

Field Report on Midline Survey – Impact Evaluation of Early Year Pre-School Program (EYPP) Bangladesh

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ACRONYMS

AIR	American Institutes for Research
DC	Data Collector
DI	Data International Ltd.
EYPP	Early Year Pre-School Program
IDELA	International Development and Early Learning Assessment
FE	Field Enumerator
FS	Field Supervisor
SAVE	Save the Children
TOR	Terms of Reference

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1 Background

The Midline data collection for the Impact Evaluation of the Save the Children's Early Year Pre-School Program (EYPP) is being implemented by Data International Ltd. (DI) under the supervision of the American Institutes for Research (AIR), USA. This document reports various steps taken for data collection including training, challenges faced during data collection and lessons learned under this phase of the study.

The focus of the Midline survey was to tract and interview all households and children who participated under the Baseline survey carried out in November 2017. Under the Baseline a total of 1,856 households and children from the catchment areas of 100 preschool centers, consisting of 50 treatments and 50 controls were interviewed. Detailed household information of the selected children is also being collected using a structured questionnaire. To capture children's current development, International Development and Early Learning Assessment (IDELA) tool was administered on the sampled students. Sampling

As mentioned in the background section, all children that participated in the Baseline survey and their respective households were selected as the sample frame for the Midline survey. Table 1 presents the targeted coverage by upazila and intervention area. In addition, 50 treatment school (Rangdhuno) teachers were also selected for interview using a structured questionnaire. To gain further insights on the pre-school performance and school community, four Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with School Management Committee (SMC) were conducted in Meherpur Sadar.

Table 1: Targeted Midline Survey Coverage

Upazila	Control	Treatment	Grand Total
Gangni	391	428	819
Meherpur Sadar	318	355	673
Mujibnagar	154	210	364
Grand Total	863	993	1856

2 Training

For the midline data collection, effort was made to recruit and train all Field Supervisors (FS) and Enumerators (FE) who worked under the baseline survey in 2017. All FS and 85% FE of the baseline team were part of the data collection team. Experts from Save the Children (SAVE), Bangladesh and senior members of Data International Ltd. (DI) provided intensive training on IDELA and on the household instrument during November 25 – 30, 2018. In

addition, all supervisors were trained separately on how to conduct the Teacher's interview. A total of 32 FE and 4 FS were trained. The FE and the FS underwent orientation and training in the usage of electronic data collection devices (TAB) with preinstalled IDELA tools and the household survey instrument.

Following the completion of the training, all FE and FS were asked to read and sign the AIR Participant Protection Assurance Form. During the training session, SAVE Meherpur office organized a briefing on Child Safeguard Policy of SAVE.

3 Finalizing Data Collection Tools and Software Development

Alike the baseline survey, International Development and Early Learning Assessment (IDELA) tools is used for preschool children development assessment. The instrument used for collection of household information was revised and a new instrument to conduct Early Year Pre-School Program (EYPP) school teacher interview was introduced. Customized software was developed for the IDELA test; for the household data collection using Open Data Kit (ODK) tool. ODK is a free and open-source set of tools to manage mobile data collection solutions. Developing the IDELA tools under ODK was not difficult, involving minor modifications to an earlier version. Apps for household data collection was developed by DI.

4 Field Data Collection

The midline data collection commenced on December 1, 2018 at all three Upazilas – Gangni, Meherpur Sadar, and Mujibnagar) under Meherpur District and continued through December 26, 2018. While 16 FEs were entrusted with the task of using TABs for IDELA test administration, the remaining FEs begun collecting household data. In addition to field supervision, the FSs were responsible for conducting the EYPP school teacher interview.

With the goal of interviewing all children and households interviewed under the baseline survey, the midline data collection involved several steps. The first step of data collection involved tracking children covered under the baseline and currently enrolled under the EYPP program or admitted in a control school. Once these children were identified, IDELA test was administered followed by home visits to conduct the household interview.

Step two required tracking those children that are not currently enrolled under the EYPP program or admitted in a control school. To track these children, the Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates collected under the baseline were used to locate their respective homestead. Once the household was tracked, identification of the child was ensured by verifying the name of his/her parents.

