USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SUAAHARA
Building Strong & Smart Families

Presentation outline

- Implementation science:
  - Why should we invest in it?
  - What is it?
  - How should we do it?
- Suaahara II experiences with implementation science
- What are the implementation and science tensions?

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SUAAHARA
Building Strong & Smart Families

Implementation science: what, why and how?

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SUAAHARA
Building Strong & Smart Families

What is implementation science?

"Use-inspired science"

1. Aim is to learn about/improve implementation
2. Methods come from the aims
3. Built with experiential learning

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SUAAHARA
Building Strong & Smart Families

Why should we investing in implementation science?

We have35 proven preventative and curative maternal and child health and nutrition interventions, but coverage remains low (Lance Child Survival Series 2003)…. But we only have a few studies per intervention and almost no comparison of delivery strategies.

We need more evidence on:
- delivery strategies (HOW)
- delivery points (WHERE) especially non facility based
- varying contexts (geography; low-scale/short-term vs large-scale/longer-term and research/lab vs. real world systems)

In short, we need to focus on IMPLEMENTATION of interventions and not just IMPACTS. And we don't want to wait 15-20 years to get knowledge into action (biomedical approach)

When? Where? Which methods?

All the time – before, during, and after implementation

Everywhere you work – it should be embedded within all interventions to learn and adapt

Research questions (and resources and context) drive the methods. Sometimes quantitative is best and sometimes qualitative is best and sometimes you need both.

Examples: monitoring, formative research, process evaluations, organizational assessments

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SUAAHARA
Building Strong & Smart Families

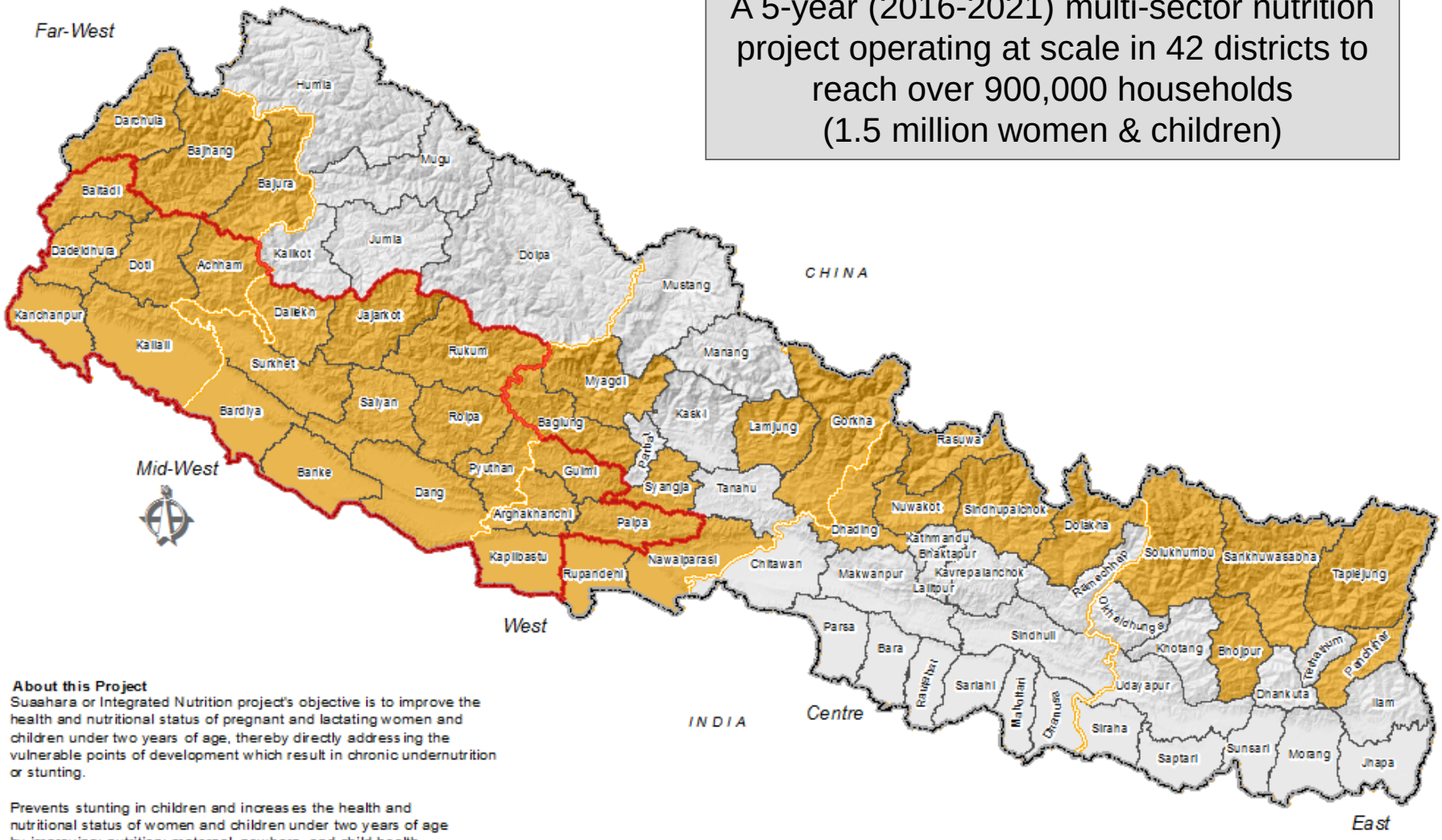
Suaahara II Interventions and Implementation Science

