SHOUHARDO III Program

Strengthening Household Ability to Respond to Development Opportunities (SHOUHARDO) III is a food security program funded by United States Agency for International Development (USAID) along with a non-match contributory funding by the Government of Bangladesh (GoB). The program is funded for a five year period (September 2015-September 2020) with a goal to achieve improved gender equitable food and nutrition security and resilience of the vulnerable people living in the Char and Haor in Bangladesh by 2020. It is implemented in partnership with six national Partner Non-Government Organizations (PNGOs) who deliver all the activities with technical support from CARE. The integrated and multi-sectoral program includes activities that together increase agricultural productivity and household incomes; enhance maternal and child nutrition and health status; build household and communal resilience to disasters; achieve women and youth empowerment and improve public service delivery to rural communities. The program is designed to reach poor and extremely poor people living in the program areas covering 8 districts in Northern Bangladesh. To strengthen this program 13 ministries of GoB are active through performing as a member of national level Program Advisory and Coordination Committee (PACC) and contributing at national level.

Program Goal

“Improved gender equitable food and nutrition security and resilience of the vulnerable people living in the Char and Haor in Bangladesh by 2020.”
Message from Chief of Party

How quickly time flies! It is already more than one year since I joined the world acclaimed USAID funded SHOUHARDO III program implemented by CARE in Bangladesh. I look back with a sense of pride and gratitude to the work the program has covered over the last 15 months. Much of it refining our implementation plans and strategies that though tedious and painstaking at times was necessary to set us off on this ambitious journey.

I feel privileged to work as Chief of Party among equals, a dedicated and committed staff and partners who individually and collectively are the drivers of change among our participant communities. At a personal level I couldn’t ask for more. As we have overcome hurdle after hurdle we have come out of it better, stronger and with a greater resolve to see the program deliver lasting impact and change in the communities we serve.

This first Newsletter of SHOUHARDO III program provides you information about our stakeholders, a brief on our program design, key actions and immediate outputs of the program’s first year. The program sincerely appreciates the generous support of participant communities; government; partner and peer NGOs; CARE Bangladesh and International; and the generosity and technical support of the United States Government and the GoB. We believe our interventions will not be effective without the collaboration we are jointly making from the very beginning.

I hope you will enjoy reading this newsletter and be enlightened about SHOUHARDO III program’s interventions and results. We also appreciate your thoughts or new idea we may replicate within our program.

Best regards,

Walter Mwasaa

(Walter Mwasaa is an accomplished Food Security and Livelihoods worker with a keen interest in resilience and youth livelihoods. He has managed both development and emergency large scale programs in Africa. He has Bachelor’s Degree in Computer Science, a Master's Degree in Development Studies and currently pursuing a Doctorate in Development Studies.)

SHOUHARDO III Purposes

Purpose 1: Increased equitable access to income for both women and men, and nutritious food for women, men, boys and girls.

Purpose 2: Improved nutritional status of children under five years of age, pregnant and lactating women and adolescent girls.

Purpose 3: Strengthened gender equitable ability of people, households, communities and systems to mitigate, adapt to and recover from man-made and natural shocks.

Purpose 4: Increased women empowerment and gender equity at family and community level.

Purpose 5: Provision and utilization of public services (i.e. Local Elected Bodies & Nation Building Departments) for communities especially for poor and extremely poor women increased.
Formative Studies and Program Integration

SHOUHARDO III is designed as an integrated program. Outputs and outcomes are designed to be mutually re-enforcing to other Purpose Area outcomes. None of the outcome pathways are “stand-alone”, and continuous interaction is implied within and across purposes. Moreover, the findings from the Value Chain Analysis, Social and Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) Formative Analysis and Gender Analysis, SHOUHARDO III Theory of Change, and outputs from the Integration Workshop’s discussions form the basis of a program integration analysis and proposed actions.

As a part of the integration process, SHOUHARDO III held a program integration workshop over two days in October, 2016 with partner NGO Managers, peer organization representatives, Purpose area Coordinators, CARE Bangladesh Directors, and CARE USA Technical Advisors that have provided support to the program since the design phase. The objectives of the workshop were to identify areas of convergence or support among the Purposes, demonstrate how these convergences are acted out or supported, and identify integration gaps within and between purposes.

