

GAVA

GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR VITAMIN A

STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2030



The Global
Alliance
for Vitamin A

STRATEGIC PLAN



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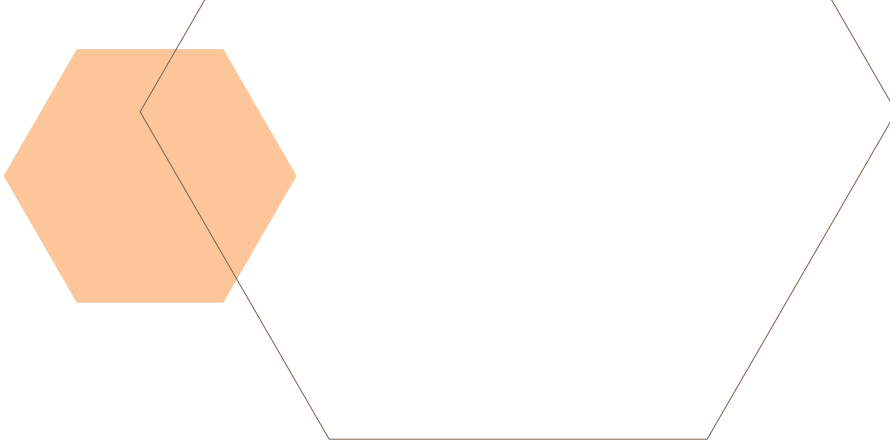
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Global Alliance for Vitamin A (GAVA) 2024–2030 Strategic Plan invites stakeholders and partners to unite in creating a future where no child’s life is at risk due to Vitamin A deficiency. GAVA acknowledges a changing global context, emphasizing the move toward sustainable solutions to eliminate the need for Vitamin A supplementation, while maintaining commitment to this proven tool, which remains highly effective in high mortality contexts. Funding limitations, data reliability and competing priorities underscore the need for evidence, innovation, political commitment and adaptable programs for delivering Vitamin A supplementation.

The strategic goals and action areas bring together research, programming and policy to address priority issues and areas of need related to Vitamin A supplementation. GAVA is founded on commitment to evidence and best practices and aligns its approaches to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

GAVA VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

Objectivity - we base our guidance, tools and advice on the best available evidence, with emphasis on effectiveness and achievement of results.

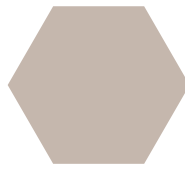
Autonomy - we are an independent voice whose work is guided by global needs, priorities, evidence and data.

Equity - we centre our work on supporting the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations.

Adaptability - we are responsive to emerging issues and embrace innovation.

Partnership - we engage inclusively and respectfully with stakeholders at the global, regional and country level.

Ownership - we support and promote national leadership for sustainability.



VISION

A world where child deaths and illnesses associated with Vitamin A deficiency are eliminated.

MISSION

To accelerate progress towards child survival and reduce the impact of Vitamin A deficiency on children under five through support for evidence-based Vitamin A supplementation programming.

GOAL 1 EVIDENCE AND POLICY GUIDANCE	GOAL 2 PROGRAM GUIDANCE AND TOOLS	GOAL 3 POLICY COMMITMENT
<p>Policymakers and program managers have access to the best evidence and guidance on Vitamin A supplementation.</p>	<p>Program managers are equipped with the tools to implement effective and equitable Vitamin A supplementation programming.</p>	<p>Increased political commitment, accountability and sustained investment for appropriate Vitamin A supplementation programming at the country and global levels.</p>
<p>STRATEGIC ACTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Synthesize knowledge• Identify research priorities• Facilitate knowledge exchange between decision-makers and researchers	<p>STRATEGIC ACTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify and prioritize actions to address common challenges• Bridge the knowledge-to-action gap	<p>STRATEGIC ACTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consolidate evidence on impact and cost-effectiveness of delivery modalities for Vitamin A supplementation• Increase awareness of the value of Vitamin A supplementation• Engage with global and regional development partners



INTRODUCTION TO GAVA

Established in 2006, the Global Alliance for Vitamin A (GAVA) has served as a platform for knowledge sharing and policy development primarily focused on Vitamin A supplementation. Comprising key partners such as Nutrition International, Helen Keller International, and UNICEF, GAVA collectively works as technical experts to ensure program managers and policymakers have access to evidence-based guidance. GAVA collaborates with a diverse array of contributors and experts, including the World Health Organization and academic partners worldwide.

With the conclusion of the 2016–2020 strategic plan and the profound impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on global health systems, GAVA recognized the necessity of redefining its mandate. Through extensive consultations with stakeholders, emphasizing the needs of vulnerable populations, GAVA sought to set a focused and long-term strategic direction in the dynamic field of Vitamin A and nutrition. Read more about GAVA's strategic planning process in [Appendix A](#).

