

Responding to nutrition in emergencies within the climate crisis

This is a summary of the following paper: *Nutrition in emergencies and the climate crisis: Global nutrition cluster scoping and options paper (2024)*.

<https://www.nutritioncluster.net/resources/nie-and-climate-crisis-global-nutrition-cluster-scoping-and-options-paper>

Climate change is one of the world's most pressing challenges, affecting up to 3.6 billion people in highly vulnerable contexts. The Global Nutrition Cluster (GNC) plays a crucial role in addressing this crisis within its humanitarian mandate, focusing on climate and weather shocks and seasonality shifts because of their impact on nutrition outcomes and their underlying causes. The GNC also considers environmental impacts and greenhouse gas emissions in its climate crisis work, given how environmental degradation exacerbates vulnerabilities and the climate crisis.

The GNC has been refining its approach to nutrition in emergencies (NIE) within the climate crisis, establishing a Climate Crisis Working Group and recognising climate as a strategic priority in 2023. The GNC commissioned a scoping of evidence, priorities, and opportunities across stakeholders to enhance its approach to supporting country clusters, GNC

global partner agencies, and other global clusters in responding to NIE in the context of climate crisis. This scoping aimed to identify relevant opportunities for the GNC in the face of the changing humanitarian landscape due to the increased frequency and severity of extreme weather events, emerging risks like disease outbreaks, and the complex relationship between nutrition and the climate crisis.

The scoping includes an initial articulation of a climate rationale for the GNC's approach, identifying action areas for climate crisis and NIE work and providing an overview of stakeholder needs and capacities. GNC stakeholders emphasised the importance of addressing this issue. Critical bottlenecks were identified, including existing challenges in NIE response, low government priority of the climate crisis, limited capacity to integrate climate predictions into country planning, and limited programming and coordination frameworks for climate crisis and NIE action.

To effectively address NIE in the climate crisis, the GNC supports a principled approach rather than a prescriptive one, described under four key areas. First, climate and environmental justice, anti-oppression, and localisation, ensuring the GNC's work addresses and does not worsen the unequal effects of the climate crisis on people's nutrition status and vulnerability. Second, adopting a NIE climate crisis lens so that climate crisis considerations are integrated into existing tools and approaches, for example strengthening climate risk in nutrition situation analyses. Third, climate-adapted NIE, whereby new coordination and programming approaches are developed for emerging climate-related risks, for example promoting sustainable, local solutions for complementary foods for children in emergencies and fragile settings. Finally, NIE climate and environmental impact mitigation, so that NIE programming mitigates negative climate and environmental impacts, for example in supply chains and waste management.

This approach leverages the GNC's strategic advantages, such as its extensive network, global reach, expertise in NIE and the climate crisis, and critical role in facilitating knowledge exchange and coordination across various levels and clusters. The scoping supports the GNC Climate Crisis Working Group's activities, GNC engagement with other clusters for the rollout of the IASC Climate Crisis Roadmap, and preparation for the GNC's next strategy.

Supporting infants aged under six months with feeding difficulties and disabilities

This is a summary of the following paper: *ENN, MAMI Global Network (2024). Identifying and supporting infants under 6-months with feeding difficulties and disabilities: An overview of resources and evidence. Emergency Nutrition Network (ENN), Oxford, UK.*

<https://www.ennonline.net/identifying-and-supporting-infants-with-feeding-difficulties-and-disabilities>

Feeding difficulties include a wide range of issues related to eating or drinking that deviate from age-appropriate norms, often associated with medical, nutritional, feeding skill, and/or psychosocial factors. These challenges can increase the risk of malnutrition and infections, as well as the onset or worsening of disabilities in children. Studies indicate that feeding difficulties affect a substantial proportion of children, with estimates ranging from 25-45% among those without disabilities and between 80-90% among children with disabilities.

Growing concerns about managing children aged under six months experiencing feeding difficulties or suspected/confirmed disabilities highlight a lack of attention and evidence-based guidance for this vulnerable age group. This has prompted the compilation of essential resources aimed at supporting both infants and their mothers. Disabilities are difficult to identify in children aged under six months and sometimes

only realised when developmental milestones are not being met. To address this, a document compiling key resources focused on children aged under six months and their mothers was developed to help consolidate existing guidance and research for mother-infant pairs. It is divided into four sections, with each providing a link to and brief description of a relevant suggested/highlighted resource.

First, practical resources on assessment tools are provided, with an emphasis on the significance of early detection of feeding difficulties or disabilities in infants. These issues can be overlooked during breastfeeding initiation and before the introduction of semi-solid/solid foods, when issues are more readily identifiable. Additionally, guidance is offered on providing caregivers with practical support to facilitate safe and comfortable breastfeeding. The section also provides general resources available that provide practical support for the feeding of infants under six months with disabilities and their



mothers. Resources specific to certain disabilities (e.g., cleft palate, Downs syndrome, etc.) are provided as well.

Secondly, a summary has been provided of some key policy documents related to disability. This includes organisational policies and guidance that have inclusive services and mainstream support in health and nutrition services.

Thirdly, a summary of the Disability Evidence Portal (DEP) is provided. This portal has been established as "a knowledge exchange platform that seeks to enable and empower decision makers with evidence-based knowledge to make decisions on how best to improve access, health, education, livelihood and social outcomes for people with disabilities worldwide... through acting as a repository of solutions, evidence and tools for strengthening decision-making within Disability-Inclusive Development."

This section also calls for more research on disability inclusion for infants. This group is often excluded from research, which has led to a lack of evidence on care required. Some of the reasons why more research is needed for this age group include the fact that they are more likely to be malnourished and that there are long-term nutritional consequences of disability and exclusion of children with disabilities in malnutrition protocols and guidelines.

The last section of the report provides a summary of ongoing initiatives that highlight the work that could be relevant to advance this agenda.