

What is the level of malnutrition in your state?



**11
MILLION**

Number of children stunted under the age of five in Nigeria.

1 OUT OF **5**
EVERY

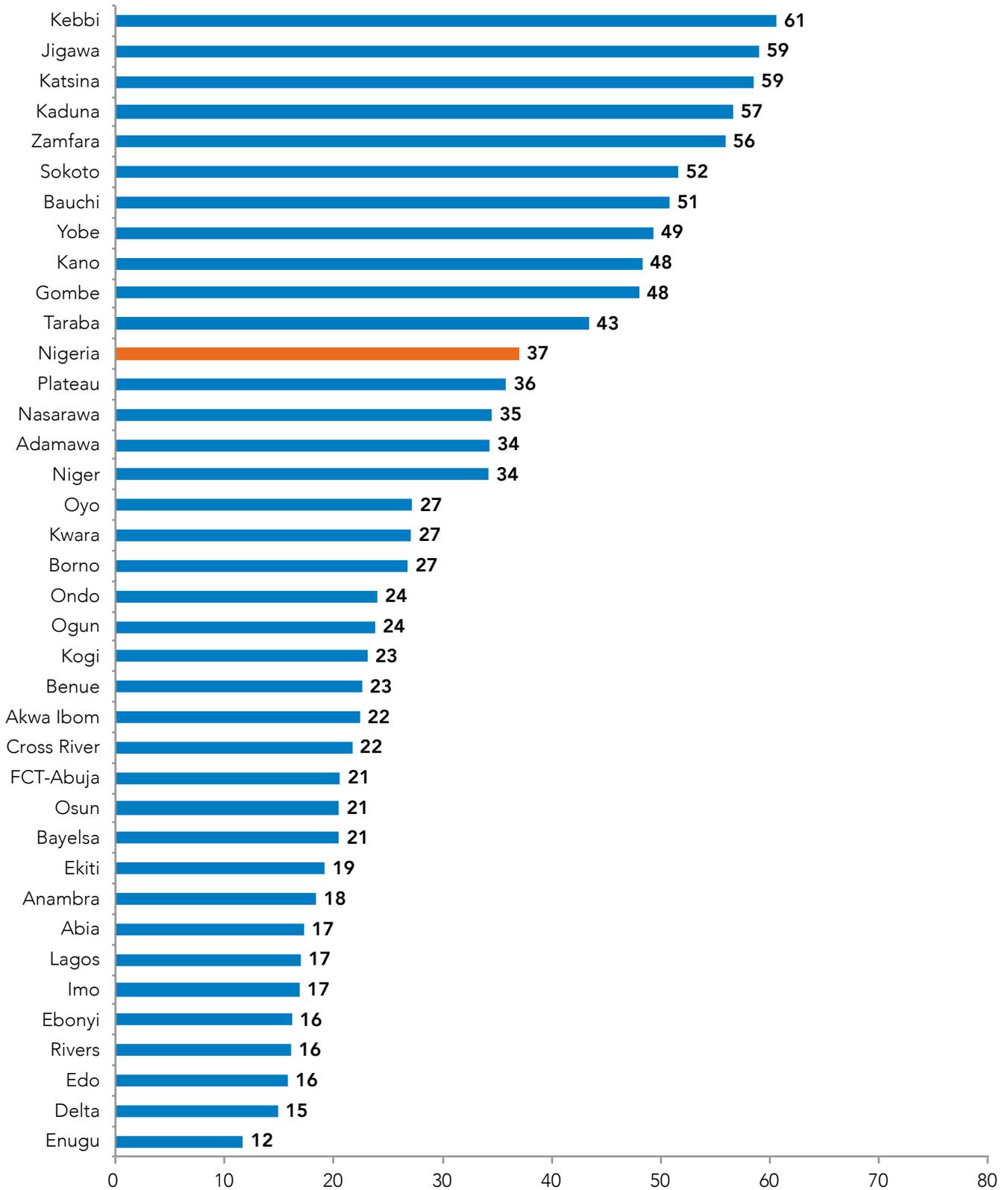
Proportion of children severely malnourished. Many won't survive to see their second birthday.

90%

Percentage of children age 6-23 months who are not fed properly based on recommended feeding practices.

FIGURE 1

Percent of Children Under 5 Who Are Stunted, by State



Source: National Population Commission of Nigeria and ICF International, Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey 2013.

What is malnutrition?

Malnutrition is a condition that occurs when people consistently do not consume or absorb the right amounts and types of food and essential nutrients.

What is stunting?

