

Conference Background

Together for Nutrition 2014: *Working Across Sectors to Improve Nutrition in India*

October 29–30, 2014, New Delhi, India

Organized by:



General Information

Partners Partnerships and Opportunities to Strengthen and Harmonize Actions for Nutrition in India (POSHAN) and Transform Nutrition are pleased to announce the conference ***Together for Nutrition 2014: Working Across Sectors to Improve Nutrition in India***, which will be held **October 29–30, 2014**, in **New Delhi**.

This conference will serve as an important platform for learning and facilitating discussion around the challenging task of bringing diverse sectors together to improve maternal and child nutrition in India. The conference is intended to bring together evidence that can inform and support current policy and program initiatives for nutrition that require cross-sectoral action by two or more sectors, such as the Government of India's [*Multisectoral Program to Address Maternal and Child Malnutrition in 200 Selected High-Burden Districts*](#). Attendees will have the opportunity to explore how decisions and actions in different sectors can influence nutrition, and how effective cross-sectoral actions can be planned, implemented and assessed.

Examples of working across sectors will include:

- State nutrition missions that include multi- or inter-sectoral coordination and convergence
- District-level convergence to bring health and ICDS together to strengthen delivery of nutrition-specific interventions
- Block-level operational planning and implementation of cross-sectoral actions
- Engaging self-help groups to create demand and strengthen local accountability for health and nutrition services at the village level

Theme	Working Across Sectors to Improve Nutrition
Hosts	POSHAN and <i>Transform Nutrition</i>
Date	October 29–30, 2014
Location	New Delhi, India
Venue	To be announced
Purpose	To facilitate dialogue and learning around advancing cross-sectoral approaches to improve nutrition in India
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide a platform for dialogue on how to advance cross-sectoral policy and program actions in India• Showcase examples of collaboration between various sectors on program development and implementation to address nutrition• Examine approaches for research on multisectoral and intersectoral collaboration and convergence in India• Explore how the current public policy and environment provides opportunities and challenges for cross-sectoral approaches addressing nutrition in India• Provide opportunity for networking among program planners/implementers working in nutrition and other sectors, and researchers

Background on Topic

Great progress has been made in recent decades in understanding how to improve the nutrition of mothers and their children. It is now recognized that a set of high-impact actions during pregnancy and the first 2 years of life can greatly reduce the immediate and long-term effects of child undernutrition. Actions during this “window of opportunity” have a direct impact by reducing death, diseases, and irreversible harm to future economic productivity. For example, effective implementation of 10 key interventions, such as improving feeding and hygiene practices and providing micronutrient supplementation, will, on their own, avert approximately a fifth of

the existing burden of undernutrition (Bhutta et al. 2013). Actions in other sectors are, however, crucially important to address the underlying causes that contribute to stubborn undernutrition.

The interventions that can have a collective impact on nutrition are not led by the same sector, agency, or actor. In India, even the delivery of nutrition-specific interventions requires two sectors, health and women and child development, to work together at multiple levels. The challenge of working across sectors for nutrition is greater when sectors do not have improvement of maternal and child health and nutrition as their primary goal or programmatic focus. The agricultural sector, for example, focuses mostly on food production, prices and farmer subsidies but greater impact could be achieved by making agricultural interventions more nutrition-sensitive. The water and sanitation sector in India is focuses on scaling up access to sanitation, which has great potential to improve nutrition, but greater impact could be achieved by linking with nutrition-specific actions as well. Although these sectors do influence maternal and child nutrition, pathways to such an influence are different.

In sum, bringing sectors together is critical to ensure that adequate food, health, and care reach a child at the same place and time and together, to yield positive impacts for nutrition. Working across sectors to plan and execute complementary interventions effectively can help to address those factors that contribute to the high burden of undernutrition in India - food security, poverty, livelihoods, water and sanitation, women's empowerment and education, and health care. Improvements in nutrition in India depend on these actions.

To read more about working across sectors for nutrition in India:

- [*Working Multisectorally to Improve Nutrition: Global Lessons and Current Status in India*](#) (Garrett et al. 2014)
- [*The Operational Evidence Base for Delivering Direct Nutrition Interventions in India*](#) (Avula et al. 2013)
- [*Analyzing Intersectoral Convergence to Improve Child Undernutrition in India*](#) (Ved and Menon 2012)
- [*Strengthening the Role of Agriculture for a Nutrition-Secure India*](#) (Kadiyala, Joshi, Dev et al. 2011)

Who will be there?

Professionals working on addressing nutrition through diverse strategies, representatives from national, state, and local governments, policymakers, researchers interested in food and nutrition issues, and others interested in solving India's food and nutrition challenges through a multisectoral and collaborative approach.

About POSHAN



Partnerships and Opportunities to Strengthen and Harmonize Actions for Nutrition in India (POSHAN) is a 4-year initiative that aims to build evidence on effective actions for nutrition and support the use of evidence in decisionmaking. It is supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Web: <http://southasia.ifpri.info/category/poshan/poshan-blog/>

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transform nutrition **About Transform Nutrition**

Transform Nutrition is a consortium of five international research and development partners. Using research-based evidence we aim to inspire effective action to address undernutrition. It is funded by the UK Department for International Development.

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