

Alive & Thrive Bangladesh

2017–2022



SHAFIQUUL ALAM KIRON | ALIVE & THRIVE

Alive & Thrive (A&T) is a global nutrition initiative to save lives, prevent illness, and ensure healthy growth of mothers and children. From 2009–2014, A&T demonstrated that rapid improvements in infant and young child feeding (IYCF) are possible in settings as diverse as Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Viet Nam.

In 2014, A&T began working in Burkina Faso, India, Nigeria, and throughout the Southeast Asia region, expanding its scope to include maternal and adolescent nutrition, and using agriculture and social protection programs as delivery mechanisms for maternal, infant, and young child nutrition (MIYCN). In Bangladesh from 2014–2017, A&T focused on integrating maternal nutrition interventions into existing platforms for maternal, neonatal, and child health. By working with existing structures, A&T reached more than 128,900 pregnant women with home-based nutrition counseling by trained community health workers.

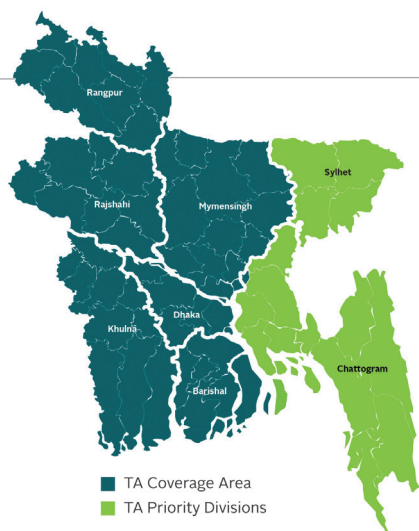
Now, A&T is leveraging its robust network and knowledge base to strengthen systems and build capacity in Bangladesh and other countries across Asia and Africa. By shifting away from service delivery to focus on technical assistance, A&T is putting increased ownership with governments for greater scalability and sustainability of MIYCN interventions. This brief highlights the systems strengthening, policy advocacy,

and knowledge generation activities that are pivotal in A&T's efforts to support Bangladesh's National Nutrition Services Operational Plan (NNS-OP) in improving the nutritional status of mothers and children.

Systems strengthening

A&T maximizes impact by facilitating and catalyzing change across systems. To achieve such change, A&T provides technical assistance to build capacity in MIYCN policy and program implementation, strategic use of data, and social and behavior change communication (SBCC).

Learning labs in two divisions. In support of Bangladesh's disbursement-linked indicators for nutrition, A&T is collaborating with UNICEF and the World Bank to assist the Health Sector Support Project in improving the quality and coverage of MIYCN interventions delivered through the government health system. In the two divisions of Sylhet and Chattogram, A&T has created learning labs in six administrative sub-units, known as *upazilas*. The Upazila Learning Lab is a testing ground for data-driven performance management and supportive supervision approaches that engage frontline workers, supervisors, and health authorities overseeing the management of service delivery. Lessons from collaborating with government and partners in the *upazilas*



INTERVENTION AREAS & GOVERNMENT PARTNERS

- Directorates of Health Services and Family Planning
- Institute of Public Health Nutrition/ National Nutrition Services
- Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development, and Co-operatives
- Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
- Bangladesh National Nutrition Council

will inform and promote replication, scale, and sustainability within the two divisions and nationally via the NNS-OP.

Technical assistance for SBCC. A&T is a technical partner in the IYCF Alliance and participates in the national nutrition and SBCC working groups to harmonize approaches across government and partner initiatives. Building on proven SBCC practices from the first decade of implementation, A&T is disseminating knowledge and strengthening capacity by supporting the development of SBCC strategies and content, and sharing relevant MIYCN SBCC tools. A&T is also providing technical assistance to develop distinct MIYCN SBCC strategies for the United Nations Development Program/ National Urban Poverty Reduction Program (UNDP/NUPRP) and the World Food Program/Maternal Allowance and Lactating Mother Allowance Program (WFP/MALMA).

Policy and program advocacy

Grounded in global MIYCN evidence, including new research in Bangladesh, A&T is supporting key partners to develop national policies, guidelines, and strategies that enhance the

coverage and quality of MIYCN service delivery. A&T's policy and program advocacy priorities are to:

- Increase awareness and commitment to MIYCN
- Ensure country readiness for the World Health Assembly's nutrition targets
- Promote the adoption of MIYCN SBCC guidelines, supportive supervision protocols, and performance management practices in health facilities
- Strengthen the implementation of the national Breast-milk Substitutes (BMS) Act
- Promote an improved model for MIYCN counseling in urban health programming

Knowledge and learning

Understanding how an intervention performs in a new context is critical for scalability and sustainability. By conducting both formative and implementation research, A&T is generating new knowledge to inform evidence-based policies, programs, and implementation strategies.

Urban nutrition. A&T is conducting implementation research on MIYCN counseling interventions in the urban context of Dhaka. The study is developing and testing the effectiveness, feasibility, and scalability of integrating MIYCN counseling into urban health centers.

BMS Act. A&T is initiating formative research on violations of the BMS Act in commercial settings, media, and health facilities in Bangladesh. The studies will quantify and describe the frequency and types of violations in order to help the government create a plan for better monitoring and prevention of violations.

Adolescent nutrition. A&T supported the introduction of key nutrition interventions into the government's new adolescent health strategy, applying formative research on pregnant adolescents from 2014–2017. The interventions are strengthening the capacity of service providers to deliver effective nutrition counseling to adolescents and providing nutrition services at schools, health facilities, and workplaces. A&T is continuing to support efforts to meet the needs of adolescents through new formative research that looks at the current program and policy environment for adolescent health.

TECHNICAL PARTNERS

- World Food Programme
- World Bank
- USAID
- Food and Agriculture Organization
- United Nations Development Programme
- Caritas
- Nutrition International
- icddr,b
- Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition
- Professional associations

MIYCN SBCC TOOLS

- Job aids
- Flipbooks for frontline workers
- Videos
- TV spots
- Posters
- Training materials

