

Capacity Building Training for Community Nutrition Scholars (CNS) in Bangladesh

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**Development and Delivery of Biofortified Crops (DDBIO) at Scale Program
International Potato Center (CIP), Bangladesh**

Background and Justification

Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in the world. Chronic energy deficiency, protein-energy malnutrition, low birth weight, micronutrient deficiency are critical issues faced by Bangladeshi population. Although it affects people of all ages, the children, young women and adolescent girls are mostly affected. Of the various micronutrient deficiencies, vitamin A, iodine deficiency disorders, iron deficiency anemia are major concerns, imparting cognitive development in children and threatening life to pregnant women. Orange fleshed sweetpotato is a bio fortified food crops as it contained beta carotene with a good source of vitamin B, C, E and other minerals.

International Potato Center (CIP)-Bangladesh, under a multi-country DDBIO Program has been implementing the project activities to improved nutritional status of women of child-bearing age, adolescent girls, and children under five in northern district of Bangladesh. This program implemented in Bangladesh jointly with International Potato Center and Local Partner Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK).

Community Nutrition Scholars (CNS) - is a proven approach of CIP to combining nutrition education and counseling with nutrition-sensitive agricultural interventions like the introduction of Orange Fleshed Sweetpotato (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. To enable communities and specially women 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), who are trained as nutrition educators and work with and among mothers in their communities.

Considering this point of view, CIP initiates to select some educated Community Nutrition Scholars (CNS) who are interested to disseminate some selective topics on nutrition messages and provide technical support for homestead gardening.

Selection of CNSs:

CIP in association with partner organization Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK) gone through the comprehensive recruitment process and selected total 7 young women as 'Community Nutrition Scholars' from Fulchhari and Gabandha Sadar Upazila of Gaibandha district who were performed better in previous project activities. These CNSs were selected for disseminating nutrition messages targeting 1400 young mothers (each CNS covered 200 mothers).

The List of Community Nutrition Scholar are presented in following table-

Sl	Name of CNS	Working Area	Union	Upazila
1	Rubina Akter	Konchipara	Konchipara	Fulchhari
2	Azmeri Akter	Uttar Uria	Uria	Fulchhari
3	Lopa Akter	Modhayo Uria	Uria	Fulchhari
4	Ruzina Katun	Ratanpur	Uria	Fulchhari
5	Sandha Khatun	Badiakhali	Badiakhali	Gaibandha Sadar
6	Laili Khatuan	Gidari	Gidari	Gaibandha Sadar
7	MST Rozi Akter	Uttar Gidari	Gidari	Gaibandha Sadar

Capacity Building of CNSs:

CNS's activities are one of the most unique and essential part of DDBIO project in Bangladesh. CIP-DDBIO project organized a day long refreshers training of trainers (ToT) on “**Integrated Nutrition, Gender and M&E for Community Nutrition Scholars**”. The training was held in Training Hall Room, Gana Unnayan Kendra, Nashratpur, Gaibandha on 15 September 2021. The main objective of the training was to increase the knowledge of CNSs on nutrition, health & hygiene and improve their organizational and communications skills. The training was facilitated by CIP and GUK project personnel. Md. Monower Hossain, Consultant, CIP, Bangladesh was the key facilitator of the whole training.

DDBIO team successfully handled the following activities maintaining all type of precautions for Covid-19 pandemic to smoothly run the training:

Inaugural Session: Inaugural session, at first, Mr. Md Mahmudul Hassan, Project Coordinator, GUK deliberated welcome speech and introduced the participants. Then, Md. Monower Hossain, Consultant, CIP Bangladesh briefly described the training norms, goal and objective of the training. After that Mr. Aftab Hossain, Program Coordinator, Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK) had given valuable speech on importance of nutrition as well as duties and responsibilities of CNSs to the community people. After his speech, he lunched the day long training course.



Inaugurate by Program Coordinator, GUK

Training Need Assessment:

As all CNSs had been conducted previous nutrition messaging sessions for two cycles, so the facilitator asked the CNSs about their knowledge gaps during facilitation of courtyard meeting. The problems were listed down on poster paper and ranked the problems.

Major Discussion Topics:

In training sessions, need based issues 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 fighting 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 the 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.

Material Used During Training

Training materials are important tools for conducting training. The following modern training materials were used in the training course:

1. CNS Training Module
2. Flipchart
3. Health baby toolkit (Bowl, spoon and leaflet)
4. Multimedia
5. White board
6. Poster
7. Marker pen
8. Microphone
9. Video Player
10. Different monitoring tools
11. Lecture sheet etc.



CNS Presented the use of Healthy baby toolkit

Training Methodology

The effectiveness of training depends on its training method. The following training methods were used in training course:

1. Group discussion
2. Brain storming
3. Role play
4. Participatory discussion
5. Individual lecture presentation
6. Exercise



Lecture presentation and feed back

Lecture Presentation and Feedback

Each CNS presented her lecture on a specific topic. The observer observed their lecture and given logical feedback. The resource persons also observed the gesture, posture, pronunciation, eye contact, body movement, what type of training materials used etc. of a participant and given suitable feedback to become an effective trainer.

Closing Session

After successfully completing the training course Md. Aftaf Hossain, Program Coordinator of GUK briefly addressed and closed the course officially.



Closing Session

Duties of CNS after training:

After completion of the training, the CNSs will operate in their respective communities in Gaibandha, districts for three months (15 August 2021 – 15 November 2021) and each CNS will work with 200 women in six groups (30-25women/group). Each group supposed to receive nutrition education in 10 sessions in three months. To address the family cooperation issue, all CNSs will also invite the husbands or guardians 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.

Conclusion:

The participants were gathered valuable knowledge regarding nutrition activities and homestead gardening and increased their capacity to handle courtyard meetings and homestead visits. The training was fruitful to the participants. They were happy to participate in the training course. We hope this training will serve the purposes of nutritional improvement through project activities.