

LANSA RESEARCH UPTAKE REFLECTIVE PRACTICE STORY

Pakistan Research Uptake Story

Bringing Research Back to Communities

Background

Women's, Work and Nutrition (WWN) is a LANSA research study, led by [Collective for Social Science Research \(CSSR\)](#) and [Leverhulme Centre for Integrative Research on Agriculture and Health \(LCIRAH\)](#). It uses anthropometric and mother-infant survey data to investigate the relationship between women's work in agriculture and its implications on mother and child health and nutrition in Sindh, Pakistan. The research surveyed over 1000 mother-child pairs through a baseline and endline survey in thirteen districts of Sindh.



All female Community Circle in Tando Mohammad Khan

The issue

While collecting data, researchers were frequently asked two questions. One, 'Is my child okay? What did you find?' and two, 'Why should we give you data? What will we get in return?' The frequency and urgency of these questions led to reflection within the CSSR team. Isn't it our moral and ethical responsibility to share the results? Could we share our insights in an effective and accessible way?

There were a number of issues with this. A majority of communities surveyed had poor literacy rates. Women, the main source of our data, were mostly illiterate and spoke only regional dialects. How could we share numerical data and concepts like stunting, wasting, and food security in a way that was interesting and understandable to them?

There was also little precedent to build upon. This is not something that the research community does as a standard practice, especially in Pakistan, or that WWN researchers had deeply engaged in before.

Yet, the results begged to be shared. Basic analysis had shown very high stunting and wasting rates and a high percentage of food insecure households. It had also shown that many women surveyed were underweight and worked in agriculture, continuing even through pregnancy.

The innovation

In Dec 2016, CSSR led approximately 40 research uptake events called Community Circles (CCs) to share preliminary results of the WWN baseline survey with selected communities. 15 administrative villages with stunting or wasting above the provincial average were chosen out of the 62 surveyed villages. Approximately 820 people (617 female and 202 male) participated in these CCs, which included members of marginalized groups. Table 1 shows a snapshot of participants by district.

The method

Step one: Identifying the key analytical concepts

To make sure the discussion was focused and accessible, researchers reflected on the core results. There was consensus that at least two ideas must be shared. One, the status of stunting and wasting in the community's children and two, the potential drivers behind this result - including mother's health, income, food insecurity, hygiene and time spent on work and childcare.

Step two: Finding the right metaphor

How can concepts like stunting, wasting or food security be shared in rural communities?

Districts	Total Participants	Male	Female
Matari	33	8	25
Tando Mohammad Khan	178	49	129
Mirpurkhas	117	31	86
Sanghar	164	38	126
Noshero Feroze	94	34	60
Nawabshah	233	42	191
Total	819	202	617

Table 1: District wise details of Community Circles held

Through a test-run with field researchers from diverse linguistic backgrounds, metaphors and analogies were found in regional languages that could convey the local experience of these concepts. For ease of understanding, stunting and wasting were referred to as *kamzori jo nazar nahi aati hai* (“weakness that is not visible”) and *kamzori jo nazar aati hai* (“weakness that is visible”). Concepts such as food security (*khaad khorak*), childcare (*bachay ki dekh baal*) and mother’s health (*maa ki sehat*) were also translated into local languages.

