

SHOUHARDO III News

Strengthening Household Ability to Respond to Development Opportunities III

Newsletter Issue 2 July 2017

Over the past few decades, Bangladesh has made an unprecedented rate in reducing poverty. Apparently, it remains a significant challenge in the remote areas of the country especially where SHOUHARDO III program operates. Poverty is found to be highly associated with the education level of the household members, food insecurity, dietary diversity in women and children, underweight and overweight in women, as well as stunting in children. There is a large gender gap in access to cash-earning opportunities and the propensity of men to participate in paid work as compared to women. To achieve greater poverty reduction, continued efforts are required to increase income diversification, bringing in more women to the workforce and increase their earnings, and balance women-earned income with the cash earnings of men.

To assess the situation of the program areas, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) conducted the 2016 Bangladesh Baseline Study for CARE (SHOUHARDO III), Helen Keller International (Sustainable Agriculture Production Linked with Improved Nutrition Status, Resilience and Gender Equity-SAPLING) and World Vision (Nobo Jatra (NJ)/ New Beginning). These Food for Peace (FFP) development food assistance programs aim to reduce malnutrition and food insecurity and improve resilience to disasters among vulnerable populations. The baseline study included a population-based survey among 3,010 households to collect data for key FFP and project-specific indicators.

SHOUHARDO III program considered all critical findings and recommendations from the baseline survey to address the root causes of poverty among poor and extreme poor households in the Char and Haor regions by designing and integrating its activities accordingly.



Message from the Chief of Party



With the support of our implementing partners, government stakeholders and community people, fueled by extreme dedication of our team members, SHOUHARDO III has gracefully stepped into its second year. As part of our commitment to our participants and donors, we constantly thrive to ensure accountability and transparency in our work. One of the ways we do it, is by putting in place robust Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) processes. These were established in compliance with CARE and USAID's FFP policies and guidance. With the M&E system in SHOUHARDO III, the data generated would inform us to improve our current intervention and future programming.

While activities progress as planned, it is unfortunate that in March this year, flash floods devastated parts of the SHOUHARDO III areas in Haor region due to torrential rains that came way too early. Boro crop, the major

produce from the region that were due for harvest were destroyed, causing losses of livelihoods in the affected households. The Government of Bangladesh has targeted to assist 330,000 households and we sincerely hope the affected population will recover from their losses.

I am happy to share with you the second edition of SHOUHARDO III Newsletter highlighting program baseline findings, major events, key activities and inspirational stories. I hope you learn from reading this, particularly on the impact the program aims to achieve in the participants' lives and how much progress has been made almost two years down the road. Once again we sincerely acknowledge the overwhelming support from communities, partners and colleagues in preparing the contents of this newsletter.

Walter Mwasaa

Table 1: Snapshot of major findings from the Baseline Study

Baseline Survey Indicator	%	SHOUHARDO III interventions to date*
Prevalence of households with moderate or severe hunger	9.6	Program distributes 6.675 kg of wheat, 1.5 kilos of yellow split peas and one liter vitamin A-fortified vegetable oil to the most vulnerable households, particularly to 34,708 pregnant and lactating mothers.
Prevalence of poverty: Percentage of people living on less than \$1.90/day	45.7	Provides training and input support to 67,633 participants so far on field crop production, comprehensive homestead development, fisheries and income generating activities.
Percentage of farmers who practiced the value chain activities promoted by the project in the past 12 months	27.0	SHOUHARDO III succeeded to reach 50,501 participants under value chain activities (maize, chili, sweet gourd, duck, goat, etc.).
Prevalence of stunted children under five years of age	41.0	Conducts Growth Monitoring & Promotion (GMP) sessions in all 947 working villages as a continuous process. A total 28,941 children under 2 years participated in GMP sessions.
Percentage of men and women with children under two who have knowledge of maternal and child health and nutrition practices	72.9	Court yard sessions on health, hygiene and nutrition issues have been conducted in all 947 working villages.
Percentage of farmers have access to agriculture and livestock extension services from relative departments of GoB	11.6	Provides technical assistance to farmers on climate-smart agricultural techniques through Farmers' Field and Business School (FFBS). Program reached 1,728 farmer leaders who received training on FFBS.
Percentage of male farmers with access to services	12.6	
Percentage of female farmers with access to services	7.2	
Agriculture related knowledge or information	2.6	
Percentage of women in union and earning cash who make decisions alone about the use of self-earned cash	13.7	Regularly conducts sessions with female program participants and couples in 947 villages.

