

Integrating Horticulture and Nutrition: SPRING/Bangladesh's Experience with Farmer Nutrition Schools

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USAID Horticulture Open Presentation Session
IOI Resort City, Sepang Utara, Malaysia, September 8, 2016



Introduction

- Bangladesh context
- SPRING's Farmer Nutrition Schools
- Agriculture-nutrition pathways
- Challenges and key take-away points



Bangladesh Context

- Rich experience in food security, livelihoods, homestead food production and farmer field school work
- High rates of stunting (36%)
- Low rates of dietary diversity (39%)
- Significant challenges with hygiene (only 10% of people wash their hands at critical junctures)



SPRING/Bangladesh Project Description

- Six-year, USAID centrally-funded Cooperative Agreement (October 1, 2011–September 30, 2017)
- Target group: pregnant and lactating women and women with children under 2 years of age (“1,000 Days”)
 - Special emphasis on two poorest wealth quintiles
- Work inside the Feed the Future ‘Zone of Influence’
 - 40 upazilas along Bangladesh’s coastal belt
- Collaborate with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Agriculture, using multiple channels to reinforce key nutrition messages



SPRING/Bangladesh: Goal & Objectives

**Goal: improve nutritional status of pregnant and lactating women, and children under 2 years
(focus on the poorest two wealth quintiles)**



1. Scale-up promotion of Essential Nutrition & Hygiene Actions (ENA/EHA) within the MOHFW, MOA, health & agriculture NGO projects

2. Enhance capacity of frontline health & agriculture workers within the MOHFW, MOA, field & peer facilitators & community groups to deliver quality nutrition services & counseling

3. Increase household access and utilization of diversified foods through Farmer Nutrition Schools

4. Enhance project learning & sharing



Farmer Nutrition Schools (FNS)

- Group-based, community-based participatory learning for resource-poor households to improve their production and consumption of diversified, micronutrient-rich foods
- Builds off of experience with HFP and FFS
- Low-cost approach using simple technologies
- Small "doable" actions to help participants link food production with improved nutrition/hygiene practices
- Integrates nutrition and agriculture: both nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions
- Follow-up support to ensure practices will continue in the community



A community forum used to teach and mentor household members to improve the production and consumption of high-quality diets rich in micronutrients for pregnant and lactating women and children ages 6-24 months.



FNS - Continued



Vegetable production

Pregnant and lactating women learn by doing

Everything built around and anchored in nutrition and hygiene (ENA/EHA)



