



**Study Tour from Tajikistan on
Multi-sector Nutrition and SUN Initiatives**

9-14 May 2016, Nepal



NPC/NNFSS

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Background

The first Lancet Series on Nutrition, published in 2008 augmented political commitment for the reduction of under-nutrition at the global and national level by identifying the first 1000 days of life as a crucial period of human development and curbing the development agenda towards ‘Nutrition interventions during this period’. The main outcome of the series was the Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) Movement which marked a major stepping stone towards improved stewardship of nutrition architecture.

The development of strong national nutrition plans rely on the effective engagement of the relevant sectors of the government. It also relies on the collective good will and alignment of multiple stakeholders who can mobilize their actions behind national efforts. Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) -a global movement, launched in 2010 with the participation of over 100 organizations has been able to drive the process by uniting governments, civil society, business sector and citizens in a worldwide effort to end under-nutrition. As of April 2016, the SUN Movement comprises of 57 SUN countries. **It is a country-driven Movement** and builds on the progress achieved in country.

SUN Movement-Nepal

Nepal became a member of the SUN Movement in 2011. Commitment to scaling up nutrition in Nepal had been demonstrated at the highest level with the Prime Minister serving as a member of the SUN Lead Group. In September 2012, the Government of Nepal, representatives from UN agencies, development partners, civil society and the private sector signed a Declaration of Commitment to support the Multi-sector Nutrition Plan for an Accelerated Improvement in Maternal and Child Nutrition. This is also a result of the recommendations of the Nutrition Assessment & Gap Analysis (NAGA) held in Nepal on 2009/2010. In order to effectively implement the multi-sector approach, Nepal established the National Nutrition and Food Security Secretariat (NNFSS) at the National Planning Commission in 2013 in collaboration with Development Partners, which is largely responsible for coordination and facilitation for the SUN related events and initiatives.

"The Government of Nepal is highly committed to improving the nutritional status of children and women as a foundation for future social economic growth and development. This is also a prerequisite to achieving all the MDGs ... there is an opportunity to make substantive and sustained progress in this area with a strengthened global partnership."

Rt. Hon'ble Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai, SUN

SUN Architecture for Nepal

Nepal is developing, updating and implementing policies, strategies and plans of action to scale up nutrition and is participating regularly in the SUN Movement and has committed itself to: (a) ensure that programs in all sectors of government are sensitive to nutrition; and (b) increase coverage of proven interventions that improve nutrition during the 1,000 days period between a mother's pregnancy and her child's second birthday. The most powerful example of the SUN Movement in action is the development of Multi-sector Nutrition Plan (MSNP).

Nepal is one of the committed countries in the SUN Movement and considered making great progress with regards to not only having chosen a multi-sector approach, which resulted in launching the MSNP in 2012. It also has designed a multi-sector – multi-stakeholder coordination architecture to ensure that the MSNP

can be effectively implemented by all relevant stakeholders. This includes the High Level Nutrition and Food Security Steering Committee (HLNFSSC), the National Nutrition and Food Security Coordination Committee (NFSCC) and the regional coordination committee. In addition, three multi-sector- multi-stakeholder working groups are working on (i) Advocacy & Communication, (ii) Capacity Development and (iii) M&E/MIS. A Civil Society Alliance for Nutrition in Nepal (CSANN) has been organized with funding of the SMS and an Academia Platform has also been established. External Development Partners organize regular meetings through the Nepal Nutrition Group (NNG) and the Food Security Donor Working Group (FSDWG) and work on setting up a private sector platform is ongoing.

The following institutional arrangement for the SUN in Nepal was established in 2012 by the HLNFSSC for effective coordination of the MSNP:

Country Focal Point: Member (responsible for Social Development Sector), NPC

(NPC amended it by assigning Joint Secretary of Social Development Division of NPCS as the Country Focal Point in 2015)

Country Technical Focal Point: Secretary, MoHP

Country Program Coordinator: Chief, Nutrition Section, CHD, Department of Health Services (MoH)

Country Technical Co-Focal Point: Secretary, MoE

Country Technical Co-Focal Point: Secretary, MoAD

Rationale - Inter Country Study Tour

The 2015 Self-Assessment exercise (SUN Progress report 2015)) shows that the longer a country is in the SUN Movement, the stronger the coordination, effectiveness and alignment of efforts. For countries that have been members of the SUN Movement for four years, there has been significant progress in the multi-stakeholder platforms which helps to strengthen country partnerships.

Multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs) meet regularly using the Country Network Meetings organized by the SUN Movement Secretariat (SMS) every two months as an opportunity for sharing. The regularization of sharing of experiences via teleconference has been essential and beneficial, however, to pave way for the newer SUN countries it is more helpful to have them visit a country where the best practices of the 'older' SUN countries can be captured. Building on this, Tajikistan organized a study tour to Nepal to learn about the multi-sector approach, SUN mechanism and the nutrition architecture of the country which could contribute to enhancing its own capacity for scaling up nutrition.

The Government of Tajikistan launched the SUN Movement with a national workshop on 11th August 2014 in Tajikistan. The launch was supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), as the country's donor co-convenor along with UNICEF.

Tajikistan in Nepal –Bridging the Gap

The Tajikistan delegates visited Nepal on a Study Tour to get practical knowledge on SUN initiatives in practice, multi-sector approach, collaborated efforts, and budget flow mechanism from 9th -14th May 2016.

Tajikistan Team Members

Name	Ministries	Department
Bogodyrova Marguba	Ministry of Health and Social Protection	Health Policy Unit of Public Health Institute
Rakhmatulloeva Sanavbar	Ministry of Health and Social Protection	MCH Department PHC & International Relation Department
Ghoibova Dilafruz	Ministry of Health and Social Protection	Department
Khayrov Khotambeg	Ministry of Health and Social Protection	Republican Nutrition Center
Nabiev Zakhir	Ministry of Health and Social Protection	Republican center for children surgery
Sharipova Mohinav.	Head of Maternity House #3 Ministry of Economic Development and Trade	Specialist on Industry Development
Unusov Ilyos	Ministry of Agriculture	
Yahyokhujaev Abbos	Ministry of Finance	
Mirzoeva Ruzigul	Ministry of Education & Science	
Donakhonov Ikromjon	Mercy Corps	
Atoev Mahmadsharif	WFP	
Shabanova Malohat	UNICEF	
Safina Abdulloeva	USAID	
Samantha Huffman	WHO	
Boymatova Khadicha		

The study tour was planned in two phases - a central level interactive session with the stakeholders to highlight the existing mechanism at the central level followed by a field visit for the assessment of the practical application of the multi-sector efforts in the field.

Objective of the Visit

To get practical knowledge on SUN initiatives in practice, multi-sector approach, collaborated efforts, and budget flow mechanism applying the interactive method with the stakeholders at the Central Level. The district visits helped to understand better the translation of the central level plans and policies into action.

Selection of Districts

The pathway that defined the selection of the districts were-the first piloted MSNP districts to reflect on the implementation of activities under the multi-sector framework and other to observe the nutrition planning and efforts in a humanitarian crisis /the emergency situation (recently affected by the earthquake) which presents an early warning system and preparedness of the country.

Interactive Session with the Stakeholders

The first day of the visit, was a briefing session at the National Planning Commission to share the expectations of the delegates and a brief update of the SUN progress of Nepal by the SUN Country Focal

Point. The delegates also met with the Hon. Vice Chairman Dr. Yuba Raj Khatriwada and the Hon. Member Prof. Dr. Geeta Bhakta Joshi of the National Planning Commission.

This was followed a briefing by the stakeholders on Multi-sector Nutrition Initiatives in Nepal. Presentations were shared which were structured around the following-

1. Overview of Nepal and the nutrition status of the country
2. SUN Framework
3. MSNP process, structure, coordination mechanism and budget flow modality
4. Lessons Learned from MSNP Mechanism

The presentation helped in providing an overview and the discussions were structured along the following:

- Costing of the MSNP and the institutional structures from national to community levels for its operation
- Budget source for MSNP at national and at VDC level and the financial management mechanism in case of budget deficit for nutrition programs
- Factors that influence the financial authorities to generate separate budget code and allocate the budget for nutrition sector
- Local government (VDC) mechanism of budget allocation for nutrition and factors affecting the process
- Identification of sectoral interventions (nutrition-sensitive and nutrition specific) in-line with MSNP
- Basis of budgeting of sectoral nutrition interventions
- Planning process at central and community level
- Challenges budgeting for nutrition
- Challenges in planning process at all level-central to the community level

Field Visit

Nuwakot district-Earthquake Affected¹

The visit was divided into two phases-the district level meeting with stakeholders focused more on the institutional structures and the VDC meetings reflected on the implementation of the activities both during normal and emergency situation together with the expansion of the multi-sector architecture at the VDC level.



District

Met with the District Level Nutrition and Food Security Steering Committee (DLNFSSC) members. The meeting was facilitated by the local development officer who presented the MSNP working modality at district level. He also highlighted how the DLNFSSC is working in planning process to support nutrition and food security program in the district.

