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Smart Phones + a Web-Based Software = Improved Monitoring

For 60 years, USAID's Office of Food for Peace has been the world leader in providing emergency and development food assistance to billions of the most vulnerable. As crises grow in complexity, the need for a more customized and tailored response has increased. For USAID that means more focus on tracking food commodities and targeting beneficiaries. The need for improved monitoring takes more than just human power; it requires new technologies – and an easy way to use them.

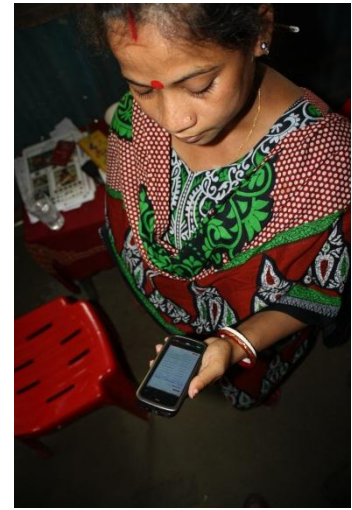
McAID

In 2005, USAID partner Save the Children developed a management information system – McAID - to track commodity distributions in rural Bangladesh through a development food assistance program. The software program was initially developed as a network registry for program beneficiaries. Information created in this registry was housed in a network accessible only at key reception points in offices in Bangladesh. As the technology improved, McAID became increasingly active in the field, relying on cell phones to send and store data about program interventions to the network hub at Save the Children.

Today, the McAID is a completely web-based management information system. Save the Children, partner NGO staff and community health workers can now enter and receive information through the more than 500 smart phones distributed throughout program intervention areas. Staff can not only record information about beneficiaries, but they can also track the movement of commodities from warehousing to distribution through GIS enhanced capabilities. McAID allows development professionals real-time access to monitoring and evaluation data, enabling implementing partners to make tailored and customized interventions for its more than 500,000 beneficiaries.



Infographic courtesy of Save the Children. For a full download of the McAID presentation, click [here](#).



A nurse from Chalitala Village uses McAID to monitor the nutrition of child patients
Dylan Butler, USAID/FFP

With real-time data and open access now in the hands of community workers, these workers save hours on their administrative responsibilities, while also making food assistance tracking more cost-efficient and portable. Any device with an internet connection can access the system. In Bangladesh, a country where cell phones are the primary means for internet access in rural areas, portability and ease-of-use has made McAID a critical component of its development food assistance portfolio. McAID has been so successful in easing the management burden of such complex programming that other organizations, including USAID partner ACDI/VOCA, have adapted the technology as its primary field-level management information system.