D4N 2025

Delivering for Nutrition in South Asia

Towards Impact at Scale

Designing Adaptive Nutrition Programs

Stage-Based Evaluation of an Intersectoral Intervention through Iterative Theory of Change

Lead Implementation Agency: GIZ

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Context

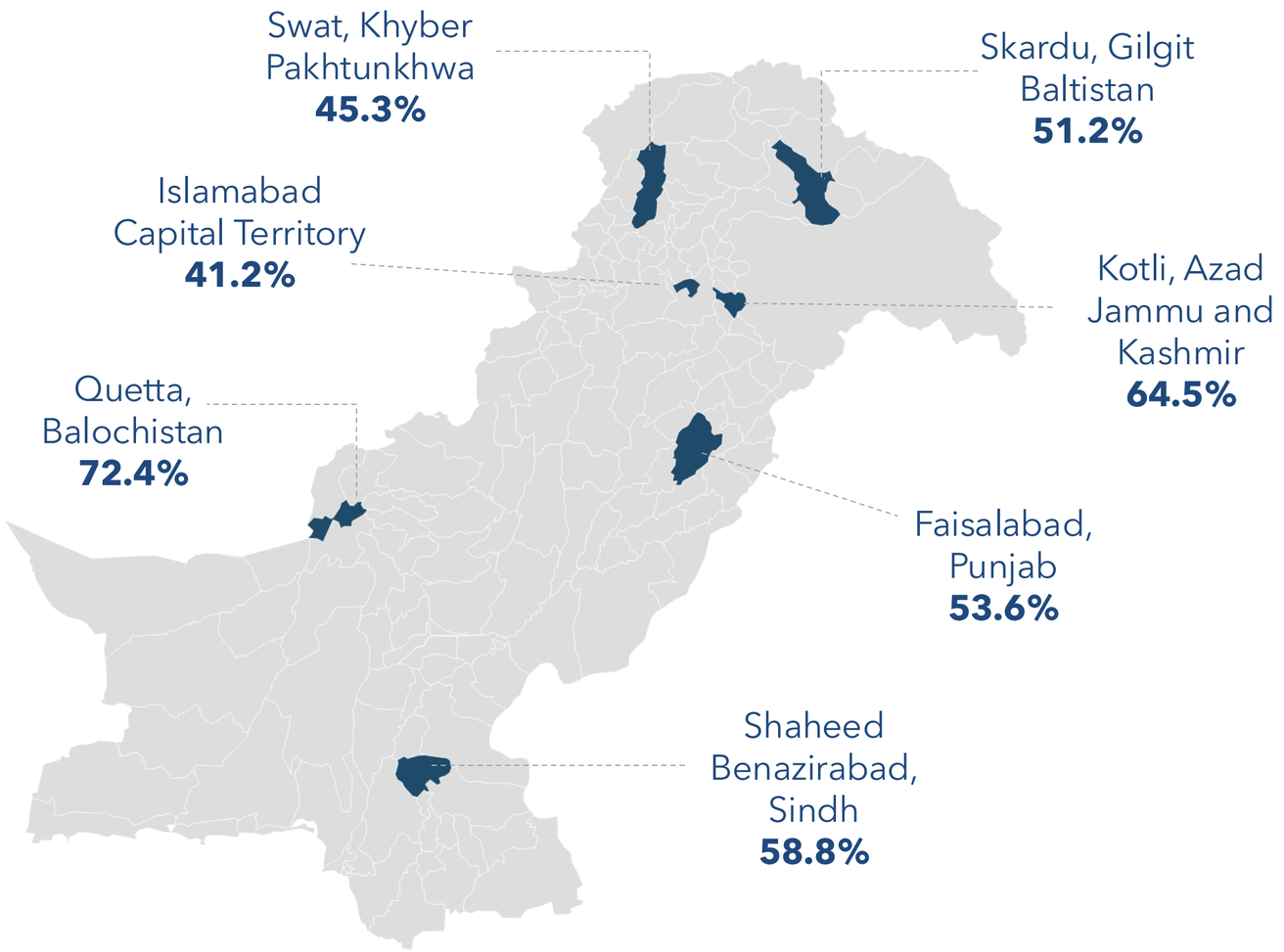
50% of adolescent girls suffer from anemia

18% of girls consume an adequately diverse diet

30% of households use fortified flour regularly equally diverse diet

10% of adolescent girls receive Weekly Iron Folic Acid (WIFA) supplements

Provincial Anaemia Prevalence



Source: National Nutrition Survey 2018

Approach

Mission

Leveraging Pakistan's largest social protection program (BISP) to improve adolescent girls' nutrition through multiple pathways of nutrition interventions

Aim

Testing the joint engagement of relevant actors of the Health, Education, Social Protection, and Food departments at the provincial and local level to work jointly on a functional and context-specific approach

Key Partners

Co funders	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and Gates Foundation
Implementation Oversight	GIZ
Implementation Partners	Nutrition International and World Food Programme
Measurement, Learning and Evaluation Partner	CERP

