The So What Leveraging Evaluative Data to Adapt Social and Behavior Change Nutrition Programming Workshop

Webinar Transcript

Laura Itzkowitz

This session will dig into the adaptation step to ensure that we're making the best use of our data. Recognizing that we have a mixture of program implementers and MEL colleagues in the audience, today's session will start by sharing key SBC terminology. Because our evaluations are generally designed to help us enhance the quality of SBC implementation in order to improve and sustain behavior change, we will also share a brief overview of the six steps to quality SBC. We will then explore the types of evaluations that can be used to assess SBC programs, the question they ask, the type of data they yield, and finally, the so-what. We will think about how we interpret and offer recommendations for adaptation using the data. Next slide.

I'm Laura Itzkowitz, a Senior Nutrition and SBC Advisor in USAID's Bureau for Global Health. Today, I'm hosting this webinar with my colleague Shaneka from USAID Advancing Nutrition. Riley is a Social and Behavior Change Project Officer. Shaneka, a Social and Behavior Change Advisor. Kelsey, a Nutrition and SBC Advisor, and Veronica, a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Advisor. Now I'm going to pass it over to my colleague, Shaneka, to get us started.

Shaneka Thurman

Thank you, Laura. As Laura mentioned, we know that we have a mixed audience of social and behavior change program practitioners as well as MEL experts. We have designed this session so that we offer enough background to each audience so that you fully understand what to look for in social and behavior change program implementation and also how to use the data from evaluations of those SBC program implementations.

We will start by outlining some key terms, but prior to doing that, I'd love to hear from you. In the chat, please list one word that comes to mind when you hear SBC or social and behavioral change. What's one word that comes to mind? Right. I see behaviors, context, barriers, counseling, facilitators, and enablers. Wow. It's really coming in fast. Communication, positive change, evidence, environment, interesting. Motivation. Transformation and change. Complicated. Yes. Culture. Slow. Yes, Orlando. Dialogue, time-taking, norms. These are all really good. Audience. Excellent.

Oh, they're still coming in. Capacity building, change pattern, influencers. I love that. We'll talk about those in a few minutes. More audiences. Excellent. It sounds like you've used your one-word wisely, and you have definitely hit a lot of the common terms that we hear in social and behavior change. I am hoping that you take that understanding with you as we flow into this discussion about using the data from evaluations to improve social and behavior change. Next slide, please.

Let's talk through some of the words that you mentioned in the chat because every single one of those words was absolutely correct. They make up several elements of social and behavior change. In evaluations, how we think about all of those things that you just mentioned together is important. As such, let's start with a few key definitions that we'll use to frame the discussion. As several of you mentioned in the chat, the foundation of any social and behavior change program, and also by virtue of the foundation of any SBC evaluation will be a behavior. A behavior, very simply put, is a specific action performed by a specific person at a specific time or place in their lives. Simply put, it's what people do. It's the actions that we take.

Every one of us, we all practice behaviors. In fact, regardless of where you are in the world, if you just woke up or if you've had a long day already, you've already practiced behaviors and likely nutrition behaviors. You could have eaten a fruit or a vegetable. That's a nutrition behavior. You may have washed your hands prior to eating. That's a nutrition behavior. Maybe you breastfed your child who was under six months today. That's a nutrition behavior. These are all actions that people take to improve our nutrition outcomes or the outcomes of others around us.

Sometimes when we want people to practice a nutrition behavior, it's not so easy for them to do. There may be things that make it easier or more difficult for them to practice. Let's just maybe use the nutrition behavior that I referenced earlier. Let's say we refine it so that we're eating two servings of green leafy vegetables per day. If someone is trying to adopt that behavior, they may say to you, "Oh, no, I can't eat green leafy vegetables these days. They're too expensive," or, "Actually, I don't prefer the taste or even the texture. I can't consume two servings of green leafy vegetables a day," or, "I don't know how to prepare them so that people in my family actually like them. I don't think I could eat two servings of green leafy vegetables per day," or, "I don't decide what we eat," or, "It's not safe to consume green leafy vegetables."

The flip side of that is they could say, "I can try to consume green leafy vegetables twice a day. I grow them in my garden. It's very easy to access them," or, "The women in my church, they've been talking about the recipes. I think I can easily try that." I've listed several reasons why trying a behavior might be easier or more difficult for people. These are called factors, and we'll show you a few more examples on the next slide. They're important to consider when you're both planning a program, implementing a program but definitely when you're evaluating a program. You want to think carefully about these factors.

Next on the screen, we have supporting actors or influencers. I saw that in the chat, so you were well ahead of me. In the age of social media, this term may be familiar to you already. A supporting actor or an influencer is a person who has the ability to motivate a person to change their action or the way that they think about certain things. They support, they inspire, or they guide us. Our influencers or supporting actors may be our spouse, they could be religious leaders, they might be our friends even. In nutrition specifically, they could even be farmers, or vendors, or community health workers. These are all people who play a critical role in reducing some of those barriers that we just talked about or even leveraging us to practice the behavior that we're trying to practice.

All of these things really do work together and in social and behavior change programming, the activities that we plan are very strategically and intentionally designed such that they work with those influencers or those supporting actors to address those factors that make it difficult or easier to practice a behavior. It really is a pathway that we focus on, both in implementation and also in evaluation. If you look at the bottom of the screen, you'll see that pathway. Maybe a nutrition program has a goal of improving health and nutrition in a community. They decide what their nutrition outcome is, maybe it's around stunting.

They may ask themselves, "If we want to reduce stunting in a community, who needs to do what? What behavior actually needs to be practiced?

If we want people to practice that behavior, which factors should we consider? Which supporting actors might help us remove some of those barriers or leverage those motivators?" Then we get to our SBC program. You see that pathway, it's a behavior change pathway, or if we're speaking in MEL terms, it feels a little bit like a theory of change. It's the logical link between all of these pieces that helps you understand their relationship. Next slide, please.

I mentioned that we would come back to factors for just a moment to focus on a really important element. Oftentimes in social and behavior change programs, we narrowly focus on a few important factors. Those factors are generally on the bottom right side of your screen. People don't eat green leafy vegetables because they don't know that they should eat green leafy vegetables. They don't have the information or they don't have quite the understanding that they should have in order to consume them. We focus in there.

As you'll notice, there are plenty of other boxes on the screen that outline factors that could be equally or even more important than knowledge. As we suggested in the previous slide, maybe they're too expensive, maybe they're too far away, maybe they're seasonal, so you can't get them all the time. Perhaps I don't make the decisions, I don't control the income. In this community, the norm is that women don't eat green leafy vegetables at a certain time of the month.

As evaluators, it's important to think critically about all of the factors that might come into play if people are trying to practice a behavior and really zoom out to think and to also offer guidance or recommendations about other factors that you're noticing as you're doing your evaluation, that might be equally important. Next slide.

