A BROKEN SYSTEM

Wasting is a condition where a child is too thin and is at increased risk of death, disease and poor development. Children need prompt sustained treatment to enable full recovery.

UN Agencies support treatment services in countries all over the world. However, how this support is currently organised complicates and compromises care.

A common way to screen for wasting is by using a MUAC* band which measures how thin a child’s arm is.

As little as 1 mm difference on a MUAC band can determine where you receive care.

A child moves between these different treatment streams as the child transitions through the different levels of severity of wasting.

SEVERE WASTING

Depending on this arbitrary cut-off, a child will be referred to an agency for treatment. This referral system is designed to meet organisational mandates rather than the child’s needs.

MODERATE

With Medical Complications

World Health Organization (WHO)

World Food Programme (WFP)

United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Healthy - No Treatment Required

With Medical Complications

Each agency has different systems, protocols, supplies, supply chains and targeting mechanisms.

As a result of this agency dysfunction, we are not meeting the needs of these children who need us most.

No UN Agency with a clear mandate for care

To best serve wasted children, there should be a cohesive care pathway across these different agencies. Currently, programmes simply don’t connect and children are left to fall through the cracks.

In refugee settings, UNHCR provides care and treatment if other UN agencies are unable to.

The current system is broken.

But with a sustained commitment to reform, we can reach more kids with the care that they deserve.