

# **International Potato Center Development and Delivery Biofortified (DDBIO) Crops at Scale Programme**

## **Report on CNS and Their Capacity Building**



## Background and Rationale:

Community Nutrition Scholar (CNS) approach-It's a proven approach of CIP to combining nutrition education and counseling with nutrition-sensitive agricultural interventions like the introduction of OFSP and other nutritious crops, create a momentum for practical change towards healthier diets and improved nutrition for the entire family and increase the consumption of nutritious, diverse foods. In order to enable communities and women in particular, to effectively articulate their demand for better nutrition services, nutrition education and counseling are needed to raise their awareness and identify specific priorities. An essential requirement for long-term, sustainable in nutritional security is to establish nutrition education resources within communities themselves. This is the thinking behind the creation of a cadre of "Community Nutrition Scholars (CNS's)" who are trained as nutrition educators and work with and among mothers in their communities. In DDBIO project CNS will play a key role to disseminate the nutritional messages to the mothers through the training and intensive household visits. In the community level CNS are the main driver of nutritional messages and CNS might be explored if there are any characteristics of OFSP as a new crop or as a new food which inhibits or encourages women to use it for their children's food. Because of the inclusion of OFSP in local participatory trials, planting material distribution activities and in the training sessions will be given by CNS, there is an expectation that OFSP may be part of the new high nutrient food options for children.



## Introduction:

The Development and Delivery of Biofortified Crops at Scale (DDBIO) program is a 3-year program (May 2019–April 2022) implemented jointly by the International Potato Center (CIP) with HarvestPlus as part of the CGIAR biofortification strategy. CIP focuses on orange-fleshed sweetpotato (OFSP), whereas HarvestPlus promotes biofortified beans, cassava, maize, pearl millet, rice, and wheat.

To enhance nutritional awareness and inclusion of OFSP on everyday diet on the project working areas CIP initiates to select some educated (at least have 10<sup>th</sup> grade education), interested community women as a Community Nutrition Scholars (CNS's) and to train them on selective topics of nutrition, OFSP, health & hygiene and monitoring. During the coronavirus pandemic in Bangladesh, nutrition education through Community Nutrition Scholars (CNS) was started with

Training of Trainers (ToTs) on “**Integrated Nutrition, Gender and M&E**” for **Community Nutrition Scholar (CNS)** under DDBIO project in Gaibandha in September 2020.

### Capacity Building for CNS:

CIP with partner organization Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK) gone through the comprehensive recruitment process and selected total 28 women as ‘Community Nutrition Scholar’ (CNS) at three working districts- Gaibandha (12 CNS), Rangpur (8 CNS) and Kurigram (8 CNS) in July 2020. The DDBIO project organized 3 days long intensive training of trainers (ToT) on “**Integrated Nutrition, Gender and M&E**” in the respective districts to equip CNS to disseminate gender sensitive nutrition messages to their communities. 28 CNSs received training in 2 batches in Gaibandha from 16-18 and 19-21 September 2020. The training facilitated by CIP project personnel and BARI-OFRD official.

### Why CNS:

CNS is the unique name of DDBIO project. So, CIP-DDBIO project has designed a comprehensive ToT course for them to increase the CNS’s knowledge on nutrition & health and improve their organizational and communications skills. CNS has responsibility to provide community women a 12- session course over three months, with each CNS mentoring 100 women. CNS’s will also make home visits to deepen the knowledge of local women and also help to adjust and reinforce nutrition messages. These counseling visits also include practical cooking demonstrations, use of healthy baby tool kit. Home garden is the important sources of nutrition. So, CNS will encourage women to introduce OFSP in their home garden and will increase adoption of OFSP at household level and accelerate behavior change of women and men towards healthier diets.



DDBIO project believe that CNS’s footstep will empower of young women who are the tomorrow’s teachers and mothers. Through the CNS, community people specially women will aware about nutrition and try to fulfill the nutritional requirement of her family members. Of course, CNS will play a sustainable role about nutrition beyond the project period also.





## Selection of CNS:

CIP-DDBIO has prepared the selection criteria and detail guideline for selecting the CNS. According to the proposed guideline CIP and GUK has completed the CNS selection process. Following is the selection criteria and guideline:

### A. Selection Criteria of Community Nutrition Scholars

**Objective:** The CNS selection criteria has been developed to meet the following objectives:

- Ensure effective selection process of CNS.
- Select eligible CNS to provide nutrition education to the rural women in an understanding manner.

### Who can be Community Nutrition Scholars (CNS):

The selected CNS are preferably from targeted households but not limited within targeted households. If there are women who meet the following criteria and interested are welcome to be Community Nutrition Scholars (CNS). However, she needs to take her family's concern regarding to be a CNS.

