

Impact Evaluation of National Solidarity Program (NSP)

Questions and Answers (Q&A)

March, 2013

1. Q: What is an impact evaluation?
A: *A methodological study to estimate the impact of a project/program/policy on certain indicators.*
2. Q: What indicators are used?
A: *The outcome indicators are chosen to reflect what the intervention (project/program/policy) could reasonably be expected to affect.*
3. Q: How long does it take to conduct an impact evaluation?
A: *Longer than it would take to roll-out and implement the project/program/policy. For instance the impact evaluation of NSP took almost five years from the design of the methodology to the completion of the data collection.*
4. Q: Why does it take longer?
A: *Because evaluations require data collected before the roll-out of the program (baseline), during the program's implementation (interim) and after completion of the intervention (endline) to estimate changes (impacts).*
5. Q: Was this the case for impact evaluation of NSP?
A: *Yes, the evaluation started in 2007 when baseline data was collected, interim data was collected in 2009 and the endline data was collected in 2011 after sub-projects were completed.*
6. Q: But NSP sub-projects are still ongoing in phase III?
A: *The evaluation captures phase II of NSP which started in 2007 and was completed in 2011*
7. Q: If so could the findings be generalized to the ongoing NSP III?
A: *Yes, to the extent the interventions in NSP III are similar to NSP II.*
8. Q: Where was the baseline, interim and end-line data collected from?
A: *The data was collected from randomly selected households in villages that received NSP (treatment villages) and also from villages that did not receive NSP (control villages). The baseline data was collected before the introduction of NSP, the interim data was collected two years into the introduction of the program, and the end-line data after project completion.*
9. Q: How many treatment and control villages?
A: *250 treatment and another 250 control villages*
10. Q: Was it necessary to have same number of treatment and control villages?

A: It is always important to have balance between treatment and controls

11. Q: In which districts were these villages?

A: The villages were in the following 10 districts; Balkh, Khost Wa Firing, Sang Takht, Daulina, Adraskan, Chisht-e Sharif, Gulran, Fersi, Hisarak, and Sherzad.

12. Q: How was treatment assigned across the 500 sample villages?

A: Through a process called “matched-pair cluster randomization”

13. Q: What does that mean?

A: In brief, it means each of the 500 evaluation villages was matched to the most similar village thus forming 250 pairs, and then for each pair one village was randomly chosen to receive NSP (treatment) and the other would not receive NSP (control). The clustering part ensured villages in close proximity either all received NSP or not. This was to avoid the complications of addressing spillover effects during estimations.

14. Q: Individuals in the control villages must have felt bad not to receive NSP – could this have affected their willingness to participate in the evaluation?

A: They were not aware of the evaluation – but once the endline was completed in 2011 the project mobilized control villages to receive NSP

15. Q: How many people were interviewed to collect data for the evaluation?

A: Many people. There were 3 rounds of surveys – baseline in 2007, midline in 2009, and endline in 2011. Collectively more than 25,000 households were interviewed including male and female villagers.

16. Q: Were any focus group discussions conducted?

A: Yes and no. Across the three surveys, some 2,600 focus group questionnaires were administered to male and female village leaders. However, these were not “discussions” per se, but rather conventional quantitative surveys (albeit in a group setting). That is, enumerators were provided with a fixed set of questions (as with the household surveys) to ask to the assembled respondents and for which they enumerated responses.