



Research and Evaluation Activities

by

**Research Training and Management
International (RTMI)**

Nutrition



Nutrition

- **Endline evaluation of the Max Foundation ‘Max Nutri-WASH’ programme in South Coastal areas of Bangladesh (July - December 2021)**

Client: KIT Royal Tropical Institute

This evaluation focused on assessing the outcomes of the Max Foundation's ‘Max Nutri-WASH’ programme, which was implemented in the South Coastal areas of Bangladesh. The programme aimed to improve health outcomes by promoting better WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) practices, nutritional behaviors, and growth monitoring, particularly for children.

The objective of the endline evaluation was to determine whether there had been any significant behavioral changes in these communities related to WASH and nutritional practices and how the Max Foundation contributed to these changes. The study also sought to evaluate the programme’s impact on child growth and health in the intervention areas.

The evaluation used a mixed-methods approach:

- Quantitative data were collected from 800 respondents across 40 unions within the intervention area, covering districts like Patuakhali, Barguna, Khulna, Satkhira, and Jessore. The target groups included caretakers of children under five, caretakers of children under two, pregnant women, grandmothers, adolescents, and government health workers.
- Qualitative data were gathered through 20 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and 22 In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) conducted in five selected unions. Key informants included project health staff (HPA and CHP), union and village-level stakeholders, and school teachers.
- The evaluation revealed that the programme had led to improvements in WASH practices, nutritional behaviors, and overall health awareness, contributing to better health outcomes, especially for young children in these coastal areas.

- **School Nutrition for Adolescent Project (SNAP) (June 2019-July 2020)**

Client: Nutrition International (NI)

The School Nutrition for Adolescents Project (SNAP) was designed to determine whether secondary schools could serve as effective platforms for delivering key health interventions, specifically focusing on iron-folic acid supplementation (WIFS), WASH education, menstrual hygiene management, nutrition education, and behavior change interventions.

This project took place between May 2019 and August 2020 in two districts of northern Bangladesh. RTM International was tasked with evaluating the project's impact on adolescent health and nutrition, particularly in terms of their knowledge and behaviors related to nutrition and hygiene.

RTM International used a cross-sectional survey design for the evaluation:

- Baseline and endline surveys were conducted with a total of 3,600 adolescent boys and girls in 75 schools in Jaypurhat district. The surveys aimed to measure changes in health behaviors, iron-folic acid intake, hygiene practices, and nutrition awareness among the students.

- The project was implemented through a partnership involving Nutrition International (NI), BRAC, and CDC, with RTM International focusing on the evaluation component.

The results indicated that schools had proven to be effective platforms for delivering nutrition and health education. Adolescents demonstrated increased awareness of iron-folic acid supplementation, menstrual hygiene, and general nutrition, which positively impacted their overall health.

- **Conduct an Endline Survey in the Intervention and Control population of the Max Foundation ‘GrowingUpUpUp’ project (October - December 2019)**

Client: KIT Royal Tropical Institute

The ‘GrowingUpUpUp’ project was a three-year initiative aimed at reducing stunting among children in the Sylhet division of Bangladesh. The project provided access to clean drinking water, improved sanitation, hygiene services, and nutrition education to drive behavioral changes that would reduce the prevalence of stunting.

RTM International was contracted to conduct the endline survey to evaluate the project's effectiveness. The evaluation aimed to measure the prevalence of stunting in the intervention areas at the end of the project and compare it to a control area. The goal was to understand how the intervention had impacted child health and the factors contributing to its success or limitations.

The endline survey employed a mixed-methods approach:

- Quantitative data were collected through interviews with 1,111 caretakers of children under two and under five years old across three unions (two intervention unions and one control union). The survey focused on health, hygiene, nutrition practices, and access to WASH services.
- Qualitative data were gathered through 12 FGDs and 18 IDIs with caretakers, younger females of reproductive age, and local stakeholders in the intervention unions.

- **Conduct a Baseline survey in the control population of the Max Foundation ‘Max Nutri-WASH’ project aiming to reduce stunting in children under the age of 2 (April 2019- July 2019)**

Client: KIT Royal Tropical Institute

According to a recent statistic, 56% of all stunted children worldwide lived in Asia. Stunted children remained shorter in comparison to the standard height-for-age ratio. For example, the Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey 2014 reported that 36% of children under 5 were stunted. Rural children were more likely to be stunted (38%) than urban children (31%). The highest prevalence was in Sylhet division (50%) and the lowest in Khulna division (28%). To capture this variation, KIT Royal Tropical Institute contracted RTM International to conduct a baseline survey in the control population for the Max Foundation’s ‘Max Nutri-WASH’ project, which aimed to reduce stunting in children under the age of 2. The objective of the study was to gather primary data on WASH, child nutrition, child health, and access to and services related to SRHR. A quantitative data collection method was employed using multi-stage cluster random sampling. The study randomly selected 23 households under 32 enumeration areas from four unions in Patuakhali, Barguna, and Satkhira districts. Data was collected from one child per household, and relevant factors contributing to stunting, such as diarrhea prevalence, WASH facilities, child health, and child nutrition, were obtained from the mothers or caregivers of the children.

