Evaluating the effects of a community media approach: The SPRING/Digital Green Experience in Niger

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SPRING Strengthening Partnerships, Results, and Innovations in Nutrition Globally

Background

- Sahel context faces harsh climate conditions, food insecurity and high levels of malnutrition
- Social behavior change and communication (SBCC) in rural areas presents unique challenges due to poor access to mass media
- Limited evidence on using community video approach for maternal, infant, young child nutrition (MIYCN) and hygiene behaviors

SPRING/Digital Green Program in Niger - 2015

The collaboration was established between SPRING/Digital Green and 3 USAID/Niger programs - REGIS-ER (NCBA CLUSA), LAHIA (Save the Children) & Sawki (Mercy Corps)

Involved 80 established Hausa-speaking community groups, in 20 villages in the Maradi Region

Focused on the development and dissemination of 10 videos by community facilitators working with 4 distinct groups in each participating village

Target Population groups included 15 to 25 members in each of the 4 distinct groups

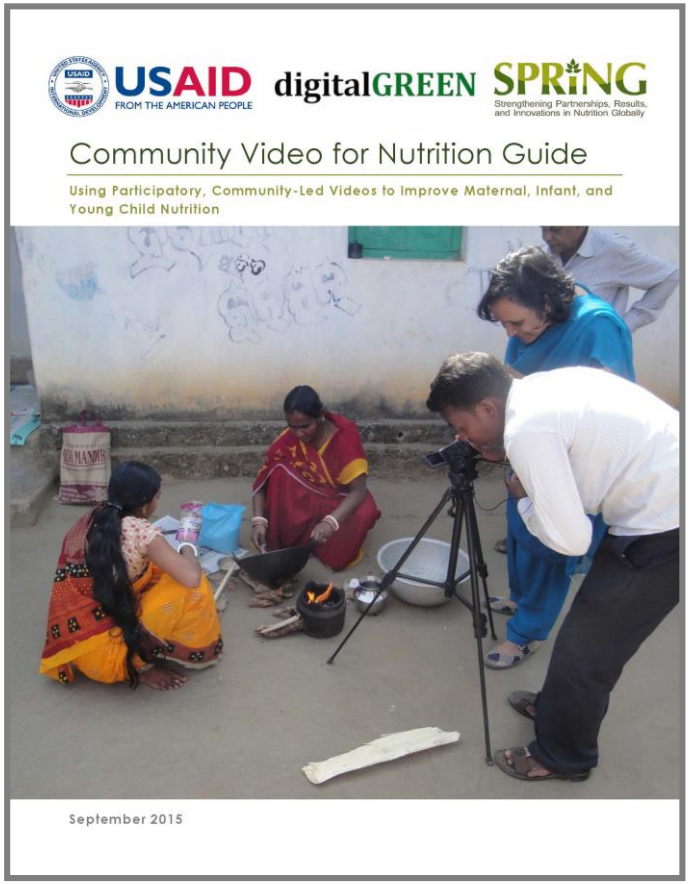
Women of reproductive age (WRA) (15-49)