To very quickly wrap this up and nicely put it on one screen, we are thinking about how certain elements of social and behavior change work together. What is their relationship? How does one impact the other? Starting from our program goal, it may be that we're trying to reduce stunting. In order to reduce stunting, we think of our nutrition outcome, which is the increased consumption of healthy diets in infants and young children. Then we may ask ourselves, "Okay, we know what the nutrition outcome is. What do people have to do? What is the behavior that they have to practice in order to see that nutrition outcome change?"

Maybe we whittle it down to caregivers feed children 6 to 23 months one serving of small fish each day. Then we think through those factors. They may not be able to feed small fish each day because they don't have it year-round, or they're unsure of how to prepare, or they believe that the children's stomachs are too small. As a result, social and behavior change programs will design specific activities that will address each of those factors. When each of those factors have been reduced, the behavior can change. When the behavior change, the nutrition outcome also changes, and then ultimately we reach our program goal.

If those improvements that we make through our evaluation lead us to quality SBC and quality SBC leads us to nutrition outcomes, it's wise that we take just a few minutes to think about what we mean when we say quality SBC. I'll turn it to my colleague Kelsey, who will share a bit more information. Over to you, Kelsey.

Kelsey Torres

Great. Thanks, Shaneka. Let's just start digging into the steps for quality SBC evaluation. We know that evaluations that are conducted with quality will help inform quality SBC programs. Shaneka highlighted

the key elements of SBC programs and this informs what we need to evaluate, but how do we get there? There are six steps to quality SBC and we've created a suite of tools to help make each one bite-size. Throughout all of these steps, I want you to keep in mind that behavioral pathways are the foundation for it all.

First, let's start with behaviors as the closest outcome to the program goals, but we know that nutrition has dozens or more possible behaviors to focus on. No matter how skilled a program's SBC team is, no single program can work to change all of them, so we must prioritize. Then we turn to the literature and we conduct formative research if needed. This will help us better understand the behaviors and the barriers and enablers that might be influencing them. In step 3, we develop a strategy based on the behavioral pathways that Shaneka described and this will serve as the roadmap for the project.

In step 4, we use our strategy to plan for implementation as well as monitoring, evaluation, and learning. Then we implement. During this step, we'll also monitor our program based on indicators thoughtfully developed with the team, appropriate targets, and a detailed plan for data collection. Lastly, we evaluate to understand what we have achieved to further adapt current programming, to identify opportunities for advocacy, and guide, design, and implementation of future programs. I'll highlight some tools we've developed to help with each of these steps. Next slide.

As I mentioned, behavior prioritization is the first step to quality SBC because it allows programs to sharpen their focus and avoid overwhelming people to ensure impact. Let's think about it. If we're trying to change everything, we may not be as successful as if we focus our efforts on fewer behaviors. Behavior prioritization requires subjective decision-making informed by data, and DHS or other quantitative data are usually most useful for this stage.

In this first tool that I'll share, it's shown on the screen, this guides you through the prioritization process. You'll start with the program goal, then you'll look at four main criteria. First, the current prevalence of the behavior and how much improvement is needed in order to increase the prevalence to about 80%. This is identified as the behavior gap. Next, based on scientific and epidemiological evidence, you'll want to consider which behaviors are closest and will make the biggest difference to the desired outcome. We call this in the tool, the potential to impact results.

Then you'll assess the feasibility of changing the behavior given available resources, services, and constraints in the program area. This is the potential ability to change. Finally, you'll look at how well the behavior fits within the project or organization, manageable interests, including time, competencies, and resources needed to promote the practice. Thinking about really what's realistic within your program's bandwidth. The behavior should also align with national or sub-national policy priorities. The output from using this tool is a list of priority behaviors, which will be the roots of your program. Next slide.

Next, we can dig into our prioritized behaviors with research to better understand the audience and audience segments as well as the context. It's important to be intentional about when we do formative research to really ensure it's needed and it's focused. You can look for existing research on the prioritized behaviors to determine if formative research is needed. Then if you decide that it is, there are probably gaps in the evidence base or new questions that come up as you're reviewing the literature that will help you focus your research.

Formative research carried out with people in the program area can help you explore why people practice the behavior or not. Those barriers and enablers we keep referring to and the list that Shaneka shared the handy tool with. We know that it takes much more than knowledge to change behaviors, so we need to also consider the structural and social barriers and enablers. Thinking back to Shaneka's

green leafy vegetable example, are they too expensive? Are there social norms in place that might be influencing practice of the behavior? Do they have a say how household funds are spent? Any number of things. We want to make sure that we're really considering anything that might be relevant in the context.

Formative research can also help us better understand who influences practices, what people are willing and able to do in their context, and how, and it helps uncover local solutions. Our decision tree tool, shown here, helps programmers select one or more formative research methods beyond the usual go-to method that we think of, and it's based on the key questions that you'll want to answer. Next slide.

After conducting formative research, we analyze the research to develop our SBC strategy, which pulls all this together. It builds on the behavioral pathways and serves as a roadmap for the project. This strategy includes prioritized behaviors, the most important barriers, and enablers, or the factors that we keep talking about that influence each priority behavior, and describes how the project will plan activities to address them by engaging different influencers.

I want to emphasize here that planning activities is a time to think outside the box. We have a real opportunity to be creative and think beyond the usual instructional and information-sharing activities. Whatever we plan, we also want to make sure that we're really drilling down on the factors that will truly make a difference. All of the activities must explicitly address or link back to a specific factor. No matter how creative we get, we'll always want to make sure our pathways hold. The strategy also defines the geographic scope of activities and expected outcomes. The tool that we've created to help with this is shown here, and it's a simple checklist that can help you check key elements of your strategy. Next slide.

Once we have prepared the SBC strategy and our implementation and monitoring, evaluation, and learning plans, we are ready for implementation. Throughout implementation, we'll want to ensure we maintain that strong quality that we established with our SBC design and strategy based on those behaviors and factors and the pathways. We developed this handy do's and don'ts tool, and it's designed in a simple way to remind us about best practices for SBC implementation and pitfalls to avoid.

You can use this resource to regularly check on implementation and identify areas to adjust as needed. We have some examples of these do's and don'ts shown on the slide. For example, do carefully sequence and align activities. Don't settle for generic activities, messages, and materials. We want to make sure that they're really tailored to the context and the audience and relevant to our behavioral pathways. Do monitor implementation, including changes and behaviors and factors, and don't ignore changes in context, participant groups, and behaviors. We want to pay attention to those in order to adapt and make adjustments. Next slide.