VDC

The team visited Ratamate VDC where a meeting was held with the VDC Level Nutrition and Food Security Steering Committee members (VDC secretary, health facility in-charge and other members). The team also had discussions with the frontline workers FCHVs, member of ward citizen forum to explore the implication of the emergency situation during the planning period and also mobilization and leveraging of the nutrition messages across these committees and role of the front line workers to mitigate the gap in information.



Photo: Delegates interact with the community

¹ Earthquake affected district

Kapilvastu and Nawalparasi²

The delegates had meetings at the District Development Committee (DDC) Nawalparasi district, Bhujahawa Village Development Committee (VDC) of Nawalparasi, Pakadi VDC/Health Post of Kapilvastu district, Banskhor VDC of Kapilvastu where they interacted with District Level Nutrition and Food Security Steering Committees (DLNFSSC), Village Level Nutrition and Food Security Steering Committees, Sector Focal Persons, Service Providers, Mothers' group, Female Community Health Volunteers and Civil Societies members.

Nawalparasi

- Met with Local Development Officer (LDO), Program Officers and Nutrition Focal Person (NFP) and discussed on the objectives of the trip
- Meeting with LDO, DHO Chief, Program Officers and relevant staffs of DDCO along with the members of District level Nutrition and Food Security Steering Committees for in-depth interaction on multi-sector nutrition and Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) initiatives
- Meeting with the members of Village Level Nutrition and Food Security Steering Committees at Bhujahawa VDC
- Observation tour at the household level to observe the key activities and interaction with family / farmers (key nutrition practices and vegetable farming); focused mainly on nutrition sensitive interventions/activities



² The Government of Nepal had selected 6 districts for the piloting of the MSNP based on the indicators identified by the plan in addition to maintaining a balance between the geographical terrain

Kapilvastu

- Field visit to Pakadi and Banskhor VDC, Kapilvastu and interaction with the health post staffs, FCHVs and community
- **Pakadi:** Meeting with the members of Village Level Nutrition and Food Security Steering Committees at Pakadi VDC and health post (services, coverage and achievement) for the nutrition specific activities
- **Banskhor:** Observation of the mothers group meeting at the community level to observe the key activities and interaction with them

Outcome of the trips

The team observed and learned about:

- The nutrition architecture for the MSNP and the collaboration and coordination mechanism
- Funding mechanism and budget disbursement for MSNP at the district level
- Progress monitoring of the activities through joint monitoring
- Nutrition specific interventions to understand how the health sector interventions that has been working in nutrition field for a long period is tied up to the MSNP ‘pool of interventions’ together with nutrition sensitive. Also to understand how nutrition sensitive interventions provide an enabling environment for the safe deliverance of the specific aspect
- Community interaction with the frontline workers to get an overview of their capacity and their active participation to escalate the momentum of MSNP at the field level
- Household visit to reflect the ‘theory’ or ‘plan’ outlined into practice and how it is sustained as per the envisioned outcome



Lessons learned

Shared by the Delegates

The study tour concluded with a sharing of the outcomes of the field visit by the Delegates primarily focusing on the 'best practices' of the Nepal multi-sector interventions that would help provide a roadmap for the future course of action at Tajikistan.

- ❖ Highly impressed that nutrition is government's priority with high commitment at the political level.
- ❖ Well established planning process and institutional structure for nutrition from the central to grass-root level with participation from multi-sector line ministries/agencies and civil societies. Strong planning process from central to local level practicing both top-to-bottom and bottom-to-top planning process. The team has expressed to practice this learning in their country in the planning process.



Photo: Team Leader of the Delegation Bogodyrova Marguba with Hon. Member Prof. Dr. Geeta Bhakta Joshi at the Debriefing-13/05/2016

- ❖ Good to learn that each sector has its own plan of action and interventions for nutrition in-line with the MSNP with separate budgeting with standard normative.
- ❖ Efficient budgeting system with supplementary budget support from donor agencies in addition to the government budget which is also reflected at the government budget source. Good to learn that the local government at VDC level also has its own resources in addition to the block grant from the central level.

- ❖ It was a good learning that all sectors have separate M&E indicators for MSNP. The sectoral and joint monitoring of the program activities under MSNP is inspiring for the team
- ❖ Another important lesson learned was that BCC is the strongest component of all nutrition interventions using the multiple strategies. Tajikistan will need to work on this approach.
- ❖ School communities were also well-informed on nutrition program and on their roles in school health and nutrition program.
- ❖ Social protection program for women to promote institutional delivery and social safety net program for children to improve nutrition are also equally impressive.
- ❖ It was a very good learning to understand how VDC is functioning in absence of local elected bodies.
- ❖ Equally, there are some good practices in Tajikistan that Nepal can learn from, that is the Primary Health Centers and WASH plan and activities, specially the hygiene and sanitation sector.

