

# NUTRITION

## Awareness Blooming

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## BleNGS Project

BleNGS is a multisector nutrition project aiming at improving maternal and child nutrition of 153,825 nutritionally vulnerable families (1,701,100 people) in Jamalpur and Sherpur districts, and strengthen health and nutrition service delivery systems through a pro-poor governance model.

With the support from the European Union, and the Australian Government through Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP), BleNGS project is being implemented by a consortium of national and international development entities—Unnyan Sangha (US), International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI-HarvestPlus, USA), Institute of Development Studies (IDS, University of Sussex, UK), and World Vision (Bangladesh, Australia and the UK).

## Talk of transformation

Changing behaviour of family practices and old beliefs on maternal and child healthcare is difficult, yet significantly important to bring long lasting impacts to get healthy mothers, children and eventually build a stronger nation.

BleNGS project is working in Jamalpur and Sherpur to make nutrition champions with good practices who are also being followed by their neighbours. We feel honoured to be the direct witness of these changes and we want you to be as well.

This is the second newsletter of the BleNGS project. This newsletter aims to give you a

brief idea of the transformation that is happening in the root level everyday. We brought here few of the hundreds of good news that include event reports, updates of programme interventions and impact stories. We are welcoming you to go through the newsletter and share your thoughts. We hope your support and prayers for the champion families and communities will be continued since they are the real heroes of the process of change.

Thank you.

**Dr. Mary Rashid**

Team Leader, BleNGS Project

## Spotlight on Key Events

### Orange the World: End Violence Against Women Now

#### Football Match for Adolescent Girls

World Vision and Unnayan Sangha under the BleNGS project organized programs marking the 16 Days Activism campaign against gender-based violence from 25th November to 10 December 2021 in six sub-districts of Jamalpur and Sherpur districts with the theme "Orange the World: End Violence Against Women Now."

The campaign organised football matches for adolescent girls, discussion sessions for women and men, and participated in government events in order to promote awareness about the importance of stopping violence against women and children. Adolescent girls' football matches in schools were notable among all other programs.





In Jamalpur and Sherpur districts, the project helped to organise six football matches for adolescent girls in partnership with school administrations. In six matches, the girls scored 17 goals! Around 2,900 individuals attended the matches and took part in the discussion sessions, which included government officials, local community leaders, religious leaders, teachers, and members of the community.

One of the football match players Punnya said, "Football is a popular game in Bangladesh. Thanks for arranging the match for us. We had obstinacy at the beginning of the game, however, it was gone after few minutes when we started playing. It helped us to prove our capacity to the community." She added, "Still discrimination between boys

and girls remains in the society. I think if leaders, teachers, parents come together, the discrimination against women will end from our society."

Singarbaruna Union Parishad chairman Mostain Billah said, "Importance of elimination of discrimination between men and women has been increased among community people through the program. The program contributed to implement the government's law to end violence against women and girls."

The project also organized discussion sessions for 202 adolescent clubs, 247 sessions for producer and MenCare groups, and 219 meetings for Infant and Young Child Feeding groups as part of the campaign.



# A joint endeavour to develop Multi-Sector Annual District Nutrition Plan



World Vision Bangladesh and Bangladesh National Nutrition Council sign to strengthen Multi-Sector Nutrition Platforms at Jamalpur and Sherpur district to improve nutrition governance on 29th December, 2021.

Bangladesh National Nutrition Council (BNNC) and BleNGS project jointly organised two workshops in Sherpur and Jamalpur on the 31st of January and the 30th of March, respectively, to develop multi-sector annual district nutrition plan in an effective and coordinated manner. Over 40 members of the District Nutrition Coordination Committee (DNCC) in Sherpur and 45 from Jamalpur attended the event.

The multi-sector annual district nutrition plan will reflect the commitment of the Bangladesh government and all like-minded nutrition stakeholders to work together more effectively in a coordinated manner.

In Sherpur district's workshop, Md. Mominur Rashid, Deputy Commissioner of Sherpur as

chairperson, Dr. Zubaida Nasreen, Director General as chief guest, Dr. Md. Khalilur Rahman, former Director General, BNNC as a special guest, Dr. Anupam Bhattacharjee, Civil Surgeon and many other government officials and staffs from BleNGS project were present.

In Jamalpur, Morsheda Zaman, Deputy Commissioner of Jamalpur as chairperson, Dr. Zubaida Nasreen, Director General, BNNC as a chief guest, and Dr. Pronoy Kanti Das, Civil Surgeon, Jamalpur and many other government officials and staffs from BleNGS project were present.

Later BNNC representatives also visited two community clinics in Jamalpur Sadar and observed overall activities of Ganeshpur and Uttor Koidola community clinics.



# Rooting health-nutrition practices through interactive popular theatre



Adolescent boys and girls are performing dramas on adolescent health, nutrition and effects of child-marriage in their communities. From December '21 to April '22, 15 groups of adolescents staged 41 dramas in their communities.

They've learnt the skills of writing scripts on social issues and staging the drama from the BleNGS project supported 5-day residential training on Interactive Popular Theatre.

Total 195 adolescents (Girls- 123 and Boys- 72) were trained in the training under six upazilas of Jamalpur and Sherpur districts.