During implementation, we'll want to ensure we're monitoring to know how things are going and where and when to make adjustments. We developed a tool to help with this step as well. Building on your SBC strategy, you can use this monitoring tool to determine which priority behaviors and influencing factors to monitor as you prepare the monitoring, evaluation, and learning plan. The tool shown here helps SBC and MEL staff develop indicators that measure along the whole behavioral pathway as Shaneka had presented. It also helps you to select and apply monitoring methods, set realistic targets and timelines based on existing data, and analyze and share results.

It also highlights the importance of making adaptations, recognizing that some behaviors and factors may take more time or a different approach than originally planned. Changes might be big or maybe just incremental, and they could range from focusing efforts on a different factor or a specific part of an activity, expanding or eliminating an activity or adjusting a measure. Next slide.

Next, it's time to evaluate, which is really at the core of our session today. Program evaluations play a critical role in improving the quality and determining the effectiveness of the social and behavior change strategies and approaches needed to reach nutrition program outcomes. Evaluations that are carefully designed and conducted can help nutrition, SBC programmers identify what worked well, what could have been done differently, and how to design and implement future programs.

The guide shown here supports implementing partners who are involved with conducting an evaluation for a nutrition program, and it breaks out key steps for evaluation. As we continue with more on the why, how, and so-what of evaluations, we'll see how these different elements feed into our evaluation and how an evaluation may inform these different elements. As Laura said at the beginning, there should be a constant cycle of implement, evaluate, and adapt. I'll now hand over to Veronica to dig into the why and how to evaluate SBC programs.

Veronica Varela

Thank you, Kelsey. We've learned what we can evaluate, but why would we do it? Especially in the middle of a program cycle when we might think it would be a better use of resources to just continue implementing rather than evaluating. We'll now go into why evaluations are important for SBC programs and give an overview of a few different types of evaluations. You'll also have the opportunity to hear stories about two common types of evaluations and try to guess the recommendation and we'll explore the so-what of those evaluations. Next slide, please.

Before we move into evaluations for SBC programs, I just want to quickly note the difference between monitoring and evaluation. We often hear these terms together, so it's important to note their differences. Monitoring is the ongoing measurement of progress towards achieving program objectives. This will typically involve routine tracking of data about a program and its intended outputs or outcomes. Evaluation is the systematic analysis of information about program activities, characteristics, and outcomes to determine if a program has achieved certain objectives. This will typically be the evaluation questions.

An evaluation seeks to understand what a program has accomplished and can have multiple time points. Many times we can use monitoring data as part of evaluations, and they can go hand in hand. They both can help programs in adapting and identifying areas for advocacy. Monitoring will specifically help a program adapt current programming to improve performance and desired outcomes. While some evaluations can also do this, such as a process evaluation, evaluations can also help guide the design and implementation of future programs. Next slide, please.

Now moving on to evaluations for SBC, why do we need to evaluate SBC programs? SBC is inherently individualized and doesn't take place overnight. In order to understand a program's outcomes, we need to know who made the change, how, and after how long. People and their behaviors are complex and dynamic. Behavior change is incremental, and change can go in various directions. We will need data for multiple time points in order to pinpoint the full scope of change. Finally, SBC is cross-cutting. When using SBC to tackle nutrition challenges, we must consider the behaviors of many individuals within the food system. Some examples include individuals in the sectors of water, sanitation, and hygiene, civil society, agriculture, and early childhood development.

Carefully designed and conducted evaluations can help programmers identify what worked well and what could have been done differently. It can help identify opportunities to support institutional and project-level advocacy for cross-cutting behaviors, design and implement future programs, and finally help donors plan for future investments and priorities. Next slide.

Now we are going to give an overview of five different types of evaluations that there are, what questions they can answer, what type of data they collect, and when they can be conducted. The image on this slide is a decision tree that is from an evaluation planning tool for USAID nutrition programs that was developed by USAID Advancing Nutrition. This decision tree walks readers through a series of questions to then guide readers to the appropriate type of evaluation that they should conduct.

Here in the red boxes, we can see the types of evaluations that we are going to go through today. We have an impact evaluation, a performance or outcome evaluation, a process or performance evaluation, economic evaluation, such as a cost-effectiveness evaluation, which is what we're going to go through today, and then a sustainability evaluation as well. Next slide.

The first evaluation that we're going to do an overview on is a impact evaluation. This evaluation can answer the question of, to what extent is the behavior change a result of the program? This evaluation can gather both quantitative and qualitative data, and it will be conducted during and after program implementation, with the most important aspect being that there is a pre-imposed program measurement points. Next slide.

The next evaluation is a cost-effectiveness evaluation, and this evaluation can help us answer which program approach is more cost-effective, what were the program costs and behavior change outcomes before and after the implementation of the program, as well as what would be the cost of scaling up the program. This type of evaluation will gather quantitative information typically, and it can be implemented during and/or after program implementation. Next slide.

The next type of evaluation is a sustainability evaluation. This type of evaluation can be broken out into two different evaluations. The first being an activity sustainability evaluation or a sustained outcomes evaluation. An activity sustainability evaluation can help us answer the question of, will or has the activity or intervention continued after external funding has ended? A sustained outcomes evaluation can help us answer the questions of, will the program's outcomes be maintained without program inputs, or were the program outcomes maintained after the program ended? They can both gather both quantitative and qualitative data, and these types of evaluations are conducted at the end of a program or typically sometime after a program has ended, typically a few years after the program has ended as well. Next slide.

The next two evaluations that we're going to go through are very common in SBC. We will spend more time on them and give you the opportunity to step into the evaluator's shoes, to guess the recommendations, and explore the so-what of these evaluations. The first common evaluation is a performance or outcome evaluation. This type of evaluation can help answer the questions of, did the program achieve its intended behavior change outcome, and to what degree did the program achieve its intended outcomes? It can gather both qualitative and quantitative data, and it can be conducted during and/or after program implementation or just after implementation as well. I will now pass it over to Riley to guide us through an activity to explore the so-what of a performance evaluation.

Riley Auer

Great. Thanks so much, Veronica. Let's use what we've learned from Veronica to understand that so-what. Imagine that we are working with a project in Nepal called Nutrition for All, and the SBC team has been tasked with improving nutrition by promoting nutrition-sensitive agriculture behaviors in farmer communities. The programmer focused on one group of farmers and promoted behaviors that they could practice both at home and on their farms in the hopes to maximize resources and impact.

They chose to promote the following nutrition-sensitive agriculture behaviors. That farmers introduce legumes and other green manure crops as intercrops or cover crops. That farmers use recommended postharvest handling methods for sorting drying and storing produce. That farmers increase yields of fruits and vegetables grown for home consumption or local markets. That caregivers and farmer households prepare safe, nutritious foods hygienically. Finally, that caregivers and farmer households prepare safe nutritious foods using methods such as thermal processing and fermentation that enhance the bioavailability of a plant's nutrients.