### Education qualification & Experiences:

- Should have passed SSC level education. May be relaxed for experienced candidate.
- Candidates with cycle riding experience and having a cycle will be preferred on priority basis.
- Energetic and Enthusiastic: The women who do not feel shy to go outside and talk to people, committed and hard working to reach the goal, enthusiastic to learn and share with other people in the community, interested and physically fit to perform the voluntary work in the community.
- Organize and manage group: The women who have capacity to organize different aged women in a group, capable to manage the group in different situations. For example, in rainy season or in other seasonal work time should be able to make group member understand and manage to come for the session. She may also need to manage the group member's family to make her participation smoothen in the nutrition sessions.

After training, the CNSs will need to facilitate sessions on nutrition and for other communications from May-December 2020 as a plan. The participants in these sessions will be- first, our priority participants are from project targeted households, and second any interested participants from the village/ward. Participants must be women with under 5 child/children will be encouraged to attend (can be project participants or not) in these sessions.

- Facilitation skill: Should be able to facilitate meeting inside the community like own village/ward. She will also work as key contact person between their community like village/union and project's for other activities.

## B. Guideline for selecting the CNS

- For the project, we are looking for 30 women from Gaibandha, Rangpur and Kurigram. The CNS will be selected as per our guideline. The CNS will receive an honorarium Tk. 5,000 per month and a kit bag (which will include relevant communication materials for facilitating meetings) and umbrella. But please help them understand that the job will earn them honor and prestige in the community. It will give them valued identity and recognition in the community. So, honorarium is a courtesy from the project.
- If some women are interested in working as community nutrition scholars but because of their little children they cannot come to the training, the project will cover the cost for a care giver for those women.
- PNGOs staff will identify these women as a CNS in consultation with their families and local opinion leaders to avoid any conflict and complain.
- PNGO staff will identify and prepare a potential CNS list and submit these lists to Specialist Agricultural Research and Development of CIP-DDBIO. (Please plan accordingly the mentioned timeline by 15 March 2020.)
- Specialist Agricultural Research and Development will review the list and meet the interested/potential CNS and finalize the process (will identify 30 CNS following the mentioned timeline) duly involving the PNGO. After final selection, please finalize the list.
- Please notify the final/selected CNS, by April 1st week, 2020 about their 2 days residential training at upazila/district level venue. The details training schedule will circulate by 3rd week of March 2020. The CNS will complete group formation as per the guideline by April 2020.
- Candidates with cycle riding experience and having a cycle will be preferred on priority basis.
- The CNS candidates should be resident of working areas.
- Should have passed SSC level education. May be relaxed for experienced candidate.

### Finalization of CNS:

During the coronavirus pandemic DDBIO team has completed the all process to finalize the CNS. Following are the process:

- GUK circulated the CNS recruitment advertisement in locally on 26 February 2020.
- GUK received total 104 CVs from project working areas.
- DDBIO team short listed 84 CVs out of 104 according to the CNS selection criteria and arranged a written and viva test for the short-listed candidates that held on 16,17,29 June 2020 & 28 July,2020.
- Through the recruitment process DDBIO team has finalized the 28 candidates as a



CNS for different working areas. During the interview they maintained all type of precautions about coronavirus.

Following table presents the CNS details of 3 districts:

Name of District	Name of Upazila	Name of Union	Number of CNS	Remarks
Gaibandha	Sadar	Gadari	4	
		Badiakhali	2	
	Fulchhari	Konchipara	2	
		Uria	4	
Rangpur	Pirgachha	Chawla	2	
		Tambulpur	2	
	Kawnia	Tepa Modhupur	2	
		Balapara	2	
Kurigram	Sadar	Mogalbasha	2	
		Panchgachhia	2	
		Municipality	1	
	Rajarhat	Ghariaidanga	2	
		Rajarhat	1	
Grand Total			28	

### Training of Trainers (ToT) for CNS:

DDBIO team organized 3 days long intensive residential training of trainers (ToT) on “**Integrated Nutrition, Gender and M&E**” for the CNS. Two batches training was held on 16-18 and 19-21 September 2020 in Gaibandha.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Gaibandha Md Abdul Matin was inaugurated the training session on 19 September 2020 and commented that there is no alternative to consumption of vitamin A to build a fit and healthy body. All of us should eat Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute (BARI) promoted orange-fleshed sweet potato (OFSP) as it is the powerhouse of vitamin A which is helpful for building our human body. Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Gaibandha also thanked the authorities concerned for choosing the district for the implementation of the programme considering nutrition fulfillment of the people of the districts and the country as well.



Representative of Civil Surgeon of Gaibandha Dr. Md. Hafizur Rahman, MOCS, Gaibandha was inaugurated the training session on 16 September 2020 and appreciated this 'nutrition education' initiative from CIP and emphasize that OFSP should get more introduced to the rural level and include in the daily diet as it is very nutritious and could easily access by the people.



DDBIO team successfully handled the following activities to smoothly run the training:

- **Schedule:** DDBIO team finalized the schedule of ToT on **"Integrated Nutrition, Gender and M&E"** for the CNS.
- **Module:** DDBIO team also worked on ToT module and finalized it. Before training CIP has printed module, flipchart for the CNS's training purpose. Attached- CNS Training Module, Healthy Baby Toolkit Card, Flipchart.



