

# The Learning Route in Rwanda - Final Report

Building civil society capacity to tackle malnutrition in Africa

May 2017



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*Malnutrition is like a forest fire: a lot of interventions are fighting the fire, but if you really want to quell the fire, you have to contain it, in addition to fighting it. And so prevention, education and awareness are pieces that we need to include in our effort to eradicate malnutrition.*

**Funmilayo Ankinyele, Food Basket Foundation International, Nigeria**

*I found the Learning Route experience amazing! I came with a number of expectations, but these have been surpassed. We have been able to go to the communities and see the way of life of the people, share with them what their challenges are, talk to them and find out how they are looking at the issue of malnutrition and dealing with its consequences.*

**Christine Muyama, Uganda Civil Society Coalition on Scaling Up Nutrition, Uganda**

## About this report

In November 2016, representatives of civil society alliances from nine sun Saharan African countries met in Rwanda to take part in a structured learning exchange visit known as a 'Learning Route'. All the alliances are working to end malnutrition in their countries and face many of the same challenges – the Learning Route was an opportunity for them to learn from successful practice in the host country and to learn from each other.

This report outlines the rationale and methodology for the Learning Route programme. The programme supports the SUN CSN's goal of promoting the formation and development of strong, credible and influential civil society alliances (CSAs) in countries affected by malnutrition, to enable them to strengthen national plans to tackle malnutrition. The report summarises the preparation for the Rwanda visit, the selection and context of the host country, the examples of 'best practice' that the participants visited, as well as the key learning and concrete outcomes that resulted from the experience.

SUN CSN's Learning Route programme is funded by the Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF). It is based on an established methodology developed by PROCASUR which has been used in more than 35 countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

## List of acronyms

ADECOR	Rwanda's Consumers' Rights Protection Organisation
CFSVA	Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis
CHW	Community Health Worker
CNA	Core Nutrition Actions
CRS	Catholic Relief Service
CSA	Civil Society Alliance
CSN	Civil Society Network
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
DPEM	District Plans to Eliminate Malnutrition
EDPRS	Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GoR	Government of Rwanda
IMCC	Inter-Ministerial Coordination Committee
JADF	Joint Action Development Forum District Levels
MCC	Milk Collection Centres
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MIDIMAR	Ministry of Disaster Management and Refugees
MIFOTRA	Ministry of Public Service and Labour
MIGEPROF	Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion
MINAGRI	Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources of Rwanda
MINALOC	Ministry of Local Government
MINECOFIN	Minister of Finance and Economic Planning
MINEDUC	Ministry of Education
MOH	Ministry of Health
MPTF	Multi-Partner Trust Fund
NFNP	National Food and Nutrition Policy
NFNSP	National Food and Nutrition Strategic Plan
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NISR	National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
RNDP	Rwanda National Dairy Platform
SCF&NSC	Social Cluster Food and Nutrition Steering Committee
SFH	Society for Family Health Rwanda
SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WFS	World Food Summit
WHO	World Health Organisation

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## Executive summary

Although a great deal of progress has been and is being made in the global fight against hunger and malnutrition, major challenges remain: an estimated 795 million people are undernourished<sup>1</sup>; some two billion people suffer from micronutrient deficiencies; while 159 million children under five years are too short for their age and 50 million children are underweight for their height<sup>2</sup>.

A key part of the UN-led Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement, the SUN Civil Society Network (SUN CSN) supports the formation and development of strong, credible and influential civil society alliances (CSAs) in countries affected by malnutrition. There are now CSAs in 39 countries and SUN CSN works closely with them to develop their capacity for effective nutrition advocacy and delivery of national nutrition priorities.

Encouraging the sharing of learning between CSAs is a priority for the SUN CSN, as the countries often face similar nutrition challenges and effective approaches that work in one setting could be adapted and applied in another. Adding to its existing learning sharing activities, in 2016 SUN CSN launched a 'Learning Route' exchange visit programme for CSAs. Funded by the Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), the programme uses an established learning methodology that was developed by PROCASUR and has been used in more than 35 countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

### Preparing for the Learning Route

SUN Alliance Rwanda (the national CSA) was chosen to host the Learning Route, which took place between 30 October and 5 November 2016. Rwanda was an ideal host, as the country had made significant progress on malnutrition (see page 6 for more details), while challenges remained that were relevant to the visiting national alliances, including: fragile multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder coordination, inadequate financial and human resources, scarce availability of research data for planning of nutrition initiatives, and lack of regular knowledge sharing among civil society organisations (CSOs).

In total, 40 people participated in the learning route, including representatives of CSAs from eight countries – Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Sierra Leone,

Uganda, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Also taking part were representatives of the Rwandan government, as well as colleagues from the SUN CSN and SUN Movement, PROCASUR Corporation, donor agencies and international organisations.

In advance of the Learning Route visit, SUN CSN carried out a survey of CSAs to find out the areas where they most needed support. The survey identified four inter-related thematic areas: advocacy, social campaigning and mobilisation; multi-stakeholder coordination; communication for behavioural change and; integrated approaches to fight malnutrition.

The **learning objectives** of the programme were to:

- Identify successful CSA initiatives to tackle malnutrition at community, provincial and national level, understand the processes and factors for success as well as explore potential for scale up;
- Recognise processes through which civil society enhances national and local policies, and strategies to address nutrition issues with specific focus on vulnerable and disadvantaged groups;
- Recognise efficient mechanisms to make policy makers accountable in addressing nutrition;
- Identify effective social mobilisation and communication strategies to raise awareness of nutrition sensitive issues and behaviour change.

### During the Learning Route in Rwanda

Designed as a planned journey with specific learning objectives, the Learning Route in Rwanda was a mix of field visits, panel discussions, and group exercises. It offered participants not only the opportunity to learn about what worked well in Rwanda and why, but to also share innovations they have used successfully in their own countries.

Ahead of the visit, SUN Alliance Rwanda's members identified five examples of 'best practice' from their own activities that related to the four themes identified by the survey – and which were in some way innovative and had the potential to be scaled up or applied in other similar contexts. Case studies were developed capturing the CSOs' learning from those experiences. The Learning Route was structured around visits to the five 'best practice' examples, so participants could understand the context and specific challenges, meet the organisations and people involved and explore what worked and why.

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In the final stage in the Learning Route journey, having visited the five practice examples, all the country teams developed an 'Innovation Plan' that applied what they had learnt to their own national context. The criteria for these Innovation Plans were that they were plans for action that built on CSAs' existing activities, that they could feasibly be completed within six months, and were practical and economical to sustain. Seed funding for implementation was awarded to the three most promising plans, as assessed by an independent expert panel. Following the Learning Route, SUN CSN supported CSAs to develop their plans further and to raise funds for implementation.

## Learning Route Feedback and outcomes

Giving feedback at the end of the Learning Route in Rwanda, the participants identified the following key takeaways:

- Progress towards eradicating malnutrition depends on coordinated action by and commitment from all key actors towards common goals; a national policy framework with the full backing of government institutions is a key element to ensuring coordination; and action-oriented local or district nutrition plans can enhance coordination and the effectiveness of interventions;

- Nutrition interventions are more likely to succeed when local communities are engaged in their design and implementation from the very beginning, having a sense of ownership through defining their priorities and being responsible for their implementation;

- Financial mechanisms should also be put in place to ensure the timely release and proper utilisation of funds for the implementation of nutrition interventions.

The most tangible outcome of the Learning Route was that CSAs from nine African countries developed practical Innovation Plans that could immediately be put into action. For hosts SUN Alliance Rwanda, it was a chance to take stock, enhance the level of engagement with government, reflect on successful practice, and learn from the experience of other countries. For the visiting country representatives, the Learning Route gave them a chance to learn from others, reflect on their work and to refocus their plans for the future.

Following the international exchange, the CSAs kept in contact giving life to a vibrant regional community of practice for knowledge sharing. The CoP has been growing in the time and identified regional priority actions and mechanisms for inclusive and mutual collaboration and knowledge sharing. A regional hub for Anglophone African SUN CSAs is in the process to be established.



## Participants' feedback

*The Learning Route has motivated me. I can now see the possibilities of doing more out of existing structures to get higher impact in communities*

**Daniel Mtweve, Community Economic Empowerment and Legal Support, Tanzania**

*Mapping nutrition to show who is where, doing what and for how long was an eye opener for me – as was effective multi stakeholder partnerships. I saw that even the small holder farmers can be linked to nutrition objectives*

**Clementina Ngina Musyoki, Feed the Children Kenya**

*The performance contract on its own makes practitioners function well. This is the thing I will take home*

**Kudakwashe Zombe, Zimbabwe Civil Society Organisations Scaling Up Nutrition**

*I learnt how programmes are implemented and how the private sector can contribute towards nutrition. I am very motivated man to go back and see how we can implement some of this*

**January Mvula, Civil Society Organisation Nutrition Alliance**

*We have listened to countries and heard what they are doing, picked a few things we can implement in Nigeria – such as ensuring state committees are functioning. Advocacy to policy makers will be our main area of emphasis so they see nutrition as a development priority*

**Beatrice Eluaka, Civil Society Scaling Up Nutrition in Nigeria (CS-SUNN)**

*I will take away the coordination strategy by the government, civil society and others, the harmonised approach to planning where all sections come together to plan as one to meet nutrition targets*

**Sanusie Fofanah, Pikin-To-Pikin Movement, Sierre Leone**

*I have realised how effective policy implementation has been to Rwanda and come to realise that from policy to household level the communities own these nutrition interventions, which are developed based on people's needs*

**Christina Muyama, Graca Machel Trust, Uganda**

*I learned an immense amount, such as how important district level coordination supported by government and civil society is to nutrition accountability, and how crucial it is to have government structures such as the performance contracts in place*

**Kenaw Gebreselassie Hailemichael, Save the Children International, Ethiopia**

*The most significant change that has come about through the Learning Route for us is “building the momentum”. Now everyone is talking about the SUN Alliance from the Ministry to civil society, and everyone from the Alliance is very proud to be part of it*

**Butera John Robert Mugabe, Chairperson of SUN Alliance Rwanda**



## Rwanda: overview of nutrition indicators in the host country

**Rwanda reached its Nutrition Millennium Development Goal targets in 2015 and alongside reduction in poverty has made significant progress towards ending malnutrition in the last decade. High level political commitment has been one of the factors in Rwanda's success on malnutrition – another has been the government's effectiveness in bringing together different actors around national policies and a common results framework. Challenges remain, such as the high levels of food insecurity and malnutrition in the Northern and Western provinces. Civil society has and is playing a key role in nutrition interventions. This section summarises the context of the host country for the Learning Route and the work of the SUN Alliance Rwanda.**

Rwanda is one of the biggest success stories in Africa in terms of the high economic growth, rapid poverty reduction and reduced inequality the country has attained over the last decade [Global Nutrition Report, 2015]. It achieved the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) in 2015 in a region that has some of the biggest hunger problems in absolute terms, being home of 124 million undernourished people [FAO, 2015]. Poverty reduction has been accompanied by increased gender empowerment, which suggests that growth has positively benefited the population. Furthermore, promoting good governance has been central to Rwanda's development strategy: this has been applied by facilitating citizen participation which has enabled local communities to participate meaningfully in decision-making on the issues that affect them. A decentralisation process began in 2000 bringing government functions closer to the people by transferring the development and delivery of a wide range of services, including nutrition interventions, to local districts.

Rwanda has demonstrated high-level political commitment towards ending malnutrition. Acknowledging the importance of good nutrition for development, the Rwandan government put nutrition issues high on the national agenda to ensure they are addressed and national targets are met by 2020<sup>3</sup>. The government has been effective in bringing together different actors to create an enabling policy environment, and has aligned nutrition programmes around a common results framework. Rwanda is now working towards financial tracking and resource mobilisation for better results<sup>4</sup>.

Rwanda has also made significant progress in improving food security and reducing hunger: from 1990 to 2015,

prevalence of undernourishment fell by nearly half, from 56% to 32% [FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2015]. The number of undernourished people has remained at around 4 million since 2002 [Ibidem]. Analysis conducted by the World Food Programme (WFP) in 2015 also highlights progress with 80% of Rwandan households food secure, based on their current food consumption and their ability to cope with future difficulties [WFP, 2016]. However, high levels of food insecurity are still found in the Western and Northern provinces of the country, which also have the highest rates of stunting. Although stunting rates dropped from 44% to 38% between 2012 and 2015 (UNICEF, WHO and World Bank, 2015) it remains the 'key nutrition issue' requiring collaborative effort from all actors working in tandem.

