

Central America

Overview

Malnutrition status

In Central America, there has been some progress towards achieving global nutrition targets. 4 countries are on course to meet the global target for under-five wasting. 3 countries are on course for each of under-five overweight, under-five stunting, and infant exclusive breastfeeding. However, no countries in Central America are on course for each of anaemia in women of reproductive age, low birth weight, male diabetes, female diabetes, male obesity, and female obesity. 4 countries in Central America have insufficient data to comprehensively assess their progress towards these global targets.

Although it performs relatively well against other subregions, Central America still experiences a malnutrition burden among its under-five population. The average prevalence of overweight in under-fives is 6.9% - the lowest compared to other subregions in Latin America and the Caribbean. The prevalence of stunting in under-fives is 12.9%, this is less than the global average of 21.9%. Central America's prevalence of wasting in under-fives of 0.9% is also less than the global average of 7.3%.

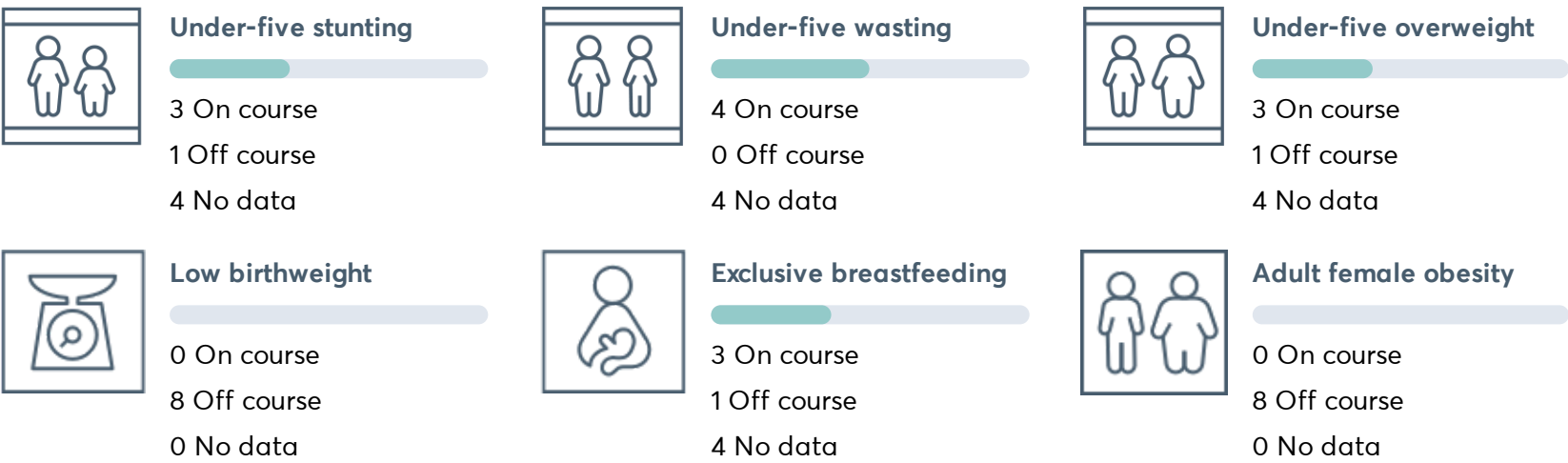
Some 33.9% of infants under 23 months in Central America are exclusively breastfed, while the subregion's average low birth weight prevalence of 8.7% is less than the global average of 14.6%.

Central America's adult population also face a malnutrition burden. An average of 15.5% of women of reproductive age have anaemia, and 11.2% of adult women suffer from diabetes, compared to 10.3% of men. Meanwhile, 31.4% of women and 22.2% of men suffer from obesity.

Sources: UNICEF/WHO/World Bank Group: Joint child malnutrition estimates, UNICEF/WHO Low birthweight estimates, NCD Risk Factor Collaboration, WHO Global Health Observatory.

Notes: Data on the adult indicators are based on modelled estimates.

Progress against global nutrition targets 2018





Adult male obesity

0 On course
8 Off course
0 No data



Adult female diabetes

0 On course
8 Off course
0 No data



Adult male diabetes

0 On course
8 Off course
0 No data



WRA anaemia

0 On course
8 Off course
0 No data

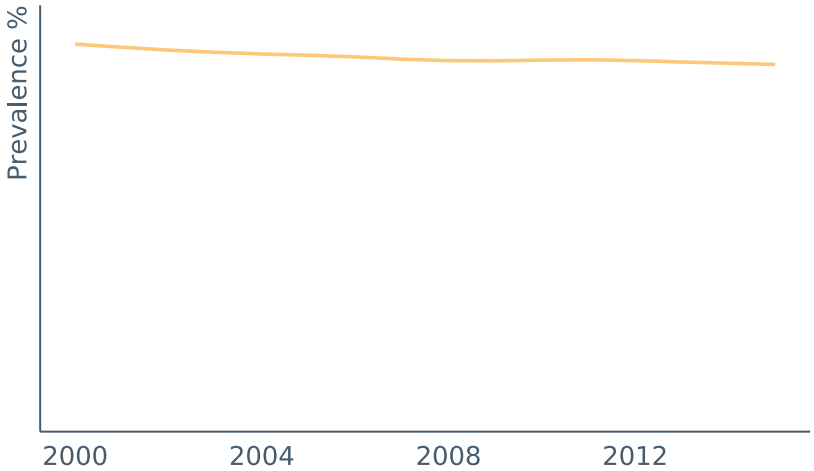
Sources: UNICEF global databases Infant and Young Child Feeding, UNICEF/WHO/World Bank Group: Joint child malnutrition estimates, NCD Risk Factor Collaboration, WHO Global Health Observatory and Global Burden of Disease, the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation.

Notes: WRA = Women of a reproductive age; NA = not applicable. The methodologies for tracking differ between targets. Data on the adult indicators are based on modelled estimates.

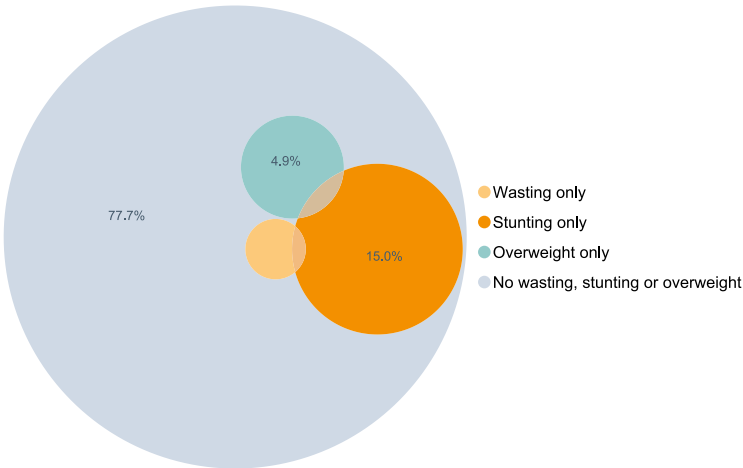
Infant and child (under-five) status

Under-five coexistence of wasting, stunting and overweight

Low birth weight



Source: UNICEF/WHO Low birthweight estimates, 2019 edition.