Almost halfway through the implementation of the program, they had a question that we've all wondered at some point in our work. Are our implementation efforts working? As a result, the evaluators designed a performance evaluation to answer one key evaluation question. To what degree is Nutrition for All reaching its behavior change goals and what may be influencing that? They used a mixed methods approach, and the evaluation team conducted an evaluation and found the following data in short.

First, the quantitative indicators showed that only a 3% to 7% increase in the uptake for each behavior over the two years of implementation. That's so much lower than the 20% increase that was expected. The qualitative data from the focus group discussions found that farmers tried to practice behaviors at home, and on the farm as much as possible, but they grow overwhelmed and couldn't keep up with the expectations amongst their other priorities at home and at work.

Given what we've learned about quality SBC from what Kelsey shared with us earlier, what might the evaluation team provide to the implementation team? Yaritza, if you could launch that poll for me we can take a second to respond. First, on the screen, we have that the evaluation question was, to what degree is Nutrition for All reaching its behavior change goals, and what might be influencing that? Then we have a reminder that there were five prioritized behaviors, a reminder that the major quantitative finding was that 3% to 7% increase in the uptake for each of those behaviors over the two years of implementation thus far, and a 20% inspected increase. Then finally the major qualitative finding was that farmers were overwhelmed.

What might our recommendation be? Is it to prioritize behaviors based on what changes would make the biggest difference and the intended outcome or goal in the program context, what people can do, and the program mandate and resources? Is it to tailor activities to each segment of the participation group as much as possible? If the program is continuing to assess whether a more refined audience segmentation can help focus program activities, or finally, is it none of these, that the program may reach its goals with more time?

Okay. Yaritza, if you can go ahead and launch the poll in just a minute or share the results, apologies, in just a minute.

Okay. While we're waiting for folks to respond, just a reminder of the question. The question is, what recommendation might the evaluation team provide to the implementation team? The first option is to prioritize behaviors based on what changes would make the biggest difference to the intended outcome or goal in the program context, what people can do, and the program mandate and resources. The second option is to tailor activities to each segment of the participation group as much as possible. If the program is continuing to assess whether a more refined audience segmentation can help focus program activities. The final option is none, that the program may reach its goal with more time.

Go ahead and launch that, Yaritza, so everyone can see the results, please. Great. A large majority of folks said to prioritize behaviors based on what changes would make the greatest impact. Then others had said to tailor activities. We would say that prioritizing the behaviors based on the changes would

make the greatest result. Oh, I'm seeing someone in the chat just mention that they can't see the results. Yaritza, can you share?

Yaritza Rodriguez

Yes, I am sharing the results, but you may need to go into the Zoom controls and select polls. Select the icon polls to see the results.

Riley Auer

Great. Thank you. Okay. In this scenario, the program may have tried to change too many behaviors at once. We might recall from earlier in the presentation, that behavior prioritization is the first step of quality SBC and Kelsey shared a great tool with us. In the scenario, evaluators may recommend prioritizing behaviors based on what would make the greatest difference to the intended outcome or goal of the program.

What does that mean for implementers? We want to maximize resources, the greatest impact can be made when we focus on the changes that would make the biggest difference to the intended outcome or program goal within our context, what people can do, and the program mandate and resources. Like I mentioned, and as Kelsey showed us before, USAID Advancing Nutrition developed a tool for prioritizing multi-sectoral nutrition behaviors. It's a helpful stepwise tool to support program planners and other stakeholders to prioritize behaviors. You can find a link to that tool in the chat where there was the QR code earlier. Okay, back to you, Veronica.

Veronica Varela

Thanks, Riley. The final type of evaluation that we are going to go through is a process evaluation. This evaluation can help answer questions such as, is the program being implemented as originally planned? Is the program making any adaptations during implementation? How well are the program's processes working and how can processes be improved? This type of evaluation typically will gather qualitative information and can be conducted during program implementation. Now, let's go back to Riley to guide us through another activity to explore the so-what of a process evaluation.

Riley Auer

Thanks again, Veronica. Okay, everyone. In this scenario, the Nourishment Project SBC team has been tasked with supporting the project's goal to improve maternal nutrition in a West African country over a five-year implementation period. After experiencing a series of significant changes caused by lots of staff turnover and new local government mandates that led to funding shifts, the Nourishment project and its key stakeholders wanted to pause and reassess whether they were still on track to implement as they originally planned.

The project was planned with inputs from many important stakeholders at the international, national, and community levels. They were keen to deliver on their promises despite these challenges. As a result, they consulted a group of evaluators to help them use the data to ensure that they were on the right track and with a particular focus on those quality SBC processes that we've talked about today. The evaluation team worked with the Nourishment project to plan for an evaluation that would answer the question. Is the Nourishment SBC activity being implemented as originally planned? The evaluation team used qualitative methods to review project documents and to consult stakeholders and project participants.

Here are some findings. A series of project documents and review revealed that many steps of quality SBC were completed successfully. The Nourishment team originally reviewed data to prioritize one behavior, and that was pregnant women eat sufficient quantities of food at appropriate frequencies for nutritious diet throughout their pregnancy. Project documents also revealed that formative research indicated knowledge among pregnant women about the importance of eating sufficient quantities of food at appropriate frequencies throughout pregnancy was high, almost 85%. But social norms encourage women to eat last, leaving them with insufficient quantities of food and qualities of food. That could only change, they found, if they were consulting men and community leaders.

Throughout the SBC strategy indicated that addressing norms would be the focus of Nourishment's work. The evaluation's FDG revealed that sharing knowledge about the importance of eating sufficient quantities of food at appropriate frequencies for a nutritious diet throughout pregnancy and trainings on food types were ultimately what was implemented. Monitoring data indicated that participation in programs was high, and survey respondents recall and retained SBC messages. However, behavior change remained stagnant.

Given what we know from quality or about quality SBC from Kelsey's presentation, what might the evaluation team provide? Or what recommendation might the evaluation team provide to the implementation team? Yaritza, if you could launch that poll, please? Thank you. As a reminder, the evaluation question was, is the Nourishment SBC activity being implemented as originally planned? The evaluation findings were that one behavior was prioritized. That formative research showed 85% of women knew the importance of eating sufficient quantities of food at appropriate frequencies, but men and leaders must address social norms that impact women's consumption. Program activities were to improve knowledge and to train on food types. Finally, program monitoring data showed that participation in programs is high, and survey respondents recalled and retained SBC messages, but behavior change remained stagnant.

What might the evaluation team recommend to the implementation team? First, could it be change the priority behavior since the monitoring indicators are high? The second option, could it be to review data on which factors need to be addressed for behavior change, or finally, could it be none that the monitoring data suggests that the program will reach its behavior change targets? We'll give you just a few more moments to reply.

Yes, Yaritza, if you could go ahead and share the results of the poll, please. Great. We see that about 82% of everyone who responded selected to review data on which factors need to be addressed for behavior change. Let's figure out the so-what. In this scenario, the program learned that during the formative research, husbands, and community leaders were key influencers of the actors for their priority behavior. However, prior to the evaluation, the program didn't develop activities for husbands and community leaders.