Program Start-Up Activities

Couple of the months in the first year, the program continued to focus on program operational start-up activities with more field-level focus such as identification and selection of program participants, revision/modification of program guidelines, and capacity enhancement of CARE and PNGO staff. At beginning the program organized a start-up workshop. The key objective of the workshop was to develop a common understanding on SHOUHARDO III interventions, strategies and compliances with four specific objectives related to staff performance, mission support and inter-projects coordination, and managing partnership for better result. The workshop was attended by colleagues from CARE USA, CARE Bangladesh, and the implementing partner NGOs of the program.

The program has completed a number of scheduled tasks, namely: Well Being Analysis and program participant selection, commencement of a census survey and beneficiary household data entry, several trainings for equipping field staff, development of modules, guidelines, warehouse selection and finalization, and the selection of volunteers.

In December 2016 the program also signed an agreement with Bank Asia to provide money transfer services for program participants at the same time creating opportunities for them to open bank accounts and get non-exploitative loans.

Signature of Host Country Agreement

The Host Country Agreement was signed between GoB and CARE Bangladesh for SHOUHARDO III program on June 28, 2016. The document was signed by Mr. Abdul Malek, Secretary of the Local Government Division of the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Cooperatives on behalf of the Government of Bangladesh and Mr. Berhanu Moreda, Acting Country Director on behalf of CARE Bangladesh. The Honorable Minister for the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Cooperatives, Mr. Khandker Mosharrar Hossain, MP graciously attended the signing ceremony. The Honourable Minister noted with appreciation the impact of the program’s previous phases and expressed his desire to see the new phase improve the livelihoods of the poor and extreme poor through multiple interventions as set forth in the program document. Simultaneously, he urged the donor community to come up with additional similar programs assuring of full government support for them.

Following this the program held its first Program Advisory and Coordination Committee (PACC) meeting which approved the functions and mandate of the committee and mandated, Divisional, District and Upazila level committees to hold their own initial meetings. Moreover, sub-grant agreements for the implementation of the program were signed on 30th of June 2016 between six partner NGOs and CARE Bangladesh. Respective Executive Directors from DAM, ESDO, MJSKS, NDP, POPI & SKS and Mr. Berhanu Moreda, Acting Country Director, CARE Bangladesh, signed these sub-grant agreements.
In northern Bangladesh a relatively big flood occurred in July 2016 compared to 2015 and affected the poor and extreme poor households. CARE Bangladesh responded in the most of the affected Districts in Kurigram, Bogra and Jamalpur Districts with emergency food and cash support from the START and CHAF funds used from other CARE emergency response projects. As the affected people were suffering from lack of shelter, utensils and other essential non-food items, the SHOUHARDO III program complemented this support with non-food items to 3500 households in Kurigram Sadar of Kurigram District and Sariakandi Upazila of Bogra District as humanitarian response that helped the affected people in providing immediate shelter and other Non-Food Item (NFI) support. The NFI support covered approximately 16,478 people of which almost 50% are women and girls. The response has also been reached to 3,000 more households affected by flood in Kurigram and Jamalpur Districts.

SHOUHARDO III Program Structure Review

SHOUHARDO III predecessor phases achieved global recognition for results in women empowerment and for its impact on nutrition. To further enhance this impact and align program to its changing context and focus areas, a program structure review was conducted. The purpose was to review the SHOUHARDO III staffing functions and structure, to identify gaps and areas to be aligned and to make recommendations for functional and structural alignment to enable SHOUHARDO III in achieving its goal.

Drawing on the findings, three interconnected recommendations came out from the structure review. The first is to revise the current functions & structure: (a) to remove overlap and inefficiencies and to increase ownership and accountability; (b) to achieve the coherence demanded of the design (strategically layered, sequenced, and integrated); and (c) to promote an equitable and enabling workplace. These changes have result in some downsizing, but leads to efficiencies and free up resources to support quality assurance and learning both within CARE and within the partners. The second is to establish a more intentional learning agenda that also promotes collaboration across functions. The third is to move beyond ‘stand-alone training’ to a deeper understanding of capacity development linked to performance metrics.