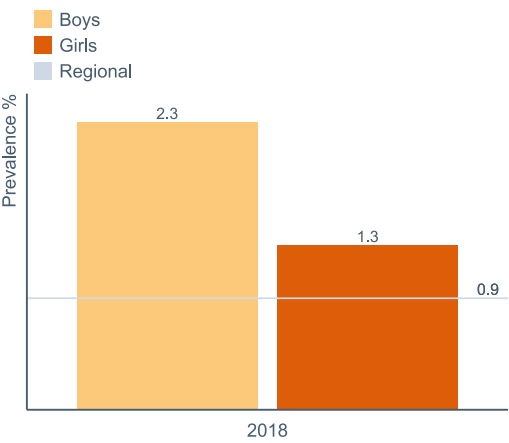


Sources: UNICEF, Division of Data Research and Policy (2019). UNICEF Global Databases: Overlapping Stunting, Wasting and Overweight, January 2019, New York.

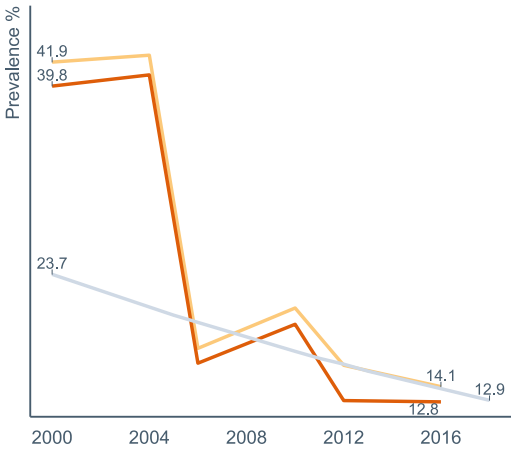
Notes: Percentage of children under-five years of age who experience different and overlapping forms of malnutrition. 7 countries included in aggregates.