Are the current activities the right ones to improve the priority behaviors? Based on the evaluation findings, the evaluator might recommend revisiting that behavioral pathway that we've talked so much about today to ensure that the key influencers identified in the formative research are reflected there and addressed by program activities. So what? While it's common for SBC programs to default to knowledge improvement and sharing facts about food consumption, there may be deeper factors that we may have to get creative to address. Otherwise, we might not see behaviors change, and using quality SBC processes can help. The Nourishment team might consider using one of the tools that Kelsey shared with us earlier. It's that social and behavior change do's and don'ts getting it right for multi-sectoral programming. You can find a link to that in the chat in just a moment here. There it is.

All right. We've walked through two case studies. Now let's see what a few other common recommendations and so-whats are. In a scenario where an evaluation indicates that the program may have tried to change too many behaviors with timelines that are not realistic or targets that are not realistic, evaluators might recommend to check and confirm targets considering the timeline required for change in priority behaviors as well as available resources. If the program is continuing, they may choose to adjust targets and to reflect those adjustments in the monitoring and evaluation plan. You might consider using the Think Big Behavior Integration Guidance developed by The Manoff Group.

In another scenario where the program evaluation data indicates that the program may have changed too many behaviors with population groups that were too large or undefined, evaluators might recommend a more refined audience segmentation to guide programming. We've talked a couple of times about different tools, so I'll just share one more in the chat about audience segmentation that can be useful. You can see it listed here on the slide. There's also a program guidance for engaging family members from USAID advancing nutrition that you might consider using for applying that information to adapt your program.

Okay. We have talked about a lot of things today and we have lots of tools and guides to support you and your team in planning and conducting SBC program evaluations and then turning those evaluation results into program recommendations and adaptations. Let's recall the steps for quality SBC that Kelsey talked about earlier. You can see them on the right of the slide here. We start with prioritize, two, there's research, then three, we strategize. In four we plan. In five we implement, monitor, and adapt. Finally, what we're discussing today, six, we evaluate. Evaluative data can help guide implementers and evaluators back to this cycle. The information that we gather can help us to make adaptations in three key areas, the SBC strategy, the monitoring and evaluation plan, and holistic considerations for the program. The case studies that we looked at earlier helped us situate how evaluative data can inform specific programmatic adaptations or the so what.

Now that we know why we evaluate, how to evaluate, and how to avoid some of those common issues in evaluating SBC programs, we've got the data. In addition to making programmatic changes to make our programs more effective, evaluative and monitoring data can help us with several other important things. They can help us back up the importance of SBC work with ministries or departments of health, and other key stakeholders. They can help us advocate for additional resources and programming streams from donors. They can help us develop partnerships with key stakeholders, markets, and other program implementers. They can foster additional collaboration with internal projects and teams. Finally, they can help us demonstrate the lessons learned from our program's implementation for future similar programs and research.

Let's go ahead and open up for discussions and questions. If you haven't already and there's a question in your mind, please feel free to go ahead and share that in the Q&A feature, and we'll go ahead and get started.

Riley Auer

Maybe a first question for Laura. Many SBC programs focus on initiating behaviors, but not enough attention is given to sustaining behaviors and which behaviors can and should become habits. The typical framework that was presented today, according to Orlando, talked about individuals' context and structural factors, but may not necessarily be useful for considering habit formation. This is the social-ecological model and may need to be combined with different approaches which take into account the cues and immediate contexts where people live to budge and nudge practices to help developing habits.

Orlando's question is, should SBC be changed as an acronym to say SBC and HF or HF where HF stands for Habit Formation?

Laura Itzkowitz

Well, thank you for that question and for bringing that up, Orlando. I think what was presented here was a relatively simple and behavior-agnostic version of the general process. I do think that this process is something you follow even when it's a behavior that's done multiple times. We need to recognize that some behaviors need to become habits, and some behaviors don't because they're not done often enough to really consider them to be habits. Like handwashing after you use the toilet, that's a habit. That's something where you are really looking at habit formation and wanting to make sure that it happens every single time.

Hand washing before preparing food. That's a habit and so you're looking at it as habit formation. Early initiation of breastfeeding, that's not a habit. That's something that is extremely important, needs to happen once, but that person, until they have their next child, hopefully at least two years later, isn't doing that behavior again. You're not- approaching it as habit formation isn't appropriate.

I think it really depends in looking at the individual behavior, but you can follow those same steps and it's how you dig into it and where you get when you talk about the factors. Those factors are still going to be useful for habit formation. I disagree with the statement that they won't be because I think there'll be different factors that inhibit habits versus individual behaviors or one-time behaviors, but they won't be-- but there still will be factors that you're going to need to take into account. Thank you.

Riley Auer

Yes, thanks so much, Laura, for that response, and Orlando, for your question, brings us back to that behavioral pathway and thinking about factors and how they link together to help us achieve those program goals. A question from Marydean Purves to Kelsey, do you factor in a gender dimension for the quality SBC tools? Marydean noted that so many of the pitfalls in the intentions have a gender lens.

Kelsey Torres

Yes, it's a great question and I'm so glad that we received it. Gender is-- There are certainly several factors related to gender that we would look at when we're doing a behavioral analysis. We have these in our factors tool, particularly some examples around decision-making or control of income as well as status and value of girls, so it's definitely considered in the behavioral pathways and an important part of those.

Then also I just wanted to share that we've developed a program guide for integrating gender into nutrition programs, and it shares resources and examples to effectively integrate gender at each phase of a nutrition program. I'll put that in the chat as well, but that's a resource that focuses a bit more intentionally and narrowly on gender specifically if you identify that as a core component of the work that you'll be doing. Then I also wanted to hand over to Shaneka in case there's anything you wanted to add about gender considerations during evaluation.

Shaneka Thurman

Thanks, Kelsey. I just wanted to quickly highlight that in our guidance documents for evaluating social and behavior change in multi-sectoral nutrition programs, we do have a section that focuses on gender specifically, not only gender in program implementation and how that impacts evaluation, but also the role of gender within the evaluation team and how that could impact bias and the quality of the data that you collect, and also how those data are interpreted and analyzed and used for recommendations.

I am so happy to hear this question about gender considerations and implications both in program implementation and evaluation. It is a critical component, as you have shared, and there are a number of resources that could be helpful both on the implementation and the evaluation side. Thank you for asking the question. Just wanted to highlight that additional piece. Thank you.

Riley Auer

Thanks so much. Kelsey and Shaneka. Super helpful. Somewhat related, Marella was wondering if there are some coaching, training, or mentoring components or tools available for implementers and practitioners. Kelsey or maybe Laura, you could take a pass at that question.

