SMART Methodology: Advancing technical response capacity of nutrition partners

SMART Methodology is the reference and standard tool amongst organisations and governments collecting nutrition assessment data, both during emergencies and in developing contexts. We recognize that the availability of high quality nutrition data is essential in understanding the extent of nutritional needs of a given population. Over the past 10 years, SMART has supported the availability of timely and credible nutrition and mortality data, presented in accessible ways at national and subnational levels. Representative and accurate data from SMART is used in national nutrition and health programming to address needs and guide the response of governments and other actors. Hence, valid nutrition data and evidence make the difference.

Action Against Hunger Canada has been the inter-agency project convener for the SMART Methodology (Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions) since 2009.

This annual review presents the actions SMART has taken in 2015 to provide decision-makers with the ability to collect reliable and accurate nutrition and mortality data.
SMART STRATEGY 2015-2017

SMART supports key nutrition stakeholders by enhancing response capacity in emergencies, development settings and displaced populations, and in high-risk contexts with an absence of reliable data. SMART also provides support by ensuring coordination and dissemination of information around the methodology and advancing technical capacity to conduct SMART surveys.

This three year strategy for SMART, which extends from 2015 to 2017, aims to improve the quality of technical and response capacity of nutrition stakeholders, with a particular focus on Africa, the Middle East and South Asia. It also contributes to Action Against Hunger’s International Strategic Plan (ISP) 2016-2020 and the plan’s overarching goals that focus on improved program quality and impact through provision of timely and quality nutrition situation analysis and monitoring.

As a member of the Strategic Advisory Group of the Global Nutrition Cluster (GNC) since 2015, and the GNC itself since 2009, SMART actively coordinates with humanitarian organisations at global, regional and national levels.

SMART’s strategic plan centres on four core pillars of engagement, as shown in the chart below.
TECHNICAL COORDINATION
SMART engages global nutrition assessment stakeholders

Through continued interaction with the SMART Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as well as with the Global Nutrition Cluster (GNC) and SMART Assessment Working Group (AWG) members, SMART ensures that all stakeholders are informed of improvements and developments to the methodology, lessons learned and good practices are shared, and continue to be the technical point of contact for various stakeholders, a function that requires strong coordination.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2015</th>
<th>JANUARY</th>
<th>FEBRUARY</th>
<th>MARCH</th>
<th>APRIL</th>
<th>MAY</th>
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</table>

- East Africa Regional SMART Assessment Working Group Meeting
  - Nairobi, Kenya
- SMART Global AWG Meeting
  - London, UK
- GNC Working Meeting
  - Geneva, Switzerland
- South Sudan NIWG Information Session
  - Juba, South Sudan
- TAG Meeting
  - London, UK
<table>
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<tr>
<th>JULY</th>
<th>AUGUST</th>
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<td>GNC Annual Meeting (co-chaired)</td>
<td>NAIROBI, KENYA</td>
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<td>IPC Nutrition Classification workshop</td>
<td>HARGEISA, SOMALIA</td>
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<td>Regional FSNWG Meeting and National NIWG Meetings for Kenya, Somalia and South Sudan</td>
<td>NAIROBI, KENYA</td>
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<td>Canadian Network for Maternal and Newborn Child Health (MNCH)</td>
<td>MONTREAL, CANADA</td>
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<td>Kenya National Data Clinic</td>
<td>NAIROBI, KENYA</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPC Nutrition Classification Workshop</td>
<td>JUBA, SOUTH SUDAN</td>
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SMART IN 2015

SMART provides global technical support for nutrition stakeholders and shares technical improvements and developments to the methodology.
COUNTRIES WHERE SMART WAS ACTIVE IN 2015

- Afghanistan
- Bangladesh
- Chad
- Democratic Republic of Congo
- Kenya
- Malawi
- Nepal
- South Sudan
- Syria
- Yemen

COUNTRIES WITH ACTIVATED NUTRITION CLUSTERS

- Somalia
- SMART Regional Office

SMART Activities in 2015
Emergency Survey Support (ESS) is a means to provide remote or on-ground technical expertise for the coordination and implementation of nutrition surveys. This enables the production of standardized and high quality nutrition data during humanitarian crises or in high-risk nutrition situations with an absence of data. At the same time, it builds local capacities to conduct SMART surveys.

