

Costs of a scaled up multisectoral nutrition program in Nepal

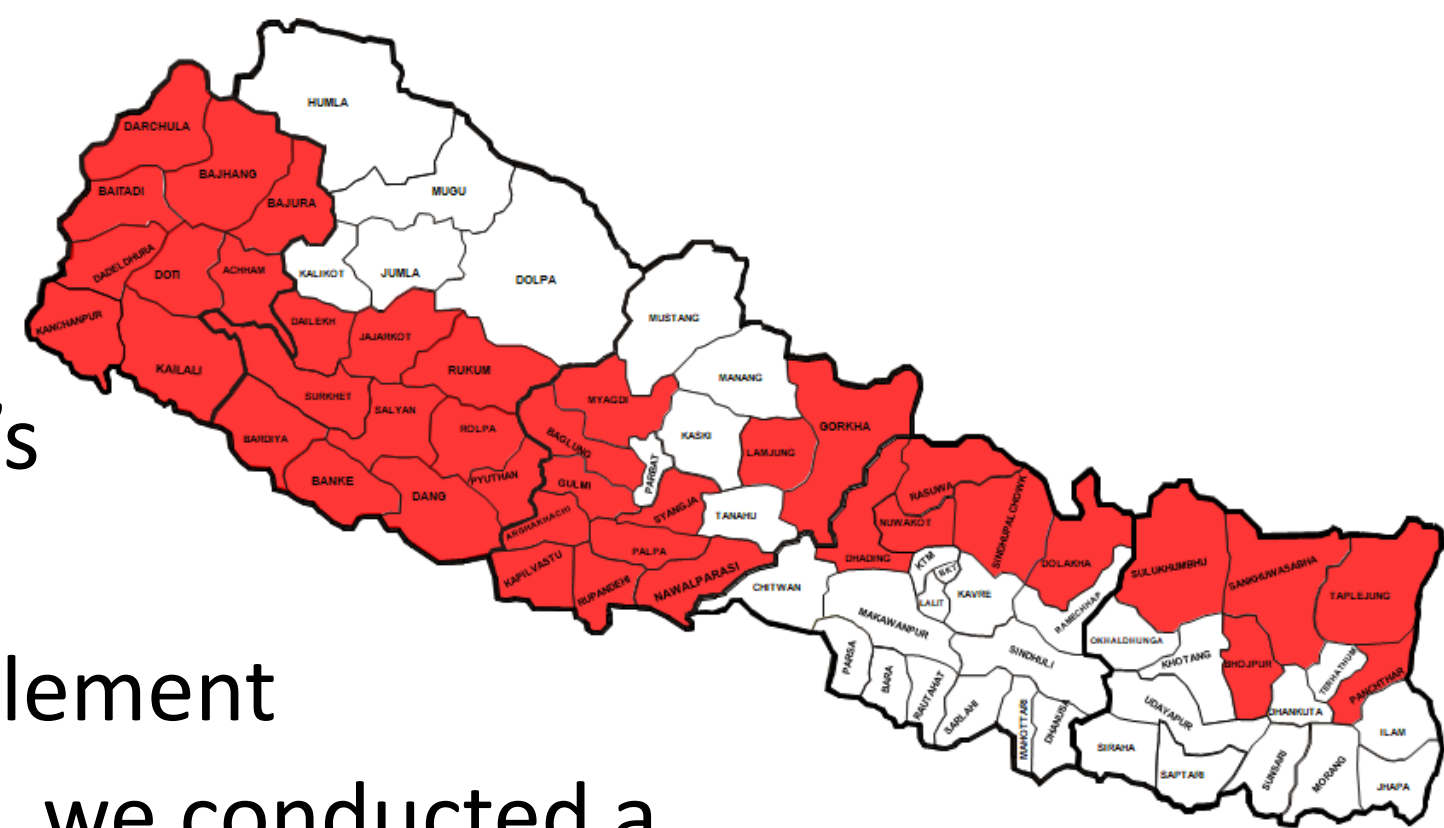
