

# Pathways to Better Nutrition

FINAL FINDINGS: PARSA

February 2016

**Madhukar Shrestha and  
Dr. Monica Biradavolu  
SPRING Project\***

\*Representing PBN Team:

Amanda Pomeroy-Stevens, Madhukar B. Shrestha,  
Monica Biradavolu, Kusum Hachhethu, Jolene Wun,  
Indu Sharma, Manisha Shrestha, and Robin  
Houston; with support from Deepa Banstola,  
Pratikshya Kisuju, Suzata Poudel, and Akriti Rana



# Who We Are



- **Strengthen** global & country efforts to **scale up** high impact nutrition practices
- **Prevent** stunting & anemia in the first 1,000 days
- **Link** agriculture & nutrition under Feed the Future

5-year, USAID centrally-funded Cooperative Agreement  
(Oct 1, 2011 – Sept 30, 2016)



For every \$1   
spent on nutrition,  
there is an \$18   
return in health and  
economic benefits.



# Nepal's Multi-sector Nutrition Plan (MSNP)

**Multi-sectoral:** Health, Agriculture, Livestock, Women & Children, Education, WASH, and Local Governance

To accelerate the reduction of maternal and child undernutrition in Nepal through multi-sectoral collaboration

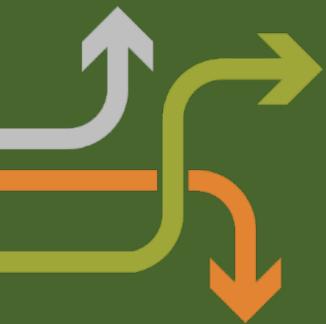
Provides an **Activity Plan** with responsible ministries attached





Results show that the MSNP has played  
an important role in planning and  
financing for nutrition.

