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Nobo Jatra Newsletter

Issue 3

August –December 2016

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Dear friends, colleagues and readers,

2016 has proved to be an exciting year for us at Nobo Jatra with some thrilling highs such as the signing of our Host Country Agreement in August coupled with the fantastic execution of our milestone program launch event in November featured in detail within this issue of the newsletter. Further galvanizing us, we have had a number of notable visits to our program working areas by valued stakeholders from our nodal Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief as well as representatives from World Vision global and senior management from our national office in Bangladesh.

Considerable effort has been expended in building a talented and dynamic team bringing together individuals with a vast wealth of experience to implement our program activities at the national, divisional and Upazila (sub district) level. As part of our goal to improve gender equitable food security and nutrition and our commitment to align with the World Vision Bangladesh pledge to achieve 50/50 gender parity by 2020, we have taken every care to ensure a sound gender balance within our team and I am truly delighted that we have achieved 35% representation of women within our core team till date. It gets even better, the ratio of our female frontline extension volunteers stands at 65% for Community Nutrition Facilitators and 54% for Community Wash Facilitators. A tremendous amount of pride comes in leading and being part of a unique, innovative and increasingly gender balanced team such as ours and I have every confidence in each and every member of the fantastic lineup of individuals we have pulled together

Whilst a large part of our energies have been focused on program start up activities, we have also achieved remarkable gains particularly in terms of our cutting edge and real time Management Information System (MIS). Developed in house by our M&E team, the ICT based system is designed to register households and enroll all 856,116 program beneficiaries assigning a unique



Foreword



ID to each individual. Through Nobo Jatra we strive to position ourselves as a thought leader, with a clear intention to move beyond tried and tested models that are not fully appropriate to and do not holistically meet the needs of a large scale program such as ours. Till December we have registered 367,173 beneficiaries in total across all four of our working Upazila's and our front line program staff must be lauded for their incredible dedication and perseverance to achieve this mammoth yet critical task.

As we reflect on 2016, partnerships and collaboration with stakeholders underpin all our endeavors. We cannot underestimate the unwavering support from the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief in helping us achieve milestones such as finalizing the host country agreement, expediting the monetization process, hosting our first program steering committee meeting, visiting our program areas and facilitating our auspicious launch event. Equally, our colleagues at the USAID Mission in Bangladesh have proved to be a pillar of strength helping us to course correct when we struggle to land on the best way to tackle complex challenges and abetting us to achieve our deliverables. As a shared commitment, our consortium partners World Food Programme and Winrock International have also dedicated major effort to accomplish program activities and targets stipulated for 2016. Equally, the technical guidance from World Vision Bangladesh and our counterparts at the global center cannot be underestimated in any way. Above all, everything we do depends on our existing partnerships and also establishing new pathways to collaboration. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our stakeholders and also start new dialogues going forward to navigate and achieve our Nobo Jatra goal.

Finally, I would like to tell you about Kankaboti Bairagi who we recently met at our launch event where we were honored to hear her speak. Aged 14, Kankaboti comes from an extremely vulnerable household in Dacope, a Nobo Jatra working Upazila and speaks with a level of maturity defying her teenage years. *"My elder sister Provaboti was married when she was 14 and still in secondary school. My parents caved into pressure from the local community and our dire economic predicament. Now they are pursuing me to marry but I am refusing at all costs. I have hopes and dreams – to obtain a post graduate degree and then embark on a career that helps people in my area to achieve greater financial security. I also want to join the campaign against early marriage and I am hopeful that Nobo Jatra will help me to achieve my aspirations and live a life I have always dreamed of."*

Let us all keep Konkaboti's dreams and aspirations in our minds as we collectively strive to achieve the Nobo Jatra goal to ensure 'gender equitable food security, nutrition and resilience for vulnerable people within Khulna and Satkhira districts in Bangladesh.'

With best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rakesh Katal', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Rakesh Katal,
Chief of Party, Nobo Jatra



Nobo Jatra Launch 30 November 2016

Led by World Vision Bangladesh (prime implementing partner), in association with the nodal Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR) and the USAID Mission in Bangladesh, the official Nobo Jatra launch event took place on 30th November 2016 at the City Inn, Khulna. The purpose of the formal event was to formally celebrate and mark the launch of the five-year USAID Food for Peace Title II Development Food Assistance program Nobo Jatra.

