

THE ROLE OF OPEN DATA FOR ADDRESSING HUMAN NUTRITION CHALLENGES IN AFRICA

Dr. Kathryn Russell

Policy Director, Agriculture and Inclusive Growth

The ONE Campaign

Currently, global investment in nutrition stands at less than 1% of Official Development Assistance, yet poor nutrition is responsible for 45% of all child deaths, reduced productivity for life in those children who do survive, and measurable reductions in Gross Domestic Product. From a civil society perspective, to effectively advocate for massive increases in nutrition financing, and thus for improved nutrition outcomes, open data are critical on: donor spending and developing country budgets (amounts for what/where), global and national-level outcomes against the 6 World Health Assembly (WHA) nutrition targets, linking interventions to household-level nutrition outcomes, and linking donor and developing country commitments to attributable progress against the WHA targets. According to the 2015 Global Nutrition Report (GNR), we still know far too little about people's nutrition status: of 12 known high-impact nutrition interventions, comparable, national-level data exist for only 3; progress is not being tracked on low birth rate (one of the 6 WHA targets); 58 countries are only able to track progress on 1 WHA target; 115 cannot assess progress on exclusive breastfeeding; and the Sustainable Development Goals only include 2 of the WHA targets. Further, most African country budgets either contain no dedicated budget line for nutrition or are not open, not all donors are implementing the nutrition-sensitive financial tracking methodology agreed by the Scaling Up Nutrition Donor Network, and the 2015 GNR concluded that a significant number of the commitments made at the first Nutrition for Growth event were not SMART (specific, measurable, realistic, and time-bound). The 2016 Nutrition for Growth and the Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition Summits present key opportunities for advocates to press for better tracking of nutrition financing; funding for the collection, analysis, and open distribution of nutrition outcomes against the WHA targets at global, national, and local levels; and SMARTer commitments; all of which provide an evidence base for increasing and better-targeting nutrition investments.