While many organisations have significantly committed to building their internal capacities for conducting nutrition surveys and support in data validation, the SMART Global Project bridges the gaps that still exist for this high level of technical expertise needed to guarantee response capacity in emergency contexts. With increasing numbers of natural disasters and protracted crises in various regions globally, ESS remains a flexible survey support function to address urgent and emerging field challenges.

MALAWI

Providing support to flood-affected areas

The Government of Malawi declared an emergency in early 2015 as heavy rains triggered severe flooding in 15 of the country’s 28 districts. Over one month, the floods displaced more than 300,000 people, with the destruction of agriculture having a broader impact on an estimated 1.15 million people nationwide. Experts presumed that the floods increased vulnerability of the affected population; however, the most recent average national Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) prevalence was based on several reports dating from 2010 to 2013. Although the lead technical partner responsible for supporting nutrition surveys had not been previously trained in SMART, updated nutrition information was required to determine the prevalence of GAM post-flooding, and to guide the planning of any necessary nutrition-related interventions.

In light of the emergency and technical gaps identified in country, SMART, in collaboration with UNICEF Malawi, agreed to develop the capacity of technical partners in order to conduct SMART surveys in flood-affected areas. In April, 15 participants representing seven organisations attended a SMART training in Blantyre, Malawi. SMART provided additional technical support for the survey protocol and questionnaire development, as well as remote support for anthropometric data analysis based on survey results.

SYRIA

SMART surveys in conflict zones

The ongoing conflict in Syria, which began in March 2011, has aggravated pre-existing nutritional concerns following diminished food and water security, sanitation, and health care services. The completion of a successful SMART survey in one governorate of Syria in 2014 indicated that, with proper training and logistics, high quality SMART surveys are feasible inside conflict zones.

Following the 2015 Syria strategic response plan, focusing on better understanding and monitoring of the nutrition situation, local nutrition stakeholders requested that SMART provides technical support for the planning, training and data quality assessment of nutrition surveys. SMART provided this support to the local organisations leading the surveys, building on previously existing capacity in SMART. This included Field Supervisor training to 20 participants representing five organisations. SMART facilitated an additional Training of Trainers (ToT) for eight individuals who were responsible for coordination and field supervision of the two surveys. This one-day training allowed SMART to provide further guidance regarding how to facilitate an enumerator training inside Syria prior to the start of data collection.

SMART also provided remote support to the project coordinator and survey managers throughout data collection phase of both surveys. Once in the field, continuous direct supervision of survey teams during data collection was not always possible due to security risks. However, mobile sharing of images allowed for constant communication between enumerators and survey managers to verify potential cases of malnutrition in the field. Results from both governorate surveys showed low GAM prevalence according to WHO classification; further follow-up surveys will continue to monitor the nutrition situation and Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) inside Syria.

1. IFRC (2015). EMERGENCY APPEAL OPERATIONS UPDATE MALAWI: FLOODS
SOUTH SUDAN

Up-to-date nutrition information in crisis

Conflict in South Sudan continues to cause deep suffering and humanitarian needs for civilians in large parts of the country. The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) is a set of standardized tools that aims to provide a “common currency” for classifying the severity and magnitude of food insecurity. This process requires consensus of the various stakeholders from sectors including agriculture, food security, water and sanitation, as well as health and nutrition.

SMART has supported the IPC process in South Sudan since 2014 by engaging with stakeholders at the Nutrition Information Working Group (NIWG) to ensure good quality nutrition information is available and utilized in IPC analyses.

Given the nature of the ongoing crisis in South Sudan and the importance of having validated nutrition data for both surveillance and programmatic purposes, SMART provided technical guidance to the IPC workshop in Juba, South Sudan, in December 2015. Unlike other ESS deployments, this was unique in nature due to the scope of activity, which was primarily technical support to the IPC process. The workshop included more than 30 participants from various organisations, including government ministries, UN agencies (WFP, FAO, UNICEF, WHO) and NGOs (Wvi & Action Against Hunger). Experts reviewed nutrition data from the Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring System (FSNMS) and SMART surveys and used them in the IPC analysis to classify the overall nutrition situation by state, as well as to develop key nutrition messages for the country.

