The current population of Nigeria is over 200M, based on the latest United Nations estimates. Nigeria has the highest number of stunted children in Africa, and ranks second globally with more than 10 million stunted children. The Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) for 2018 reported that 32% of children under five were stunted, 19.4% were underweight and 7% were wasted. Besides a lack of basic protein and energy, the immediate causes of undernutrition are deficiencies in micronutrients such as vitamin A, iodine, iron, and zinc. Almost 58% of women are anaemic and 31% are iodine deficient, while close to 30% of children under five are vitamin A deficient and 20% are zinc deficient. Nigeria is experiencing a double burden of malnutrition, where undernutrition, including micronutrient deficiencies, exists alongside overweight, obesity and diet related Non-Communicable Diseases. Common causes of malnutrition in Nigeria include poor infant and child feeding practices, lack of access to healthcare, water, sanitation and a high level of poverty.

Nutrition International, formerly the Micronutrient Initiative, is a global leader in nutrition. For 25 years, Nutrition International has worked with a wide range of donors, governments, UN agencies, civil society, research institutions and other partners to promote, accelerate and facilitate the scale-up of high-impact nutrition interventions within health, food and education systems.

Nutrition International was established in Nigeria in 2007 and has become a trusted partner of the government and a leader in addressing the burden of malnutrition in the country. Nutrition International Nigeria implements high impact, low cost interventions and solutions to the problem of malnutrition – including micronutrient deficiencies – through different programs and interventions. With its strong team of experts in public health and nutrition, Nutrition International Nigeria works with partners to support the government to ensure people in need are reached with life-saving and life-enhancing nutrition programming.

Nutrition International Nigeria implements programs in the following areas to support the scale-up of nutrition in the country.

- Vitamin A supplementation
- Maternal nutrition, including iron and folic acid (IFA) supplementation for pregnant women
- Zinc and oral rehydration salt (LO-ORS) supplementation for the treatment of childhood diarrhoea
- Technical assistance to the Government of Nigeria
- Increasing the impact of nutrition and family planning interventions for women and girls through a partnership with the United Nations Populations Fund (UNFPA)

Nutrition International Nigeria works closely with the Nutrition Division of the Federal Ministry of Health, Ministry of Budget and National Planning, the National Primary Health Care Development Agency states, development partners, donors and other key stakeholders in supporting nutrition programs.
Nigeria Capital: Abuja

Priorities and Geographic Coverage

Nutrition International Nigeria aims to achieve six key and complementary strategic objectives between 2019 and 2024:

- Improve the nutrition, health and survival of pregnant women and newborns
- Improve the nutrition, survival, health and development of children under five
- Improve the nutrition, health, and well-being of adolescent girls and women 20-49 years of age
- Strengthen nutrition governance and increase resourcing for nutrition
- Leverage partnerships to strengthen nutrition intervention coverage, access and reach
- Improve the nutrition, health, development and productivity of the general population

National programs supported by NI:
- Vitamin A capsules
- TAN (Technical Assistance for Nutrition)

Sub-national programs supported by NI:
- Vitamin A supplementation
- Zinc and ORS
- Iron and folic acid supplementation
- NLIFT Investment (UNFPA)
Technical Assistance for Nutrition (TAN) is a project supported by UK aid from the UK government, which seeks to improve the capacity of SUN countries to design, deliver, and track the progress of nutrition programs and to generate, learn from and adopt knowledge of what works. Nutrition International is contributing to TAN by coordinating the provision of technical assistance to help national SUN focal points and sectors responsible for nutrition specific and nutrition sensitive interventions in select countries to overcome gaps in capacity for the design and delivery of multi-sectoral national nutrition plans, tapping into its global hub to source and deploy the expertise needed.

- Through the TAN project, Nutrition International supported costing of the National Multisectoral Plan of Action for Nutrition (NMSPAN) and is currently supporting pre-survey activities on the National Food Consumption and Micronutrient survey. Nutrition International is a member of the Technical Advisory Committee for the survey.

