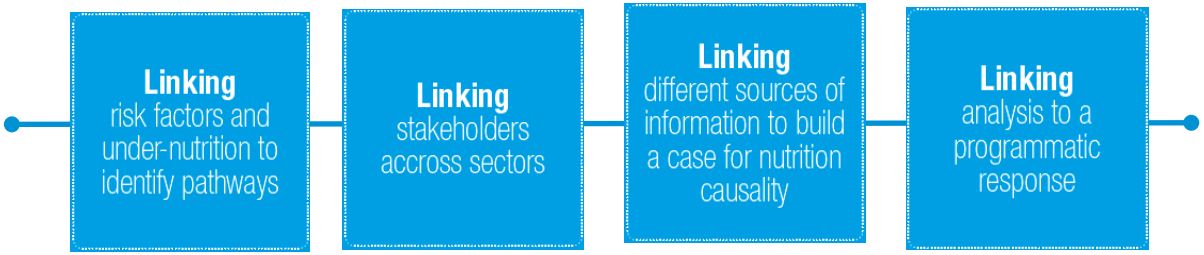
NUTRITION CAUSAL ANALYSIS



Link NCA – Analysing local causes of undernutrition to inform nutrition programming

Ag2Nut webinar – May 13th 2015

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USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Why a new method ?

Initial review of experience

- Undernutrition causality is multi-factorial, complex to capture, and specific to a local context
- No standard Nutrition Causal Analysis (NCA) method has emerged
- Lack of a structured method has further constrained operational agencies from carrying out this type of assessment on a systematic basis
- Has led to results of varying quality (static picture, lack of priorisation of causes, macro level,…)
- As a result, causal analysis at a local level is often weak, relying more on assumptions rather than evidence

"In practice, the evidence to assign different possible determinants of undernutrition is rarely looked for. It is almost as if the UNICEF conceptual framework is used for programming as an actual causal chain for every situation" (Levine & Chastre, 2011)

Research phase

Research initiation (Aug 2010)

GO - To contribute to address the underlying causes of acute malnutrition (*as per ACF International strategy*)

SO - To develop a standardized and replicable methodology to identify and discriminate the key risk factors of undernutrition

Need for a method that is:

- STRUCTURED in order to make the process more efficient and to ensure the quality and usefulness of the results
- LOCAL to inform programmes adapted to specific local communities, livelihoods and agro-ecological zones
- OPERATIONNALY FEASIBLE to balance scientific rigor with field time, expertise and resource realities

Key steps of the development of the method

MEMBERS OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

2010: **Research** Protocol design

2011-2012: **Adapting** method design

2014: Developing **Guidelines**, **Tool Kit** and **Training kit** **Looking for funding** for dissemination phase

2010 > 2011 > 2012 > 2013 > 2014 > 2015

2010-2011: **Field test** (Zimbabwe, Bangladesh)

2012-2013: **Field test** (Burkina Faso), **finalizing** Link NCA method and tools

Sep 2014: USAID/OFDA **funding**

2015: **Start dissemination** of the method

2010 – 2015 : 14 Link NCA studies implemented, 2 on-going

What is a Link NCA ?

Link NCA in a nutshell

A Link NCA is a structured, participatory, holistic study, based on the UNICEF causal framework, intended to build evidence-based consensus around the plausible causes of undernutrition in a local context.

Link NCA research questions

Q.1 : Prevalence of under-nutrition

Q. 2: Prevalence of risk factors

Q. 3: Describing pathways and their linkages

Q. 4: Shocks, Seasonal, and historical trends

Q. 5: Which is explaining most of cases?

Nutrition survey

Risk Factor Survey

Qualitative Enquiry

A participative method

- Technical expert workshop
- Community enquiry
- Final stakeholder workshop

Link NCA main steps

1. Preparatory phase / Over 1 month
2. Identify hypothesised risk factors and pathways / 4-6 weeks
3. Data collection / 7-8 weeks
4. Analyzing results and building a consensus / 6-8 weeks
5. Communicating results and planning for a response / 3 weeks

4,5-5 months

Outputs of a Link NCA

Key outputs of a Link NCA

- Prevalence of undernutrition
- Prevalence of key risk factors
- Understanding of the perception of undernutrition by communities.
- Dynamics of undernutrition and related risk factors
- Description of nutrition vulnerable groups
- Description of local pathways to undernutrition and linkages
- Local causal model of undernutrition

Added value of the Link NCA : examples from recent studies

Tackle mis-conceptions of causes of under-nutrition

Ex:
Burkina Faso (seasonality; nutrition vulnerable groups)

Indentify root causes and constraints for intervention

Ex:
DRC (cash crop)

Review operational priorities by reaching a consensus on causes of under-nutrition

Ex:
Philippines (Focus on FSL v/s WASH)

Strengthen community voice and appropriation of the survey findings

Ex:
India (MNREGA)

Link NCA project

Link NCA project pillars

- Awareness and advocacy
- Expertise and technical backstopping
- Institutional capacity building
- Sourcing and training of Link NCA specialists
- Facilitate sharing/disseminating Link NCA reports and results
- Learning, enhancing and safeguarding the quality of the method and results

Link NCA project - funded

TECHNICAL UNIT

- Project Coordinator
- Project Officer
- Hotline
- Trainings
- Tools development

5 LINK NCA + RESPONSE ANALYSIS PILOTS

- Chad
- Ethiopia
- Kenya

LEARNING & TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT

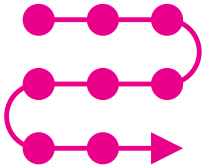
- Response Analysis process
- Lessons learnt collection
- Upgrade of the method & tools

COMMUNICATION

- Website/ depository
- Publications
- Newsletter
- Awareness sessions/side events

Resources

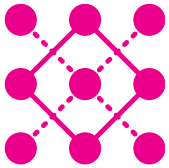
OVERVIEW



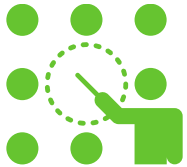
GUIDELINES

TOOL KIT

INDICATOR GUIDE



PATHWAY MODULE



TRAINING KIT

www.linknca.org

For further information about the design
or implementation of a Link NCA,
visit the dedicated website:
www.linknca.org

To communicate with an expert
about any Link NCA-related questions:
linknca@actioncontrelafaim.org