



## SHOUHARDO III Annual Report FY2021 Learning Brief

### Introduction

Strengthening Household Ability to Respond to Development Opportunities (SHOUHARDO) III is a Resilience Food Security Activity (RFSA) funded by the United States Government through the United States Agency for International Development/Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA), with complementary funding from the Government of Bangladesh (GoB). SHOUHARDO III is a multi-sectoral program that addresses food and income insecurity, maternal and child health and nutrition, and women's and youth empowerment. It seeks to improve access to public services for the rural poor while building their resilience capacities. It is implemented through six Partner Non-Government Organizations (PNGOs) covering eight target districts in northern Bangladesh that receive technical support from CARE. The Annual Report (AR) for the Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) covers interventions and results for the period of 1 October 2020 to 30 September 2021.

FY21 is the first year of SHOUHARDO III's Extension (S3X) period. In this phase, which includes the subsequent year, the program focuses on two areas: (1) testing, identifying, and promoting service provision models by public, private, and community-based organizations and service providers; and (2) mobilizing communities to engage with these local service providers (LSPs) to ensure a sustained benefit. The program invested resources and efforts even before the S3X period to ensure a smooth transition and implementation of planned activities on the ground to maximize results in its final years.

For nearly five months in FY21 (April to August) the Government of Bangladesh imposed a strict country-wide lockdown due to a surge in COVID-19 cases that compelled the program team to postpone the implementation of activities on the ground because of restrictions on traveling and closing of all offices. Despite the tremendous challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic in FY21, the program was able to achieve some significant results and overcame a number of key challenges.



### Highlights of Compelling Program Achievements (as per PaBS, FY21)

Indicator	FY21 Result	FY20 Result
Number of beneficiaries who reported increased access to targeted public services	80.2 (132,142 out of the 129,500 target)	74.9
Percentage of people in target areas with access to improved sanitation facilities	86.9 (out of 70 target)	65.7
Women's Dietary Diversity Score (WDDS)	6.38 (out of 6.4 target)	6.2
Percentage of HHs using health and nutrition services in past 12 months	64.4 (out of 65 target)	62.7
Percent of married women (Aged 15-49) whose husbands helped with household tasks	85.1 (no target, but baseline result was 36.9)	70.3

86.9 percent of people in the operational areas had access to improved sanitation facilities. It was the result of increased demand and supply for the improved latrines. SHOUHARDO III conducted awareness sessions in the communities as well as sold latrines in remote locations through sanitation entrepreneurs. Different WASH stakeholders also provided support towards attaining this success (especially for those who couldn't afford latrine at their own cost).

It is worth noting that, despite many losses due to COVID-19, the program managed to maintain the dietary diversity score at the same level – as a result of the improved techniques applied by farmers and increased knowledge of nutrition.



### Key Areas that need Strengthening (as per PaBS, FY21)

Indicator	FY21 Result	FY20 Result	Adaptation plan
Percentage of beneficiary households with increased food production	36.5 (out of 75 targets)	61.4	The program will continue to mobilize private and public providers to access quality inputs as well as markets and market information.
Access to markets	76.2 (out of 93 targets)	92.1	
Prevalence of children 6–23 months receiving a minimum meal frequency	51.2 (out of 69 targets)	67.2	The program plans to strengthen SBCC using different channels and improve production
Percentage of farmers who reported receiving market information in the last 12 months	61.5 (out of 88 targets)	85.2	Strengthen linkages with the market actors which were disrupted during the COVID period. In addition, social networks and forums will be used to provide market information to the farmers
Percentage of program beneficiaries aware of cost and consequences of gender-based violence	51.5 (out of 75 targets)	67.9	The program is revamping its GBV strategy rollout in the field by strengthening the engagement of men and boys, as well as facilitating conversations in the communities, religious leaders, and government stakeholders



## **FY2021 Program Results**

### **On-Farm Livelihoods**

77% (1,126 of 1,545) of HHs received service from local service providers (LSPs)

