



## Child Growth and Development Path-to-Scale Research Initiative

September 2020

### Executive Summary

#### Path-to-Scale Research at IPA

Innovations for Poverty Action's Path-to-Scale Research (PSR) Program works to accelerate the process of moving evidence-based interventions from proof-of-concept to scalable and adaptable programs and policies. In contrast to innovation research that explores brand new ideas for solving development problems, path-to-scale research begins with evidence-based approaches that have already shown promise in rigorous impact evaluations. PSR builds on these promising approaches by creating evidence on when, where, and why an approach is expected to work, and identifying ways to optimize program design and implementation at scale. PSR supports policy-maker efforts to identify and incorporate the most effective interventions into programs and policies, resulting in better health outcomes, improved livelihoods, and less poverty.

#### Child Growth and Development (Stunting) Initiative

Stunting<sup>1</sup>, or being too short for one's age, is a warning signal that a child is at risk of failing to reach their full potential. Stunting predicts poor school achievement and progress, lower cognition, reduced earnings, and a higher probability of living in poverty. It also increases the risk of death from infectious diseases in childhood. Stunting is a standard measure of chronic malnutrition, but poor nutrition and feeding, inadequate care, and repeated infections can also cause growth faltering. Increases in poverty, disruptions to food and agricultural systems, and reduced access to health services, challenges predating but also exacerbated by the current COVID-19 pandemic, create conditions that make children vulnerable to stunting.<sup>2,3</sup>

The PSR team reviewed evidence on stunting reduction interventions and held a workshop with academic and practitioner experts to identify promising evidence-based approaches (EBAs) and explore research questions to address evidence gaps. These prioritized EBAs include **small-quantity lipid-based nutrient supplements (SQ-LNS)** and **animal source foods** to complement infant diets, **cash transfers combined with behavior change communication (BCC)** programs, and **home-based growth monitoring**.

The PSR team has consolidated research agendas around these EBAs, working closely with stakeholders throughout the process, and is currently seeking implementation and research partnerships for SQ-LNS, cash transfers combined with BCC, and animal source foods. The PSR team is targeting countries and sub-national regions with the most severe burdens of stunting to scale up research.<sup>4</sup>

1

# Child Growth and Development Path-to-Scale Research Initiative Overview

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This document provides an overview of the PSR Program's Child Development and Growth (Stunting) Initiative. Learn more about this initiative [here](#), and see the research agenda for

this initiative [here](#).

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