

# Tackling stunting in Bangladesh: the WASH - Nutrition Nexus



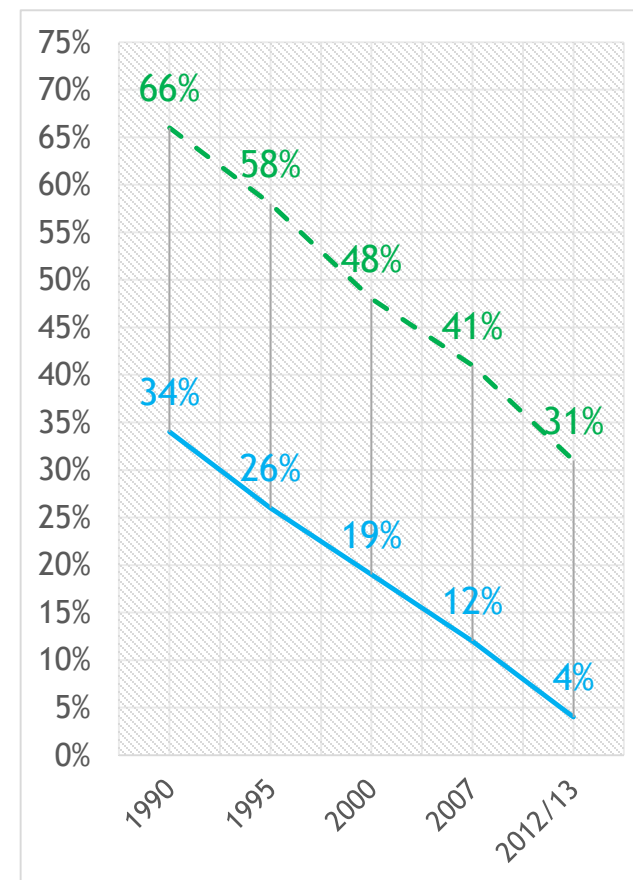
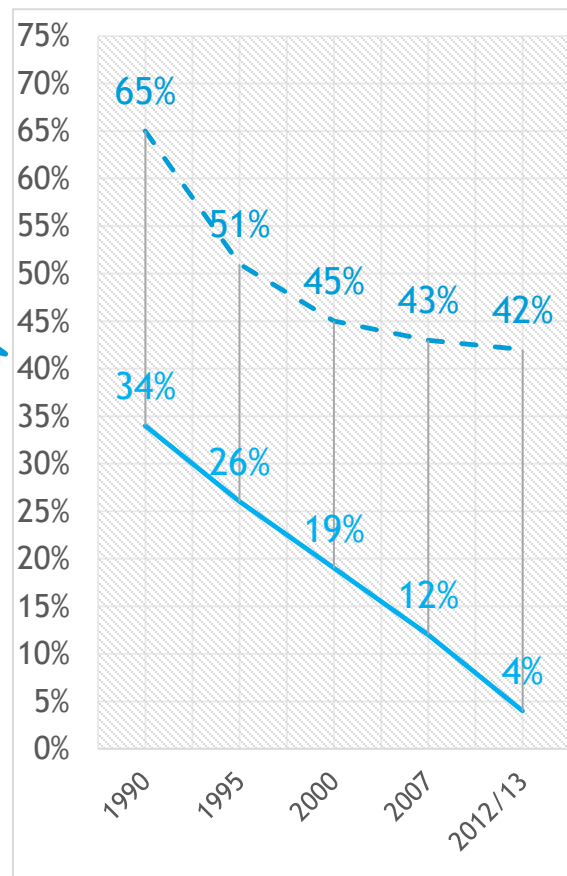
Photo: UNICEF

# Reduction in open defecation explains a reduction in stunting, but does not stop stunting entirely

The reduction in open defecation only has a limited effect on stunting reduction. Hygiene could explain the gap

