In November 2019, SHOUHARDO III hosted a dialogue session with the Technical Training Centre in Kurigram. Six trained youths attended the session, and PRAN-RFL group representatives formalized their recruitment in the presence of Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Expatriates’ Welfare and and Overseas Employment.

With the collaboration between CARE SHOUHARDO III and UNICEF, 110 latrines, 50 tube wells, and 115 hand washing kits were provided to the extreme poor participants of the program at Kojuri union in Shahjadpur Upazila under Sirajganj District.

Complementing resilience efforts with technology

CARE SHOUHARDO III recently signed a technical partnership with (spell out RIMES) then (RIMES). One of the innovative approaches is delivering messages on disaster preparedness through the participants’ mobile phones. “We know that each winter can be different from the previous one, but now, we know how we can prepare better and respond to protect our crops and avoid being sick ourselves,” said Abu Taleb Sarker from Sonaiari Village, Bidyanando Union, Rajarhat, Kurigram.

Engaging men not just for women’s empowerment but also in building family’s capital

Since the program re-calibrated its VSLA approaches which garnered more interest in the communities all the members have since been female. In the first quarter of FY20, there came the first all-male VSLA group in Purbo Phulmati village, Fulbari Upazila in Kurigram District. “Usually, we don’t have a stable income or the income source round the year, and most of us have no savings, whether formal or informal. At the time of necessity we have to take a loan from others and NGOs with high interest rates, which becomes a burden for us,” said Anwar Hossain, the chairman of the group.

Strengthening ‘Little Doctor’ initiative in primary school

Ms. Samiya, a 12 year old class five student shared, “Last month (Nov’19) my younger sister was suffering from diarrhea. Then, I prepared oral re-hydration salts in my own schedule. Eventually, she recovered from diarrhea in a short time. It was really impactful for my family and my mother appreciated that.”

Earning after training

Md. Sohail Mia from Mohammadpur village, Bokshigonj upazila in Jamalpur received training on electric house wiring trade after the life skill training from Muktijuddha Science and Technology College, Bokshigonj. And now, he has been working as an electric worker and earns BDT 14,000 monthly. He bears the educational expenses of his siblings with the money and saves a particular amount so that he can fulfill his dream to set up a shop of electronic equipment of his own.

Applying lessons in the groups reformation

Hafej Maowlana Md. Nasir Uddin, Imam of Satbhita Jame Mosjid of Satbhita village of Bakhshigonj Upazila stated, “I received training through SHOUHARDO III on how to prevent child marriage and violence against women. I discussed the demerits of child marriage and violence against women with explanation from Islamic perspective several times during Khutba (prayer session) on Fridays. Consequently, many of the males of the community got enlightened and stood against child marriage and violence against women has been reduced. As a religious leader of the community, I feel really content having contributed in social change.”

Flood Response Activity

Rashida’s house in Nama para village in Kurigram got an upgrade, under the plinth raising intervention of the program. “I’m going to plant vegetables for our consumption and for selling too, as what I learned from SHOUHARDO. Little by little, I know we can get back on our feet again. What is important is that with our house being on a raised plinth now, we worry no more for our survival whenever a disaster like this would come. I am grateful that we all survived and my children serve as my inspiration to move forward”, she explains with a smile.

Lessons learned and ways forward

- The program will pick up on the khas land facilitation initiative that started in 2018. It will continue the conversation with the participants who have moved to their own homes as well as the concerned government staff to support the khas land process for the extreme poor.
- Program participants can only receive cash transfers through their registered bKash account. As this is a new initiative, SHOUHARDO III is working closely with its partners so that the field staff can provide appropriate guidance to the participants in setting up their accounts.
- During Community Score Card (CSC) process, an interface meeting was facilitated by CARE to put together service providers and citizens in the program areas to discuss the status of service provision in the communities, particularly on Community Clinics. There were certainly some unmet needs on the participants’ side which directed the discussion on how the government staff should act on their raised demands.
- The program’s frontline staff are figuring out how to reach more participants due to their work engagements during the day. This may mean holding community group meetings for them later in the day after their return from work.
- The newly formed VSLA groups were found stronger in solidarity and more positive in thinking compared to the previous VSLA groups.