Succinctly, the take home messages can be categorized as-

- Political Commitment is high with proper channelizing of the budget and the formulation of plan and policies that is supportive of the multi-sector initiative
- Capacity of the frontline workers and the community are well aware of ‘what’ they want and also the dialogue to capture the block grant for the VDC is strong
- Coordination is strong because of the inclusive and well placed structures. The team will place dialogues to expand the SUN Multi-sector Membership to include Social Dev. Sector and the Local Development.
- Monitoring-The monitoring and evaluation framework is good which encompasses both the inter and intra-sector monitoring and also the joint monitoring for MSNP
- Social Protection will also be given importance
- Advocacy at all levels together with the SBCC component

Annex: Itinerary for the Delegates

Day/Date	Time	Activity	Venue/District	Key Officials to be met
7th May 16		ARRIVAL	Kathmandu	
8 th May		Rest and sight-seeing tour in Kathmandu	Kathmandu	Not Applicable
Day 1-9 May 16	10:15 am-11:30 am	Introductory/Kick Off Meeting (NPC officials will facilitate a meeting with Vice Chair of NPC)	National Planning Commission (NPC)	Prof. Dr. Geeta Bhakta Joshi, Hon'ble Member, NPC Mr. Madhu Kumar Marasini Joint Secretary, Social Development Division UNICEF, USAID and NFSS to join
	11:30 am – 12:45 am	Back to Hotel for Lunch	Hotel Himalaya	
	01:30 pm - 05:30 pm	Briefing on Multi-sector Nutrition Initiatives in Nepal (Government sectors and stakeholders)	National Nutrition and Food Security Secretariat (NNFSS), Kathmandu	Key sectors and stakeholders of Nutrition/MSNP, academia, civil society, media, etc.
	6:00-8:00 pm	Welcome Reception and Dinner at the Hotel Informal interaction with nutrition sectors and stakeholders		Mr. Madhu Kumar Marasini, NPC and Nutrition/MSNP Focal persons of the sectors and stakeholders NNFSS team
Day 2-10 May 16	7:00-7:45 am	Breakfast	At Hotel Himalaya	
	7:45 am	Field trip to a district (2 and half hour drive from Kathmandu which is also an earthquake affected district)	Nuwakot	District Level Nutrition and Food Security Steering Committee (DLNFSSC) at Bidur
	11:45 am - 12:30 pm	Lunch at Hotel Satanchuli	Nuwakot	

	12:30-2.15 pm	Travel to Ratmate VDC, Nuwakot	Ratmate VDC,	Field observation
	2.15 pm	Drive back to Kathmandu	From Nuwakot	
Day 3- 11 May 16	5:30-6:00 am	Breakfast	Hotel Himalaya	
	6:00 to :6:20	Travel to Airport		
	7:30 am	Flight to Bhairahawa		
	10:00-11:00am	Travel to Nawalparasi from Bhairahawa	Parasi, Nawalparasi district headquarter	
	11:30 am- 1:00 pm			Meeting with District Level Nutrition and Food Security Steering Committee (DLNFSSC)
	1:15-2:00 pm	Lunch	Parasi	
	2.00 pm- 3.30pm	Travel to Bhujuwara VDC from Parasi	Bhujahawa VDC	VDC Level NFSSC
	3:30 pm	Drive from the district to Hotel at Lumbini		
	6:00 pm	Hotel Check in at Hotel Buddha Maya, Lumbini		
Day 4- 12 May 16	6:00-8:30 am	Morning Tour of Lumbini/ birth place of Lord Buddha	Lumbini	SUN team
	8:30-9:30 am	Breakfast at Hotel Buddha Maya, Lumbini		
	9:45 to 10:30 am	Field visit to Pakadi VDC, Kapilvastu (TBD)	Pakadi, Kapilvastu	
	10:30 am to 13:00 pm	Interaction at VDC level		Meeting with Mothers Group Meeting with VDC Steering Committee
	13:00 to 15:00 pm	Drive back to the Hotel for Lunch, Hotel Check out		

	15 – 16:00	Travel to Bhairahawa Airport		
	18:00	Fly Back to Kathmandu		
Day 5- 13 May 16	7:00- 8:30 am	Breakfast in Hotel		
	8:30 - 9:30 am	Preparation for debriefing		
	10:00 am- 12:30 pm	Debriefing Meeting with NPC	NPC	Hon. Prof. Dr. Geeta Bhakta Joshi Mr. Madhu kumar Marasini
	12:30 pm- 1:30 pm	Back to Hotel, Lunch		
	2:00 – 6:30 pm	Tour of Kathmandu Valley, Afternoon Sightseeing		
Day 6- 14 May 16	7:00- 8:00 am	Breakfast		
		Return to Tajikistan		