Afterwards, a Program Strategy Discussion Meeting was organized with the Partner NGOs to share a summary of the functional review report. CoP of SHOUHARDO III program presented a summary of the key aspiration of CARE on partnerships with Partner NGOs that CARE conducted on SHOUHARDO III program. Participants were then invited to reflect on the implications of the review for SHOUHARDO III present functional structure.
Key Achievements

October 2015 - September 2016

- Receipt of 32,480 MT of wheat for Monetization and 4,295 MT for Direct Distribution.
- Completion of:
  - Vulnerability Mapping/ Well Being Assessment and Household Census Survey.
  - Master Program Participants List (MPPL) finalized.
- Completion of Gender, Value Chain and Social Behavior Change Communication Studies.
- Set up of community level implementation groups
  - 862 Village Development Committees formed; Community Action Plan Conducted in 862 Villages and Community Value Chain Analysis in 136 villages; 182 Empowerment Knowledge And Transformative Action (EKATA) groups formed; 120 youth groups formed.
- Training for
  - 2,156 farmers on Comprehensive Homestead Development; 2,959 participants on Income Generating Activities (IGA).
  - 2,824 Volunteers (954 –Community Agriculture Volunteers 429 – Union Disaster Volunteers 953 – Community Health Volunteers and 488 – Community Empowerment Volunteers).
  - 1,074 Court Yard Sessions on health, hygiene and nutrition.
- 120 low cost household latrines and 11 drainage culverts constructed.

Hosting Program Visitors

In January 2016 the Gender and Youth Adviser of USAID/FPF and SHOUHARDO III USAID/ Bangladesh Mission Program Activity Manager visited previous SHOUHARDO II working areas in Sirajganj and Bogra to review some of the work done with the EKATA groups. In their feedback they mentioned the successful model and its impact, and challenged CARE to think about the sustainability of the EKATA model.

In December 2016 Mr. Tofayel Alam, Program Activity Manager from USAID Dhaka office visited program areas in Sirajganj, Gaibandha and Kurigram Districts to review start up activities. In the same month Kumkum Kashiparekh, CARE USA Program Coordinator visited Kishoreganj program office and one village, and attended commodity distribution.

In the same month Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Disaster Management & Relief, Mohammad Hussain, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Food, Ayatul Islam, Acting Director, OFDHA, USAID, Tom Love, Senior Advisor, Food Security and Disaster Management, OFDHA, USAID Ms. Shahnaz Zakaria, along with other senior officials from GoB paid visit to Chittagong to meet the officials of Directorate General of Food, Chittagong giving an overview on monetization shipment management and observed the monetization wheat commodity offloading operations. Zubaidur Rahman, Resource Management Coordinator form SHOUHARDO III program and senior officials from Nobo Jatra Program, World Vision Bangladesh were also present during the visit.
Community-led Roadside Vegetable Plantation

The community people of Jamaler School Par Village, under Ghorialdanga Union in Kurigram District, became united in using common resources, through a mile long roadside vegetable cultivation in their community as a quick-win initiative of SHOUHARDO III.

This is a way to cover shortfalls in food production through the establishment of vegetable or fruit plantations at community level. Quick-win is short, cost effective initiative planned and run directly by a community to address a previously identified problem. Community members cover the costs associated with the activity through very small cash inputs, in kind donations of materials or through the provision of free labor.

To initiate the process, the villagers, with a facilitation by the program, were gathered together to discuss the possible way to do vegetable cultivation jointly and in a short time. They felt such an initiative, will be beneficial for the poor vulnerable households in the community. Both side of the roads they planted seasonal vegetables like bottle gourd, sweet gourd and bean. These vegetables were selected for the nutritional input they would provide to the households as well as additional income they could generate by selling at local markets.

In the beginning it was not smooth or trouble-free as because there were no cost-free arable land within the village. Later, the community people planned to utilize the roadside area for vegetable cultivation. Through respective ward member, they communicated with the Union Parishad to get prior approval and support to do so. They also shared about the initiative with the household members who owned the lands besides the roadside. Community established a system of collecting funds to purchase seeds. Eleven villagers came forward agreed with an amount of BDT 20 each and one of them collected the money. Other more economically well-off households provided higher amount of money to cover the costs. Poor and extremely poor households unable to provide cash inputs provided raw materials including bamboo, wicker, rope and labor.

The Agriculture Officer paid visit to the village and became surprised seeing the community initiative on their own. The Officer appreciated their idea and promised that he will make regular visit to this village to provide time to time technical support. He also planned to propose few names from the village to have training on agriculture offered by the Upazila Agriculture Office. This very first quick-win ended up with formation of a Village Development Committee (VDC), involving promising Natural Leaders within the community, to address other problems through implementing the community action plan with the support of community people. Like Morzina, aged 56, other community people feel like they never had this strong solidarity that they have now. Achieving quick win initiative collectively have tied community people together and built solidarity among them which will definitely be a weapon to fight against poverty and ensure food for all.