

# ADDRESSING THE DOUBLE BURDEN OF MALNUTRITION FOR CHILDREN WON'T BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT A WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT, WHOLE-OF-SOCIETY APPROACH.



The foods children eat are affected by decisions in the education, urban planning, social service, health, food sectors, and more.

In South Africa, malnutrition is a growing concern, affecting people and the economy. Many children face a double burden of malnutrition – undernutrition and obesity – making it difficult for them to grow and reach their full potential. Join us as we look at a day in the life of 5-year-old Nosipho to see what she eats and what we can do together to ensure she has access to good nutrition daily.

## NOSIPHO'S STORY \*



My name is Nosipho, and I'm five. I live in Masiphumelele with my mom and brother. We share two rooms and don't have water or a proper electricity connection.



2

### AT CRECHE

**8 AM** When my mom drops me off at creche, we all get porridge with sugar before we start learning.

**10:30 AM** My mom packs me sweet yoghurt for my snack because it's the same as everyone else and I don't want to feel different. Sometimes when mom can afford it, I get an apple too.

**12:30 PM** For lunch, the school gives us pap and vegetables. I don't like this, but my teacher makes me eat it. I know it will make me big and strong!



12

3

### AT AUNTIE'S HOUSE

**3:30 PM** After school, my auntie picks me up because my mom is still working. She makes me 2-minute noodles because they are easy to store and prepare and use hardly any electricity. When mom gets the grant at the end of the month, she does a big shop and buys noodles on special in a large pack at the supermarket.



3



4

### AT THE SHOP WITH FRIENDS

**4:30 PM** Before going home, my friend Sizwe calls me to go with him to the spaza for his mom. She gives him a Rand or two to buy us a treat. The shopkeeper puts a box by the till for kids to stand on so we can pay for sweets and chips.



6

5

### AT HOME

**6 PM** Even though my mom is so tired after work, she prepares a meal on our gas stove. It takes over an hour to cook pap and sausages. Mom says dinner is cheap and will fill my tummy, which will make me healthy. I have vegetables on Sundays because mom can't afford them every day.

\*

1

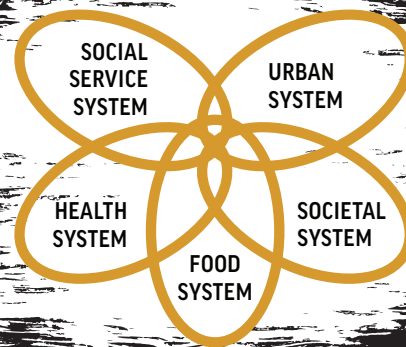
### AT HOME

**7 AM** I wake up, and my mom feeds me banana-flavoured instant pap. I like it because it's sweet and tasty and my mum likes it because it's quick and easy. The packet tells her about all the added vitamins.



## OVERLAPPING SYSTEMS

Children's diets - like Nosipho's - are shaped by overlapping systems that interact with each other to affect the **availability, access, affordability, appeal, and aspirational value** of food. These factors make it difficult for many children to consume a nutritious and varied diet. At the same time, environments can make it easy for children to eat too many of the wrong types of food and not enough of the right kind.



**BUT THESE DIETS ARE NOT INEVITABLE.**

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

We see from Nosipho's experience that there are many potential ways that local, provincial, and national government can act to affect these diets for good:

### EDUCATION SYSTEM

Invest in Early Childhood Development Centres (ECDs) as spaces to provide healthy meals and build healthy social norms among children and caregivers.

→ ECD → PARENTS



### FOOD SYSTEM

Enact policies that make healthier options more affordable, accessible and appealing while disincentivising options high in sugars, salts, and fats.



### SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEM

Dedicate more resources for higher levels of social protection. South Africa's Child Support Grant and meals at ECDs keep Nosipho from getting hungry, but it doesn't mean she is well-nourished. The Grant is not sufficient to buy enough basic nutritious foods, let alone more expensive, healthier options.



### BUILT INFRASTRUCTURE SYSTEM

Finance energy systems and housing that enable the preparation of healthy meals.

Additionally, improving water and sanitation, electricity, solid waste management and roads would make it easier for spaza shops and fresh food vendors to have hygienic stores with more fresh produce.

## TAKE ACTION!

**WE MUST LISTEN TO COMMUNITIES TO KNOW WHO NEEDS TO DO WHAT TO IMPROVE FOOD AND NUTRITION FOR CHILDREN.**

Provincial and local governments must create dedicated spaces and opportunities to listen.

**PLACE-BASED APPROACHES CAN ENSURE IMPACTFUL ACTION.**

Focusing efforts to address malnutrition in specific areas will mean our actions are meaningful because they are tailored to people's realities, especially children's.



**TO AFFECT MEANINGFUL CHANGE, WE MUST COLLECTIVELY CONNECT POLICY TO PEOPLE  
- TO THE LIVED REALITIES OF THE PEOPLE WE SERVE.**