Children (under-five) nutrition status

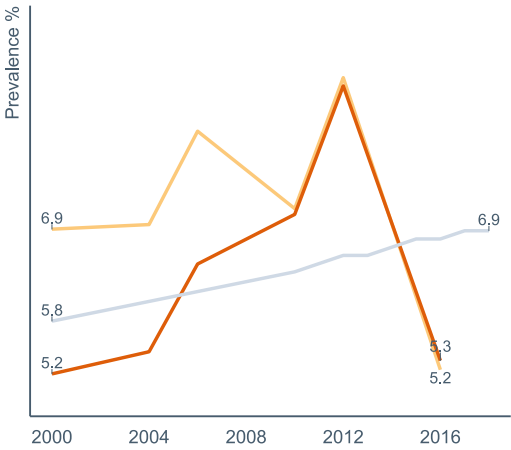
Wasting by gender



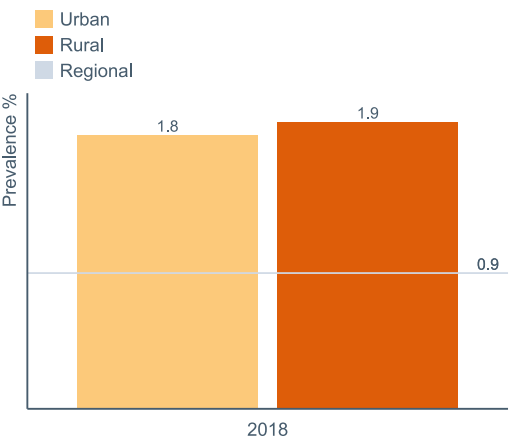
Stunting by gender



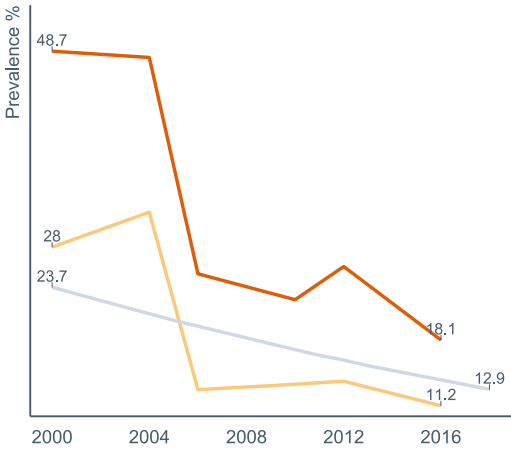
Overweight by gender



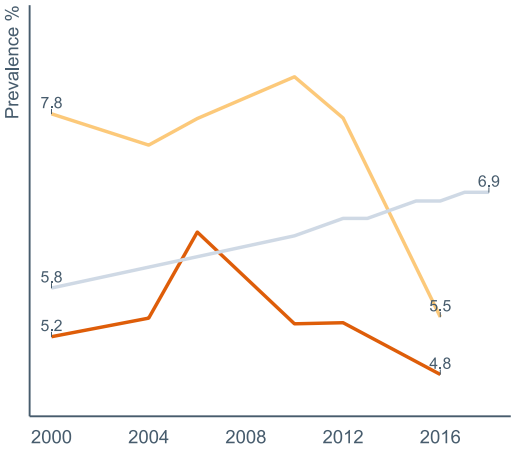
Wasting by location



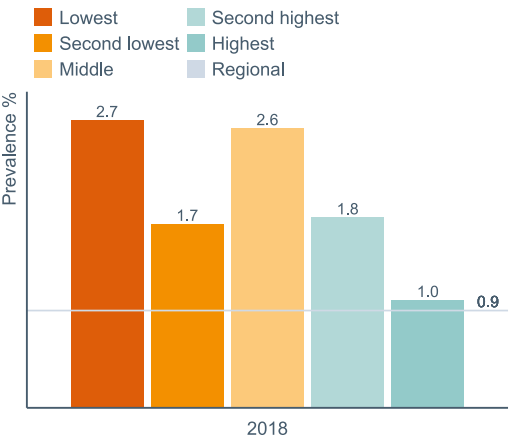
Stunting by location



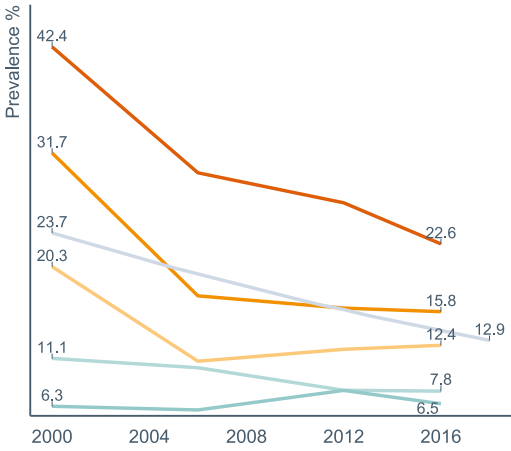
Overweight by location



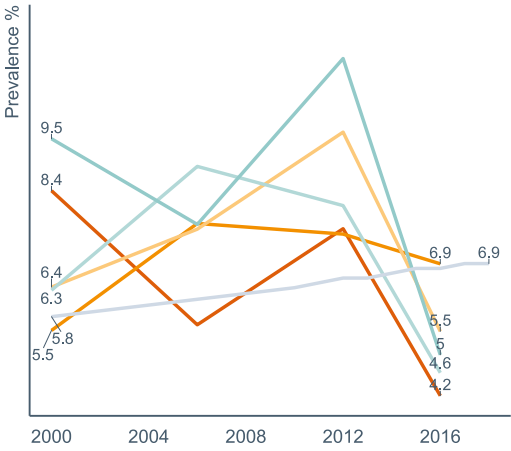
Wasting by income



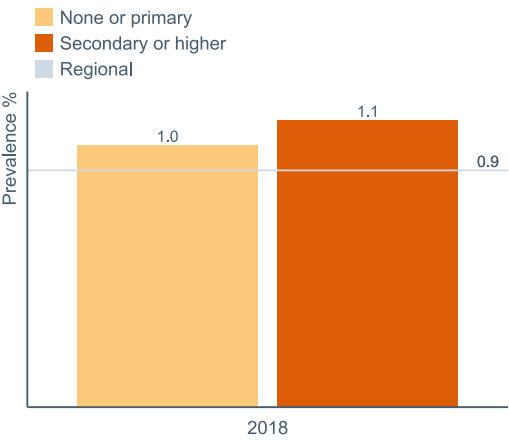
Stunting by income



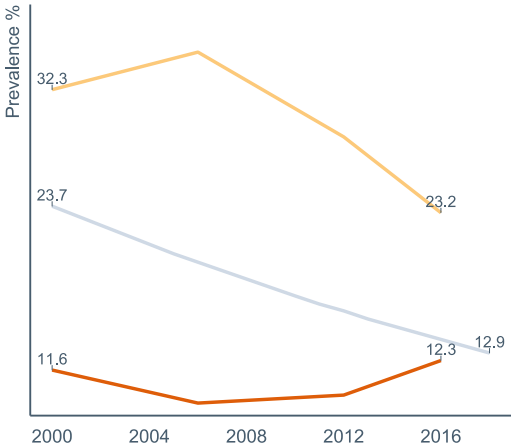
Overweight by income



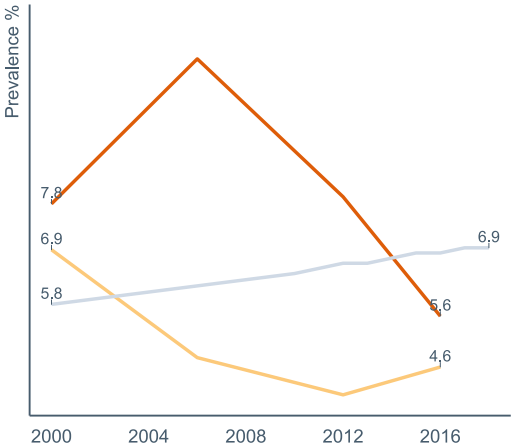
Wasting by education



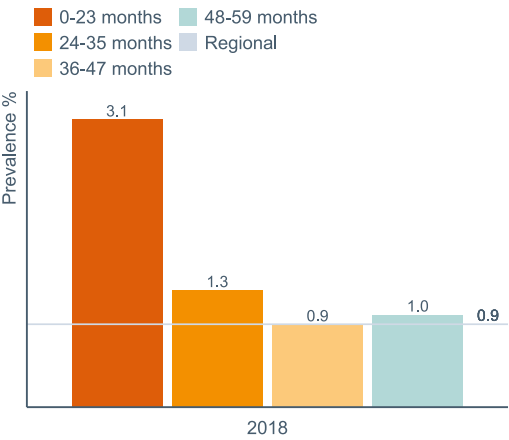
Stunting by education



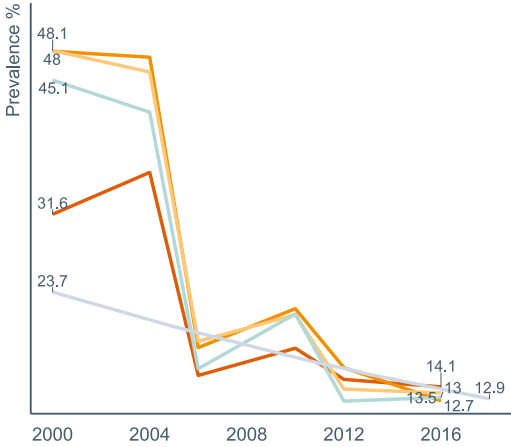
Overweight by education



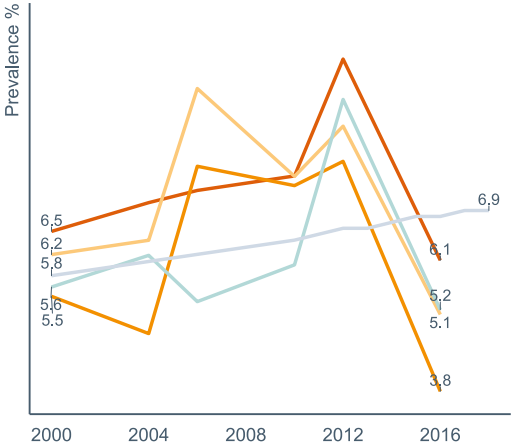
Wasting by age



Stunting by age



Overweight by age

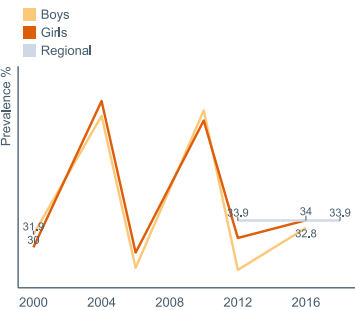


Sources: UNICEF/WHO/World Bank Group: Joint child malnutrition estimates. From 1 to 7 countries included in aggregates.

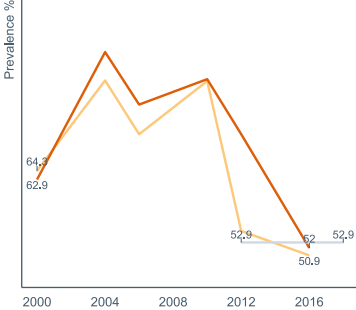
Notes: Regional figures are from UNICEF, Division of Data Research and Policy (2019) where available and are aggregated otherwise.

