

## **Summary of Report**

The perceived efficiency of development activities related to improving infant and young child nutrition in low-income countries.

Data collected from surveys and interviews with informants from the Development community

October 2008

Prepared by Sophie Peloquin, BSc. Nutrition

As part of the  
Master Programme in Public Health Sciences in Applied Public Health Nutrition

Karolinska Institute, Stockholm, Sweden

## Pros and Cons of the different strategies used by development organisations to promote IYCN (as presented by a majority of the informants)

Strategies	Focus should be on...	Impeding elements are...
<p><b>To promote exclusive Breastfeeding up to 6 months</b></p> <p>Large amount of evidence supporting the benefits of exclusive BF up to 6 mths.</p> <p>Exclusive breastfeeding up to 6 months of age is one of the most efficient intervention for child survival.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Create an enabling environment for breastfeeding (policies to help mother exclusively BF, community support)</li> <li>-Give attention to the Mother's health (supplementation, psychological health).</li> <li>-Educate on mother and child bonding(breastfeeding is a care issue)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Numerous challenges to extended exclusive breastfeeding when women are the household's breadwinner</li> </ul>
<p><b>Education on Infant and young children feeding practices</b></p> <p>A lot has been done to educate on breastfeeding but little on proper complementary feeding.</p> <p>Education is one of the most efficient ways to improve IYCN.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Provide information on proper sanitation, hygiene practices, refrigeration and re-heating, etc.</li> <li>-Educate on the importance of proper feeding during illness and after illness</li> <li>-Educate on the importance to increase food diversity (increasing number of food crops cultivated in subsistence agriculture)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Education would have no impact in a food insecure community.</li> <li>-Time for the preparation of complementary food is an issue in poor community when women cannot afford to stop working.</li> <li>-Cultural barriers to offering food that are rich in iron (animal foods.</li> <li>-Food diversity is very low in many countries.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Increase availability and accessibility to nutritious complementary foods in the commercial market</b></p> <p>Complementary feeding is one of the most efficient way to reduce stunting in children under 2 years of age.</p> <p>Commercial complementary foods can decrease the time of food preparation. Lack of time is an issue due to economic constraint in many developing countries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Put emphasis on local complementary foods.</li> <li>-Forbid promotion of complementary foods for children below 6 months of age as this risk displacing breastfeeding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Commercially available fortified complementary foods do not reach the poorest. Never going to be cheap enough for a market-based approach.</li> <li>-Fear of violation of the Code<sup>a</sup>.</li> <li>-Creation of a dependency on commercial products.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Advocacy work</b></p> <p>Leadership is needed in advocacy, too many people reaching for government attention with different messages.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Ensure that all messages carry a shared vision</li> <li>-Advocate for policies pushing for an enabling environment for Breastfeeding and complementary feeding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Topics of major importance for advocacy may not be the same for all the stakeholders</li> </ul>
<p><b>Public-private partnerships</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Assess the potential conflict of interest in PPPs carefully.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- For funding issues, people have a tendency not to work together.</li> <li>-Private companies working together with NGOs can reduce credibility and trust and could hinder the possibilities for other collaborations with Governments or other NGOs</li> </ul>

<p><b>Complementary foods prepared from locally available products</b></p> <p>Education on how to use local resources is a sustainable strategy for the poor.</p>	<p>-Educate on the ways to prepare safe and nutritious complementary foods from local products</p>	<p>-Locally available food may not always be sufficient to meet all micronutrient needs (especially for iron).</p>
<p><b>Supplementation programs</b></p> <p>Supplementation is very efficient and cost-effective with some nutrients, such as vitamin A.</p>	<p>-Identify and target the population at risk in each different situation (at the country or lower level) - Determine the cost-effectiveness and the health risk and benefits of each supplementation program before implementation.</p>	<p>-Mass fortification of staple foods is inefficient with infants and young children, as their intake of these foods are too low to benefit from the added nutrients.</p>
<p><b>Sprinkles added to home-prepared food</b></p> <p>Sprinkles can be a cheaper and more sustainable way to provide adequate micronutrient intake than industrially prepared FCF.</p>	<p>-Ensure nutrient adequacy of home prepared complementary food from locally available products -Respect and promotion of traditional weaning foods</p>	<p>-Sprinkles can also be used in an improper way. If one has to pay for it, it may be saved, used too sparingly, which means the food would still be lacking nutrients.</p>
<p><b>Commercially available FCF</b></p> <p>Commercial FCF are easy and quick to prepare.</p>	<p>-Educate on HOW to adequately use commercially available fortified complementary foods. -Make FCF accessible and affordable even to the lowest sectors of the society. -Establish a legislation to ensure nutritional adequacy of ALL commercial FCF. -Evaluate the economic realities of each specific country before implementing market-based solutions</p>	<p>-Market-based approaches do not work in developing countries. This has not been yet proven as a viable option.</p>

- <sup>a</sup> : The code refers to the International Code for Marketing of Breastmilk substitutes

## **Support of the strategies to improve IYCN in low-income countries (as perceived by the majority of stakeholders)**

- The private sector is not seen as having a role to play in BF promotion, neither should it get involved in advocating to government for an increased commitment towards IYCN issues.
- Advocacy work to raise IYCN issues on the political and development agenda should mainly be the mandate of International organisations, although multi-sector alliances such as GAIN and BF advocacy groups can also play a role.
- BF promotion should be the role of International Organisations and BF advocacy groups.
- All stakeholders have a role to play in education and promotion of proper feeding practices.
- Ensuring increased availability and accessibility to nutritious complementary foods (including developing and marketing low cost commercial FCF) seemed to be the least supported intervention strategies. When implemented, it should be the mandate of the local government of developing countries along with the private sector and multi-sector alliances (such as the GAIN).
- All members of the international community should aim at working together towards a unique goal: to improve infant and young child nutrition along with maternal nutrition in developing countries.

## **Our major challenges in IYCN related issues**

### *Money*

“We know what do to we just don't have the money to do it.”

“Because of funding issues, people have a tendency not to work together”

### *Priority setting*

Nutrition is not a top priority in many countries.

### *Clear and adapted messages*

NO one fit all answer.

Strategies HAVE TO vary from one country to another

How to adapt messages to all circumstances on complementary feedings?

Different sectors sending different messages.

For efficient advocacy: we have to work in partnership with a common (shared) message

### *The role of the Private sector*

How to ensure respect of the Code?

Is there a role for the private sector in education on breastfeeding and complementary feeding?

Are we ready for more public-private partnerships (PPPs) in the field of IYCN?

What can be the short-term and long-term risks and benefits of PPPs?

## **What should be our main focus in new projects targeting IYCN?**

- Educating mothers about adequate complementary feeding
- Investing in operational research
- Meeting all the needs of the developing child in poverty setting (some research have shown needs in some nutrients can not be met from locally available foods).
- Working with life cycle as an entry point to communicate and intervene at all levels where nutrition is essential.
- Developing a horizontal model combining IYCN to other essential actions that have to be done within nutrition (maternal nutrition for example).