Engaging grandmothers and men: a family-focused approach

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The Infant & Young Child Nutrition Project

- USAID’s flagship project on infant and young child nutrition.
- Aims to prevent malnutrition for mothers and children during the critical time from pregnancy until two years of age.
- Led by PATH in collaboration with CARE, The Manoff Group, and University Research Co., LLC.

Photo: PATH/Evelyn Hockstein
Malnutrition is a major contributor to the burden of disease worldwide

- Underlying cause of more than 1 of 3 child deaths in poor countries each year.
- More than 3.5 million children die each year.
- More than 10% of the total global disease burden.

Why grandmothers and men?

Photo: Judi Aubel
Influence on feeding behaviors

Infants <6 months:
• Almost 13% exclusive breastfed

Children 6-23 months:
• 30% consume a minimum acceptable diet
• 45% fed minimum diversity
• 58% fed minimum meal frequency

Photo: PATH/Evelyn Hockstein
Approach

- Literature review.
- Study on infant feeding practices of HIV+ mothers.
- Pre-test and idea exploration.
  - Male group leaders
  - CHWs on engaging grandmothers

Photo: Faith Thuita
Approach, continued

- Formative research on maternal, infant, and young child nutrition.
- World-wide literature review on grandmothers and men.
- Evaluation of intervention to engage grandmothers and fathers.

Photos: PATH/Evelyn Hockstein
Findings

- In general, knowledge about breastfeeding is much higher than that about complementary feeding.
- Grandmothers:
  - Respected
  - Involved in household decision-making
  - Frontline child caregivers

Photos: Faith Thuita
Findings, continued

- **Men:**
  - Culturally-defined father roles and responsibilities.
  - Listen to counsel of their mother.
  - Want more information.

Photos: PATH/Evelyn Hockstein
# Evaluation design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Arm 1: Intervention group</th>
<th>Arm 2: Intervention group</th>
<th>Arm 3: Comparison group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$O_1$</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>$O_2$</td>
<td>$O_c$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$O_3$</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>$O_4$</td>
<td>$O_c$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interventions:
- $X = \text{father engagement}$
- $Y = \text{grandmother engagement}$

- Grandmother-Mother pairs
  - Grandmother dialog groups
- Father-Mother pairs
  - Male dialog groups

Photos: Altrena Mukuria
Lessons learned

• Use a family-centered approach to behavior change for infant feeding and maternal nutrition.
• Men are not male women.
• Grandmothers are key influencers in the family.
• Address community norms, not just individual behaviors.
• Engage existing structures and networks.

Photos: PATH/Evelyn Hockstein and Altrena Mukuria
Recommendations

• Pay attention to the socio-cultural context.
• Take time to review literature and conduct formative research.
• Adopt a family-centered approach, do not just focus on the mother-child dyad.
• View grandmothers and men as resources, not obstacles.
Thank you

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