The event comprised approximately 200 participants ensuring representation of the Secretary and other key representatives from the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR), the USAID Mission in Bangladesh, consortium partners World Food Programme and Winrock International, the Khulna Divisional Commissioner, local

Ambassador to Bangladesh, and Janina Jaruzelski, USAID Mission Director attended and expatiated in the capacity of special guests. Priceless reinforcement from World Vision senior leadership also manifested itself in the attendance of Jed Hoffman, Vice President, Resource Development and Management, International Programs Group, and Fred Witteveen, National Director, World Vision Bangladesh who also served a Chair of the event. A special reflection and sharing segment was also included during the course of the event, shining the spotlight on two Nobo Jatra beneficiaries Kankaboti Bairagi and Laile Begum who were invited on to the dias to address the audience highlighting their personal socio economic circumstances as well as local challenges.

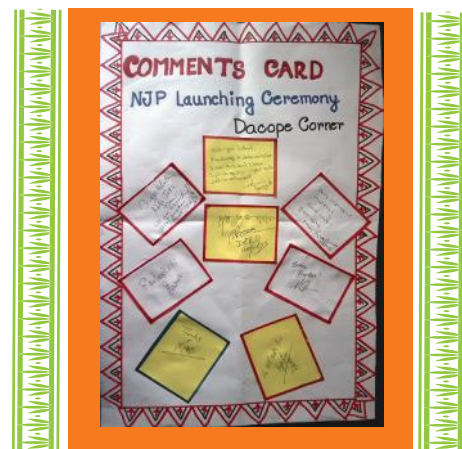
The formal speeches were preceded by a welcome address

“We are optimistic that when Nobo Jatra comes to a close it will successfully bring visible changes to the lives of 856,116 beneficiaries covered through the four program working sub districts.” Honorable Minister, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, Government of Bangladesh

Members of Parliament and District and Upazila level government legislators. The audience further encompassed patrons from international and local NGOs including the Chief of Party’s from Development Food Assistance programs operating in the geographically contiguous Feed the Future Zone of Influence, leading local academia and friends from the media. Key to note was the special attendance of a cross representation of Nobo Jatra beneficiaries from all four program working Upazilas (sub districts).

The event followed a formal arrangement with a bilingual anchor and several insightful orations by the chief guest and special guests. The Honorable Minister, Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, Birbikram, M.P., Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, Government of Bangladesh graced the milestone event as the chief guest. Md. Shah Kamal, Secretary, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, Government of Bangladesh, Marica Bernicat, the US

by the National Director, World Vision Bangladesh serving as chair of the event and a brief presentation by the Chief of Party, Nobo Jatra.



Guest Comment Cards at Nobo Jatra launch

“We are optimistic that when Nobo Jatra comes to a close it will successfully bring visible changes to the lives of 856,116 beneficiaries covered through the four program working sub districts.” Honorable Minister, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, Government of Bangladesh

Partnerships and collaboration

The overall themes of partnership and collaboration formed the crux of all formal addresses at the event and were further accentuated by all speakers. During the launch, the Honorable Minister implicitly recognized that *“the U.S.A. is an important development partner for Bangladesh. We are working with mutual respect to one another and are very eager to maintain this fruitful relationship. We hope that the U.S.A will support all development activities in Bangladesh and we hope to work together to help disaster affected communities.”*

The US Ambassador to Bangladesh further affirmed this desideratum through highlighting that the *“battle against food insecurity, malnutrition and natural disasters is not won in a day or a year. It is an ongoing effort to build institutions, communities and families. It involves working in partnership with the Government of Bangladesh at all levels, the donor community, civil society and private enterprise, to develop strategies that make Bangladesh stronger, more resilient and more capable of marshaling and applying resources to address these acute needs.”*

The consistency of this message permeated throughout the event across government representation at the national, divisional and district level, the USAID Mission and World Vision as a whole. During the opening address, the World Vision Bangladesh National Director singled out the unique and integrated nature of Nobo Jatra and its strong partnerships with the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, USAID and consortium partners World Food Programme and Winrock International in improving the reach, scale, quality and sustainability of the program overall. Furthermore, there was widespread recognition that conducive to ensuring the sustained wellbeing of children, families and vulnerable communities throughout Bangladesh is a priority to foster collaboration and forge fruitful partnerships with a broad range of actors including the Government of Bangladesh at the national and local level, like minded donors and development partners.

The optimism in terms of building synergies and nurturing teamwork in order for Nobo Jatra to successfully bring visible and tangible change to the lives of 856,116 beneficiaries was viewed as a tremendous auxiliary by all present and not least by Nobo Jatra frontline program staff. The Divisional Commissioner, Khulna further underscored this commitment through pledging unequivocal support for Nobo Jatra at the divisional, district and sub district level ensuring the harmony of interventions with existing government services and structures. This further strengthens the strategic and longer term aim of the event to fortify functional linkages with relevant local government authorities to engage them further with Nobo Jatra and develop a sense of ownership of sustainable high quality services that will continue after external assistance comes to an end.