Implementing the National Food and Nutrition Strategic Plan (NFNSP), 2013-2018, is considered to be vital to achieving sustainable, long-term food and nutrition security in the country. To support the Plan's implementation in recent years, several multi-stakeholder platforms have been set up at central and local level: led by the Ministry of Health, the Inter-Ministerial Coordination Committee (IMCC) is the highest body bringing government and development partners together to address hunger and undernutrition; the Social Cluster Food and Nutrition Steering Committee (SCF&NSC), is a cross-government body, coordinating and implementing the national nutrition policies and strategic plans; and the National Food and Nutrition Technical Working Group provides technical advice in coordinating and organising nutrition activities at national and local level.

In 2016, a National Nutrition and Food Coordination Secretariat to Eradicate Malnutrition was established under the Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC)

<sup>3</sup> Republic of Rwanda (2000), Ministry of Finance and Economic development' Rwanda Vision 2020

<sup>4</sup> SUN Website: <http://scalingupnutrition.org/sun-countries/rwanda>

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to coordinate all activities and actors in nutrition. The Secretariat also serves as technical support to districts, development partners and CSOs working together in implementing nutrition programmes. Decentralising and strengthening the multi-sectoral approach has helped Rwanda to be successful in addressing malnutrition.

Civil society played a key advocacy role in ensuring nutrition was high on the political agenda. Through increased coordination, CSOs have influenced decision-making processes to tackle malnutrition. The creation of the SUN Alliance in Rwanda grew out of a history of strong commitment and coordination among CSOs.

Established in 2014, the SUN Alliance Rwanda is a registered umbrella organisation for CSOs. It operates

as a hub for collaborative action on nutrition through advocacy and community mobilisation. With a membership of 79 CSOs including local, international NGOs and academia, the Alliance is a platform for all in civil society actively engaged in scaling up nutrition in the country. The aim of the SUN Alliance is to amplify the voices of communities affected by malnutrition and to focus on the need for nutrition action to be more accountable to them.

The Alliance enhances coordination among partners, strengthens capacity for nutrition planning, programing and monitoring, and empowers its members to effectively contribute to investments in nutrition. The SUN Alliance also aims to align its advocacy and mobilisation efforts to national programmes to accelerate progress and lead to sustainable results.



Measuring child's weight, Gigasara District

## The Learning Route: preparation

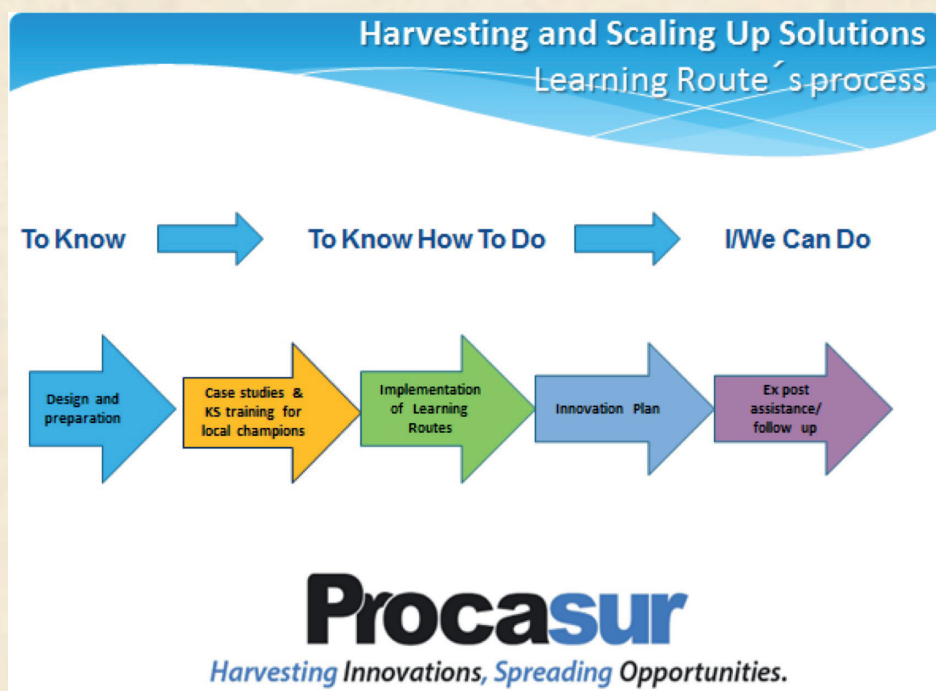
The Learning Route methodology was developed by PROCASUR to facilitate the two-way knowledge exchange between peers, and to move away from a 'study tour' approach. The step-by-step process is built as a learning journey, allowing participants to reflect on 'best practice' examples visited in the host country, and to learn from each other as well as from their hosts. This section describes the methodology and preparation steps taken before the Learning Route.

### What is a Learning Route?

The Learning Route methodology has been used by PROCASUR and its partners in more than 35 countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia. What differentiates a Learning Route from a conventional exchange visit is its methodological approach: designed as step-by-step process, and built as a learning journey, the Learning Route aims to stimulate participants to reflect on the 'best practice' examples visited in the host country, and to learn from each other as well as from their hosts. This methodology seeks to move away from a study tour approach and break down the distinction between 'visitors' and 'hosts' by facilitating a two-way knowledge exchange between peers.

### Objectives of the Learning Route

The Learning Route's main objective was to contribute to stronger, more coordinated Civil Society Alliances, aligned with national priorities, with the capacity to actively contribute to national efforts and to respond to the needs of the country's most vulnerable communities in order to reduce cases of malnutrition. Taking part in the Learning Route enabled national alliances to learn from each other, and gave them an advocacy platform to increase multi-stakeholder coordination at national level in their own countries, while also allowing them to explore creation of a regional hub for SUN Civil Society Alliances as a group. The regional hub was subsequently set up, with terms of reference and group priorities agreed.



*We are gathered here from all parts of Africa, we are speaking the same language – and this language is nutrition*

**January Mvula, Civil Society Organisation Nutrition Alliance, Malawi**

**The Learning Route methodology was developed by PROCASUR and has been used in more than 35 countries all over the World**

### Preparing for the Learning Route in Rwanda

The learning route took place from 30th October to the 5th November 2016. It benefited from the active collaboration between SUN CSN, SUN Alliance Rwanda and PROCASUR Corporation, which developed and implemented the methodology for the learning exchange.

In preparation for the Learning Route, the SUN CSN carried out a survey of CSAs from Anglophone African countries to inform design of the Learning Route. The survey asked CSAs to name their core areas of intervention and best practice in the fight against malnutrition, as well as to identify the priority issues facing their members and their learning needs. This mapping exercise enabled the

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SUN CSN team to focus the Learning Route programme on four inter-related thematic areas:

1. Advocacy, campaigning and social mobilisation
2. Multi-stakeholder coordination
3. Communication for behavioural change and;
4. Integrated approaches to fighting malnutrition

The survey process was also used to find a country and a CSA to host the Africa Learning Route – and Rwanda and SUN Alliance were selected. It took six months to prepare for the Learning Route visit, allowing organising partners to work together to define the content and make logistical arrangements for the field visits, and to mobilise SUN Alliance’s partner organisations and

to shape the methodology to respond to the specific needs of the visiting CSAs.

In preparation for the Learning Route, the SUN Alliance Rwanda engaged with government officials and other relevant national actors and decision-makers (from international organisations, UN agencies, donors and CSOs) to encourage them to be involved in the Learning Route’s activities. As a result there has been a high level of participation during the entire LR and afterward of government at different levels – including representatives of MINALOC, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, Mayor of Nyanza, Mayor of Gisagara and DPEM Gisagara – as well as UN agencies (WFP, UNICEF, FAO) and donors (Swiss cooperation, EU, USAID).



Community practicing their traditional dance. Learning Route preparation, Gisagara District

The Learning Route in Rwanda was structured around five ‘best practice’ case studies, examples of successful initiatives taken by CSOs in the host country to tackle malnutrition. Each case study was explored through a field visit or a thematic workshop session followed by group analysis and reflection. The analysis involved participants identifying key aspects of the good practice that had the potential to be applied in their own context, as well as possible challenges and ways to address them. Analysis of the case studies was conducted with representatives from the organisations that implemented them. This enhanced knowledge sharing and mutual learning between the Learning Route’s participants and their hosts.

The journey started and ended in Kigali and involved visits to rural areas in the districts of Nyanza and Gisagara (see Annex I for the Learning Route detailed agenda). An important aspect of the Learning Route methodology is identifying ‘nutrition champions’ in the host country. These were individuals who played a significant role in the successful nutrition initiatives that were featured

as ‘best practice’ examples. The champions led the group during each case study visit and were at the centre of the learning exchange process. Champions included representatives from international organisations and CSOs, as well as rural producers and farmers –giving voice and visibility to those often cut off from the formal knowledge market (rural women, youth and smallholder farmers).

The Learning Route concluded with each CSA (including the hosts) creating and presenting an ‘Innovation plan’ for action based on the learning they had acquired during the visit. The aim was to focus the CSA’s attention on how they could apply their learning back in their own country contexts and to stimulate new approaches to tackling malnutrition. The Learning Route was built on an understanding that knowledge sharing is a fundamental condition for scaling-up nutrition responses, and aimed to inspire participants to become agents of change in their countries, and make it possible for innovation to be shared and good practice to travel and grow.

## Learning Route participating countries and their nutrition indicators

This section describes the nutrition context and civil society experience in the eight countries participating in the Learning Route as visitors – which were shared during the ‘Experience Fair’ that began the learning journey in Rwanda.

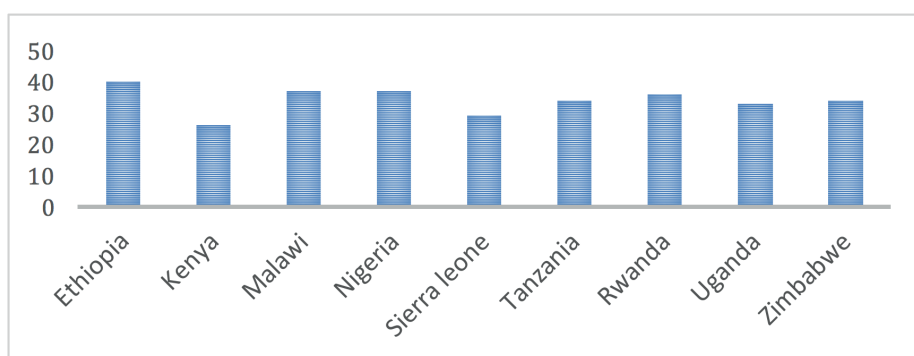
The Learning Route brought together representatives of CSAs from nine African countries: Rwanda, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. There were 27 participants in total, with each country delegation comprised of three representatives CSOs working at national or sub-national level: of these, 56% belonged from national non-governmental organisations and 44% represented international organisations; 52% were women and 48% men [see, List of Participants in Annex II].

During the Experience Fair that opened the Learning Route, country delegates gave brief presentations on the nutrition status of their respective countries, key intervention areas, achievements, challenges and contributions as CSAs supporting national efforts to end hunger and malnutrition.

Presentations showed that the nutrition challenges faced were often similar: although all countries had achieved significant progress in reducing malnutrition, stunting and wasting rates remained high.

According to the Global Nutrition Report 2016, at the global level, African countries have the highest rates of under-five stunting (58%); yet reductions in some forms of malnutrition were registered in all countries participating in the Learning Route. Stunting in children under-five decreased from 42% in 2010 to 34% in 2014 in Tanzania [TDHS-MIS, 2015/16], while Malawi experienced a decrease from 48% to 37% in stunting rates over the past decade [MDHS, 2016]. Kenya has the lowest rate [26%] of stunting [KDHS, 2014], followed by Sierra Leone [29%] [SLDHS, 2014].

**Table: Stunting rates in children under five-years in the Learning Route’s participating countries**



Source: Demographic and Health Surveys [data refer to the period between 2013 and 2016, having been collected in different years depending on the country]

Progress has been also made to decrease wasting in children under-five: as the Demographic and Health Surveys conducted at national level reveal, Rwanda, Malawi and Zimbabwe were able to meet the Millennium Development Goal target of reducing wasting prevalence to under 5%, resulting in the following figures 2.2%, 3%

and 3.3%. Nigeria (18%) and Ethiopia (9%) have a high prevalence of wasting among children under-five: this is the case of while Uganda [5%], Tanzania [5%], Sierra Leone [4.7%] and Kenya [4%] reported similar trends in relation to this indicator<sup>5</sup>. With 87.3% of babies under-six months exclusively breastfed, Rwanda is a role model

<sup>5</sup> Source: national Demographic and Health Surveys. Links to the publications are available in the References, at the end of this report.

