more community participation?
4. How have Ethiopia's efforts to improve nutrition been shaped by its focus on building resilience to drought-related crises? What could other countries take away from this in terms of addressing dual goals of nutrition and resilience?
5. How would you improve the future design of Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Program so that it can reach the rest of the country's population, as well as the most vulnerable? Does reaching these two segments of the population require different strategies?

Chapter 17. 25 Years of Scaling Up: Nutrition and Health Interventions in Odisha, India

1. How did Odisha work through different platforms to implement and scale up health and nutrition interventions?
2. How did leadership and bureaucratic ownership help Odisha improve nutrition? How could this be replicated or encouraged in other Indian states or other countries?
3. Capacity building was a critical component of Odisha's nutrition improvements – which capacities do you think were most important and why?
4. Are the factors that enabled adequate, stable, and flexible financing for social sector programs and nutrition in Odisha replicable for other states or countries? Why or why not?
5. How was an enabling policy environment for scaling up health and nutrition interventions created in Odisha?

Chapter 18. Championing Nutrition: Effective Leadership for Action

1. What factors contributed to the level of leadership for nutrition change in Zambia?
2. What leadership characteristics do the individuals profiled in this chapter have in common?
3. The chapter makes the case for exposing potential leaders from other disciplines to both nutrition data and firsthand experience as a way of garnering cross-sector support for nutrition in the future. What are some examples of how this could be done?

4. How can nutrition leaders balance the need for donor support for nutrition in their countries with the challenge of disproportionate donor power?
5. How can researchers better work with nutrition leaders to build the evidence base at the local level? Are there specific issues or areas of research you think should be prioritized?

Chapter 19. New Horizons: Nutrition in the 21st Century

1. Drawing on the examples provided in the book, what role does community action play in improving nutrition? How can actions at the community level be effectively linked to efforts at the national scale?
2. How do nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions complement one another? In your opinion, what is the best example from the book of these approaches working together effectively?
3. What are three lessons from the book about how to build political will to scale up nutrition action?
4. Drawing from the book, what is an example of a nutrition success that did not endure? What can be learned from that experience?
5. What do you think will be the most important nutrition issue in the next 5-10 years and the next 25 years?