3. IPC (2016). WWW.IPCINFO.ORG

RAPID SMART

NUTRITION SURVEILLANCE IN EMERGENCY CONTEXTS: SOUTH SUDAN CASE STUDY, FIELD EXCHANGE 50TH EDITION AUGUST 2015

Reliable nutrition data are critical to assess and respond to a crisis, but are often lacking due to resource and population access constraints. Monitoring change over time is particularly challenging.

SMART, Action Against Hunger, CDC and UNICEF launched nutrition surveillance activities in South Sudan in mid-2014 due to a deteriorating crisis there. Action Against Hunger launched the Surveillance and Evaluation Team (SET), funded by UNICEF and with technical support from CDC and SMART, to monitor the nutrition status of the population, provide the foundation for a nutrition monitoring system, and provide technical support to nutrition partners. Rapid SMART was the survey method used for surveillance in various counties given the high levels of insecurity. Challenges in undertaking these Rapid SMART surveys included lack of accurate population data, difficulties in access and logistics to remote areas, and lack of in-agency technical survey capacity. The implementation of the SET model in South Sudan convincingly demonstrated that high quality, representative anthropometry data can be obtained even in the midst of an ongoing conflict using the Rapid SMART method.
SMART LEARNING
SMART has a proven track record for providing high-quality technical capacity building.

KENYA
Master Trainer Course

Master Trainers are a sustainable cohort of technical professionals that co-facilitate trainings and build capacity in SMART Participants in the 2015 East Africa Regional SMART Assessment Working Group Meeting noted the need to strengthen technical expertise in the region.

Hence, Action Against Hunger facilitated its fourth SMART Master Training in March 2015. Facilitators held the training in Nairobi in March to increase the pool of SMART master trainers in the region. Led by SMART East Africa Regional office with support from Action Against Hunger’s Training Centre, nine participants representing eight organisations from across East Africa attended the training. By focusing on adult learning and participatory methods, the Master Training provided participants with the skills and tools to design and implement interactive training programs and reinforced their SMART skills.

Survey Manager Training

Survey Managers are responsible for planning and managing a survey from start to finish while ensuring diligent supervision of team members in the field.

OBJECTIVE To support WV in meeting the capacity gaps highlighted in the East African region and break their dependency on consultancies to provide timely, representative, high quality nutritional assessments.

- Nairobi, Kenya
- February 2015
- In partnership with World Vision International (WVI)
- 18 participants from eight countries

SOUTH SUDAN

OBJECTIVE To contribute to strengthening the NIWG through capacity building and technical support to partners with existing programs and the need to conduct nutrition surveys.

- Juba, South Sudan
- May 2015
- 21 participants representing 16 organisations

SOMALIA

OBJECTIVE To enhance the capacity of relevant Somalia delegation field staff in conducting nutrition surveys and provide assistance to partners undertaking surveys in their respective operational areas.

- September 2015
- In partnership with ICRC
- 13 participants from ICRC Somalia Delegation field staff (Departments of Health, Detention and Economic Security)
SENEGAL
A partnership between SMART and SENS

Recurring shocks, including food price rises, droughts and influxes of displaced persons, often affect the Sahel region of West and Central Africa. With the ongoing refugee crisis due to conflict in the Central African Republic, Nigeria, Chad and Cameroon, UNHCR, in partnership with SMART, planned a training in French for these regions. A synergy exists between Standardized Expanded Nutrition Survey [SENS] and SMART. UNHCR developed SENS Guidelines for nutrition assessments for use in refugee settings; sampling, analysis and field procedures for anthropometry in SENS are undertaken using the SMART methodology. SMART recommends the use of SENS tools for the inclusion of additional variables in SMART surveys.

Funded by UNHCR and co-facilitated by SMART, 19 participants representing seven organisations attended the inter-agency regional training held in Dakar, Senegal, in August. The Regional Office of UNICEF for West and Central Africa assisted in the organisation of the training and the provision of anthropometry material.

BANGLADESH

OBJECTIVE To improve the level of technical capacity to carry out nutrition surveys and enhance the quality of anthropometric data collected in Bangladesh through capacity-building of nutrition cluster partners responsible for SMART Methodology assessments.

