



**BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE (DCHA)  
OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)**

## **NUTRITION SECTOR UPDATE – JUNE 2010**

### **SECTOR OVERVIEW**

USAID/OFDA supports a variety of emergency and preventive nutrition interventions worldwide. USAID/OFDA nutrition programs include treatment for severe and moderate acute malnutrition, infant and young child feeding, nutrition education, support for nutrition systems, and operational research to advance best practices and build capacity within local systems and the humanitarian community. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2009, USAID/OFDA provided more than \$48 million in nutrition assistance in 15 countries around the world. Between October 2009 and May 2010, USAID/OFDA has provided more than \$28 million in nutrition assistance in nine countries.

Disasters can increase the nutritional vulnerability of affected populations by causing displacement; decreasing food supply; reducing access to health and water, sanitation, and hygiene infrastructure; disrupting livelihoods; and reducing a populations' ability to purchase food, medicines, and water. USAID/OFDA-supported disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities in the nutrition sector aim to build resiliency within communities and health systems to mitigate the nutritional effects of disasters. For example, USAID/OFDA implementing partners have utilized community-based approaches to increase nutritional coverage, as well as identify and treat malnourished children at an early stage.

### **RESEARCHING MILK'S ROLE IN PASTORALIST COMMUNITIES**

In FY 2009, implementing partners Tufts University and Save the Children/U.S. launched the second phase of USAID/OFDA-supported Milk Matters, a three-year knowledge and practices study on milk in pastoralist communities in Somali Region, Ethiopia. Scheduled to extend through FY 2011, the study focuses on the quantity and quality of human and animal milk production, as well as milk access for different socio-economic groups. The research team is evaluating milk interventions with the goal of designing food assistance programs that reflect the importance of milk. Ultimately, the study aims to improve understanding of the causes of chronically high malnutrition rates in pastoralist areas in order to prioritize child health and nutrition interventions.

### **USAID/OFDA GLOBAL STRATEGIES IN NUTRITION**

USAID/OFDA supports communities and ministries of health to lead efforts aimed at preventing and treating acute malnutrition. Empowering parents and health workers to treat and cure acutely malnourished children saves lives, alleviates the suffering of malnourished populations, and reduces the social and economic impact of malnutrition on the community. In contrast to programs aimed at treating severe acute malnutrition, programs designed to manage moderate malnutrition in children have remained virtually unchanged for the last 30 years. In response, USAID/OFDA is supporting the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF), non-government organizations (NGOs), and academic institutions to conduct operational research aimed at improving the prevention and treatment of moderate acute malnutrition through improved nutrition supplements, such as ready-to-use supplementary foods (RUSF), and more effective and standardized programming. USAID/OFDA also supports nutrition programs that focus on strengthening systems, such as nutrition early warning and surveillance systems; improving nutrition and mortality survey methodologies; developing nutritional products, including RUSF; providing innovative approaches aimed at preventing and treating acute malnutrition; supporting ministries of health to integrate the management of acute malnutrition into routine health services; and assisting governments in updating and establishing nutrition policies and guidelines.

### **USAID/OFDA CONTACT**

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