UN Network growing strong in Burundi

With contributions to the UN Network Secretariat from:

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A number of UN colleagues gathered in Bujumbura on 30 July 2018 to 1 August 2018, eager to view the preliminary findings from the UN Nutrition Inventory that was carried out in Burundi. The retreat set out to leverage these results, with a view to improving UN collaboration across planning, targeting, implementation and M&E. It was moderated by the Chad UNN–REACH Facilitator, who spoke about how the exercise has spurred transformative change.

FIGURE 3.
Excerpt from the UN Nutrition Inventory (2018) conducted with support from the UNN Secretariat and the Chad UNN-REACH Facilitator
The Inventory, a strategic exercise supported by the UNN Secretariat, is a vehicle for expanding UN Network membership to other UN agencies, and thus further mobilizing the United Nations System for increased nutritional impact. This is not only a win for nutrition but also for sustainable development, understanding that nutrition is a key driver. Inspired by the initial findings, the Burundi Inventory prompted four other UN agencies – UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR and UN WOMEN – to participate in the exercise. This has given rise to a second wave of data collection, which will integrate that from the additional UN agencies in order to obtain a more complete picture of UN nutrition support in Burundi. At the end of the retreat, three agencies announced their intention to join the UN Network in-country, and the fourth later followed suit.

The Inventory takes into account the wide spectrum of actions that support positive nutrition outcomes from animal rearing to breastfeeding education and counselling, prevention of adolescent pregnancy, taxes and subsidies to support good nutrition, Vitamin A supplementation, household water treatment, cash transfers and maternity protection, among others. These actions straddle multiple sectors, such as agriculture, education, health, labour, social protection, WASH and women’s empowerment as well as multiple UN agencies. Data initially gathered from the five participating UN agencies (FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO) were packaged into compelling visuals that illustrate gaps and overlaps, inciting action-oriented discussions about opportunities for increased synergies among the UN agencies. This, in turn, helps better equip UN actors to ‘deliver as one’ on nutrition.

In Burundi, as in other countries where the Inventory has been completed, these findings have helped to increase the understanding of what the UN agencies are doing to support good nutrition. A solid understanding of these singular efforts is vital for the collective UN Network, and most importantly, to reaching ambitious nutrition targets.
The UN Nutrition Inventory findings have since provided a basis for UN colleagues from nine UN agencies to develop a common UN Agenda on Nutrition, which covers the 2019-2023 period. This important milestone affirms UNN Burundi’s commitment to join forces and collectively tackle malnutrition head-on. Stay tuned for key insights about the common narrative in Series 2 of UNN Tales Be Told.