



SHOUHARDO II NEWS

Strengthening Household Ability to Respond to Development Opportunities

A Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 1

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Goal:

Transform the lives of 370,000 Poor and Extreme Poor (PEP) households in 11 of the poorest and most marginalized districts in Bangladesh by reducing their vulnerability to food insecurity.

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Message from the CoP

With pleasure, allow me to introduce the first edition of the CARE Bangladesh SHOUHARDO II Program Newsletter. We have been trying to make these as informative and interesting to a diverse readership, updating on elements we feel will be of interest, including progress updates, best practices, lessons learned, both in implementation and technical management.



In this Newsletter you will find exciting stories centered around the poorest people we work with, how they are engaging with the Program, and how their lives are being changed. The SHOUHARDO II Newsletter attempts to present each edition under a "theme" approach to allow our partners to better understand how the Program deals with different diverse issues, and to be able to bring a better appreciation of progress in these areas spanning a period of several months.

Today's edition focuses and celebrates Women's role in socio-economic development and pays tribute to all our women in society for their incredible contribution to the society. We salute them and remain committed to support in this endeavour to bring a balanced society and thereby multiplying our strength to eradicate poverty from Bangladesh and beyond.

Happy reading and we welcome thoughts and comments to Monjur Rashid (Acting Knowledge Management Coordinator, SHOUHARDO II Program) at monjur@bd.care.org or info@bd.care.org.

Best Regards,

Faheem Khan

Enlightening Stories of Women and Adolescent Girls Empowerment

Story of Sufia : Poverty to Self-Reliance

Sufia Begum (38), lived in Gonpotodia village under Bera upazila of Pabna district, became helpless due to river erosion. Sufia started her family life with her husband but the Jamuna scrambled her dream by devouring her homestead and cultivable land. After the miserable incidence, her husband also had an injury from road accident that deepened her misery. She took shelter at her father's house, along with her two children, finding no alternative to survive. Her struggle to run her family then began.

A year back, Sufia got involved with SHOUHARDO II Program. She was selected as CHD (Comprehensive Homestead Development)

Achievements till date

- North Char, Mid Char, Haor and Coastal regions are covered through this Program
- 1509 villages from 172 unions of 30 upazila under 11 districts are covered
- 362,177 PEP households have been selected as eligible program beneficiary
- 86,538 pregnant women and lactating mothers are receiving nutrition support
- 73,067 children under two years of age have been included for nutrition support
- 513 functioning EKATA centers with an enrollment of 17,519 women and adolescent girls members
- 366 ECCD centers established & enrolled 21,634 girls and boys
- 1,464 infrastructure schemes (homestead plinth level raising, household/community latrine, deep tube-well maintenance and installation, school renovation/maintenance) jointly implemented by PNGOs & CARE- Bangladesh
- 469 cash for work schemes (HH raising, community place raising, road/embankment maintenance) completed by PNGOs or CARE directly



Sufia in her bottle gourd garden

SHOUHARDO II, a five-year CARE-Bangladesh Program, funded by USAID and the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) making this one of the world's largest non-emergency food security development programs, and a significant contributor to Bangladesh's poverty reduction initiative. The Program is significantly strengthened with the active participation of 13 Ministries of the GoB who are members of the National Program Advisory Coordination Committee (PACC), where similar PACCs cascade all the way down to the divisional, district, and upazila levels. SHOUHARDO II partners with a variety of institutions including 16 national NGOs responsible for 90% of overall implementation coverage and technical partners such as IUCN, World Fish, IRRI, RIMES etc.



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beneficiary through the process of COG (Core Occupational Group) selection. She received 3 days CHD training.

"I always think how I can develop my economic condition so that we can have three meals a day and good health. Through receiving CHD training, I saw a ray of hope to achieve my dream"

- Sufia Begum

After training she received different input supports for CHD like saplings of mango, guava, lemon and neem, seeds of different fruits & vegetables and a goat. Sufia herself did bed for vegetable cultivation, pit preparation, planting of tree sapling, sowing of seeds, weeding and irrigation. Her laborious work gave a bumper production. She distributed vegetables to her relatives and neighbours, after fulfilling her family requirements. Besides, she earned 1,500 taka by selling vegetables. Now again, she is dreaming for a hunger free life having greater access to nutrition and income opportunity.

New Light of Hope in Akashi's Life

Akashi was born and brought up in Rangpur. After her father's second marriage, Akashi along with her mother and her siblings was forced to leave her father's house and took shelter at her maternal grandfather's house in Bogra. They were passing their days without any financial support from Akashi's father. Poverty forced Akashi's mother to get Akashi married at her early age. As her mother was not in a position to pay the dowry, Akashi was bound to get married to a physically disabled person. Though there was not that much of financial security, there was nice understanding between Akashi and her in laws. Unfortunately, this condition did not exist for long time. She was mentally tortured as she was not getting pregnant. No later the situation has improved, her husband and in laws was accused of a false murder case due to local conspiracy. As they had to bear the expenses of the case, they became poorer and more vulnerable.

