

CONCEPT NOTE

Delivering for Nutrition in South Asia: Implementation Research in the Context of COVID-19

December 1-2, 2021

Virtual Event

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

IFPRI's Partnerships and Opportunities to Strengthen and Harmonize Actions for Nutrition in India (POSHAN), together with the event co-hosts, are pleased to announce the virtual conference, '**Delivering for Nutrition in South Asia: Implementation Research in the Context of COVID-19,**' which will be held **December 1-2, 2021**.

COVID-19 has impacted health and nutrition services, food systems, and economies of low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). In particular, the pandemic has exacerbated the challenges faced by the most vulnerable groups, including pregnant and lactating women and young children.

Implementers across South Asia are working diligently to ensure program continuity, while fulfilling new pandemic-related functions. Additionally, frontline workers (FLWs) are navigating new pressures around time and workload, while program participants face safety concerns and new challenges related to program uptake. Governments and development partners are continuously rethinking service delivery modalities out of necessity, which is creating opportunities to advance innovation and efficacy in implementation.

There is an urgency to share evidence and insights from implementation research and experiences to learn from program adaptations and ensure continued delivery and uptake. Emerging data must be quickly distilled into practical insights that can be acted upon locally, nationally, and regionally.

This is the first South Asia-focused virtual conference on implementation research, anchored by IFPRI's flagship nutrition initiative in India, POSHAN. This conference will bring together policymakers, program implementers, and researchers in the South Asia region to consider implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on nutrition programming in the short- and long-term. Previous India-focused implementation research conferences were held in 2016, 2019, and 2020.

PURPOSE

To bring together evidence that can inform and support current policy and program initiatives in South Asia for improving maternal and child nutrition during global crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

OBJECTIVES

- Share evidence of the impact of COVID-19 on maternal and child nutrition
- Highlight adaptations to support implementation of health and nutrition interventions and social safety net programs

- Identify lessons learned from implementing programs to support maternal and child nutrition during the pandemic

PROCESS

Through an open call, we invite abstracts on research studies and implementation experiences, explicitly focused on COVID-19, and related to:

- Implementation, coverage, and quality of maternal and child health and nutrition interventions/programs;
- Implementation, coverage, and quality of social safety net programs;
- Impacts on infant and young child feeding practices, diet quality, food security, nutritional status or other outcomes; or
- Other relevant implementation or research on nutrition and COVID-19

PARTICIPANTS

This conference will convene academics, implementers, development partners, and policymakers to share and discuss evidence on strengthening the implementation of maternal and child nutrition initiatives in South Asia.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The discussions and deliberations emerging from this conference are expected to convey research-based insights to nutrition stakeholders and policymakers to bolster actions for tackling undernutrition in South Asia.

CO-HOSTS

- Aga Khan University (*Pakistan*)
- Alive & Thrive (*India*)
- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) (*India*)
- Helen Keller International (HKI) (*Nepal*)
- IDinsight (*South Asia*)
- Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) (*Sri Lanka*)
- International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (icddr,b) (*Bangladesh*)
- International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) (*South Asia*)
- National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) (*India*)
- NITI Aayog (*India*)
- Standing Together for Nutrition (STfN) (*Global*)
- Society for Implementation Science in Nutrition (SISN) (*Global*)

- UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA) (*Regional*)
- World Health Organization South-East Asian Regional Office (WHO-SEARO) (*Regional*)
- World Bank South Asia (*Regional*)

For more information on the conference, please visit the [Delivering for Nutrition 2021 website](#).