



BRINGING NUTRITION FOR CHILDREN

Message from Naoko Tanimura, Corporate Affairs, DANONE JAPAN:



HN&FS project started in 2010 to improve children's and mothers' knowledge and awareness about health, nutrition and hygiene issues, and to facilitate behavioral changes for their healthier and happier life. With CARE Bangladesh's strong expertise, network, and competencies in the subject areas, the project has been successfully following the track and bringing the positive changes in the beneficiary's communities. During the course of project implementation, we try things and learn from the experiences, have dialogue with and listen to people. It is a co-creation of a self-sustainable model among all stakeholders. And it should be replicable in the other areas in Bangladesh in the future.

Photo Credit: Riabul Islam



Student in front of a learning garden

Introducing the project

Poor nutritional status is a key health problem in Bangladesh. Young children and women of reproductive age are especially vulnerable to nutritional deficits and micronutrient deficiencies. Inadequate or inappropriate feeding patterns and poor hygiene practices lead to malnutrition. In this situation, a project named "Health Nutrition and Food Security for Marginalized Children and their Families (HN&FS)" started in 2010 with the objective of designing and facilitating an education program module and its sustainable execution mechanism which aims at knowledge improvement and behavioral changes towards nutrition, health and hygiene issues for marginalized school children and their families, funded by DANONE Japan in 50 schools in five sub-districts (Sherpur, Sariakandi, Shibganj, Gabtoli and Sonatola) of Bogra district, Bangladesh.

The project's vision is to develop a sustainable integrated model of health, nutrition and food security

for marginalized school students and their families through capacity building of School Management Committee (SMC) and teachers; in collaboration with Government education, health, agriculture, public health engineering department and local government. Thus the students and their families can get safe and clean environment as well as obtain health, nutrition and hygiene education and services. The project facilitates to conduct educational sessions about health, hygiene, nutrition and food safety and security using materials developed by the project for students and their mothers. The project has established collaboration with government department of education, health, agriculture, local government and public health engineering to provide support to schools and encourage SMC to play central role to make liaison and monitor progress. The project also has developed mother groups and build capacity so that they can plan, coordinate and receive health and nutrition services from health centers and ensure safer and cleaner environment.

Whats inside

- Project vision and goal
- Project strategy and conceptual framework
- Transition process
- Project intervention
- Project achievements
- Stories from the ground
- Lessons learned





Photo Credit: Rabul Islam

A mother is working at her homestead garden

Project vision

To enable the SMCs and Teachers by providing necessary knowledge, skills and tools and developing their capability so that they can reinforce the system which is affecting the overall effectiveness/performance of primary schools.

Project goal

By end of 2015, a set of Health, Nutrition and Food Security interventions (school sessions, mothers sessions, school and homestead gardening, hygiene and health promotion activities) will be self-managed by local schools and communities.

Project objectives

- Improve health, hygiene and nutritional understanding of extremely poor people in rural areas especially the most socially, economically and politically marginalized school going children and their families through imparting Health Hygiene and Nutrition (HHN) education and dietary practice.
- Promote homestead gardening that can surely be a good source of nutritional products such as fruits and vegetables.
- Build capacity of SMC and teachers so that they can facilitate existing Government body, organization and department and make the schools and community people aware about the service centers to get locally available services easily in the long run.

Project location



Impact coverage for 2014

Total number of upazilas	5
Total schools	40
Total students (Class III, IV & V)	6680
Total family members	33400
Total households	6373
Total Mother groups	195
Total MG members	6373
Total SMCs	40
Total SMC Members	440
Total Teachers	235