Kelsey Torres

Sure, yes, I'll kick us off and if Laura has anything to add, she's welcome to. We actually recently held a workshop series that was built around these tools and a workbook that we've developed on improving complementary feeding, enabling better complementary feeding, and it really ties in each of these tools. We will be sharing out the recordings from the workshop series, and we'll also be doing a summary webinar from the key learnings from the workshop. Stay tuned for that invite. Then, of course, we're happy to touch base offline. I can put my email in the chat if you have more specific questions, and we can discuss further. Laura, do you have anything you'd like to add on that?

Laura Itzkowitz

No, I think that's a great answer.

Riley Auer

Great. Thanks so much, Kelsey. Marella also had another question just wondering if the tools were translated into other languages. We're excited to share that, yes, many of the tools are already available in French, and if you navigate to the links that we've shared throughout the presentation, you'll find landing pages where both the English and then other available translations are provided.

With cost effectiveness, does USAID have a benchmark or some established comparative to gauge cost-effectiveness? Cost-effectiveness may vary by economy. Veronica, did you want to share a little bit about your thinking on that and then maybe pass to Laura?

Veronica Varela

Sure. Sorry, was having trouble unmuting. Typically, with cost-effectiveness evaluations, you will analyze what the program or interventions cost was per outcome delivered and then this will then be compared to other interventions that can produce similar outcomes. This will then aid in identifying the intervention that achieves the most outcomes within a given cost, and then I'll pass it over to Laura to elaborate a little more on the USAID side of it.

Laura Itzkowitz

Thanks, Veronica. I can't give the full details of USAID policy on this because, to be honest, I don't know it, but I'm guessing if you dig around on the internet that there is some more detail on that. What I will share in the chat is that USAID does do cost-benefit analysis for some of our programs, and particularly some of the Feed the Future programs have had cost-benefit analysis done. You could look at those to see how they structured it.

The other thing I want to share is that our project, USAID's project, Breakthrough RESEARCH, had completed a nutrition SBC business case looking specifically at the cost-effectiveness of SBC interventions for nutrition. They did use two different countries as case studies, Nepal and then Kebbi state of Nigeria. I put the links in the chat and you have to scroll to the bottom of the SBC business case page for nutrition because they also did business case analyses for other health areas for SBC. I think

those will give you a little bit of a sense of how USAID is approaching cost-effectiveness, though recognizing that not every study is done the exact same way.

Riley Auer

Great. Thanks so much, Veronica and Laura for that response. We have another question sort of going back to the tools that we discussed today. In multi-sectoral nutrition interventions such as food systems, the selective priority behaviors, maybe one to three of those are influenced by various factors. Could you let us know a bit more about how to address those issues and result in positive behaviors? Maybe Laura and Kelsey could respond there.

Kelsey Torres

Thanks. Sure. Happy to. I'm just looking at the question again. Could you inform how to address those issues? When you are building out your behavioral pathways, you'll identify those factors that matter the most in that context, but I see there are some questions around production, marketing, gender, and watch. The point about multi-sectoral nutrition is that we may need activities that engage actors across sectors. I think what's important in our programming is that we consider what's feasible in our context and within our program, but also connecting with other activities or programs in the area to see what their strengths may be and to be able to coordinate to make sure that we're addressing all of the factors across sectors that bounder the most for our behavior.

Really ensuring that we're not trying to do it all because that- it's not possible. We might have a more specific focus for our program, but we still have an opportunity to connect with other programs and make a difference on the cross-sector approach towards enabling the behaviors that we're looking to change. Again, welcome Laura to add on that one.

Laura Itzkowitz

Yes, I'll just add in that when you're looking at food systems behaviors, I would expect the factors to be different than when you're looking at the health side of nutrition behaviors and you have different actors. Like if you're looking for a producer to do something, for a market vendor to do something, they're still people and they will still have internal factors as well as external factors that keep them from doing this behavior. The same approach and building that pathway will really help you to understand what are the internal factors that you can be working and the social factors that you can be working to address through your program. Then what are those structural factors that may you're working to address through your program?

Particularly a food systems program probably should be working to address some of those structural factors. Maybe there are others where, like Kelsey said, you need to look to see what other programs are happening in that area. Are they addressing these structural factors or raising to USAID or whoever your donor is and saying, look at our research, here's what we found. We can address these factors, but we know that we're not going to achieve the results necessary unless this other extremely important factor gets addressed. It seems outside the scope of our program, can we discuss how this can happen? That doesn't mean that your program will be expanded to address it, but that that's something to really raise as an issue if you see it as being truly inhibitive of making a behavior change. Thank you.

Riley Auer

Yes. Thank you both so much for those replies. We're hearing a lot, we're bringing up that behavioral pathway really frequently. There's one other question that relates to that, and that's how can that SBC pathway be integrated in humanitarian or emergency setting programs? Yes, I think a number of us could take that one, but does someone want to give it a try?

Shaneka Thurman

Laura, do you want to take it?

Laura Itzkowitz

Not really. I'll be honest, I really don't have much experience in a humanitarian setting, so I don't know if, Shaneka, you feel comfortable taking that? [crosstalk]

Shaneka Thurman

Wishing that Mike was here, yes.

Laura Itzkowitz

Exactly. We actually have, a USAID I have colleagues who focus on SBC in humanitarian settings and I think at, I think at Advancing Nutrition also, there are colleagues who have expertise in that area. Unfortunately, none of them are on this webinar with us, so I don't know that any of us could really do that justice. I do know if you're working on humanitarian programming that's USAID funded, that there are a number of resources that USAID Advancing Nutrition has been working on and is currently working on putting together that really adapt and apply all of these tools in a humanitarian setting. Particularly when you think about the RFSAs, somebody else is going to have to help me with what that stands for.

Riley Auer

Yes, Resilience Food Security Activity.

Laura Itzkowitz

Thank you, Riley. Those are USAID activities that are funded through our Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, focusing on that humanitarian-to-development nexus and where some of these real areas that have been really hit hard for a long, long time and where our development programs aren't quite hitting. Some of the guidance that Advancing Nutrition is working on, how do these tools really adapt into that setting and helping the RFSAs use their first year refine and implement period to really dig into building their pathways for their behaviors. Prioritizing their behaviors, building the pathways, making sure that all of their programming is guided and evidenced. I know that doesn't exactly answer your question and I apologize that we don't have the right people here to answer it, but hopefully, it can guide you toward the right path to get an answer.

Riley Auer

Thanks, Laura. It's also a helpful reminder that more resources are on the way. Although we aren't able to really concretely address today, it's good to know that there might be more answers coming. Marydean Purves had pointed out another really good point. Shaneka, I wonder if you might be able to talk about it a bit more. They mentioned that 20% goal in two years from one of those case studies we looked at earlier in the presentation, that two years to make such a substantial impact on behaviors is really ambitious. Can you share a bit more about that and the tools that we have to help stakeholders in those situations?

