

A conversation with The Power of Nutrition, September 8, 2016

Participants

- Martin Short – Chief Executive Officer, The Power of Nutrition
- David Eastman – Associate Director, Measurement and Evaluation, The Power of Nutrition
- Maddie Cleland – Associate Director, Investments, The Power of Nutrition
- Jack Castle – Associate Director, Investments, The Power of Nutrition
- Elie Hassenfeld – Co-Founder and Co-Executive Director, GiveWell

Note: These notes were compiled by GiveWell and give an overview of the major points made by Martin Short, David Eastman, Maddie Cleland, and Jack Castle.

Summary

GiveWell spoke with Mr. Short, Mr. Eastman, Ms. Cleland, and Mr. Castle as part of its investigation into The Power of Nutrition as a potential top charity. Conversation topics included updates on operations and the Liberia and Tanzania country programs, and funding.

Operations update

The Power of Nutrition utilizes the existing supply chains of organizations like the World Bank and UNICEF to increase access to 11 different nutrition interventions.

The Power of Nutrition is accountable to two key metrics: stunting and saving lives.

Currently, The Power of Nutrition finances investments in Liberia and Tanzania. The Power of Nutrition finances programs in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, in geographies with a stunting prevalence equal to or above 30% and at least 250,000 children stunted. The Power of Nutrition uses three main criteria to evaluate potential “hotspot” countries and investments: scale of programming and absorptive capacity, sustainability at government, local, and community levels, and potential for transformative change in the country’s health or nutrition systems. It is developing a pipeline of future investments in partnership with its two current implementing partners, UNICEF and the World Bank.

The Power of Nutrition currently has 14 staff members. They are split between three areas: Investments, Partnerships & Brands, and Communications.

The Power of Nutrition has reached the final stages of its application for 501(c)(3) public charity status.

Liberia program

In Liberia, The Power of Nutrition has committed to invest \$4.6 million over a 3-year period; this contribution was matched on a 1:1 basis by UNICEF for a total program budget of \$9.2 million. The Power of Nutrition has also committed up to \$400,000 for measurement & evaluation, bringing the total joint investment to \$9.6

million. This 3-year investment would serve as the first phase of a potential total 6-year investment, focused on improving the nutritional status of women and children, and embedding nutrition as a core component of Liberia's post-Ebola health system.

In Liberia, interventions funded by The Power of Nutrition fall into three main categories:

1. **Those aimed at prevention of stunting:** promotion of exclusive breastfeeding and complementary feeding, and use of micronutrient powders
2. **Those aimed at saving lives:** vitamin A supplementation (VAS) for children under five years old, treatment for severe acute malnutrition (SAM)
3. **Those aimed at improving maternal nutrition:** iron-folic acid (IFA) supplementation

Monitoring and evaluation

The Power of Nutrition is working with UNICEF to develop the program's monitoring and evaluation framework. The baseline data will be taken from the most recent version of Liberia's National Nutrition and Mortality Survey, which is being carried out using Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions (SMART) methodology. The Power of Nutrition is awaiting the survey's results, which are currently being validated by the Ministry of Health & Social Welfare.

Collecting data on severe acute malnutrition

SAM prevalence can be difficult to measure, as it is dependent on a variety of seasonal factors, including weather and harvest patterns and cycles of illness.

Effect of the Ebola virus on data availability

The latest Demographic and Health Survey conducted in Liberia dates back to 2013, before the Ebola epidemic. Thus, it has been difficult for the international community to determine the exact impact of the epidemic on health indicators nationally and in the most affected counties. According to UNICEF, funds that were supposed to be committed to nutrition may have been diverted to the Ebola response, thus there are concerns that the progress that Liberia was making in terms of reducing undernutrition could have been threatened. The Power of Nutrition, in partnership with UNICEF, aims to use national survey data on undernutrition indicators and mortality to make data-driven decisions to inform the implementation of the potential 6-year program.

Tanzania program

In Tanzania, The Power of Nutrition invested \$20 million in a \$300 million results-based financing (RBF) mechanism alongside a consortium of the following donors: USAID, the Global Financing Facility, and concessional loans from the World Bank's

International Development Association (IDA). The World Bank matched (and surpassed) The Power of Nutrition's contribution with an investment of up to \$24 million.

The RBF mechanism incorporates a number of nutrition-focused indicators, which are aimed at incentivizing the government to further prioritize nutrition interventions. These indicators are related to:

- Nutrition-specific interventions, such as IFA supplementation to pregnant women, VAS for children under 5, and behavior change communication (BCC) sessions educating mothers on good nutrition practices for children under 5 (e.g. growth monitoring, breastfeeding, complementary feeding) delivered to households by CHWs
- Nutrition-sensitive interventions, such as malaria prophylaxis, modern family planning, immunization, and incentivizing childbirth in a health facility
- Efforts to improve the quality of facilities, health-related human resources, and supply chains

The government and development partners are financing the program's inputs, and have committed to a \$2.3 billion national scale-up of its reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health (RMNCH) focused Primary Health Care (PHC) program. Up to \$44 million of the \$300 million in overall RBF funding can be allocated for nutrition performance. The Power of Nutrition's investment includes an output-based performance payout program at the primary health facility level in 7 regions and incentives for local government authorities (LGAs) nationally. The facility level RBF includes indicators for nutrition and RMNCH interventions which are paid based on outputs. The incentives for LGAs are based on a blended score of performance on nutrition, RMNCH, and quality indicators. At the health facility level, facilities receive payouts every three months based on the number of interventions they perform and an assessment of facility quality. For example, they receive approximately \$0.40 for each VAS dose administered to a child, and approximately \$0.80 each time a CHW visits a household to conduct a BCC session on nutrition education, including breast-feeding or complementary feeding. Facilities can allocate up to 75% of the payout amount to equipment purchases or other investments to improve delivery and quality, and up to 25% for incentive payments or bonuses for workers.

Monitoring and evaluation

Program implementation began in November 2015. Researchers collected baseline data across all RMNCH indicators in February 2016. In March 2016, the World Bank reported data from the government's Health Management Information (HMI) system on indicators in the program results framework, along with a narrative progress report on the RBF roll out. In October 2016, The Power of Nutrition expects to receive the program's first Annual Report, which will cover the period from August 2015 to August 2016. Staff members will likely travel to Tanzania in

November 2016 to determine the research design for the program's independent evaluation.

Funding

The Power of Nutrition aims to unlock \$1 billion in new funding by 2020, using pre-negotiated guaranteed matching agreements. To reach this goal using its current co-financing mechanism, it would have to raise \$250 million to release a further \$750 million from its co-financing partners. Bilateral funding agreements have been signed with the UK's Department for International Development and the Children's Investment Fund Foundation; the UBS Optimus Foundation also has a bilateral agreement signed as the first investor to The Power of Nutrition.

All of the funds invested by The Power of Nutrition are matched by The Power of Nutrition's two implementing partners, UNICEF and the World Bank. The Power of Nutrition is conducting research to identify future implementing partners able to provide matching financing and deliver programs with the scale and impact that The Power of Nutrition promises to its investors.

All GiveWell conversations are available at <http://www.givewell.org/conversations>