The theory of change

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Why did the Bangladesh Integrated Nutrition Program (BINP) fail?
The case of the Bangladesh Integrated Nutrition Project (BINP)
Summary of theory

Target group participate in program (mothers of young children)

- Target group for nutritional counselling is the relevant one

- Children are correctly identified to be enrolled in the program

- Food is delivered to those enrolled

- Supplementary feeding is supplemental, i.e. no leakage or substitution

- Food is of sufficient quantity and quality

Exposure to nutritional counselling results in knowledge acquisition and behaviour change

- Behaviour change sufficient to change child nutrition

Improved nutritional outcomes
The theory of change

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Right target group for nutritional counselling

PARTICIPATION RATES WERE UP TO 30% LOWER FOR WOMEN LIVING WITH THEIR MOTHER-IN-LAW
The theory of change

- Target group participate in program (mothers of young children)
  - Target group for nutritional counselling is the relevant one
  - Children are correctly identified to be enrolled in the program
  - Food is delivered to those enrolled
    - Food is of sufficient quantity and quality
    - Feeding is supplemental, i.e., no leakage or substitution

Exposure to nutritional counselling results in knowledge acquisition and behaviour change

Improved nutritional outcomes

Knowledge acquired and used
The theory of change

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Behaviour change sufficient to change child nutrition

Improved nutritional outcomes

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The right children are enrolled in the programme
The theory of change

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Supplementary feeding is supplementary

Improved nutritional outcomes

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A typical theory of change

Inputs → Processes → Outputs → Outcomes
What it really looks like

Inputs → Processes → Outputs → Outcomes
Funnel of Attrition
The funnel operates within steps in the causal chain

- Show up
- Attend
- Stay awake
- Pay attention
- Understand
- Agree
- Absorb
- Retain
- Act
Many interventions fall at the first hurdle

• Free male circumcision: 25% if free down to just 10% with partial subsidy

• Pre-school in Mexico, fewer than 10% of parents who registered actually took part

• Insurance schemes typically less than 10% take up
And participation declines over time

- ½ households stopped using improved cookstoves by 8 month follow up survey

- Water treatment: fewer than 1/3 households using filters in Cambodia and pasteurising in Kenya after 3-4 years. And only 5% disinfecting in Guatemala after just one year
And so

• Use theory of change for evaluation framework

• So analyse factual as well as counterfactual

• And so use mixed methods