80% (868 of 1050) reported increased access to public services, an increase in trend compared to 74.9% in FY20

93.8% (329 of 361) of respondents stated they have applied improved management practices/ technologies in FY21

SHOUHARDO III program piloted the “Banana stem haylage” as animal feed to address cattle feed scarcity, especially during floods. It was found that by feeding a local bull with this feed, there is an increase of live weight of 553.93 grams/day, whereas, in the case of the control treatment, this increase was only 256.70 grams/day

85.1% (715 of 804) of married women aged 15-49 were being helped by their husbands in doing household tasks

### **Non-Farm Livelihoods**

*Sanchay Sathis* have facilitated the formation of 685 new Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), generated a total savings of BDT 54.1 million (US 635,000), and facilitated share out meetings of 513 VSLA groups

The program developed an app named after the *Sanchay Sathi* to digitize the VSLA groups' record-keeping and ease the calculation process

SHOUHARDO III trained 363 non-farm business leaders (272 females and 91 male) on different trades such as tailoring, bamboo work, handicrafts, pottery, and small business

Through the Deep Haor Remote Char (DHRC) – Livelihood Recovery Assistance (LRA), 15,551 beneficiaries received the first installment of which 11,836 received the second installment to kick-start their business

100 youth beneficiaries (49M; 51F) received business planning input and skills development support under the DHRC-LRA intervention that created the opportunity of starting their career

4,027 skilled youth (1,343M; 2,684F) out of trained 6,409 youth engaged in new employment opportunities as they navigated the new way of working in the COVID-19 period



SHOUHARDO III developed 155 Business Skills Development Service Providers (BSDSPs) (Male 97, Female 58) for providing business planning and related support to adolescent girls and young females

The BSDSPs supported the development of 937 youth business plans (733 males and 204 females) in DHRC-LRA

The program mobilized 110 skilled e-business actors who supported 800 youth (97 females out of 800)

### **Health & Nutrition**

SHOUHARDO III used cable TV network channels to broadcast SBCC messages on health and nutrition topics and on preventing gender-based violence (GBV) especially on child marriage which reached 46,081 beneficiaries

20,054 (15,706F; 4,548M) poor and extreme poor (PEP beneficiaries) shared that they used telemedicine services from both the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) and the SHARA Platform where they could talk to healthcare providers and receive prescriptions via SMS

The program trained 75 Private Community Skilled Birth Attendants (PCSBA) with a view to strengthening the local health service provision

PCSBA provided Growth Monitoring and Promotion (GMP) services to 2,654 children under 2 years (1,671 girls and 983 boys) and earned a total of BDT 34,775 (USD 406.80). A total of 1,717 pregnant and lactating women (PLW) beneficiaries received services (direct and through the telephone) from these PCSBA

4,767 PLWs received altogether 32,145 cash transfers (BDT 500/USD \$6 per transfer) as supplementary cash support with an aim to meet their nutrition needs

### **Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene**

86.9 percent of people in the operational areas had access to improved sanitation facilities which is an increase compared to the 65.7 percent that was seen in PaBS FY20 results

Due to the program's intense facilitation of open defecation free (ODF) awareness sessions, 423 villages were certified as ODF Villages with the support of respective Union Parishads (UP) and Village Development Committees (VDC) along with the community groups

Program beneficiaries installed 1,124 latrines through self-financing or governance



The program developed 62 WASH LSPs in 26 unions who have conducted 2376 arsenic tests of tube wells with an aim to reduce water-borne illnesses by identifying arsenic contamination

Through the SWIRL project, latrine producers (LPs) sold 11,924 improved latrines irrespective of the household's well-being status

### **Disaster Risk Reduction**

The PaBS FY21 revealed that the Average Coping Strategy Index is 81.2 (out of 544 surveyed respondents) compared to 93.13 in FY20 which indicates that beneficiaries have become more resilient to be able to bounce back after the shocks

Beneficiaries' access to public services has increased to 80.2% of the beneficiaries (868 of 1,050), compared to 74.9% in FY20