Men (25- 60+) model husbands selected by health centers

Adolescent girls (12-18) in “safe space” programs

Key Influencers, including grandmothers and other family members

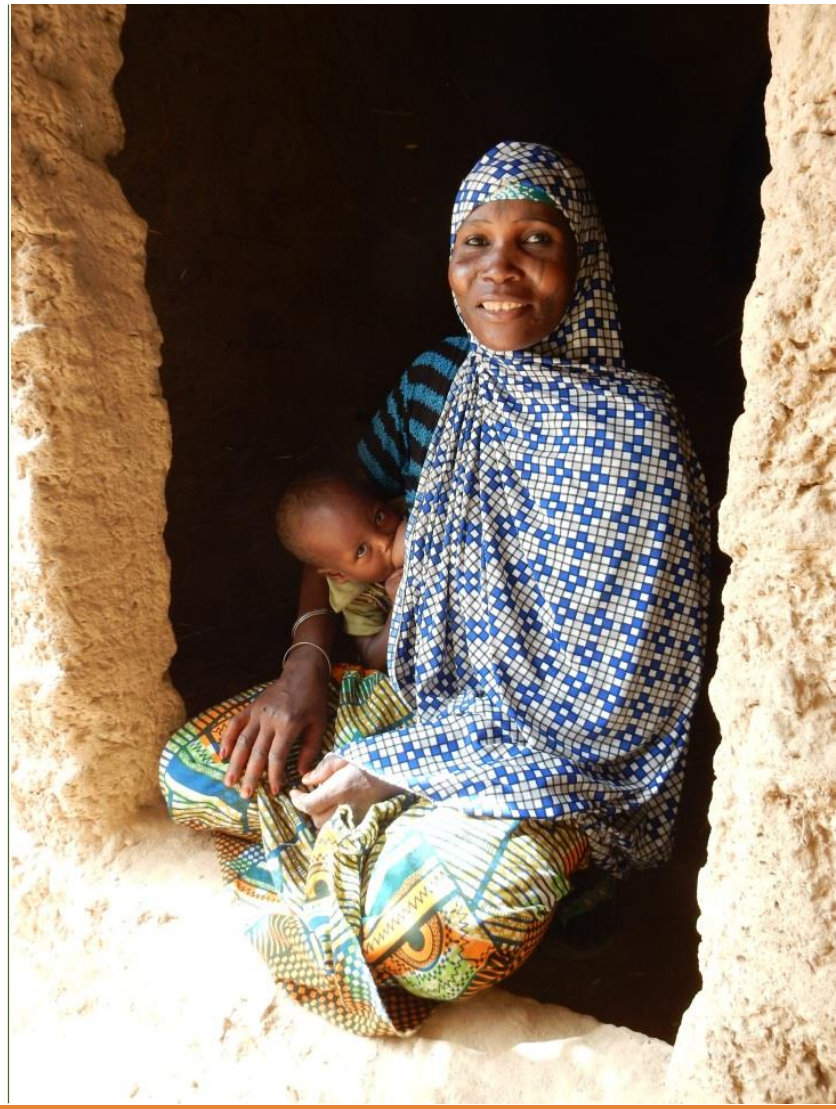
Figure 1: Community Video for Nutrition Guide Steps



1. Rapid formative research
2. Prioritization of video themes
3. Video production & 2-day MIYCN and hygiene training
4. Identify early adopters/key influencers
5. Video dissemination and data collection training
6. Production of videos
7. Pretesting/finalization of videos
8. Dissemination of videos
9. Home visits and follow-up
10. Quality assurance/supervision

10 Prioritized video topics in Niger include

1. **Importance of hand washing with soap**
2. Importance of the first 1000 days
3. **Active/Responsive feeding**
4. Importance of exclusive breastfeeding (EBF)
5. EBF for on demand feeding and working mothers
6. Introduction of complementary food for the baby after 6 months
7. Age appropriate complementary feeding for babies 6 to 24 months
8. Maternal and adolescent girls diet
9. Animal and human contamination, diarrhea and management
10. Dietary diversity & resilience



Study Objectives

1. To assess the acceptability and feasibility of introducing the community video approach
2. To determine the effectiveness of the approach in the Niger context
3. To assess factors influencing the potential for scale-up and sustainability

Mixed Method Evaluation Results

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Qualitative Methods

Objective: to address questions on the acceptability of the project, and to gather feedback on the process to inform scale-up

Methods: Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) & In depth Interviews (IDIs) with program beneficiaries and mediators during a workshop held in August 2015

Sample: program beneficiaries (33 men, adolescents and women) & 39 mediators

Analysis: Thematic analysis techniques:

Feasibility of the Videos

- Timing and duration of videos appear appropriate
- Videos encourage women to come more regularly to group meetings
- Many outsiders are attracted to the sessions which results in overcrowding at the video viewing
- Women could relate and understand the content and behaviors presented in the videos

"The women are very enthusiastic because the actors are villagers like them and speak Hausa. This has had a great effect and resulted in significant behavior change." (Female Mediator)

"It is important to project the videos during all the group meetings, the simulations conducted during the videos are easier to understand than listening to the group facilitator." (Woman beneficiary)

Acceptability of the Videos

- Excitement in the group is spilling over and uniting the community
- Group members and mediators social status is increasing
- Inviting influential members to the groups is helping to educate others and support behavior adoption

"The video gave us the final push to change. I already knew many things before through my husbands' school, but it took us seeing the video to make a change" (Woman Beneficiary).