- Dhaka, Bangladesh
- November 2015
- In partnership with Action Against Hunger Bangladesh and UNICEF and the National Nutrition Cluster
- 17 participants representing 13 organisations
GUATEMALA
SMART in Latin America and Caribbean: focus on chronic malnutrition

A learning needs analysis conducted by SMART in 2013 identified a lack of individuals with the skills to undertake nutrition surveys that collect anthropometric and mortality data in Latin America and Caribbean (LAC). Significant stunting prevalence exists in the region, with 48% of the population identified as chronically malnourished in Guatemala (UNICEF, 2014). Coupled with cyclical droughts, irregular rains and reduction of coffee harvest due to a fungal disease (rust), there is considerable concern that the worsening food security situation might affect the nutritional status of the population.

In February 2015, SMART facilitated a regional inter-agency training in Guatemala City, Guatemala, with 19 participants representing 12 organisations in attendance. The training strengthened the capacity of attendees and their respective organisations to respond to needs, specifically improving the regional technical capacity for nutrition surveys and enhancing the quality of anthropometric data collected in LAC. Later in March, Action Against Hunger implemented surveys in four affected livelihood zones of Guatemala’s Eastern and Western Dry Corridor. Survey results showed very high chronic malnutrition (stunting) according to WHO classification. The development of SMART guidelines for using chronic malnutrition as the main indicator of a survey followed these surveys.

“I think that both the design and methodology are good. I didn’t know SMART beforehand, but after this training I think I have a good understanding and could undertake a survey.”

“Very good methodology, exercises and flow of training provide a way to understand and place concepts well.”

– GUATEMALA TRAINING PARTICIPANTS
**By the Numbers**

**SMART Website Visits, Downloads and User Demographics**

- **Total Website Visits**: 27,349
- **Total Unique Visiting Users**: 17,810
- **Total Number of Unique Organisations**: 1,782
- **Total Countries Using Downloads**: 143

**Total Number of Downloads**: 16,755

**Downloads by Sector**

1. International NGO: 7,330
2. Academic Institution (Inc. Students): 2,664
3. UN Agency: 2,243
4. Government [National or Regional]: 1,123
5. Consultant: 1,141
6. National, Regional or Local NGO: 985
7. Research Institution: 785
8. Humanitarian Network: 484

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Online Users of the SMART Learning Toolbox

International Non-Governmental Organisations

ACDI/VOCAC
Action Against Hunger/Action contre le Faim (ACF)
Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)
African Development Solutions (Adesos)
Aga Khan Foundation (AKF)
Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED)
Alimentacion
Alliance for International Medical Action (ALIMA)
Amref Health Africa
Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC)
BRAC
Canadian International Medical Relief Organization (CIMRO)
CARE
Caritas Internationalis
Catholic Relief Services (CRS)
Centre for Affordable Water and Sanitation Technology (CAWST)
Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI)
Comité Colaboration Medica (CCM)
Concern Worldwide (CWW)
Cooperatieve voor Assistance en Relief Everywhere (CARE)
Cooperazione e Sviluppo (COOPi)
Cooperazione Internazionale COOPI
Coordinamento delle Organizzazioni per il Servizio Volontario (COVS)
Dan Church Aid (DCA)
Danish Refugee Council (DRC)
Family Health International 360 (FHI 360)
Feed the Children
FINCA International
Food for the Hungry International (FFH)
Foundation for International Development/Relief (FIDR)

French Institute for Public Health Surveillance (InVS)
Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN)
Global Communities
Gorta Self Help Africa
Health Poverty Action
Helen Keller International (HKI)
Help – Hile zur Selbsthilfe e. V. (Help e.V.)
HelpAge International
ICAP at Columbia University
iDe (International Development Enterprises)
Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation (ICCO)
International Emergency and Development Aid (IEDA Relief)
International Medical Corps (IMC)
International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC)
International Relief & Development (IRD)
International Rescue Committee (IRC)
INTERSOS
Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW)
Johanniter International Assistance
John Snow, Inc. and JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc. (JSI)
Joint Aid Management International (JAM)
Magnia Children at Risk (MAGNA)
Malaria Consortium
Medair
Medecins Du Monde (MdM)
Medecins Sans Frontieres/Doctors Without Borders (MSF)
Mercy Corps
Merlin
Micronutrient Initiative (Mi)
Musulm Aid
Norwegian Church Aid
Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)
Oxfam
Partners in Health (PIH)
PATH