Infant and child (under-five) feeding over time

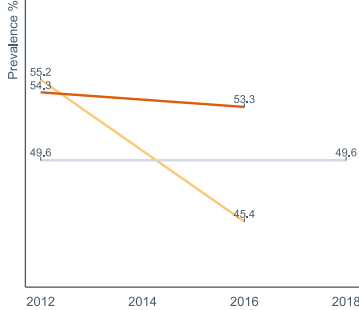
Exclusive breastfeeding by gender



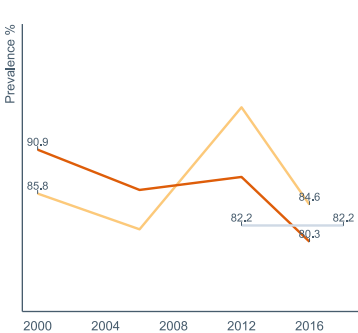
Continued breastfeeding at 1 year by gender



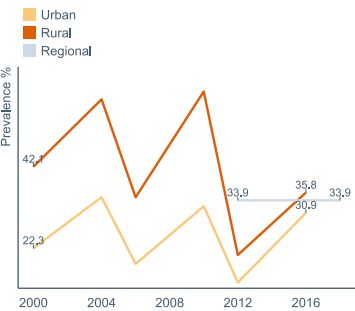
Minimum acceptable diet by gender



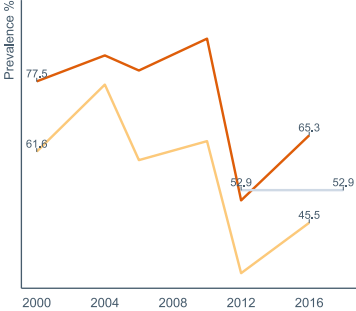
Introduction to solid, semi-solid or soft foods by gender



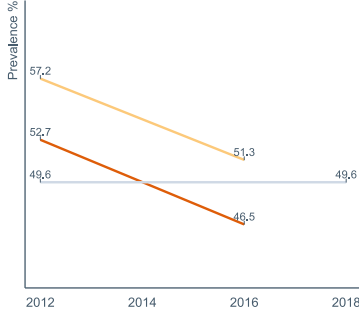
Exclusive breastfeeding by location



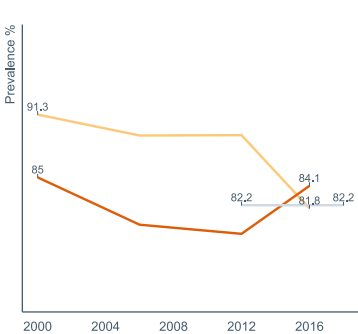
Continued breastfeeding at 1 year by location



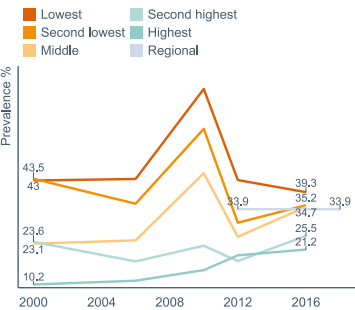
Minimum acceptable diet by location



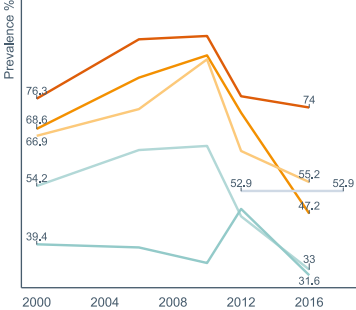
Introduction to solid, semi-solid or soft foods by location



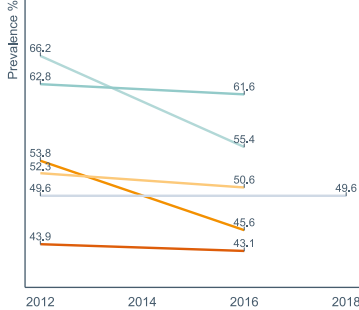
Exclusive breastfeeding by income



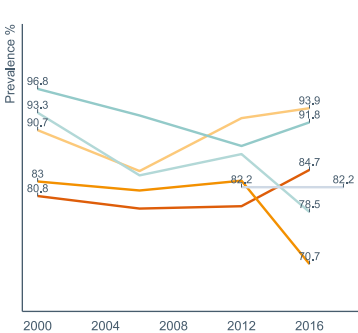
Continued breastfeeding at 1 year by income



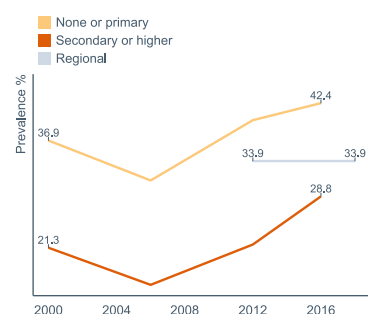
Minimum acceptable diet by income



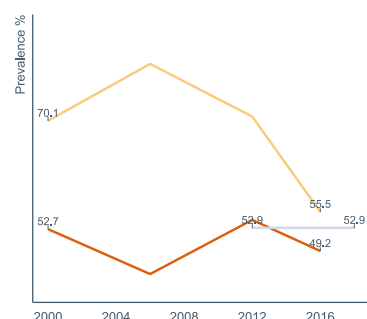
Introduction to solid, semi-solid or soft foods by income



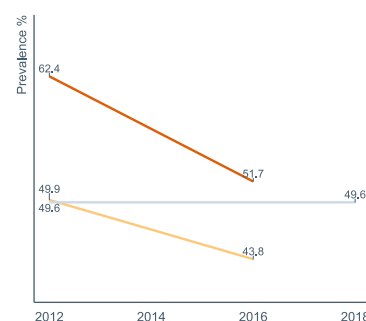
Exclusive breastfeeding by mother's education



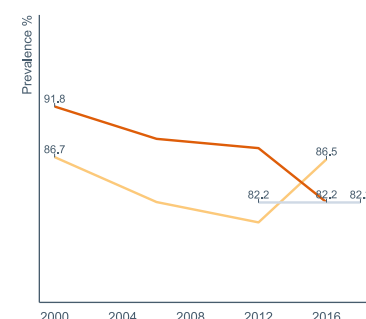
Continued breastfeeding at 1 year by mother's education



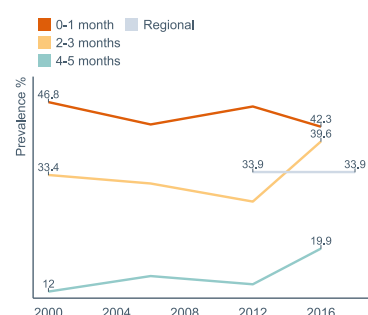
Minimum acceptable diet by mother's education



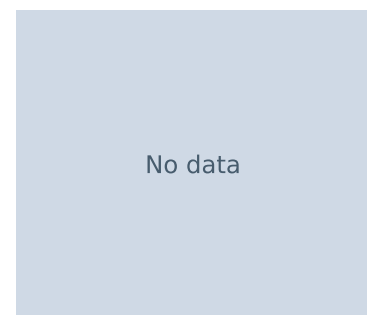
Introduction to solid, semi-solid or soft foods by mother's education