Integrated Nutrition - SUAAHARA II Project

USAID | NEPAL

Suaahara II

A 5-year (2016-2021) multi-sector nutrition project operating at scale in 42 districts to reach over 900,000 households (1.5 million women & children)



About this Project

Suaahara or Integrated Nutrition project's objective is to improve the health and nutritional status of pregnant and lactating women and children under two years of age, thereby directly addressing the vulnerable points of development which result in chronic undernutrition or stunting.

Prevents stunting in children and increases the health and nutritional status of women and children under two years of age by improving: nutrition; maternal, newborn, and child health services; family planning services; water, sanitation and hygiene; and home-based gardening.

March 31 , 2016, USAID Nepal's Geospatial Lab

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SUAAHARA Building Strong & Smart Families

Suaahara II: intervention packages for life cycle

CORE package (n=3,353 wards)

- SBCC Package
- MIYCN Package
- IMAM Package
- CB-IMNCI Package
- Nutrition advocacy
- GESI

CORE + package (n=1,504 "disadvantaged" wards)

CORE package AND the following interventions

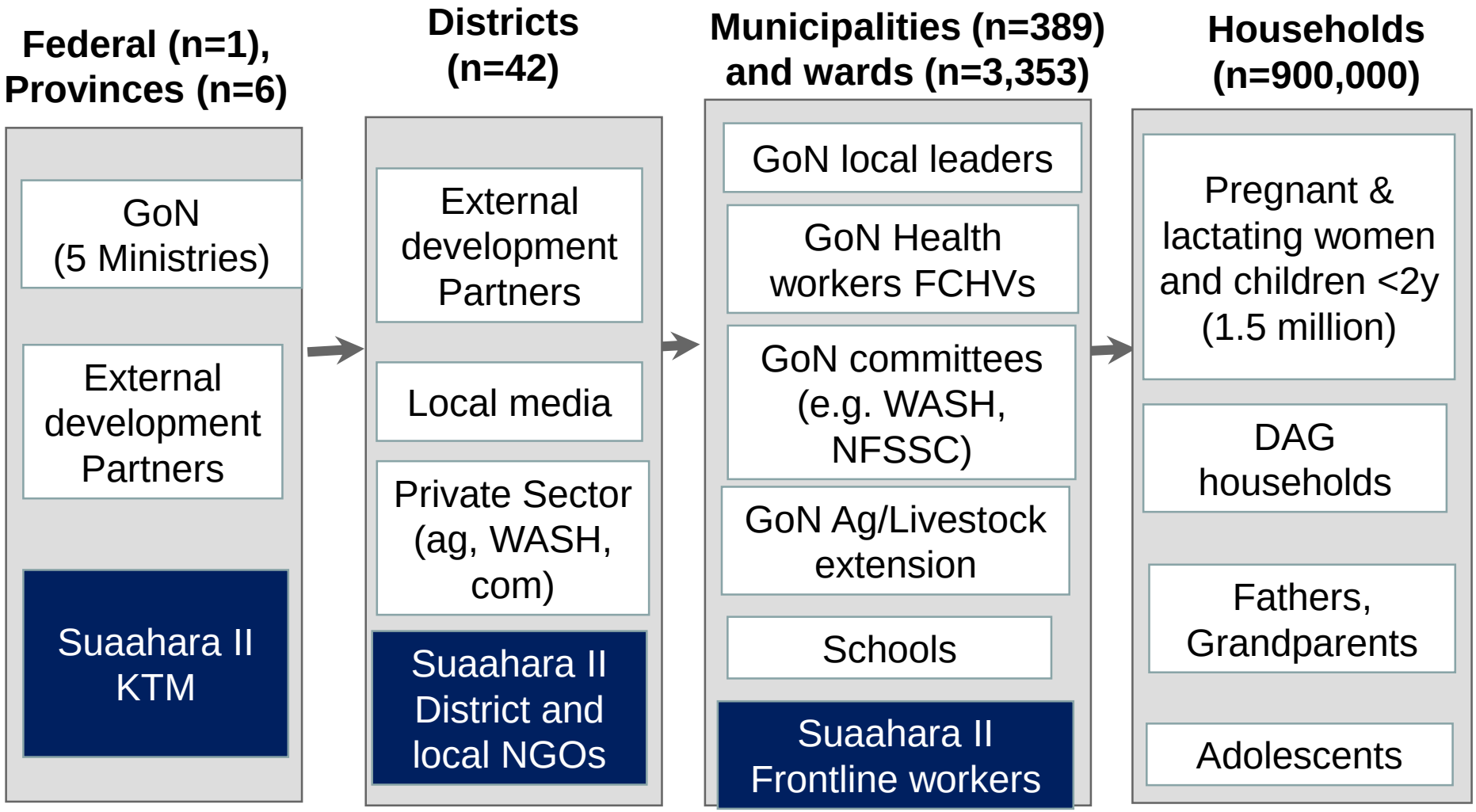
- Enhanced Homestead Food Production
- Intensive SBCC
- Intensive WASH
- Intensive Health
- Intensive GESI