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From left to right: Victor Lansana Koroma from Sierra Leone, George Odhiambo from Kenya and Funmilayo Ankinyele from Nigeria presenting a “Call to Action” to governments during the Opening Ceremony of the LR in Kigali

in the region. Other countries have also performed well in this regard. For example, in Kenya, exclusive breastfeeding increased from 13% to 61% in the past decade. Uganda, Malawi, and Sierra Leone also exceed the 2025 global target for exclusive breastfeeding of 50% coverage with 63%, 61.2% and 58.8% coverage rates in 2015<sup>6</sup>.

Country delegates recognised shared challenges in implementation of nutrition interventions: weak multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder coordination and inadequate financial and human resources are two major constraints. Low availability of information and research data also constitute a challenge, especially in the planning of nutrition initiatives, along with a lack of regular knowledge and information sharing among civil society membership. This can lead to poor utilisation of resources and evidence to inform decision-making and advocacy processes. Cultural traditions and religious beliefs such as food taboos can also hinder food and nutrition security at individual and community level.

Finally, country teams called for the need to improve monitoring and evaluation systems including nutrition

indicators to track both quantitative and qualitative impacts in nutrition.

Despite the challenges, opportunities for scaling up nutrition were also identified. For example, formulation of national food and nutrition policies and the development of strategic action plans to address malnutrition. Government commitment towards improved nutrition and the position of nutrition within national priorities were viewed as crucial in sustaining long-term nutrition interventions in all countries.

CSAs played a critical role at national level in ensuring nutrition is high on the public agenda, championing the importance of nutrition at national and district/county levels (for instance in Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda); training member organisations, community networks and media in advocacy and social mobilisation on nutrition (for instance in Sierra Leone, Tanzania); spearheading awareness campaigns at national level (e.g. Zimbabwe); lobbying government to make national programmes, such as social protection initiatives, nutrition sensitive (e.g. Malawi) and in creating specific budget lines for nutrition in targeted states (Nigeria).

<sup>6</sup> Source: national Demographic and Health Survey

## Learning from the Rwandan experience - Examples of 'best practice' in tackling malnutrition

This section describes the five 'best practice' examples from Rwanda that the participants visited during the Learning Route – and records their learning and feedback in each case

*I have seen a number of good examples in Rwanda about how multi-sectoral platforms can effectively work at the district level and at the community level, and I have seen the way the community owns the nutrition initiatives and also how the private sector is playing a key role to ensure that malnutrition is reduced in the country*

**Christine Muyama, Uganda Civil Society Coalition on Scaling Up Nutrition, Uganda**

### Case Study 1: Rwanda Stakeholder & Action Mapping for Nutrition

*The experience in our country shows that Stakeholder & Action mapping is key to address malnutrition; because once you know partners that are in the country, what actions they are working on, and the gaps of both geographical and beneficiary coverage [of nutrition interventions] you can easily tackle the issue of malnutrition. Without knowing who is doing what and where, what actions are being undertaken and where the gaps [are], you can't move ahead*

**Jannette Kaiyangwa, UN-REACH Initiative**

The Stakeholder & Action Mapping for nutrition carried out in Rwanda offers an example of how this can be an effective tool to identify relevant stakeholders in nutrition, help them to prioritise their actions towards common objectives and strengthen multi-sectoral coordination, thus contributing to addressing gaps in coverage of nutrition interventions at national and local level.

Stakeholder & Action Mapping for nutrition was developed in 2015 and promoted by the Office of the Prime Minister in collaboration with UN-REACH. The mapping exercise brought together different

stakeholders working on both nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions<sup>7</sup>. These included UN agencies (such as, FAO, WHO, UNICEF and WFP), government institutions (MINAGRI, MOH, MIGEPROF, MINEDUC and MINALOC), organisations from Civil Society at national and sub-national level, as well as academia, bi and multi-lateral donors and other development partners.

The mapping aimed to improve nutrition coordination by providing an indicative overview of who the key stakeholders in nutrition are, where they are working, and how many people they are reaching – categorised according to Core Nutrition Actions (CNAs), i.e. key agreed actions to address malnutrition. The exercise depicted the prevalence of child malnutrition at district level alongside the CNAs implemented, revealing where quality of geographical and beneficiary coverage was required.

The Mapping also provided an overview of different actors and their responsibilities and of the CNAs addressed, for example: disease prevention and management; maternal, neonatal and child health; micronutrient supplementation; and food and agriculture; nutrition education, sanitation. Of particular value was clarifying the role of different stakeholders involved in carrying out nutrition interventions – government ministries, field implementers and donors.

<sup>7</sup> Nutrition-specific interventions and programmes address the immediate determinants of fetal and child nutrition and development—adequate food and nutrient intake, feeding, caregiving and parenting practices, and low burden of infectious diseases. Instead, nutrition-sensitive interventions and programmes address the underlying determinants of fetal and child nutrition and development— food security; adequate caregiving resources at the maternal, household and community levels; and access to health services and a safe and hygienic environment—and incorporate specific nutrition goals and actions. Source: adapted from, Scaling Up Nutrition, 2011.

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The Stakeholder & Action Mapping revealed that, although all 30 districts of Rwanda had partners working on food and nutrition, their numbers varied substantially [from three to 13 partners] as did the number of CNAs supported and initiatives undertaken.

This led to a discussion among partners on what actions were not taken, where, and how to strengthen collaboration to improve coverage of nutrition interventions and increase the number of beneficiaries to ensure that all districts have partners present. As a result, recommendations were given to partners leading to better planning and coordination.

The mapping exercise had some limitations: it was a voluntary activity and it was not clear if all stakeholders involved in nutrition actions were identified or chose to contribute. In addition, the mapping only focused on a set of selected key actions. It was also acknowledged that all organisations working in these districts were

not included in the mapping exercise. The mapping should be then interpreted as an indicative and directional tool.

Furthermore, to be effectively used for planning purposes, the Stakeholder & Action Mapping will need to be periodically updated, since programmes and projects change. In this process, SUN CSAs have a role to play in bringing together CSOs working on nutrition. In Rwanda, the SUN Alliance engaged multiple partners in the exercise and ensured their active participation.

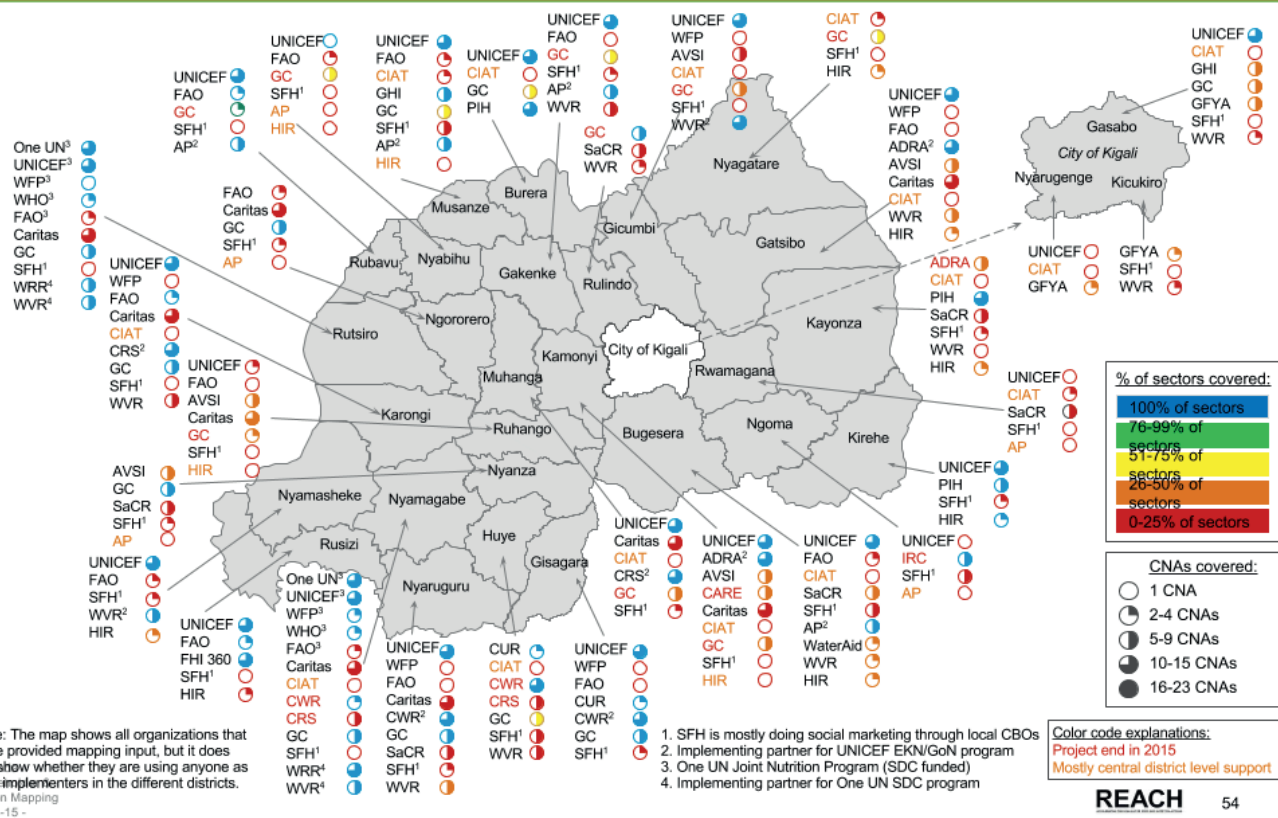
Today, most of the actors working in nutrition are using the results from the Stakeholder & Action Mapping to inform decision-making processes on where and how to intervene at ground level.

During analysis of this case study, participants focused on the different key steps needed to carry out the

**NB! Only shows stakeholders who have reported**

## What catalysts & implementers are working in which districts?

How many CNAs are they working on, and how many sectors are they covering?



UN-REACH: Nutrition Stakeholder and Action Mapping



stakeholder mapping, and discussed challenges and opportunities. Each CSA group developed their own step-by-step guide of the key steps towards a successful, inclusive and sustainable mapping process relevant to their context. It was commonly agreed that: inclusive participation right from the very early stage of defining the themes for mapping was essential to success; using the decentralized coordination platforms / SUN committees at district level was the best way to carry out the mapping exercise; the process should be repeated on annual basis, the tools should be simple and not costly (e.g. surveys); sharing the results

with all stakeholders was also key and provided a chance to reflect on available resources and gaps; and the exercise can greatly contribute to improved dialogue, coordination and more effective planning and allocation of resources.

As a result of this case study, two of the visiting CSAs developed Innovation Plans around mapping: Kenya (*Mainstreaming nutrition as a multi-sectorial agenda in Mombasa County*) and Malawi (*Stakeholder mapping*).

## Case study 2: Strengthening Pro-Poor Public Private Partnership to fight malnutrition. The experience of DUHAMIC-ADRI and SOSOMA

*From the DUHAMIC-ADRI and SOSOMA experience, I have learned about effective working collaboration between the private sector and the government. The knowledge and the experience that DUHAMIC-ADRI and SOSOMA have gained over years is now used to advise the government on how to tackle malnutrition*  
**George Odhiambo Ogola, International Medical Corps, Kenya**

A good example of partnership building between civil society, the public and the private sector is the DUHAMIC-ADRI and SOSOMA experience, which plays an important role in the fight against malnutrition in Rwanda. DUHAMIC-ADRI is a Rwandan not-for-profit organisation operating in the country since the 1980s to support smallholder farming. It is also an active member of the SUN Alliance, both at national and at

district level. DUHAMIC-ADRI adopts an integrated approach to enhance rural livelihoods, working with producers' associations and cooperatives to improve agricultural production and access to markets. Initially, DUHAMIC-ADRI developed a complementary food unit and product named "SOSOMA" after the main ingredients used (soya, sorghum and maize) that produced fortified flours<sup>8</sup>. Today, 73% of SOSOMA products are certified by the Rwanda Standard Boards for reaching quality standards<sup>9</sup>.

In 2008, SOSOMA separated from DUHAMIC-ADRI and became a private company. Today, SOSOMA Limited Company supplies its products to a wide range of international organisations (Compass International, Partners in Health, Caritas Rwanda, Care International, among others) as well as government bodies (MOH, MINEDUC) that distribute them to hospitals and health centres. Products are also exported to neighbouring countries (Uganda, Burundi).