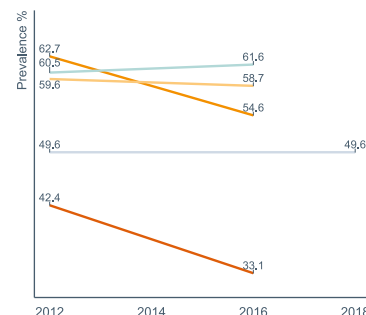
Exclusive breastfeeding by age



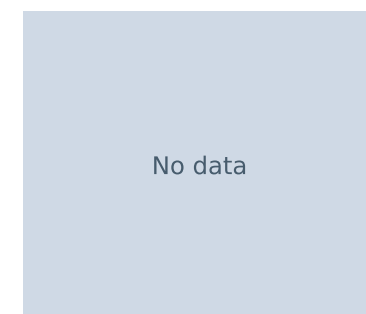
Continued breastfeeding at 1 year by age



Minimum acceptable diet by age

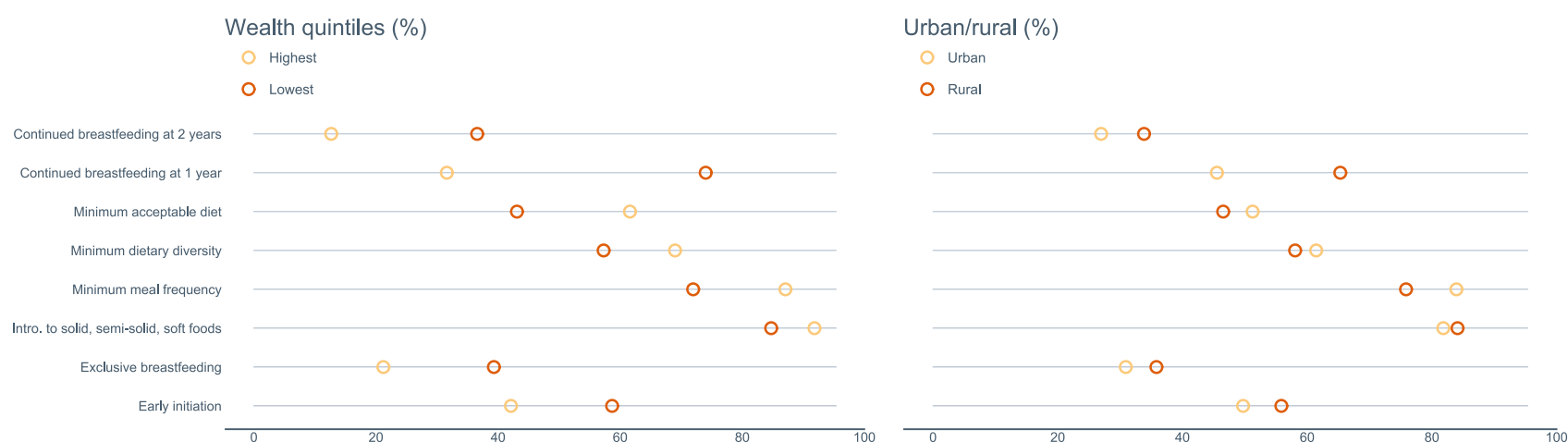


Introduction to solid, semi-solid or soft foods by age



Sources: UNICEF, Division of Data Research and Policy (2019). Global UNICEF Global Databases: Infant and Young Child Feeding: Exclusive breastfeeding, Predominant breastfeeding, New York, May 2019. From 1 to 5 countries included in aggregates.

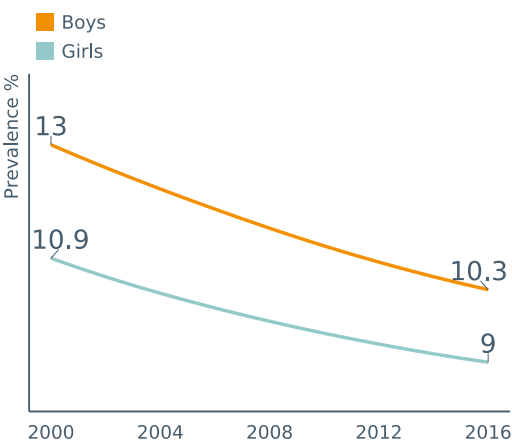
Infant and young child feeding



Sources: UNICEF, Division of Data Research and Policy (2019). Global UNICEF Global Databases: Infant and Young Child Feeding: Exclusive breastfeeding, Predominant breastfeeding, New York, May 2019. From 1 to 5 countries included in aggregates.

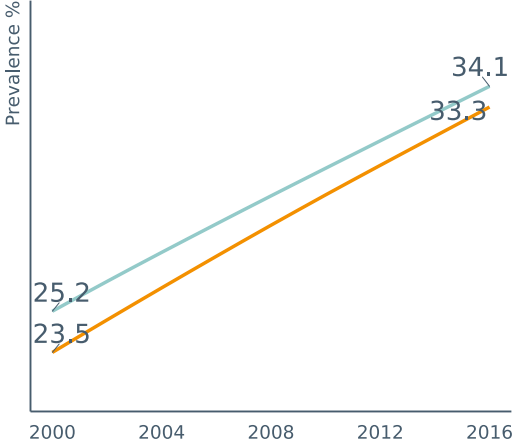
Children and adolescent (aged 5-19) nutrition status

Ages 5-19 by gender:
underweight (%)



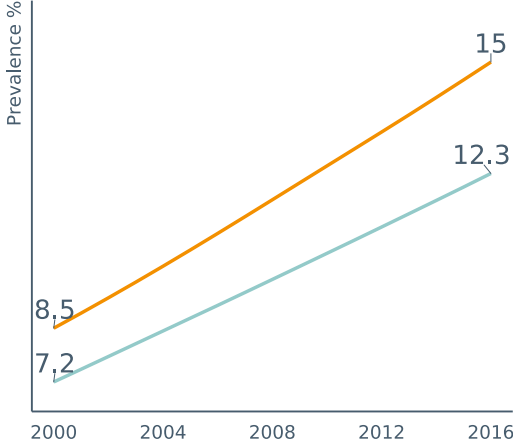
Sources: NCD Risk Factor
Collaboration. 8 countries included in
aggregates.

Ages 5-19 by gender:
overweight (%)



8 countries included in aggregates.

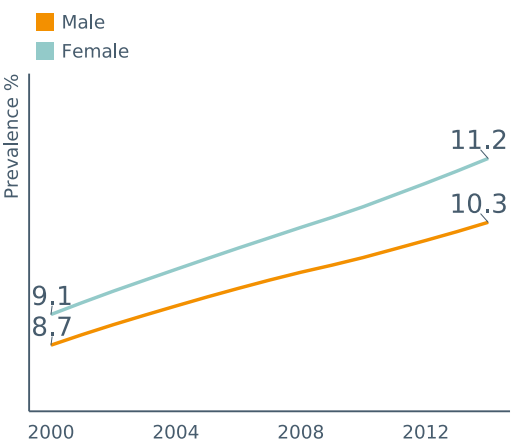
Ages 5-19 by gender:
obesity (%)



8 countries included in aggregates.