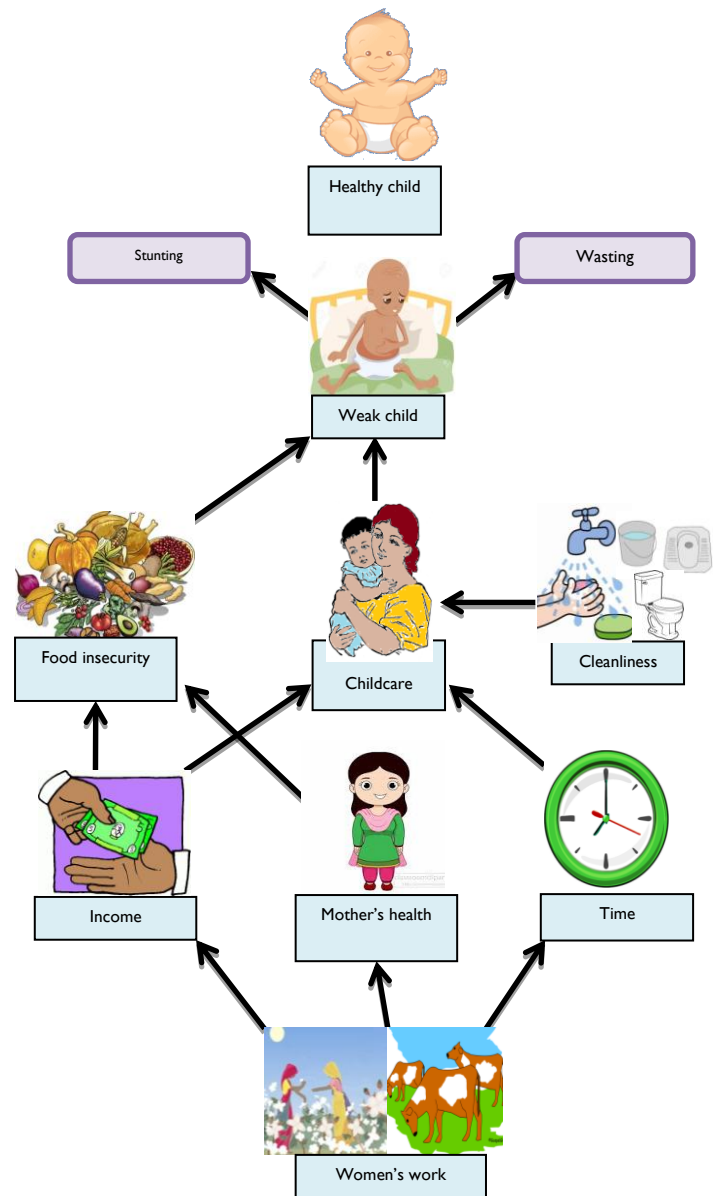
Step three: Adding visuals

Team members with experience teaching literacy to low-income students suggested sharing pictures as a useful tool in nurturing a cognitive link between a concept and a word. This idea was adapted in the CCs to make concepts more relatable and interesting to participants. A special set of visual tools was developed to show a healthy and weak child, the causes behind this difference, and key numerical concepts like percentages. Care was taken to ensure the visuals were relevant and culturally appropriate for the participants.

Step four: Prompting action

The final step was using these findings to see if they could inspire participants to take action. Drawing upon team members’ past experience in teaching leadership, we found that story telling is an effective way to motivate action. The analytical concepts were connected in a simple story that was co-created with the CC participants.

A Community Circle started with the rhetorical question, what kind of children do you want – healthy or unhealthy? Once the community said they wanted their children to be healthy, they were asked about their community’s children. Following this reflection, results were shared for their administrative village and compared with provincial averages using visuals. The provincial average was deemed to be a benchmark that seemed attainable and not “foreign” to participants. The difference between the Sindh average and their own children led to great shock among the participants. They were then asked what may have caused this. As the group discussed and debated the causes, various issues around mother’s health, income, food insecurity, hygiene and time spent on work and childcare were brought into focus. As the discussion progressed, the facilitator pinned the relevant pre-prepared visual on the board as each concept was discussed.



Box 1: Visual representation of CC discussion

Relevant survey data relating to the causes was also shared to prompt further discussion. Soon a more holistic picture of the goal and the issues began to appear on the board (See Box 1). After this discussion was complete, the facilitator asked participants what could be done at the community level to address these issues and what role evidence could play in this.

Conclusion

Community Circles were successful in relaying our findings back to the communities. This realization has encouraged us to adopt the reporting back of research findings to the community as a standard practice. CC discussions also enabled progressive voices for change within communities. As Rafeeda from Mirpurkhas said, “I also think that this (women working during pregnancy) is a very important issue but no one listens to me. Now that you have come and also talked about it, I can tell other women and we can work together.”

Key Contacts

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Facilitator pinning visuals on board during Community Circle