"The men now accept to let their wives visit the health center and to at times accompany them. In addition, they agree to provide money for consultations more frequently." (Woman Beneficiary)

"We are considered teachers and we are given great importance. We are valued in the community because of this work it has changed our status. We are perceived as officers to accompany and support people to change their behavior." (Mediator)

Scale up and Sustainability

- There is great enthusiasm and interest in expanding the program
- Will need additional mediator training and possibly incentives to motivate staff
- Desire for new video content: birth spacing, avoiding early marriage, and education
- Additional suggestions include coordinating with SMS messages and print materials
- Stakeholders wanted to retain the resources to continue disseminations and home visit after the project concluded if there was no extension

"If the project does not remove the equipment, we could continue to provide home visits and advise the population." (Mediator)

"We must extend the video sessions for all other groups of villages and go to neighboring villages. By increasing the number of mediators and finding alternative means of projection we can expand the program reach." (Male Mediator)

Quantitative Methods

Objective: to measure the effectiveness of the facilitated videos and home visits focusing on responsive feeding and hygiene behaviors

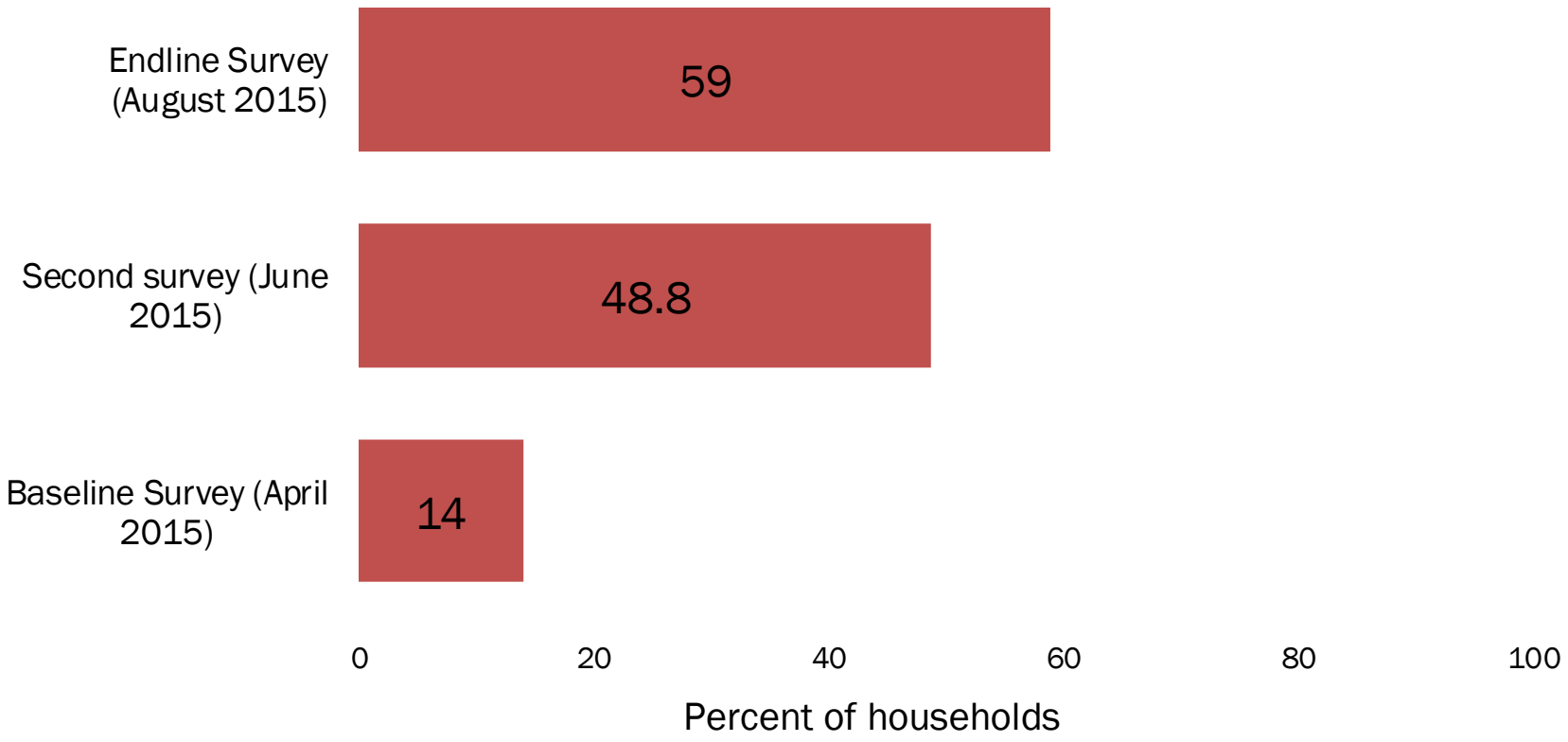
Methods: Three rounds of data collection (Baseline (April 2015, Second survey (June 2015), Endline (August 2015)

