

# **Promoting collective vegetables gardening by adolescent girls for reducing malnutrition in Afghanistan**

## **Introduction**

Malnutrition is one of the major social development challenges in Afghanistan. Stunting and underweight rates of under-five children are 40% and 25% respectively. For adult population only 62% of the women of reproductive age are found to have a normal Body Mass Index (BMI) score. Micronutrient deficiency that includes deficiency of vitamin A and D is also acute in the country. Low dietary diversity, especially very low levels of vegetable consumptions, is considered to be a key factor for such micronutrient deficiency. With only 50% of the households having vegetables in their regular diet, increasing its consumption is critical for improving nutritional outcomes.

## **Study Objectives**

The study will assess the feasibility of collective vegetables gardening by adolescent girls as a means to improve nutritional outcomes. The study will assess an intervention creating both access (on supply side) and awareness (on demand side) by leveraging on an existing social programme for adolescent girls. It will not only assess the *ex ante* possibility of the interventions but also generate *ex post* evidence on the actual feasibility of such a model in the particular context by implementing it at a small scale. The direct outcome of the study would be improved household crop production, consumption of vegetables, dietary diversity and complementary feeding. On the other hand, the indirect outcomes would be improved knowledge and skills, improved yield and efficiency, and income. Besides these outputs another important outcome would be scaling up of this piloted intervention model in similar contexts for a full evaluation. If found feasible and sustainable, this intervention model can potentially be made a part of many other social programmes.

## **Partners**

BRAC Afghanistan (Lead) and BRAC International.