

Generating Evidence to Inform Integrated Social and Behavior Change Programming in the Sahel

Breakthrough RESEARCH will conduct mixed methods research to assess successes and challenges of integrated SBC programming, including its effectiveness on priority behaviors and cost-effectiveness in a climate-stressed setting. Breakthrough RESEARCH's evaluation activities will improve the design and implementation of SBC programming in RISE II and inform USAID's global portfolio of integrated SBC programming.

Governments and development partners worldwide are increasingly investing in integrated social and behavior change (SBC) programs addressing multiple health areas or sectors. Such programming is thought to offer many benefits relative to more narrowly focused SBC interventions, including improved behavioral effectiveness, beneficiary satisfaction, and sustainability—but conclusive evidence is limited. Ensuring effective implementation of integrated SBC requires that stakeholders work together to address key learning questions such as: Are there particular behaviors or combinations of behaviors for which integrated SBC programming is particularly effective? How many behaviors may be integrated without overburdening beneficiaries?

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)'s Resilience in the Sahel Enhanced (RISE) II programs target chronically vulnerable populations through programming to improve priority behaviors in maternal, newborn, and child health, family planning, nutrition, and water, sanitation, and hygiene. The programs are being implemented at the community and facility levels through four Development Food Security Assistance (DFSA) partners and health service delivery mechanisms in select zones in Burkina Faso and Niger. To support these implementation partners, Breakthrough ACTION will provide capacity strengthening and technical assistance to the partners to strengthen coordination and enhance the quality and alignment of the SBC components of the programs.

WHAT IS INTEGRATED SBC PROGRAMMING?

Integrated SBC refers to programming that addresses behaviors concerning multiple health areas or development sectors in a coordinated and intentional way. Typically, integrated SBC programming involves developing a single, coherent SBC strategy, which may group behaviors that are:

- Practiced by the same audience of people in the same life stage.
- Influenced by the same social norms or individual-level factors.
- Preceded by the same gateway behavior.
- Pertaining to co-occurring health or development conditions. This is critical in resource-constrained settings in which multiple issues need to be addressed and vertical or siloed programs may not be as effective or efficient.

Over the next three years, Breakthrough RESEARCH will conduct mixed methods research to assess successes and challenges of integrated SBC programming, including its effectiveness on priority behaviors and cost-effectiveness in a climate-stressed setting. Breakthrough RESEARCH's SBC-focused evaluation will complement 1) a larger RISE II base-

ACTIVITY SNAPSHOT

Generate evidence to inform integrated SBC programming in the Sahel

BREAKTHROUGH RESEARCH CONSORTIUM

Population Council (lead), Tulane University, Avenir Health, ideas42, Population Reference Bureau, Institute for Reproductive Health at Georgetown University

LEAD RESEARCH PARTNERS

Population Council, Avenir Health

COLLABORATING PARTNERS

Ministries of Health (Burkina Faso and Niger), Ministries of Agriculture (Burkina Faso and Niger), Breakthrough ACTION, DFSA implementing partners, TANGO, in-country research institutions

ANTICIPATED TIMELINE

August 2019 – August 2022

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

Burkina Faso and Niger

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line study; 2) formative research and monitoring conducted by DFSAs on their specific programs; and 3) assessments of capacity strengthening and pilot testing of SBC interventions conducted by Breakthrough ACTION.

HOW WILL THIS ACTIVITY HELP IMPROVE SBC PROGRAMMING?

Breakthrough RESEARCH's evaluation activities will improve the design and implementation of SBC programming in RISE II and inform USAID's global portfolio of integrated SBC programming. The results will also be used by RISE II implementing partners, including the Breakthrough ACTION project, for continuous learning and adaptation of integrated SBC programming within their existing and future projects. USAID, the governments of Niger and Burkina Faso, and other donor organizations can use the results to inform investment decisions about the most effective and promising SBC approaches to improve health and development in the Sahel region. Insights gleaned from Breakthrough RESEARCH's activities will be particularly valuable given the dearth of

robust evidence regarding integrated SBC in shock-prone regions such as the Sahel, or integrated, community-level SBC in any setting.