Project strategies

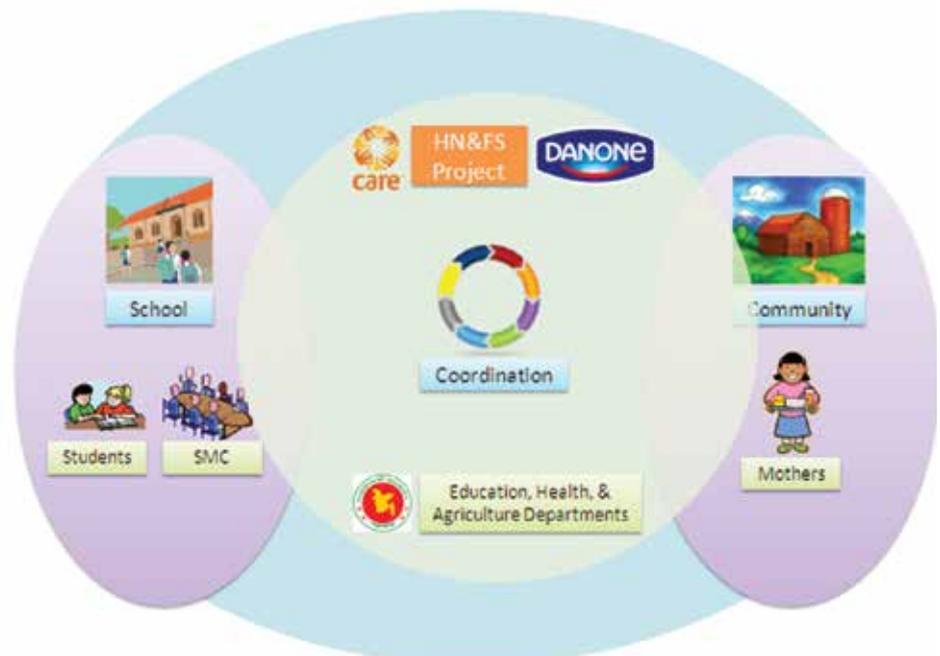
Strategy 1: Conduct assessment and selection exercise to finalize the target schools to facilitate the system transformation process.

Strategy 2: Promote skill based learning for primary school students to adopt behaviors on Health, Hygiene & Nutrition and improve competencies of school management committees (SMCs) and teachers to continue the targeted activities.

Strategy 3: Facilitating planning, coordination and execution of the safer and cleaner Health & Hygiene services and facilities.

Strategy 4: Facilitating effective community engagement to support the system and practices.

Project conceptual framework



Project implementation process

The project's activities are implemented in both school level and community level, school management committee is coordinating all activities and maintaining liaison with different government department.

The project interventions are implemented at school and community level simultaneously so that students can get favorable environment at household to practice health nutrition and hygiene behaviors. All activities are coordinated and monitored by SMC with support from government education department. Key project activities are:

School level interventions:

To increase knowledge and change behaviors about health, nutrition and hygiene of students the project facilitates to conduct educational sessions, cleanliness campaigns and hand washing demonstrations; facilitates to establish learning fruits and vegetables gardening in school premises and also facilitates to organize health camps for students.

Table: Transition plan

Period	Oct, 2013	Jun, 2014	Sep, 2014	Dec, 2014	Jun, 2015	Sep, 2015
Number of exited school (Low performing schools of all upazilas)	10					
Number of transited school (Best performing schools of all upazilas)		08				
Number of transited school of Sherpur upazila			06			
Number of transited school of Shibganj				08		
Number of transited school of Gabtoli and Sariakandi upazilas					07	
Number of transited school of Sariakandi and Sonatola upazilas						11

Nutritious Food Corner: An innovative approach

The project has started a new initiative "Nutritious Food Corner" for the local women that helps them to generate income and also empowers them economically. This is a business venture where local women, especially who worked as project instructors earlier, serve different nutritious food like bread, vegetables, locally available fruits and healthy snack to the students daily at lower price in social marketing approach. The SMC and the project jointly decided that they would take necessary steps to establish "Nutritious Food Corner" for the students. CARE project management encourages the SMC and provides technical support to establish it at school campus. The primary objective is to ensure healthy food for students. The female entrepreneurs and school authority are benefitted financially by earning profits. SMCs are getting required fund to continue the project activities in future which also ensure the sustainability of project activities. Till March, 2015 four "Nutritious Food Corner" were established for school students.

Community level interventions:

The project facilitates to conduct educational session at community level for students mothers, arranges practical training session to establish homestead garden and provides seeds to marginalized families.

The project builds capacity of SMC members through training, orientation and attending monthly meeting; and facilitates SMC to establish coordination with local governments education, health, agriculture, public health engineering departments.

