The role of double duty actions in addressing the double burden of malnutrition

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What are double duty actions?

“Double-duty actions include interventions, programmes and policies that have the potential to simultaneously reduce the risk or burden of both undernutrition and overweight, obesity or diet-related NCDs”
Where did the “double duty” concept come from?

6. There are opportunities for “double-duty actions” that can help address both undernutrition and unhealthy diets by promoting healthier growth in children’s first 1,000 days, healthier food environments, nutrition-friendly food systems, and more enabling political environments.
Finally, we have an urgent need for a clear list of actions that can do double duty, combatting both undernutrition and obesity/noncommunicable diseases at once. Although the synergies in approaches have been debated for more than two decades (FAO and WHO 1992; UNSCN 2006b), more work is needed to bring together actions that address both undernutrition and unhealthy diets in an internationally agreed-upon package. The beginnings of such a list are already taking shape. The analysis in this chapter and in Chapter 7 on food systems points to four broad areas where shared actions could help address both concerns at the same time:

1. political actions and strategies to motivate and enable nutrition improvement;
2. development of food environments that support healthy growth by providing diverse diets throughout the life course;
3. actions in the first 1,000 days after conception as well as during mothers’ preconception period; and
4. promotion of nutrition-friendly food systems.

Specific double-duty actions that could combat both undernutrition and obesity/nutrition-related noncommunicable diseases include counseling women during pre-
1. **Efficiency**
   - Obesity is rising as under-nutrition continues – so it’s *potentially* more efficient to take actions to reduce the risk of both
   - Financing & other resources could be more efficiently used & spent

**What is the rationale for double duty actions?**
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But currently, undernutrition and obesity/diet-related NCDs are dealt with by separate processes, financing, policies & interventions.
Perhaps this makes sense?!
What is the rationale for double duty actions?

2. **Biology**: There are links between early growth and development & onset of NCDs. *Thus actions that promote healthy growth will be, de facto, double duty actions.*
**But**, basic guidance designed to enhance early growth has ignored obesity risk.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group vulnerable to undernutrition</th>
<th>Measure of quantity and quality of diet</th>
<th>Foods included in the score</th>
<th>Threshold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infants 0–6 months of age</td>
<td>Exclusively breastfed (i.e. no other foods or liquids)</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Exclusivity threshold for individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infants and young children 6–23 months of age</td>
<td>Minimum acceptable diet (MAD)⁵⁰</td>
<td>Grains, roots, tubers; legumes and nuts; dairy products; flesh foods; eggs; vitamin A-rich fruits and vegetables; other fruits and vegetables</td>
<td>Indicator combines standards of dietary diversity and feeding frequency by breastfeeding status. Thresholds are contingent on these composite indicators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum dietary diversity (MDD)⁵¹</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>Score ranges from 0–7. A minimum recommended threshold is 4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Women’s dietary diversity score (WDDS)⁵²</td>
<td>Starchy staples; dark green leafy veggies (GLV); other vitamin A-rich fruits and vegetables; other fruits and vegetables; organ meats; meat and fish; eggs; legumes/nuts/seeds; milk and products</td>
<td>As above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDD</td>
<td>Starchy staples; beans and peas; nuts and seeds; dairy; flesh foods; eggs; vitamin A-rich dark GLV; other vitamin A-rich veggies and fruit; other veg; other fruit</td>
<td>Score ranges from 0–10. Minimum recommended threshold is 5 foods per day.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Low-income households</td>
<td>Household dietary diversity score (HDDS)⁵³</td>
<td>Cereals; white roots and tubers; vitamin A-rich veggies and tubers; dark GLV; other veg; vitamin A-rich fruit; other fruit; organ meats/offals; flesh meat; eggs; fish and seafood; legumes, nuts, seeds; milk and products; oils and fats; sweets; spices/condiments/beverages</td>
<td>Score ranges from 0–12. No threshold but 12 is highest.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Proportion of daily food intake among infants 6-23 months, Egypt

What is the rationale for double duty actions?

3. **Diets**: Healthy diets are beneficial whatever the nutritional risk. *Thus actions that promote healthy diets will be, de facto, double duty actions.*

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**Box 2.3: Elements of a high-quality diet**

Drawing the evidence together with an emphasis on adequacy, diversity and balance, current recommendations from UN agencies, governments and scientific bodies point towards the following choices for ensuring a high-quality diet for all people over two years of age:

- Eat a diverse diet drawing on as many food groups as possible.
- Consume diets that contain plenty of wholegrains, fruits and vegetables, fibre and nuts and seeds.
- Unless a vegetarian or intolerant to dairy, consume eggs, moderate amounts of dairy (mainly milk), fish and small amounts of meat.
- Avoid or consume low levels of added sugars, sugary snacks and beverages.
- Avoid or consume low levels of processed meat.
- Replace saturated and industrial trans fats with unsaturated fats.
- Eat low levels of salt and ensure that all salt that is consumed is iodized.
What is the rationale for double duty actions?

*But*, actions taken to provide food to address food insecurity & undernutrition have not done enough to consider obesity risk
“For Ghana, India, Kenya, Mali, Rwanda, there are no legislated or advised nutritional guidelines”
“... Biscuits were identified as a suitable vehicle for vulnerable populations as more than 50% of biscuits in India are consumed in rural ... Naandi distributed the biscuits to school-aged children via their midday-meals programme. Following the success of these biscuits in schools, Britannia began distribution of fortified biscuits throughout India. It is estimated that 2 billion packets of Britannia’s iron-fortified biscuits are now sold per annum in India.”
What is the rationale for double duty actions?

4. **Opportunity**: There are delivery platforms available through which actions & financing designed to reduce undernutrition could be designed to also reduce risk of obesity. *Eg*

- Health systems: Nutritional counselling for pregnant women; breastfeeding promotion and protection
- Schools: School food programmes and education
- Commercial sector: Marketing regulations; access to food retail
- Humanitarian aid: Food in emergencies
- Governance: Bringing together decision-making
What is the rationale for double duty actions?

5. **Collaboration**: It is a way to bring two disparate communities together in a non-threatening way.

**Double Duty** is about **Designing** actions **Differently** to address the **Double burden** **Deliberately** not **Doing** away with what we already **Do**
Double duty is not just about what we do, it’s how we do it

“Doing double duty is a process of considering all forms of malnutrition when implementing & designing programmes & policies”

Three levels of doing double duty
What do we need to know in order to design effective double duty actions?

- What do we know about the effect of existing interventions that could do double duty on the double burden?
- What do we know about how decisions are currently made about the actions to address the two sides of the double burden?
- You tell me!
Thank you
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