



SOCIAL BEHAVIOR CHANGE COMMUNICATION: STRATEGY AND CONCEPT

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 seeks to transform maternal, newborn, and child health and nutrition through robust social and behavior change communications (SBCC). It aims to create new social norms and enable joint decision-making and planning among men and women so that families are empowered to adopt recommended health and nutrition practices. USAID's SBCC approach connects with families and communities using a locally resonant concept based on the five key life moments or milestones of a child's first 1000 days: pregnancy, one week, 8-40 days, 5 months, and the first 6-23 months after birth.

This strategy complements the Republic of Tajikistan's National Communication Program for the First 1000 Days of a Child's Life, 2020-2024, and plays a critical role in supporting the program at many levels. Through an audience centered and evidence informed approach, SBCC is strategically employed to improve self-efficacy among facility and community-based providers. It challenges prevailing social norms about gender equity, household decision making, and caregiving roles and build awareness, skills and motivation among fathers, mothers, and other caregivers in *1,000 Day Households* to adopt and maintain recommended practices. A *1,000 Day Household* is a household that has either a pregnant woman or a child under two living in the home.

To help communities better understand these five key life moments, HMHB adopts the metaphor of making kulcha, a traditional Tajik flatbread. From growing and cultivating the wheat to mixing and preparing the dough, each step of the process is critical. Just like a kulcha, a healthy child can only reach its full potential and growth if families come together to adopt key behaviors throughout the early stages of the child's development.



HMHB's SBCC strategy targets three priority audiences because of their instrumental role in enabling the adoption of maternal, child health, infant and young child nutrition and water, sanitation, and hygiene behaviors: pregnant women and mothers, their husbands, and their mothers-in-law.

