

Newsletter

ISSUE- JUNE 2022

Joint Action
for Nutrition
Outcome
(JANO)
project



Funded by
the European Union

With funding from
 Austrian
Development
Cooperation



Key Project Progress:

- **83,200** pregnant and lactating mothers, adolescent girls and boys reached with nutrition information through **13,764** courtyard session
- **423,267** (55% women) community people received information about nutrition, COVID 19 and hand washing through one to one counselling.
- **624** gender analysis sessions were conducted through volunteers and CSG members to identify the male engagement and gender barrier in the community.
- **100,000** COVID 19 Vaccination cards distributed to Civil Surgeon offices
- **5,431** community level and **912** school level GEMS (Gender Equity Movement in School) sessions have been conducted reaching **47,494** and **76,251** students (57% girls) respectively
- **325** Head Teachers received orientation on GEMS implementation in schools
- **2,545** (60% girls) students in **325** schools received training on climate smart gardening, child protection and their role to promote WASH, health and nutrition.
- **331** schools organized Annual Campaign in schools (debate, quiz, essay competition, day celebration) on health, hygiene and nutrition
- **12,9507** (64% female) community people benefitted from nutrition related awareness campaign through **1,044** Theater for Development (TfD) shows
- **16,062** (62% female) community people received nutrition related awareness messages through pico projector.
- **1,899** (31% female) Union Development Coordination Committee (UDCC) members in 64 unions received refresher training on nutrition planning.
- **144** (16% female) Upazila Nutrition Coordination Committee (UNCC) members in 7 Upazilas received training on multi-sectoral nutrition sensitive issues.
- **2** districts and **7** Upazilas developed the District Nutrition Action Plan
- **32** Community Score Card exercises have been conducted in **32** unions to measure community people's satisfaction on receiving services.
- **16,595** (70% women) farmers trained on climate-smart vegetable gardening and livestock management.
- **905** demonstration plots developed on homestead vegetable gardening, zinc rice, sweet potato and fodder cultivation
- **7** Farmers Field Day (FFD) organized at Upazila level on zinc rice and sweet potato.
- **875** (46% women) government frontline staff trained on different nutrition-specific and nutrition sensitive issues.
- **68** women entrepreneurs received technical and business development training from relevant Govt. departments and private sectors.
- **70** (50% women) entrepreneurs received training on vermicompost (organic fertilizer) production through Department of Agricultural Extension.

European Union visited JANO project activities

A team of European Union delegations, Meher Nigar Bhuiyan, Programme Manager, Resilient Livelihoods and Food Security and Nutrition, Margherita Capalbi, Programme Manager, Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, and Laura Cecchi, Programme Manager, Finance and Contracts visited various activities of Joint Action for Nutrition Outcome (JANO) project in Rangpur and Nilphamari from February 28 till March 01, 2022. The team visited Union Development Coordination Committee (UDCC), observed Community Support Group (CSG) and Community Clinic activities, different interventions in schools like adolescent club, climate smart vegetable gardening, Theater for Development (TFD) show etc. They also visited high value nutrition vegetable homestead garden, spoke with the project participants, and women entrepreneurs. The delegation team met District Nutrition Coordination Committee members and discussed overall updates on nutrition situation and district

annual nutrition plan. They were invited at DC office to meet the District Commissioner, Rangpur. Mr. Aamanur Rahman, Program Director-ERPP, CARE Bangladesh and Ms. Afroz Mahal, Director Program Management and Implementation, Plan International Bangladesh, Shahiduzaman ED of ESDO, and other regional colleagues from the JANO team joined the team during the visit.



Managing Director of Community Clinic health support trust visited JANO project interventions

JANO project is working to improve the operations of the Community Clinics (CC) in the project working areas. To observe the project activities and functionality of these CCs Mr. Tulsi Ranjan Saha, Managing Director (Additional Secretary to the Government of Bangladesh), Community Clinic Health Support Trust, MOH&FW along with his team visited JANO project areas in Rangpur and Nilphamari on March 9, 2022. The team observed the record keeping system, referral system, breast-feeding corner, seating facility and demo plot of vegetable garden. They also observed how the project is working with the Community Support Group (CSG), Community Group (CG), and Multi-Purpose Health Volunteers by integrating the CCs nutrition activities. Following the visit at Shamgonj Elahibazar and Uttar Shashi Community Clinic located in Taragonj, Rangpur and