Shaneka Thurman

Yes. Again, am so happy that you picked up on that. It's really hard to think about what are the most important elements to share in a webinar like this and not forgetting key points. One thing that we did actually consider is really talking in more detail about targets, which you rightfully picked up on. One

element that we talk about in our evaluation guide, and Riley highlighted it as well, is that you also want to make sure that when you're setting your targets, you're doing so appropriately and really thinking about the context in which you're working, as well as any previous data that you have available to you that can help you really ground truth how quickly or how slowly behaviors might change.

We saw lots of comments in the chat in the beginning when I asked about the one word that comes to mind when you think of SBC, and I saw slow moving and it takes time, and that is absolutely true. Ensuring that you have set targets that are appropriate are not only helpful for the program but also for evaluators so that the recommendations that are shared are appropriate. I can share a tool, it's not a tool from Advancing Nutrition, it's another one from the man-off group that is designed to help you think about how to plan for your targets, the type of research, and data that you might need to think through what targets are appropriate.

I will share that in the chat in just a moment. Just to note that your comment is definitely well taken. We want to make sure that we are appropriately considering targets and how quickly or how slowly behaviors might change. Thank you for that.

Riley Auer

Oh, sorry. I struggled to find my unmute button. Thanks so much, Shaneka. That was a really helpful reply. We have another question in the chat or rather the Q&A, about, are we able to recommend any quality assurance or quality improvement tools that align with the meal tools. Maybe Shaneka you could take that one too.

Shaneka Thurman

Sure. I also just want to ground the work that we are sharing out today and why it is designed the way that it is designed. Before we started developing this evaluation guidance, we did a pretty in-depth review of evaluations that have been done and really thinking about what the issues are within those evaluations and what people need. This body of work that we're sharing out today was strategically designed both from our review of those evaluations and a number of key informant interviews that we did with SBC practitioners as well as male folks and while also reviewing several other guidance documents that are out there.

We ultimately decided that this work is designed for people who have a strong evaluation foundation, but maybe not a strong foundation in social and behavior change. As you look through the guide, you may see that some elements, as you have rightfully pointed out, like data quality, may not be explicitly focused on there. That is because we really are trying to focus on SBC and evaluations.

All of that to say, as we were developing this body of work, we did take into account a number of different resources that would help us strengthen the quality of our work. I would recommend just taking a look at the USAID Learning Lab. There's a wealth of information there on data quality, how to achieve it. I will try to find the link for you really quickly and put it in the chat, but that's a really good place to start. From there, you should be able to link out to find additional tools that will help you think more deeply about DQAs. Thank you.

Riley Auer

Thanks so much, Shaneka. [unintelligible 01:20:16] was asking if we could elaborate a bit more on what you can monitor in terms of output level indicators. They noted that at the activity level, you can monitor the number of activities that are being implemented or the participation in those activities, and

then suggested that at the outcome level, you might measure to what extent behaviors are being practiced.

They're wondering, what would we suggest to measure in between, especially if we're going beyond the information sharing that was highlighted in a couple of the case studies today. Then this information could also guide adaptations and inform our valuations. In summary, is there a tool for monitoring frameworks? Maybe, Veronica, you could take a first pass at that question.

Veronica Varela

Sure. Thank you, Riley. This is where the behavioral pathway will become important. Shaneka showed a simple example of a behavioral pathway at the very beginning, and that pathway is something that we will want to use to not only design evaluations but to design activities and then identify relevant monitoring indicators.

Looking at your behavioral pathway and based on your activities that are being planned, you'll want to have a variety of indicators that are addressing not just the output of your activities, such as participation in a certain activity or something like number of counseling sessions that are being conducted by health workers, depending on what your activity is focusing on. You'll also want to be measuring changes in your factors that are being addressed as well, and then potentially changes in the outcome as well.

Kelsey had mentioned a tool that was developed by Advancing Nutrition, which is the monitoring social and behavioral change for multisectoral nutrition. That tool walks you through a framework of identifying different factors, prioritizing your behavior, and then different indicators that you could also measure based off of the prioritized behavior as well. I believe we already shared it in the chat, but I can share it again as well.

Riley Auer

Thanks so much, Veronica. There is a related question from Martin, wondering if there's a menu of indicators for SBC program teams that they could adapt and if so, if we could receive a link for that.

Shaneka Thurman

Do you want me to take that? [laughs]

Veronica Varela

I can start and then you can add anything additional that you may have. In the two tools that we developed, there is an Annex in the tools in which we had pulled some example SBC indicators. There is not necessarily a comprehensive list of validated SBC indicators since we know like we mentioned, SBC is very complex and it's very individualized. We were able to pull some examples of just very common indicators that are used that can be customized depending on what your program is measuring. We'll add those to the chat as well.

Shaneka Thurman

Oh, great. I'm glad that you're here, Peter. [laughs] Thanks for adding that. I'll also just share that as you're thinking about social and behavior change indicators, while we don't currently have a bank that is specific to nutrition, I encourage you to think outside of nutrition as well because we see oftentimes that these factors that we really try to measure in the behaviors, for example, they're common across all health sectors.

If you're doing family planning work and you're trying to measure gender or norms or some of those other factors, you might be able to reach outside of nutrition to think about how other sectors have measured some of those same behaviors because they do, sorry, the same factors because generally, the types of factors can be the same across different sectors, so I'll just add that in.

One other thing to mention, Kelsey mentioned earlier that we have a complimentary feeding workbook. At the end of the complementary feeding workbook, there is also a list of nutrition behaviors that have indicators there. At the behavioral level, we do have a bank of indicators that can be adapted. They're mainly from DHS. Beyond that, when you start to measure factors, we do have some at the end of our evaluation guidance as Veronica mentioned, but do also reach outside of nutrition to think about other indicators that might be relevant.

Riley Auer

Great. Thank you so much. That's really helpful and good point to all of these excellent tools that we've been talking about. [unintelligible 01:25:55] had asked a question in the Q&A about how to assess the impact of social change, taking into account the context of norms and barriers, especially to the use of those behaviors. Would anyone on the team like to take a pass at that question?

Shaneka Thurman

I can take it because this has come up in a lot of our webinars, both specifically around evaluation and also around implementation. Certainly, if you have the resources, the time and the budget, and really the capacity to do this work, I would encourage you to design and impact assessment with a really strong evaluation firm that can be supported by your SBC team. That impact assessment will certainly allow you to take into consideration norms and other factors that might play a role in your impact.

We don't always have the luxury of time or budget to conduct an impact assessment, and in those cases, I think you can still pull together a lot of data that is very strategically and intentionally cultivated or curated to tell your story of what may be influencing your ability to see change. That can start at the global level. When you think about how nutrition behaviors change, we have a wealth of evidence in the form of behavior profiles that paint the picture of this entire behavioral pathway. What is the behavior? What are the factors that are most important? Who are the most important supporting actors and which activities work? That starts as your global framework for what should work in order to change behaviors.