Improved methods for poultry rearing

Egg production from indigenous chickens can be significantly increased

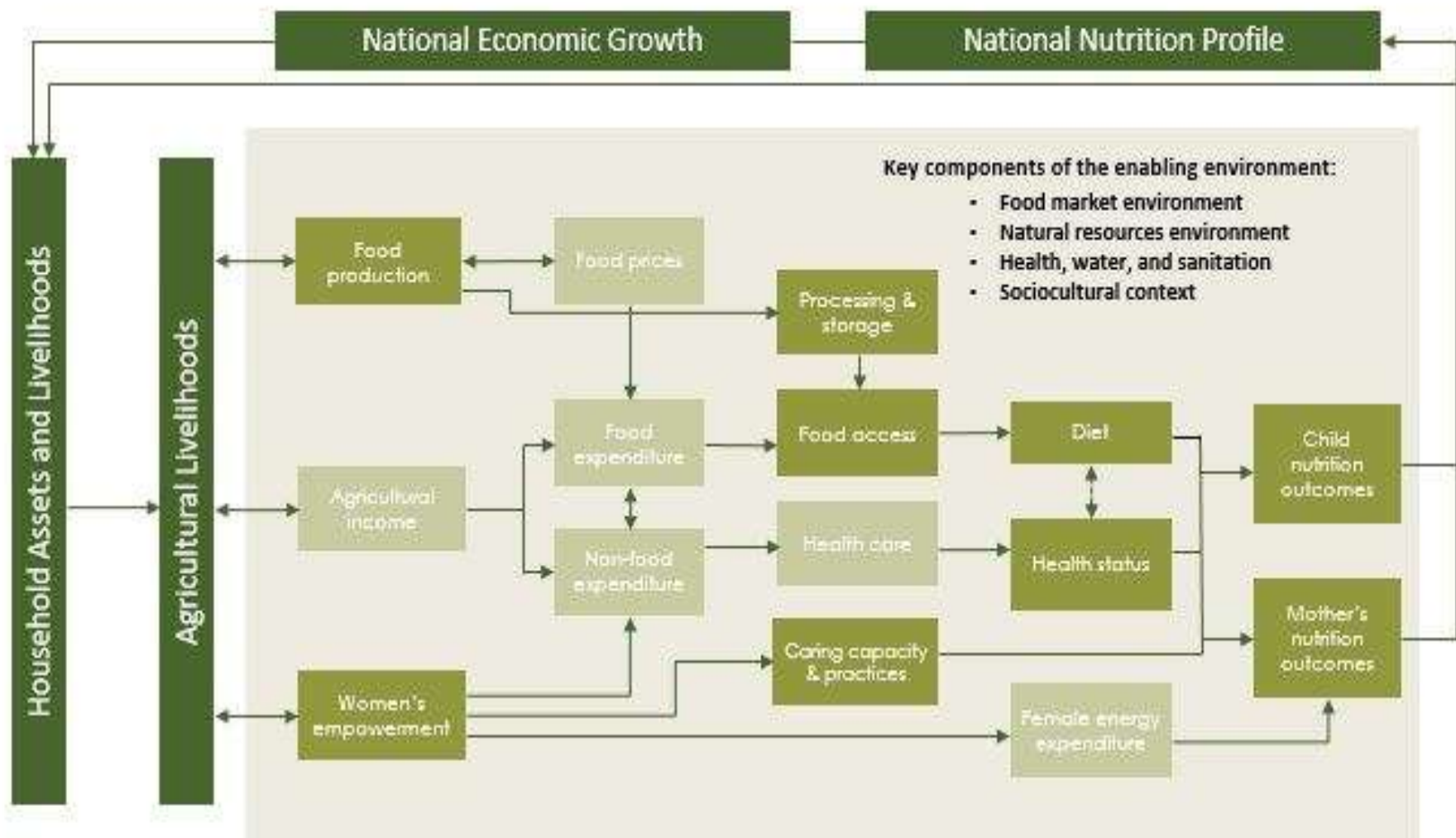