SBCC=Social Behavior Change and Communication
MIYCN=Maternal, Infant, Young Child Nutrition
IMAM=Integrated Management of Childhood Illness
MCH/FP=Maternal and Child Health and Family Planning
WASH=Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
GESI=Gender Equity and Social Inclusion

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SUAAHARA Building Strong & Smart Families

Suaahara II: Intervention delivery context



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SUAAHARA
Building Strong & Smart Families

Example: SBC package during the first 1000-days

Interpersonal Communication (4-6 home visits)

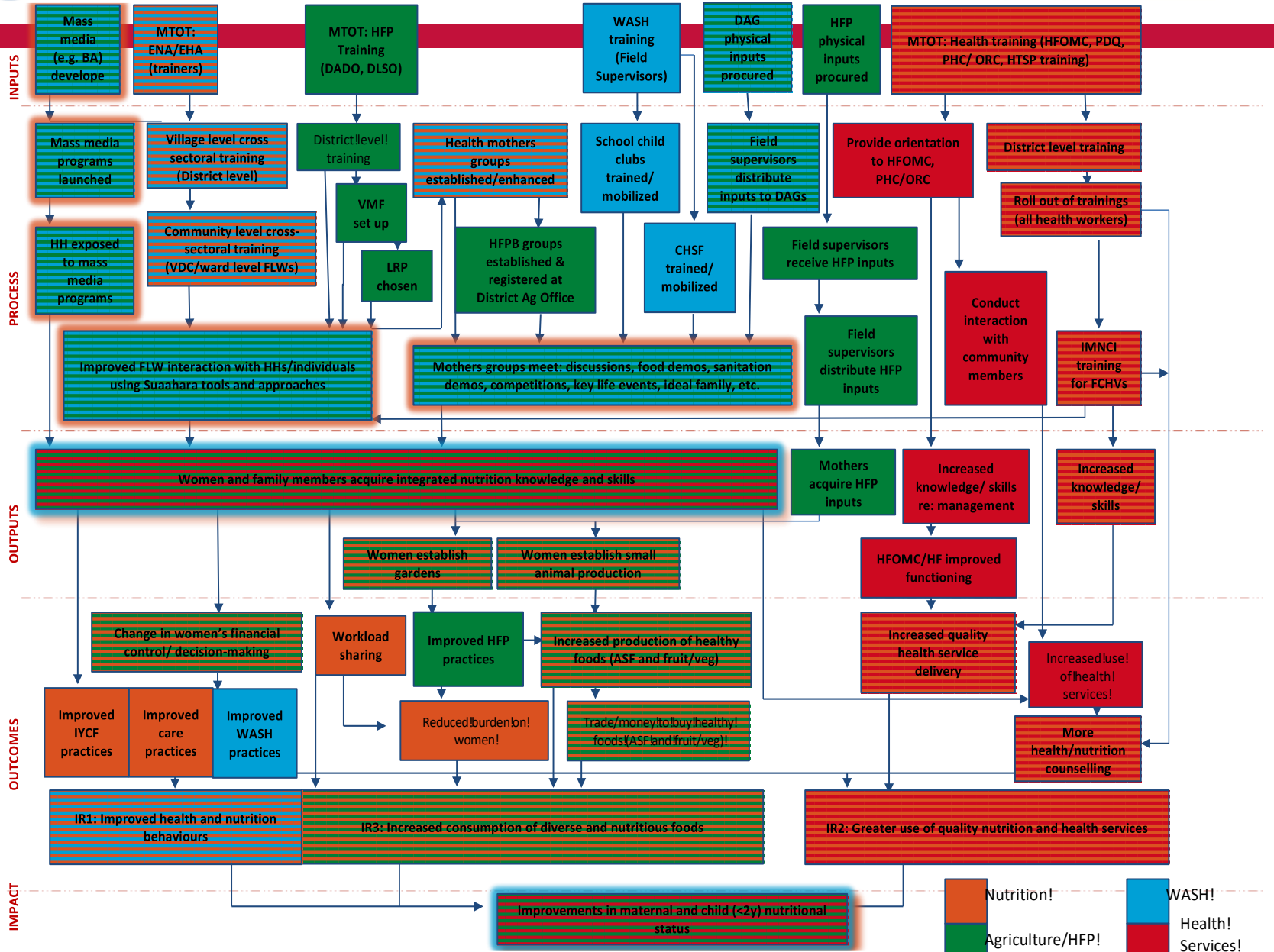
Community Mobilization (3 key life events, Monthly group meetings Quarterly food demos)