Sample: approximately 300 women with a child between 6-23 months at each data collection point

Analysis: Bivariate analysis

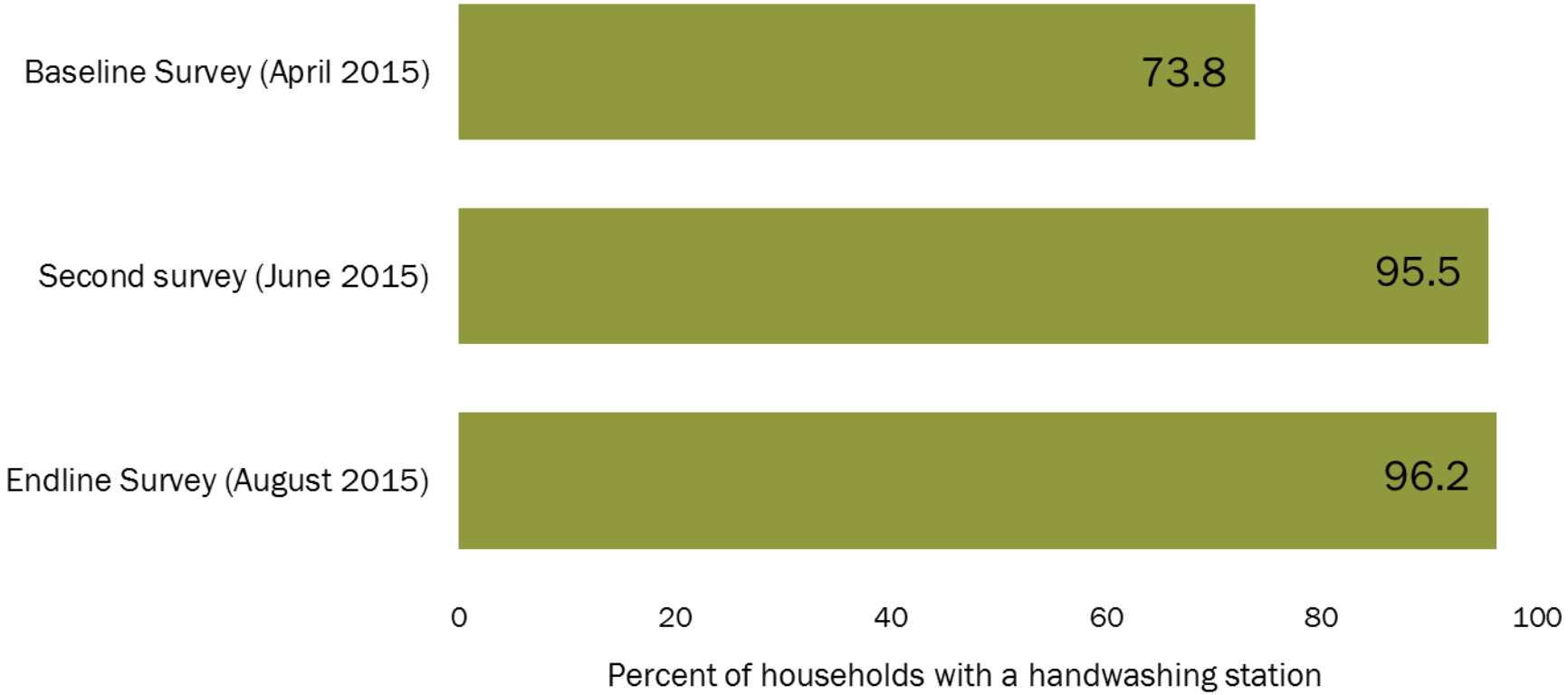
Handwashing Behavior

Having a designated place to wash hands increased from 14% to 59% after exposure to the video.