Nutrient-dense small indigenous fish

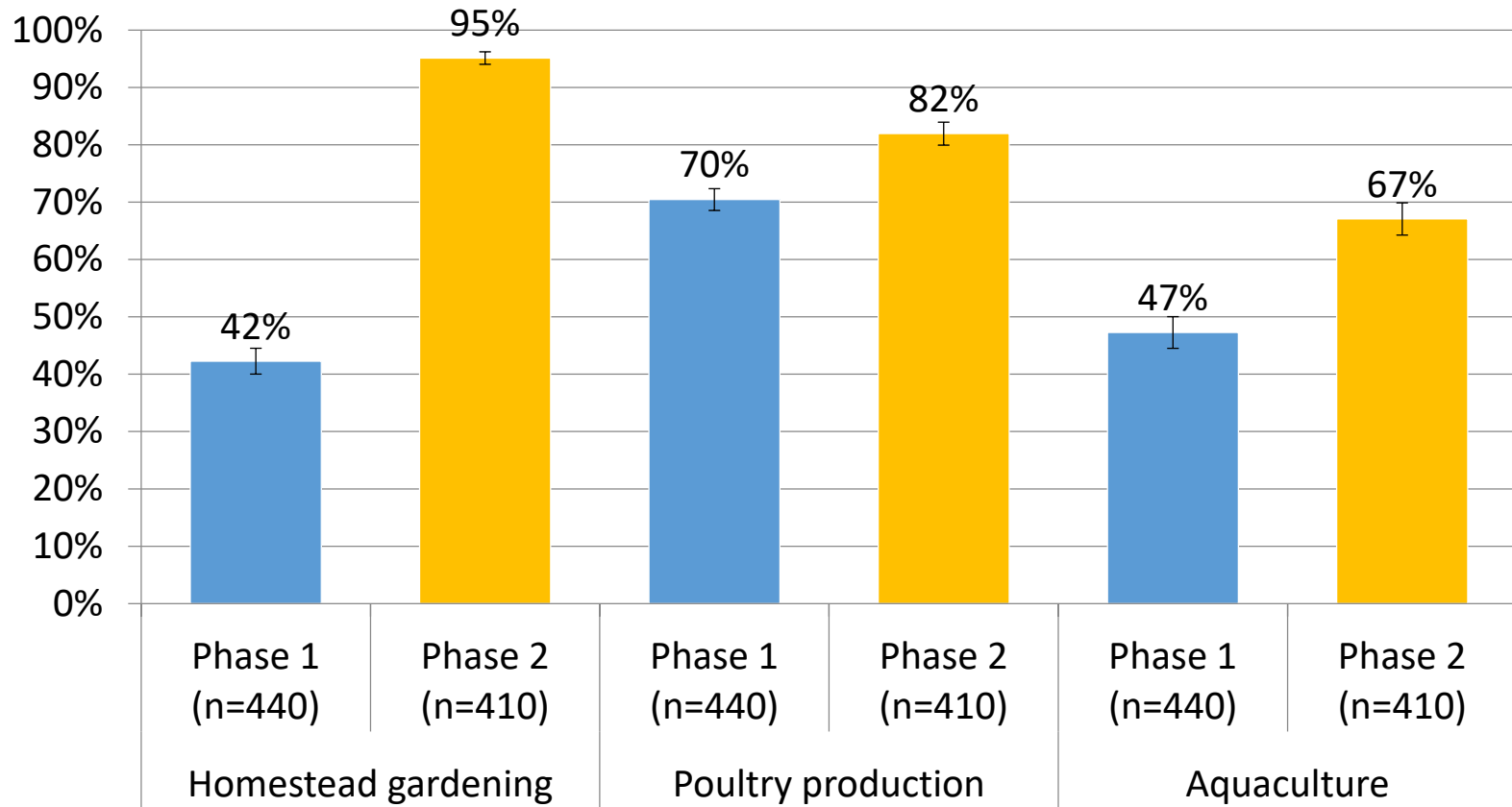
Poor households raise fish to meet the demand for animal source food