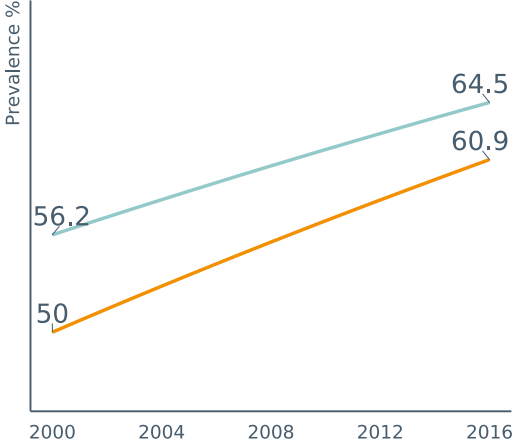
Adult nutrition status

Adult by gender:
diabetes (%)



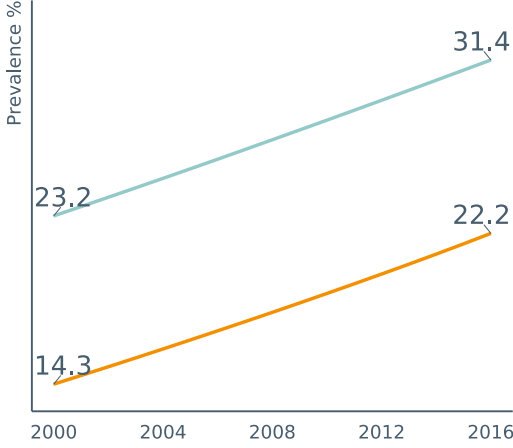
Sources: NCD Risk Factor
Collaboration. 8 countries included in
aggregates.

Adult by gender:
overweight (%)



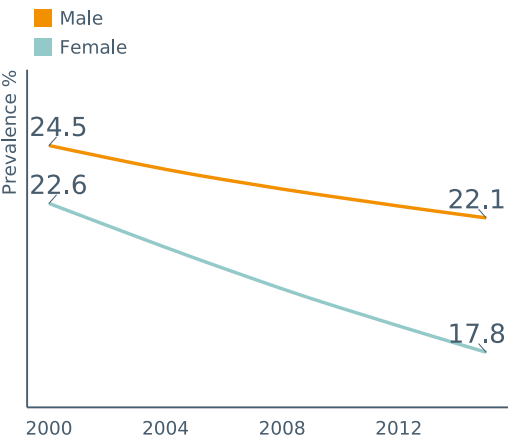
8 countries included in aggregates.

Adult by gender: obesity
(%)



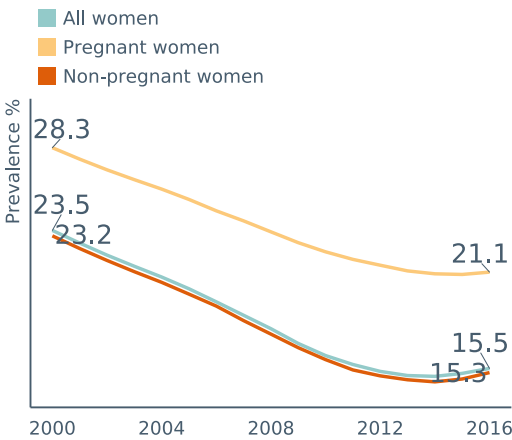
8 countries included in aggregates.

Adult by gender: raised blood pressure (%)



Sources: NCD Risk Factor Collaboration. 8 countries included in aggregates.

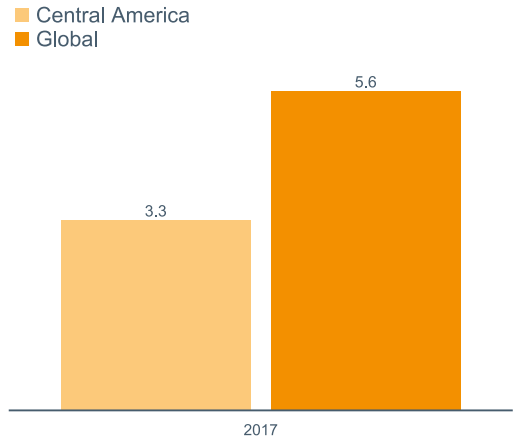
Adult: anaemia in WRA (%)



Source: WHO Global Health Observatory.

Notes: WRA = women of reproductive age. 8 countries included in aggregates.

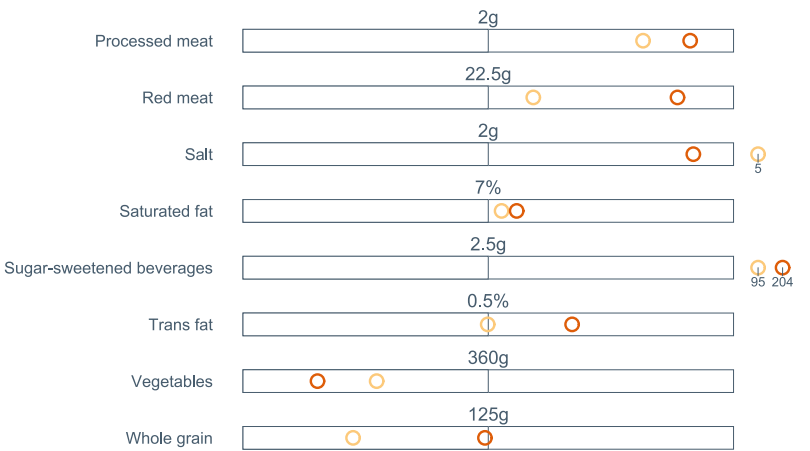
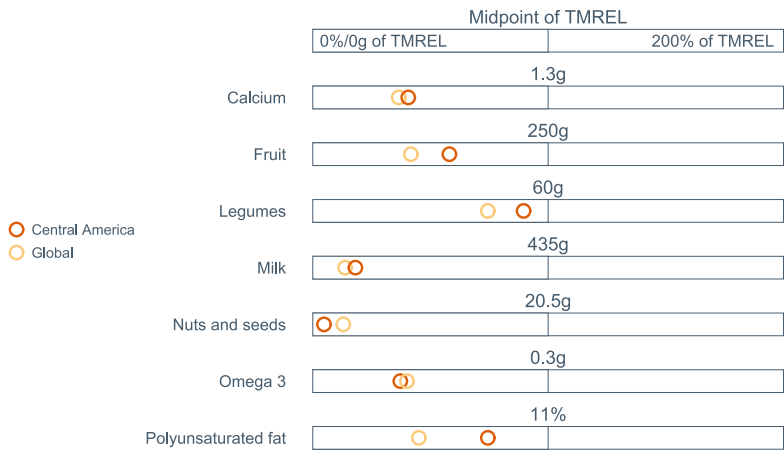
Adult: sodium intake (grams per day)



Source: Global Burden of Disease, the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation. 8 countries included in aggregates.

Dietary needs

Consumption of food groups and components, 2016



Sources: TMREL = theoretical minimum risk of exposure level. Global Burden of Disease, the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation.

Notes: Men and women aged 25 and older. 8 countries included in aggregates.