A main indicator of childhood malnutrition is stunting—when children are too short for their age due to inadequate intake of the required nutrients over a long period of time. Stunted children have poor physical growth and brain development, preventing them from thriving and living up to their full potential. With an estimated 11 million stunted children under the age of five, Nigeria is facing a crisis of malnutrition.¹

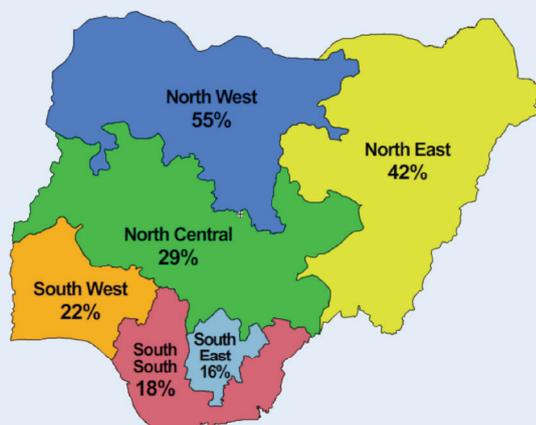
What is the situation across Nigeria?²

According to the most recent national survey, 37 percent of children under age five are stunted (national average), and 21 percent are severely stunted. Children in rural areas are more likely to be stunted (43 percent) than those in urban areas (26 percent), and the pattern is similar for severe stunting (26 percent in rural areas and 13 percent in urban areas).

Looking at the regions (see Figure 2), the North West has the highest proportion of children who are stunted (55 percent), followed by the North East (42 percent) and North Central (29 percent). But even in the South South and the South East, with the lowest percentage of malnourished children, almost 1 out every 6 children are stunted.

FIGURE 2

Percent of Children Stunted Under Age 5 by Region, 2013

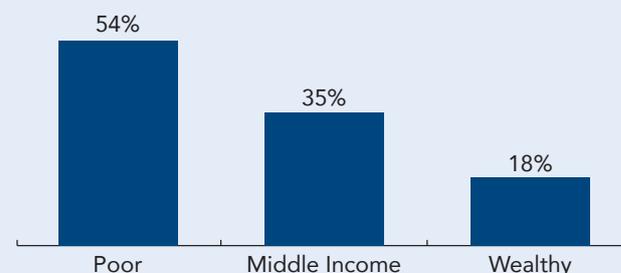


The latest survey data also reveals a link between mother's education and wealth, and stunting levels. If we look at the national average for mother's level of education, we see that stunting ranges from a low of 13 percent among children whose mothers have a higher education to 50 percent among those whose mothers have no education. A similar relationship is observed between household wealth and stunting (see Figure 3). Children in the poorest households are three times as likely to be stunted (54 percent) as children in the wealthiest households (18 percent).

FIGURE 3

Children in poorest households three times as likely to be stunted as children in wealthiest households

Percent of Children Stunted, by Wealth Quintile



What is the situation in the states?

At the state level, stunting varies widely (see Figure 1).

- Kebbi has the highest proportion of stunted children (61 percent), followed closely by Jigawa and Katsina (59 percent), Kaduna (57 percent), and Zamfara (56 percent), but a total of 10 states have about half of children under five stunted, including Sokoto (52 percent), Bauchi (51 percent), Yobe (49 percent), and Kano and Gombe (48 percent).
- Four states have about one-third of children under five stunted—Plateau, Nasarawa, Adamawa, and Niger, while seven states have an estimated one-quarter of children stunted—Oyo, Kwara, Borno, Ondo, Ogun, Kogi, and Benue.
- However, in the remaining southern states with the lowest chronic malnutrition levels, stunting is still a serious challenge, with about one in every six children stunted. Enugu state has the lowest proportion of stunted children at 12 percent.

References

- 1 United Nations Children Fund, *Improving Child Nutrition: The Achievable Imperative for Global Progress* (New York: UNICEF, 2013).
- 2 National Population Commission of Nigeria and ICF International, *Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey 2013* (Calverton, MD: ICF International, 2014).

Which strategies work to improve malnutrition?

The following four proven strategies can protect mothers and children from malnutrition:



Mothers should put babies to the breast in the first 30 minutes after birth and breastfeed them exclusively for the first six months without any other foods or liquids — not even one drop of water!



Mothers should start giving a sufficient amount of a variety of healthy foods such as fruits, vegetables, eggs, and meat after the first 6 months of life, along with continued breastfeeding for up to 2 years or beyond.



Mothers and children should have access to the right amount and variety of foods that are rich in vitamins and minerals, and be encouraged to consume them regularly.



Parents and caregivers should be given up-to-date information on infant and young child feeding practices, as well as the support that they need to feed their children in the best way possible.

What can you do to combat malnutrition in your state?

There is a role for everyone in combatting nutrition. You can:

- Raise awareness about Nigeria's silent crisis of malnutrition.
- Reach out to colleagues in all sectors, such as health, agriculture, finance, education, and women's affairs, and work together to fight malnutrition.
- Take every opportunity to integrate nutrition into state-level program plans and strategies across sectors.
- Advocate for an adequate and dedicated budget line for nutrition at the state and local government area (LGA) levels in all sectors.
- Just do it! – fund or implement programs that use proven strategies to reduce malnutrition.



FEDERAL MINISTRY OF HEALTH, NIGERIA

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