

Management of Acute Malnutrition in Infants amongst Refugee Population in Ethiopia – Steps Taken to Date and Lessons Learned (GOAL Ireland)

- **The original problem or knowledge gap**

Infants below six months are overlooked when it comes to identification and management of acute malnutrition. They are excluded from nutrition surveys and community screening resulting in late presentation for treatment.

- **Outline of the response/solution sought/action taken**

GOAL is working with South Sudanese refugees in Ethiopia to provide services for acutely malnourished infants including integration of the CMAMI guideline into primary healthcare services, establishment of mother to mother support groups, community level screening using weight for length Z-score for identification and referrals of cases of acute malnutrition.

- **Lessons learnt and recommendations**

GOAL is in the early stages of addressing MAMI needs among refugees in Ethiopia, however it is already clear that the CMAMI protocol is timely for health workers to work through. Remaining challenges include the absence of a case definition for MUAC screening of infants <6months which makes identification of malnutrition in this group challenging; a general lack of understanding of acute malnutrition in infants <6 months and resistance to including this age group in surveys and assessments as their inclusion is not considered 'standard protocol'.

Based on GOAL's experience to date we believe a more concise CMAMI protocol is needed. There is a need for nutrition programmes, as well as surveys and assessments to move away from the '6-59 month' target group to a '0-59 month' target group. Finally there is a need for a case definition for community level identification of this vulnerable group.

- **Next steps**

GOAL will continue to advocate for the inclusion of infants 0 – 6 months in surveys and assessments in refugee camps in Ethiopia and collect anthropometric information on all infants arriving in the camp <6 months to contribute to global efforts to identify and agree a case definition for community level identification of acute malnutrition in infants < 6 months.