Nutrition Embedding Evaluation Programme: Lessons from civil society organizations on conducting quality nutrition impact evaluations

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Objectives:

• Build the capacity of DFID and partner organizations to identify and measure the results of their investments in nutrition-related interventions.
• Address knowledge gaps on the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of nutrition interventions and how they can be delivered at scale.
• Support civil society organizations to strengthen their ability to carry out effective evaluations of their nutrition-related interventions.
• Disseminate evidence of best practices for impact.

Summary

• NEEP was a 4-year program (2013-2017) funded by DFID and implemented by PATH.
• Its focus was in conducting robust, small-scale, and cost-effective impact evaluations.
• 18 civil society organizations received grants and evaluation technical assistance (ETA).
Nutrition Embedding Evaluation Programme: Gap Analysis and Findings

Number of CSOs that required ETA for different technical focus n=20
Abbreviation: CSO, civil society organization; IYCF, infant and young child feeding; MAM, moderate acute malnutrition; M&E monitoring and evaluation; SAM, severe acute malnutrition; WASH, water, sanitation, and hygiene.

Tools for collecting lessons learned:
- Grantee monthly/quarterly updates
- Telephone calls (individual and group)
- Global workshops
- SharePoint website
- Learning sessions at international conferences
- Weekly staff meetings
- Quarterly reporting
- Project completion report & final process report

Indicators (standardized & nutrition outcomes)
- Intervention design: IYCF
- M&E plans and frameworks
- Data analysis

Interpretation of results, reporting and communicating results
- Intervention design: Cost-effectiveness
- Intervention design: Agriculture/nutrition
- Intervention design: Other
- Intervention design: Early childhood development
- Intervention design: Anemia/micronutrients
- Technical support: Nutritionist

Managing evaluation implementation & monitoring performance
- Survey instrument design
- Sampling and sample size
- Evaluation design
- Intervention design: WASH
- Intervention design: SAM/MAM
- Intervention design: Adolescents
- Data analysis: Nutritional outcomes
- Intervention design: Behavioral/psychosocial
- Technical support: Economist
- Data analysis: Quantitative or qualitative
- Technical support: Statistician
- Data analysis: Costing

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Challenges and Lessons Learned

1) **Institutional review board approval (IRB) process:** allocating extensive amount of time for the IRB process as well as having a comprehensive understanding of the process, including the need to include all study components in the application, the application and renewal requirements from designated IRB, and the benefits of utilizing institutional support of the research partner to speed up these processes.

2) **Protocol development:** involving key evaluation stakeholders—such as the principal investigator, research partner, or field staff—from the very beginning of the evaluation design to build strong relationships, gather insight on the study, and allow for a better understanding of the evaluation as a whole.

3) **Data collection:** ensuring adequate time, resources, and data available to carry out data collection at both baseline and endline, including sufficient human resources, transport, and appointment setting. Field staff should also be adequately sensitized to the study and have the appropriate training to carry out the data collection effectively.

4) **Reporting of results:** the importance of following available international/national guidance on how to present the evaluation results, either based on technical standards or based on journal requirements.

ETA Program model: Created a model for future ETA programs by examining the NEEP experience and highlighting lessons learned and accomplishments from the perspectives of the CSOs, the NEEP program team, and the donor DFID in conducting and providing ETA for robust nutrition impact evaluations.

Implication for Future Programs

https://journals.sagepub.com/eprint/9ETS9A6M2XAX9CGNXTNH/full
THANK YOU!

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