People in Need (PIN)
Physicians Across Continents (PAC)
Plan International
Population Services International (PSI)
Proyecto CERO ONG Internacional
Relief International
Samaritan’s Purse
Save the Children International (SCI)
Secours Islamique France
Solidarités International
Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS)
Syrian Expatriate Medical Association (SEMA)
Tearfund
Terre des hommes (TdH)
The Hunger Project
Valid International
Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO)
Welthungerhilfe
World Concern
World Relief
World Vision
Zerca y Lejos ONGD

National, Regional or Local Non-Governmental Organisations

Access Development and Relief Organization (ADRO)
AFIA Santé
Aged and Children Pastoralists Association (ACPA)
Aide Au Développement Gémbloou (ADG)
Al Massar
Apanalaya
Asociacion Nacional Ecumenica de Desarrollo (ANED)
Association for Rural Development (ARD)
Association pour la Promotion de la Femme et de l'Enfant (ASSOPROFEN)
Asociacion Studio Paziente Immunocompresso onlus (ASPIC)
Athena Foundation
Bangladesh National Woman Lawyers’ Association (BNWLA)

Catholic Church
Integrated Community-based Development Program (CC-IDP)
Center for Development and Disaster Management Support Service (CCDMASS)
Center of Excellence for Rural Development (CERD)
Centre de Soante de Reference (CSSP)
Centre for Children’s Happiness (CCH)
Centre for Counselling, Nutrition and Health Care (COUNSENUTH)
Centre for Disability in Development (CCD)
Centre pour la Promotion du Monde Rural (CEPRON)
Charitable Society for Social Welfare (CSSW)
Child Rights and You (CRY)
Child Rights Connect (CRC)
Child Rights Foundation (CRF)
Chuny Thulo Group (CTG)
Community Appraisal & Motivation Programme (CAMP)
Community Children Organisation (CCOCO)
Community Health and Development (CHADO)
Cooperespana
Deepak Foundation
Development Fund (DF)
Disaster Prevention and Food Security Programme and Coordination Office (DPFPSCO)
Disaster Risk Management and Food Security Sector (DRMFSS)
Ekjut
Emencine Associates for Social Development (EASD)
Fight Hunger Foundation
First Step Cambodia
FOCUS 1000
Graines de Paix
Hand in Hand India
HANDS Pakistan
Health for All Foundation (HAF)
Health Link
Health Organization for Mindanao (HOM)
Health Oriented Preventive Education (HOPE)
Health Reform Foundation of Nigeria (HERFON)
Health Strategy and Delivery Foundation (HSDF)
HealthNet Afghanistan
Jan Sahas Social Development Society
John Dau Foundation
KISIMA Peace and development
Mother and Children Development Aid (MACDA)
Nepali Technical Assistance Group (NTAG)
Nile Hope
Philani
PIACT Bangladesh
Protecting Families Against HIV/AIDS (PRAFA)
Pure Heart Foundation (PHF)
Rafiki Wa Maendeleo Trust (RWMT)
Rajiv Gandhi Charitable Trust (RGCT)
Rangpur Dinaipur Rural Service (RDPRS)
Rebecca Mbok Foundation (RMF)
Reliance Foundation
Replicative and Child Health Alliance (RACHA)
Rescue Initiative–South Sudan
Shabelle Relief and Development Organization (SHARDO)
Shanti Ashram
SHBC Swaziland
Society Against Hiv/AIDS Protecting Families (SAPPHIF)
Solidarités International
Somali Rehabilitation Foundation (SAMS)
Solutions For Humanity (SneHA)
Universal Network for Knowledge & Empowerment Agency (UNKEA)
Unnayan Onneshan
Urban Poverty (PNPM Perkotaan)
WARDI Relief & Development Initiatives
Women Peacemakers Program (WPP)

UN Organisations

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit–Somalia (PSNAU)
International Organization for Migration (IOM)
United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)
United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR)
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)
World Bank
World Food Programme (WFP)
World Health Organization (WHO)

Academic Institutions

Abia State University
Addis Ababa University
Aga Khan University
Ahfad University
Ahfad University
For Women
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria
Air Shams University
Aksum University
American University of Beirut
SMART thanks all of the organizations, agencies, partners and more who have accessed our various survey planning tools.
Acknowledgements

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