Nilphamari Sadar respectively Mr. Saha said, "Strong coordination among CHCP, JANO volunteers, Multipurpose volunteers, Health Assistants, Family Welfare Assistants and CG has enabled the CC to provide an extraordinary service to the community. Also, the Nutrition Action Plan is creating an opportunity to track the activities undertaken by the CG." He emphasized on the nutrition garden initiative and suggested the CS and UH&FPO to replicate this model in other CCs. He also urged that other CCs should visit Uttara Shashi Community Clinic and try to adopt the operational method of this clinic as this is an exceptional example.

Later, Mr. Saha visited Community Support Group (CSG) and observed social mapping, CSG Nutrition planning, alignment with Union Parishad, progress

monitoring, service provider linkage, talking book, ICT apps etc. Acknowledging the work of the CSG he stated that, “All members of this CSG are example of how alternative leadership takes place at grass root level to serve the greater community regarding health and nutrition issues.” He asked the Civil surgeon, UH&FPO and UNO to extend this practice among the CSG beyond JANO’s working area. Finally, he concluded that, “I am taking the

learnings with me and I will initiate further discussion how this can be replicate nationally.” The visit was accompanied by Mr. Dr. Mohammad Jahangir Kabir, Civil Surgeon Nilphamari, Mr. Dr. Shameem Ahamed, Civil Surgeon Rangpur, government officer from Health and Family planning, UNO and other valued staff from JANO consortium.



Karate training: Developing self-esteem of student leaders through self-defense training

Karate training under the JANO project is designed for young girls’ students. It is helpful for physical fitness and increases the self-esteem of individuals. Self-defense training increases their confidence and ability to protect themselves by defying traditional gender norms and gender-based violence. A total of 175 adolescents participated in Karate Training in 7 batches under 7 Upazilas of Nilphamari and Rangpur districts from certified instructors. Each batch consists of 25 adolescent girls. This month, the Consultant has started to work on Video documentation and user guideline. The duration of the training is 32 days, 2 hours each day which will cover 32 sessions with more than 150 self-defense techniques. This self-defense karate training is building the confidence level of the girls.



eSBCC System for effective message dissemination

eSBCC platform is one of the key interventions of JANO project where various information is shared with the target participants via configured SMS service. The main objective of the eSBCC system is to develop and disseminate nutrition sensitive and nutrition specific messages among the targeted audience within the project area who have limited or no access to smart phones. The target group include adolescent girls and boys, pregnant women, lactating mothers, and mothers of children under 5 years of age. Another purpose of the intervention is to make the participants aware so, that they can apply the learnings from these SMS in their daily lives to overcome many health complications such as malnutrition, anemia, and blindness. This system will improve the overall nutrition status and create awareness at the individual and family level. Within the last six months, the project has disseminated approximately 30 nutrition sensitive and nutrition specific awareness messages to over 47 thousand

project participants. The eSBCC messaging service was proved to be a very reliable and useful tool for disseminating information during the global COVID-19 pandemic situation.



Amplio Talking Book: a new approach to SBCC

Talking book is an audio device that can hold a library of informational audio content in the form of songs, general speech and dramas to facilitate community learning. The audios are stored in an interactive manner guided by different icon-based buttons where a non-literate user can choose the topics that interest them most and replay content as often as they want. The Talking Book also collects usage statistics and user feedback, which helps implementing project to evaluate user engagement.

One of the primary focuses of JANO was to change the nutrition behavior of pregnant and lactating mothers, children under 5 & Adolescents so that they can internalize different nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive information. As a part of the technological interventions the project deployed 208 talking books through 208 community volunteers to influence the behavior and enhance the lives of the project participants by providing them with information pertaining to best practices.



The talking book is being used to disseminate messages on health and nutrition, wash and gender equality. The project developed a deployment guideline and trained volunteer on talking book operation. The volunteers are applying group approach to circulate the talking book messages and so far have reached more than 50,000 project participants with different nutrition related messages. .

JANO Food Fortification Study

JANO project recently commissioned a study titled *“Scoping of fortified and nutritious food products for the targeted households and strengthening the distribution network to the last mile”* with research support from ICDDR,B one of the most renowned research organizations in Bangladesh.