The program identified, trained, and developed 2,765 Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) leaders (1,849 females and 916 males) as LSPs from its initiation in 2019 to September 2021. With the support of Village Development Committees (VDC), the DRR leaders led the disaster preparedness process in FY21

95.1% (440 of 469 interviewed respondents) reported that the DRR leaders led the Risk Reduction, Adaptation, and Contingency Plan (RRACP) in their villages considering the current COVID-19 situation

93.6% (of 1,050) respondents reported receiving early warning information through the GoB hotline, Union Digital Center (UDC), voice messages from RIMES, and other sources and took better preparedness measures to protect their assets

Through the RIMES partnership, the program operationalized a long-lead (15 days) streamflow forecasting at the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) and provided customized weather forecast for 75 upazilas of the eight SHOUHARDO III districts.



## Key Reflections:

Due to the recurring waves of COVID-19 infections and the lockdown measures and restrictions, SHOUHARDO III started adopting the “stop & go” approach in its implementation; rather than a phased approach as initially envisioned in the S3X proposal. SHOUHARDO III has only managed to implement activities face-to-face, engage key stakeholders on mobilizing LSPs, and engage community groups for half (i.e., six months) of FY21. As it navigated the challenges of FY21, the program was not able to complete at least 60% of the activities and achieve anticipated results. These areas include farmers’ application of improved management practices and technologies, access to market and market information, number of income sources, dietary intake of children between 6-23 months’ age, and women’s decision-making.

With field movement restrictions in place, the program adapted and operated remotely, mobilizing staff and beneficiaries using digital platforms. Using Information and Communication Technology (ICT), SHOUHARDO III significantly adjusted its delivery of activities on the ground.

As a program priority throughout FY21, the program trained Local Service Providers (LSPs) with specializations in mobilizing VSLAs, disseminating early warning information to support the DRR initiatives, and delivering WASH services and livelihood support to beneficiaries. Previously engaged LSPs, following CARE models such as Growth Monitoring Promoters and Private Community Skilled Birth Attendants (PCSBAs), remained committed to delivering health and nutrition services to women and children in northern Bangladesh. SHOUHARDO III also conducted community score card (CSC) to improve health and nutrition services that enabled community clinics to remain functional with specific opening hours for most parts of the week and with staff and basic medical supplies in place.

Program beneficiaries installed 1,124 latrines through self-financing or governance and social accountability interventions such as inclusive participatory local planning; monitoring the quality of public services through the Community Score Card tool; public hearing. Additionally, the WASH LSPs continued their work to ensure water quality by testing tube wells. Furthermore, the DRR leaders from all the communities reviewed village-level Risk Reduction, Adaptation, and Contingency Plans (RRA&CPs) in small groups of eight to ten people to maintain health protocols; paving the way for beneficiaries’ increased awareness on what to do in the case of an emergency, especially during the monsoon season.

This reporting year, efforts to empower women and girls also continued with the replicating of the Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW) Museum that was set up in the first quarter of FY21. The private and public sectors carried on through remote and limited in-person engagement. The program managed to meet with upazila (sub-district) and district government counterparts to tackle issues concerning the Poor and Extreme Poor (PEP) – enabling accomplishments of other result areas and accessibility of safety nets for the PEP.



## **Conclusion:**

In order for SHOUHARDO III program to achieve its lasting impact in the communities, the program will need additional time to sustain the results that it generated over the last six years. This time will be also required to regain momentum to strengthen service models and community engagement efforts. FY22 onwards will be used to reach LSPs' maturity so that they can operate in the communities while receiving support from the private and public sectors. The program will figure out the sustainable locally-led solution and mobilize the communities to keep continuing their efforts after the program is phased out. At the same time, the program will continue its advocacy efforts through dialogues based on priority areas such as youth development and gender equality. The program will be continuously sharing the results, lessons, and scaling-up of best practices for the wider CARE community, other organizations, and donor societies.