

The Maternal, Infant, and Young Child Nutrition (MIYCN) and Family Planning (FP) Integration Working Group

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Overview

The Maternal, Infant, and Young Child Nutrition and Family Planning Integration Working Group was formed to better understand the synergies between maternal, infant and young child nutrition (MIYCN) and family planning (FP) in order to improve the health of women and their families. The MIYCN-FP Working Group serves as a coordination and discussion platform, providing a framework and repository for evidence, guidelines, and tools related to the integration of MIYCN and FP services. The Working Group brings together implementing partners and donors to maximize opportunities, understand challenges, and identify strategies for ensuring that service integration meets women's and children's needs and strengthens quality of care. Participation in the Working Group is open to anyone working and interested in MIYCN and FP, or related fields.

History of Working Group

The MIYCN-FP Integration Working Group was launched in 2010 under the leadership of the Jhpiego-led ACCESS-FP project, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Infant and Young Child Nutrition project led by PATH. An initial MIYCN-FP technical consultation was held in May 2010 and brought together over 55 experts from 31 organizations and culminated in a joint call to action to continue to collaborate, through a technical working group, to advance the agenda for the integration of MIYCN and FP. Over time, leadership of the group transferred to the Maternal and Child Health Integrated Program (MCHIP) —funded by USAID and led by Jhpiego— and the Strengthening Partnerships, Results, and Innovation in Nutrition Globally (SPRING) project, led by John Snow, Inc. Most recently, the Working Group was co-chaired by the Maternal and Child Survival Program—funded by USAID and led by Jhpiego—and the SPRING project.

Vision and Goals

From the start, the vision for the MIYCN-FP Integration Working Group has been to ensure that all women and children have access to FP and nutrition interventions during maternal, newborn, and child health services and are able to apply the interventions to achieve their optimal health. The Working Group was formed with these goals in mind:

- Identify effective strategies for MIYCN-FP integration in maternal, newborn, and child health; prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV programs; and broader community-based nutrition and food security programs.
- Promote the adoption of evidence-based MIYCN-FP integration strategies and approaches at various levels, from policy to implementation, at both the community and facility levels.

- Advocate for the mutual benefit of integrating MIYCN, FP, and HIV¹ services through engagement with policymakers, managers, health care providers, and community leaders.

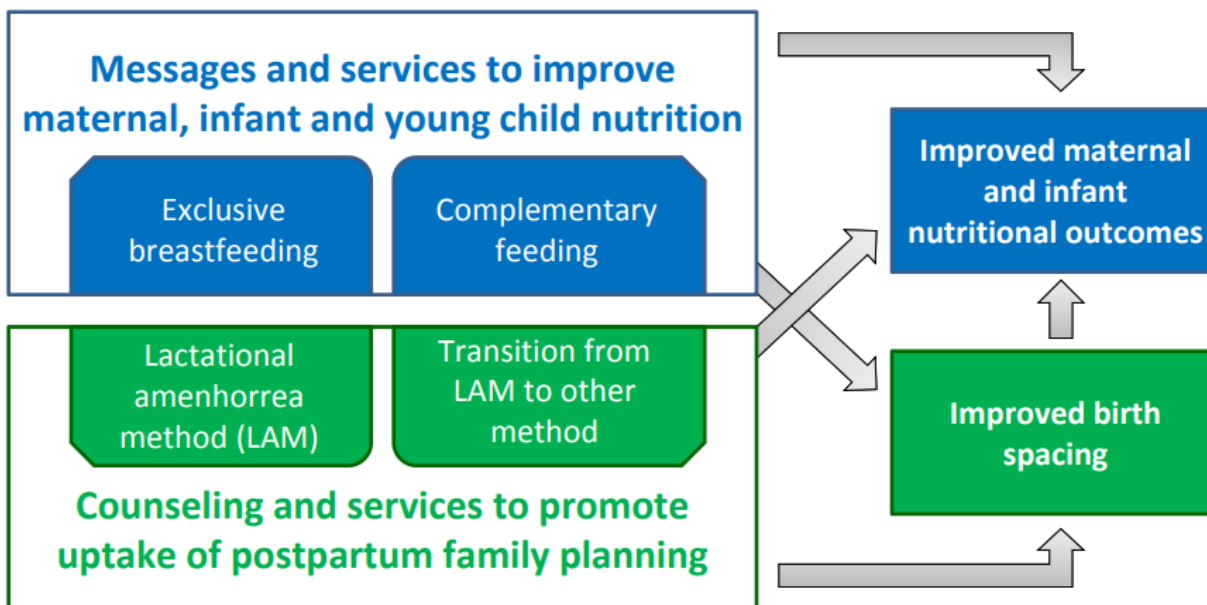
Objectives and Members

Bringing together implementing partners and donors, the MIYCN-FP Integration Working Group was designed to be a forum to:

- Share experiences on MIYCN-FP integration from a variety of programs including, maternal, newborn, and child health; infant and young child nutrition; FP; and HIV prevention.
- Document successful practices for MIYCN-FP integration.
- Collect, review, and standardize programmatic guidance (job aids, training materials, etc.) for effective MIYCN-FP integration.
- Develop advocacy materials and tools.
- Develop indicators and guidance to measure MIYCN-FP integration.

