

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY INTEGRATION?

Integration can be defined as a continuum that requires, at a minimum, coordination of technical sectors to ensure coherence, minimize duplication and ensure sectors don't work against each other. At the other end of the continuum, integration is a complete synergy of sectoral interventions that are designed and implemented using a unified strategy, joint resources and shared competencies through every step of the project.

The idea of integration in the BabyWASH Coalition is to bring together water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH); nutrition; and early childhood development (ECD) technical sectors to intentionally address multiple needs of children in the first 1,000 days from pregnancy to age 2, with the common goal of improving the quality of life of children.

HOW CAN INTEGRATION HAPPEN?

The BabyWASH Coalition is interested in integration at various levels, ranging from geographical co-location and shared targets to delivery of a fully multi-sectoral program through the same field workers, including monitoring and evaluating progress toward the common goal. While the term integration is often used in various ways, the BabyWASH Coalition focuses on integration of technical sectors to address a multi-causal issue. Based on ideas from SPRING, Action AGAINST Hunger, WASHPlus, and others, we think there are four basic typologies on the integration continuum:

1. **Co-location:** Different sectoral programs are implemented in the same place with similar, or potentially shared, target audiences. Though the design is not coordinated, there is the assumption of coherence at this level.
2. **Coordination:** Program elements or messages are coordinated and harmonized among sectors, information is shared across sectors to limit duplication and to facilitate learning from one another, but training and implementation activities are separate.
3. **Collaboration:** Field workers come together to implement joint activities within a program under a specific common goal. Sectoral activities are chosen and prioritized to have the highest potential to contribute to the common goal. Field workers receive training in other sectors, outside their typical area of expertise, so they can support multi-sector collaboration as they work toward the common goal.
4. **Synergy:** Field workers are trained across disciplines and individuals are expected to deliver coordinated program elements from more than one sector. Synergy requires a unified strategy, shared resources and competencies at every step of the project management cycle, and a shared monitoring and evaluation framework to reach and measure the program's contribution to the overarching common goal.

Integration can happen within one single program, or through the combined forces of several partners/programs. Although ideally integration should be conceptualized from the earliest stage of strategic planning, it can also be built gradually by adding components over time using a scaffolding approach. For instance, a programme could begin with just a WASH programme, and then slowly add other sectoral interventions over time. This is ideal in situations where certain interventions (i.e. water access) are essential enablers to other interventions.