Intervention coverage

Coverage/practice indicator	Total (%)	Boy (%)	Girl (%)	Year

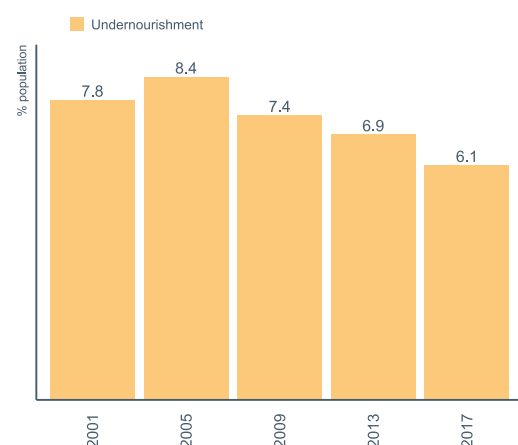
Coverage/practice indicator	Total (%)	Boy (%)	Girl (%)	Year
Children 0-59 months with diarrhoea who received zinc treatment	1	2	1	2014
Children 6-59 months who received A supplements in last 6 months	50	50	50	2014
Children 6-59 months given iron supplements in past 7 days	20	20	19	2014
Women with a live birth in the five years preceding the survey who received iron tablets or syrup during antenatal care	84			2014
Household consumption of any iodised salt	NA	NA	NA	NA

Sources: Huestis A. and Kothari M., based on *2016 Global Nutrition Report* and UNICEF global databases, 2019.

Notes: NA = not applicable. Data is compiled using STATcompiler and taken from country Demographic and Health Surveys for 2005-2018. 1 countries included in aggregates.

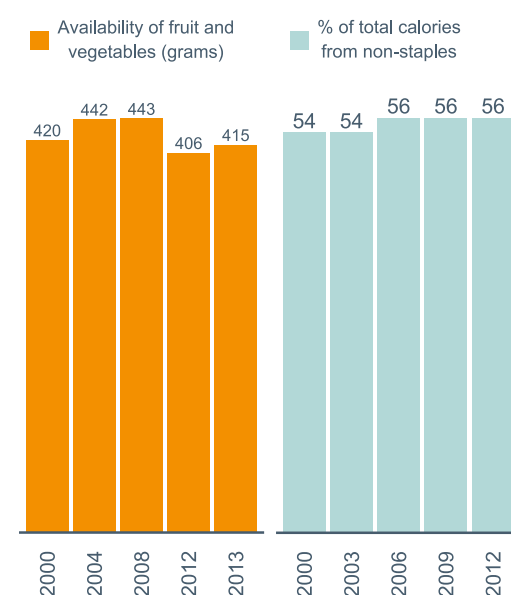
Determinants

Undernourishment (% population)



Source: FAOSTAT 2018.

Food supply



Source: FAOSTAT 2018.

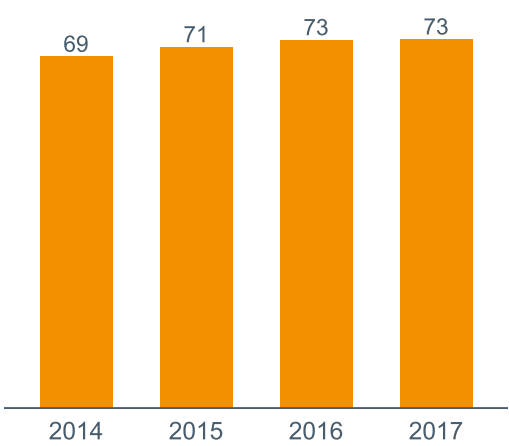
Gender-related determinants

Early childbearing: births by age 18 (%) ¹	20	2016
Gender Inequality Index (score [*]) ²	0.37	2017
Gender Inequality Index (country rank) ²	83	2017

Sources: ¹ UNICEF 2018; ² UNDP 2018.

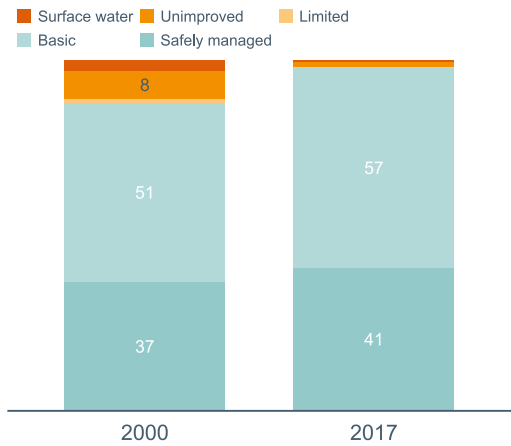
Notes: ^{*} 0 = low inequality, 1 = high inequality. From 1 to 7 countries included in aggregates.

Female secondary education enrolment (net, % population)



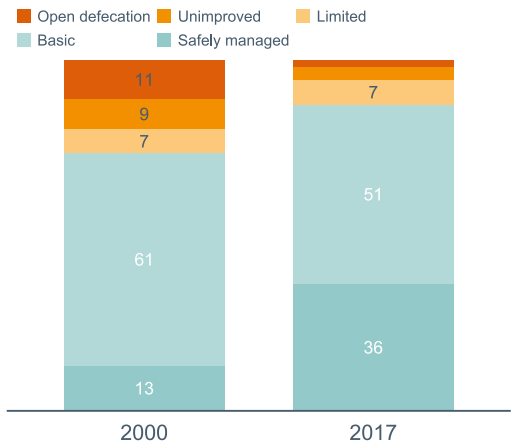
Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2018. From 2 to 7 countries included in aggregates.

Drinking water coverage (% population)



Source: WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme 2019. From 4 to 8 countries included in aggregates.