Mass Media: "Bhanchhin Aama" (Weekly localized radio drama and live call-in components)

Mobile technology (35 SMS; Interactive Voice Response for FP)

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SUAAHARA Building Strong & Smart Families



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

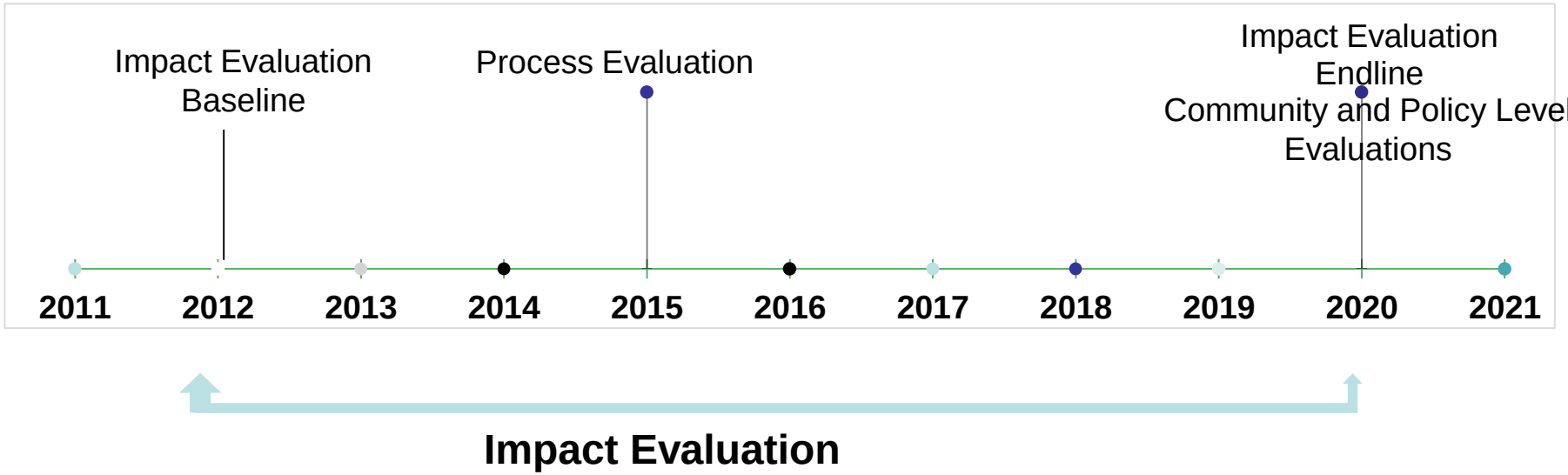
SUAAHARA
Building Strong & Smart Families

Suaahara II: monitoring, evaluation and research

DIFFERENT people have
DIFFERENT data needs and wants, requiring
DIFFERENT approaches

Challenge: how to prioritize so that data generated is guided by program needs, used by implementers at all levels and to answer important questions about implementation and science!

