**NIPN Responds to a Request From The Ministry of Health To Inform The Food And Nutrition Strategy**

The Ethiopian Government developed the country’s first Food and Nutrition Policy in November 2018 and is currently developing the Food and Nutrition Strategy to operationalize the policy.

To inform the strategy, the Ministry of Health (MoH) requested NIPN to conduct analyses of existing evidence and provide information on seven questions related to the implementation of the second phase of the National Nutrition Program (NNP II).

NIPN addressed these questions and submitted two reports to the MOH: 1) results from an analysis on the progress towards NNP II targets and 2) results from a rapid literature review to identify the effects of social and behavior change communication (SBCC) on infant and young child feeding (IYCF) practices in Ethiopia.

**Progress towards NNP II targets**

The NIPN team used data from nationally representative surveys, annual sectoral reports and administrative reports to analyze progress against NNP II targets between 2016 and 2019. The findings showed that progress has been made in the past four years, but more concentrated efforts are needed in several NNP II initiatives to reach their targets.

From six of the NNP II outcome indicators, exclusive breastfeeding (59%), exceeded the World Health Assembly target (50%) but did not reach the NNP II target (80%). For stunting, wasting and underweight in children and under nutrition among women, progress was observed, but targets were not met.

The indicator with the highest coverage of nutrition-specific interventions was the availability of iodized salt in households (88%), although more work is needed to increase the percentage of women who take 90 or more iron/ folate tablets during pregnancy.

For coverage of nutrition sensitive interventions, the agricultural sector performed the best as it reached most of its targets. Coverage of access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation facilities saw an increase but targets were not met.

Data gaps related to, for instance, adolescent nutrition, women’s diets, anemia, and non-communicable diseases, limited the scope of the analysis.

The review also assessed the challenges with multisectoral coordination which included: poor coordination and planning, insufficient collaboration among implementing sectors and a limited sense of ownership and accountability. Although efforts have been made towards multi-sectoral nutrition coordination, it is still not functioning as expected.

**The effectiveness of SBCC interventions**

The review looked at studies that were conducted for programs targeting children between 0-23.9 months and which included a nutrition and SBCC intervention. The studies were appraised using the Joanna Briggs Institute critical appraisal.

Results from this review found that SBCC interventions were effective in improving IYCF practices and were more effective than traditional nutrition education interventions that focus on individual behavioral change.

SBCC interventions that were the most effective used multiple platforms, multiple communication channels, reached different and segmented audiences, had multiple contact points, and used a multisectoral approach.

The two reports were shared with the MOH and findings presented to ministry staff and implementing partners.