

Effective Integrated Programs Improve Child Survival

Briefing for National Governments from the BabyWASH Coalition

During the past thirty years we have witnessed remarkable improvements in the health of children worldwide. Millions more children are surviving and thriving thanks to investments that prioritized access to health care. However, the job is not complete. The challenges that we face today are multifaceted and will only be overcome with the collaboration of diverse experts and institutions. In order to reach every child by 2030, we must employ new approaches that harness efficiency and effectiveness.

The Situation:

- More than 500,000 children die annually from diarrheaⁱ; more than 900,000 die from pneumoniaⁱⁱ, many of them less than two years old.
- 159 million children under 5 are stunted as a result of chronic malnutrition and repeated bouts of diarrhea and other diseases. Stunting impacts a child's cognitive and physical development, and leaves her more susceptible to diseaseⁱⁱⁱ.
- Due to poverty and stunting, 43% of all children under-five in low- and middle-income countries are at risk of failing to reach their full developmental potential^{iv}.
- Worldwide, 2.4 billion people lack access to improved sanitation facilities, exposing them to harmful pathogens and making them susceptible to disease^v.
- Children in the first 1,000 days are most at risk as this is when the brain is developing the fastest.

The Solution:

- Integrated programs should take a holistic approach to ensure children not only survive, but thrive. Integrated programs bring together water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), early childhood development, and maternal, newborn, and child health to ensure an enabling policy and programming environment in which children can reach their full cognitive and economic potential.
- Health and nutrition experts must work together, alongside education professionals, agricultural workers, and WASH specialists to have the most impact on children's wellbeing and to effectively achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- National and sub-national budgets must include resources for integrated programs that reach even the most rural communities.

Call to Action:

1. Ensure political support at the highest levels for integrated responses to multi-faceted health problems through national and sub-national policy and budget prioritization.
2. Create and provide long-term support to high level steering committees that involve multiple ministries to share data and develop joint strategies and workplans.
3. Develop multi-year plans to finance integrated programmes and ensure sustainability that are costed and commit ministries to BabyWASH objectives.
4. Assess long-term impact of integrated programmes through the inclusion of cross-sectoral indicators in monitoring and evaluation frameworks.
5. Ensure that staff from all relevant ministries understands how their work can contribute to improved health and nutrition outcomes by providing intervention lists, etc.
6. Ensure integrated programs are included in Global Financing Facility Country Investment Case frameworks as well as other funding mechanisms.

For more information, please contact the BabyWASH Coalition (info@babywashcoalition.org)

ⁱ UNICEF Data (2015). <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-health/diarrhoeal-disease/>

ⁱⁱ UNICEF Data (2015). <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-health/pneumonia/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Global Nutrition Report (2016) *From Promise to Impact: Ending malnutrition by 2030*. <http://ebrary.ifpri.org/utils/getfile/collection/p15738coll2/id/130354/130565.pdf>

^{iv} Black (2016) *Early Childhood Development Coming of Age: Science through the life course*. The Lancet. [http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(16\)31389-7/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(16)31389-7/fulltext)

^v JMP Report (2015) http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/monitoring/jmp-2015-key-facts/en/