Innovations in Bangladesh and lessons learnt from abroad

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GED Training of Trainers in Bangkok

Learning with CARE colleagues from around the world

GED Training-of-Trainers (ToT) was organized in May by ARMU and facilitated by Allison Burden, Walter Fordham and Jamie Terzi. 30 participants from across the Asia Pacific region and the Americas took part in the workshop. The weeklong ToT provided CARE Bangladesh the opportunity to learn how to facilitate gender equity and diversity sessions.

Some of the objectives were to:

- Know the importance of awareness and dialogue skills as the foundation of social transformation.

- Practice the exercises and activities contained in the diversity, gender and empowerment training modules

- Understand and be able to explain the link between our personal and organizational learning and how GED is relevant to our programming work.

The training gave CARE staff new methodologies for facilitating GED and showed how the foundation of social transformation can be created through awareness and dialogue. It helped people to learn from their own experiences, which in turn gave them more energy and determination to be a part of the change.

The most interesting part was that it had no theoretical discussions; participants went through a completely practical experience. Using the AIKIDO Model people were brought into the dialogue

which gave them the practical learning experience rather than the typical sessions where expert opinions are enforced.

It contains three parts – awareness (helps us to know how GED is relevant to our work and life), dialogue (how we engage others to share experiences for working together) and action (see what we can do together to explore skills in identifying solutions). Our team also felt that if the model were used at the community level, then it would bring better results in our projects.

As a result, a two-day training course based on the AIKIDO model has been designed and trial sessions will be held in our Rangpur office in June.

The GED Unit will be translating some selected sessions to our community facilitators of EKATA so that they are able to practice it at the grassroots in the communities we work with.

Our team thinks this will enhance the value of EKATA groups where participants are active in the process of awareness, dialogue and action rather than being a process led by CARE facilitators.

By promoting this non-traditional approach, EKATA groups can be more sustainable in the long term as it becomes more of a community owned and led process that does not require costly (and ongoing) external inputs from CARE.

It may be difficult to create a space where women feel comfortable to share their thoughts and it may also be a lengthier process. However, it may also prove a more effective way for women to realize issues in their own lives and their ability to overcome these obstacles.

To learn more about our changing vision for GED please contact Habib: habib@bd.care.org **or Sajeda:** Yasmins@bd.care.org

Macro-level context analysis

The first CARE Bangladesh 'Macro-Context Analysis' workshop was held in May, led by the Program Quality Unit and the Rangpur Regional Office. Macro-Context Analysis (MCA) is a key part of the 'Country Office Measurement and Learning System' (COML), and an important step in monitoring and evaluating our programs. MCA is designed to gather important contextual issues from the areas where CARE works, to help us in planning, research and monitoring.

Participants took part in a timelining exercise and group discussions to identify the different social, political, economic and social issues affecting the lives of our impact groups in the Rangpur region.

Encouragingly, staff discussed the many gains that have been made in Rangpur in terms of women's empowerment including increases in women's wages, increased access to education and high levels of women's safe mobility. Timelining involved discussion around events and improvements in governance.

Staff also noted that local governments in Rangpur are co-operative and receptive to CARE's
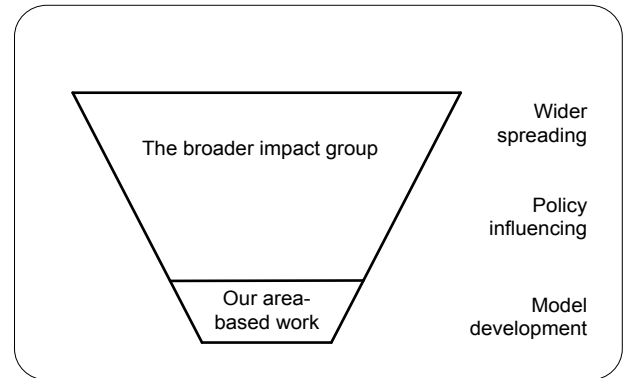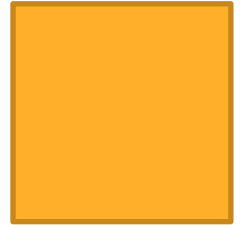

work. Participants discussed electricity and gas shortages, which has discouraged investment in industry in the area, and limited investment in agriculture.

We will continue this process over the coming months. For more please contact Amy: macmahon@bd.care.org, **Mansur:** Mansur@bd.care.org, **or Seema:** fatima@bd.care.org

CARE-B takes the model development journey

During May, CARE-B staff participated in a Model Development workshop to clarify what we mean by a 'Model' and how this differs from what we refer to as an 'Approach'. This is a crucial part of the ongoing development of our Programs. By developing models we can have bodies of verifiable and credible evidence that can highlight our tangible change within our Impact Groups.