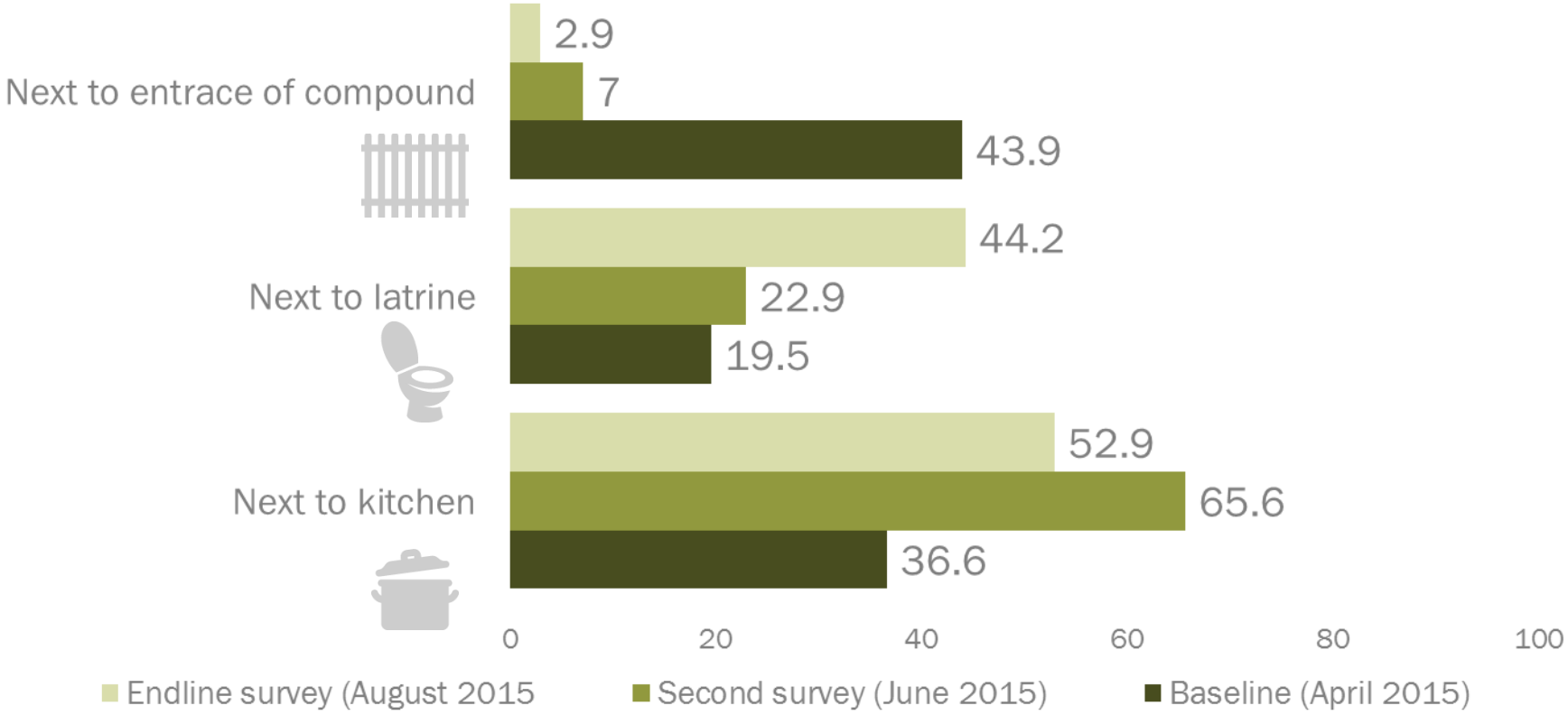
Handwashing Behavior

Among households with a handwashing station, the percent having soap and water increased from 73.8 at baseline to 96.2% at endline.