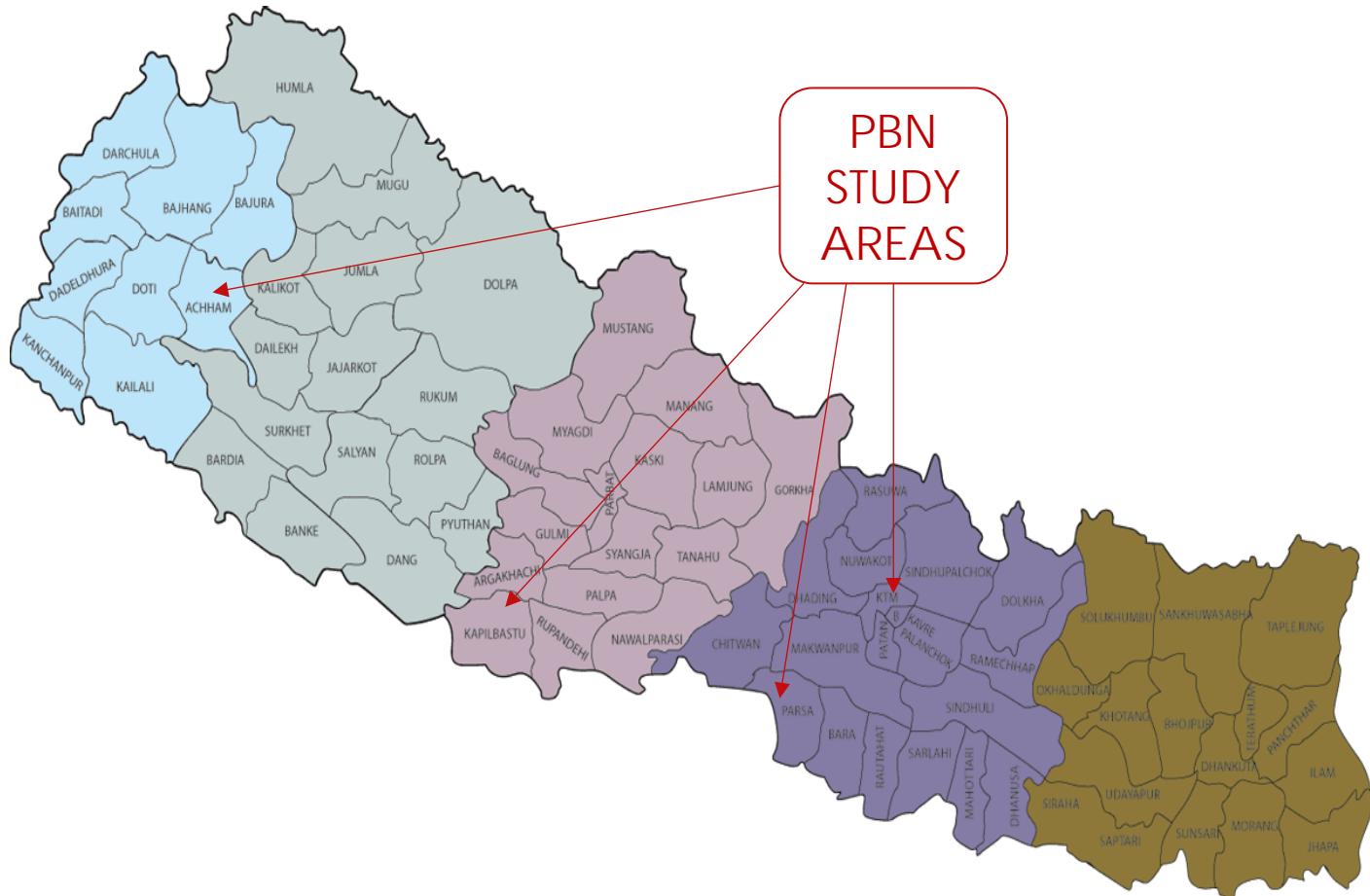




# SPRING's Pathways to Better Nutrition Study



# PBN Study in Nepal



# Pathways to Better Nutrition in Nepal

This was a case study on how various nutrition stakeholders in Nepal prioritize and fund activities to reduce malnutrition in the country under the MSNP framework.



# PBN Study Essentials



## Mixed Method

conducted key informant interviews, scanned news content, analyzed budget data, and reviewed secondary survey data

## Longitudinal

collected data over two+ years

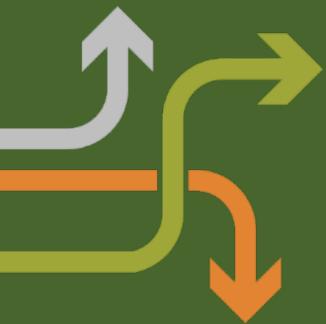
## Multi-level

collected data at the national level, in districts and village development committees (VDCs)

## Based on MSNP

all parameters of the study defined directly by the MSNP





# Study Methods



**INTERVIEWED ALL MSNP STAKEHOLDERS**



DDC  
DOH  
DADO  
DLSO  
DWCD  
DEO  
DWSSD



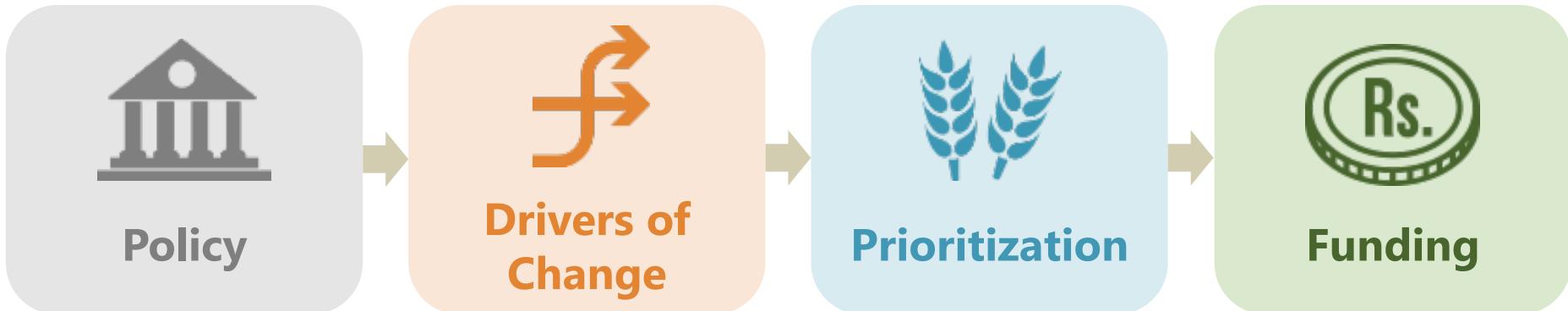
# What does PBN contribute to Nepal?

## PBN's Hypothesis

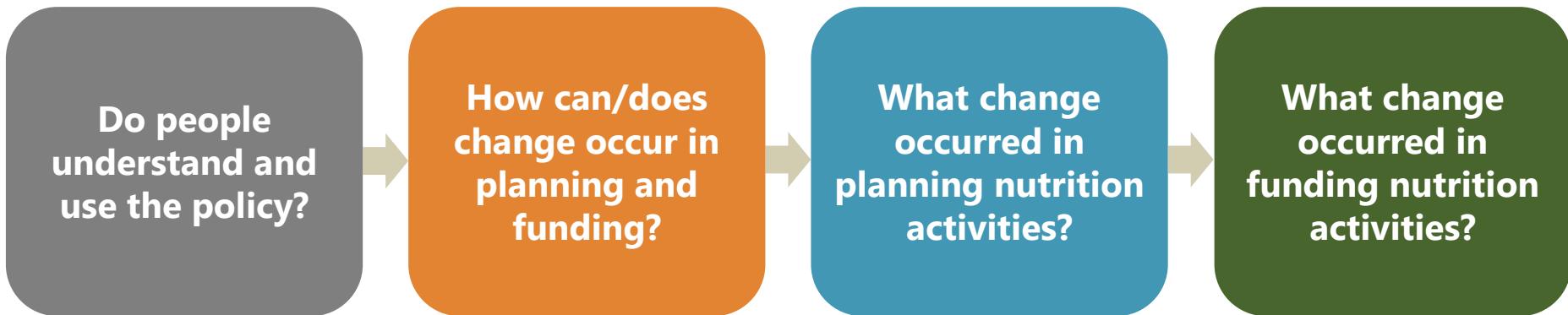
The MSNP will improve the priority of nutrition across stakeholders, which will then increase funding for nutrition.