Suaahara II evaluation (an IS starting point)



Evaluation: (attribution)

- Did Suaahara improve nutritional status among mothers and young children and related behaviors?
- Did Suaahara improve health services, including the providers' skills and knowledge?
- Did Suaahara improve the policy environment for nutrition?

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SUAAHARA Building Strong & Smart Families

Suaahara II research (3 IS examples)

"Adolescent Girls' Panel (16 districts; N=1150)

What are adolescent girls' nutrition-related knowledge and practice and how can they be reached? How does this vary by stage of adolescence?

WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH

SMS RCT (1 district: N=3,350)

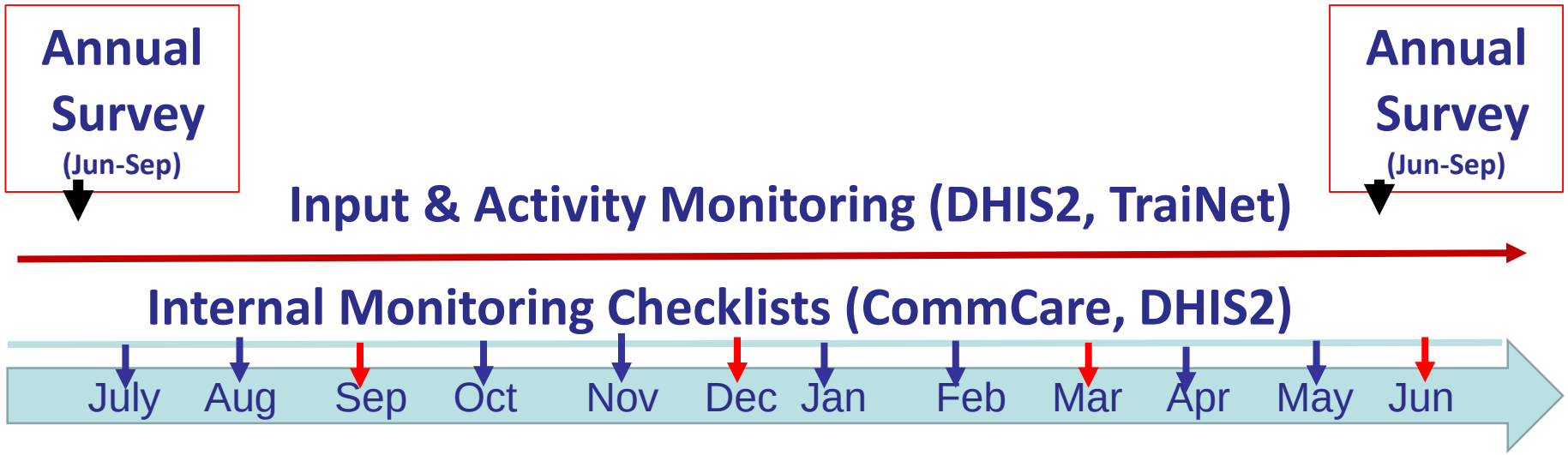
Is SMS an effective means of improving diets of young children, in the context of pre-existing multi-platform SBC interventions?

UNIVERSITY OF South Carolina

Formative Research (purposive sampling)

What are barriers & facilitators for key behaviors? What factors are important for program design and implementation?

Suaahara II monitoring (IS as real-time data use)



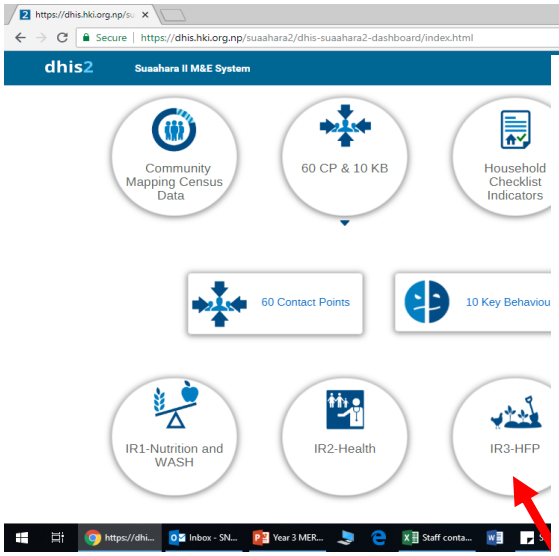
Monitoring: (tracking)