Project transition process

The project has planned to transit gradually which has already started in 2013 and will be completed in 2015. An assessment has been conducted in consultation with Department of Primary Education, Bogra before making the decision of exiting. Fifty schools were ranked with set indicators and 10 low performing schools had been exited from the project on 31 October, 2013. Forty schools are

selected for transition process on 2014 to 2015. In 2014, twenty two schools have been transited and remaining eighteen schools will be transited in 2015. It is mentionable that transition process starts six months prior to build capacity through on-the-job training so that project activities can be sustainable through SMC and community. The below table shows the transition plan of the project:



School teachers and SMC members are participating in a training

Photo Credit: Mazibur Rahman



Training conduction for teachers and SMC members

Photo Credit: Rabul Islam



District level coordination meeting

Photo Credit: Rabul Islam



Government officials are observing mother group meeting

Photo Credit: Mazibur Rahman

Photo Credit: Mazibur Rahman



School session conduction

44% marginalized student's household had homestead vegetables garden as a good source of vitamins and minerals for them.

Photo Credit: Rabiul Islam



Students are working in school learning garden

Improvement of health and nutritional status of students finally increased their attendance rate at school and improved their academic performance.

Photo Credit: Mazibur Rahman



Students are participating in cleanliness campaign

Project achievements

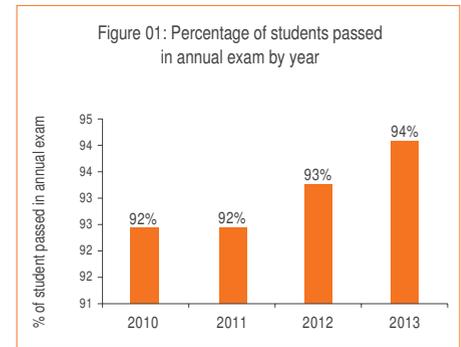
Promoting homestead garden for food security

The project distributed seeds to near about 1300 mothers on 2012 and 900 mothers on 2013 and 200 ultra-poor mothers on 2014. They are producing different kinds of vegetables and fruits in their homestead gardens. Project provided seeds, fencing support and training on 2012 and 2013. In 2014, only 200 ultra-poor families received seeds from project as a safety net approach. Government agriculture extension workers provided training which coordinated by SMCs. In a cross-sectional survey on December 2014, we found that 44% marginalized student's household had homestead vegetables garden which is good source of vitamins and minerals for them.

Enhancing students' academic performance and class attendance rate

The project is trying to improve students' health through increasing their knowledge about the health, hygiene and nutrition and facilitate to organize health camps. Improvement of health and nutritional status of students finally increased their attendance rate at school and improved their academic performance.

Students' annual exam pass rate increased from 92% in 2010 to 94% in 2013 (Figure 01). Figure 02 illustrates the trend of students' class attendance



rate from 2010 to 2013. It presents that the percentage of students of class III, class IV and class V attended more than 80% school days. For class III it increased slightly from 77% in 2010 to 82% in 2013, for class IV increased from 81% in 2010 to 86% in 2013 and for class V it increased from 85% in 2010 to 88% in 2013.

Raising awareness and positive behavioral change about health, hygiene and nutrition

The project is working to improve knowledge level and to change the behavior about health, hygiene and nutrition among the students and their families through school sessions and mother group meetings. Presently the school students and community people are more concerned than before about the personal hygiene, importance of nutritious food, sanitary latrine, hand-washing and clean environment.