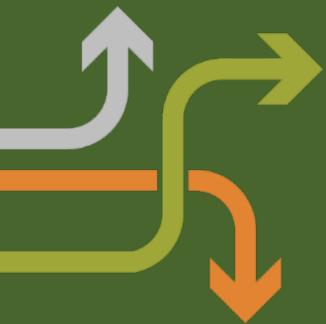


SPRING'S PBN STUDY TRACKED:



BY ASKING THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:





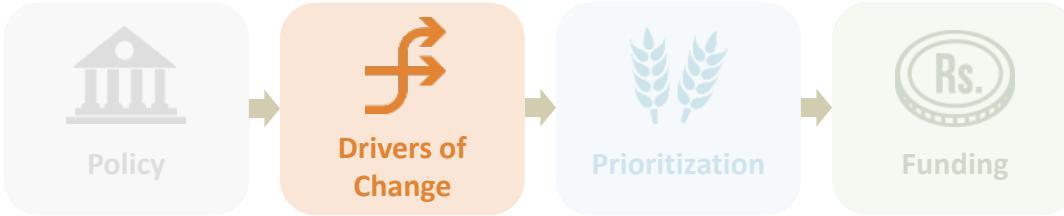
# Parsa Study Findings





Understanding of the MSNP was good among district stakeholders. They did not believe that the MSNP was new, but they pointed out several ways that the MSNP was different. District officials have provided training at the VDC level on the MSNP. **Those who attended these trainings had good understanding;** those absent from trainings need to improve their understanding.





## Key drivers affecting the MSNP in Parsa:

### Human Resources

HR remained a problem that future MSNP planning must take into account.

### Coordination

The MSNP led to improved coordination among sectors, particularly at the district level.

### Bottom-Up Planning

The MSNP was considered more sustainable than donor programs.

### Sustainability

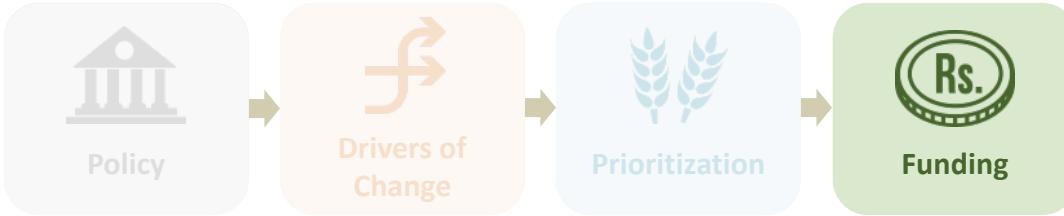
Bottom-up planning was as yet unable to live up to its promise to bring community needs to the forefront of planning.





The MSNP has contributed to improved perceptions and behaviors of government, donors, and UN groups related to **prioritization of nutrition**. All stakeholders agreed that prioritization for nutrition has increased in their work.





The MSNP has been very successful in prioritizing **funding for nutrition** through a separate line item in the budget.



# Parsa DISTRICT SNAPSHOT



# Context of Malnutrition in Parsa

The vast majority of households in Parsa are food secure.

“Parsa falls under Category 1 – meaning that it passes the threshold of 80% of households having food availability or access to money to buy food for the next three months.” [Donor stakeholder]

Parsa has good capacity for agricultural production

“Parsa has resources like soil, manpower, and markets. It is well suited for fruit and vegetable production and livestock business.” [Government stakeholder]



# To reduce malnutrition in Parsa, KIs said:

- Improve support and resources for poor farmers to increase productivity
- Better supervision for programs targeted to the poor
- Change feudal systems of society that lead to women's disempowerment
- Improve awareness on what to eat and food taboos

“There’s a common perception that green leafy vegetables should not be given to pregnant women. We have to work on awareness raising and behavior change.”  
[Government stakeholder]



# To reduce malnutrition in Parsa, KIs said:

Respondents remained optimistic that much change has already happened, and more will happen in the future

“Even just 5 years ago, every woman was in *ghunghat*. Now there is some change. When we go to the VDCs, women come out and talk to us. Girls are being sent to schools. Change in practices on good nutrition will happen slowly but surely...”  
[Government stakeholder]





Policy

# Understanding the MSNP



# District Government KIs

The MSNP was not new, but it was different because:

