

# Alive & Thrive's Theory of Change for integrating maternal nutrition into ANC platforms provides an evidence-based framework for achieving scale

A Theory of Change for scaling up maternal nutrition interventions based on rigorous design and feasibility testing in Africa and Asia

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## Background

The absence of a framework and operational guidance on the integration of maternal nutrition interventions into antenatal care (ANC) services has led to gaps in services; maternal malnutrition remains widespread.

## Objective

To test the feasibility of integrating a package of proven maternal nutrition interventions into ANC platforms in Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and India. A Theory of Change (ToC) for integrating maternal nutrition interventions was derived from the four implementation research studies.

## Methods

The interventions were designed based on principles of behavior change and systems strengthening to improve maternal nutrition in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Co-design processes, formative studies, capacity building and ongoing monitoring involving stakeholder teams were used to develop programs and adapt them to diverse large-scale ANC programs. The common barriers and strategies found across countries were combined into the ToC. External rigorous evaluations generated evidence of impact.

## Results

Gaps in ANC protocols, service delivery capacity, ANC contacts, family support and drivers of pregnant women's nutrition behaviors were addressed by strategies in the ToC. Integration of the package into ANC proved feasible. Coverage and several key nutrition service delivery indicators improved in multiple countries. Maternal nutrition practices also improved and varied in countries.

## Conclusion

The ToC based on field implementation in large scale ANC platforms was proven valid as a starting point for adaptation in other countries. ANC provides an important opportunity for rapidly scaling up maternal nutrition coverage. Both facility- and community-based actions are essential.

## PROGRAM LOCATIONS



Alive & Thrive conducted implementation research in four countries from 2014-2021

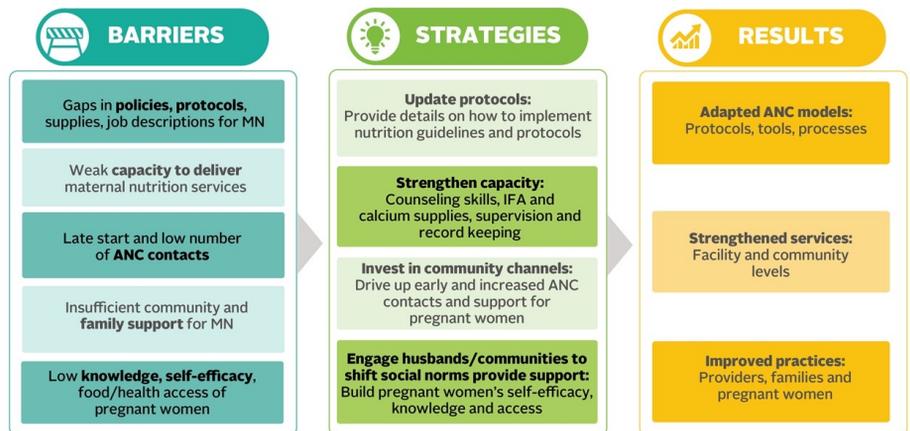


Based on WHO guidelines

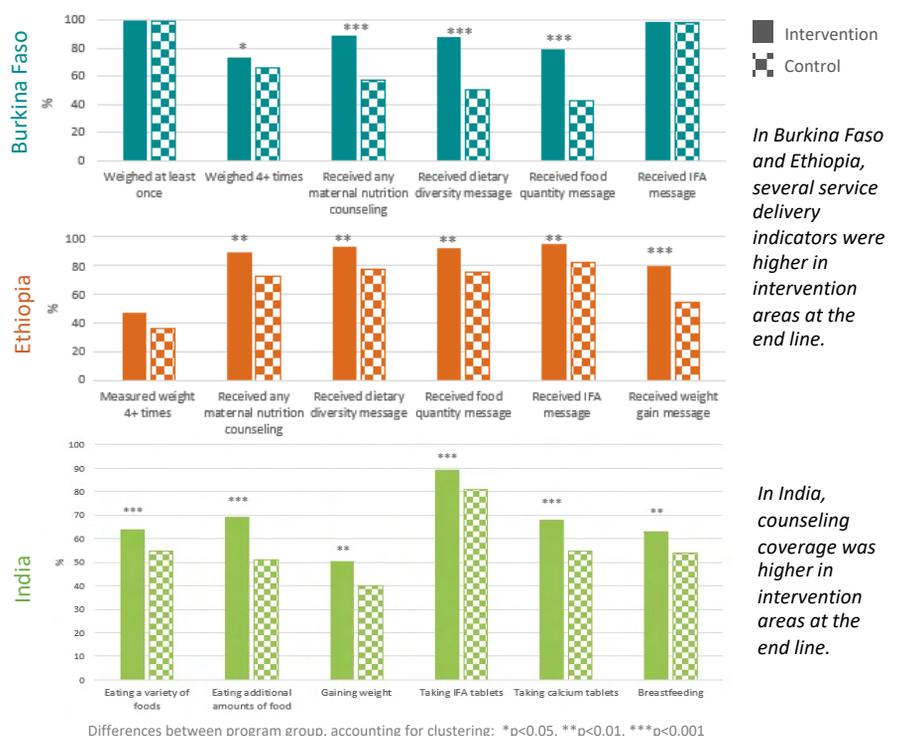
## THE PACKAGE OF MATERNAL NUTRITION INTERVENTIONS



## THEORY OF CHANGE FOR INTEGRATING MATERNAL NUTRITION INTO ANC



## RESULTS OF FEASIBILITY TESTING



In Burkina Faso and Ethiopia, several service delivery indicators were higher in intervention areas at the end line.

In India, counseling coverage was higher in intervention areas at the end line.

Differences between program group, accounting for clustering: \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001