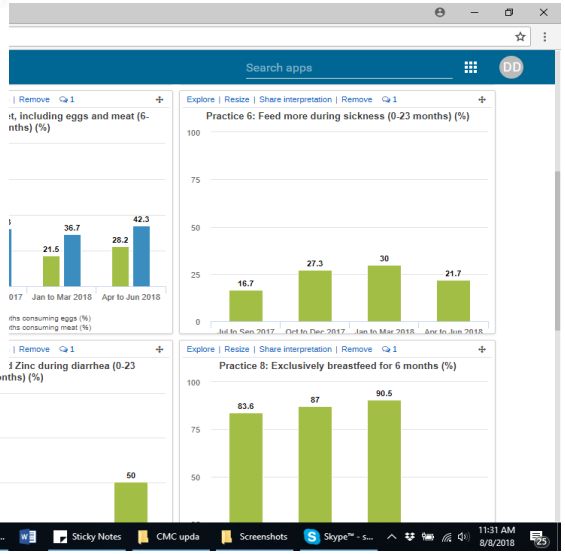
- Are activities approved in annual workplans being implemented at a rate to reach targets?
- How many/who was reached (gender, caste/ethnicity, post) by each activity?
- What is the quality of those activities being implemented?

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

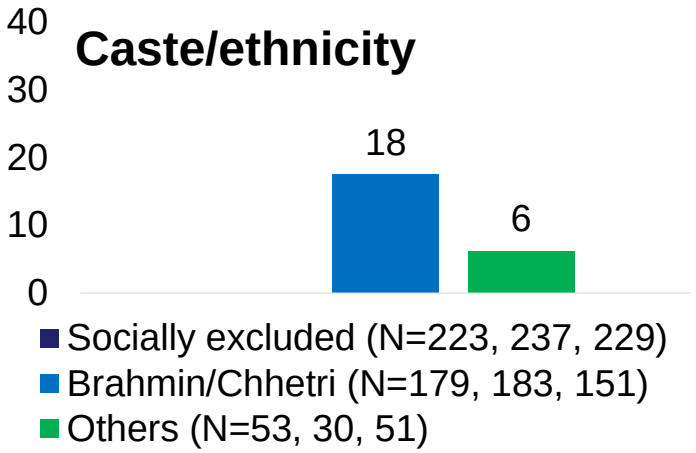
SUAAHARA Building Strong & Smart Families

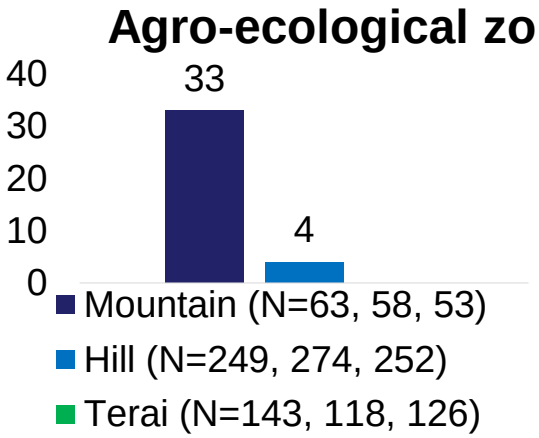
Use the findings internally OFTEN and ASAP