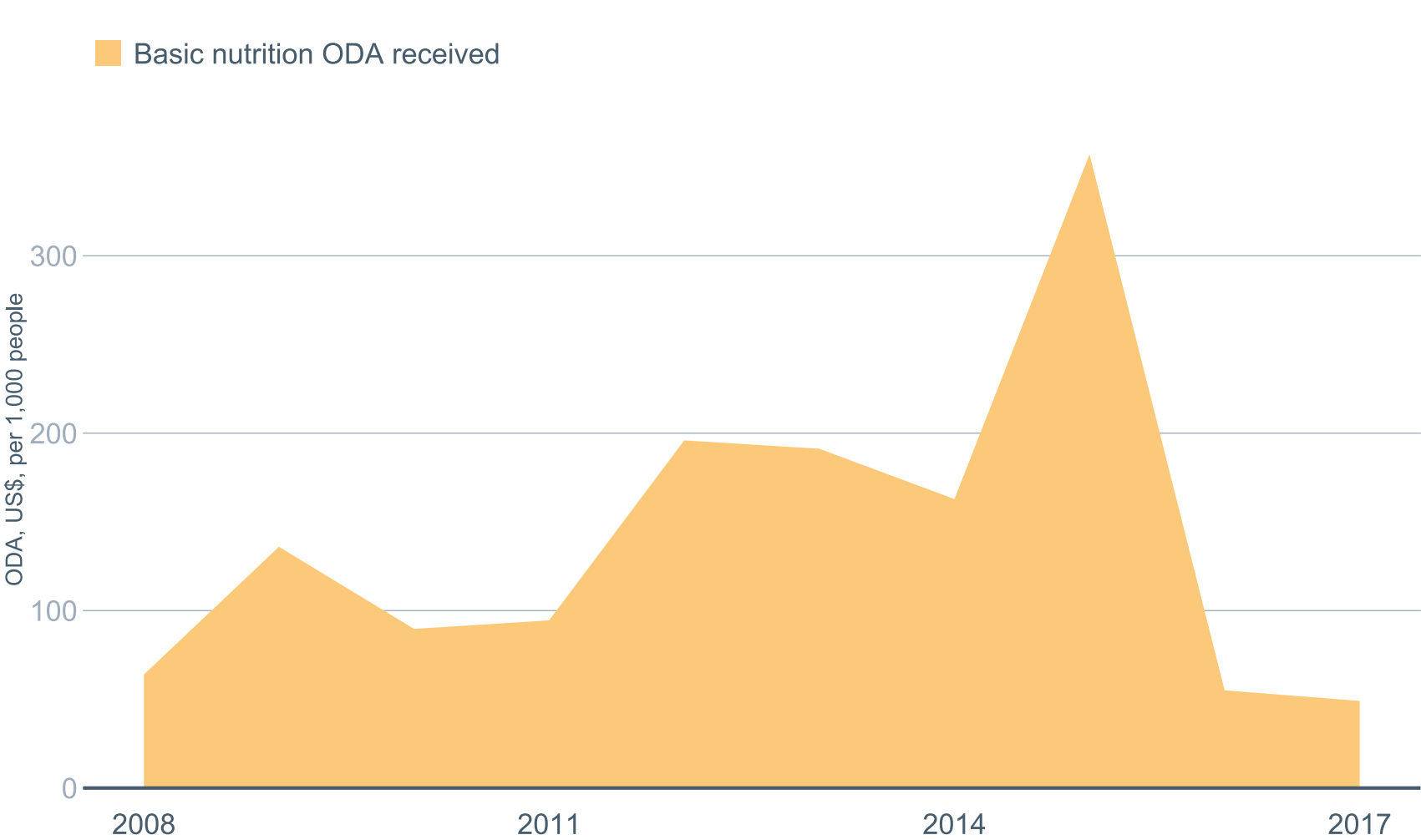
Sanitation coverage (% population)



Source: WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme 2019. From 1 to 8 countries included in aggregates.

Resources, policies and targets

Development assistance



Sources: Development Initiatives based on OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Creditor Reporting System (CRS).

Notes: ODA = official development assistance. Amounts based on gross ODA disbursements, constant 2017 prices. Figure includes ODA grants and loans, but excludes other official flows and private grants.

National policies

Mandatory legislation for salt iodisation	8/8
Sugar-sweetened beverage tax	1/8
Food-based dietary guidelines	7/8
Policy to reduce salt consumption	2/8
Operational policy, strategy or action plan to reduce unhealthy diet related to NCDs	6/8
Operational, multisectoral national NCD policy, strategy or action plan	5/8
Operational policy, strategy or action plan for diabetes	6/8
Policy to reduce the impact on children of marketing of foods and beverages high in saturated fats, trans-fatty acids, free sugars or salt	1/8
Policy to limit saturated fatty acids and virtually eliminate industrially produced trans-fats	1/8

Sources: Global Fortification Data Exchange 2018; Sugar-sweetened data prepared using data from the NOURISHING database, academic references and market reports; FAO 2018; WHO Global database on the Implementation of Nutrition Action (GINA), 2nd Global Nutrition Policy Review, WHO Global Health Observatory.

Notes: Add note: NA = not applicable; NCD = non-communicable disease.

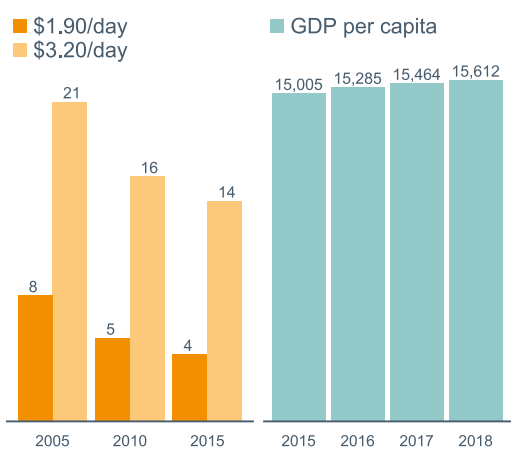
Targets included in national (nutrition or other) plan

Stunting	Anaemia
7/8	4/8
Low birth weight	Child overweight
6/8	6/8
Exclusive breastfeeding	Wasting
8/8	7/8
Salt intake	Overweight adults and adolescents
5/8	6/8
Multisectoral comprehensive nutrition plan	
5/8	

Sources: WHO Global database on the Implementation of Nutrition Action (GINA), 2nd Global Nutrition Policy Review.

Economics and demography

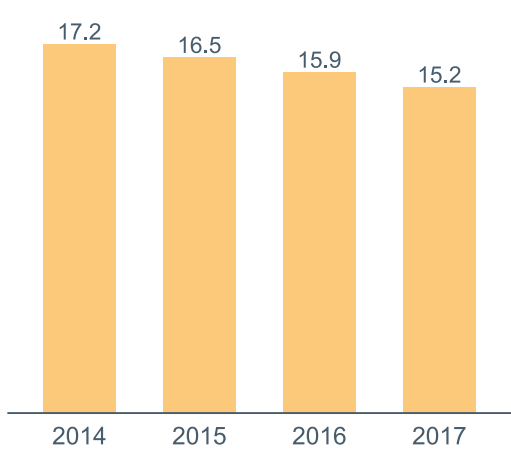
Poverty rates (%) and GDP (PPP\$)



Sources: World Bank 2019, IMF World Economic Outlook Database 2019.

Notes: PPP = purchasing power parity. 8 countries included in aggregates.

Under-five mortality (per 1,000 live births)



Source: UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation 2018. 8 countries included in aggregates.

Government revenues (\$m)



Sources: IMF Article IV staff reports (country specific) and IMF World Economic Outlook Database (April 2019). 4 countries included in aggregates.

Income inequality

Gini index score ¹	Gini index rank ²	Year
47	132	2017

Sources: World Bank 2019.

Notes: ¹ 0 = perfect equality, 100 = perfect inequality. ² Countries are ranked from most equal (1) to most unequal (120). From 1 to 4 countries included in aggregates.

Population

Population (000)	93,685,381	2018
Under-five population (000)	16,126	2019
Rural (%)	25	2018
>65 years (000)	12,574	2019

Sources: World Bank 2019, UN Population Division Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2019. 8 countries included in aggregates.

Population density of health workers per 1,000 people

Physicians	1.91	2016
Nurses and midwives	2.23	2016
Community health workers	0.46	2016

Sources: WHO's Global Health Workforce Statistics, OECD, supplemented by country data. From 2 to 8 countries included in aggregates.