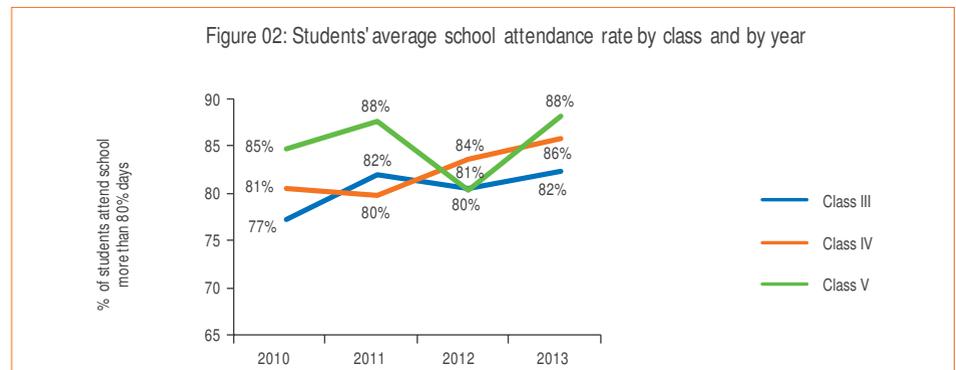
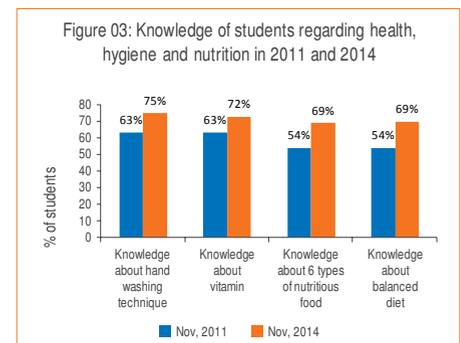


Figure 03 shows that the knowledge of students of class III, class IV and class V about hand washing technique increased from 63% in 2011 to 75% in 2014, knowledge about vitamin increased from 63% in 2011 to 72% in 2014, about nutritious food increased from 54% in 2011 to 69% in 2014 and about balanced diet from 54% in 2011 to 69% in 2014.



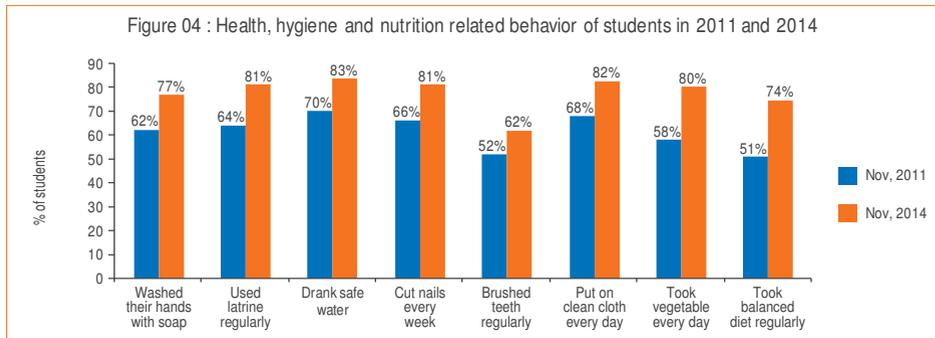


Figure 04 shows the behavior of students about health, hygiene and nutrition at two different time period. The figure 04 depicts that students' practices related to health, hygiene and nutrition significantly improved from 2011 to 2014.

In 2010, before starting the project a baseline survey was conducted. If we compare few indicators with baseline and data collected on 2014, then we can observe that hand-washing practice, use of sanitary latrine and regular nail cutting improved significantly among students (Figure 05).

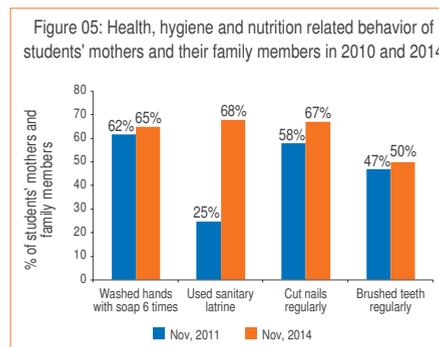


Figure 06 presents that the knowledge of students' mother of class III, class IV and class V about hand washing technique increased from 53% in 2011 to 63% in 2014 and knowledge about nutritious food increased from 43% in 2011 to 51% in 2014.