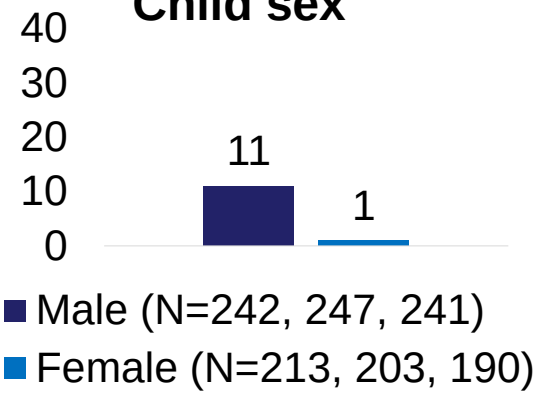


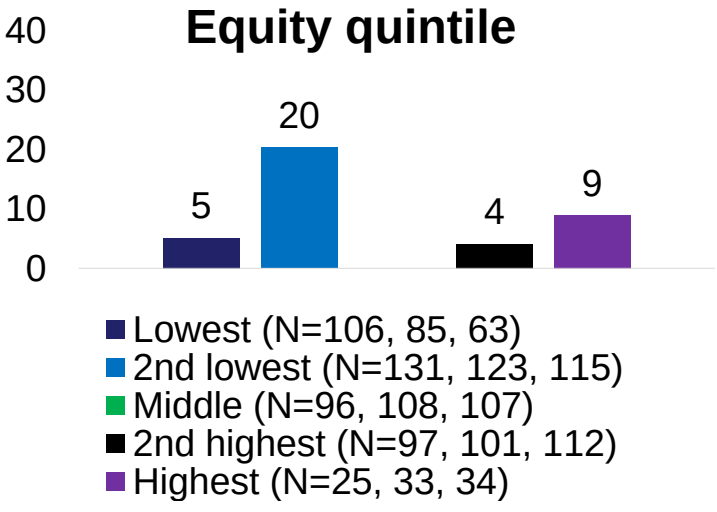


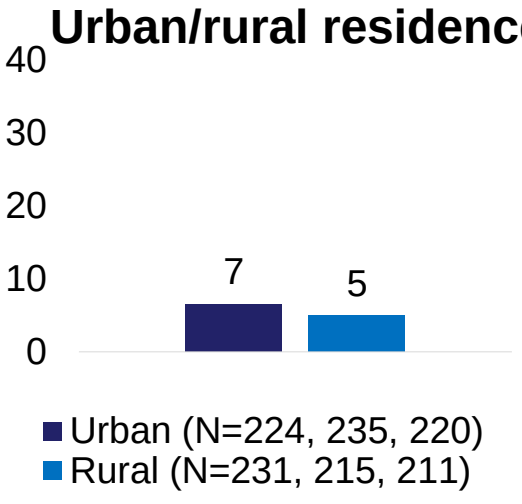
Exclusive breastfeeding (6PP increase): percentage point increase by sub-group, 2017-2019