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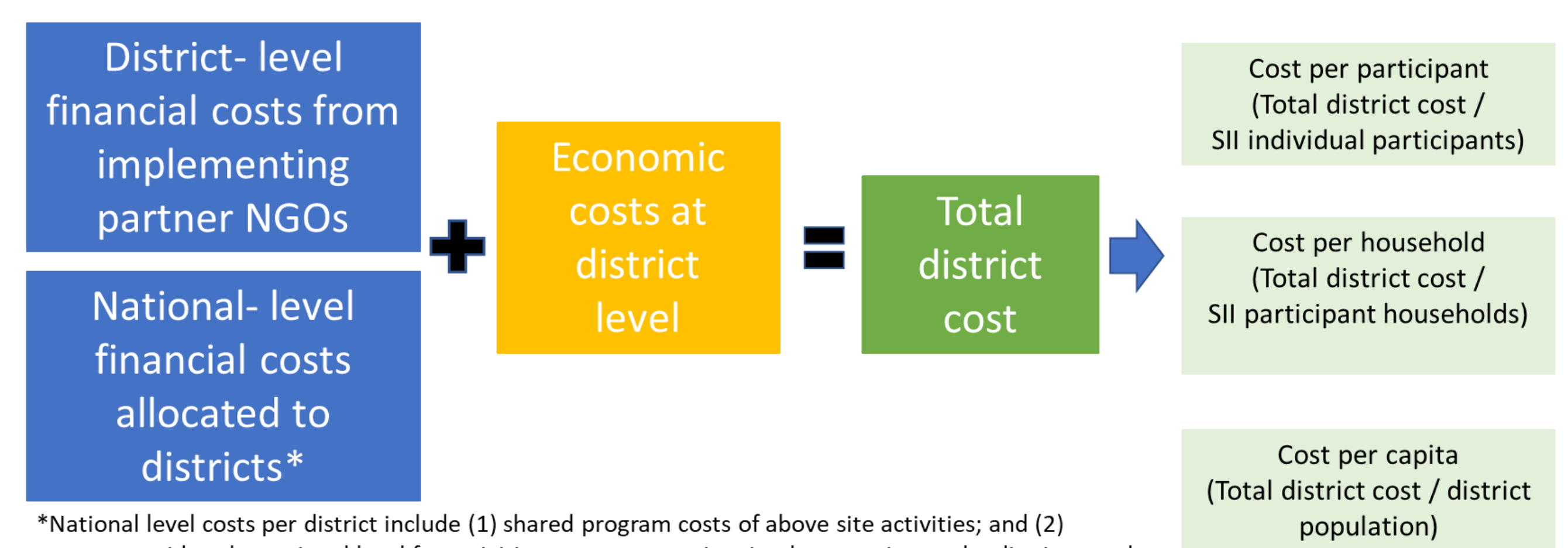
Background