IPT show member Sadia Shurovi said, "We should stage nutrition focused drama theatres more. This is mass awareness building drama show, many people get to know about their misconceptions on health and nutrition, superstitions about adolescent age practices. We are showing the impacts of the bad and good practices."

She add, "We hope, if we do this type of drama shows more and more, the bad practices will reduce, and mother and children will get good care."



# Adolescent girls stopped child marriage



“I did not want to be a victim of child marriage. It would have been most costly mistake of my life if I had been married-off at the age of 13.” Mitu says. “I am grateful to my club members who stood beside me. My life might have been ruined if they hadn't stepped forward sooner.” Mitu is from a village of Sherpur district whose parents decided to married her off at 13.

She learned about the harmful effects of the child marriage and government laws from the adolescent club. She and her friends now know how to fight against injustice that they learnt from club activities supported by BleNGS project.

In the adolescent clubs girls discuss if they face any problems and work together to solve the problems, e.g. bad effects of child-marriage, necessity of food and nutrition for adolescents, and importance of education for girls.

Like Mitu and her friends, the project is working with 15,687 adolescent girls forming 672 Adolescent Clubs who are playing active role to stop child marriage and improve nutritional status of adolescent girls in their communities in six upazilas of Jamalpur and Sherpur districts.

## Nutrition Graduation- livestock support to extreme poor families



To improve livelihood & nutrition status through tackling the poverty, the project has distributed 970 goatlings among 485 extreme poor women under nutrition graduation. Among the distributed goatlings in Year 3 & 4, it has been observed that 16% goats had given birth and 331 extreme poor families gave goat milk to their children which is nutritious as well as healthy.

The community development facilitators (CDF) coordinated 23 trainings in this reporting quarter, with 1,858 extreme poor women to increase their productivity of seed

and goatlings since they received the seed and goatlings from the project. CDFs were also monitoring the progress of the extreme poor and poor families who were distributed seed in previous year and they have produced high nutritious vegetables and consumed. The training included goat rearing, goatling shed construction, quarantine period management, immunisation, and homestead gardening. Upazila Agricultural department and Livestock department supported to conduct these trainings with providing technical support.



“Goat-milk tastes delicious!” Hena from Jhenaigati upazila says. She milks from the goat that recently gave birth. She gets little amount of milk, but it can be mixed with water for boiling to drink enough for all family members.

“It gives us additional nutrition in my current pregnancy and my adolescent girl and boy also can drink goat milk. We have no cow, so it fills our need of milk and saves our money.”



## Arohi is a healthy child now!



“Now I cook and feed my younger child balanced and diversified food, hence her overall growth is improving, being a mother this is the most beautiful thing in my eyes.” Asma Begum said. Asma is mother of Arohi, a 12 months old baby who was suffering from severe malnutrition (Severe Acute Malnutrition).

Arohi was skinny and used to dislike meals. When Ruksana, the Community Nutrition Promoter (CNP) visited her, she noticed

Arohi's weight and MUAC (Mid-Upper Arm Circumference) were significantly below the standard and she immediately recommended her to visit local Community Clinic.

Initially, her family denied that Arohi had any health issue, claiming she was a healthy baby. They consented to visit the community clinic after series of counselling. The Community Health Care Provider (CHCP) of the community clinic referred her to the Jamalpur Sadar Hospital where later, she received intensive treatment with several medicines, her family members were also counselled. World Vision personnel also visited her multiple times to assess her overall condition. Arohi was also registered in a PD health session last month, which helps malnourished children's health to improve.

Now Arohi is more interested in taking daily meals and she seems happier than before!

## Insights from Civil Surgeon

Dr. Anupam Bhattacharjee, Civil Surgeon, Sherpur district

“On behalf of Sherpur district's health department, I thank World Vision for contributing to improve maternal and child health and nutrition besides the government of Bangladesh.

They work in the district and upazila nutrition coordination committee meetings, support in the community clinics, work with adolescent's health and nutrition and build awareness of communities about health and nutrition through establishing groups.

We will continue our work on health and nutrition with our frontline staff even if the project ends. Good is that, World Vision has been working to strengthen our field health staff's skills as well.

Multi-sector District Nutrition Annual Plan development is another aspect where World Vision is also supporting. Recently we did a workshop together. When this plan will be finalized and implemented, mothers and children of the district will be more benefitted.”



# BleNGS Accomplishment

(Dec'21 - April'22)

## Improved nutrition and hygiene practices of mothers and children U5



**28,464** pregnant and lactating Women, husbands and mothers-in-laws received counselling (ttC)

**18,678** mothers participated in IYCF sessions

**9,018** mothers participated in Cooking & Feeding Demonstration

## Life-skills for Adolescents



**35** school taskforce committees trained

**11,380** adolescent girls participated in group sessions

**41** dramas staged by 15 groups of adolescents

## Producer Groups



**600** producer groups received cash support to establish community learning plots and start small business

**31** collection points established to sell the products

**1,537** demonstration plots of bio-fortified crops established

## Nutrition Graduation



**485** extreme poor families received 970 goatlings

**1,858** extreme poor women received training on gardening and goat rearing

## MenCare Groups



1,053 MenCare Sessions with 10,153 members

1651 MenCare orientation for religious leaders

## Multi-Sector Nutrition Governance



Supported **224** Community Groups of Community Clinics

Organized **2** multi-sector annual district nutrition plan workshops

Conducted 2 DNCC and 7 UNCC meetings



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