The MSNP had an integrated approach

“Parsa is a UNICEF district, so many programs on nutrition are already implemented here. Before MSNP, the majority of stakeholders had the concept that nutrition is the work of the health sector alone. But we have to know the underlying causes of bad nutrition, isn’t it? So MSNP cleared the roles of all sectors...” [Government Stakeholder]

With the MSNP, there was no duplication

“Before MSNP also every sector was doing nutrition activities but there were problems like duplication of programs and haphazard planning...”  
[Government Stakeholder]



# District Government KIs

The MSNP was not new, but it was different because:

The MSNP  
targeted  
DAG VDCs

“MSNP prioritizes the most disadvantaged VDCs, and within these VDCs, the target beneficiaries are the poor and marginalized.” [Government Stakeholder]

The MSNP  
planning was  
data-driven

“I found the MSNP planning process to be different. It is based on the data of current status and the idea is to predict for future. It was not like this before. Before, we used to make plans as per the already decided programs. Also, MSNP is situation-based and we have used log frame approaches.” [Government Stakeholder]



# District Government KIs

The MSNP was not new, but it was different because:

The MSNP made some respondents realize how their regular programs were related to nutrition, and the importance of nutrition-sensitive activities

“We realized that even though we do not give it the term ‘nutrition’, many of our regular programs related to women are actually about nutrition... In our society, the women will eat meals after feeding the men and children. We tell women in our training, “keep food aside before you feed everybody else to ensure something will be left for you.” Isn’t this related to nutrition?”  
[Government Stakeholder]



# Donors

Donor stakeholders had a good understanding of the MSNP's integrated approach

“My knowledge of MSNP is that all stakeholders should work together. Livestock for producing milk and eggs; agriculture for vegetables and food; WASH for safe water and ODF; health for vitamin A...if all agencies go together in a united way, we can achieve something... that is what I learnt from their discussions in the meeting.”  
[Donor Stakeholder]

Donor respondents stated that their programs were aligned with the MSNP

“MSNP’s program is similar to World Bank’s Sunaula Hazar Din program.”  
[Donor Stakeholder]

“MSNP is very much related to NeKSAP.”  
[Donor Stakeholder]



# VDC Stakeholders

- DDC provided MSNP training to VNFSSC members
- Those who reported attending the training had good levels of understanding of the MSNP
- One respondent also reported taking what was learned and spread the nutrition awareness messages to others

“I gave a one day training to others on healthy eating, importance of sanitation, etc. The participants were villagers.” [VNFSSC member]



# VDC Stakeholders

For some VDC respondents, nutrition was nothing new

“Our regular program is related to distribution of improved seeds to farmers to increase productivity, give trainings etc. While these programs are not directly related to nutrition, it has been 34 years that I am working. All these years, we have been telling farmers that being healthy requires intake of 350 gm green leafy vegetables. So isn’t it related to nutrition? We tell them not to eat stale food. That is also related to nutrition. Similarly we tell them to produce fruits.” [VDC Stakeholder]



# VDC Stakeholders

However, those VNFSSC members who could not attend the training did not have a good understanding of the objectives of the MSNP

This highlights:

- Need for continuous training
- Mechanism for sharing information about trainings and workshops with absentee committee members





Drivers of  
Change

# Key Drivers



Funding



Positive Change Toward Scaling-Up Nutrition



# Human Resources: District Level KIs

Current HR was insufficient to implement the MSNP effectively

Manpower shortage & frequent staff transfer

“Before, we had 18 branch offices and now we have 4. Can 4 people work where before there were 18 people working? It is not possible. Only people in the VDCs near us (in District HQ) take over services.” [Government stakeholder]

Overburdened staff:  
Not possible to add on new programs

“There is not enough HR to add more programs. We should see the success of existing programs before adding any more.” [Government stakeholder]

Lack of transfer of knowledge



# Human Resources: VDC-Level KIs

Current HR was insufficient to effectively implement the MSNP

Manpower shortage

“At the VDC level, PHCs and ORCs need to be strengthened. There are vaccines, but not enough vaccinators.” [District stakeholder]

“From livestock sub-center, 1 person looks after 60 villages. There is no time to do everything.” [VDC stakeholder]

Too many responsibilities for staff to handle

“I have to look after 18 VDCs. We have our regular programs also. I am not able to give time to this [MSNP].” [VDC stakeholder]



# Coordination: District Level

Coordination between sectors was good generally and the DNFSSC met regularly. Under the MSNP, coordination was better than usual.

