

Erin Hunter

Project Title: Closing the childhood development gap in rural Bangladesh

Abstract:

Globally, 200 million children are failing to reach their full physical and cognitive developmental potential; and those with the highest risk are malnourished children living in poverty—a large portion of who live in Bangladesh. Our team of research collaborators is preparing to conduct a cluster-randomized controlled trial (entitled “RINEW”) in Kishorganj, Bangladesh to adapt, pilot, and iteratively revise an integrated package of cost-effective interventions that address the known major barriers to healthy child growth and cognitive development. These interventions will address early childhood stimulation, WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene), child and maternal nutrition, and the reduction of lead exposure in effort to reduce childhood stunting (short height for age) and improve cognitive developmental outcomes. My independent dissertation interests fall under the umbrella of RINEW—namely to explore the time-use patterns of household members participating in the larger trial and examine the externalities associated with study participation. In preparation for developing my dissertation proposal, I am proposing preliminary fieldwork across the border in Bihar, India, where I will collaborate with partners currently piloting a software platform that I aim to adapt for use in RINEW and my dissertation research in Bangladesh. Furthermore, I will pursue high quality Bengali language training at the American Institute for Indian Studies.