The objectives of the study were to-

- Understand the perceived benefits and disadvantages of fortified food (FF) consumption
- Capture the perceived incremental cost of fortified vs. non-fortified foods
- Identify the incremental cost families would be willing to spend to obtain benefits from FF
- Understand the perceptions about FF sellers
- Identify the constraints and opportunities from suppliers' perspective (both public and private) for last-mile reach/distribution of fortified and nutritious food products.

This study explored attitudes, preferences, knowledge, and practices related to fortified food products and fortified product supply chain actors. This assessment has also identified reasons for influencing consumers' decisions to purchase fortified and non-fortified foods.

Key findings:

- Only 41% of respondents had heard about fortified food, and among them 52% did not know the process of food fortification.
- Despite the increased cost, respondents were willing to spend 107 BDT (approximately \$1.23 USD) per week for Vitamin A fortified oil and 15 BDT (\$0.17 USD) for iodized salt per week in addition to the regular household expense.
- Less than half of respondents (48.9%) were using other fortified food in addition to

iodized salt.

- Affordability was reported as one of the primary barriers to consuming fortified foods. In addition to this, several other factors influenced fortified food purchase and consumption: lack of availability in markets, decision-making power between men and women within the household, knowledge about adulteration, lack of trust in fortified food products, and input from relatives.
- Mass media, relatives and neighbors, and the fortified food suppliers are the major source of information in areas where community health workers and community mobilization programs are not playing a major role in raising awareness about the importance of fortified food.

Recommendations:

- Although the target population comprises pregnant and lactating women and adolescents, husbands and **household heads should also be informed** of micronutrient deficiencies and ways to address it.
- Community-based **social behavior change interventions** are needed to increase awareness and better involve individuals, families, and communities to promote the use of fortified food.
- Consumer motivation **activities at market level** should be done by local government agencies through the orientation of retailers.
- Work with the existing community mobilization team (e.g., Community Support Group) to **inspire mothers and husbands at the household level** through sensitization and promotion on the use of fortified foods.

- Work at the market level with market committees **to establish a system for continuous monitoring** to address the trust issues about artificial fortified food components.
- **Engage relevant government** departments ensuring the food safety should monitor the issue of food adulteration.
- Advocacy to government should be emphasized to **develop or modify policies** to involve TCBS in the supply chain to distribute subsidized fortified foods in the rural areas.
- Private investors/distributors should consider making the fortified foods (e.g., vitamin A soybean oil, iodized salt) available in affordable sizes with subsidized prices to **reach the last mile** as a corporate social responsibility.



Annual Reflection and Learning Workshop

JANO project organized three days long Annual Reflection and Learning Workshop from 28 March 2022 to 31 March, 2022 at Cox's Bazar. Deputy Country Director (DCD) Program, CARE Bangladesh, Mr. Ram Das inaugurated the session. Senior Management from CARE BD, Plan International BD and ESDO were present in the workshop and delegates from European Union, CARE Austria and Country Director of CARE Bangladesh joined virtually.

The key objectives of the workshop were to-

- Share overall reflection and learnings from last year
- Develop strategies for documentation and communication for advocacy and policy influence
- Capture good practices and areas of improvement
- Emphasize learning on program quality and sustainability

Representatives from Bangladesh National Nutrition Council (BNNC) and private sector participated in an interactive panel discussion session on 'public-private coordination and collaboration to strengthen nutrition governance in JANO' during the workshop.



Climate smart gardening for improved nutrition and safe environment

JANO project supported the establishment of 730 homestead vegetable gardening demonstration plots applying climate-smart techniques in collaboration with Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) and the private sector (ACI Seed). DAE has provided technical assistance and the private sector has provided input support (seeds for 227 demo plots). More than 12,595 farmers, including CSG members, were able to learn about cultivating highly nutritious vegetables at their homestead applying climate-smart agricultural techniques through training and process demonstrations. Farmers practice techniques includes vegetable cultivation in raised bed, use of organic fertilizer, crop diversification, intercropping and mulching.