MSNP coordination  
was generating  
ownership over  
programs:

“We had [inter-sectoral] coordination before too, but now we have strong coordination under MSNP. We have frequent meetings of the DNFSSC in which we discuss and share. Before, we thought other sectors’ work is their work, but now we have a common interest.” [Government stakeholder]

MSNP Coordination  
was bringing together  
sectors that may not  
have worked together  
previously

“Because of MSNP, coordination between sectors is improving. We usually work with health, women & child, and WASH, but now we are also coming into contact with agriculture and livestock.” [Government stakeholder]



# Coordination: District Level

Examples of good coordination:



## Coordination: District Level

However, respondents said that coordination can be further improved, especially between donor and government programs

Suggestions from respondents about how to enable better coordination and integration between nutrition-related donor programs with the GoN's MSNP:

- Reduce duplication: The older Food Security and Nutrition Network set up as part of a UN-funded program should be integrated into the DNFSSC
- NeKSAP data should be utilized by the DNFSSC to make better planning and implementation and budgeting decisions



# Coordination: VDC Level

VNFSSC was  
unable to meet  
regularly

“...we haven’t been able to call the meeting after forming the committee. There is a problem giving time for this. There are no elected representatives so there are a lot of daily tasks that fall on me...” [VDC stakeholder]



# Bottom-up Planning: District Level

Bottom-up planning broke down in practice

Programs were top-down, not bottom-up

“Most plans come from the top. e.g., IMAM program was a top-down program.”  
[Government stakeholder]

Plans were rarely made at the district level, let alone the VDC level

“The MSNP plans were made at the district level. The VDC was not consulted.” [VDC Stakeholder]

Allocated budget was never used as intended

“15% of budget should be given for agriculture but the political parties never allow it. It is used for road and bridge construction.”  
[Government stakeholder]



# Sustainability

The MSNP ensured sustainability of nutrition programming in Parsa.

- Planning structures created (DNFSSC, VNFSSC)
- Separate budget line item

District and VDC KIs:  
Government programs  
were more sustainable  
than donor programs  
because they were  
implemented for longer  
duration. Donor programs  
were short-lived.

“The result of WB’s programs should  
be seen in 100 days, but the MSNP’s  
results will be seen in 5 years.”  
[Donor stakeholder]

“There was a good [donor] program that  
provided cooking oil to girls with 90%  
attendance in schools. But that was  
stopped.” [Government stakeholder]





Prioritization

# Has the MSNP improved nutrition prioritization in Parsa?



# Prioritization

The MSNP has contributed to prioritizing nutrition at both district and VDC levels

“I have been so much influenced by the training that I always talk about nutrition and MSNP in every visit.... In *terai* particularly, girls get married early so I also raise awareness among high school students.” [District stakeholder]

“Nutrition-related programs are now in focus. Such as goat keeping for milk and meat, establishing the milk dairy which produce/collect 1,000L milk per day, cow, and buffalo keeping to have milk. If people will have good source of pure milk at home then they don’t have to buy contaminated and diluted milk.” [VDC Stakeholder]



# Prioritization

The MSNP led to district officials paying more attention to prioritizing nutrition at the VDC level

“When the different sector officials (from MSNP sectors) did *ilaka* visits, they found that local governments had not prioritized health. Budget was allocated for road construction. DPHO prioritized three programs to add to the list: full immunization coverage, acquire an ambulance, and increase institutional deliveries.” [District official]