While infant and young child nutrition is a key link for integration, and the focus of this Working Group, other opportunities for integration exist with immunization, maternal health, including maternal nutrition for lactating mothers, and HIV prevention services (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Links between MIYCN and FP services and outcomes



Source: <https://www.k4health.org/toolkits/miycn-fp>

As of November 2018, the MIYCN-FP Integration Working Group has over 460 members in over 40 countries. Key participants in meetings included representatives from donors, nongovernmental organizations, local institutions, and others.

The group meets semiannually in Washington, DC. Meetings bring together participants to provide technical country updates, share resources and tools, and devote time to subgroup work to advance deliverables for the

¹ HIV services to women living with HIV and their HIV exposed children

key areas of focus. In 2017 and 2018, joint working group meetings were held in collaboration with the FP and Immunization Integration Working Group.

Subgroups

The MIYCN-FP Integration Working Group convened several subgroups that were charged with advancing specific domains related to MIYCN-FP integration (Table 1). Subgroups met as needed to develop and implement action plans and reported their progress to the larger Working Group. These subgroups held webinars, developed case studies, shared research developments, and gathered training materials, job aids, and other materials that could later be used by other projects and implementing partners to advance MIYCN-FP integration. Further, they contributed to the development and dissemination of the MIYCN-FP Integration Toolkit, which includes key resources related to advocacy, social and behavior change communication, training, monitoring and evaluation, and country experiences for use by program implementers, researchers, and other stakeholders. Subgroups also worked on new tools to fill gaps in resources and advance integration through country programming.

Table 1. MIYCN-FP Integration Working Group’s subgroups and their areas of focus

Group	Areas of focus
Documentation of Field Experiences and Results/Dissemination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and collect documentation of MIYCN-FP activities and locate promising resources for the MIYCN-FP toolkit. Encourage and facilitate dissemination of the toolkit and track proposed efforts.
Healthy Timing and Spacing of Pregnancies (HTSP) and Adolescents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase visibility and understanding of the links between MIYCN/development and FP for HTSP and Adolescents.
Monitoring and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advance measurement of integrated programming through development of key indicators.
Social and Behavior Change Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for, document, and provide guidance on the use of strategic social and behavior change approaches for increasing acceptability and uptake of key MIYCN-FP practices and use of related services.

Major Accomplishments

A major accomplishment of the MIYCN-FP Integration Working Group was the development and maintenance of the MIYCN-FP Integration Toolkit, available on the K4Health [website](#). This toolkit shares a variety of background documents and tools for linking MIYCN with FP to improve maternal, infant, and child health and nutrition outcomes, with a particular focus on integration, advocacy, social and behavior change communication, training, monitoring and evaluation, and country experiences for use by program implementers, researchers, and other stakeholders. It is accessible to the public for use and reference as needed.

Given that the MIYCN-FP Working Group essentially absorbed many of the original members and the objectives of another technical working group that was focused on the use of the Lactational Amenorrhea Method (LAM), the MIYCN-FP Integration Working Group, worked with the K4Health platform in 2016 to merge the original toolkit developed by the LAM Working Group during an update of the MIYCN-FP Toolkit.

A number of other accomplishments are summarized below under Key Legacy Resources, including an Advocacy Brief: Maximizing Synergies between Maternal, Infant, and Young Child Nutrition and Family Planning, which has been widely circulated.

Key Legacy Resources

In recent years, the MIYCN-FP Integration Working Group has developed several key resources, which include:

- MIYCN-FP Toolkit: <https://www.k4health.org/toolkits/miycn-fp>
- Advocacy Brief: Maximizing Synergies between Maternal, Infant, and Young Child Nutrition and Family Planning: <https://www.k4health.org/toolkits/miycn-fp/advocacy-brief>
- Key Considerations for Monitoring and Evaluating Maternal, Infant, and Young Child Nutrition (MIYCN) and Family Planning (FP) Integrated Services: <https://www.k4health.org/toolkits/miycn-fp/key-considerations-monitoring-and-evaluating-maternal-infant-and-young-child>
- Table of Key Behaviors for MIYCN-FP Integration: <https://www.k4health.org/toolkits/miycn-fp/table-key-behaviors-miycn-fp-integration>
- Bibliography: Maternal, Infant, and Young Child Nutrition and Family Planning (MIYCN-FP) Integration: <https://www.k4health.org/toolkits/miycn-fp/bibliography>

Future Direction

In January 2019, a meeting was convened with key stakeholders involved in the MIYCN-FP Integration Working Group and the FP-Immunization Integration Working Group. Participants recommended the merging of the two groups, given their natural convergence across technical areas, target populations, and timing of interventions, which have brought them together several times since their establishments. A new MIYCN-FP-Immunization Community of Practice is currently being launched to formalize the merger of the two groups.

Previous discussions in each group have converged around health systems considerations, operationalization of integration, and monitoring and evaluation of integrated services (including the experience with home-based records). This presents an exciting opportunity to continue to collaborate and share opportunities and challenges associated with expanding integrated FP, nutrition, and immunization services into broader life-course service delivery—from communities, to health facilities, from regional- to national-level advocacy.

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