With the passage of time Akashi became the mother of two children. As a result, expenditures of the family increased but the source of income remained same. During this time she was selected as an extreme poor pregnant mother by SHOUHARDO II and became the Chairperson of PIC (Project Implementation Committee). Later, her husband took part in IGA



Akashi with her goats

(Income Generating Activity) training and received a goat as an input support. After four months the number of goat increased and Akashi started gardening and planting vegetables. These activities increased her income and she started contributing financially to her family. Afterwards, she became a member of VDC (Village Development Committee) and started maintaining a monthly local deposit scheme with local insurance company. She got her five years old son enrolled into pre-school of ECCD (Early Child Care and Development), run through PNGO-GBS. All these activities were well accepted by her family and community. Now, Akashi is dreaming for buying cows, her children to be more educated and also earn on increased income.

Moli : Out of Fears and Helplessness

Fourteen years old Moli is residing in a village of Shalikha under Madhupur union of Sonatola along with her poor parents. Her father, Dholu Sarkar, has been maintaining his 5-members family by pulling van through hardship. It was her father's dream that his beloved daughters would be educated and brighten family image. Moli is an EKATA group member and studying in class VII by dint of indomitable will force of her father. But two stalkers of her village had been teasing her on the way to school over a long period of time. She did not have courage to protest due to lack of voice as she came from a poor family. Fears in her



Stalkers apologizing in presence of the villagers

mind and helplessness forced her to keep silent and but to bear the pains by herself.

One day in the evening, Moli was on her way to home after attending EKATA group meeting, stalkers expressed slang gesture, rebuke using acrid & obscene words, and teased her. Moli became puzzled and felt helpless. Bewilderingly, Moli started running from the spot to escape and in a few minutes she took shelter on her mother's lap. She was embarrassed to share the fact with her mother. Her breathing stamina was about to stop due to shame, confusion, and nervousness.

Moli shared the incidence with the EKATA volunteer. The volunteer shared the same with the members of the EKATA and local PNGO - GBS persons. Instantly, members of EKATA protested and discussed the next course of action. They raised the issue in VDC meeting and informed local UP member for proper action and

Strategic Objective 1:
"Availability of" and
"access to" nutritious
foods enhanced and
protected for
370,000 PEP
households

Strategic Objective 2:
Improved health,
hygiene and nutrition
status of 281,000
children under 2
years of age

Strategic Objective 3:
PEP women and
adolescent girls
empowered in their
families,
communities, and
Union Parishad

Strategic Objective 4:
Local elected bodies
and government
service providers
responsible for
reducing food
insecurity are
accountable to and
work proactively with
communities

Strategic Objective 5:
Targeted community
members and
government
institutions are better
prepared for,
mitigate, and
respond to disasters
and adapt to climate
change

justice. Subsequently, arbitration was held on the following day of the incidence. UP members, GBS peoples, local elites were present in the arbitration. Arbitrator's listened entire fact from both the parties with patience and the stalkers realized that they did an offence. Then the offenders were repented and committed they would not repeat the same in future. The eve teasers begged apology to Moli in presence of all.

The UP member praised the instant and courageous initiative of the EKATA. He also expressed that the EKATA group helped to open his eyes on social violence, violence against women and to take appropriate action for ensuring justice. The UP member also added that the EKATA group will act as driving force of the society in collaboration with VDC, local elites and UP representatives for eliminating such heinous unsocial activities from the society. The VDC Chairperson expressed his commitment that if such incidence repeats he would ensure justice with the cooperation of others.

Community Led Initiatives

Emerging Initiatives of VDC

Some are born to change the world and discover new horizon. VDC of Naikong Khali is like that. They had have a dream by SHOUHARDO II Program which rejuvenated, reformed and ultimately changed them. Naikong Khali is a village of Teknaf upazila under Cox's Bazar district, where people were geared up to establish their own rights. Local people of Naikong Khali organized themselves and formed VDC. Group members discussed in a VDC meeting about their problems, needs, feasibility and the ways to solve the problems.

Through this process they pointed out the poor health and malnourished status of villagers as their crucial problem. They identified the unhygienic living condition, scarcity of pure drinking water and aversion of proper hand washing practice as the reasons for their weak health. People were habituated to defecate on open space which, was a pernicious practice. Though SHOUHARDO II has been awaring the mass people about the adverse affect of the bad culture, but only awareness was not enough. Due to lack of technical knowledge and financial ability they could not set up hygienic latrine. Under these circumstances a WATSAN (water and sanitation) cell formed in VDC meeting. The WATSAN and VDC jointly found four hundred open latrine user families and identified 22 extreme poor families who had no latrine.

VDC, WATSAN and the local UP member submitted their request



Amena Begum has received ring and slab

to VERC, a national NGO, for their technical assistance. VERC provided assistance to the people of Naikong Khali through their 'Under Accelerating Wash Coverage' project which was funded by UNICEF. According to the plan four hundred families will get hygienic latrine and 22 extreme poor families already have received materials for latrine constructions.