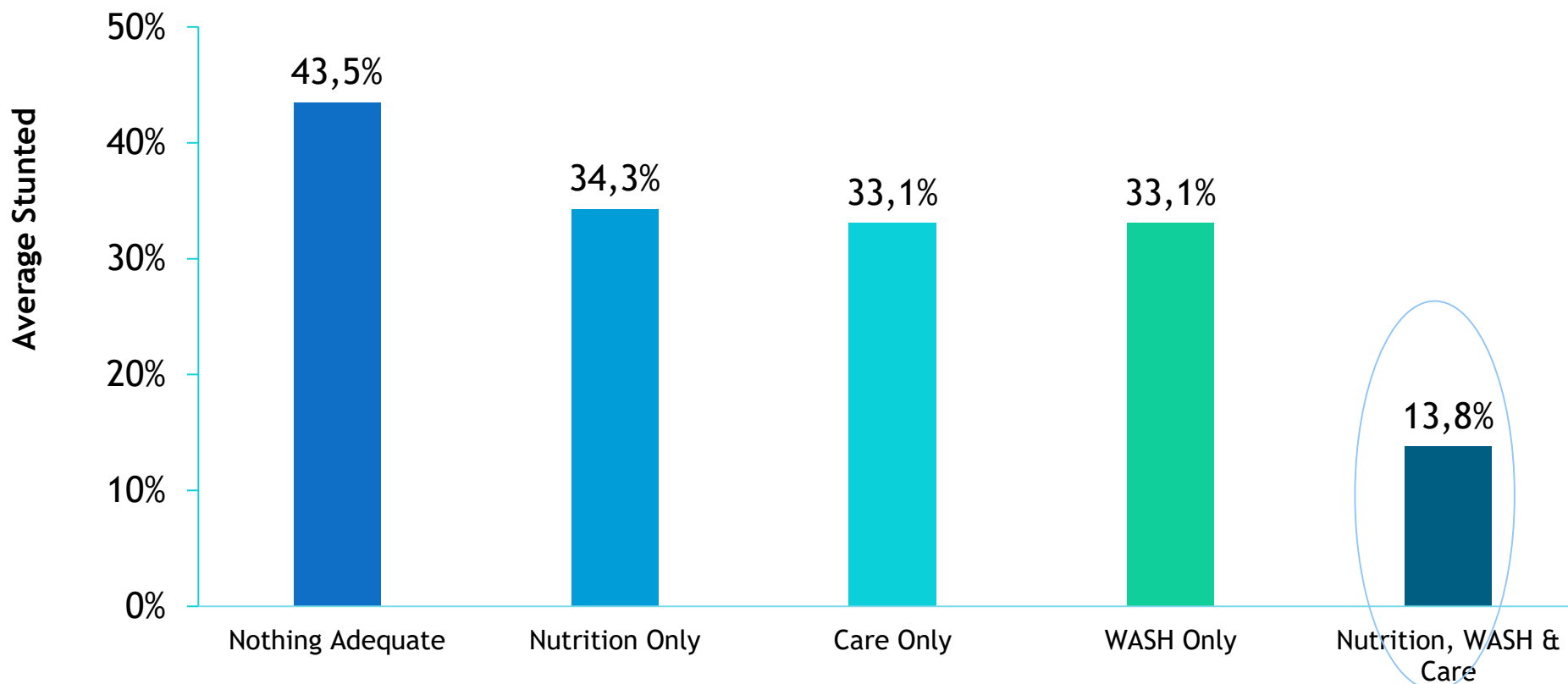
Stunting (or chronic child malnutrition) can result in:

- increased mortality risks
- impaired cognitive function
- low physical capacity
- low human productivity, efficiency, economic activity



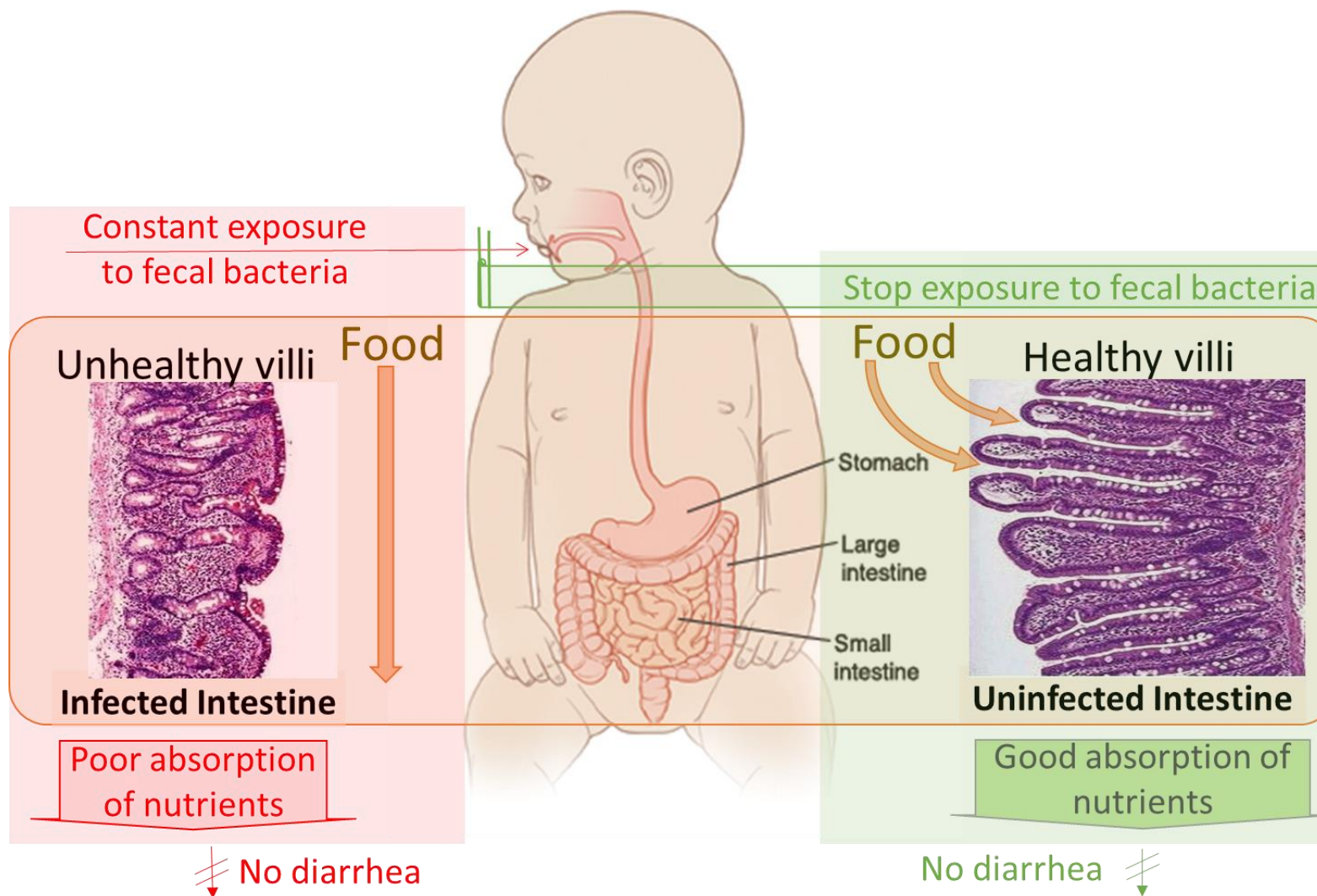
--- Stunting    - - - Under-weight    — Open Defecation