*as of June 2017



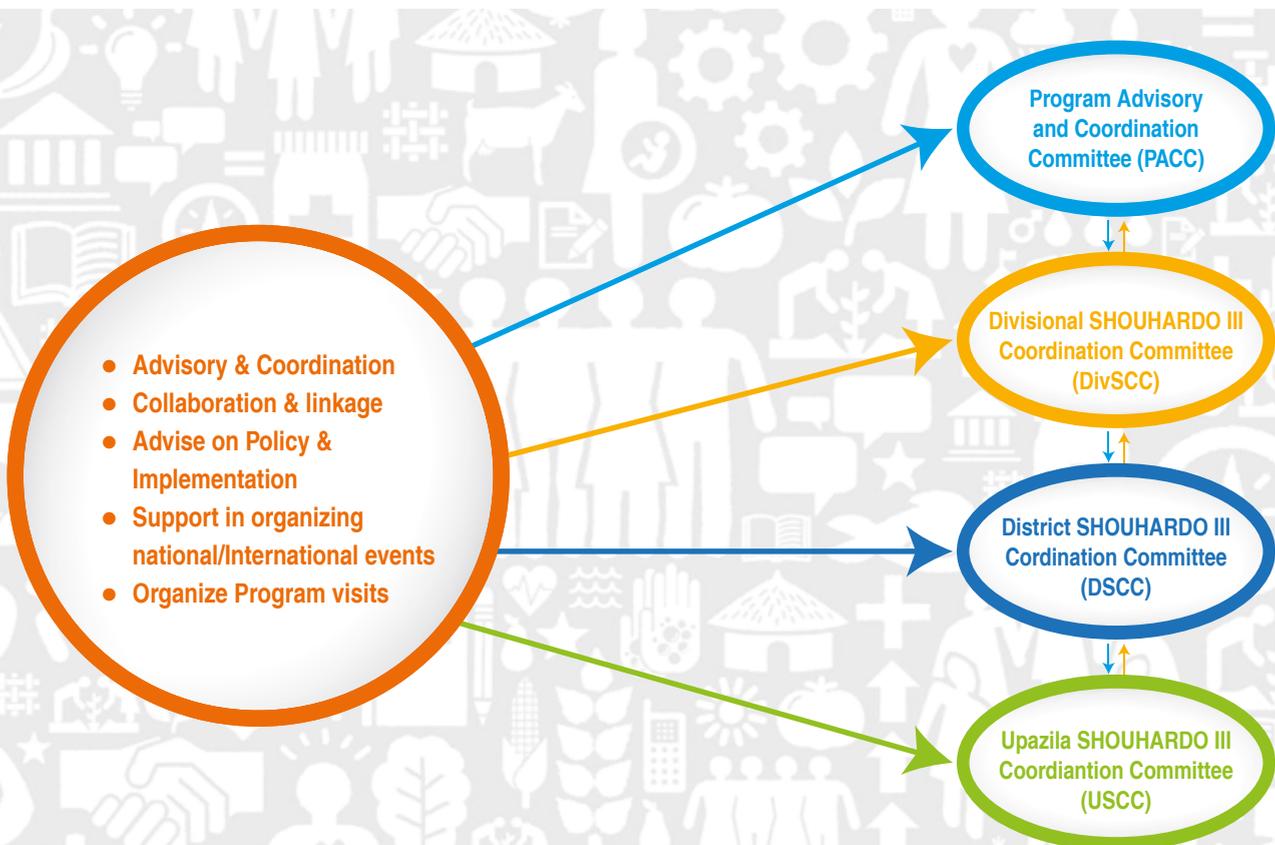


Program Advisory & Coordination Committee (PACC) meetings

To strengthen the SHOUHARDO III program, 14 ministries of GoB are members of national level Program Advisory and Coordination Committee (PACC). The program facilitates meetings at the *upazilla* (sub-district), district, divisional and national levels to review the progress of the program and ways to improve government services for the poor communities in the program intervention areas. The program also organized visits by PACC members to program areas both in Char and Haor Regions. The PACC members' visits encouraged community members to access government services and continue their individual and community development efforts.