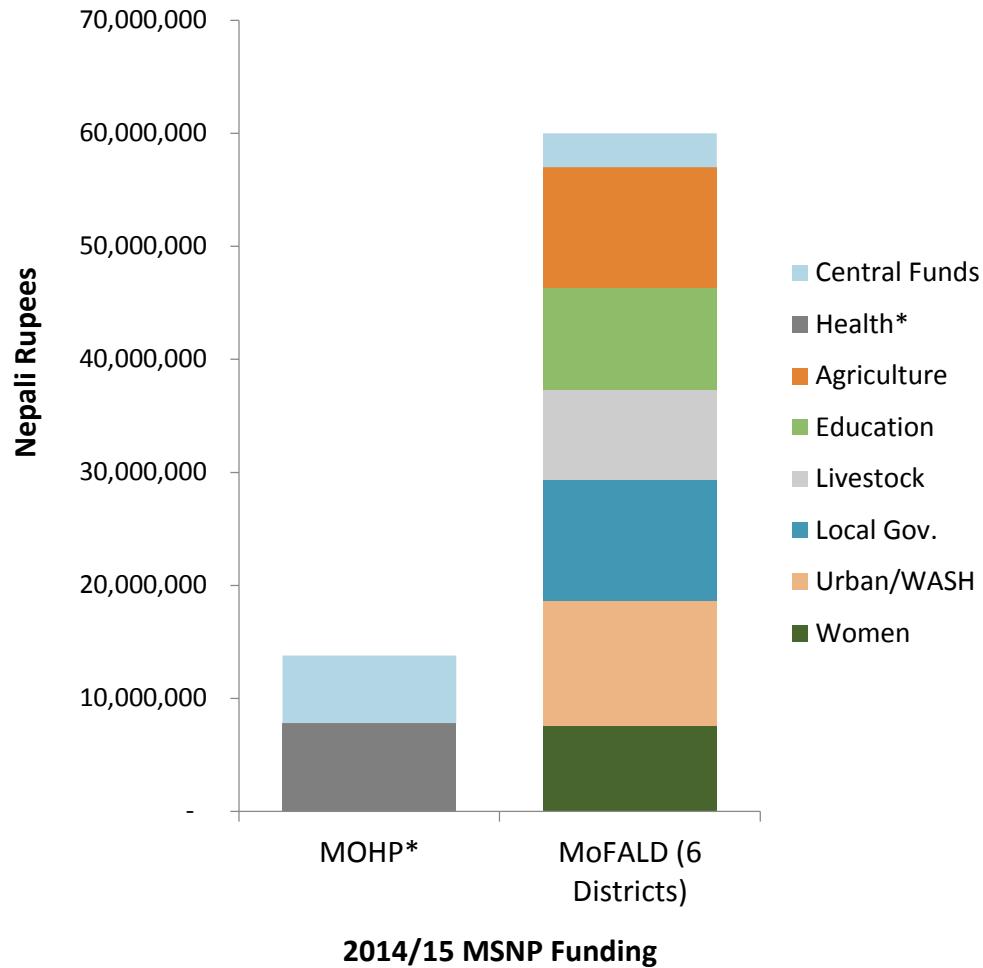


Funding

How were resources mobilized for these activities? How much was allocated? What was the flow of finances?



# Financing: The MSNP Line Item



“60 million being allocated for the MSNP is the major success...it is good that the money goes directly to the districts.” [National Donor Stakeholder]

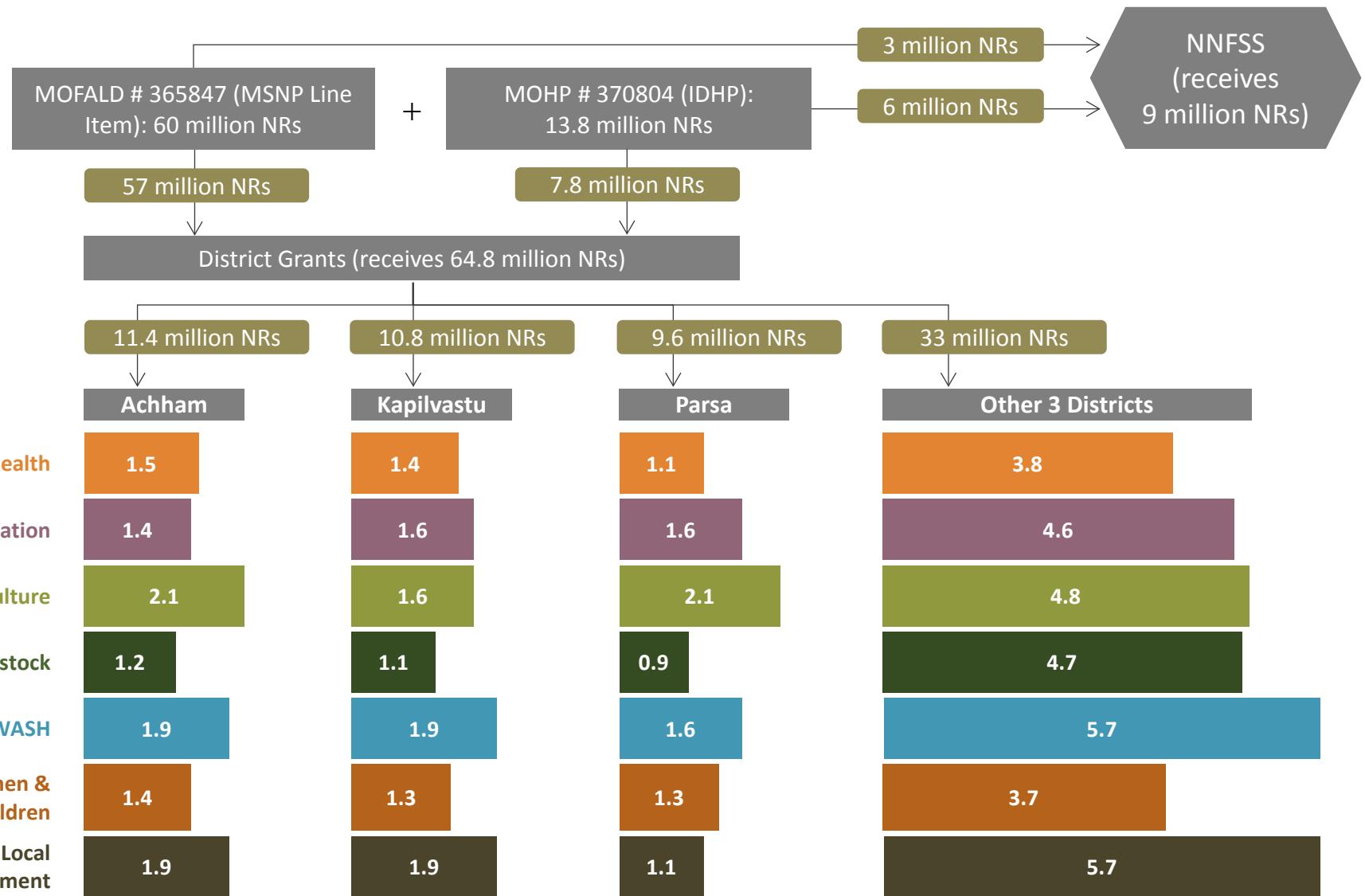
- Nearly 100% of this allocation was spent nationally in 2071/72.
- For 2072/73, the MSNP line item has increased to 100M Rs., but it is for a greater number of districts.

