



LANSA

Leveraging Agriculture for
Nutrition in South Asia



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

Lessons learnt from a mixed-methods feasibility assessment of integrating agriculture and nutrition behaviour change intervention with financial incentive to improve maternal and infant nutrition in rural Bangladesh

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Objectives

- › Assess feasibility, acceptability and compliance of an intervention that integrates agriculture and nutrition behavior change with cash transfer to improve maternal and child nutrition among disadvantaged rural families in Bangladesh.



The intervention

Mobile phone

Given to all
women

Monthly
recharge

Training & Counselling

Home
gardening

Infant feeding

Cash transfer

Monthly
1200 Taka
(USD 14)

bKash



Design and methods

1. Formative research

- In-depth interviews of parents of <2 children; FGDs; Key Informant interviews

2. Stakeholder consultation

- Shared formative research findings
- Interactive exchange of opinions
- Finalised intervention design

3. Feasibility assessment



Design and methods..

3. Feasibility assessment

› Qualitative

- In-depth interviews of mothers & fathers of <2 children
- Focus groups with grandmothers
- Key informant interviews:
 - Agriculture and nutrition counsellors
 - Project Officer and Manger
 - Mobile (*bKash*) banking operators

› Quantitative

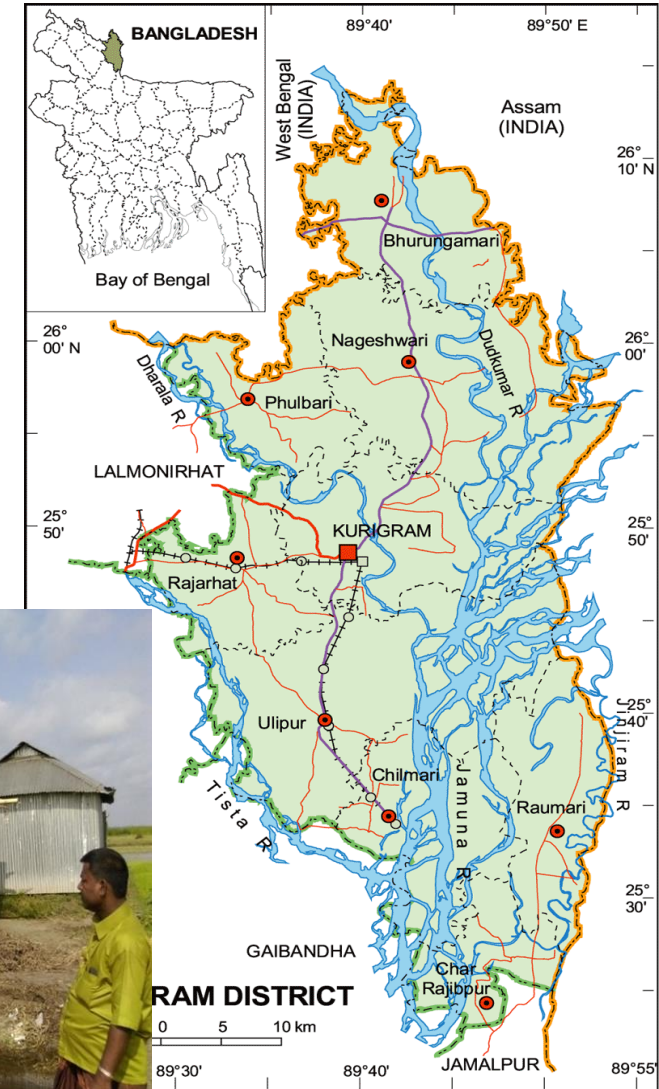
- Household survey of women



Design and methods..