- **Conduct a baseline survey in the control and midline survey in the intervention populations of the Max Foundation 'Max Value for Stunting Free Village' project aiming to reduce stunting in children under the age of 2 (July 2018- September 2018)**

Client: KIT Royal Tropical Institute

The Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey 2014 indicated that 36% of children under 5 were stunted, with rural children more likely to be affected than urban children (38% vs. 31%). Stunting was most prevalent in Sylhet division (50%) and least prevalent in Khulna division (28%). A three-year project named ‘Max Value for Stunting Free Village’ was implemented to address this issue, focusing on the poorest populations in hard-to-reach areas of the Sylhet division in northeastern Bangladesh. The project required a baseline survey in the control area and a midline survey in the intervention area to assess the project's progress. KIT Royal Tropical Institute contracted RTM International to conduct these surveys. The overall objective was to collect primary data on WASH, child nutrition, child health, and access to

SRHR services. The study was carried out in one control union (Charmohalla) and two intervention unions (Islampur and Noarai) of Chhatak Upazila in Sylhet division. The target group for the study was the caretakers of children under 2 years of age. Using multi-stage cluster random sampling, baseline data was collected from 301 households in the control union, while midline data was gathered from 152 and 151 households in the intervention unions. Anthropometric measurements were taken from one child per household, and data on other factors related to stunting, such as diarrhea prevalence, WASH practices, child health, and child nutrition, were collected from the children's caretakers.

- **Perceived quality of nutrition services and satisfaction of community people regarding nutrition services and their utilization status** (April-June 2013)
Client: Institute of Public Health Nutrition

RTM International conducted a study to assess the perceived quality and satisfaction with nutrition services and their utilization among community members. The study used both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods and covered all seven divisions of Bangladesh to ensure representative and valid findings. The primary focus of the study was to explore the knowledge and satisfaction of users regarding nutrition care provided to children aged 0-5 years. The respondents included parents or caregivers of children under 5. Additionally, the study assessed the knowledge and practices of parents or caregivers regarding nutrition indicators, especially infant and young child feeding (IYCF) practices. The study also gathered data from pregnant women, lactating mothers, and adolescent girls on selected nutrition-related activities to provide a comprehensive understanding of the community's perceptions and satisfaction with nutrition services.

- **Development of PROFILES and Costing Models for Comprehensive Nutrition Program in Bangladesh for 2011-2021** (August 2010 - August 2011)
Client: Academy for Educational Development (AED), US office

The initiative aimed to envision a Bangladesh free from malnutrition and sought to answer critical questions regarding the steps required to achieve this goal, the potential benefits, and the associated costs. Over the past year, national stakeholders and technical experts convened to address these issues. RTM International was contracted to generate new PROFILES estimates and develop a national costing model for nutrition programming in Bangladesh under the Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance Project (FANTA-II). A series of stakeholder meetings, field visits, expert consultations, and costing workshops were organized to facilitate this process, led by a Lead Economist from the country. The study presented the results of this collaborative and consensus-building effort, aiming to enhance understanding of the value of investing in nutrition and the investment levels necessary to improve nutrition as a means of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Bangladesh Vision 2021 objectives. For the period of 2011 to 2021, the report detailed projections on the benefits of investing in nutrition regarding improvements in development outcomes and estimated the costs of providing maternal and child nutrition services at a national scale. The PROFILES tool was utilized to project the benefits of investing in nutrition, focusing on improvements in development outcomes such as reduced maternal and child mortality and enhanced economic productivity. Additionally, a national costing model was developed to estimate the expenses associated with providing maternal and child nutrition services at scale. The objective of the report was to present the estimates generated from these two models to guide policymakers in understanding the scope and costs of nutrition interventions as operational plans for the health and population nutrition sector program were implemented.

- **Conduct Baseline Survey of the Project “Strengthening the Iron and Folic Acid Supplementation (IFA) Program to reduce Iron Deficiency Anemia among Pregnant Women”** (November 2011 to February 2012)
Client: Micronutrient Initiative, Bangladesh

The Micronutrient Initiative Bangladesh supported the Government of Bangladesh in demonstrating an effective program model aimed at increasing the coverage and utilization of iron and folic acid (IFA) supplements among pregnant women. This pilot initiative was implemented in Satkhira and Narsingdi districts. RTM International was contracted to conduct the baseline survey in these two districts, collecting data from both the intervention and control districts. At the household level, 200 pregnant women were interviewed in each of the four districts, totaling 800 interviews conducted across the sample. In addition to household data collection, a sub-study on knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) among health workers across the four districts was carried out. The field team visited relevant health facilities in each cluster to interview health workers and collect data regarding IFA stock availability. The report was submitted on schedule and received acceptance from the sponsor and the program.

- **Conduct Formative research for Newborn Vitamin A Supplementation (NBVAS) in Bangladesh** (June 2010- July 2010)
Client: Micronutrient Initiative, Bangladesh

Under a contract with the Micronutrient Initiative, RTM International conducted formative research aimed at identifying feasible models for delivering newborn Vitamin A supplementation (NBVAS) integrated within existing community-based maternal and newborn health services, which could be recommended to the Government of Bangladesh for scale-up. The formative research involved mapping existing maternal, neonatal, and child health (MNCH) facilities and assessing the needs and interests of various community populations regarding the design of an integrated program. The study focused on several areas, including Sadar and Nesarabad (Swarupkathi) upazilas of Pirojpur district, Madhupur and Shakhipur upazilas of Tangail district, and Jaldhaka and Dimla upazilas of Nilphamari district.

- **Conduct the Baseline Survey for the Reconstruction, Economic Development and Livelihoods (REAL Project) (2009)**
Client: Helen Keller International, Bangladesh

The purpose of this survey was to establish baseline data to track progress and changes resulting from Helen Keller International's development interventions in the impact areas. The baseline survey for the REAL project was conducted with specific objectives: assessing household assets, income, expenditures, and income-generating activities; evaluating the existing status of household food security; examining women's empowerment; and determining nutritional status through dietary recall and anthropometric measurements. The survey covered all unions included in the program within four upazilas across two districts. Data were collected through 180 successful interviews in both the experimental and control groups, resulting in 180 interviews for each. In each sample household, one woman was identified as eligible for an interview. A household questionnaire was administered during the interview with the eligible respondent.

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