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Nobo Jatra Newsletter

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Foreword from Chief of Party

I am delighted to present the second issue of the Nobo Jatra newsletter. During this quarter, our Host Country Agreement was signed and program activities have consequently gained significant momentum. A further milestone was the development of a beneficiary census app to collect crucial data from the program areas. A major semi annual learning workshop took place with all Nobo Jatra staff including the sub-grantees with the main objective to identify gaps, barriers and challenges as well as explore mitigation options in order for the team to reach common consensus and construct specific recommendations and action plans. Over the past few months, the team have also been actively engaged in a number of significant trainings, orientations and events with the overall aim to strengthen program activities and maximize impact.

Once again we recognize the unwavering support of all our partners and colleagues in preparing this newsletter. Going forward, we are excited to roll out more activities and build strong linkages with beneficiaries, partners, Government and other stakeholders to achieve Nobo Jatra's goal to *'improve gender equitable food security, nutrition and resilience of vulnerable people within Khulna and Satkhira districts in Bangladesh.'*


I hope you enjoy reading this issue of the newsletter!

Rakesh Katal



World Food Programme
wfp.org





Newsflash - HCA signed!

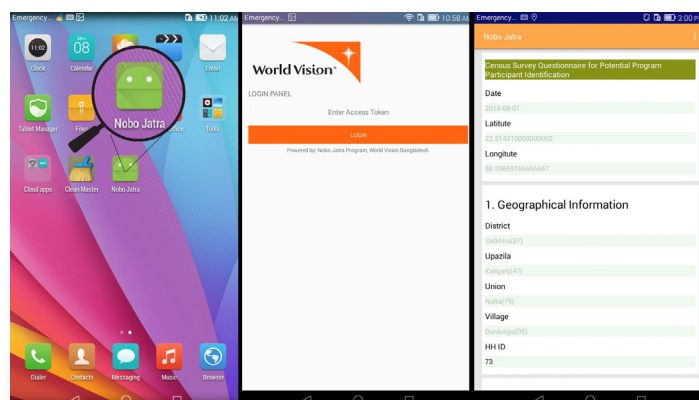
Nobo Jatra is delighted that the Host Country Agreement (HCA) was signed on **August 7th 2016** by Md. Shah Kamal, Secretary, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MODMR) and Fred Witteveen, National Director, World Vision Bangladesh. Also in attendance during the signing were Mohammed Manirul Islam, Deputy Secretary, (Relief Admin), MODMR, Shabbir Ahmed, PS to Secretary, MODMR, Rakesh Katal, Chief of Party, Nobo Jatra, and Sabbir Hasan Chowdhury, Government Liaison and Monetization/Commodity Manager, Nobo Jatra.

Along with the interim approval letter for call forward FY15 obtained in December 2015, the signing of the HCA is a major milestone for Nobo Jatra involving close coordination with a number of Ministries and their respective Departments. With the signing now completed, planned program activities have now accelerated with the FY16 call forward at the Ministry of Food awaiting approval and the monetization reimbursement process also initiated.

A Nobo Jatra beneficiary census app!

An exciting new android app has been developed to collect beneficiary data from Nobo Jatra working areas. The app is designed to capture a range of valuable information on geographic location, wellbeing analysis, socio demographic data, basic information related to assets and safety nets as well as information on WASH (water points and latrines) and pregnant and lactating women.

Nobo Jatra frontline staff across all four working Upazilas will undertake the task to collect the beneficiary data and to facilitate this process 240 tablets have also been procured. A week long **'Piloting of Household Data Collection using Tablet-based Offline Application'** program was held to orientate staff on the app, identify the drawbacks and areas of improvement, assess the straight forwardness of the app and also ascertain how many households can be covered by an Enumerator in a day in order to inform a detailed HH Census data collection plan.



The app has been designed with the intention to acquire up to date and relevant data on beneficiaries through an efficient and timely process that will inform program implementation activities over the five year lifespan of Nobo Jatra. Moreover, the data captured and stored through the app will be easily uploaded on to a customized McAid system as per USAID requirement as soon as it is finalized and ready.



Case study: Water for Survival

“We need nothing
but a glass of
water to drink ...”

Shyamnagar Upazila, located in the south west of Bangladesh, is a particularly vulnerable coastal area covered by the Nobo Jatra program. Due to its proximity to the Sundarbans, the vulnerability of the local community is exacerbated by the contamination of ground water with arsenic, iron and saline with surface water also riddled with bacteria.

In Ramnagar (a village located in Kaligonj Upazila, Satkhira) one can often see inordinately long queues (some stretch to half a kilometer) of water pitchers,

jerry cans, pots, containers and jars. A small number of women, adolescents and children also stand in line whilst most others leave their water collecting utensil to mark their spot in the queue and return home to complete chores. To maintain order and a smooth water collecting system, the local community have set up a committee with inhabitants responsible for the maintenance and repair of the water point. The water is used only for drinking purposes and is supplied through a pipe from a nearby desalination plant installed by an NGO.