### Meet our Nutrition Champions: Innocent Benineza, DUHAMIC-ADRI Executive Secretary

Since 1995, Innocent Benineza has been the DUHAMIC-ADRI's Executive Secretary, responsible for the coordination and implementation of different integrated projects aimed at enhancing rural livelihoods. Under his direct supervision, DUHAMIC-ADRI team supported more than ten farmer cooperatives to increase quantity and quality of soybean, sorghum and maize production through regular agriculture extension services. It was also under his leadership that the first processing unit, SOSOMA, was created. Over time he was able to engage with different partners seeking to improve the nutritional status of the Rwandan population.

*"The objective of DUHAMIC-ADRI and SOSOMA is to improve the nutrition status of the population in Rwanda, by developing fortified food at an affordable price for rural populations. In addition, SOSOMA is also an important market for local products such as soya, sorghum and maize. In this sense, DUHAMIC supports farmers who produce these crops and SOSOMA offers a secure market for their products".*

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SOSOMA 1, Old labelling

SOSOMA 1, New labelling developed following the recommendations from the LR participants

One of the key elements that made the experience of DUHAMIC-ADRI and SOSOMA successful in Rwanda, is the 'reinvestment policy' that ensures sustainability of the value-chain process: under this policy, the dividends annually distributed from SOSOMA to DUHAMIC-ADRI and their main shareholders are reinvested into rural development projects supporting local farmers in the 12 cooperatives which supply SOSOMA with the grains used to prepare the products.

Building in win-win mechanisms for civil society, the private sector and farmers' cooperatives, ensures that food is locally produced, of acceptable quality

and provides a stable market for local producers. DUHAMIC-ADRI also provides technical assistance to farmers in order to meet the required market standards.

The diversification of SOSOMA products tailored to different age groups or to respond to specific micronutrient deficiencies, helped to meet clients' demands. Having government backing was also key to ensuring a link to market for hundreds of farmers.

Although it is difficult to have a comprehensive and statistically representative causal link between malnutrition

**8** Flours are fortified with vitamins and minerals, as: Vitamin A [retinol], Vitamin D3, [cholecalciferol], Vitamin E [tocopherol], Vitamin K1 [philloquinone], Vitamin C [Ascorbic acid], Vitamin B6, [niacin], Vitamin 12 [cyanocobalamin], Folic acid and Biotin. Minerals are Potassium Chloride and DiCalcium Phospate. Source: <http://www.sosoma.rw/>

**9** <https://www.africamechampions.com/images/laureats/SOSOMA-Industries-Ltd-profile.pdf>

**10** From 2012 to 2015, stunting rates dropped from 44% to 38% (UNICEF, WHO and World Bank, 2015)

rates and the introduction of SOSOMA products in the market, since no specific impact evaluation has been conducted so far, it is possible to argue there is a correlation between falling stunting rates among children under five-years over the last 3 years and the widespread use of SOSOMA products in hospitals and health centres, and distributed through a network of international organisations supporting child nutrition at the national level<sup>10</sup>. As popularity for SOSOMA in Rwanda and neighbouring countries increases, the partnership has potential to be sustained over time.

During the Learning Route, participants had the opportunity to meet with DUHAMIC-ADRI and SOSOMA representatives, to visit SOSOMA's processing unit and learn about different phases of the products' processing.

They learnt about the importance of dialogue and involving the private sector in multi-stakeholder efforts against malnutrition; and they learnt about sustainable

approaches to the value chain through public-private partnership.

The Learning Route participants had some concerns about the Sosoma approach, one being the need to ensure that conflict of interest processes were established and adhered to in cases where an entity is both a non-governmental and for-profit entity, and where government procurement is involved. In addition, concerns around the international code on marketing of breastmilk substitutes along with labour conditions for women in the production factory were raised.

The Learning Route participants were able to share their experience and expertise in these areas with DUHAMIC-ADRI and SOSOMA. Based on the suggestions provided during the Learning Route, SOSOMA worked to improve the packaging of its products to avoid any misleading interpretation about the use of 'same as breastfed' milk substitutes.

### Case study 3: Communication strategies for behavioural change towards improved nutrition. The Land O' Lakes and Urunana experience

The case of Land O' Lakes International Development and Urunana Development Communication (DC) shows how effective communication strategies can help in improving the consumption of key nutritional foods, such as milk.

Land O' Lakes International Development is non-profit organisation, which started as a farmer and dairy cooperative in the United States of America.

The organisation has been working in Rwanda since 2007, supporting smallholder farmers to access markets, improve their production to meet international safety and quality standards and increase consumer demand. In 2014, with a grant from US AID, the Rwanda Dairy Competitiveness Programme II (RDCP II), implemented by Land O'Lakes International Development, partnered with Urunana DC to raise awareness among Rwandan population about the health benefits of consuming high-quality milk.

This initiative complemented RDCP II's overall goal of strengthening the dairy value chain while supporting the Government of Rwanda's priority of improving food and nutritional security [Land O' Lakes International Development, 2016].

Urunana DC is a registered National NGO specialised in the development of communication tools, mainly focusing on Social and Behaviour Change Communication approaches. As part of their activities, Urunana DC developed the first radio soap opera in the country depicting real life in rural villages and addressing sensitive issues of social interests, mainly reproductive and sexual health, HIV and AIDS, maternal and child health, family planning, gender violence and, more recently, nutrition.

Since 1999, Urunana DC have produced and broadcast more than 1,800 episodes, making them one of the most successful programmes, reaching around 70% of the population in Rwanda.

*Urunana DC started to bridge the gap in Communication for Behavioural Change. Radio [is] ...a powerful tool capable of reaching a much broader audience than any other media in Rwanda. With radio soap opera you can create role models to explain the different kind[s] of behaviour and [use] positive characters to show changes in behaviour, and their benefits so people know what characters they should copy and which ones to reject".*

**Sylvia Muteteli, Urunana DC Coordinator**

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Land O' Lakes International Development and Urunana DC tailored content and messages for the radio soap opera to reach a broad audience and different segments of the population such as women, expectant mothers, children and men, especially those living in the rural areas. The communication strategy was extremely successful in reaching the target groups with clear, culturally relevant and attention-catching messages.

As the RDCPII impact report shows (Land O' Lakes International Development, 2016), the market demand for milk greatly increased between 2014 and 2016: the combination of the Urunana radio programming with other dairy consumption campaigns, such as Shisha Wumva<sup>11</sup>, reached over 1.6 million consumers.

The campaigns helped drive consumer demand for dairy across the country and raised awareness of

the nutritional benefits of milk and milk products. Per capita consumption of milk has also greatly increased from approximately 40 litres in 2012 to 59 litres by 2016 (Ibid.).

This case study demonstrated how Communication for Behavioural Change can effectively work and which tools and strategies successfully reach population segments. The preparation undertaken by Urunana DC and Land O' Lakes International Development to identify causes of nutrition behaviour they wanted to address identified social restrictions or misconceptions about consumption of certain foods, such as a common belief that men don't drink milk, only children do.

The construction of the characters of the radio soap opera was based upon this preparatory work and in-depth immersion of the working team in the rural communities they wanted to depict in the soap opera.



Vegetable gardens are organised in rural villages to raise awareness on the importance of ensuring a balanced diet. Gisagara district

<sup>11</sup> 'Shisha Wumva' is a National Milk Consumption Campaign launched in 2014 by MINAGRI, in collaboration with the RDCP II, aimed at raising awareness of the benefits of milk consumption and its availability on the Rwandan market

This helped the programme makers to develop characters that portrayed people they needed to target with the show.

*“We send a writer to live with a host family. They eat, sleep, cook and milk cows alongside a host family. This is how we make each character relatable, and realistic. And this is where we noted opportunities for messaging around four main themes: milk consumption and nutritional benefits, milk hygiene, handling during transportation to the collection center and responsibility sharing between wife and husband about cow management and family nutrition”, Sylvia said<sup>12</sup>.*

Milk consumption campaigns were very successful at reaching both urban and rural audiences and helping increase milk consumption; still, more efforts are needed to increase per-person consumption to 70

litres a day by 2020. Changing commonly accepted behaviors in the population takes time and commitment. There is potential for the Rwandan government to use this experience to support behaviour change for other nutrition-related issues.

The two main takeaways for visiting participants were: that it was important to have a strategic approach to engaging with the media to enhance nutrition messaging; and that using mass media channels for intensive behaviour change communications around eating locally available produce can be extremely effective and can reach commonly excluded groups.

Two of the visiting CSAs' Innovation Plans were inspired by this experience: Ethiopia (*Nutrition visibility and awareness through the media*); and Sierra Leone (*Eat what you grow*).

## Case study 4: 'Milk way' to enhance nutrition, from the producer to the consumer, the experience of Nyanza district

During the second-half of their journey, the Learning Route participants visited rural and semi-rural communities to look at experiences of multi-stakeholder partnerships at a district level. In the district of Nyanza participants learnt about a multi-stakeholder initiative to enhance the production and trade of quality and safe milk.

The Rwandan government sees milk as a key product for nutrition policy in Rwanda. This focus has resulted in increased production of milk, processed milk products and trade in milk.

With this objective, the Rwandan government initiated several programs and campaigns to raise awareness on the importance of consuming milk as a source of indispensable nutrients, especially for children and pregnant women with the aim of increasing consumption particularly in rural areas.

Government led initiatives include the Girinka Munyarwanda or One Cow per Poor Family and 'One Cup of Milk per Child'. While improvements have been registered, national milk consumption is still below the 2020 FAO target of 70 litres of milk consumed per capita [FAO, 2015].

Moreover, increased milk production has not been associated with improvements in quality, which is typically below national market standards. As a consequence, almost 96% of the milk produced is sold in informal markets [East Africa Dairy Development, 2009].

CSOs and the public sector collaborated to improve quality standards, increase production and raise awareness among rural populations of the importance of producing and consuming high-quality milk. Coordination was established between CSOs, Land O'Lakes International Development (through the RDCP II 2012-2017 program), the Rwanda's Consumers' Right Protection Organisation (ADECOR), the Rwanda National Dairy Platform (RNDP), UN agencies such as FAO, MINAGRI and other governmental bodies. At district level, other actors intervened such as dairy cooperatives and private enterprises.

Producers were encouraged to join cooperatives, making them eligible for capacity-building training. Other benefits included: strengthened negotiating power; access to governmental programmes like One Cow per Poor Family; as well as training in farming techniques, animal health and feeding, breeding

<sup>12</sup> Source: <https://www.landolakes.org/Resources/Success-Stories/Milk-plays-a-dramatic-role>

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management, organisational and financial management, and marketing. Over time skilled members are supported to become trainers to other farmers and producers. This helped to improve milk quality and increase production. Milk Collection Centres (MCCs) were also created to facilitate the collection and distribution of milk from the cooperatives to the processing units and private enterprises in the rural areas. In the 17 districts where the RDCP II was implemented – including Nyanza district – the number of MCCs increased from 40 to 77 between 2012 and 2016, while the collection of milk improved from 16.1 million litres to 48.4 million litres per year (Land O'Lakes International Development, 2016).

In Nyanza, farmers were trained to improve livestock management and increase production of high-quality milk. In Nyagisozi sector, Giramata Mworozu Dairy is a cooperative that joined this initiative. Before the cooperative was established, smallholder livestock producers sold their milk individually in the informal market. Milk production was often less than 3 litres per day, a quantity that – the farmers say – couldn't satisfy a household's daily needs. CSOs were key in improving capacities of farmers and linking them to local markets. Today, farmers from the

Giramata Cooperative are able to sell more than 24 litres per day. In the district of Nyanza, a partnership with the Zirakamwa Meza Nyanza Dairy, a private milk processing enterprise, ensured access to market to local producers from the Giramata cooperative.

In Nyanza, government programmes for enhancing milk production and consumption have played a catalytic role, allowing other community-based initiatives to grow and be sustained. Empowerment of local communities, through the establishment of local cooperatives, as well as capacity building and awareness raising were the keys to enabling the sustainability of this intervention.

Finally, the farmer-to-farmer training model was successful in building capacity at a local level, accelerating efforts to increase milk production. Yet, farmer groups and cooperatives need to be further strengthened to improve service delivery to members and to market milk to buyers. In this context, ownership and accountability is important among value chain actors as well as the involvement of the private sector to create market opportunities for local farmers.