CNS Training  
Module\_Final\_Sept'20



Healthy Baby Toolkit  
Card\_Final\_Sept'2020



Flipchart\_Final\_Sept'  
2020.pdf

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- **Training Session:** After enrolment, each CNS was attended a three-days long residential ToT on validated modules and receive IEC materials required for them to conduct nutrition education sessions.
- **Discussion Topics:** The training sessions discussed on the concepts of Food and nutrition; Types and causes of different types of malnutrition; Useful major micronutrients and ways to prevent micronutrient deficiency, including the role of OFSP in alleviating vitamin A deficiency; Appropriate cooking practices; Breast feeding and vaccination program (EPI) by the government; Complementary food; Healthy baby toolkit; Healthcare management for sick children; Safe motherhood; Precaution of pregnant women, care during pregnancy and lactation care for sick children; Mother care and equal food distribution; Homestead gardening; Personal health and hygiene, Monitoring etc. The training also covered the discussion of techniques of communication and facilitation of CNS as during some sessions CNSs shared the belief and traditional social practices especially on newborn care, pregnant and lactating mother nutritious food intake and care etc. In addition, role play and demonstration practice on food and nutrition, gender sensitive food distribution, cooking practice, essential nutrition action and hygiene was also part of the training.





- Pre and post evaluation: To assess the impact of training among the participants, pre and post evaluations were carried out and ranked on a scale of 0–20. It was found that the pretest lowest score was 8 in 1st batch and 9 in 2nd batch, and height score was 15 in 1st batch and 16 in 2nd batch. On the other hand, posttest lowest score was 11 in both batches, and height score was 18 in 1st batch and 19 in 2nd batch.
- Increase knowledge: In 1st batch 12 participants out of 13 increased their knowledge and in 2nd batch 14 participants out of 15 increased their knowledge.
- DDBIO team honored the CNS by token gift for their excellent performance in roleplay.
- After completion of the training, the CNSs will operate in their respective communities in Gaibandha, Rangpur and Kurigram districts for three months (01 October 2020 – 31 December 2020) and each CNS will work with about 100 women in five groups (20 women/group). Each group supposed to receive nutrition education in 12 sessions in three months. To address the family cooperation issue all CNS will also invite the husband or guardian of the women's family on the first day or orientation day of this education sessions. On that first day the CNS will provide an overview of the next three months discussions and provide effort to make them understand the importance of women participation in the nutrition education sessions.



### Training Closing:

During the coronavirus pandemic both training batches were completed successfully with the involvement of CIP personnel, GUK personnel, invited govt. official, BARI official and newly appointed young and energetic CNS. 1st batch training was officially closed by GUK official and DDBIO project personnel. On the other hand, 2nd batch training was officially closed by Deputy Director of Department of Agricultural Extension, Gaibandha.





## Responsibilities of CNS:

The key role of CNS in the DDBO project is to aware the community people about nutrition and hands-on education to insure it. CNS are the most important vehicle to disseminate the nutrition messages in the community's doorstep. Following are the main responsibility of CNS:

- Each CNS will identify 100 women from her respective community for each cycle (3 months) according to beneficiary selection criteria.
- CNS will fill up the final beneficiary form under her supervision.
- CNS will form 5 women groups and each group will consists of 20 women.
- CNS will invite the husband or guardian of the women's family on the first day or orientation day of this training or education sessions.
- Every month CNS will organize and facilitate 4 sessions in each group, so within 3 months she will conduct 12 sessions including introductory session in each group.
- CNS will facilitate 6 sessions with 6 groups in first 3 days and household visit another 3 days per week.
- She will visit all households in a month and aware them regarding nutrition and health of mother, child and adolescent girl, and gender issues. On the other hand, CNS will ensure sessions learning through the household visits and encourage them to practice these knowledges.
- CNS will involve during distribution of seed and OFSP vines among the women and will supervise ensure sowing of seeds & planting vines.
- CNS will support women for homestead gardening.
- CNS will coordinate with agriculture volunteer for better implementation of project activities.
- In association with concern field facilitator CNS will prepare monthly work plan and monthly progress report and submit to project coordinator.
- After ending every session, she will update the register and at the end of month she will fill up the monthly report and submit to concern supervisor.
- She will assist project coordinator to prepare case study or success story regarding problem and success or learning issues.
- Besides, CNS will agree to do any other tasks as program related designated by the project.

## Field activities start by CNS:

In DDBIO project 28 women are appointed as a CNS in July 2020 and started their activities at field level.

- 28 CNSs selected 2800 women from their respective communities and formed 140 women groups.



- They received 3 days long intensive training of trainers (ToT) on “**Integrated Nutrition, Gender and M&E**”
- They conducted orientation or introductory session with all women groups in October 2020.
- They completed 8 sessions in each group by November 2020. So, 140 groups received 8 sessions from CNSs.
- In the meantime, they visited individual household and encourage them to practice this knowledge.
- At least 11200 persons will know the nutrition messages through the CNS activities by December 2020.
- They also started the process of new beneficiary selection for another cycle for next 3 months January-March 2021.