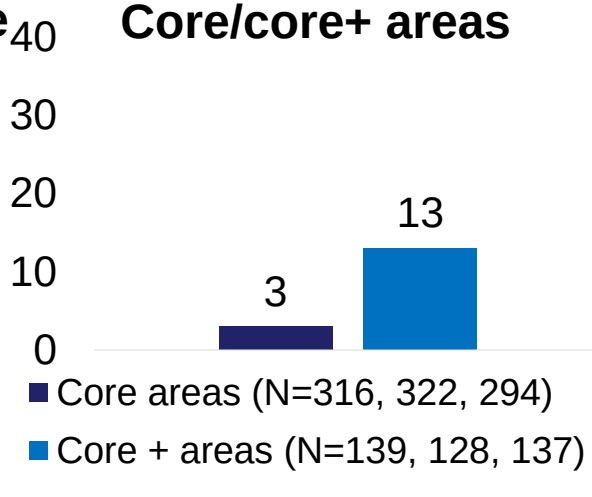












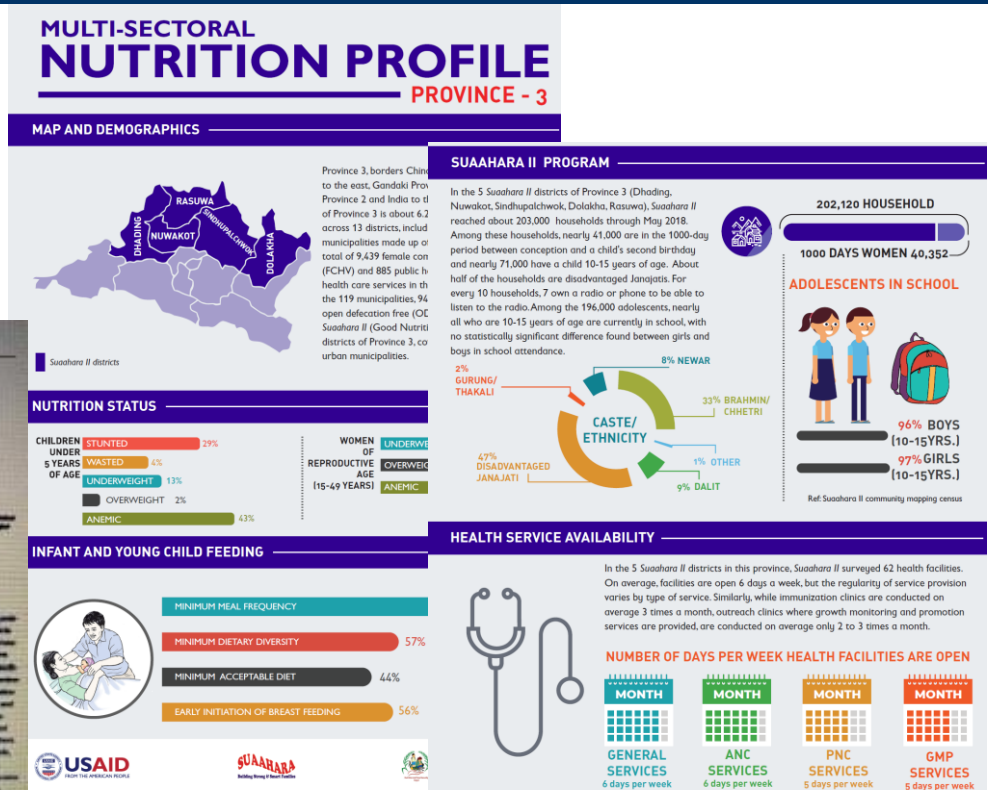
USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SUAAHARA Building Strong & Smart Families

Year 1 Results: 5 examples of use for refining targeting, programming and monitoring

1. **Design phase:**
   - Adolescent program (95% in schools; SMS wouldn't work)
   - Grandmothers (separate intervention not needed)
2. **Mid intervention (adapt interventions)**:
   - Fathers' MCHN knowledge was low, and thus "letter to the father" designed and implemented
   - Increase in activities to promote BA, as exposure was low but listenership high among those who were aware of BA
   - WASH focus on 3 handwashing "before" given gaps identified
3. **Mid monitoring (adapt tools):**
   - Equity quintile used for HH level targeting to distribute inputs and tools changed to collect willingness to pay data

Share findings with diverse audiences to generate new questions and insights



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SUAAHARA
Building Strong & Smart Families

What are the tensions with implementation science?

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SUAAHARA
Building Strong & Smart Families

Conflicting interests between researchers (study now!) and implementers (act now!)

Understanding and assessing complicated implementation environments is limited

Research and intervention timelines, budgets, etc. may not align and/or be flexible (donors key too!)

Research ethics (need ethical approval) vs intervention ethics (need ethical actions)

Shifting budgets, activities and modalities, staffing, etc. making measurement nearly impossible

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SUAAHARA
Building Strong & Smart Families

Resolving the tensions…

1. **Communication**: Involve implementation scientists in major program planning meetings and workshops to think, discuss, and revise budgets, staffing, training, etc. Meet often and discuss planned programming changes and jointly decide how to adjust both implementation and research plans.
2. **Clarity:** Implementers can define their priority questions and stick to these requests with MER teams. Implementers should also stick to the implementation plans, when possible.
3. **Methods innovation**: researchers should bring in methods and collaborators who focus on systems and leadership, management. We need more nuanced ways to merge quantitative and qualitative findings.
4. **Trade-offs:** what is essential, important, and nice to do?
5. **SIMPLIFY:** Researchers can simplify findings to be actionable and disseminate the learnings in user-friendly ways and timings!

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SUAAHARA
Building Strong & Smart Families

Good luck to us!

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SUAAHARA
Building Strong & Smart Families

PNGO partners

Consortium partners

Suaahara II would like to thank the Government of Nepal for their leadership.

This presentation is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The content of this plan is produced by Helen Keller International, *Suaahara II* Program and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

The Society for Implementation Science in Nutrition (SISN)

Connecting Knowledge with Action for Impact

Want to find out more about SISN and its work?

- Follow:
  - @implementnutri #SISNFramework #InvestinIR
  - The Society for Implementation Science in Nutrition
- E-mail: **info@implementnutrition.org**
- Check out the website: **www.implementnutrition.org**

AND

- Search the NEW Knowledge Hub, a database of key resources on IS in nutrition
- Subscribe to the SISN mailing list
- Apply to become a member

THE SOCIETY FOR IMPLEMENTATION SCIENCE IN NUTRITION