Staff from the Zirakamwa Meza Nyanza Dairy explaining the milk processing system to LR participants, Nyanza district

## Visiting participants said their principal learnings were:

- that it is important to look at the whole value chain from farmer to consumer and the role of the policy framework if nutrition interventions are to be effective;
- that the state has an important role to play in developing laws that support high-quality nutrition standards, which are developed through consultation using multi-stakeholder platforms [e.g. Rwanda's national dairy platforms];
- that the private sector, such as cooperatives of farmers and local enterprises, play an important role in the economy and also are well placed to share nutrition and health messages;
- and that collaboration between key actors including civil society via multi-stakeholder platforms is the key to developing an integrated approach to fighting malnutrition; the life of vulnerable farmers needs to be seen as a whole, and small business, agriculture, health, sanitation, infrastructure are all involved in integrated interventions.

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## Meet our Nutrition Champions: Zilpa Mukarwego and Théogene Munyensanga, Giramata Mworozu Dairy Cooperative, Nyanza district

Zilpa and Théogene are model farmers from the Giramata Mworozu Dairy Cooperative in Nyanza district. During the Learning Route we had the privilege to be hosted in their houses and learn from them. Starting with one cow, as head of her household, Zilpa was able to send her 5 children to University based on the family's income from milk production. As a beneficiary of the 'One Cow per Poor Family' programme, Zilpa received training in animal feeding techniques and health care, she learned how to build an improved cowshed and enhanced her skills in livestock production. Over time, she became a reference for other women in the community and trained others in breeding techniques to improve the quantity and quality of the milk. *"Though cow keeping is challenging, it is also rewarding. I was motivated by the return from the venture and I have also shared the skills and experience with my fellow farmers. My cow was the solution to lift my family out of poverty", Zilpa said.*

Living not far from Zilpa's home, Théogene is the president of the cooperative and a popular livestock producer in the region. For seven years, he has been providing technical training to other farmers in the district. His integrated farming system, which also includes biogas, is a successful example of a sustainable livelihood. Today, Théogene and his family have a self-sufficient household economy. His wife and children participate in farming activities. As Théogene recalls: *"Before the cooperative was set up, we used to farm in a traditional way producing a little amount of low-quality milk. This was not enough for the family's consumption nor for selling: it was not just affecting our income, but also our nutrition situation. Today things have changed: I am training other farmers and they are now able to pay school fees for their children and for the insurance for their cows".*



Zilpa Mukarwego



Théogene Munyensanga

## Case study 5: Decentralisation and operationalization of nutrition interventions in the district of Gisagara

On the fifth day of the journey, the Learning Route arrived in Gisagara district in the Southern province of Rwanda. Gisagara was previously known for having one of the highest rates of chronic malnutrition among children under-five years, particularly in the rural areas<sup>13</sup>. To tackle this problem, district authorities developed a multi-sectoral plan to reduce malnutrition with civil society, academia and international organisations. This led to implementation of the District Plan to Eliminate Malnutrition (DPEM): stakeholder coordination was effective and, in just five years, contributed to the reduction of the stunting prevalence by 10%, from 48% (NISR 2010) to 37.5%, which is the average stunting rate across the country (NISR 2015).

As a government-led multi-sectoral initiative to fight malnutrition, the DPEM is developed and owned by the districts themselves. The DPEM provides a five-year plan for the implementation of development

initiatives aimed at poverty reduction, making the link between local and national priorities. Implementation of the district plan changed the way malnutrition was addressed: nutrition partners in Gisagara explained that before 2010 there was a lack of knowledge about the magnitude of the malnutrition problem in the district, which was reflective of national understanding. This was mainly due to a limited exchange of information among different actors working on nutrition. For example, regular communication might be maintained only with certain district officials leading to unilateral decisions. Malnutrition reduction rarely appeared in the District Development Plan as a priority, thus reductions in stunting were slow.

When nutrition was adopted as a national priority as evidenced by the 'National multisector Strategy to Eliminate Malnutrition' (NmSEM) in 2010 and design of DPEMs in 2011, the dialogue among partners engaged in

### Meet our Nutrition Champions: Evode Micomyiza, SUN district committee co-chair, Gisagara district

Nutrition Programme Manager for CONCERN Worldwide NGO, Evode Micomyiza is also the co-chair of the SUN district committee in Gisagara. He was at the front line in the development of the DPEM, being primarily engaged in liaising with district authorities for the design and implementation of multi-sectoral nutrition interventions, as well as advocating for the appointment of the DPEM coordinator. Today, he can affirm that even if *"the mountain was difficult to climb, once you have clear targets and objectives you can reach the top to reduce malnutrition"*.

During the Learning Route, Mr Micomyiza explained the steps taken over six year to "climb the mountain" to tackle malnutrition in Rwanda – from the starting point in 2009 with the Presidential Initiative to Eliminate Malnutrition, through the Rwanda Multi-sector Strategy to Eliminate Malnutrition 2010-2013, and the 2011 District Plans to Eliminate Malnutrition (DPEM), extended to all districts in 2013, and in 2014 formation of SUN Alliance Rwanda in 2014 and the appointment of a DPEM Coordinator in Gisagara District. By 2015, the rate of stunting in children under-five years had decreased by 10%.

nutrition actions greatly improved. Stakeholders' areas of intervention and coverage were mapped out at a district level. Improved cooperation and communication among parties also resulted in increased knowledge on the specific causes of malnutrition and implementation of joint strategies to address them.

In Gisagara district, the Catholic University of Rwanda was invited to join the multi-stakeholder platform to

contribute to research and analysis on the underlying causes of malnutrition among the rural population.

The University promoted community-based research at household level, which revealed the strong link between malnutrition and lack of education and awareness. It also showed that immediate causes of child stunting were not only related to a lack of food but also rooted in poor hygiene practices, inadequate

<sup>13</sup> Stunting prevalence in children under-five was estimated between 30 and 39 percent in Gisagara district. Source: Rwanda National Nutrition Screening 2014, Rwanda Stakeholder & Action Mapping 2014/15





Cooking demonstration, Gisagara District

dietary behaviour and detrimental beliefs related to food consumption. The research conducted by the Catholic University of Rwanda based on the data collected at the local hospital in 2016, showed that, among the risk factors for under nutrition in children under-five living with household mothers, the large size of the family was the main one [87.5%], followed by inadequate knowledge about nutrition at family level [77.5%] and limited knowledge of precautionary measures to prevent malnutrition [72.5%]<sup>14</sup>.

Based on these results, stakeholders worked together. The SUN Alliance mobilised partners and advocated for a DPEM Coordinator in the district, which was important to ensure the effective coordination of different nutrition actions and to record them in the district plan.

Today, an evidence-based approach to malnutrition reduction continues and the district has gained visibility at national level, becoming a role model for the rest of Rwanda. This experience shows that reducing malnutrition is possible within a short time, when there

is collaboration, commitment is strong and partners are aligned towards common goals. In the district of Gisagara, the decentralisation of nutrition interventions and coordination among stakeholders have been operationalised in an effective way, from the design down to implementation phase at village level.

CSOs mobilised community members and enhanced their capacity in nutrition actions: Community Health Workers played a key role by engaging with communities on healthy approaches to food and to raise awareness of the importance of ensuring a balanced diet, especially for women and children; vegetable gardens and cooking demonstrations were organised in communities, while nutrition messages were spread through poems, songs and theatre compositions. These combined actions resulted in increased people's awareness of nutrition issues and greater ownership of nutrition initiatives at village level.

Finally, government commitment towards reducing malnutrition contributed to improve accountability and

<sup>14</sup> Catholic University of Rwanda, Study series on abstract on malnutrition, 2016. Presentation delivered during the Learning Route.

the tracking of financial mechanisms at district level. One mechanism was the use of performance contracts, known as *Imihingo*<sup>15</sup>, between the national government and local government authorities. *Imihingo* are signed every year between the President of Rwanda and local government institutions and line ministries. They commit institutions to the targets they have set for themselves.

Over the past decade, this approach has been used by local government authorities for setting local priorities, defining annual targets (with measurable indicators) and defining activities to achieve them.

The performance indicators provide a framework to establish accountability, improve the speed and quality of execution of government programmes and accelerate progress towards economic development and poverty reduction. In Gisagara, household performance contracts were established as a tool to set medium-term objectives with clear and measurable indicators to improve nutrition status at family level.

All this section is based on what the participants discussed and highlighted during the case study analysis as important/successful strategies and learning.

Five of the Innovation Plans developed by CSAs were inspired by the Gisagara case study: Sierra Leone (*Eat what you grow*), Zimbabwe (*Strengthening of food and nutrition security committees in Mashonaland Central and Mashonaland West Provinces*), Tanzania (*Accountable district nutrition steering committees to scale up nutrition*), Uganda (*Nutrition budget line advocacy*), and Nigeria (*Improving nutrition through policy implementation at all levels*).

*The performance contract itself made collaboration among practitioners work well. This is one learning I will take home*

**Kudakwashe Zombe, Zimbabwe**

## Participants said their principal learnings were:

- that Rwanda system has managed to improve efficiency in the performance of staff and community through the signing of performance contracts;
- that cooperatives for community health care workers are important and act as an incentive, since they are volunteers in Ministry of Health and Child Care;
- that recipe books and cooking demonstrations can promote consumption of locally available nutritious foods;
- that kitchen gardening can promote economic empowerment of the community;
- and that decentralised, multi-stakeholder coordination is key for effective implementation of nutrition interventions

<sup>15</sup> *Imihingo* is the term for performance contracts in Kinyarwanda

## Impact of the Learning Route on participants and host organisations

This section summarises the feedback from the visiting participants, the host organisations and other colleagues about their experience of the Learning Route – and the impact it had

*One of our objective as a Network is to inspire and enable learning and exchange across countries: we know that this is really, really, important not only in terms of scaling up efforts to reduce malnutrition, but in terms of building relationships, allowing people to come together, to reflect, to learn from each other as much as from the context*

**Cara Flowers, SUN CSN Coordinator**

The Learning Route helped unite SUN Civil Society Alliances in the region, creating a positive environment for knowledge sharing and networking. It built relationships among SUN CSAs and created the conditions for future collaboration among CSOs and other key stakeholders in Africa.

The Learning Route's experience did not only respond to CSAs' learning needs and personal expectations, but even surpassed them. An important key take-away from the programme was

the high level of commitment and dedication by all parties involved in the multi-sectoral nutrition platform in Rwanda.

From the central government to the district level and the villages, from CSOs to the private sector, everyone was fully engaged in the common effort to eradicate malnutrition.

This was a clear inspiration for the Learning Route participants, as some testimonies reveal:

*At the beginning I was expecting to see something different from what we are doing in Nigeria to fight malnutrition, but this experience was...mind blowing! Seeing motivated people willing to change has impressed me to do more*

**Aji Rachel Robinson, Heal the Youth Foundation, Nigeria**

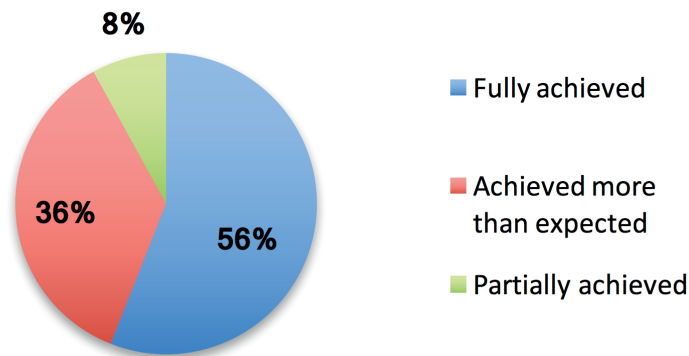
*I have gained a lot from seeing the effort community people are making towards change and how they embraced change. When I go back I will try to trigger this type of enthusiasm and commitment among community people*

**Victoria Squire, CONCERN Worldwide, Sierra Leone**

*The Learning Route has given me a new sense of responsibility. It is exciting to think about the possibilities. This is our opportunity to take it a step further to achieving results for nutrition. I feel like a pioneer*

**Funmilayo Ankinyele, Food Basket Foundation International, Nigeria**

**Learning Route's main objective:  
To enhance capacities of SUN Alliances  
to effectively contribute to multi-stakeholder  
platforms, promoting cascade capacity  
strengthening of their Alliance members**



Source: SUN CSN Learning Route's Evaluation. Qualitative analysis<sup>16</sup>

After the Learning Route, a survey was circulated among participants to assess the methodological, technical and logistical implementation of the Learning Route. A total of 25 (of a total of 27) representatives from the CSAs responded.