› Study site

- WFP's Bangladesh Poverty Map 2015
- Two villages in Kurigram district
- Bank of Tista River (close by & further away)



Findings

Compliance

- › All women attended fortnightly agriculture and nutrition counselling sessions
- › No woman missed monthly cash
- › All women attended garden bed demonstration group meetings
- › All women established their own homestead garden without much difficulty



"We could give time to the counsellors. They usually visited us at home when we had less household works. Sometimes they informed us before coming, sometimes did not." (Woman, 23)

Understanding the content & knowledge retention

- › Women well understood information provided through both counselling and demonstration
- › Most women were able to recall the content

“Krishikormi’ (Agriculture Counsellor) told us to use a bucket for watering, use fertilizer or cow dung and pesticides. They told us to mix fertilizer with water and spray it.” (Woman, 20)



Use of cash

- › Generally used for purchasing foods for children
- › Buy seeds, fertilise
- › Used for incidental needs (i.e. child illness)
- › Saved for anticipated emergency
- › Small investment (hen, goat)
- › Most women independently decided about spending money
- › Some women consulted husband

Everyone has good comments on my receiving money from this project. I can spend money as I wish, my husband says nothing. Now, I can buy anything that I prefer for my child. There is no need to ask money from my husband. I, myself, spend my own money. (Woman, 19)



Experience of owning a mobile phone

- › Women were very pleased to be a first time mobile owner
- › Increased women's interaction with family
- › Needed husbands help for charging the phone during power failure
- › Mostly used phone for calling; sometimes for listening to music
- › Few needed help from a family member to read SMS



"I can call (my husband) in case of any problem using this mobile phone. I have been benefited, because my husband has one mobile phone that he always keeps with him and carry it wherever he goes. Now, if my husband goes outside he calls me in my phone if necessary, isn't it good for me?" (Woman, 31)

Findings..

Perceived usefulness of the project

- › Provided new knowledge of child nutrition
- › Increased capability of home gardening
- › Improved means of communication with husband and relatives
- › Provided 'own income' to women

"I liked it because I learned from it. ...I also liked the nutrition information as I didn't know such information earlier. Now I know and understand the importance of eating nutritious food; (now I know) feeding (the child) vegetables would provide vitamins." (Woman, 22)



"In the past, quite often the seeds I planted did not grow. I have been benefited after I planted (seeds) according to the instructions of the 'Krishikormi Dada' (brother agriculture worker) about how to sow (seeds). (Woman, 31)

Barriers to compliance

- › Restriction on women's movement
- › Domestic animals damaging the garden
- › Excessive rains
- › Mobile banking agent fee
- › Shortage of electricity to charge the phone
- › Requirement of national ID card



"Rainfall washed away (the seeds) but I planted the seeds again. Cow and goats have damaged the vegetables, so I have surrounded (the garden with fence) as advised by the Krishikormi Bhai (Agriculture Counsellor)."
(Woman 20)

Quantitative results

	n	%
Received counselling on homestead gardening	58	100
Established homestead gardening after counselling	58	100
Received nutrition counselling	58	100
Received all monthly cash through bKash	58	100
Person who withdrew cash		
Women herself	23	39.7
Husband	33	56.9
Children	58	100.0
Relatives	5	8.6
Purpose of spending cash		
Purchase seeds	13	22.4
Purchase fertilizer	10	17.2
Purchase foods	53	91.4
Child's study	3	5.2
Other (health, medicine, small livestock, child clothing, fencing)	34	58.6

Conclusion

- › Combining nutrition-sensitive agriculture with nutrition-specific and -sensitive interventions can be a feasible and acceptable approach to the community to improve infant feeding practices
- › Using mobile phone technologies can provide additional benefit to reach the disadvantage families
- › Social safety net and mobile phone could catalyst women's improved position in the family
- › Large-scale trial is needed to assess the impact and scalability of the approach



Study team

- › The University of Sydney
 - Michael Dibley, Anowarul Bokshi, Mu Li, Robyn McConchie
- › International Centre for Diarrheal Disease Research, Bangladesh
 - Mansura Khanam, Gulshan Ara
- › Solidarity Kurigram
 - Harun Ar Rashid

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Questions?