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## STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS, RESULTS, AND INNOVATIONS IN NUTRITION GLOBALLY (SPRING)

The goal of the SPRING project in the Kyrgyz Republic is to improve the nutritional status of children under the age of two and women of reproductive age by increasing the uptake of 11 evidence-based nutrition practices and services.

### MAJOR FOCUS AREAS

According to the 2012 Kyrgyz Demographic and Health Survey, 18 percent of children under five are stunted. In addition, 43 percent of children under five and 35 percent of women (aged 15-49) have some degree of anemia. SPRING works at both the community and national levels to contribute to reductions in stunting and anemia in the Kyrgyz Republic through the uptake of 11 evidence-based practices.

These practices, tailored to the Kyrgyz context, relate to optimal breastfeeding, appropriate complementary feeding of children, dietary diversity throughout the year, reduced consumption of junk food, handwashing, and other household-level behaviors targeting women and children in the first 1,000 days.

SPRING also works with USAID's Agro Horizon Project to increase access to a diverse diet, integrate nutrition messaging into ongoing project activities, and develop training materials. SPRING also promotes technologies and practices to increase safe preservation and storage of diverse foods to enhance dietary diversity over the winter season.

## EXPECTED RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

At the national level, SPRING supported the finalization and roll out of the national anemia technical guidelines and protocol, which includes proper nutrition practices for pregnant women.

The project strengthened nutrition-related components of the pre-service clinical training for doctors and nurses, which is being adopted and integrated into academic program by 19 medical colleges and four universities.

A special working group, established with USAID's support, developed a new clinical protocol around prevention and treatment of helminth infections, and developed strategies and materials to accompany future deworming campaigns.

As part of its efforts to train health care providers to deliver high-quality nutrition services and counselling, SPRING trained over 6,2 thousand health workers since January 2015.

27 health facilities received training and guidance to help them achieve Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative certification. Thus far, seven hospitals, eight family medicine centers, and two general practice centers have been designated as mother-baby friendly.

SPRING mobilized nearly 2,600 community volunteers who deliver key nutrition and hygiene messages to households, particularly those with pregnant and lactating women and/or children younger than two years. Each quarter, they reach over 120,500 caregivers and over 20,000 children under two from about 30,000 households through household visits and community meetings in areas covered by the program. The program also engages local and national level media to reach urban audiences.

The program published a cookbook and a food storage guidebook in Kyrgyz and Russian languages to help families keep and eat diverse and nutritious foods throughout the year. SPRING also provides targeted technical assistance and capacity building to various agriculture projects and organizations to strengthen nutrition program elements or to make the agriculture programming more nutrition-sensitive.

Four surveys involving 3,459 women aged 18-49 revealed improvements in the dietary diversity of women and exclusive breastfeeding practices as well as increased consumption of vital supplements by pregnant women.

**Duration:** August 2014 – June 2018

**Funding Level:** \$7,589,539

**Implementing Partner:** The SPRING Project

**Key Partners:** Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, UNICEF, USAID Agro Horizon Project, Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN)

**Activity Locations:** Jalalabad Oblast - 11 rayons and towns (including Jalalabad City); Naryn Oblast - 6 rayons and the town of Naryn; and Bishkek city

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