As the survey shows, the main objective of the Learning Route, which was "to enhance capacities of SUN Alliances to effectively contribute to multi-stakeholder platforms, promoting cascade capacity strengthening of their Alliance members", was either exceeded or fully achieved. In particular, 14 people [56%] assessed this objective as fully achieved, 9 [36%] as achieved more than expected, while 2 people [8%] answered that it was partially reached. The specific learning objectives of the Learning Route were also fully achieved.

## SPECIFIC LEARNING OBJECTIVES OF THE LR. - MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS FROM THE SURVEY

### 1. Identify successful initiatives to tackle malnutrition:

- 68% [17 people] fully achieved
- 32% [8 people] achieved more than expected

### 2. Recognise modalities through which civil society enhances national and local policies and strategies, to effectively address nutrition issues:

- 64% [16 people] fully achieved
- 20% [5 people] achieved more than expected
- 16% [4 people] partially achieved

### 3. Identify efficient communication strategies to raise awareness on nutrition issues and to promote behavioural change among the targeted population:

- 60% [15 people] fully achieved
- 28% [7 people] achieved more than expected
- 12% [3 people] partially achieved

### 4. Understand the catalytic role played by the civil society in bringing together key nutrition actors towards common goals:

- 60%, [15 people] fully achieved
- 40% [10 people] it was achieved more than expected

Furthermore, 80% of participants strongly agreed that the Learning Route team adequately guided and facilitated individual and collective learning; field visits and working group sessions were

highly appreciated as suitable spaces to foster knowledge sharing and mutual learning. The Learning Route also created a favourable environment for strengthening the relationships between SUN Civil

<sup>16</sup> Available at: <https://www.slideshare.net/SUNCSN/draft-sun-csn-evaluation-satisfaction-rate>

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Society Alliances and the SUN CSN (there was 80% agreement from respondents in both cases).

Interviews conducted with SUN Alliance Rwanda and the host CSOs highlighted the impact the programme had on the country host. The Learning Route helped to revitalise momentum among nutrition practitioners in Rwanda, providing visibility to the SUN Alliance and their member organisations, as coverage of the event by national media showed (radio as well as newspapers).

The Learning Route also served as an advocacy platform to increase multi-sectoral coordination and further engage line Ministries.

This resulted in participation of government officials (at central and district level), policy makers and nutrition practitioners from diverse sectors throughout Learning Route activities. The exchange was an opportunity for Rwandan CSOs to learn from international participants and to receive feedback to improve the implementation of their projects and activities.

Finally, the Learning Route contributed to building social capital in the country, identifying and strengthening capacities of nutrition champions, systematising their experiences to make them accessible, furthering critical analysis and enabling interaction with a wide audience.

*The methodology used in the Learning Route was really effective. Local champions (i.e. smallholder producers) were more confident in interacting with foreign people and this is thanks to the systematic coaching mechanism that was part of the methodology of the Learning Route itself. The methodological approach based on real exchange also brought me new learning from other countries. It has been a real opportunity for being together*

**Alphonse Karabaranga, Rwanda's consumer organisation, ADECOR (Learning Route host organisation)**

*Getting together we discover the potential there is in each other. Now we feel we want to work together, as we have a greater understanding of each other. It really feels we are one team and we have to work together. We are overcoming our background and individual identity and differences and becoming one SUN Alliance. The Learning Route contributed to that a lot*

**Laurien Kubwimana, SUN Advisor in Education, Pentecost Church of Rwanda**

*Making malnutrition history is possible though a multi-sectorial approach. It is a government commitment to empower everyone to play a fundamental role in the economic growth and development*

**Diane Gashumba, Minister of Health, Government of Rwanda**

*Our success is the result of a combined effort. Rwanda has put in place Joint Action Plans to Eliminate Malnutrition (to ensure multi sectorial collaboration)."*

**Munyeshyaka Vincent, Minister of State, MINALOC, Government of Rwanda**

## Scaling up good practices to improve nutrition: Innovation Plans

*Because of the challenges we have, and the solutions that seem to be here in Rwanda, we were invited here to learn, so that we can replicate and improve our system back home*

**Tendai Gunda, Save the Children, Zimbabwe**

During the final two days of the Learning Route, SUN CSAs worked in country teams to draft their Innovation plans with the objective of reinforcing strategies and programmes already existing in countries by integrating approaches, processes and partnerships that have not yet been explored.

In this context, the Innovation plans intended to build on learning from the Learning Route and facilitate the scaling up of successful practices and innovations among countries.

Innovation plans revolved around a set of different topics, framed within the thematic areas of the Learning Route, such as, awareness raising on nutrition issues through media; mapping of key nutrition stakeholders at national and sub-national level; strengthen accountability and increase

coordination of CSOs towards common objectives, to quote few of them [a short description of each country's Innovation Plan is available in Annex III].

The Country Teams presented their Innovation plans on the last day of the Learning Route in an open plenary, allowing participants to get immediate feedback from their peers.

The final version of the Innovation Plans was submitted in early 2017 by the Country Teams and assessed by a technical committee composed by SUN CSN, SUN Movement Secretariat and PROCASUR Corporation; the three Innovation Plans that received the highest scores were awarded with start-up capital of USD 5,000 to support their implementation [see, Annex III for further details].



Learning Route's participants with Théogene Munyensanga

# The Learning Route in Rwanda - Final Report

Building civil society capacity to tackle malnutrition in Africa



The Learning Route's Team and participants at the LR Opening Ceremony in Kigali © Photo Tim Mwaura



Cooking demonstration, Gisagara District

## Conclusions

*Reaching the results is not a responsibility of the governments only; it is a joint responsibility of all stakeholders. We complement each other and we focus on targets. Alignment is really the key to success*

**Alam Khattak, SUN Country Liaison, SUN Movement Secretariat**

Over the past decade, Rwanda achieved tangible results in reducing hunger and malnutrition. Progress has been possible thanks to the creation of a favourable political and social environment for the development of multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder initiatives to fight malnutrition. As a multifaceted problem, malnutrition requires the convergence of multiple actions and coordination among different partners to be adequately addressed. In this context, some lessons learned from the strategies and approaches that have been successfully implemented in Rwanda to tackle malnutrition, include:

- **Strengthening multi-stakeholder coordination** towards common goals to scale up nutrition. Eradicating malnutrition is possible, if all parties (whether they are governments, CSOs, international organisations or the private sector) coordinate together towards common goals and fully commit to reach joint objectives;
- Establishment of a **policy framework prioritising nutrition** is an essential institutional tool that helps to bring together all the different stakeholders and sectors, to coordinate nutrition activities, and to identify achievements and gaps;
- **Mapping nutrition stakeholders at national and district level** can support effective planning of nutrition interventions, avoiding duplication of efforts and helping to allocate resources;
- Set-up of **action-oriented nutrition plans at the local level** (for example, District Plans) to tackle malnutrition can contribute to enhance the effectiveness of nutrition interventions, by furthering the coordination among different stakeholders;
- **Engage local communities in nutrition interventions**. As the experiences in Gisagara and Nyanza districts have shown, nutrition interventions are likely to succeed when local communities are engaged in the design and implementation of nutrition activities from the very beginning, defining their priorities and being responsible for their implementation. This process helps stimulating the ownership of the initiatives by the communities;
- **Bridging nutrition-sensitive initiatives and nutrition-specific interventions**. Different interventions should go hand-in-hand and complement each other to increase effectiveness of their actions;
- **Involve the private sector in supporting nutrition activities**. The private sector can play an important role in accelerating efforts to lift people out of poverty and scale up nutrition. To create a favourable environment for business to be engaged in nutrition initiatives, clear regulations, appropriate legislation and market strategies should be created;
- Finally, **financial mechanisms need to be put in place** to ensure the timely release and proper utilisation of funds for the implementation of nutrition interventions.

**While learning from the Rwandan experience, participants also made recommendations to their Rwandan peers which included:**

- improve advocacy and data analysis and collection in order to increase budget allocations for nutrition activities at district level;
- include specific budget lines in national plans;
- increase and improve data collection and documentation of best practices to reduce malnutrition;
- promote the collection of quantitative field data on the impact of nutrition interventions, particularly when regarding private sector initiatives;
- and strengthen capacities at the local level to monitor, track and adapt nutrition interventions;
- include something about how learning will be continued beyond the learning exchange e.g. how regional group will continue to facilitate learning exchange between alliances.



## Call To Action!

During the Learning Route, the 9 SUN Civil Society Alliances raised their Call To Action for government, national and international policy makers, national and International agencies that can play a role to accelerate and support the fight against malnutrition. **They call on governments to play their part in scaling up nutrition by taking action in 3 key areas:**

**1. Co-ordinate Nutrition Plans:** Position nutrition at the highest level of government and bring together stakeholders from across government, the private sector, civil society, donor and UN networks to develop coordinated and coasted nutrition plans both at national and subnational level.

**2. Resource Allocation:** Ensure national nutrition plans are fully funded. Spending on nutrition should be prioritised and national budgets must include specific nutrition budget lines to turn plans from a piece of paper into a reality. Key to this is the timely release and proper utilisation of funds.

**3. Community Engagement and Accountability:** Ensure nutrition interventions are transparent and involve the communities most affected by malnutrition. Nutrition plans must reflect the realities of communities, respect communities as implementation partners and enable communities to track progress and hold governments accountable to their commitments.



The Learning Route's Team and participants © Photo Tim Mwaura

**Thanks to the Learning Route, participants have renewed their motivation for tackling malnutrition. They have been exposed to new ideas and strategies to enhance the performance of nutrition interventions in their own countries and facilitate communication among Alliances**

**Relationships between SUN CSAs have also been enhanced, creating the conditions for future collaboration among CSOs and other key stakeholders in the region.**

**The Learning Route has opened new opportunities for civil society to come together as a strengthened network. Now, time is to go fast, and together!**

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## Annex I: Learning Route's Agenda

LEARNING ROUTE AGENDA, 29 OCTOBER – 06 NOVEMBER 2016											
Time	Saturday 29 October	Sunday 30 October	Monday 31 October	Tuesday 01 November	Wednesday 02 November	Thursday 03 November	Friday 04 November	Saturday 05 November	Sunday 06 November		
06:00	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Travel to Nyanza District	Breakfast	Travel back to Kigali	Breakfast	Breakfast		
07:00						Meeting with Gisagara district's authorities					
08:00			Learning Route's Official Opening			Travel to Gishubi sector					
09:00				Case study (2) : Strengthening PPP to fight malnutrition, the experience of DUHAMIC-ADRI and SOSOMA	Case study (3): Field Visit: the "Milk Way" to enhance nutrition, from the producer to the consumer passing through national policy framework. The case of ADECOR		Visit to the Memorial of Genocide	Work in Groups: Country Teams' Innovation Plan session		Participants travel back home	
10:00		Arrival of participants at the hotel in Kigali				Case study (4) Field Visit: operationalization of nutrition interventions at district level, the case of Gisagara					
11:00			Panel Presentation and Discussion: SUN CSA Rwanda & Guests				Check in and accommodation in the hotel				
12:00											
13:00	<b>Lunch</b>										
14:00	<b>Lunch</b>										
15:00	Arrival of participants at the hotel in Kigali	Let's know each other: Learning Route's internal opening with international participants and SUN Alliance Rwanda	Case Study (1): Rwanda Stakeholder & Action Mapping	Work in Groups (methodological session): case study analysis	Field Visit (continuing)	Travel back to Huye and Work in Groups (methodological session): case study analysis	Work in Groups: Country Teams' Innovation Plan session	Presentation of the Innovation Plan & Competition		Participants travel back home	
16:00		Experience Fair: Presentation of the Country Teams	Discussion and closing of the day	Communication for behaviour change: Land O'Lake and URUNANA experience: video Projection and debate	Travel to Huye and accommodation in the hotel	Introduction to the Innovation Plan (methodological session)		Closing of the Learning Route and meeting with journalists			
17:00											
18:00											
19:00 - 20:00	<b>Dinner</b>										
21:00-23:00	Accommodation: Umubano Hotel		Accommodation: Hotel Mater Boni Consilii (Southern Province, Huye (Butare)		Accommodation: Hotel Mater Boni Consilii (Southern Province, Huye (Butare)		Accommodation: Umubano Hotel				
Place	Kigali	Kigali	Kigali	Nyanza/ Huye	Gisagara/ Huye	Gisagara/ Huye	Kigali	Kigali	Kigali		