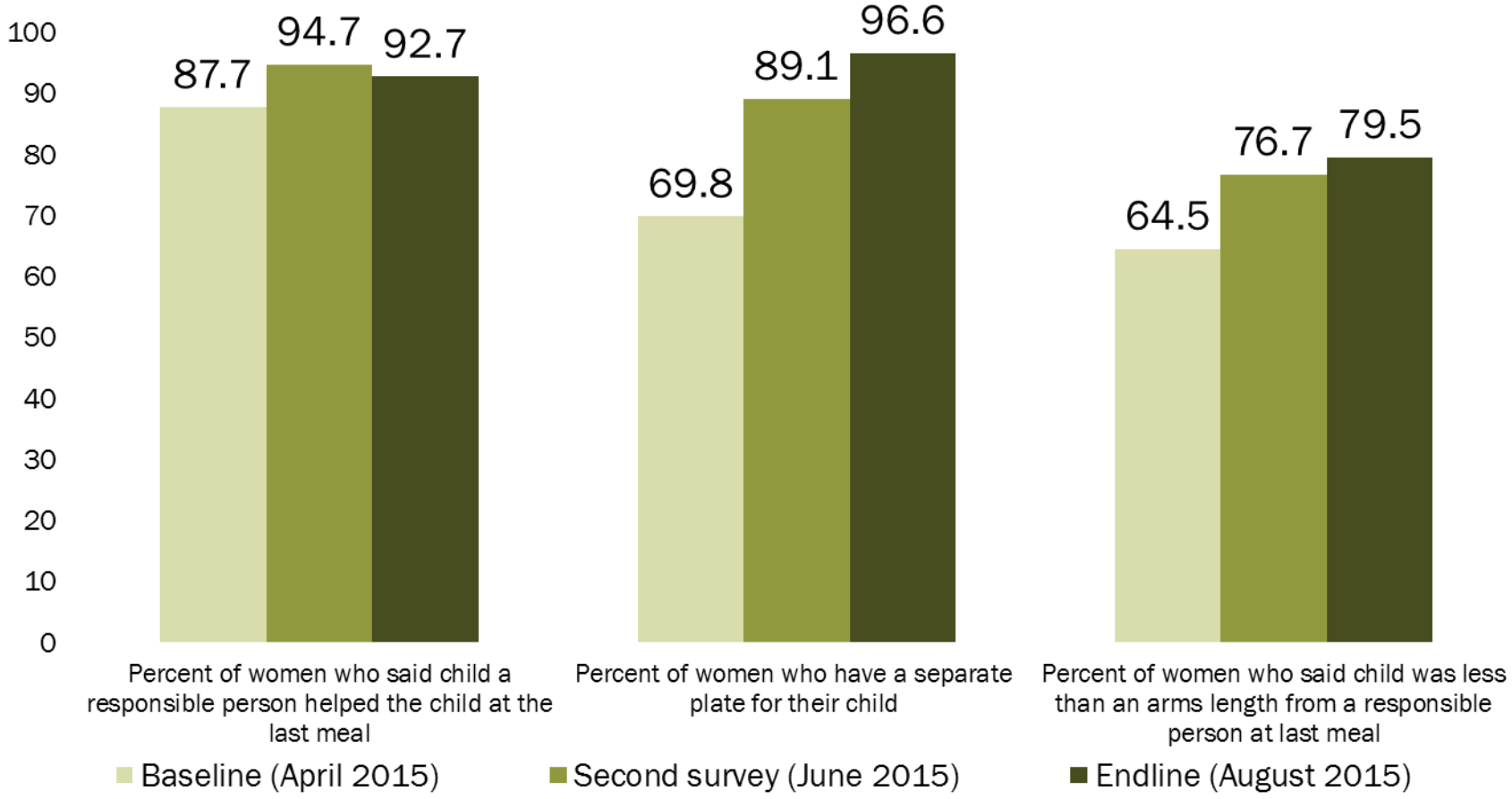
Handwashing Behavior

In households with handwashing stations, more were found next to the kitchen & latrine after the video.



Responsive Feeding Behavior

Responsive feeding practices increased after exposure to the video.