WHY FOCUS ON VITAMIN A SUPPLEMENTATION?

Despite a global decline in under-five mortality rates, the grim reality persists that 13,800 children under five years old still succumb to mortality daily¹. Most of these deaths occur in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia, where limited resources and access to Vitamin A-rich foods contribute to Vitamin A deficiency (VAD), particularly among infants and young children². In such settings, the World Health Organization recommends biannual, high-dose Vitamin A supplementation (VAS) for children aged 6 to 59 months to mitigate the risks of morbidity and mortality³.

While dietary interventions are essential for addressing micronutrient deficiencies, the immediate life-saving impact of VAS remains crucial until dietary strategies are optimized. Despite over 30 years of programming, equitable delivery and local ownership of VAS are still lacking. Hence, GAVA maintains its commitment to prioritizing VAS for children at risk of VAD as a vital intervention for child survival.

GAVA'S ROLE IN SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE PROGRAMMING

During the recent strategic planning exercise, GAVA partners considered whether to expand its mandate to include Vitamin A science and programming for reducing VAD more broadly. However, the decision was made to maintain focus on VAS for children at risk of VAD as a critical intervention for child survival, prioritizing it within the broader context of long-term public health and nutrition strategies. The rationale for this stems from the observation that, despite over 30 years of programming, VAS still faces challenges in achieving equitable delivery and local ownership necessary for maximizing its impact on child survival. Thus, GAVA recognizes its responsibility to continue its dedicated focus on ensuring access to VAS for children in need, thereby enabling them to benefit from its potential to reduce morbidity and mortality.

GAVA is dedicated to supporting program managers and decision-makers globally, regionally, and at the country level in implementing effective VAS programming to enhance health, nutrition, and child survival outcomes. While maintaining a focus on VAS, GAVA's technical advice remains inclusive of broader dialogue to promote the optimal mix of interventions to meet population nutritional needs adequately.

1 UNICEF 2023. Levels and Trends in Child Mortality. Report 2022 Estimates Developed by the UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation

2 Stevens, Gretchen et al., Trends and mortality effects in vitamin A deficiency in children in 138 low-income and middle-income countries between 1991 and 2013: a pooled analysis of population-based surveys. The Lancet Global Health 2015, Volume 3, Issue 9, e528 - e536

3 WHO. Guideline: Vitamin A supplementation in infants and children 6–59 months of age. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2011

VISION

A world where child deaths and illnesses associated with Vitamin A deficiency are eliminated.

MISSION

To accelerate progress towards child survival and reduce the impact of Vitamin A deficiency on children under five through support for evidence-based Vitamin A supplementation programming.

VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

The following values and principles shape GAVA's work:

Objectivity - we base our guidance, tools and advice on best-available evidence, with emphasis on effectiveness and achievement of results.

Autonomy - we are an independent voice whose work is guided by global needs, priorities, evidence and data.

Equity - we centre our work on supporting the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations.

Adaptability - we are responsive to emerging issues and embrace innovation.

Partnership - we engage inclusively and respectfully with stakeholders at the global, regional and country level.

Ownership - we support and promote national leadership for sustainability.

GAVA GOALS

Many aspects of Vitamin A supplementation programs are shifting and there is a pressing need to help countries transition from current delivery platforms, find new ways to finance Vitamin A supplementation programs, and continue to advocate for Vitamin A supplementation where and when it is needed. There is a continued need for collaboration, integration, efficient resource allocation and effective programming in addressing challenges and achieving nutrition goals.

GOAL 1 - EVIDENCE AND POLICY GUIDANCE

Policymakers and program managers have access to the best evidence and guidance on Vitamin A supplementation.

RATIONALE - WHY ARE WE DOING IT?

With ongoing research and innovation in the field of Vitamin A science, along with the tremendous volume of information being produced, it is important to have a credible and readily accessible source of information.

Furthermore, research that is shared in journals or academic conferences may not be fully accessible to a non-academic audience. Knowledge needs to be distilled before it is ready for application and must be available to the people and organizations who can put it to practical use.

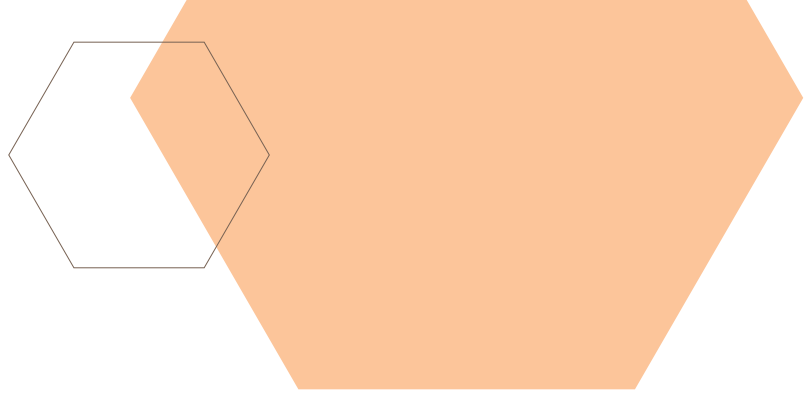
STRATEGIC ACTIONS: HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE OUR GOAL?