## Annex II: List of Participants

Country	Name/Surname	Gender	Civil Society Organisation
Ethiopia	Metasbia Legesse	Female	CARE Ethiopia
	Kenaw Gebreselassie Hailemichael	Male	Save the Children International
	Tseguereda Abraham	Female	Alive & Thrive/FHI360
Kenya	Mary Koki Kyalo	Female	CONCERN Worldwide
	George Odhiambo Ogola	Male	International Medical Corps
	Clementina Ngina Musyoki	Female	Feed the Children Kenya
Malawi	January Watchman Mvula	Male	Sustainable Rural Development Community Organisation- SURDOC
	Bessie Ndovi	Female	Civil Society Organisation Nutrition Alliance- CSONA
	Hazel Kantayeni	Female	CARE Malawi
Nigeria	Beatrice Eluaka	Female	Civil Society Scaling Up Nutrition in Nigeria [CS-SUNN]
	Funmilayo Ankinyele	Female	Food Basket Foundation International
	Aji Rachael Robinson	Female	Heal The Youth Foundation
Rwanda	Paul Mbonyi	Male	The Future in Our Minds - Rwanda
	Crescence Mukantabana	Female	Poor Women Development Network
	Egide Tuyisenge	Male	Africa Evangelist Enterprise [AEE]
Sierra Leone	Victoria Squire	Female	CONCERN World Wide
	Victor Lansana Koroma	Male	Health Alert-Sierra Leone
	Sanusie Fofanah	Male	Pikin-To-Pikin Movement
Tanzania	Faraja Kassim	Male	Partnership for Nutrition in Tanzania [PANITA]
	Daniel Mtweve	Male	Community Economic Empowerment and Legal Support [CEELS]
	Itika Kisunga	Female	Lusungu Wananchi Development Association [LUWADA]
Uganda	Richard Baguma	Male	Uganda Health Communication Alliance
	James Kintu	Male	World Vision Uganda
	Christine Muyama	Female	Graca Machel Trust
Zimbabwe	Kudakwashe Zombe	Male	Zimbabwe Civil Society Organisations Scaling Up Nutrition
	Tendai Gunda	Female	Save the Children
	Regis Matimati	Male	Africa Ahead
<b>Learning Route Team</b>			
United Kingdom	Brie O'Keefe	Female	CIFF
United Kingdom	Marie Rumsby	Female	SUN CSN - Vice-Chair
United Kingdom	Cara Flowers	Female	SUN CSN - Coordinator
United Kingdom	Megan Pennell	Female	SUN CSN - Country Support
United Kingdom	Cecilia Ruberto	Female	SUN CSN - LR Program coordinator
Pakistan	Alam Khattak	Male	SUN SMS – Country Liaison
Italy	Giulia Pedone	Female	PROCASUR - LR Methodological coordinator
Rwanda	Gaetan Ngabonziza	Male	PROCASUR- LR logistic coordinator
Rwanda	Monica Ssanyu	Female	PROCASUR- LR logistic coordinator assistant
Rwanda	Venuste Muhamyankaka	Male	SUN Alliance - Coordinator
Rwanda	Robert Butera	Male	SUN Alliance - Chairman
Kenya	Timothy Mwaura	Male	SUBIRA Film production
Sierra Leone	Ramatu Jalloh	Female	SUNISL [CSA Sierra Leone] / Communication specialist

## Annex III: Innovation Plans

This Annex provides a brief overview of the Innovation Plans that nine participating national Civil Society Alliances developed as a result of taking part in SUN CSN's Learning Route Africa, hosted by Rwanda in October 2016. Learning from Rwanda's experience, from each other and by reflecting on their own practice, the alliances were supported to develop plans for specific targeted innovations that would:

- >> build on their existing work
- >> be practical to implement within 6 months
- >> be sustainable both economically and practically
- >> have potential to scale up or be replicated

### About SUN CSN's Learning Route programme

SUN CSN's Learning Route programme aims to increase peer-to-peer learning between national SUN civil society alliances [CSAs]. A 'learning route' is a proven process for accelerating knowledge sharing and peer-to-peer learning – the methodology, developed by PROCASUR Corporation, has been used in more than 35 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa and Asia, involving over 3000 development practitioners. At the heart of a learning route is a facilitated visit to a host country by representatives of different countries.

Countries	Ethiopia	Kenya	Malawi	Nigeria	Rwanda	Sierra Leone	Uganda	Tanzania	Zimbabwe
Innovation plan intervention areas									
Multi-stakeholder platform coordination (national / subnational)									
Stakeholder mapping									
Evidence-based advocacy									
Capacity building									
Accountability, performance contracts									
Integrated nutrition-sensitive value chain									
Behaviour change & social mobilisation									
Policy tracking and review									

## Innovation plans' titles and main themes of intervention

Alliances' Innovation plans developed during the Rwanda Learning Route had the following intervention themes:

<b>Ethiopia</b> Theme	<b><i>"Nutrition visibility and awareness through the media"</i></b> Communication and social mobilisation for behavioural change
<b>Kenya</b> Theme	<b><i>"Mainstreaming nutrition as a multi-sectorial agenda in Mombasa County"</i></b> Multi-stakeholder platform coordination and governance
<b>Malawi</b> Theme	<b><i>"Stakeholder mapping"</i></b> Multi stakeholder platform coordination and governance at sub-national level
<b>Nigeria</b> Theme	<b><i>"Improving nutrition through policy implementation at all levels"</i></b> Policy and advocacy at sub-national level
<b>Rwanda</b> Theme	<b><i>"Enhancing faith based organizations to promote nutrition behaviour change"</i></b> Communication and social mobilisation for behavioural change
<b>Sierra Leone</b> Theme	<b><i>"Eat what you grow"</i></b> Nutrition and value chain, communication and social mobilisation for behavioural change
<b>Tanzania</b> Theme	<b><i>"Accountable district nutrition steering committees to scale up nutrition"</i></b> Accountability, policy and decentralisation
<b>Uganda</b> Theme	<b><i>"Nutrition budget line advocacy"</i></b> Policy and advocacy at sub-national level
<b>Zimbabwe</b> Theme	<b><i>"Strengthening of food and nutrition security committees in Mashonaland Central and Mashonaland West Provinces"</i></b> Governance and decentralisation

<b>Ethiopia</b>	<b>SUN CSA: Ethiopian Civil Society Coalition for Scaling up Nutrition (ECSC-SUN)</b>	
	Title: “ <i>Nutrition visibility and awareness through the media</i> ”	Main themes: Media training; Behavioural change communication and Social Mobilisation
	For more info contact: CSA coordination and Innovation plan focal person: <a href="mailto:Israel.Hailu@savethechildren.org">Israel.Hailu@savethechildren.org</a> <a href="mailto:metasebia.legesse@care.org">metasebia.legesse@care.org</a> ; <a href="mailto:tabraham@fhi360.org">tabraham@fhi360.org</a>	Overall budget: 5,500 USD (innovation plan 5,000 USD)

**Justification:** The Ethiopia Civil Society Coalition for Scaling up Nutrition (ECSC-SUN) has media sensitisation as one of its priorities, in order to put nutrition higher up the public and political agenda. Despite the efforts made by ECSC-SUN to include nutrition in the media agenda, the communication material developed have not been used in the nutrition sector properly. To respond to this challenge, the Innovation Plan focuses on strengthening the capacities of journalists and editors to recognise and report evidence-based nutrition messages, with a specific focus on reaching pregnant women and lactating mothers.

**Expected results:** Nutrition becomes a higher priority for the media, and formally recognised in media plans. Increased quantity and quality of nutrition-related messages reported by the media outside the health sector – for instance in reporting on agriculture, livestock and fisheries, energy, education, social inclusion and others. Targeted beneficiaries: 30 editors (multi-sectorial) and 13 media journalists (1 for each media outlet).

**Innovation and intervention:** ECSC-SUN’s objective focuses on creating awareness and creating demand for nutrition services (“right to food”) through the media. The innovation plan will strengthen the ongoing training of journalists and collaboration with various media houses at Regional level. ECSC-SUN will introduce an innovative ‘media award, which proved to be a powerful tool in other countries (e.g. Tanzania, Zambia) to catalyze the interest of the media and result in high-quality coverage relating to nutrition (eg 1,000 Days). This plan will encourage media houses to assign or delegate a correspondent who is trained and informed about key nutrition information and practices at the community level. This will improve the quality of nutrition messages covered by the media and increase their focus on child and maternal nutrition.



<b>Kenya</b>	<b>SUN Civil Society Alliance: Kenya SUN Civil Society Alliance</b>	
	Title: “ <i>Mainstreaming nutrition as a multi-sectoral agenda in Mombasa county</i> ”	Main theme: Multi-stakeholder platform coordination and governance at subnational level
	For more info contact IP focal person: <a href="mailto:gogolla@InternationalMedicalCorps.org">gogolla@InternationalMedicalCorps.org</a> CSA Kenya coordination: <a href="mailto:George.ouma@dswkenya.org">George.ouma@dswkenya.org</a>	Overall budget: 11,500 USD (innovation plan 5,000 USD)

**Justification:** Despite the Food and Nutrition Security Policy backing for multi-sectoral collaboration, there is only sporadic and unsustainable interaction between key nutrition-related actors in Mombasa county. The stunting rate in Mombasa county is 21%; therefore, there is an urgent need to link nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions and to address all forms of malnutrition by strengthening multi-sectoral coordination.

**Expected outcomes:** 1) Development and adoption of a common results framework for nutrition by all nutrition actors in the Mombasa county; 2) Increase of nutrition intervention efficiency and effectiveness [cost-effective, with no duplication, and with targeting of vulnerable groups].

**Innovation and intervention:** Currently, in Mombasa county, there is only sporadic interaction between key sectors including actors in health, agriculture and education. The Kenya SUN CSA aim is to facilitate the establishment of institutionalised multi-stakeholder collaboration and launch the Mombasa county multi-sectoral platform by the end of planned programme in the IP. To foster a functional Platform, the SUN Alliance will mobilise actors involved in nutrition and will: map all key nutrition stakeholders of the Mombasa county; develop the Terms of Reference for the multi-sectoral platform [with details of key roles and responsibilities of the different actors]; develop a common results framework and implementation plan. While working at sub-national level, the SUN Alliance will actively engage with the national Nutrition MSP who will support the initiative within the agreed national framework. A multi-sectoral coordination forum will inform the scaling up of good practices and ensure complementarity and reduced duplication. If successfully implemented, the Mombasa county multi-sectoral coordination forum will act as a learning centre for other counties, and facilitate replication and scaling up.

<b>Malawi</b>	<b>SUN Civil Society Alliance: Civil Society Organisation Nutrition Alliance (CSONA)</b>	
	Title: <i>“District stakeholder mapping”</i>	Main theme: Multi-stakeholder platform coordination and governance
	For more info contact Innovation Plan Focal Person: <a href="mailto:Bessie.Ndovi@concern.net">Bessie.Ndovi@concern.net</a> CSA coordination: Tisungeni Zimpita <a href="mailto:Tisungeni.Zimpita@concern.net">Tisungeni.Zimpita@concern.net</a>	Overall budget: 5,000 USD (innovation plan 5,000 USD)

**Justification:** In Malawi, nutrition stakeholders and interventions have been identified at the national level, while at district level this information is still fragmented. In this context, the stakeholder mapping would help districts to identify the key actors and interventions operating at the local level, their coverage [geographical and of beneficiaries] and help them to effectively allocate resources and support existing efforts to reduce malnutrition.

**Expected outcomes:** Greater effectiveness and efficiency of nutrition interventions thanks to improved multi-stakeholder coordination and planning in the mapped districts. Availability of a comprehensive database of all nutrition stakeholders in Nsanje and Zomba districts is produced by June 2017.

**Innovation and intervention:** Nutrition stakeholder mapping at district level in Malawi does not provide segregated data on where different stakeholders are operating, the type of operations, the duration of their projects, or the level of resources being channeled to nutrition. The new initiative proposed in the IP will assist districts to map the missing information. Conducting stakeholder mapping in such detailed way will inform programming and improve coordination of nutrition interventions at the district level. CSONA plans carry out the data collection and dissemination and lead dialogue using the multi-stakeholder platform to improve the coordination and planning.

