



# REDUCING STUNTING IN CHILDREN

**Equity considerations**  
for **achieving** the  
**Global Nutrition Targets 2025**



World Health  
Organization





# REDUCING STUNTING IN CHILDREN

**TARGET:** 40% REDUCTION IN THE  
NUMBER OF CHILDREN UNDER-5  
WHO ARE STUNTED

**Equity considerations**  
for **achieving** the  
**Global Nutrition Targets 2025**

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# PREFACE

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Equity is the absence of avoidable and unfair differences between groups of people. Social inequalities in health imply a difference in health status that is considered unjust and preventable through reasonable action. Health inequalities are related to social inequalities in nutrition through complex pathways, including policies addressing health and nutrition; the quality and quantity of food available and consumed; access to and affordability of nutritious foods of good quality; as well as the living conditions and circumstances of individuals and populations.

Reducing health inequalities and leaving no one behind is part of the Sustainable Development Goals (1) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2). Expansion of the evidence base on health inequalities in nutrition is needed to better plan, design and implement public health nutrition policies, plans and programmes. Identifying and acting on inequalities and their drivers contributes to achieving the six Global Targets 2025 to improve maternal, infant and young child nutrition (3), as endorsed by the Sixty-fifth World Health Assembly (4).

This series on Equity considerations for achieving the Global Nutrition Targets 2025 (3) have two objectives. First, it aims to underscore the relevance of social determinants, health equity, gender and human rights in malnutrition, and the need to further advocate for their inclusion in nutrition actions at global, regional and national scales. Second, it aims to provide policy-makers and programme and project managers with practical and useful examples of evidence on nutrition interventions that face and address inequalities in nutrition. Throughout the document, boxes are used to present examples on the use of evidence for project design and implementation; multisectoral collaboration; and incorporation of social determinants, health-equity, gender and human-rights approaches in nutrition actions. This series has been designed to disseminate concise information to public health nutrition officers who are not experts in social and health inequalities. The non-exhaustive examples are contextual and therefore are not to be considered for global guidance. Current and updated World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines are available online and they are referenced in this document for this target on reducing stunting in children and in the other documents of the series for the rest of the targets.

***Reducing health inequalities and leaving no one behind is part of the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development***

***This brief is dedicated to supporting the achievement of the Global Nutrition Targets 2025***



## **TARGET 1: 40% REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN UNDER-5 WHO ARE STUNTED**

**Section 1** of this issue provides basic concepts about child stunting, as well as the prevalence, trends and magnitude of the problem.

**Section 2** provides examples on how socioeconomic determinants and inequalities influence and interrelate with child stunting.

**Section 3** briefly explores interventions that have been implemented to address child stunting.

**Section 4** describes the key areas that should be included in interventions to tackle child stunting from an equity focus.

**Section 5** underscores the involvement of stakeholders in addressing social and health inequalities while implementing public health nutrition interventions to tackle child stunting.

A table with a summary and entry points and key considerations for interventions is also presented. Next, a list of further reading and useful links is provided for readers who are interested in exploring these issues in more detail. Finally, a methodological note is included to explain how information was collected to produce this brief.

The information provided in this issue is aligned with and supportive of the outcomes and actions of the *Comprehensive implementation plan on maternal, infant and young child nutrition*

UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF  
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2016-2025

as endorsed by the Sixty-fifth World

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