- Assessing the cost of large complex nutrition programs will help policy makers assess value and affordability of such programs as they aim to reach their national nutrition targets.
- Currently there is limited evidence of the costs of large scale multisectoral nutrition (MSN) strategies especially, additive costs resulting from the integration of activities across sectors.
- Helen Keller International leads a consortium to implement the USAID Suaahara II (SII) multisectoral nutrition program.
- SII covers 42 districts (shown in red) in Nepal in support of the government's national nutrition policy.
- To understand resources needed to implement an integrated nutrition program at scale, we conducted a costing study of the SII program.



Methods

- Mixed methods cost analysis of Suaahara II program (2016-2020) using a societal perspective.
- Applied the **SEEMS-Nutrition approach** to analyze total and unit costs including financial and economic costs.
- Conducted **in-depth interviews** and **focus group discussions** involving **231 participants** to estimate economic/opportunity costs (time spent on SII activities, out of pocket (OOP) costs in 4 purposively selected districts diverse in geography, and length of participation).



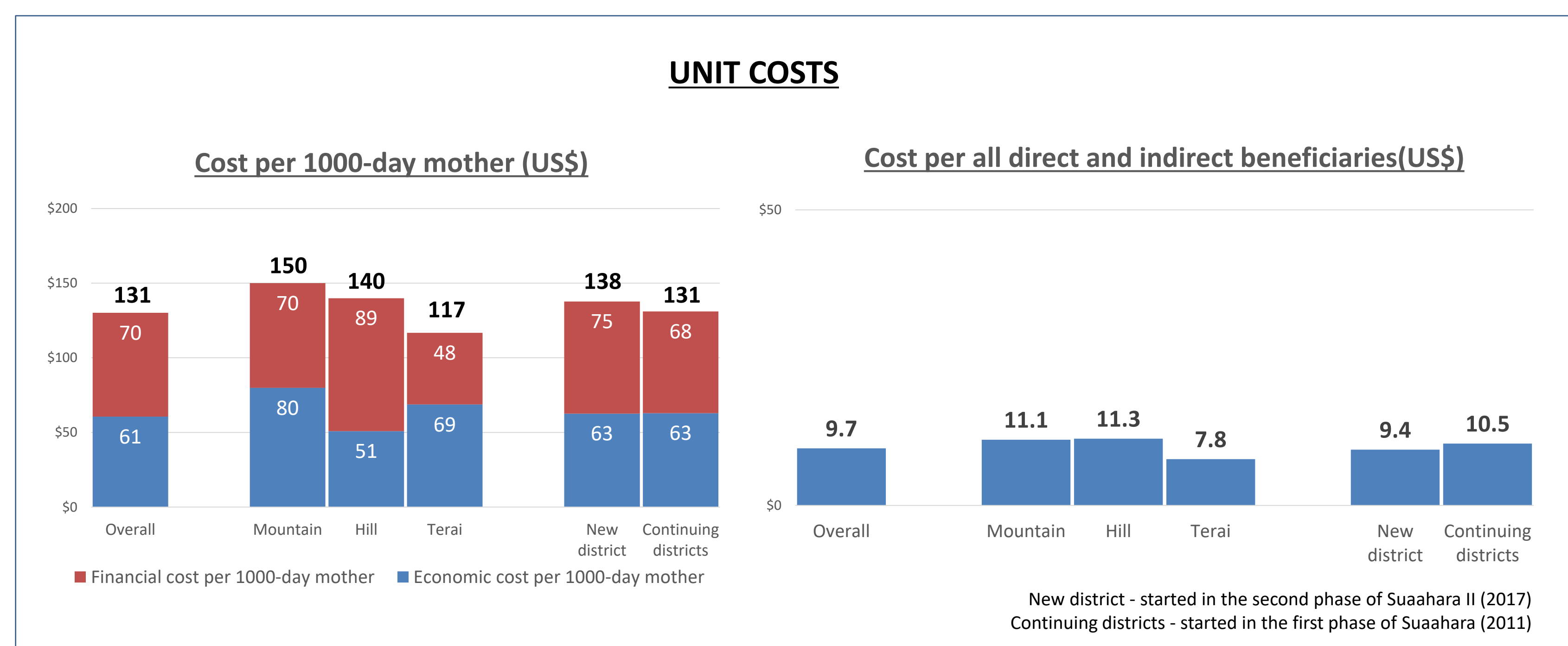
*National level costs per district include (1) shared program costs of above site activities; and (2) expenses paid at the national level for activities to support project implementation at the district or sub-district level.

