



SOCIAL BEHAVIOR CHANGE COMMUNICATION: LOCALLY AVAILABLE FOODS

Healthy Mother, Healthy Baby Activity

The USAID Healthy Mother, Healthy Baby (HMHB) Activity seeks to enable families to adopt better maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH), infant and young child feeding (IYCF) and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) practices during the first 1,000 days of a child's life.

HMHB SOCIAL BEHAVIOR CHANGE CAMPAIGNS

Breastfeeding saves lives, but only 36 percent of Tajik children under six months of age are exclusively breastfed. As children begin transitioning to soft or solid foods, many are introduced to the wrong kind of diet. To counter the high consumption of low cost, low nutrient packaged foods and to encourage consumption of locally available fruits, vegetables, and animal proteins, HMHB devised the *Locally Available Foods for Moms and Young Children* campaign. The campaign is just one component of HMHB's targeted social behavior change communication (SBCC) strategy, which also includes *Joint Decision Making* and *Breastfeeding Beyond the First 40 Days*. HMHB also supports WASH activities and initiatives to create demand for fortified foods using SBCC events and messaging.

LOCALLY AVAILABLE FOODS

Happy and thriving mothers and babies should consume foods found close to home such as eggs, fruits, and vegetables. The HMHB *Locally Available Foods* campaign provides an interactive, visual opportunity to explain food selection and preparation techniques. Through Community Health Teams, the campaign also shares information to increase awareness of the value of local foods and the benefits of nutritious complementary feeding. The campaign helps create awareness of how to identify nutritious fruits and vegetables locally, sharing the benefits of iron-rich food consumption and correcting the commonly held belief that iron-rich foods are unsafe for young children. Key campaign messages included:

- Plan and prepare meals with local foods that are rich in protein and Vitamin A, starting at 6 months, to help ensure a happy, healthy Kulcha!
- Feed babies locally available iron-rich and Vitamin A-rich foods starting at 6 months of age.
- Feeding babies iron-rich and Vitamin A-rich foods is easy to do and prevents stunting.
- Babies need more nutrients at 6 months of age than are available in breast milk.
- Continue to breastfeed your baby until 24 months as needed while also feeding them iron-rich and Vitamin A-rich foods.

“It’s not just about getting children enough to eat. It’s about getting them the right food to eat. That is our common challenge today.”

UNICEF’s executive director, Henrietta Fore