Photo: Participants attend the Divisional SHOUHARDO III Coordination Committee meeting organized by Divisional Administration, Mymensingh.





Hosting program visitors



Photo: Ms. Michelle Nunn, President and CEO of CARE USA, attends a meeting with EKATA group in Kurigram district.

In April 2017 CARE's President and CEO Michelle Nunn and Associate Vice President of Program, Partnerships and Learning Jamie D. Terzi visited SHOUHARDO III program activities in Kurigram district in Bangladesh. They met with female farmer leader group, listened to the stories of adolescents in Empowerment, Knowledge and Transformative Action (EKATA) group and watched the folk drama session on awareness raising for the community members. Walter Mwasaa, Chief of Party, CARE Bangladesh, along with other staff from the program, accompanied them in this visit.

"I truly believe CARE Bangladesh is leading the way around innovation, market-based approaches, sustainability, resiliency, and transformational gender based approaches. The holistic approach to the work and the richness of the personal stories was inspirational."

Ms. Michelle Nunn
President and CEO of CARE USA



Photo: Visitors from CARE USA and US Congress meet with and listen to VDC members in Sunamganj district.

A group of high official visitors, from CARE USA and US Congress, visited SHOUHARDO III program in Bangladesh on 21 February 2017. They met with program participants and village development committee members in Duarabazaar upazila under Sunamganj district to learn about the participant's views regarding the program and also attended a food distribution event to observe how SHOUHARDO III is supporting the pregnant and lactating women in ensuring proper nutrition during pregnancy period and also met with school children.

Major program activities

October 2016 – June 2017

Through the Farmer Field and Business Schools (FFBS) methodology, **1,728** participants were equipped with improved agricultural production skills and technologies.



FACILITATES farmers' **capacity development through FFBS** where the farmers attend the sessions of their respective crop/livestock during their different stages of growth.



To increase the income of PEP, the program has organized skills development training and provided input support (cash and in-kind) to **62,580** participants (F: 43,245; M: 19,335).



825 Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) groups were formed and **16,434** participants (F: 16,284; M: 150) were trained mainly on the importance of savings and accounts maintenance.



SHOUHARDO III is committed to give special attention to women's empowerment in terms of access to and control over household resources, assets and opportunities.



SHOUHARDO III implements Growth Monitoring & Promotion (GMP) for children under two and provided supplementary food ration among **34,708** pregnant women, lactating mothers and other family members.



491 Community Risk Assessment sessions conducted and **348** community level contingency plans developed to enhance disaster preparedness.



9,831 Village Development Committee (VDC) members received training on organizational development and good governance including environment, resilience and advocacy issues.



284 homestead plinth level raised, **25** U-shaped drainage culverts, **246** sanitary latrines and **11** community based resource centers have been constructed in the program areas to prevent flood.





Mahmuda's journey: From housewife to business woman



Mahmuda (40), with her husband Kutub Uddin and six children, lives in the village named Borodol Natun Hati in Sunamganj district. Before being a SHOUHARDO III participant, Mahmuda, who was a housewife, lived a painful life. She got married to Kutub Uddin, who is more than 10 years older, during her adolescence. Her husband was a day laborer and they were struggling to make ends meet. The day was at its worst if her husband could not find any work to sell labor. The whole family had limited or no access to services and information from the local government. This left them most of the time with very limited income options.

SHOUHARDO III program came and provided her training on how to generate income and she received BDT 4,500 to start her own business. She put up her small shop next to her home so that she can manage household chores as well. Her shop is very popular, especially as women and children in the community prefer to buy from her. Now combined with her husband's earning, the total monthly income of the family is around BDT 15,000. She has also started saving, for any emergency, through the Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA). Eventually, Mahmuda, who was once a housewife and had no capacity, has become the President of VSLA in her village. She encourages other women to earn on their own and save. She has become a role model for other women in the union.

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