Source: NNSSC approved Total MSNP Budget Summary FY71/72

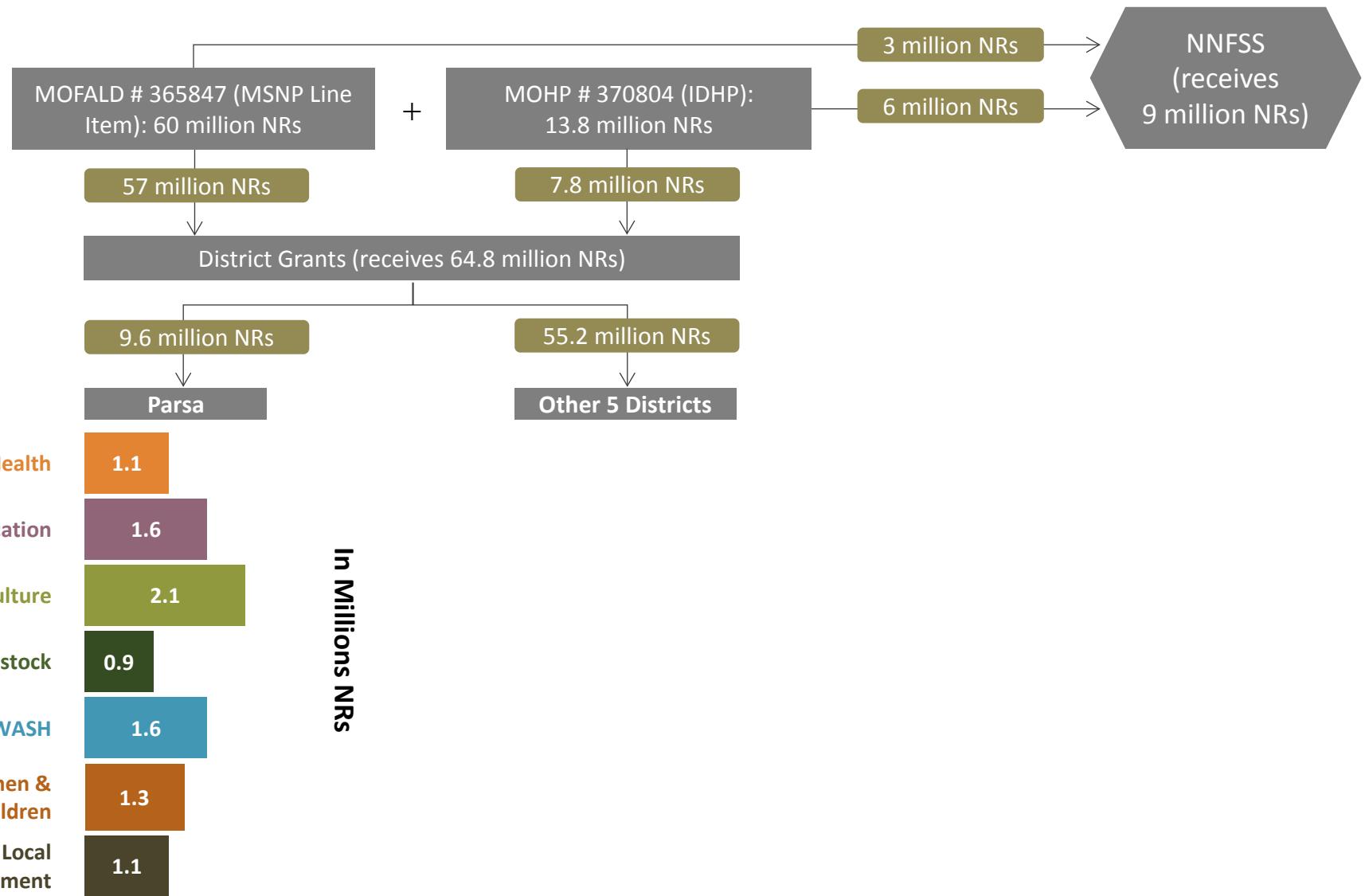
\*These are UNICEF funds run through the MOHP budget.



