

Alive & Thrive India

2015–2020



VELOCITY CREATIVE

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 2015, 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). Now, A&T is leveraging its robust network and knowledge base to strengthen systems and build capacity in these and other countries across Africa and Asia.

In India, from 2015–2020, A&T is providing technical support to accelerate coverage of effective MIYCN interventions at national and state levels. This brief highlights the systems strengthening, policy change, and knowledge generation activities that are pivotal in A&T's efforts to improve the nutritional status of mothers and children.

Systems strengthening

A&T maximizes impact and sustainability by facilitating and catalyzing change across systems. To achieve such change, A&T provides technical assistance to build capacity in MIYCN policies and program implementation, social behavior change (SBC), and strategic use of data. Below are some examples at the national and state levels.

National technical assistance. A&T supports the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW) and the Ministry of Women & Child Development (MWCD) to develop and strengthen national MIYCN guidelines and policies. Under India's new National Nutrition Mission—*POSHAN Abhiyaan*—A&T is promoting the strategic use of data for planning, monitoring, and supervision at district and state levels; developing a comprehensive SBC strategy; and supporting the roll-out of home-based MIYCN counseling by Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs). This work is being done through technical assistance to NITI Aayog (National Planning Commission), MWCD, and MoHFW.

State-level technical assistance. Since 2015, A&T has focused on the effective delivery of quality nutrition services across multiple platforms that serve mothers, infants, and children in two states: Bihar and Uttar Pradesh (UP). To achieve scale and sustainability, A&T collaborates with governments, donor organizations, and implementation partners in high malnutrition-burdened states—including

Alive & Thrive India is a knowledge partner supporting maternal, infant, and young child nutrition at scale.

PARTNERS SUPPORTED

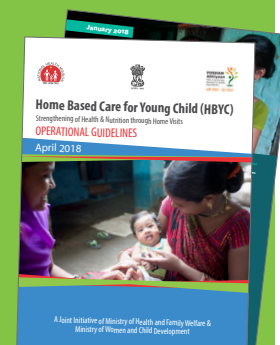
- Government of India
- United Nations (UN) agencies
- Development partners
- Medical and nursing colleges
- Professional medical associations
- International and national technical support organizations

PLATFORMS IMPROVING MIYCN SERVICES

- Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCH+A) program under the National Health Mission
- Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)
- Rural Livelihoods Mission/Self Help Group (RLM/SHG)

GUIDELINES AND POLICIES SUPPORTED

- Mother's Absolute Affection (National Breastfeeding Campaign)
- Anemia Free India
- Home based Care for Young Child
- Women's Nutritional Needs during Pregnancy



Odisha, Jharkhand, and Rajasthan. These joint efforts allow A&T to guide MIYCN policy roll-out, support SBC strategy development, build capacity, and design implementation plans in these states.

One of A&T's strengths is applying evidence-based SBC strategies to improve MIYCN practices at scale. A&T is providing technical expertise to government and partner organizations in the design of SBC programs and strategies, which are being implemented in UP, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, and Rajasthan. A&T contributed to the content development of the SBC framework for the World Bank-supported ICDS Systems Strengthening and Nutrition Improvement Project (ISSNIP) across eight states, and the mass media plan adapted for POSHAN Abhiyaan. In Bihar, A&T supported the development of an SBC strategy for the 'Jan Andolan' (People's Movement) under the POSHAN Abhiyaan.

Policy and partnerships

Advocacy champions. A&T leads collaborative advocacy efforts with UN agencies, development partners, reproductive, maternal, newborn, and child health (RMNCH) organizations, nutrition organizations, and premier health and nutrition institutes—including the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS). By creating opportunities for knowledge sharing, consultation, and networking, local experts are positioned to inform and promote MIYCN policies and SBC strategies.

Medical colleges and associations as strategic partners.

Medical colleges are strategically placed in the healthcare delivery system to lead the policy and program advocacy agenda on the first 1,000 days (the critical period from conception to two years of age). Through their academic, research, and service functions, and their public health linkages, these institutions play a significant role in promoting MIYCN by training future medical practitioners, generating evidence to inform policy decisions, developing best practice models, and supporting public health and nutrition systems. A&T supports medical colleges and hospitals in UP, Bihar, and Delhi, and through collaborations with IPEG and PATH in Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Odisha, and Madhya Pradesh. Through these partnerships, A&T is strengthening the MIYCN component of pre-service curricula and developing an evidence-based model for effective MIYCN integration at medical colleges.

Professional associations also play an essential role in the sensitization and capacity building of health providers through continuing medical education programs. A&T partners with a number of professional associations in India—Indian Association of Preventive and Social Medicine, the Indian Academy of Pediatrics, and the Federation of Obstetricians & Gynecologists—to advocate for MIYCN policies, develop continuing medical education modules on MIYCN, and support initiatives for POSHAN Abhiyan.

Knowledge and learning

Understanding how an intervention performs in a new context is critical when assessing 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. A&T India's evidence-generation agenda aims to:

- Understand the barriers and facilitators influencing MIYCN practices and behaviors at the household level.
- Assess the integration of maternal nutrition services in government antenatal care delivery.
- Determine the feasibility of integrating MIYCN interventions into the existing polio eradication/immunization platforms.
- Review the use of social and behavior change communication (SBCC) for improving complementary feeding practices within the ICDS platform.
- Understand how to increase the integration of MIYCN into the functioning of medical colleges.

Data generated from ongoing implementation learning allows A&T to actively develop, adapt, and share MIYCN tools and materials with governments and partners. Below are some examples of the knowledge materials created by A&T.

SBCC AND MIYCN LEARNING TOOLS

- Community mobilization flyers
- Training videos
- Job aids
- Flipbooks for frontline workers
- Videos