Besides, association with the local member they also managed another major component of pure water and sanitation, six deep tube wells from VERC. Tube wells have been installed for 180 families of four para (hamlets).

"Before having latrine in our house, guests were also used to go behind the bush of the house to defecate like us, which was ignominious and disgrace to our social values. Now situation has been changed."

-Amena Begum

All initiative will fail, if behavioural change does not take place. For that purpose, VDC is regularly organizing CLTS (Community Led Total Sanitation) to change pernicious practice of not washing hand properly. VDC's recent activities has received a lot of eulogize. They are now capable to access Government and other non-government offices. They have motivated to change their surroundings for better life for themselves and future generation.

Embankment to Defend Flood

The village Monowarkanda is under Bhagber union of Dhobaura upazilla. This village is situated by the river Godaria. Every year, the river over flows during the heavy monsoon. As a result, crops of about 1000 acres of land are being damaged by the flood water and livelihood of 3000 PEP people is being affected. Embankment was a long time demand of the community. They had communicated with their local leaders repeatedly but every time their demand had been overlooked. Their exclusion from society and helplessness were the reasons behind such indifference. At last, VDC under SHOUHARDO II Program had taken initiatives to build that embankment. The VDC members had discussed the issue with community people and decided to



Community people are working together at Monowarkanda embankment side

build embankment by their own labour. As a results building of embankment started and it took one month to finish. Finally, Monowarkanda, one of the extreme physical and socially vulnerable village demonstrated unprecedented example of unity and unlimited power lying within the community for the first time in the region. The achievement has geared up their confidence level and satisfaction that leads them towards self reliance and reduces the dependency on outsiders.

SHOUHARDO II-CSISA Collaborative Work at Rangpur

CSISA and SHOUHARDO II made a joint collaboration for maximizing the agricultural production of PEP households through promoting new technologies and flood/drought tolerant crop varieties to reduce the risk of cultivation from flood and cold prone community and water saving technology for Boro rice cultivation. At the beginning of the collaborative program potential areas of work has been finalized and jointly a training program has been organized on diversified crop variety. In total, 34 participants received that training. Under this collaboration with CSISA, 'BINA Dhan 7' (short duration rice variety) in 2.75 acres, flood tolerant rice variety 'BRRI Dhan 51' & 'BRRI Dhan 52' in 6.03 acres, wheat variety 'BARI Gom 26' (steam rust resistant) in 5.72 acres and mustard variety 'BARI Sharisa 14' in 0.6 acres of land have been introduced as new modern improved variety. Through this cultivation a total of 42.39 MT of crops have been cultivated where rice is 29.85 MT, wheat is 12.01 MT and mustard is 0.53 MT. Besides, soil conserving technology 'Power Tiller Operated Seeder' also has been introduced in 5.72 acres of land.



Farmer's in the field with BINA Dhan 7

US Ambassador's Visit to SHOUHARDO II Program



Villagers of Choto Kowaliber welcoming His Excellency US Ambassador to Bangladesh, Mr. Dan W Mozena and his team



US Ambassador to Bangladesh is observing courtyard session on HHN at Boropara village, Cox's Bazar

His Excellency US Ambassador to Bangladesh, Mr. Dan W Mozena and his wife Ms. Grace Mozena visited SHOUHARDO II Program activity on February 26, 2012 at Choto Kowaliber village of Ullapara upazila. During the visit he discussed with the members of VDC, ECCD, EKATA, CHD etc and exchanged his views with Program beneficiaries. He expressed his satisfaction while observing many achievements of the Program.

Earlier on 8 December 2011, the US Ambassador visited SHOUHARDO II Program sites at Cox's Bazar region. Lt Gen. Francis J. Wiercinski, Comd Gen, US Army Pacific along with some other delegation of US army and USAID Mission Director, Mr. Richard Green also accompanied him. The Ambassador and his team visited different program activities under Cox's Bazar region and highly praised the different initiatives taken for food security under SHOUHARDO II Program.

CARE Bangladesh Participation in the 'America Week' 2012

'America Week' is a three-day long event that highlighted the important ties between the people of the USA and Bangladesh by taking the USAID funded activities to the people of other regions other than Dhaka Capital. This year it was organized in Chittagong. Mr. Dan W Mozena, Honorable US Ambassador was inaugurated the program, while the Mayor of Chittagong Mr. Manjur Alam was present as a special guest.

As one of the development partner of USAID, CARE Bangladesh SHOUHARDO II Program also participated in the event. They

displayed the SHOUHARDO II materials in their stall and screening a video documentary entitled "The SHOUHARDO Program-Just a Snapshot". One of the previous SHOUHARDO partners, MISUK, performed *Palagan* (traditional folk culture) followed by acting and deliver various message on early marriage, dowry, hygiene and sanitation as well as women empowerment issues. Apart from that, CARE Bangladesh COVAW project presented a study findings on "Cost of Violence Against Women and its Implication in the Society". Visitors had opportunities to learn CARE Bangladesh SHOUHARDO II Program from this event.

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