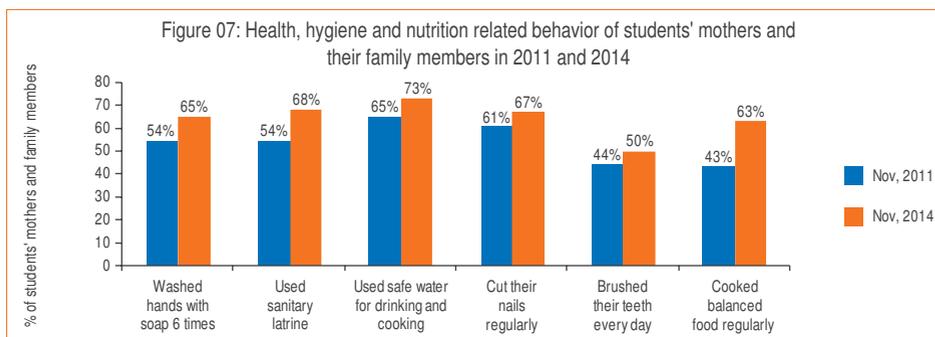
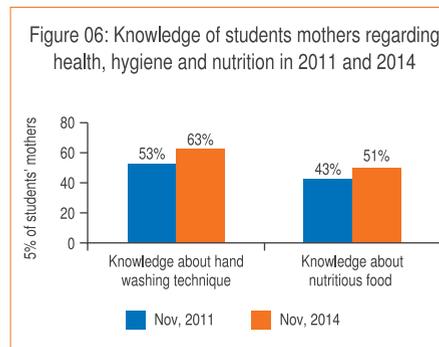


Figure 07 shows the behavior of students' mothers and their family members about health, hygiene and nutrition at two different time period. The hand washing with soap, use of sanitary latrine, use of safe water for drinking and cooking, regularly nail cutting, brushing teeth and regularly cook balanced food increased significantly among students' mother and other family members from 2011 to 2014.



Students are participating in hand washing demonstration

Photo Credit: Mazibur Rahman

Knowledge of students of class III, class IV and class V about hand washing technique, vitamin and nutritious food increased in 2014 compare to 2011.



Seed distribution to the mothers

Photo Credit: Mazibur Rahman

School students and community people are more concerned than before about the personal hygiene, importance of nutritious food, sanitary latrine, hand-washing and clean environment.



Student is helping his mother in a homestead garden

Photo Credit: Mazibur Rahman

Photo Credit: Rabiul Islam



Students are going to receive health service at the nearest Community Clinic

Photo Credit: Mazibur Rahman



Project staffs are facilitating in SMC monthly meeting

Now SMCs are arranging the health camps at nearest health center where students are receiving medical checkup and medicines at lower cost.

Capacity building initiatives for SMC

School Management Committee (SMC) members are the prime drivers of a school, because SMC is a Government founded body to run a school smoothly with direct supervision from the Education office. CARE Bangladesh works closely with the SMCs to implement the project activities so that school authority can continue project activities independently in future. Workshops, residential trainings were conducted to build the capacity of the SMC members and orient them about their roles and responsibilities. The project staffs also facilitate the SMC monthly meeting to make the meeting effective and regular. They keep the health, hygiene and nutrition issues on the agenda of SMC meeting so that committee can be more concerned about the health of students.

Improving access to health services

Previously project arranged health campaigns using project fund to treat students in 2012. Since 2013 project motivated the SMC members and teachers to arrange health camps using government health centers. Through this initiative more students are receiving the medical checkup and medicines from available government health facilities than earlier.

Figure 08: Average number of health camp per quarter in 2012 and 2014

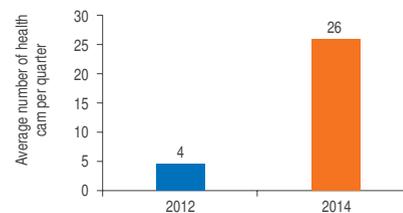
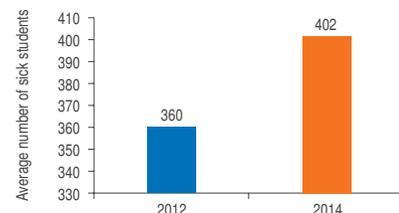


Figure 09: Average number of sick students received treatment from health camps per quarter in 2012 and 2014



The figure 8 and 9 show that the number of health camps and the number of students getting treatment both have increased. Now SMC are arranging the health camps either the nearest health center or invite the government service providers at school after coordination with government Health Manager at upazila level to screen and treat students regularly.