By using our area-based work within our programs to package a 'Model' we can highlight how our innovation offers a clear and unique advantage over other approaches, with demonstrated cost-effectiveness and added value. By thinking in this way we will build the evidence to influence policy and decision makers to take up our 'Models' and implement them at a scale more broadly than CARE's own programs just as we were able to do with our Community Support System (CmSS) Model and its uptake by the Government of Bangladesh.

What are the characteristics of a model?

Workshop participants outlined the following as core characteristics of a model:

1. Coherent set of principles and elements linked to program pathways and domains of change (TOC and impact goal)
2. Demonstrated rigorous, practical evidence which is both quantitative and qualitative in nature and in easily understandable language, around key claims
3. Contributes to lasting social change (amongst impact population groups)
4. Broad ownership and credibility exists amongst key stakeholders and recognition amongst a wider audience
5. Enhanced cost-effective/ value for money is offered
6. Scalability and Adaptiveness
7. Influences some or all of policies, legislation, national plans and development practices, and leverages resources

We will continue this discussion in June where we will be able to share some CARE Bangladesh Models and explain how we will use this to influence policy and decision makers nationally. We think this will allow us to take our work to a greater scale and create ownership broader than CARE.

If you would like any more information on Model Development please contact Mehrul: mehrul@bd.care.org or Jamie: jamie@bd.care.org

Aklima's Steps to Success

Aklima lives in Arura Majlishpur village within Itna's Ashar Haor at Kishoreganj. Live was difficult in a 5-member household, reliant solely on the modest income of her day-laborer husband. As a FSUP-H participant, Aklima is not only actively contributing to various community development activities but also chairing her VDC.

Aklima initially contributed to her VDC's savings scheme with her income, from the few poultry she raised. She knew how to sew but could not afford a sewing machine. Things around when she bought a sewing machine in June 2010, with the 4,700BDT provided by FSUP-H as seed capital. She started earning a monthly income of 1,500-2000BDT from her sewing work, which supplemented her children's education and other household expenses.

Aklima won 4,000BDT in March 2012 from a unique IGA lottery system in the Arura Majlishpur savings scheme.

She started a small grocery at her home with this money and 3,000BDT of her own savings. Her daughter and husband helped her by procuring the grocery items from the bazaar. Apart from selling stock, she also started selling savoury-sweet snacks she made herself. Her business soon started prospering. Customers paid both in cash and bartered with rice-paddies. In this current harvest season, she actually made a profit of 35,000BDT from 2,625 kg rice.

Aklima never thought that she could earn such a huge profit. Her hard work and integrity has contributed to her financial independence and kindle her entrepreneurial spirit. Come monsoon time, she is planning to have her husband hawk the grocery items door to door, as in-store traffic is low. In the coming autumn, she is planning to make her store permanent. She also plans to offer her tailoring services through her store.

Arura Majlishpur is a remote village where villagers either opt for farming, fishing; lending from the loan-sharks; or travelling to the big cities as migrant workers for their livelihood. In such a place, Aklima is leading the way for the marginalized women.

Wasfia conquers Everest!

Former CARE-B colleague Wasfia Nazreen who worked with us in our empowerment team has recently conquered Everest, the highest point in the World. She is the second Bangladeshi female to do so in history. She is quoted as saying when she reached the summit, "This is to the women of Bangladesh who brave their lives everyday for freedom, peace and equality." This is a tremendous feat and we congratulate Wasfia on being a powerful inspiration to the women of Bangladesh.

Fodder selling is a profitable business

Saigari is a village of Dhaperhat union in Sadullapur Upazila under Gaibandha district. CARE-SDVC project assisted in the formation of a farmers group in involved in cow rearing.

Nurul Islam, a member (and later leader) of the group received training from SDVC on cow rearing, cow management, market linkage and fodder cultivation. Every member of the group had at least one cow however none had a fodder plot.

Nurul started fodder cultivation in his small land holding, increasing milk production by regular and increased feeding of his cattle. This practice has been increased across the community which has result in increased production and income across the board.

CARE-B is looking at ways of linking projects within our Extreme Poor program up so that we can realize greater impact through synergy. One potential that is being explored is linking fodder growing as an IGA in SHOUHARDO II with dairy producers in SDVC.

By harnessing the learning from our initiatives we can explore more of these linkages across our programs. This means greater impact and sustainable livelihoods for people like Nurul.

CARE-B building new website

CARE-B is in the process of developing a new website.

Have a look at www.carebangladesh.org and let the A&R team know your thoughts on how we can make it a better resource for people interested in our work at CARE Bangladesh but also what you would like to see as a team member of CARE. Look forward to hearing from you.

In the upcoming June edition

It's over to you! Interested in sharing your latest news, photos or ideas or want more information about a topic seen in *Action and Reflection*? Contact Soman: moodley@bd.care.org, Anahita: anahita@bd.care.org or Mansur: mansur@bd.care.org