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“Reconcile land system changes  
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## Traveling photo exhibitions to disseminate family-invented uncommon solutions to overcome malnutrition in Madhya Pradesh, India

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### Abstract

The Positive Deviance (PD) approach identifies and leverages existing yet uncommon family-invented solutions to complex problems such as malnutrition to promote social and behaviour change. Many women of reproductive age and young children of rural communities in Madhya Pradesh (MP), India, still face this challenge. The Indo-German Securing Nutrition, Enhancing Resilience project implemented the PD approach in MP. It identified families with well-nourished children despite similar socio-economic constraints and discovered their uncommon practices in a community-participatory approach.

Their successful practices were documented through photography by adolescent girls and organised in themes, e.g. childcare, maternal nutrition, gender roles, family values, or food production. To disseminate the practices, a traveling photo exhibition was conducted in six villages across two districts in MP. Photography was chosen to make the practices relatable, spark discussions among community members to reflect on doable solutions that are already practised by few of their own peers, and to motivate adoption. Alongside guided exhibition walks, in total 19 focus group discussions (FGDs) with women, men, and adolescents were conducted during and two months after the exhibitions, exploring perceptions, willingness to adopt new practices, and perceived barriers and enablers. Selected photos of the exhibition were used to support the FGDs.

The FGDs fostered strong discussions about the daughter-in-law's participation in family meals or men's involvement in household chores such as fetching water and helping with cooking. While the latter issues did not reach consensus, both male and female participants expressed willingness to adopt other practices, such as making moringa-leaf-powder as food-additive, or establishing homestead nutrition gardens irrigated with household wastewater. Despite persistent challenges such as alcohol consumption among men or limited decision-making power for women, especially women expressed need for change through involving men more actively in meetings and make them feel appreciated. Follow-up discussions revealed varying levels of retention of exhibition content, underscoring the need for sustained engagement.

While participants expressed interest in and willingness to adopt PD practices for better nutrition, future research should further focus on co-created interventions, consistent community involvement, and targeted strategies for male engagement and care.

**Keywords:** Behaviour change, community-driven, cultural practices, family-invented solutions , gender roles, malnutrition prevention, nutritional practices, participatory approaches, positive deviance