

There has been a positive increase in policies seeking to improve nutrition in Nigeria. Findings of the **Stories of Change in Nutrition Nigeria study** reflect key challenges needing to be addressed to promote progress:

1. limited coordination and implementation of policies;
2. need for clearly defined roles and responsibilities for government sectors;
3. need for simultaneously implementing multisectoral interventions in targeted communities for impact.

**Therefore, it is recommended that Ministers and Commissioners of different sectors agree to a joint annual operations planning process that will enable the alignment of interventions and implementation resources in common geographic locations of priority in the 2021–2025 period.**

Reducing malnutrition requires every individual to eat food that provides enough different types of nutrients the body needs. There also should be no illness that causes the body to lose these nutrients. Thus, to prevent malnutrition, all mothers and children must have access to the right foods to eat; clean, safe water and sanitation; and the needed health and nutrition services, all at the same time.

Achieving such simultaneous service delivery calls for the right efforts from all the sectors shown in the illustration.

Although each sector is already implementing actions that can improve nutrition, these actions are unfortunately scattered and not occurring comprehensively within targeted communities. Without cohesive action, reducing malnutrition is very difficult.

**In 2018, only six percent of Nigerian children under five years of age received all these necessary services:**

1. mother had four or more antenatal care visits;
2. child born in health facility;
3. child received all age-appropriate immunizations;
4. household does not practice open defecation;
5. household has improved drinking water source;
6. mother or father has at least six years of education.

**Malnutrition can only be effectively reduced if each child who needs these interventions receives all of them, within the same time period.**

Implementing joint operational annual planning processes will ensure that more than six percent of children have simultaneous access to the minimum set of multisectoral services and interventions that can reduce malnutrition.