1. Synthesize knowledge

GAVA will leverage its technical expertise to continuously monitor and share relevant global research, policies and guidance. To facilitate easy access, we will synthesize this knowledge, maintain a comprehensive repository on the GAVA website and proactively communicate new information and updates as they emerge.

2. Identify research priorities

With a holistic view of the Vitamin A landscape, GAVA will use our regional and country-level experience and technical expertise to identify gaps in evidence, information, policy or guidance related to Vitamin A deficiency and Vitamin A supplementation. We will collaborate with the research community to prioritize research and data collection initiatives to contribute to evidence-informed decision-making regarding Vitamin A supplementation.



3. Facilitate knowledge exchange between decision makers and researchers

GAVA will serve as a platform for effective knowledge exchange between policymakers, researchers, program managers and technical experts. This exchange will drive problem-solving and policy development, ensuring the safety and appropriateness of Vitamin A supplementation. Through focused technical meetings, we will bring together decision-makers and experts to work collaboratively and reach consensus on strategies and solutions, including policies and guidance.

GOAL 2 – PROGRAM GUIDANCE AND TOOLS

Program managers are equipped with the tools to implement effective and equitable Vitamin A supplementation programming.

RATIONALE – WHY ARE WE DOING IT?

Aligning with the Paris Declaration on Development Aid Effectiveness, GAVA recognizes the significance of local ownership and sustainability. For Vitamin A supplementation programs to be effective and reach populations most at risk of Vitamin A deficiency, it is crucial for program managers to have access to practical evidence-based tools and resources that can be readily adapted and applied by national and local organizations working to address a country's unique needs.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS: HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE OUR GOAL?

1. Identify and prioritize actions to address common challenges

GAVA will actively engage with program managers and those responsible for implementing Vitamin A supplementation at the country level to gain an understanding of their unique barriers and challenges. GAVA will collaborate closely with country partners to pinpoint these issues

and determine the necessary support. We will host technical, strategic and planning meetings that bring together key stakeholders, partner agencies and technical assistance partners to facilitate the development of localized responses to address identified challenges in Vitamin A supplementation programming.

2. Bridge the knowledge-to-action gap

Based on research, evidence and global best practices, GAVA will develop tools and guidance for program managers. This may involve creating practical tools such as guidance documents, evidence summaries, briefing notes, case studies or instruction manuals to enable program managers to effectively apply best practices in their Vitamin A programming. It may also include organizing orientation and educational sessions on current best practices and updates or changes in guidance.

GOAL 3 – POLICY COMMITMENT

Increased political commitment, accountability and sustained investment for appropriate Vitamin A supplementation programming at the country and global levels.

RATIONALE – WHY ARE WE DOING IT?

From a public health perspective, the impact of Vitamin A supplementation is evident. However, this may not be as apparent to government decision-makers and managers navigating budget constraints. Given the shift in Vitamin A supplementation delivery from campaigns to routine health services, it will be even more crucial to determine when, where and how Vitamin A programs should be implemented.

GAVA strives to secure increased country and global political commitment, accountability and sustained investment in Vitamin A supplementation programming. As a critical life-saving intervention, Vitamin A supplementation should not be removed



from public health and nutrition programs until Vitamin A deficiency no longer poses a threat to child survival. It is essential to recognize that advancements such as those that improve dietary intake may not benefit children in poor or hard-to-reach populations. It is equally essential that complex global issues such as climate change and conflict do not divert the attention and resources of global partners away from effective interventions like Vitamin A supplementation.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS: HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE OUR GOAL?

1. Consolidate evidence on impact and cost-effectiveness of Vitamin A supplementation delivery modalities

GAVA will summarize evidence on Vitamin A supplementation impact in briefing documents tailored for policymakers and funders to enhance their understanding of Vitamin A supplementation and its continued relevance to the health agenda. These products will provide decision-makers with the information necessary to situate Vitamin A supplementation in the context of their country's needs and budgets, and build the rationale for strong policy commitment.

2. Increase awareness of the value of Vitamin A supplementation

GAVA will showcase the cost-effectiveness of Vitamin A supplementation by developing investment cases and success stories from countries where Vitamin A programming has had a significant and sustained impact on health outcomes and child survival. In addition, we will expand our communication efforts to contribute to global reports and other high-profile publications. This expanded outreach will keep the child survival benefits of Vitamin A supplementation visible to policymakers and funders.