SOPRAN Intervention

The project adopts a multisectoral approach involving Health, Education, and Food departments to deliver a holistic package:

Weekly Iron Folic Acid (WIFA) Supplementation: Provision of WIFA supplements to 100,000 adolescent girls (aged 10-19 years) for six months

Capacity Building of Teachers and Lady Health Workers: Conducted trainings to deliver nutrition education sessions at school and in community

Nutrition Education: Curated sessions to build knowledge and awareness through Social and Behavior Change Communication Strategy

Capacity building: Trained government stakeholders from Food Departments/Food Authorities on fortification processes, quality assurance and regulatory roles

Strengthen local small scale flour processors: Installed micro feeders, provided premix and built capacity to improve fortified flour availability

Cash Vouchers for Fortified Flour Access

Project Name: Leveraging Pakistan's Social Protection Programmes for Adolescent Girls' Nutrition (SOPRAN)

Measurement, Learning and Evaluation (MLE) Objectives

Assess how adolescent girls can act as catalysts of change at individual level and transfer knowledge to their families

Test the potential of adolescent girls to act as catalysts for change

by promoting healthier nutrition practices among peers, families and communities

Assess the change in knowledge, attitudes and practices among adolescent girls

After roll-out of Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) and community engagement strategy and strengthening nutrition education as a technical skill

Assess improvement in awareness and nutritional intake of fortified flour

After strengthening the capacity of local flour mills and distribution of vouchers among BISP-eligible families

Methodology

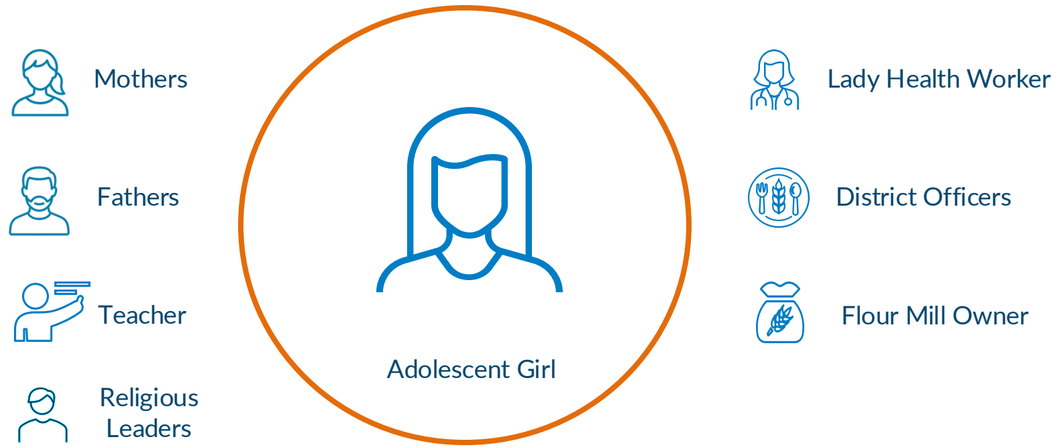
A Living Framework

Implementation is guided by an Iterative Theory of Change, developed and refined through continuous partner meetings and workshops.

Mixed Methods MLE:

We utilize a robust **before-and-after study design** to assess knowledge, dietary shifts, and uptake of WIFA supplementation.

- ✓ **Quantitative Survey:** Data collected from 567 girls (grades 6-12) across seven districts.
- ✓ **Qualitative Insights:** FGDs and KIIs with parents, teachers, health workers, religious leaders, district officials and flour mill owners.



Baseline Findings

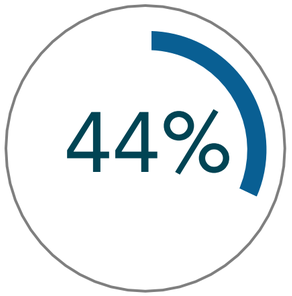
Nutritional Status & Dietary Habits

- Adolescent girls exhibited nutritionally inadequate diets
- Low understanding of core nutrition concepts, impacting dietary choices
- Inconsistent practical habits, like meal consistency and snacking
- School food environment limited access to nutritious choices
- Financial constraints, taste preferences, and accessibility issues were primary barriers limiting nutritious food consumption

girls showed awareness of dietary diversity and typically consumed 4 out of 9 possible food groups

Awareness of Key Intervention (WIFA Supplementation)

- Low awareness and acceptance of WIFA supplementation
- Resistance to WIFA supplementation is multi-layered, stemming from family influence, community perceptions, and personal hesitation



adolescent girls indicated experiencing fatigue and weakness

Food Fortification and Consumption of Fortified Flour

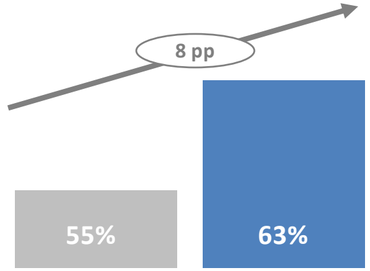
- Awareness of food fortification remained limited due to low market visibility, mistrust of processed flour, preference for chakki-ground flour and anticipated financial constraints.