Step three involved tracking those children that could not be found at their residence as the child was visiting relatives during school holidays or the family permanently migrated to a different location. A total of 52 such children belonged to this category. Through subsequent

visits to their residence or visiting a relative's place located within a few kilometer enabled interviewing 11 children and their parents. A summary status of those 41 children that could not interviewed are provided in the Table 2.

Table 2: Reasons Children Not Interviewed under the Midline Survey

Reason	Total
Migrated to a different upazila/district	29
Vacation/visiting relatives	12
Grand Total	41

5 Issues Encountered

5.1 Positive Factors

Locating sampled households for the baseline survey was not difficult. Deploying all Field Supervisors (FS) and Enumerators (FE) except six used in the baseline survey, circumvented the challenge of tracking and revisiting the sampled households. In addition, name and address of the household head along with the GPS coordinates collected during the baseline survey assisted the field team in identifying the sample households. Families visiting relatives were tracked by calling their cell phone number collected during the baseline data collection.

Willingness to participate in the survey by households was high. Save the Children has been working in Meherpur on EYPP and other education and health related activities for many years. The residents have favorable impression and experience with SAVE. Households were amenable to providing data on a study that is related to SAVE's activities. Use of FEs that were involved under the baseline was advantageous as most of the respondents could recognize the field team; also, they were comfortable talking to FE who were from their localities.

No external factors hindered data collection effort. There were concerns about possible political disturbances involving disruption of law and order preceding the national parliament elections held on December 30. During the midline data collection, December 1 to 26, 2018, there were no violence or strikes in Meherpur, and therefore did not hamper any data collection effort. There were a few cold and rainy days when data collection was moderately challenging.

IDELA testing well-received by guardians. The field data collectors observed enthusiasm and curiosity amongst guardians of the sampled children regarding the IDELA sessions. It was satisfying to see that most of the baseline sampled children could recall the IDELA test experience and were enthusiastic in participating under the midline. The guardians appreciated the assessment protocol.

Almost all sampled households are not abject poor. All the surveyed areas had access to electricity, and almost all households have electricity connections, access to safe drinking water, and almost 90% of the children's mothers were literate.

Parents of the sampled treatment area are more knowledgeable about EYPP compared to the control areas. Save the Children managed Rongdhonu schools were operating for children above four years of age in the treatment areas. The parents of the treatment areas are appeared more motivated to send their children to school compared to parents of the control areas. These parents think that by sending their children to school at a young age will positively affect their children's future academic performance.

Parents who send their children to kindergarten schools in urban and per-urban areas have favorable impression about EYPP. They think that if children of four years of age are sent to school, they will be able to become more comfortable with the external environment and perform better in their studies in the future. The economically more well-off people in the urban areas still prefer privately-run kindergarten schools.

It was observed during the baseline, that some of the children were unwilling to participate in the IDELA, especially when conducted by male assessors. Under the midline, almost all the children were comfortable in taking the IDELA. Arguably, their interactions with adults outside the family environment since the baseline contribute towards overcoming their shyness in interacting with adult males.

5.2 Challenges

Multiple household visits were needed to complete the survey questionnaires in several cases. During the midline survey period, several of the children along with their mothers had gone to visit their maternal or paternal grandparents' houses or to some other relatives' homes, following the completion of school year. Also in the case of sick children, multiple visits were needed to complete the IDELA.

At the time of conducting the IDELA, in few cases bystanders and onlookers adversely affected the sampled children's performance. The people from the locality, especially adults were inclined to observe the proceedings during the IDELA administration. Children tended to be shy and uncooperative in such an environment. All onlookers were requested to vacate the premises where IDELA was conducted. Compared to the baseline, IDELA administration due to such external factors was less acute.

6 Lessons Learned for Follow-up Data Collection

Retain midline field data collectors during the end-line survey. Revisiting the sampled households during the end-line survey will be easier for those involved in the midline exercise. Their training and field experience under the midline will be a positive factor in efficient and quality control of the data collected during the endline. Locating or tracking the targeted households will be predictably easier for the field data collectors, because of their familiarity of the local environment.

Complete the endline survey by mid December 2019. The preschool year ends in mid-December. Many parents and children of the sampled households of the baseline had left their homes to visit relatives outside the village, as soon as the children's annual vacation starts. Thus, it is recommended that the end-line survey is completed within mid December 2019.