<b>Nigeria</b>	<b>SUN Civil Society Alliance: Civil Society Scaling up Nutrition in Nigeria (CS-SUNN)</b>	
	Title: <i>“Improving nutrition through policy implementation at all levels”</i>	Main theme: Policy review and evidence-based advocacy at subnational level
	For more info contact CS-SUNN coordinator and IP focal person: <a href="mailto:beateluk@gmail.com">beateluk@gmail.com</a> ; CS-SUNN Chairperson: Nnam Ngozi, <a href="mailto:ngnnam@yahoo.com">ngnnam@yahoo.com</a>	Overall budget: 44,100 USD (innovation plan 5,000 USD)

**Justification:** Nigeria has a National Policy on Food and Nutrition (NPFN) in place, as well as sectoral policies and plans and a coordinating structure. Nutrition desks and designated nutrition desk officers are available in sectoral ministries. Despite these enabling factors, coordination of food and nutrition activities is still a great challenge. To tackle this problem, the Innovation Plan proposes to develop, through an inclusive process, key nutrition stakeholders with the aim of harmonising all the various sectoral plans.

**Expected outcome:** all states and their multi-stakeholder platforms are aware and able to implement a costed, multi-sectoral and implementable National Plan of Action for the revised National Policy on Food and Nutrition (NPFN).

**Innovation and intervention:** with this innovation plan CS-SUNN wants to enhance advocacy, dissemination and multi-stakeholder dialogue and coordination activities to effectively implement the National Plan of action for the NPFN. Some of key interventions are: 1) CS-SUNN will develop and use state-specific scorecards to measure the level of implementation at state and national levels, while also assessing the Knowledge, Attitudes, Behaviour and Practices (KABP) of policy makers in nutrition; . 2) CS-SUNN State Chapters will hold nutrition stakeholder advocacy meetings for the implementation of the plan in the focal states; 3) Policy dialogues will be held to identify potential challenges and obstacles to implementing the plan, and also to show that activities planned are drawn from the state specific plan; 4) Policy briefs and fact sheets will be developed and shared during these policy dialogues.

<b>Rwanda</b>	<b>SUN Civil Society Alliance: SUN Alliance Rwanda</b>	
	Title: <i>“Enhancing faith based organizations to promote nutrition behaviour change”</i>	Main theme: Communication and social mobilisation for behavioural change
	For more info contact IP Focal person: <a href="mailto:mbonyi.fiom@gmail.com">mbonyi.fiom@gmail.com</a> CSA coordination: <a href="mailto:venustemuh@yahoo.fr">venustemuh@yahoo.fr</a> <a href="mailto:rbutera@sunalliancerwanda.org">rbutera@sunalliancerwanda.org</a>	Overall budget: 6,625 (innovation plan 5,000 USD)

**Justification:** Due to the limited information about nutrition-related issues and policies, some religious representatives show a negative attitude or even resistance towards nutrition behaviour change, especially when it revolves around food consumption of some particular food or species. Religious leaders have a great influence on the local population and they could play an important role in disseminating better practices and behaviours to reduce malnutrition.

**Expected outcome:** 1) Improved collaboration and linkages between faith-based organisations and food and nutrition actors (e.g. health system, public and private sectors, civil society etc); 2) Increased involvement of religious leaders in implementation of and informing about food and nutrition policies and programmes.

**Innovation and intervention:** building on the successful experiences shared by the Sierra Leone and Kenya CSAs, the SUN Alliance in Rwanda wants to work with faith-based organisation to strengthen their involvement and collaboration on nutrition enhancement programmes. To achieve that the SUN Alliance members will work with diverse religious groups to: organise awareness workshops for religious leaders at national level on malnutrition issues; design nutrition education messages suitable to be delivered during prayer sessions; organise radio talk shows featuring faith leaders to disseminate messages widely; organise meetings with the National Faith Network and the main nutrition actors at national level to evaluate results and identify areas for further collaboration.

<b>Sierra Leone</b>	<b>SUN CSA: Scaling-up Nutrition and Immunisation Civil Society Platform Sierra Leone (SUNI-CSP SL)</b>	
	Title: <i>“Eat what you grow”</i>	Main themes: Nutrition and Value Chain, Behavioural change communication and Social Mobilisation
	For more info contact: Ramatu Jalloh (SUNI CSP SL coordinator) <a href="mailto:ramatujalloh@gmail.com">ramatujalloh@gmail.com</a> ; Victoria Squire (innovation plan focal point) <a href="mailto:victoria.squire@concern.net">victoria.squire@concern.net</a>	Overall budget: 5,150 USD (innovation plan 5,000 USD)

**Justification:** Despite the fact that farmers in Koinadugu produce vegetables and livestock, the district still has one of the country’s highest rates of malnutrition rate, especially stunting. The market-oriented agriculture that prevails in the region mean that farmers often prefer selling their products rather than keeping what they produce for household consumption. This innovation plan intends to tackle this problem by raising awareness of the importance of consuming locally-produced food.

**Expected result:** Targeted vulnerable groups in Koinadugu district will change their dietary habits and increase their consumption of nutritious, locally-produced foods. The changes will result in an improvement in their nutritional status. Targeted beneficiaries: approximately 2,000 people in Koinadugu, Northern District of Sierra Leone.

**Innovation and intervention:** SUNI-CSP SL will combine behavioural change communication with agriculture and nutrition-focused activities to promote the benefits of eating locally available foods. Through effective multi-stakeholder collaboration among local CSOs, authorities, farmers, religious leaders etc, SUNI CSP-SL will tackle the specific causes of malnutrition in the district, and undertake awareness, social mobilisation and communication activities to promote behavioural change of the population. Training selected “champions” and “master farmers” will also be part of the strategy, in order to ensure sustainability and set the basis for scaling up the activities to other districts.

<b>Tanzania</b>	<b>SUN Civil Society Alliance: Partnership for Nutrition in Tanzania (“PANITA”)</b>	
	Title: “ <i>Accountable district nutrition steering committees to scale up nutrition in Tanzania</i> ”	Main theme: Accountability, policy and decentralisation
	For more info contact: Faraja Kassim, <a href="mailto:faraja.kassim@panita.or.tz">faraja.kassim@panita.or.tz</a> Daniel Mtwewe, <a href="mailto:mtwevezmdj@yahoo.com">mtwevezmdj@yahoo.com</a>	Overall budget: 27,274 USD (innovation plan 5,000 USD)

**Justification:** In Tanzania, few councils have District Nutrition Steering Committees [DNSCs] operating; within council areas, Ward Development Committees [WDCs] are not appropriately trained, and local and external resources supporting nutrition interventions are very limited. Functioning and accountable DNSCs are a priority in the fight against malnutrition as they will build district-level capacity and coordinate nutrition activities.

**Expected outcomes:** Kalambo district [Rukwa region] will develop functioning and accountable district nutrition steering committees [DNSC], while wards committees [WDCs] and village councils [VCs] will be supported to integrate the district’s agreed nutrition agenda into their activities.

**Innovation and intervention:** PANITA identified the ‘performance contract’ used in Rwanda as an innovation they could replicate. When introduced at village, ward and district level, these contracts will increase the accountability and effectiveness of the agreed nutrition-related plans. In order to achieve this major change, PANITA will build capacity in the district multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms. If this programme succeeds, PANITA expect the following outputs: thirty-eight (38) Performance Contracts/Terms of reference [TOR] executed at village level; one District NSC and 23 Ward Development Committees [WDCs] in South Western Highlands Zone of Tanzania; One District nutrition strategic plan with result framework in-line with National Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Action Plan [NMNAP] developed. A participative and evidence-led approach is an essential element of this innovation plan and it will be carefully documented. The results and the lessons learned will constitute the basis for scaling up and replicating in other districts.

Uganda	<b>SUN Civil Society Alliance: Uganda SUN Civil Society Alliance</b>	
	Title: “Nutrition budget line advocacy”	Main theme: Policy review and evidence-based advocacy at subnational level
	For more info contact IP Plan focal person and CSA coordination: <a href="mailto:James_Kintu@wvi.org">James_Kintu@wvi.org</a> ; <a href="mailto:rbaguma@healthuganda.org">rbaguma@healthuganda.org</a> ; <a href="mailto:ChristineM@gracamacheltrust.org">ChristineM@gracamacheltrust.org</a>	Overall budget: 18,500 (innovation plan 5,000 USD)

**Justification:** SUN Alliance in Uganda works in collaboration with the Office of the Prime Minister to facilitate the integration of nutrition interventions in district plans and budgets. About 10 districts have established District Nutrition Coordination Committees (DNCCs); however, the critical gap is the lack of a specific nutrition budget line for adequate allocation of resources towards the delivery of nutrition services.

**Expected outcome:** with training and capacity development from SUN CSA, local authorities from three districts will establish a nutrition budget line for their district. The main target beneficiary groups will be women of reproductive age and children under five years.

**Innovation and intervention:** the Uganda SUN Alliance will coordinate evidence-based advocacy activities with district stakeholders to demonstrate the need for a nutrition budget line. At the same time the Alliance will work with district-level authorities and staff to develop their capacity and create SMART nutrition budget lines. The aim is that nutrition budget lines would be integrated into district plans by the end of the Innovation Plan work. The alliance aims to ensure multi-stakeholder participation and focus efforts on capacity development, communication and dissemination of the results as well as on robust monitoring and evaluation. The implementation of the proposed innovation plan will provide lessons that will be shared with other actors to influence the budgeting process for 2017-2018, which begins in October 2017. In the long term, adequate funding for nutrition at district level will translate into improved delivery of nutrition services. With continued advocacy, the practice will be formally adopted by the Ministry of Finance for all of Uganda’s 112 districts.

Zimbabwe	<b>SUN CSA: Zimbabwe Civil Society Organisations’ SUN Alliance (ZCSOSUNA)</b>	
	Title: “Strengthening of food and nutrition security committees in Mashonaland Central and Mashonaland West Provinces”	Main themes: Decentralisation, MSP coordination, accountability
	For more info contact: Kudakwashe Zombe <a href="mailto:nutritionist.zombe@gmail.com">nutritionist.zombe@gmail.com</a>	Overall budget: 5,000 (innovation plan 5,000 USD)

**Justification:** In Zimbabwe, policies, strategies and guidelines for food and nutrition security are in place at national level, but there is still no results-based multi-sector coordination. In this context, members of CSOs can facilitate the dialogue among stakeholders and the implementation of policies and strategies out to make multi-sector coordination effective.

**Expected outcomes:** Improved coordination of nutrition activities in Zimbabwe led by members of ZCSOSUNA will lead to well targeted, effective and efficient collaborative actions to address malnutrition in Mashonaland Central and Mashonaland West Province.

**Innovation and intervention:** The ZCSOSUNA strategy focuses on achieving national level commitment while also strengthening dialogue, planning and coordination of subnational food and nutrition committees in two provinces. While at national level, the ZCSOSUNA objective is to appoint the First Lady as nutrition champion and gain political commitments from different ministries, at subnational level their efforts will focus on capacity building and establishment of “performance contracts” at national, provincial, district and ward level. ZCSOSUNA learned from the performance contract adopted by Rwanda, seeing this approach as an interesting innovation with the power to improve accountability, efficiency and effectiveness of diverse public, private implementing actors.

# The Learning Route in Rwanda - Final Report

Building civil society capacity to tackle malnutrition in Africa

## About the Learning Route organizers

**SUN Civil Society Network (SUN CSN)** is a coalition of 2000 civil society organisations including 39 country alliances working together to realise the right to food and nutrition. The network supports the delivery of nutrition policies, plans and programmes; advocates for improved nutrition and food security; and enables learning and sharing nationally, regionally and globally. The SUN CSN works with communities, governments and other actors in order to eradicate malnutrition

[www.suncivilsociety.com](http://www.suncivilsociety.com)

**SUN Alliance Rwanda** was established in 2014. Today, the Alliance involves 79 civil society members from both local and international CSOs and academia, all actively engaged in scaling up nutrition at country level, whether through nutrition-specific programmes or nutrition-sensitive initiatives. As part of its strategic objectives, SUN Alliance works to contribute to the design, implementation and monitoring of effective accountable national multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral policies and plans for scaling up nutrition. With this aim, SUN Alliance encourages and facilitates coordination among all Civil Society actors, ensuring alignment of their strategies, programmes and resources with national nutrition priorities.

[www.sunalliancerwanda.org](http://www.sunalliancerwanda.org)

**PROCASUR Corporation** is an international organisation that specialises in identifying, documenting and scaling-up local innovations and successful practices to improve rural livelihoods. Its mission is to foster the sharing of local knowledge to fight rural poverty. Through learning platforms based on different knowledge management tools and methodologies, PROCASUR fosters the sharing of innovations bringing global institutions and local people together. Since 2006, PROCASUR has promoted learning opportunities in over 30 countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean, affecting the lives and livelihoods of thousands of rural people across the globe.

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