A Qualitative Analysis: Empowering Rural Women through Voluntary Services

Photo Credit: Rabiul Islam



Mother group meeting

Photo Credit: Rabiul Islam



Homestead garden training conduction

There were some mother groups for each school and these groups attend one community meeting each month. Now project has decided to transit from schools periodically. But to make these activities sustainable the project has decided to make some volunteers. These volunteers are selected from the community mother groups and trained by the project. They agreed to perform their tasks voluntarily and eager to serve their local community without getting any financial benefits. So, the project initiated to conduct mother group meetings by community volunteers at those places where the project already transited. The community volunteers are motivated to conduct these sessions willingly to improve knowledge of mothers of the students. A qualitative analysis was executed to find out the motivational factors that will help us to scale up this community volunteer model in future.

“A good relation was built with community people and they respect me. They concentrate on my words and value my opinion. Through taking these sessions I can contribute to build the awareness among people about the health, nutrition and hygiene. I enjoy conducting sessions and want to continue it (conducting sessions) in future“

A Volunteer of Ramchondropur union, Sariakandi upazila, Bogra

Results and Findings

The volunteers mentioned that conducting sessions help them to increase their own skill, knowledge and experience and earn respect of community people. They mentioned that these sessions played important role to build awareness about health, nutrition and hygiene among community people and it empowered them in

the community. Voluntary services increased the social acceptability of the volunteers in their local community. Most of the volunteers mentioned that they are very happy to perform the sessions and they have intention to continue these sessions in future. The community volunteers conducted 70% planned sessions in the transitioned schools. More than 90% of volunteers are intended to conduct sessions in future.

Motivational factors for doing voluntary services:

Obtaining respect from community people

Volunteers mentioned that people respect them and value their opinion more than earlier. People are interested to follow their messages. People honor their decision and they can participate in decision making process. Thus they are empowered socially and it motivates them to perform the voluntary services like conducting mother group sessions.

Building awareness among community people

By conducting session volunteers are increasing awareness of community people about health, hygiene, sanitation, nutrition and homestead gardening. This act gave them mental satisfaction and motivates them to perform voluntary works.

“I wanted to conduct sessions to inform people about health, hygiene and nutrition and make them aware about causes of different diseases”

Comment from a volunteer of Gabtoli upazila, Bogra

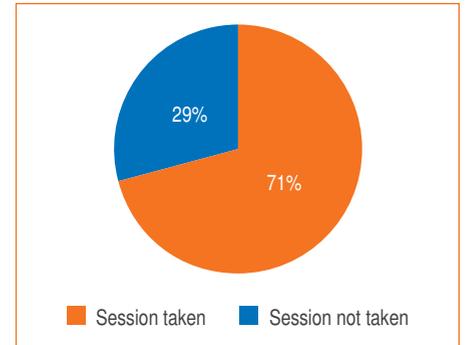
Self development

Through taking these sessions the volunteers have improved their knowledge level about health, hygiene and nutrition. They have developed their skill about homestead gardening and balanced diet. They also thought that conducting sessions can increase their experience which would help them to develop their skill.

“By conducting these sessions I can develop my knowledge and skill level and gather more experience”

Comment from a volunteer Gabtoli upazila, Bogra

Volunteers are playing important role to build awareness about health, nutrition and hygiene among community people. People respect the volunteers and value their opinion more than earlier. They can participate in decision making process both in household and community and it empowered them in the community. Thus voluntary activities have remarkable impact to empower the rural women. These acts can be helpful for the



volunteers to earn social respect and also can play important role to build awareness about health, hygiene and nutrition among the local community especially the marginalized women.

Volunteers are playing important role to build awareness about health, nutrition and hygiene among community people which empowers them socially.

Stories from the ground

Photo Credit: Rabiu'l Islam



Razia Begum at her school

A health and hygiene conscious school girl

Razia Begum is a student of class four of Khabulia Primary School of Sonatola upazila. It is a school of Char area which is usually used as a flood center during flood of that community. This is very remote area of the northern Bangladesh and the communication system to the school is still very low standard due to soil degradation.

Razia and her family belong to this poor community who have to struggle hard and soul to survive. Usually Razia comes to school after taking her meal from home. But one day she came to school without taking meal and her mother also came to the school following her steps. Her mother met with the head-teacher and complained that Razia came to school without taking her meal. Then head-teacher called Razia to ask the reasons.

