

Multisectoral Initiative to Address the Issue of Nutrition Among Children Residing in the Remote and Tribal Odisha

N Chakravarty¹, S Bhattacharjee², A Ahuja³, A Nair⁴, BP Mohapatra⁵, F Sultana⁵, P Choudhury⁵, S Nallala¹, L Nanda¹

¹PHFI (IIPH B), ²UNICEF, ³Dept. of WCD, ⁴Social Welfare, ⁵Dept. of H&FW, Odisha

Background

- More than 44 percent of children under the age of 3 underweight and 38 percent stunted in Odisha (IIPS and Macro International 2007).
- One of the challenges to addressing this issue has been the lack of trained frontline workers to address and refer children to appropriate health institutions for appropriate health care and treatment.
- A multi-sectoral partnership was initiated in September 2012 among the Department of Women and Child Development, the Department of Health and Family Welfare, the National Health Mission, the Government of Odisha, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the Public Health Foundation of India, with funding support from the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department.
- The initiative aimed to build the capacity of supervisors and child development project officers from the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) to understand and manage the issue of stunting in children.
- Selected auxiliary nurse midwives (ANMs) and nutrition counsellors from areas with a high prevalence of childhood stunting were also trained.

Figure Title



Figure above: Ongoing training on WASH, Malkangiri
Figure Below: Community faces, Koraput



Findings

- The resulting training program is unique in that it is evidence based and comprehensive, covering all aspects that influence stunting. The training curriculum is also delivered in an innovative manner, using a mix of audio, visual, and lecture.
- The results from the pre-tests and post-tests for the trainings indicate that new knowledge significantly increased among trainees (PHFI and IIPH 2014).
- Feedback from participants showed that use of audio-visual aids during the sessions made trainings interesting for them.
- Key success factors are: One was that each of the partners came with a unique set of skills and domain expertise: UNICEF offered support in streamlining funding, trainers, and technical knowledge; PHFI offered curriculum development and technical knowledge; and the government agencies offered leadership and logistical support to ensure that everyone was trained.
- Proactive involvement of senior leaders from all organizations, which helped the junior members and officers to stay motivated.
- Finally, a strong sense of urgency in the face of the glaring problem of childhood stunting compelled partners to fully commit to the initiative.

Lessons Learned/ Conclusion

- The initiative also faced several challenges.
- Technically and logistically, one challenge was to develop a comprehensive curriculum that integrated the expertise of several different experts.
 - Managing the timeline with so many experts was also difficult, which resulted in delays in the module-development process.
 - This initiative demonstrated that with patience and high-level coordination among different sets of stakeholders from different agencies and with diverse perspectives, a successful training curriculum can be designed and delivered.

Resources to Learn More

- E-modules focusing on reduction of stunting and management of Severe Acute Malnutrition were developed.
- The modules are available in the public domain as an open access. Please find the link below to discover more:
<http://www.nutritionmoduleodisha.in/>

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Contact Information

Nayan Chakravarty, nayan.Chakravarty@iiphb.org, PHFI (IIPH B)
Sourav Bhattacharjee, sbhattacharjee@unicef.org, UNICEF

Intervention

This project was implemented in three distinct phases:

- Phase I focused on developing a classroom based training curriculum,
- Phase II focused on translating some of the curriculum into an online training course, and
- Phase III focused on using the classroom-based curriculum to train all 2,200 ICDS supervisors and 220 selected ANMs in Odisha.
- In Phases I and II, Comprehensive training modules were developed, on the basics of nutrition, water and sanitation, infant and young child feeding practices, facility-based management of severe acute malnutrition (SAM), childhood illness, behaviour change communication, and monitoring and evaluation.
- In Phase III, ICDS, with technical assistance from PHFI and UNICEF, organized 2-day trainings, in small batches of 40 members each across all 30 districts of the state.
- Staff from PHFI and officials from ICDS and the Department of Health and Family Welfare delivered the trainings using a mix of lecture and video-recorded modules with voiceover.
- UNICEF and PHFI jointly monitored the quality of the trainings by administering a pre- and post-knowledge assessment and self-administered questionnaire to each participant of the trainings.

To scale up the initiative, the partners are now finalizing the online training course focused on stunting and SAM management. The Department of Women and Child Development is willing to host the course on its website.



Figure above: E-module on reduction of stunting and management of SAM

Figure below: Activities undertaken at various phases during the project