HOW WILL THIS ACTIVITY BE IMPLEMENTED?

RISE II partners are implementing complex, cross-sectoral programming to address resilience, agriculture, nutrition, health, and poverty. Breakthrough RESEARCH's evaluation will focus on SBC programming and its effects on health behaviors and outcomes. While specific research questions will ultimately be informed by the SBC interventions developed by Breakthrough ACTION and/or the DFSAs (expected January 2020), they may include questions such as:

- Is integrated, cross-sectoral, multi-health-element SBC programming more effective and cost-effective compared with less-integrated programming? Among which audience and for which health outcomes?
- Which program elements (activities) appear to be most effective and cost-effective? What is the level of intensity required for behavior change in a non-permissive environment?
- What is the effectiveness of integrated family planning SBC into agriculture, food security, or life-skills programs via community-based integrated platforms such as care groups?
- How effective are the RISE II SBC activities in shifting gender and social norms to enable improve reproductive, maternal, newborn, and child health behaviors?
- To what degree do climate shocks and related migration mediate the impact of integrated SBC programming health decisions, behaviors, and outcomes?

ANTICIPATED PRODUCTS AND ENGAGEMENTS

- Evaluation dataset made publicly available
- Research reports and scientific articles
- User-friendly briefs and infographics
- Targeted workshops, meetings, and/or webinars for local and global SBC policymakers and practitioners; participation in meetings led by Breakthrough ACTION

Breakthrough RESEARCH will implement a quantitative survey to be conducted at three points during the RISE II program cycle. Data analysis and results dissemination will follow each survey round. Complementary research will be conducted at strategic times during the RISE II program cycle, leveraging monitoring data from partners where possible to reduce duplication of effort and parallel data collection. The Breakthrough RESEARCH surveys will be book-ended by the RISE II evaluation conducted by TANGO. Participation in the SBC Technical Working Group will be ongoing throughout the project to disseminate any results.

Using USAID/Global Health core funds, Breakthrough RESEARCH will also conduct complementary research and learning activities to further inform RISE II project implementation. These activities include:

- An **SBC indicator mapping** activity to strengthen routine monitoring systems. The activity will identify gaps in monitoring data and enable alignment across partners' monitoring systems, with the ultimate aim of producing monitoring data that will simultaneously inform programmatic improvement and contribute to outcome evaluations.

WHAT IS RISE II?

RISE II contributes to underlying resilience using a package of investments that align U.S. government Global Food Security Strategy funding in the agriculture sector with complementary funding in health and governance. RISE II also builds the foundation for agricultural growth by strengthening market systems in targeted value chains, including enhanced access to finance and the policy-enabling environment.

- A **costing assessment** that will leverage Breakthrough RESEARCH's *Guidelines for Costing of Social and Behavior Change Health Interventions* and will inform the cost-effectiveness analysis and cost-benefit assessment of integrated SBC.
- **Qualitative research** that will help clarify how interventions focused on social and gender norms and decision-making among target beneficiaries is influencing contraceptive uptake and use in the Sahel.



A man helps his wife with child care in the village of Dan Gado. MARJOLEIN MOREAUX, SPRING

- **Coordination with collaborating partners.**

Breakthrough RESEARCH will lead regular workshops and partner engagement activities in collaboration with the Sahel Collaboration and Communication project to facilitate discussion of monitoring, evaluation, and learning throughout the RISE II project. Results will be documented and lessons from monitoring data and implementation experiences shared to course-correct programming as needed.

Breakthrough RESEARCH

This activity is being implemented as part of Breakthrough RESEARCH. Breakthrough RESEARCH catalyzes social and behavior change (SBC) by conducting state-of-the-art research and evaluation and promoting evidence-based solutions to improve health and development programs around the world. Breakthrough RESEARCH is a consortium led by the Population Council in partnership with Avenir Health, ideas42, Institute for Reproductive Health at Georgetown University, Population Reference Bureau, and Tulane University.

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