

**Title:** Joint nutrition and stimulation counseling in routine health services: From principle to practice using a system-based application of the Care for Child Development approach - Experiences from Kenya, Mozambique, and South Africa

**Type of Session:** Interactive Workshop

**Moderator:** Dr. Svetlana K. Drivdale, PATH, Mozambique

**Additional contributors:**

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**Purpose:**

The workshop will engage the participants in exploring the feasibility of integrating counseling on nutrition and stimulation into routine health services for pregnant women and children 0–3 years and their caregivers. The health system is the only system to consistently reach this demographic. The PATH model based on adaptations of UNICEF/WHO *Care for Child Development*) —a module of the Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (IMCI) package – will be presented and analyzed, followed by breakout sessions to examine the model’s fit for specific countries or organizations. The target audience for this workshop will include government, UN, researchers, and practitioners.

**Motivation:**

**Technical** The SDG 4, to ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning, highlights the recent recognition of the importance of quality early childhood development. A child’s brain develops most rapidly during the first three years of life and developmental delays and effects of poor nutrition may be irreversible afterwards. Nutrition and learning stimulation have synergistic impact on development. With malnutrition rates stagnant in countries like Mozambique and Kenya, innovative solutions are urgently needed. PATH found nutrition counseling and development stimulation to be rarely implemented in the Kenya, Mozambique and South Africa, and not incorporated in any way into routine child consultations.

PATH builds capacity and supports health service providers and community health workers to provide nutrition and stimulation counseling across the continuum of care from pregnancy through 2 years in Kenya, Mozambique and South Africa. PATH analysis of national health guidelines, formative assessment of health services and provider skills at baseline, desk review and formative assessment of caregiver practices relevant to nutrition and stimulation were conducted in all countries. The assessments led to design of adapted version of Care for Child Development Counselling Cards organized by service touchpoint and of training and mentoring/supervision processes aimed to help providers merge counseling with other routine

activities, in the context of limited consultation time. Additional intervention model of playbox session was developed to task-shift counseling to non-clinical staff in the waiting room. PATH acts as a catalyst for health system leadership, empowering MOH to bring ECD and nutrition services more fully into service delivery at all care provision entry points and levels.

### ***Process***

PATH will share the process and the lessons learned during the adaptation and implementation of integrated nutrition and stimulation counseling in the health system in the three countries, with interested government and other stakeholders.

Firstly, a short video of nutrition and development stimulation counseling during child consultation will be presented and analyzed with participants, to identify how counseling was integrated into normal consultation routine.

As the next step, the moderator will promote small group work based on countries and/or sectors, around the following key questions: 1) what is the current state –strengths and weaknesses - of counseling on nutrition, in your health services? And of counseling on development stimulation? 2) If you were to strengthen such counseling, what entry points and providers would you prioritize and why? 3) What would your capacity building process be (that would promote health system ownership)? How different or similar would it be to PATH process and why? The groups will present their work in plenary and will be given time to revise their analysis after plenary session. Participants will end the workshop with a clear understanding of the core components of the PATH integrated ECD program model, and practical tools and ideas for adapting the model for their countries.

The contributors to the workshop will include PATH technical and programmatic specialists who developed the integrated counseling approach, adapted *Care for Child Development*, and supported field implementation.