Barriers and Facilitators in the Use of Iron and Folic Acid and Vitamin A Supplementation and Improving Dietary Practices: A Qualitative Study in Zinder and Maradi, Niger

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Conflict of Interest Disclosure

I have no conflict of interest to report in relation to this presentation.

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Jen Burns, Idriss Leko, Kaled Djibo Mamoudou, Abigail Conrad, Lisa Sherburne, Avril Amstrong
Objectives

Qualitative formative research to identify the factors that support or inhibit—

1. Improve access and adherence to iron-folic acid supplementation among pregnant women and adolescent girls.
2. Improve access and timely use of vitamin A supplementation for children under five.
3. Increase consumption of iron and vitamin A-rich foods among women of reproductive age, adolescent girls, and young children.

Partners/Stakeholders
USAID partners, Breakthrough Research, Breakthrough Action, Ministry of Public Health

- 58.6% of pregnant women suffer from anemia
- 6% of children aged 6–59 receive an age-appropriate dose of vitamin A
- 6% of children receive a minimally acceptable diet
Methods

• **Sampling:** 2 communities per district; livelihoods and access to health centers
• **Data collection:** focus group discussions, group interviews, and semi-structured interviews
  – open-ended and semi-structured questions; cognitive mapping and participatory approaches
• **Purposive sampling:** 227 respondents
  – pregnant women
  – female caregivers of children under five
  – adolescent girls
  – family members
  – community leaders
  – health workers/volunteers
Results: IFA Supplementation

- availability
- distance to health centers
- family and community support
- service quality

“The difficulties encountered by women … are the distance that separates the village from the health center ... It is not easy because they do not take the risk of riding on motorcycles”.
— Pregnant woman, Guidan Roumdji

“Sometimes, we can go up to 3 times or even 4 times without having a consultation because the health agents say that there are too many people. And that you have to come back another day, and even that day, if you leave, it is not sure...”
— Family member, Guidan Roumdji
Results: Vitamin A Supplementation

- availability
- from mass campaigns to health services integration

“In practice, if we have 100 children and we only have doses for 50 children, there is a **shortfall**. We give to those present and others go to wait...”

— Health worker, Guidan Roundjii
Results: Dietary Intake of Iron and Vitamin A

- food access and availability
- family and community support
- social and gender norms

“We also do not give eggs to children under five years old, otherwise the child will be locked up like an egg, that is to say, it takes a long time before it starts to speak”.

— Community leader, Allah Karbo
Process for Applying Learning

1. Results from Formative Research
2. Action Plans
3. Application

USAID ADVANCING NUTRITION
## Application to Policy and Programs: Support Across Partners and Government

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technical Assistance</th>
<th>Target Audience</th>
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<tr>
<td>Supply chain assessment/Action plans</td>
<td>GoN, UNICEF, supply chain actors</td>
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<td>National IFA module</td>
<td>Clinic health workers, community health volunteers</td>
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<td>Radio broadcasts</td>
<td>Caregivers, pregnant women and lactating women, household members, community members</td>
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<td>Multi-sectoral program integration</td>
<td>Adolescent safe spaces, care groups, community dialogues, CHVs, husband schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Micronutrients 101 training</td>
<td>Partners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Context analysis and recipe development</td>
<td>Radio, husband schools, care groups, farmer groups</td>
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Overall Recommendations

- Address supply chain disruptions
- Bring IFA closer to communities
- Establish adherence partners
- Develop national IFA training
- Support integration of vitamin A and deworming into routine services
- Multi-sectoral programs
USAID Advancing Nutrition is the Agency’s flagship multi-sectoral nutrition project, addressing the root causes of malnutrition to save lives and enhance long-term health and development.

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