Results

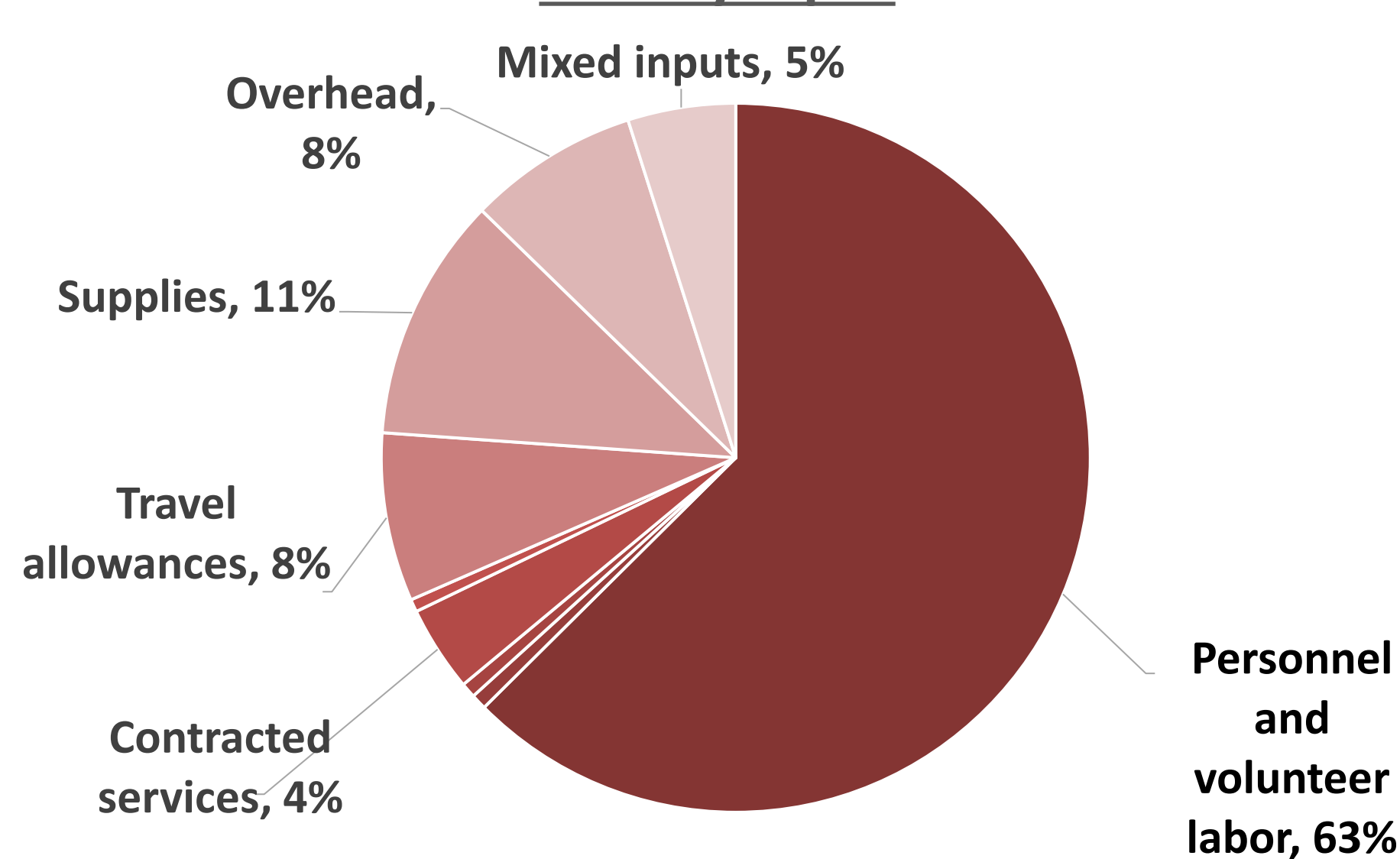
TOTAL COSTS

	Financial	Economic	Economic Cost %
Overall	\$480,072	\$418,298	47%
By agroecological zone			
Mountain	\$428,221	\$488,243	53%
Hill	\$378,767	\$366,276	49%
Terai	\$584,845	\$451,034	44%
By length of involvement			
New district	\$395,899	\$332,884	46%
Continuing districts	\$472,688	\$432,689	48%