- The TAN project is supporting an in-depth review of effective coordination and implementation of nutrition actions across Nigeria. TAN is providing technical assistance to assess and understand the coordination and implementation gaps and opportunities across all relevant line ministries and sectors in Nigeria, which will help to build institutional and technical capacity of relevant sectors from an evidence-based perspective and ensure effective scale-up of nutrition actions.
CURRENT PROJECTS

Improving the nutrition, health and survival of pregnant women and newborns

IFA SUPPLEMENTATION FOR PREGNANT WOMEN

Between 2016 and March 2019, Nutrition International partnered with Plan International, State Primary Health Care Development Agencies (SPHCDAs), the Federal Ministry of Health, State Ministries of Health and UNICEF on IFA supplementation for pregnant women in Sokoto, Kebbi, Katsina and Zamfara states. The project’s goal was to improve the availability of sufficient, quality IFA for pregnant women in government health facilities, increase the uptake of IFA among pregnant women and promote the alignment of national and state-level policies with international guidelines on IFA. By the end of the project, 319,100 additional pregnant women had received IFA supplements from the public health system with support from Nutrition International. Some 201,900 additional pregnant women received at least 90 IFA supplements from the public health system and 91,400 additional pregnant women consumed at least 90 IFA supplements distributed by the public health system in Kebbi and Sokoto States.

MATERNAL NUTRITION

Between 2019 and 2024, Nutrition International will be delivering a maternal nutrition programme, which will include IFA supplementation, nutrition counselling and pregnancy weight monitoring, as well as the promotion of early initiation of breastfeeding and exclusive breastfeeding. Nutrition International is strengthening community level service delivery through capacity building of Community Based Health Volunteers to conduct home visits, provide nutrition and IFA compliance counselling, conduct referrals and create demand for antenatal care services. Nutrition International is also focused on improving the capacity of health care workers to provide quality care to pregnant women, especially at the primary health care level in Sokoto and Kebbi states.
CURRENT PROJECTS

Improving the health, nutrition and survival of children under five

VITAMIN A SUPPLEMENTATION

Through the In-Kind Assistance (IKA) program, Nutrition International procures doses of vitamin A capsules and donates to all 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory in Nigeria through UNICEF, for delivery during biannual Maternal Newborn and Child Health (MNCH) Week. Nutrition International also provides operational support for delivery of vitamin A supplementation to 14 low performing states – Bauchi, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Enugu, Gombe, Imo, Kano, Kogi, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau and Sokoto. By the end of March 2019, Nutrition International supported the government by donating a full national supply of vitamin A capsules through the IKA program. Some 2.6 million additional children aged 6-59 months received two doses of vitamin A in eight Nutrition International-supported states. Overall, 8.8 million children (84%) received two doses of vitamin A in these states. Some 816,300 caregivers were reached through behaviour change communication in 2018 in Delta and Sokoto States. None of the districts had no stock-outs during the MNCH weeks.

ZINC AND LO-ORS FOR DIARRHOEA TREATMENT

Nutrition International is focused on demand creation for zinc and low osmolarity oral rehydration salts (LO-ORS) among caregivers as the treatment for diarrhoea among children aged 0-59 months and building the capacity of front line health workers to manage childhood diarrhoea with zinc and LO-ORS. Nutrition International also supports states to strengthen sustainable supply systems to ensure a consistent supply at all levels of health care. This project is being implemented in Katsina, Kano and Sokoto states.
Partnering with UNFPA to increase the impact of nutrition and family planning interventions for women and girls

Nutrition International and UNFPA have committed to increase the impact of nutrition and family planning interventions for women and adolescent girls through a joint pilot project. The pilot project is being implemented in Sokoto and Kebbi States, North western Nigeria, Kaduna State and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), North central Nigeria; and Bauchi State, North eastern Nigeria. The overall objective of the pilot project is to contribute to reducing anaemia and related morbidity. The project will enable UNFPA to address the needs of women 15 to 49 years old, pregnant women and young adolescent girls by integrating essential nutrition interventions into existing reproductive and maternal health programs.

The project seeks to expand knowledge and awareness about micronutrient supplementation and healthy eating for vulnerable adolescent girls and women of reproductive age in Nigeria. The project will also address the missed opportunities to expand demand for nutrition through various UNFPA platforms. The project is coordinated by UNFPA Nigeria, and leverages strong partnerships with government, training and regulatory health institutions, civil society organizations and local women’s organizations.

Adolescent girls and women of reproductive age are among the most underserved populations globally, and lack of access to nutrition and reproductive health services. UNFPA focuses its efforts on 46 low-income countries, and addresses the health challenges of Every Woman Every Child. Making reproductive health commodities available and accessible empowers millions of women and young people, increases gender equality and enables them to exercise their reproductive rights. However, without good nutrition the impact of these UNFPA efforts will remain incomplete. There are missed opportunities to expand access to and demand for nutrition through leveraging various UNFPA programs targeting adolescent girls and women of reproductive age for greater health and economic benefits.