3. Engage with global and regional development partners

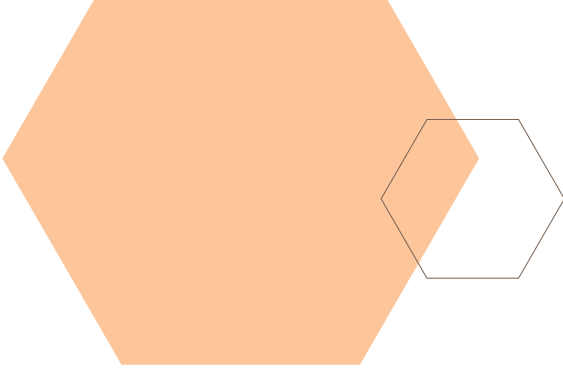
GAVA will convene and engage with key regional actors, including stakeholders, fora, donors and country leaders to promote cooperation and knowledge exchange related to Vitamin A programming. In doing so, GAVA will aim to catalyze greater collective action on Vitamin A supplementation aligned with the priorities and agendas of the respective organizations.

COMMUNICATIONS

GAVA will develop a comprehensive communications strategy to ensure stakeholders receive timely notice of relevant policies, tools and guidance. Recognizing that many policies and guidance documents remain current for long periods of time, GAVA will proactively communicate new information and changes while assuring stakeholders that historical information remains valid. The GAVA website will serve as a central hub for sharing best practices and guidance from GAVA as well as from technical partners like WHO and researchers. This will include regular newsletters providing updates and informing program managers about relevant conferences, workshops and events hosted by partners in the Vitamin A and nutrition fields.

ACHIEVING RESULTS

GAVA partners are committed to being accountable to each other and to our stakeholders. As such, GAVA has developed a performance management framework that aligns with our strategic objectives and operational plan. Progress on achievement of Strategic Goals will be reviewed annually and measured against key performance indicators.



APPENDIX A: GAVA STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

GAVA undertook a strategic planning refresh from August to December 2023. The process was led by an external consultant with consistent engagement and input from the GAVA core partners — Nutrition International, Helen Keller International and UNICEF.

The activities involved in the development of the final 2024–2030 strategic plan were as follows:

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

A comprehensive stakeholder consultation was an essential component of the planning process. This was done to ensure that the resulting plan would be relevant to diverse stakeholders within the Vitamin A and nutrition communities, with emphasis on the needs of the stakeholders in the Global South. The consultation consisted of three key activities:

- **Stakeholder Survey:** The survey was disseminated through the GAVA newsletter as well as through the partners' respective networks to reach a broad group of stakeholders in the Vitamin A and nutrition communities. There were 92 responses to the survey, with 14 different countries represented. Many of the respondents worked in Africa, with half of all survey participants engaged in work at the national level.
- **Key Informant Interviews:** Core group members generated a segmented list of key stakeholders to engage in the consultation process. Next, the core group prioritized the list to identify individuals to participate in the key informant interviews. Eleven semi-structured interviews were held with 13 individuals participating. Participants included experts from peer organizations, funders, researchers and regional partners with specific expertise and experience working in the Vitamin A and nutrition ecosystems.

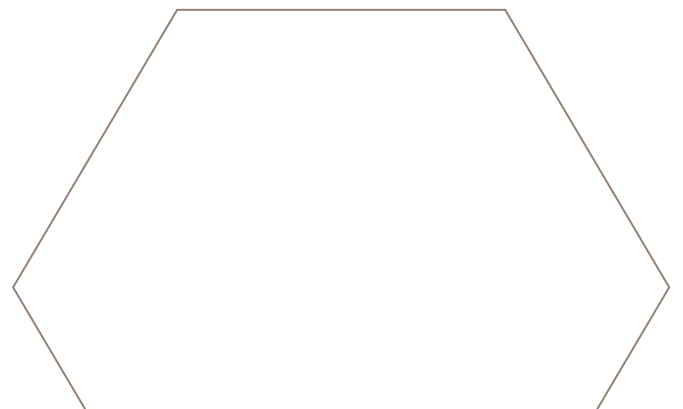
- **Input from GAVA Core Group:** Members of the core group provided written feedback to the interview questions.

IN-PERSON STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP

In November 2023, the core group members engaged in a participatory two-day in-person strategic planning workshop hosted by UNICEF. Key outputs of the meeting included the development of GAVA principles, priority-setting based on stakeholder input and a framework for the strategic plan.

REGULAR CORE GROUP MEETINGS

The core group was actively engaged in the strategic planning process through a series of four touchpoint meetings with written communications and feedback throughout.





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