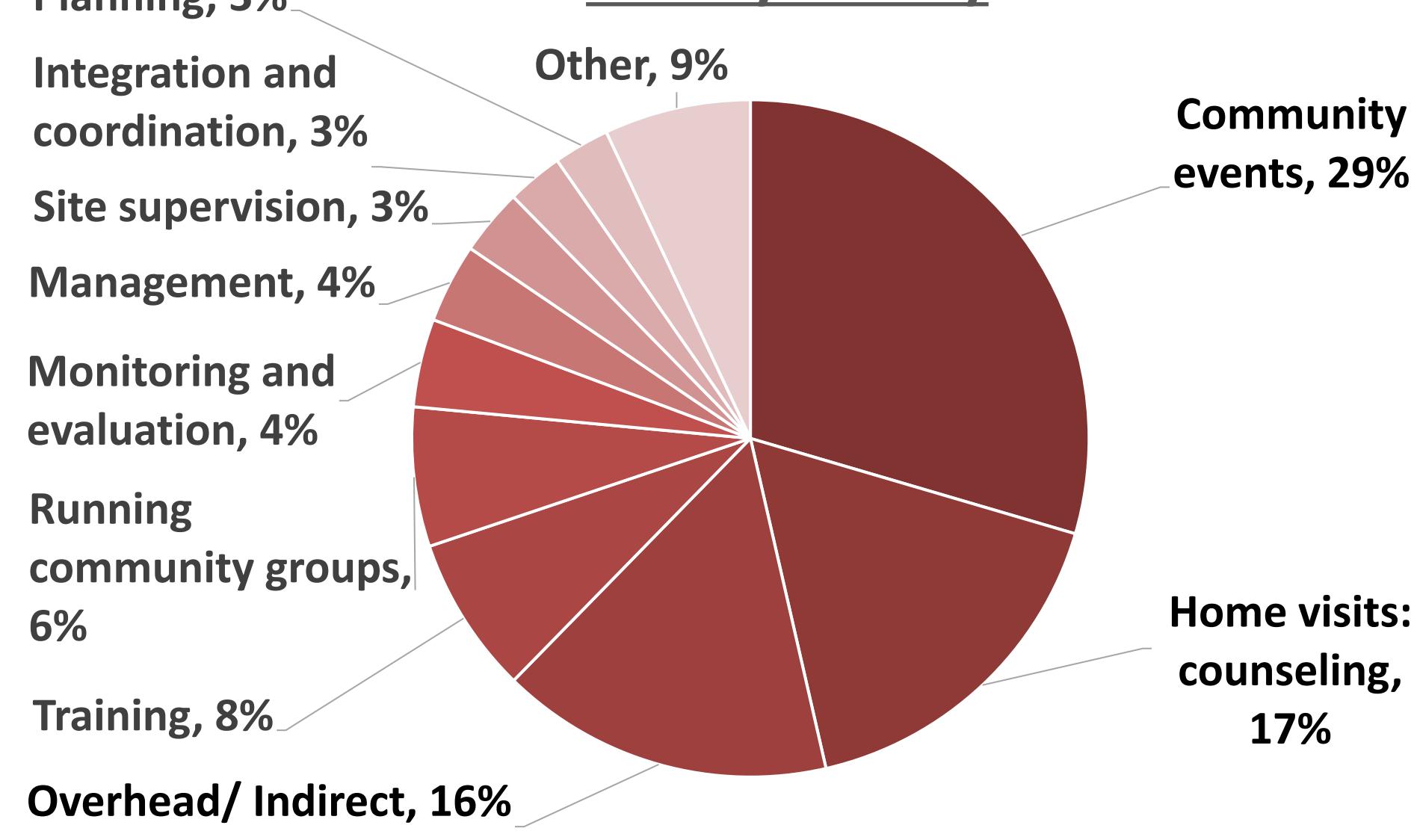
UNIT COSTS



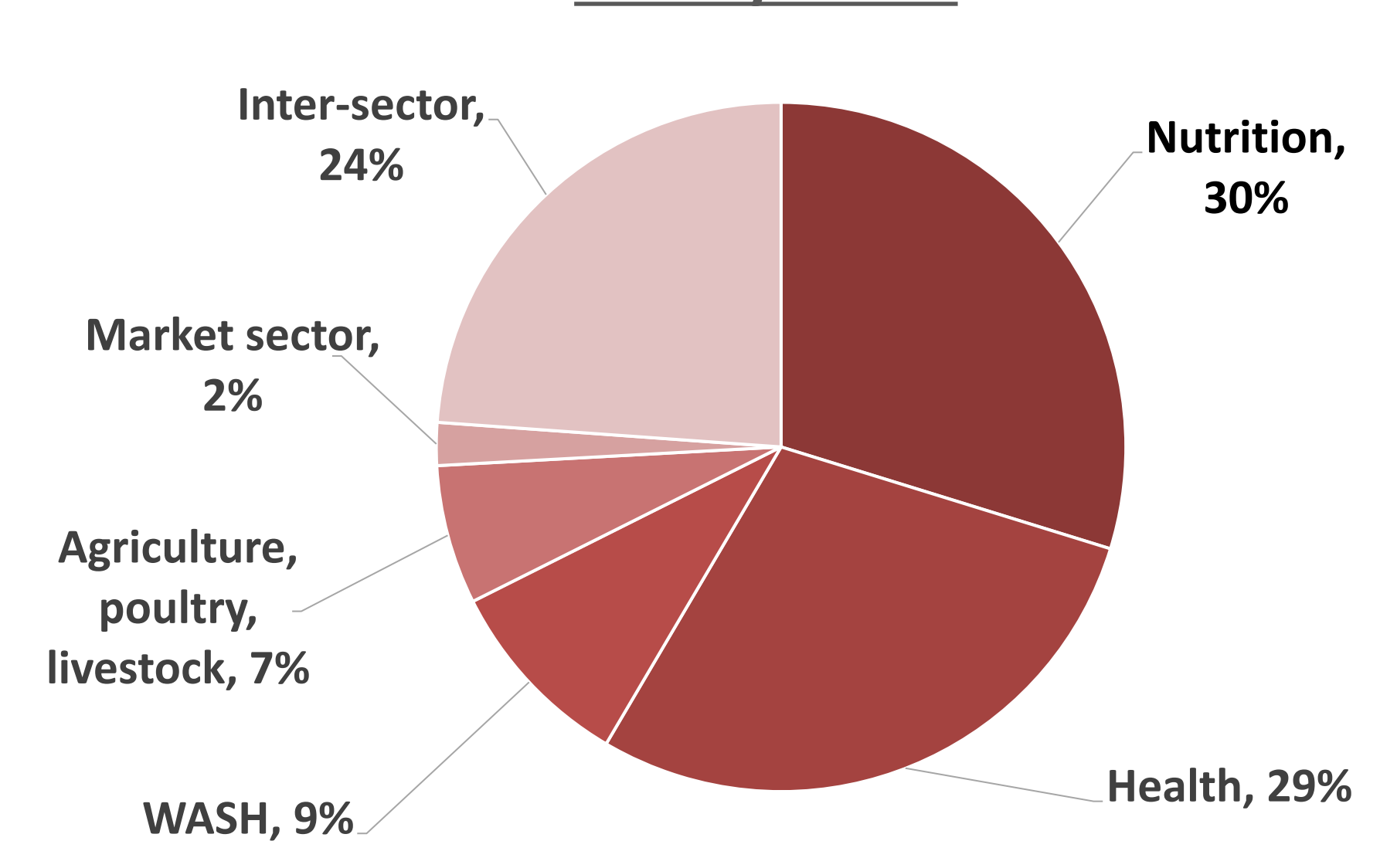
Cost by input



Cost by activity



Cost by sector



Discussion

- Unit costs estimates are comparable to costs of other integrated nutrition programs.^{1,2}
- Economic costs or opportunity costs of participants and frontline volunteers** account for a significant share of total costs.
- The program is costlier to implement in logistically remote mountain and hill districts.
- Personnel accounts for the largest share of input costs.
- Extension and community events account for the largest activity cost shares.
- The SEEMS Nutrition standard approach can improve comparability of costs for complex multisectoral nutrition programs, generating evidence for decision making and program planning.

Acknowledgements

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References

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