



Triggering for positive behaviour change in nutrition

Insights from Sustainable Nutrition for All in Uganda and Zambia

SUMMARY

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The potential of millions of children can be unlocked with good nutrition. Inadequate care and feeding practices, food insecurity, inequitable gender relations, an unhealthy household environment and inadequate health services are all leading contributors to early childhood malnutrition. Each of these underlying factors of undernutrition is heavily influenced on the one hand by external factors in the food environment, but also by behaviours related to food production and purchase, intrahousehold food distribution, care practices and hygiene.

Behaviour is complex. Currently, one of the best-known strategies for improving the impact of nutrition-sensitive interventions, including agriculture, and particularly effective in preventing stunting, is Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC). SBCC is a behaviour-centred approach to facilitating communities, households and individuals in understanding, adopting and sustaining improved nutrition-related practices. Demand for such practices from the households and the communities is dependent on knowledge, awareness, motivation to act, familiarity and habituation, which are often influenced by perceptions of social norms, attitudes and beliefs. Much of the existing nutrition-related SBCC effort has focused on increasing knowledge, awareness raising and/or sharing information; however some SBCC actors are using more participatory approaches to move beyond awareness to engage emotions and harness motivators. "Triggering", which is illustrated in this paper, is one such approach.

Recognising the importance of demand creation and SBCC, SNV, together with the Centre for Development Innovation of Wageningen UR (CDI) and the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT), and funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) developed the Sustainable Nutrition for All (SN4A) programme. SN4A is an integrated community-focused programme, reaching over 15,000 households in 4 districts in Uganda and Zambia. The objectives are to enhance availability

and access to nutritious food, improve dietary diversity and improve the health and nutritional status of households, particularly children under two years of age.

The pillars of SN4A relate to multi-sectoral governance, the supply of nutritious foods through agrobiodiversity, and SBCC. As part of the SBCC process, SN4A also adopts the triggering approach used in Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) from the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sector. The innovative method reaches families, including fathers and elders, in a culturally appropriate way that both respects and challenges traditional gender roles.

This technical brief provides an overview of community SBCC and triggering on positive nutrition and hygiene behaviours. It summarises some key insights and findings from SN4A in Zambia and Uganda, and aims to assist policymakers, practitioners and researchers in understanding the approaches and tools used and guide their investments in demand triggering and SBCC. Focus groups and interviews were conducted with governance staff, nutrition action groups (NAGs) and community members in November 2016 and in June 2017 and the findings are presented in the SN4A Technical Brief No.2. Policy recommendations based on the impact evaluation will be published in the upcoming Sustainable Nutrition for All policy brief.

Policy Recommendations

The SBCC strategy, including triggering, is a critical pillar of SN4A and can be adapted with effect in different contexts, as demonstrated in Zambia and Uganda. Based on the findings to date, and drawing evidence from other nutrition programmes with SBCC, SNV and the SN4A partners recommend that policymakers:

Support the scalability of community driven SBCC nutrition strategies in different contexts as part of nutrition programming,

without compromising on the effectiveness of the approach. This includes community mapping to identify the key nutrition issues and gender analysis of the barriers/opportunities as well as triggering for positive behaviour change. Give priority to high quality IPC, community platforms and home visits and complement this with other communication channels e.g. community radio or support groups.

Support the capacity building of district and sub-district frontline staff from different sectors to implement SBCC strategies.

The SBCC should be informed and developed conjointly with multi-sectoral nutrition platforms, both at the national and subnational level. An analysis of the human resource and financial capacity of the different sectors should be conducted to be clear about the roles and responsibilities of the staff from education, agriculture, health, community development, planning etc. Actions are required on many fronts, including well planned collaboration amongst various sectors and strengthening of existing structures, such as government health and agricultural extension services.

Build teams of multi-disciplinary members, with complementary skillsets and influential roles, and partner innovatively with traditional and non-traditional partners.

For example, involve religious leaders and teachers in mobilisation, facilitation etc.

Involve the communities themselves in the planning, implementation and review of the nutrition programme and ensure involvement of all members, male, female, young people and the elderly.

Work with the existing resources, support emerging leaders and nutrition champions in the communities as they are valuable resources for change.

Support the development, activation, implementation and review of national Food-based dietary guidelines (FBDGs).

These tools can play an important role in promoting principles and practices to support healthy diets. In order for these to be effective, they should be evidence based and widely used to not only guide nutrition education, but also policies and programmes in other sectors. The five finger guideline is an effective tool as piloted in SN4A (Appendix 1 of SN4A Technical Brief No. 2). Inclusion of nationally promoted materials is important, but it is also critical to adapt these to local contexts. In SN4A, the importance of nutrition for the whole family and how everyone has a role to play is important.

Target emotional drivers of improved nutrition behaviours in a sensitive manner.

This is a promising avenue for increasing the effectiveness of behaviour change interventions particularly amongst the more vulnerable members of a population.

Use existing resources at community level to implement nutrition interventions. Using schools proved to be a natural and effective way to reach children and their parents.

Children are empowered at an early age with critical nutrition education. While in school, children can have a strong influence on their parents by discussing for example, the 'five finger' messages and requesting to eat food from the five food groups. Through the small animals intervention in schools, children learn how to increase supply of animal meat at household level.

Leverage and expand the existing programmes to break down gender barriers to practicing optimal nutrition behaviours over time.

Agricultural programmes typically target male farmers and established female farmers due to the male bias in extension services. Health and nutrition education programmes, tend to engage women and children, and to focus on children during the first 1000 days of life, because of women's perceived traditional roles as primary care givers. Integrated nutrition programmes have the potential to break down these gender stereotypes. This can be achieved by tailoring interventions to better address the different opportunities and constraints faced by female and male farmers in their production and consumption behaviour. This entails developing services that do no harm, and promote more active encouragement of male household members in the household, and the promotion of services that are better tailored to the multiple roles of women within the household. The next generation of nutrition sensitive programming needs to address underlying intra-household dynamics which affect many of the agriculture nutrition pathways. This requires building in effective mechanisms to monitor how different interventions on SBCC change these behaviours.

photo front page: Training Nutrition Action Group (NAG) members in Kasese district, Uganda © SNV/Denis Onyodi

photo back page: Nsenyi primary school nutrition assembly in Kasese district. © SNV/Denis Onyodi

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