# When comparing interventions, combining WASH, nutrition and care has the biggest impact on growth



Newman, J (2013) *How Stunting is related to Adequate Food, Environmental Health and Care: Evidence from India, Bangladesh, and Peru*, World Bank





**1** How to improve the effectiveness of the fight of Stunting

**A** EVIDENCE - SHOWCASES

*Examples of programs contributing to the effectiveness*

Max Foundation:
Unicef:
Other organisations' programs:



**B** IDEAS FOR SCALE UP

*Categories of scale up ideas to improve effectiveness*

Collaboration programs
Stakeholder engagement
Knowledge and evidence
Policy & politics
Resources, capacity & finances
Other

2

Other topics/ ideas

# MAX FOUNDATION

Riad Mahmud, Country Director Bangladesh

The WASH-nutrition nexus: Achieving the *Stunting Free Village*

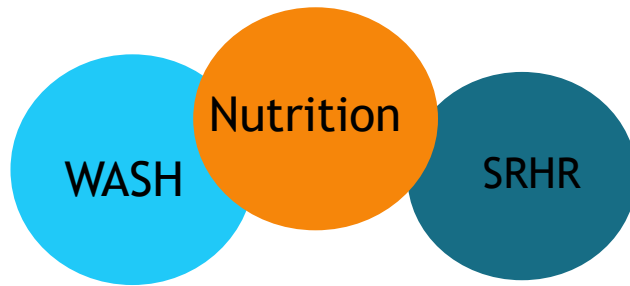


*Our mission is to fight child mortality by providing a healthy start in life for as many children as possible in the most effective and sustainable way.*

We work in

Rural and  
Urban  
Hard to  
reach areas

Integrated  
approach



Governance & gender

Community  
,strengthening

Sustainable  
Market models

Institutional  
embedding

1.5 million people in  
Bangladesh





# Our Approach: Stunting Free Village

- Influenced by the success of CLTS
- Concept developed based on published research on stunting
- Considers local determinants of stunting and first 1000 days

## The concept

Infection prevention

+

Effective Nutrition

+

Safe motherhood

+

Equitable WASH and Health governance

Triggering > Action > Evaluation



*Growth monitoring chart - green, yellow and red zones for measuring stunting*

**While complete eradication of stunting may not be possible, that's our aim**



We trigger change by focusing on parents' most precious resource: their children.



*Mothers and children, with a scale for measuring weight*

Tools we use include

- courtyard sessions by health promotion agents trained by local partners
- monitoring children's growth monthly, and Parents plot data on a community growth chart
- peer learning to help identify and avoid risky behaviours that contribute to stunting

# Notable behaviour change and improved health status of children have inspired us to mainstream this approach\*



Parents are the best researchers on how to reduce stunting – identifying 34 risky behaviours

There seems to be a causal link between improved growth of <2 children and WASH behaviour change by parents



Children whose parents who practiced at least 60% of 34 behaviours showed improved growth



The most important factor for change is the motivational level of the parents.

*\*Based on our findings from initial action research in four villages (653 HHs / 122 children <2)*