



Enabling environments

Transform Nutrition's research is structured around three questions. Here we describe the third, on enabling environments for nutrition.

? How can enabling environments be promoted? How can existing and enhanced political and economic resources be used most effectively to improve nutrition?

Existing research has highlighted the need to build sustained political commitment and capacity at a global and country level for direct and indirect interventions to be effective. Such enabling environments are fundamental to transforming thinking and action on undernutrition, and reversing decades of neglect.

Our research is concerned with defining, assessing and strengthening an enabling environment and finding new ways to increase capabilities and accountability of policy makers and practitioners.

There is limited evidence on the wider institutional, governance and resourcing factors behind successful nutrition interventions. Despite repeated references to leadership, political will and institutional capacity, we still know little about what an enabling environment for undernutrition reduction looks like. How do we create and sustain such an environment at international, regional and country level?



Jan Grarup/Noor for Save the Children

We hypothesise that political will and strong nutrition governance are key. But we need to open the black box of 'political will' and find out more about the political drivers, institutions, incentives and constraints behind undernutrition reduction. So our research addresses three overarching research questions:

- ? What are the features of an enabling environment for nutrition?
- ? How can we assess, monitor and strengthen leadership and capacity?
- ? How can we assess, monitor and strengthen accountability and responsiveness?



GMB Akash/Panos Pictures for Save the Children

Under the first question we are building on and extending existing nutrition governance research via case studies, econometric analysis and ethnographic studies. We are identifying key drivers of an enabling environment to generate hypotheses for the most effective means of influencing them.

The second question takes us beyond descriptions of enabling environments. Here we map and assess the status of nutrition leadership and institutional capability in our focal countries: Bangladesh, India, Kenya and Ethiopia.

Finally, we are developing and evaluating tools and approaches for positively influencing such drivers. This includes:

- tools to monitor and measure political commitment to tackling nutrition;
- new ways of making nutrition more visible in the political landscape through real time monitoring; and,
- community based mechanisms to hold policy makers and practitioners accountable on the ground.