# Flow of Funding for the MSNP line Item – Example 2071/72



# Flow of Funding for the MSNP line Item – Example 2071/72

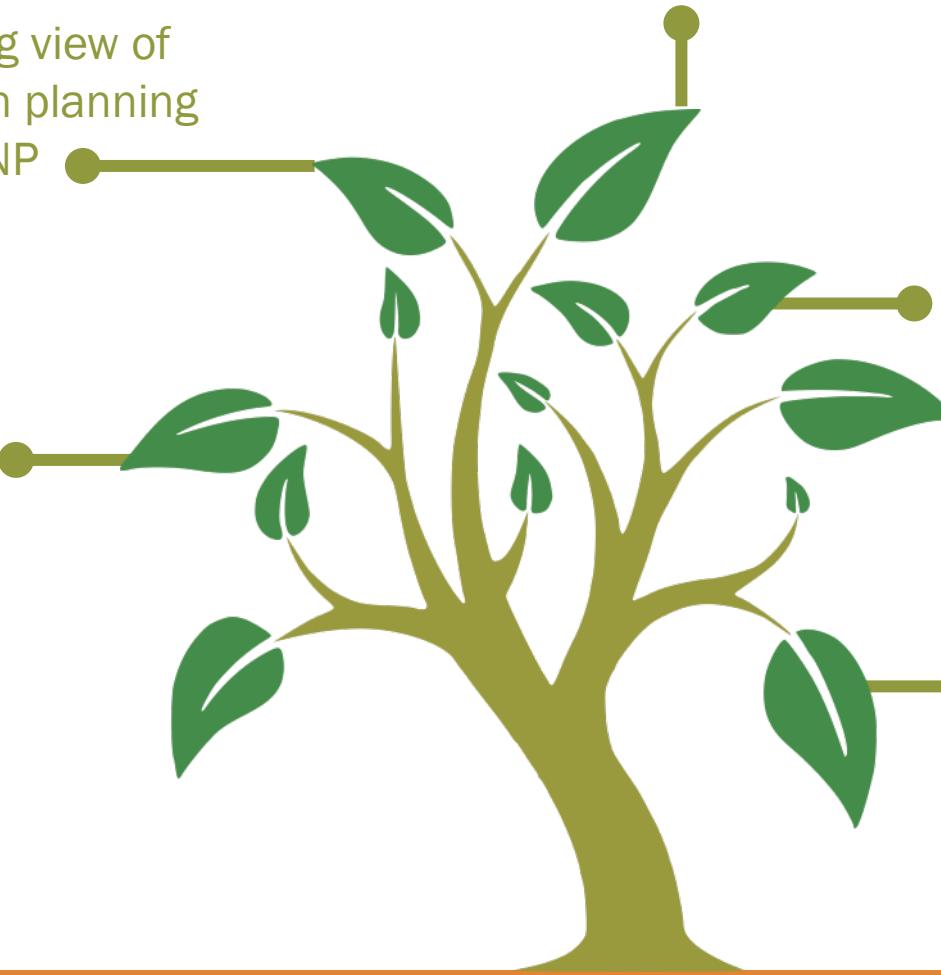


# District Nutrition & Food Security Steering Committee: Multi-sector Nutrition Plan Parsa Budget Allocation, in Rupees

District Office	Proposed Budget FY 2071/2072	Proposed Budget FY 2072/2073
DDC (Local Governance)	1,073,000	1,015,000
DEO	1,570,000	1,257,000
WASH	1,635,000	1,360,000
DWSSD	1,253,000	1,000,000
DADO	2,100,000	1,750,000
DLSO	908,000	1,000,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,539,000.00</b>	<b>7,382,000.00</b>



# Recommendations

- 
- #1 Take a long view of scale-up when planning follow-up MSNP
  - #2 Provide budget for transportation and fuel to help district and VDC-level stakeholders travel easily to VDCs
  - #3 Take severe HR constraints into account for future planning
  - #4 Use existing data, e.g., NeKSAP data in DNFSSC meetings and for future planning
  - #5 Avoid duplication of nutrition committees



# Recommendations, cont.

**#6** Provide continuous training at the VDC level

**#7** Improve bottom-up side of planning to ensure allocated funding is used as directed and meets community needs

**#8** External partners should increase efforts to align planned activities and funding to MSNP objectives

**#9** Programs should coordinate group formation at the community level so that the same individuals are not called to participate in multiple groups

**#10** Include nutrition in VDC budgets



**SPRING**  
is

Evidence-based.

Country-led.

Results-driven.

Improving lives through  
better nutrition.

This presentation was made possible by the American people through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) under Cooperative Agreement No. AID-OAA-A-11-00031, the Strengthening Partnerships, Results, and Innovations in Nutrition Globally (SPRING) project.<sup>1</sup>



[www.spring-nutrition.org](http://www.spring-nutrition.org)



**SPRING**  
Strengthening Partnerships, Results,  
and Innovations in Nutrition Globally

# THANK YOU!

This presentation was made possible by the American people through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) under Cooperative Agreement No. AID-OAA-A-11-00031, the Strengthening Partnerships, Results, and Innovations in Nutrition Globally (SPRING) project.1



[www.spring-nutrition.org](http://www.spring-nutrition.org)

