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Title: Process Evaluation shows Grandmother-inclusive Approach Feasible for improving Maternal Nutrition and Infant feeding

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Introduction

Grandmothers (GMs) play leading roles in maternal child health and nutrition (MCHN), but are generally not included in MCHN programmes. The GM-inclusive approach capacitates GMs as agents of change. Mamaniva is a collaborative, quasi-experimental operations research project, testing the effect of the GM-inclusive approach on maternal, infant and young child nutrition in Sierra Leone (SL) from 2013 to 2016.

Methods

In June 2015, a cross-sectional qualitative process evaluation assessed the reach, coverage, implementation fidelity, acceptance and sustainability of the approach implemented by World Vision (WV) in collaboration with the SL Ministry of Health (MOH). Focus group discussions (FDGs) were held with GMs, pregnant women, mothers of children under 2 years; husbands; and community leaders in eight of fifteen intervention communities. In-depth interviews were conducted with key informants/and project staff using semi-structured guides.

Results

FDGs showed nearly all female members of each intervention community are reached through this project and most members attend every meeting, despite the Ebola outbreak. Widespread acceptance of the approach by GMs and community members was indicated by themes of trust and appreciation of project staff and value of the MCHN information. Project staff interviews revealed high fidelity to GM-inclusive approach. District health workers suggested integrating the project approach into the responsibilities of community health workers (CHWs), including training CHWs on participatory methodologies, to address sustainability issues.

Conclusion

This evaluation demonstrated that the GM-inclusive approach is feasible, acceptable, but has additional capacity requirements. Results of impact on MCHN outcomes will inform future scale-up.