

SISN Symposia Sessions, ICN, Buenos Aires, October 2017

Symposium, Tuesday Oct 17th, 8:00-10:00, Hotel Sheraton, Room 4.

Using Implementation Research to Build Better Multisectoral Programs for Improving Maternal and Child Nutrition Outcomes.

Co-hosts: International Food and Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the Society for Implementation Science in Nutrition (SISN)

There is increasing evidence that multisectoral programs can improve maternal and child nutrition outcomes. However, multisectoral programs are complex and understanding the pathways by which such programs achieve impacts and how these pathways can be leveraged to optimize impacts is not well understood. Some of the knowledge gap can be addressed by designing a clear program theory framework as part of the evaluation design, and conducting a detailed impact pathway analysis. In recent years, there has been growing interest in using implementation research to address this knowledge gap, as reflected for example in the launch of SISN. In response to this interest, a new generation of well-designed large-scale comprehensive evaluations of multisectoral programs focused on improving nutrition now includes implementation research as part of their overall evaluation plan.

This symposium reports on recent experience using implementation research in the context of comprehensive evaluations of multisectoral programs to assess how programs achieve impact and how researchers have worked with program implementers to promote uptake of the findings for program strengthening and scale-up. The target audience for this session includes researchers, program implementers, donors, and policy makers who are interested in understanding how implementation research can be used to build better multisectoral programs.

The three learning objectives of this session are:

- 1) To strengthen the collective understanding of how implementation research can be used to build better multisectoral programs
- 2) To understand some of the challenges and opportunities of having program implementers and researchers working together to conduct implementation research
- 3) To catalyze collective action on using implementation research to build better multisectoral programs.

The introductory presentation in this session provides a general overview of what implementation research is and how it can be used to build better programs, drawing upon concepts highlighted by SISN.

Introduction		Dr Deanna Olney, International IFPRI. USA.
Speaker 1	Introduction: Using implementation research in the context of comprehensive evaluations of multisectoral programs to assess pathways of impact and interpret impact findings	Dr. Marie Ruel (Chair) Director Poverty, Health and Nutrition Division. IFPRI. USA.
Speaker 2	Lessons learned from the process evaluation of HKI's homestead food production program in Burkina Faso	Dr. Jennifer Nielsen Senior Nutrition Advisor. Hellen Keller International. USA.
Speaker 3	Using process evaluation results to understand program impacts and for optimizing program design to improve child nutrition outcomes	Dr. Deanna Olney
	Q&A - Questions on first 3 presentations	
Speaker 4	Scaling up behavior change interventions to improve child feeding: reflections on the use of research findings in program implementation and scale-up	Dr. Tina Sanghvi Alive & Thrive. FHI 360. USA.
Speaker 5	Addressing issues of scale, rigor and context in the design of evaluations of large-scale behavior change interventions in Bangladesh, Vietnam and Ethiopia	Dr. Purnima Menon IFPRI. India.
	Q&A - Questions on Alive and Thrive	
Speaker 6	Lessons learned from designing and implementing an integrated nutrition, livelihood and ECD project in Malawi	Ms. Natalie Roschnik Save the Children. UK.
Speaker 7	Optimizing an ECD-based, agriculture and nutrition program to improve the diets of pre-school children in Malawi	Dr. Aulo Gelli IFPRI, USA.
	Q&A - Questions about ECD-based agriculture and nutrition program in Malawi	
	General Discussion	

Evidence-Based Integration of Nutrition Across Multiple Sector Programs: How Can This Be Done?

Co-hosts: Nutrition International (NI) and SISN.

This symposium aims to provide to a diverse audience of academics, program managers, implementers, and policy makers, examples of systematic approaches to integrating nutrition into both – nutrition and non-nutrition sectors through a range of modalities. More specifically, it will describe a systematic approach to: a) optimizing opportunities to deliver nutrition interventions through existing multiple sector programs b) maximizing the demand for services provided by such interventions, and c) designing and applying efficient inter-sector coordination mechanisms. The symposium will centre around results of the recently conducted Integration Development Research (IDR) in Bangladesh in which systematic approaches were applied to identify opportunities for the integration of nutrition into multisector BRAC programs on health, nutrition, education, economic development, agriculture and food security, and community empowerment. It will also reflect on how the results of the IDR were incorporated into the programs and operationalized.

Five public health and nutrition experts will succinctly speak in this session, leaving ample opportunity for the audience to interact and dialogue. The **first** speaker will provide a critical review of the challenges and opportunities for successful integration and lay the foundation for the following presentations. The **second** and the **third** speakers will reflect on their field experience in designing and implementing integrated programs, within the context of a large, national-level non-government organization and government sectors respectively. The **fourth** presentation will describe how research can inform the systematic designing of integration of nutrition into multiple-sector programs, share results of a set of inter-dependent research that supported the integration, and how the recommended interventions were incorporated and operationalized by the programs. The **fifth** presentation will reflect on strategies used to promote linkages between service delivery units and household utilization across programs. **Finally**, a brief summary and way forward will be discussed to initiate the audience interaction.

Introduction		Chair: Luz Maria De-Regil, NI. Co-chair: Chowdhury Jalal, NI.
Speaker 1	Effective integration of nutrition into other sectors – Opportunities and challenges.	Purnima Menon, IFPRI.
Speaker 2	Integrated nutrition programming across government and non-government sectors in Timor-Leste – Strategies used to make collaboration at the household level the default.	Heather Grieve, Australian Embassy and Development Program Dili, Timor-Leste.
Speaker 3	Linking agriculture, gender, nutrition behavior change and microcredit interventions in Bangladesh: what are we learning about converging and integrating to reach households with multiple intervention streams?	Saiqa Siraj, IFPRI.
Speaker 4	Integration and scaling up nutrition within NGO Programs – Challenges and opportunities in Bangladesh.	Kaosar Afsana, BRAC
Speaker 5	Evidence-based designing of integration of nutrition into multiple-sector BRAC programs (INBP) – Overview of the research design.	Chowdhury Jalal, NI
Speaker 6	Strategy for integrated linkages between service delivery and household utilization across programs.	James Stephen Lee, Independent Consultant
	Discussion Summary and way forward	