Systemic Barriers identified at Baseline

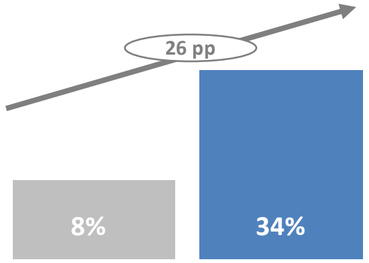
Baseline data confirmed substantial gaps in adolescent nutrition stemming from multidimensional barriers:

- **Mistrust:** Specific skepticism regarding health supplements within the community
- **Social Norms:** Deep-seated traditions affecting food distribution
- **Economic Constraints:** Limited access to diverse food groups

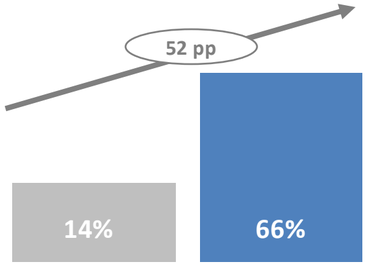
Progress at Midline



Knowledge of iron-rich foods



Awareness of anaemia



Awareness of WIFA Supplements

Baseline Midline

Adolescent girls' knowledge of key nutrition topics specifically iron rich foods demonstrated encouraging improvements from baseline to midline

Adolescent girls’ awareness of anaemia and WIFA supplements increased significantly from baseline to midline

Recall of topics discussed was highest for anaemia and WIFA supplements

Girls mainly share nutrition knowledge with their mothers, then fathers, but avoid conversations with other male relatives and community members

Adolescent girls’ dietary diversity improved, potentially due to girls actively taking interest in consuming home cooked meals, indicating effectiveness of nutrition education sessions

Chakki (Mill) Owners exhibit ease in producing fortified flour after receiving initial training

> “Foods that are rich in iron include meat, fish, and fruits like apples. Green leafy vegetables, such as spinach, are also a good source of iron, and even potatoes contain iron,”
>
> - Adolescent girl in-school, Skardu

Adaptive Implementation

Challenges

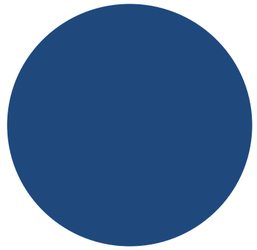
- **Political instability** such as security incidents and political conflicts resulted in unscheduled activity cancellations
- **Natural disasters** such as flash flooding curtailed fieldwork
- **Inter-Governmental Friction** such as lack of formalized coordination protocols between federal and provincial departments delayed the establishment of project steering committees

Adaptation

- Developed formal provincial and district steering committee meeting structures
- Collaborative Approach

Way Forward

The project aims to develop a scalable and sustainable approach to reducing anemia nationwide

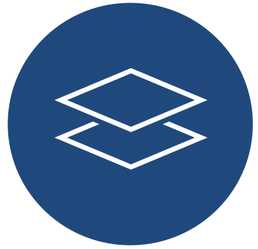


SCALE IN

Strengthening the implementation of the model within existing government and social protection systems for institutionalization.

SCALE OUT

Expanding the proven intervention model horizontally across diverse districts and provinces to maximize geographical reach and impact.



SCALE DEEP

Embedding behaviour change, nutrition awareness, and supplementation practices that create lasting impact and deep, sustained cultural shifts

Pathways to Scale

Institutionalize Curriculum

Embed comprehensive nutrition education within the formal school curriculum.

Promote Kitchen Gardens

Encourage household-level production to ensure better access to iron-rich foods

Mandate Fortification

Enforce the use of fortified wheat flour through robust provincial legislation.

Rigorous Reporting

Establish a unified reporting system to provide essential structural support for national monitoring.


Weekly Iron Folic Acid
WIFA


NUTRITION
Workshop with Adolescent Girls
Youth Participatory Research for the Adolescent Centered Nutrition Indicators (YCAN) Pilot in Pakistan
Leveraging Social Protection Programs for Adolescent Girls' Nutrition (SOPRAN)


Building Health Together:
WIFA Supplementation in Schools (SOPRAN)
Islamabad - ICT
IMSG (I-VIII)


NUTRITION


Weekly Iron Folic Acid
WIFA

Project Stakeholders

Funders

german cooperation
DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

GF

Strategic lead

BENAZIR INCOME SUPPORT PROGRAMME
Celebrating Women Empowerment

Implementation oversight

giz Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Implementation partners

WFP World Food Programme

NUTRITION INTERNATIONAL
Nourish Life

MLE partner

CERP
EVIDENCE MATTERS

Technical advisory departments: Education, Food & Health (Provincial & District)

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50 YEARS OF IFPRI
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