“We just keep 4-5 jars here at a time. One cannot exceed the limit. Then we go back to prepare the food for our family members and finish the daily household chores. Meanwhile we come back to check the line whether it has gone forward or not. Some days, we get the water at noon, again some days at afternoon or even some days at evening. There are also the days when we go back home without taking water. On average we get this water twice a month, sometimes it's twice every six weeks.”

Rihana, 35



Access to safe water throughout the year remains a major challenge for inhabitants as shallow tube wells do not function well due to the salinity in the ground water and the unavailability of fresh aquifers*. Consequently, the local community resort to drinking pond and rain water during the monsoon season with unsafe contaminated water drawn from tube wells for the rest of the year. This water is used for cooking, washing and most household chores and leads to a proliferation of water borne infectious diseases such as diarrhea, dysentery, and jaundice. In most cases, safe drinking water has to be collected from remote locations, with women like Rihana and adolescent girls traditionally allocated the task. This can often expose them to gender based discrimination and render them even more vulnerable.

*a body of permeable rock that can contain or transmit groundwater.

During a Nobo Jatra team visit to the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) in Shyamnagar Upazila, it was highlighted that the local government is trying to improve the current water scenario through installation of Pond Sand Filters (PSF), rain water harvesting systems, shallow and deep tube wells and desalination plants. Other NGOs working in the area have also initiated these types of water systems. If properly maintained, all of these water options, particularly PSFs, are safe and sustainable in the longer term. Of the various water options found in Shyamnagar, rain water harvesting was identified as the most common and sustainable means of drinking water at the household level and this finding also came across in a number of resource mapping reports undertaken by Nobo Jatra.

However, through extensive discussions it emerged that the majority of water systems cease to work properly within a short period of time. The main reason behind this is a lack of active and capable WATSAN committees to

“Usually, we need at least two jars of water every day. We can collect 15 to 20 jars within the first 15 days of a month; then we try to use as little water as possible. We struggle every day for getting safe water to drink.”

Sultana, 37

adequately manage the water systems. There was some consensus from the DPHE and local leaders that those water systems that remain usable in the longer term are usually managed by a well-trained and active WATSAN committee. Usually supported by an NGO, these committees make consistent effort to maintain, repair, collect tariffs, and mobilize the local community.

Through dialogue on the sustainability of water systems, local Upazila leaders also re-emphasized community involvement during installation and a need to develop skills at the local level for the overall management and maintenance of water options.

Leveraging these valuable insights on the challenges faced by local communities, Nobo Jatra has already reactivated a number of WATSAN committees (3 in Kaliganj and 6 in Shyamnagar) and will mobilize resources to establish safe water options in partnership with local government and leaders in all four program Upazilas. Moreover, as part of planned activities, Nobo Jatra will work closely with Water Management Committees (WMCs) to maintain and ensure water sources are fully operational and implement comprehensive Water Safety Plans (WSP). Caretakers for the water facilities will also be selected from the local community to help foster ownership and long term sustainability.



Linkage with WVB Girls not Brides before 18

As part of the program outcome to reduce the incidence of early marriage, an exposure visit to the World Vision ADP office in Satkhira took place to learn about and create linkages with the Girls not Brides local chapter. Child marriage is an ongoing problem in the Nobo Jatra program areas with poverty, lack of education and awareness, religious and cultural restrictions, and a lack of income generating activities identified as the main causes.

The Girls not Brides campaign challenges prevailing social norms in communities where there are incidences of child marriage through working with local governments (Ministry of Women and Children Affairs), faith leaders, community leaders (MOUs with Mayors), parents, teachers and adolescents. Through engaging with a wide range of stakeholders, the campaign aims to change established attitudes towards child marriage, highlight the negative effects the practice has on girls and their wider community, and raise awareness of the law where child marriage is illegal.



As part of its remit, Nobo Jatra aims to conduct media awareness campaigns to reduce the incidence of early marriage. Planned activities include developing early marriage and adolescent pregnancy prevention messages as well as advocacy messaging on early marriage to be broadcast through local radio. Creating linkages with the local World Vision Bangladesh chapter of the Girls not Brides before 18 is also critical to understand their implementation guidelines and leverage and support existing campaigns in the program working area to achieve one of Nobo Jatra's intermediate outcomes to reduce incidences of early marriage.

DRR in Kaligonj

Kaliganj, a Nobo Jatra working area, has increasingly been highlighted as susceptible to rapid onset disasters such as cyclones, tidal surges and floods. River erosion, ground water contamination, water logging and increased levels of salinity in the water further exacerbate the vulnerability of the local population. As part of a DRR assessment of the area, a Nobo Jatra team met with representatives of the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief and a number of local government leaders to gain a clearer understanding of DRR needs and areas of intervention. Through discussions, the most vulnerable unions were identified with the team going on to visit two of these unions (Krishnanagar and Champaphul) and the attached wards and villages.