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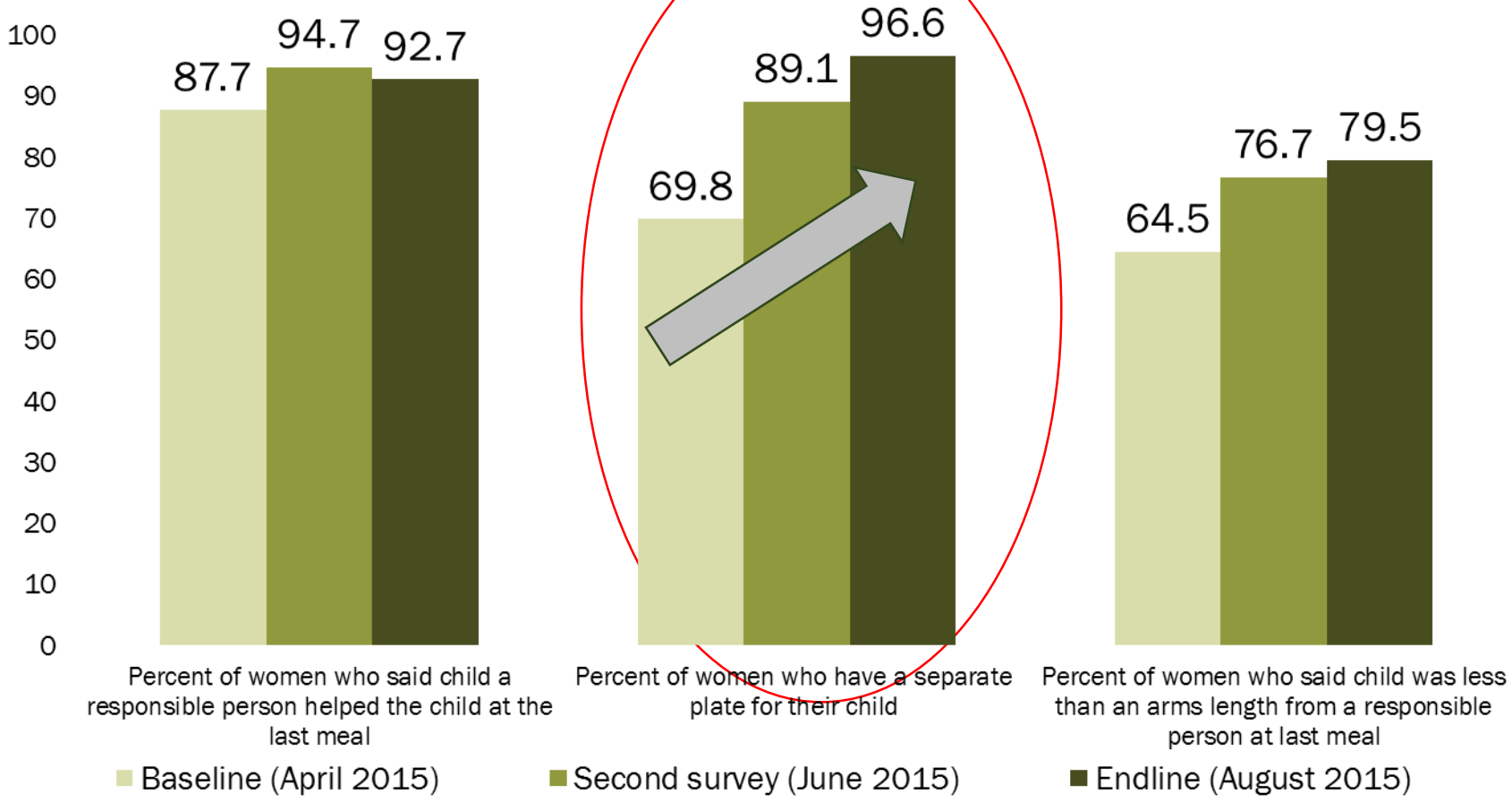

Conclusion

- Qualitative & quantitative data suggest the intervention is generating community discussion and behavior change
- There is evidence that men are becoming increasingly involved in behavior adoption
- There is interest in expanding the videos to new audiences, considering new video themes, and increasing the number of mediators.
- Behavior change appears to be sustained past the initial exposure

www.spring-nutrition.org/CommunityVideo

Thank you!

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