After investigation, head-teacher found that Razia's mother works in the field daily and on that day she was working with the cow-dung before serving the meal to her daughter. Razia's mother was in hurry and she didn't wash her hand before serving the meal. But Razia refused to take that meal as that was unhygienic and unhealthy. So she came to school without taking her meal.

Actually Razia is an enrolled student of HN&FS project and regularly attend the school sessions about personal hygiene and hand washing. These sessions help her to know about personal hygiene, healthy behavior, sanitation, hand washing, cleanliness and nutritious food it grows consciousness in her about the importance of hand-washing and practice it in her daily life.

Photo Credit: Mazibur Rahman



Rishma Begum is working in her homestead garden

Economic empowerment of a rural woman through homestead gardening

Rishma Begum is a woman of Ramnagar village of Fulbari union of Sariakandi upazila of Bogra district. She is 27 years old and studied till class seven. Her husband is a very poor farmer who had to struggle hard for their daily living.

She is a mother group member of HN&FS project and attends the meeting regularly. She learned about the importance of homestead garden and decided to take lease of 15 decimals land for cultivating vegetables. Presently growing bottle gourd, bitter gourd, bringles etc. in her garden. Now she is economically self-dependent as she is earning enough money from her own garden. She is expending her income for the better education

of her child and trying to ensure the nutrition of her family. She has also opened a deposit account at local bank and saving her extra income regularly so that she can use that money in future.

Now her husband respects her opinion and consults with her before taking any important decision about their family and children. The earnings from this garden helped her to be economically empowered.

"From Project mother group meeting I learned that it's not just enough to serve nutritious food to other family members, rather women also have to take nutritious food regularly. Now I can take care of myself and take decision for my family and can earn money."

Photo Credit: Rabui Islam



Sokina Begum is serving healthy foods to the students

Self-employment to ensure economic independence for marginalized woman

Sokina Begum is a woman of Tekani village of Modhupur union of Sonatola upazila of Bogra district. She is 35 years old and studied till class eight. Her husband is a retired school teacher. Her husband earns very low and they have to struggle very hard to run their living. Since being married she was trying to help her husband by earning money. Recently she has decided to establish a "Nutritious Food Corner" at Tekani Government Primary School to ensure her self-employment. The CARE project management has encouraged the SMC and committed to provide the technical support to establish the Nutritious Food Corner at school campus. Sokina Begum is now serving

different nutritious food like bread, vegetables, locally available fruits and healthy snack to the students daily at lower price.

Sokina is earning profit of Tk. 150-200 every day. This small business initiative helped her to empowered economically from this small business and played active role to reduce her poverty. The school students are also very happy of getting those tasty and healthy snacks easily at lower rate in their school campus.

"I always want to do some good for my community people and try to earn for my family. I am satisfied by serving the healthy food to the children and earning that profit from this small business"

Lessons learned

- Interactive sessions like school sessions and mother group meetings can be helpful to increase the knowledge on health, hygiene and nutrition and also can play important role to change behavior of the student and their family members.
- SMC can play the most important role for the improvement of school and students. It is observed that when SMC took necessary steps and work efficiently, the cost of maintaining garden reduced and school could establish learning garden properly.
- School gardens can be a good platform of learning for students and good source of earning for school authority.
- Homestead garden can be dependable source of meeting daily need of nutrition for family members.
- The coordination meeting among different government departments and working NGOs can be helpful to implement project activities and to improve the relationships among themselves.
- If we can aware community people about the rights and services, they can receive those from existing Government service center.
- Through coordination with government agriculture department the SMCs can arrange training for people where they can learn about the way of gardening.
- By using the locally available government health facilities especially from Community Clinic the students can receive health services easily at free of cost.
- The community people can work voluntarily to improve the health, personal hygiene and nutrition status of the community people and it also empowered them socially.
- Low cost hand washing material (Tippy Tap) can be economic instrument for low income setting community and school children can replicate it at their household level.
- Nutritious Food Corner can be a good business venture for local women which is generating income and also empowering them economically.



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