In addition to safe drinking water, other areas requiring infra structural development and interventions include cyclone centers and re excavation of canals and ponds to ensure Pond Sand Filters (PSFs) work properly. A number of PSFs in the area have been proposed to be fixed or reactivated as part of Nobo Jatra activities. A critical need to support and train volunteer groups to respond to disasters also emerged during the field visit. Linking community members to local Disaster Management Committees along with capacity building of Village Development Committees was also identified as a need.

Building rapport with local communities and service providers

With the aim to build strong rapport with local communities in Nobo Jatra program areas, a team from Winrock International visited Dacope Upazila to engage with locals as well as agro-input retailers in order to scope existing and potential livelihood options. During the course of the visit,

the team were able to gauge the feasibility and profitability of IGAs and also understand the types of implementation strategies that would work well for the poor people of this area. This process will help in developing Standard Annual Performance Questionnaire (SAPQ).

Disaster Management Innovation Fair

Nobo Jatra participated in an influential 'Disaster Management Innovative Fair' organized by the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief. Building a 'disaster resilience nation' was the overall objective for the day long fair with numerous organizations invited to attend in order to share information on their respective experiences in dealing with climate disasters and to highlight relevant success stories.

The fair provided an important platform for Nobo Jatra and other participants to accelerate awareness activities and disseminate knowledge on disaster management. The Nobo Jatra team were delighted to participate in the fair and to be given the opportunity to actively engage with Ministry personnel and other organizations active in the disaster and resilience sector.



World Environment Day

World environment day was celebrated by Nobo Jatra across its working areas in Dacope, Koyra, Shamnagar and Kaliganj with over 700 participants joining in throughout the day. This year's theme 'go wild for life' highlights the damage caused by the illicit trade of wildlife and the damage this causes to the environment, livelihoods, communities and security.

As part of the celebrations and to maximize traction, Nobo Jatra involved local government leaders such as Upazila Chairmen and Upazila Nirbhai Officer (UNO) in all four program Upazilas. Representatives from the Upazila

government administration, local teachers, INGOs, national and local NGO's and service providers all joined in the celebrations. Following colorful rallies, participants made their way to their respective Upazila halls where further discussions took place. Speakers placed significant emphasis on communities working together to mitigate environment challenges such as increased salinity, use of pesticides, and waste management. Due to the proximity of all Nobo Jatra working areas to the Sundarbans, degradation of natural resources was also a key area of discussion, with a need for alternative sustainable livelihoods clearly identified.

Safe Motherhood day

As part of celebrations for 'Safe Motherhood Day' processions took place across all four upazilas with discussions centering on this year's theme '**standard service to all new mothers is our pledge**' also taking place at each respective health complex. Participants comprised local government officials, doctors, NGOs and the local community. Overall, the celebrations raised awareness on safe and appropriate ante and post natal care, and building strong linkages between local health services providers and the local community.



Semi Annual Learning Workshop

A Semi Annual Learning workshop took place to strengthen team building, review sector specific progress and agree on activity plans till the end of FY16. Moreover, the workshop also provided an invaluable platform to share lessons, identify challenges as well as mitigation strategies and recommendations. The workshop comprised a total of 55 participants including attendees from World Food Programme and Winrock International.



A snapshot of the significant trainings that took place over the quarter can be found below:

Training of Trainers (TOT) for Census and Beneficiary Registration Process

The M&E team organized a ToT for 36 core members of Field Offices from 13-16 June and the process of Census and Beneficiary Registration started immediately after. A unique feature of this training was the field demonstration of the Social Mapping and the Wellbeing Analysis process. Following first segment of in house training, participants were able to field test the transect walk, social mapping and census questionnaire.

MCHN, WASH, Gender, Community Development Officers, M&E Officers and Field Office Coordinators (FOCs) of four Upazilas participated in this training at CSS-AVA Center, Khulna.



Training on ToT

A training facilitated by trainers from WVUS was held from 21-23 June on effective facilitation, universal model of conducting training, training module development and power point presentation at CSS AVA center, Khulna for a total of 16 staff members from NJP.

Training on Environmental Compliance and Mitigation

A daylong training on Environmental Compliance was held at WVB national office on 26th June. This training was conducted by USAID Regional Environmental Advisor (REA) and Mission Environmental Officer (MEO). A total of 15 senior level staff members including WV US. Technical Advisor, and partners participated in the training. A follow-up training on Environmental Compliance and Mitigation was held on 29-30 June at CSS-AVA center-Khulna.

Orientation on MCHN

MCHN team organized an orientation for MCHN officers, MCHN/WASH Organizers, WASH officers, FOCs and community development officers and gender officers on key issues such as overview of Maternal Child Health and Nutrition (MCHN), Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF), 1000 Days Approach, Environmental Enteropathy Disorder (EED), Growth Monitoring and Promotion (GMP), Mainstreaming Nutrition, Micro Nutrient Powder, Early Initiation and Exclusive Breast Feeding, (EIBF & EBF).

Gender Training

Two batches of Gender and Social Integration Training were organized for key Nobo Jatra staff in May with a total of 55 participants from WVB, WI and WFP attending the 2-day training.

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