FNS and the Ag-Nut Pathways



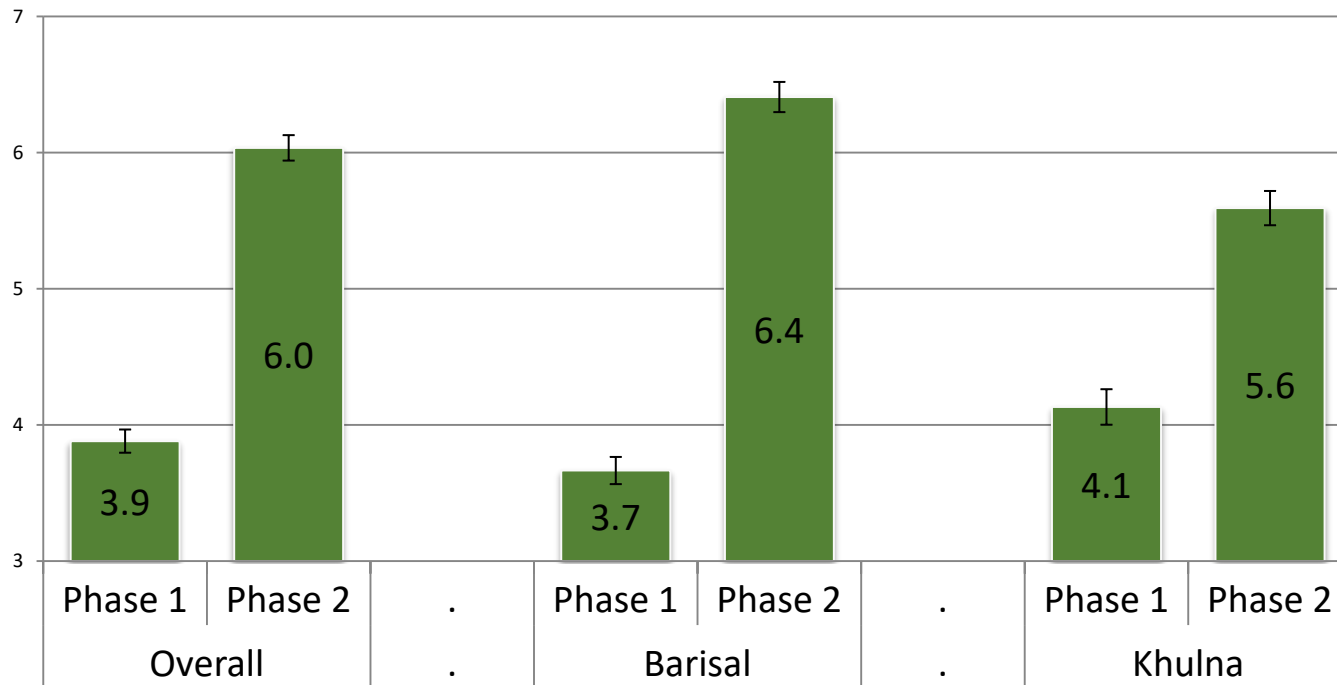
FNS Cohort Study Results - 1



Increased involvement in production



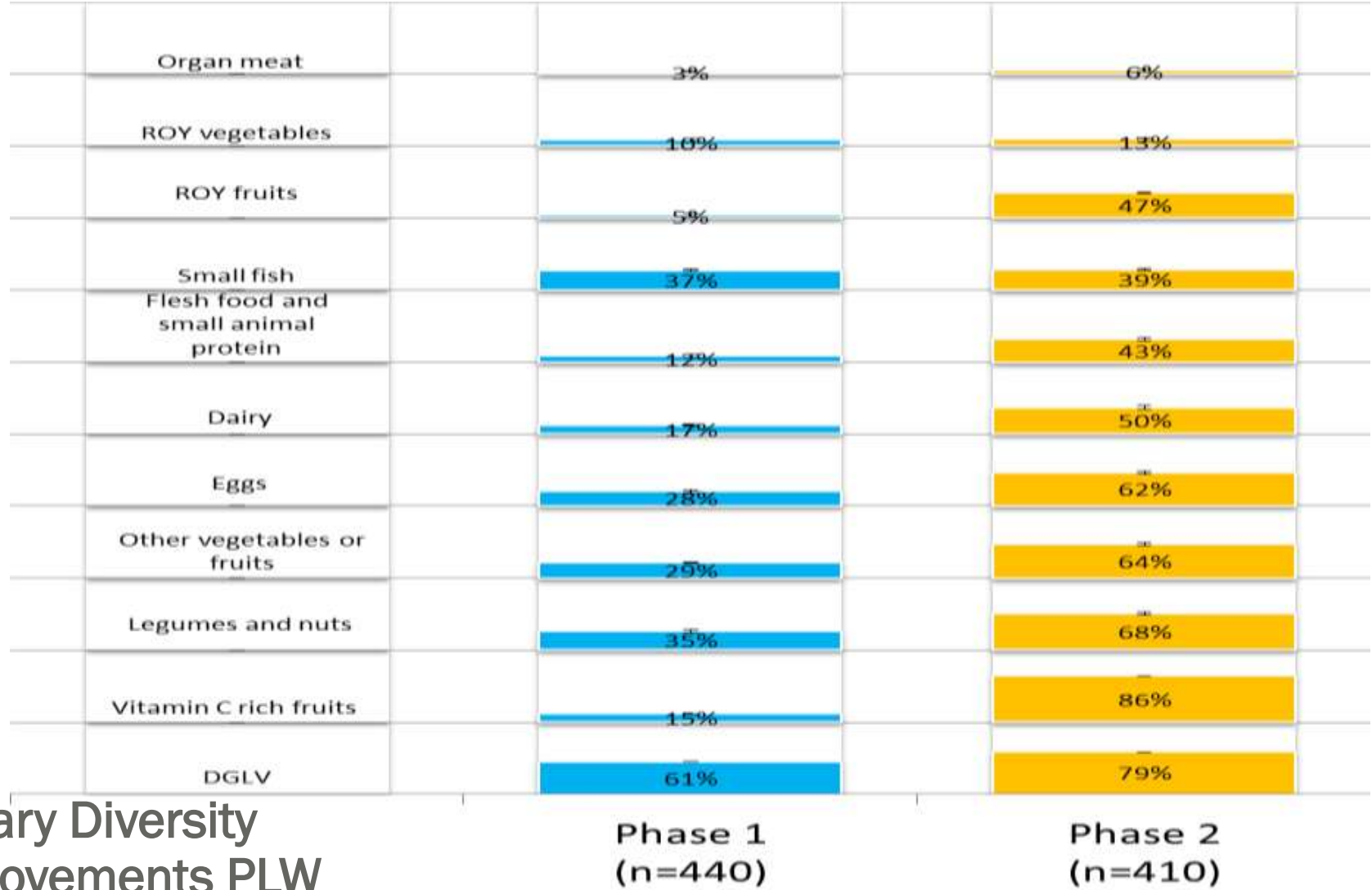
FNS Cohort Study Results - 2



Mean dietary diversity score of pregnant and lactating women



FNS Cohort Study Results - 3



Challenges

Sustainability

How to link to Government?

How to keep people motivated?

How to maintain quality inputs?

Community involvement

How to convince husbands?

How to convince mothers-in-law?



In Summary

Farmer Nutrition School (FNS):

- is low cost, scalable, and evidence-based community-level intervention
- uses simple technologies and peer-to-peer learning
- combines nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive approaches
- improves access to and consumption of nutrient-dense and a more diverse diet



Key Takeaway

- Small innovations are key
- Look for linkages to government
- Engage all members of the community
- Tailor your messages carefully
- Sometimes it can be better to focus on the enabling environment instead of nutrition outcomes/impact-level indicators



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Thank you