From there. Also, pull in any context-specific information that talks about that pathway and what should work. Pull in your formative research, all of these data points tell your story of what may have contributed to the change. Your monitoring data as well, any evaluative data, and if you have the ability to also measure some of the contextual factors that might also play a role in whether the behavior is changing and what your impact might be, also measure that.

The short story is if you don't have the opportunity to plan for and resource a full impact evaluation, there are still ways that you can really use data to tell your story and it may not, well, it definitely will not give you the true impact because you do need careful statistical analysis to do that, but it does allow

you to pull together a story map of why things are happening and what your role was in those changes. I will pause there and turn to others who might have comments.

Riley Auer

Thanks, Shaneka. Let's take a step back to move from some of these really detailed focused questions which have been so great to discuss and think again about this so what for writing recommendations for using our evaluative data. I'm wondering what challenges or successes some of us on the call today might have had as evaluators related to getting to that so what or writing recommendations? Would anyone on the team like to share some of their experiences on those challenges or successes? Maybe folks in the chat could share some of their own too.

Shaneka Thurman

Yes, Riley. I would love-- I feel like we have been driving the ship here and I know there's a lot of expertise on the call as well, so it would be lovely to hear from you if you have any experience that you would like to share, challenges, success stories, et cetera. Feel free to write it in the chat. If you raise your hand, we can try to unmute you, but it would be great to have some cross-sharing here because I know that there is some really good experience in the audience today as well.

Riley Auer

Would anyone from the audience like to share about some of their experiences with these challenges and successes as an evaluator for writing recommendations based on their evaluation findings? Give just a couple more moments, but we would love to hear from you.
I see that Marydean Purves has shared that one lesson is to write your target reader or write to your target reader. That's a great point. Would anyone on the team like to elaborate? Maybe Marydean, if you're willing, we could unmute you just to share a little bit more about that experience you have.

Marydean Purves
Yes. Can you hear me?
Riley Auer

Yes. Yes. Please.

Marydean Purves

My name doesn't appear very well. I'm Marydean Purves. I'm a longtime evaluator working on USAID and working on nutrition programs in the past. I've branched out into some other arenas and there are some common lessons I've learned. Apart from really knowing who's going to be reading and using your recommendations, your data, I find that that's really important to know them almost as well as you know the group that you've been evaluating because otherwise, they may not use anything you have to say.

Another thing that I've learned is to break out recommendations, say, policy recommendations. You categorize your recommendations, implementation or/practice recommendations, policy recommendations, costing recommendations so that those people who are zeroing in on those arenas have something that's very applicable to their arena. Of course, they all have to tie together, but I found that even my clients have appreciated the way I can break it down in that fashion. I'll stop there.

Riley Auer

Thanks so much, Mary. Also, thank you for correcting the way that your name has been presented. Apologies for that. Yes, knowing your reader is so important. That's such an excellent point. I really appreciate that you added on putting your recommendations into usable buckets so that relevant stakeholders can pick them up and really start working with them.

I'm wondering if anyone else might want to share or perhaps sharing challenges and successes that you might have had as an implementer related to adapting your programs based on the evaluation recommendations you've received from evaluators.

Kelsey Torres

Riley, it looks like there's maybe a hand raised. I'm not sure if Yaritza can unmute.

Riley Auer

Thanks, Kelsey. Yes, Yaritza, if you could, that would be great.

Tendai

Hello?

Riley Auer

Yes, please go ahead.

Tendai

Yes. My name is Tendai. I also just wanted to comment on the importance of evaluation, but more on evaluators' biases. I think it's very important when evaluating social behavior change to be very open-minded. As you had mentioned before, most SBCs are designed with the notion that people don't have the knowledge, but that's not usually the case. Behavior change is as a result of many factors.

I did an evaluation once on iron-folate supplementation adherence, and it wasn't because people weren't knowledgeable. Some of the factors were actually systemic, including the availability of iron supplements within the health facilities themselves, including also knowledge of the healthcare providers on how they were supposed to distribute iron-folate supplementation. By being open-minded, you also approach evaluation from a holistic point of view, and you don't narrow it.

Again, speaking into the recommendations themselves, I've noticed the most recommendations that are difficult to pass through the systems are the policy recommendations because we don't often have the audience of policymakers. I think there's also need to be strategic with how you do that. Whilst most of our reports land in programmers' hands, it's the root now to the policymakers themselves and people who are making decisions, people who are budgeting for sector budgets, that's where also some of our recommendations need to land. Thank you.

Riley Auer

Thanks so much, Tendai, for those really great points. You're right, although most of today's session was focusing on using our evaluative data for program adaptations, thinking about how that data can inform

other pieces is really necessary. We talked a little bit about backing up the importance of SBC, advocating for additional resources, and you have made a really great point in your comment, Tendai, about that, as well as developing some partnerships, fostering collaboration, and then of course, demonstrating the lessons that we've learned.

We spent all of today talking about SBC evaluations, and we're so thrilled to share a little bit more about the core package of materials that we developed. We've talked about why to evaluate, how to evaluate, and how to avoid some common issues in evaluating SBC programs in particular. Now we have these tools targeting or really addressed to evaluators, USAID staff, and then a suite of tools that can be used by a multitude of stakeholders for designing and conducting behavior change evaluations.

In addition to these three resources, we've also shared a series of other materials throughout today's session. All of those are provided at the end of our slide deck and we're happy to share that out today. You can see some of them here, they'll all have links, and then a few more from Advancing Nutrition and other groups.

We just wanted to take a final moment to pause and thank everyone for participating in today's session. It was really great to hear some experiences after sharing out examples, quality processes, and many of the other things that we've talked about. I just want to pass to Shaneka or Laura or anyone on the team who might want to say some closing reflections as well. Thank you.

Shaneka Thurman

Thank you, Riley. I'll pass to Laura, but just to quickly say thank you all for joining. It's been so fun to share what we've been working on, but also really great to hear from you and your experiences and the questions that you have shared with us today, I think keep us thinking about how to continue to improve evaluations and social and behavior change and how to also support those who will use the evaluations and adapt their programs. Thank you for sharing. We learned so much from you as well, but I'll pass to Laura in case she has any final thoughts.

Laura Itzkowitz

Thanks, Shaneka. I echo everyone's thanks for joining and I really hope that you take what you heard today and really think about it and reflect on how you can adapt your programs and use your evaluations and use your data to make sure that that so what is coming through. That evaluations aren't documents we stick in a drawer, they really need to be used to be valuable. I hope you all have a really great rest of your day and thank you so much for joining us.

Riley Auer

Thank you. Bye, everyone.

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