



Integrated Family Health Initiative (IFHI): Catalyzing Change in Bihar, India

About the Integrated Family Health Initiative

Keywords: maternal health, immunization, family planning

BACKGROUND Bihar is one of India's largest and poorest states with over 100 million people. Poor nutrition and poor health, particularly for women and children, lead to early deaths and generational cycles of lost potential. The state has one of the country's highest rates of maternal, neonatal and infant mortality. Underlying factors that contribute to these negative health outcomes primarily include extreme poverty, gender and social inequality among many others.

Recognizing these persistent gaps, the Integrated Family Health Initiative (IFHI) project was launched in 2011 to address these disparities with support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

OBJECTIVE IFHI's objective is to support the Government of Bihar in increasing the universal coverage and quality of life-saving interventions and improve the health and survival of women, newborns and children during the first 1,000 days - from conception to the child's second birthday.

STRATEGIES To reach this objective, IFHI implemented a set of core, proven interventions, spanning the family health continuum of services: maternal, newborn, nutrition, immunization and family planning. The interventions were initially implemented in 137 blocks of eight high-risk districts.

The core interventions address critical barriers to the delivery of services by:

- Improving counseling and emergency preparedness for mothers and newborns;
- Strengthening the quality management of routine deliveries and post-partum evaluations;
- Building basic and comprehensive emergency and obstetric care capabilities in health facilities;
- Refining routine management of neonatal infections;
- Ensuring full immunization;
- Improving nutrition through iron and folic acid uptake during pregnancy, early and exclusive breastfeeding and appropriate complementary feeding;
- Expanding access to quality family planning services and birth spacing methods.

Program Name: Integrated Family Health Initiative (IFHI)

Program Country: India

Timeframe: 2011 – 2018

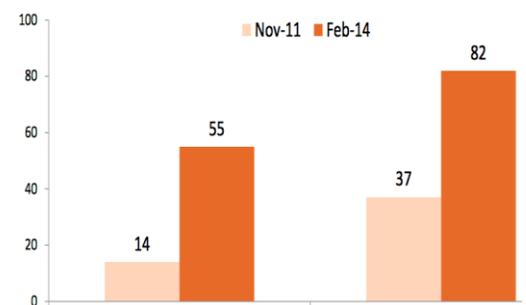
Donor: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

CARE has been identified as the lead partner in the formation of a State Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health Unit for the state of Bihar under the Government of India's RMNCH+A program.

Quantifiable results from IFHI:

Beneficiaries:

Mothers receive quality information during home visits



Pregnant women received advice about emergency preparedness

Women with preterm/LBW babies given advice for extra care

IFHI also implemented a number of cross-cutting solutions to address critical barriers of good health, such as poor information flow, poor information use and poor integration of interventions. This included **strengthening data-driven management**, through activities such as mapping and registration across the continuum of care and employing facility-based observations of deliveries to monitor the quality of care and clinical outcomes. Another area of work was to **integrate service delivery** and **improve the capabilities & tools for frontline workers and facility staff** through tools, checklists, job aids, and mobile nurse training teams. Finally, a third area applies cross-cutting solutions in **optimizing incentives** and **creating partnerships, including** team-based goals and incentives, and working with private providers to increase access and quality of reproductive, newborn, and maternal health services.

INNOVATIONS In addition to the core set of interventions, CARE pilot tested several innovations, new to Bihar, to address underlying barriers to the delivery of quality services. Two key innovations received approval for scale-up across Bihar by the Cabinet in September 2013:

1. **Team Based Goals and Incentives:** an intervention aimed at strengthening the teamwork and motivation of the front line health workers through the setting of collective targets and recognition of successful teams on a quarterly basis with a small non-financial reward. The intervention has demonstrated increased teamwork and coordination amongst frontline workers, and has resulted in higher quality home visits.
2. **Information Communication Technology based Continuum of Care Services:** an award winning (mHealth Alliance Collaboration Award 2013) mobile technology intervention to aid frontline health workers in registering, tracking, managing care, and counseling pregnant women and mothers with newborns.

INTEGRATION AND STATEWIDE SCALE UP Since the project's inception, IFHI has worked closely with the Bihar government officials from the state and the block level to build capacity and ownership at all levels. A Technical Support Unit was formed in 2013 to support both the Health and Social Welfare Departments of the Government of Bihar to achieve rapid and sustainable reduction in rates of mortality, fertility and malnutrition and increase immunization coverage. Under this partnership CARE aims to provide catalytic support to the two departments to transform capabilities and behaviors, by building leadership and ownership, as well as strengthening systems, reporting and budgeting, establishing a social accountability process, and importantly expanding the use of proven solutions and tools.

RESULTS

IFHI interventions have shown significant success since implementation began across several key indicators:

- At least two home visits during the last trimester increased from 29% to 62%;
- Three visits in the first week following delivery increased from 6% to 29%;
- Counseling on maternal danger signs increased by 29%;
- Advice on family planning during pregnancy by frontline health workers increased by almost 24%;
- Use of modern contraceptives (6-8 months postpartum) increased from 11% to 17%;
- Early initiation of breastfeeding increased by 20%;
- Complementary feeding, including children 6-11 months receiving age appropriate frequency of semi-solid food increased from 30% to 77%;
- Percentage of children (6-11 months) who received DPT-3 vaccine increased from 60% to 70%;
- Use of basic infection control practices has improved: correct hand washing increased by 9% and use of gloves when conducting deliveries is at 91%.

CONCLUSION IFHI through its cross cutting solutions and interventions, hopes to have catalyzed significant reductions in maternal, neonatal, infant mortality, malnutrition and reduced unmet need for family planning. Effective strategies will be documented, as well as tools and innovations that can benefit family health throughout the state of Bihar, India, and globally.

Resources IFHI on the SRMH Wiki page:

<http://familyplanning.care2share.wikispaces.net/Integrated+Family+Health+Initiative>

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