Sonali Begum from Gangachara, Rangpur is one of the demonstration homestead gardeners who received technical information from DAE and seeds from ACI Seed. She said, "JANO project has given me access to technical assistance, quality inputs and solutions for my agricultural needs. I learned new techniques of homestead gardening. Now I can cultivate



vegetables in my homestead throughout the year." Sonali's garden motivated other CSG members and the community to learn and adopt climate-smart practices to produce vegetable at their homesteads or other fallow land. Besides producing vegetables, Sonali managed to produce 500 grams of spinach seed which helped her plan ahead for year-round vegetable gardening. Sonali has become a role model for promoting knowledge and improved agriculture practices in the community.



The year-round vegetable cultivation process is contributing to improved nutrition for the community. In year four, around 1,432 homestead vegetable gardens have been replicated by the CSG members and community people. JANO looks forward to keep supporting enthusiastic personas like Sonali who dreams of weaving a beautiful future for her family and the community.

School Rooftop Garden: an initiative to strengthen local nutrition

It has become a common scene at the Panga Girls High School to see that the students are working in the school rooftop garden. This interesting journey began about 3 years back when the school authority set up a roof top garden for the beautification of the school premises. After a year, in the midst of blooming flowers, Joint Action for Nutrition Outcome (JANO) planted the seed of healthy diet in the mind of the school authority stating, they should also promote healthy eating and nutrition for all.

With JANO project's support, Panga Girls High School adopted the School-Based Gardening program where the students learned about different gardening techniques, crop cultivation process including crop bed size, different crop seasons, food value and nutrients. With the help of their agriculture teacher Sukumar Roy, the students are now cultivating eggplant, chili, spinach, bitter gourd, bottle gourd, long bean, ladies' finger, capsicum etc. in the rooftop garden. Many students are replicating their learnings and



practicing homestead gardening with their parents. Being an innovative approach, the School-Based Gardening grabbed good attention of the community.

Anni Moni, a student from 8th grade said, "I enjoy growing these vegetables as they are healthy. I feel delighted when I have my own cultivated vegetables and share them with my friends and family." Reflecting on the scope of this initiative, Mr. Sukumar Roy (agriculture teacher) shared, "It is very appreciable that students are being taught about cultivation at such an early age. They participate enthusiastically and engage in the process although it's not a part of the school syllabus. I believe this this will have a positive impact on strengthening nutrition status in the community and help the students understand the value of food."

JANO project is implementing the innovative School-Based gardening model in 331 schools in Rangpur and Nilphamari districts. The project is dedicatedly working with the passionate adolescent groups who aim to bring in positive changes such that malnutrition becomes a myth in tomorrow's society.

Girls' Cycle Race at school to break gender stereotype

According to our patriarchal social concept, girls are expected to undertake activities at home and outside, as chosen by the patriarch of the home. But things are changing with time. People now have a different mindset. Small, out of the box initiatives create great impact in the society and bring about a change in people's mind. Girls' Cycle Race at school is one such initiative.

JANO has initiated Girls' Cycle Race at schools through annual sports activity within its working area, with the aim to promote gender equality and gender friendly environments at schools and throughout the community. In this particular event, adolescent girls participate in a cycle race, which was previously not common in the society. In our society, cycling is an activity for boys and girls would often be restricted from doing so by the family. But JANO believes in gender equality and is working to change ideas and practices that promote gender inequality and gender bias.

To achieve its target, JANO arranged cycle rallies in schools to raise awareness about girls' rights and the need for gender equality. But the community was either not interested or discouraged the events by stating "girls do not ride bicycles" "cycle race is not for girls" or even "the girls are not

comfortable with riding bicycles". But when the rally was finally held, it presented a different scenario. The people who were initially against the idea of cycle race for girls were amazed at the confidence and enthusiasm of the girls participating in the race. JANO staff member Shima, a school volunteer from Jaldhaka shared her experience by stating "When I first approached the school authority about arranging this event, they were concerned that the girls will not participate in the race. But I took it as a challenge and completed the event successfully with 20 girls participating in the race, which was praised by the same school authority".

After the event, the girls as well as their family members had a more positive outlook about cycling as it saves both time and money, is easy to maintain, helps the user remain fit and most importantly, gives the girls a confidence boost. "I have always wanted to ride a bicycle but my parents forbade me to even think about it. But after I participated in the race and my parents understood the concept of gender equality and equal opportunities, they have allowed me to ride a bicycle." Says Ayesha, a student who participated the cycle race arranged by JANO.



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