Climate change ground zero

Throughout the event, an inherent concern inferred was that the south west coastal region, where Nobo Jatra programming is concentrated, is the most disaster prone area in Bangladesh. The region is vulnerable to the effects of climate change and is also unique for its environmental characteristics. The uncontrollable and unsustainable levels of salinity and continual flooding, compounded with increasing natural disasters and climate change effects such as the rise in sea levels, erratic monsoons have further increased the barriers to growth faced by the region having a knock on effect on socio economic factors. The honorable Minister further highlighted that the four Nobo Jatra Program Upazilas are widely considered the most exposed with climate change, high levels of poverty and the regular occurrence of climate disasters further heightening the vulnerability of the areas. The resiliency of local communities residing in these areas is further diminished due to the frequency and scale of disasters – in most cases, before the local community can fully recover from one climate shock, they are afflicted with another.

Building on previous Government of Bangladesh and Feed the Future gains

Bangladesh is a key partner country for the U.S. Presidential Feed the Future initiative on development. To this end, USAID has partnered with the Government of Bangladesh since its 1971 independence and is committed to working in collaboration to achieve its goal of becoming a middle income country by its 50th year of independence in 2021. As a Feed the Future (FtF) zone of influence as well as the Government's prioritization at the national level for



The US Ambassador and Mission Director interact with Nobo Jatra team

development investments, the Nobo Jatra programming area in the southwest coastal region has considerable investment, however, as acknowledged during the launch, much of this investment targets those in low income categories without directly targeting the extreme poor.

To this end, there was consensus that a critical requisite for Nobo Jatra will be to build on the previous successes of both the Government of Bangladesh and on existing and previous Feed the Future programs' tested practices to achieve rapid gains in livelihood, income and food security. The USAID Mission Director further emphasized that **"Individuals, families and communities are healthier, stronger and more resilient in the regions where USAID Food for Peace operates and we hope to bring these benefits to the Khulna and Satkhira communities where Nobo Jatra will work."** Building on the overarching theme to foster strong partnerships and overall coordination, there was further unanimity that every effort must be placed on leveraging existing programming and government structures by facilitating joint learning and ongoing dialogue. Leveraging learning from previous government programs, the

Laile Begum

On a more poignant note, during the celebration of the Nobo Jatra launch, we were fortunate to hear from our valued beneficiary Laile Begum.

Laile Begum comes from an extremely vulnerable household in Dacope Upazila and is determined to make her voice heard in front of the audience. **"I was married at 11 and have three sons and a daughter. My husband is a day laborer and eldest son works in a local restaurant. I grow vegetables in my kitchen garden but this isn't enough to sustain me during the lean season as salinity and prolonged dry spells impact my modest harvest. I am hopeful that Nobo Jatra will help me to learn how to grow produce to feed my family throughout the year. I have not been able to educate my children and have therefore immersed myself in social awareness activities so that more families enroll their children in schools."**

Following the close of the launch event, a strategic lunch meeting took place with all esteemed speakers,



Honorable Minister makes the closing address

Secretary, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, was keen to emphasize that the success of Nobo Jatra largely depends on the timely and efficient implementation of Nobo Jatra interventions to ensure that the program finishes within the stipulated five year cycle and fully maximize allocated resources and fulfil Nobo Jatra's commitment to the vulnerable communities– and to this end, the government will extend all manner of support to achieve this goal.

representatives from the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, USAID Mission, senior leadership from World Vision, World Food Programme and Winrock International. The strategic lunch meeting also comprised attendees from the divisional administration in Khulna and local Members of Parliament from the Nobo Jatra working areas. Over the course of the lunch, participants were able to build on the themes covered during the lunch in a more intimate setting which also served as a further ice breaker for all stakeholders.

Ending on an extremely positive note, particularly from the standpoint of further motivating and inspiring staff, was the US Ambassador and USAID Mission Director's impromptu decision to appreciate the displays providing a snapshot of each respective Upazila display. This wonderful show of solidarity and first hand interaction with the Nobo Jatra team was a most appropriate note to end the auspicious and milestone celebration of the Nobo Jatra launch event.



Laile Begum addresses the audience



Field Visit of Additional Secretary (Relief), Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief to Khulna and Dacope

Parallel to broader coordination strategies, Md. Zakir Hossain Akanda, Additional Secretary (Relief), Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief undertook a field visit to Khulna and Dacope from the 22-24 October 2016. The overall goal of the visit was to firmly position Nobo Jatra as a government steered program and increase ownership of the program at the local administration level and also strengthen the buy in from local communities and beneficiaries. A further objective was to meet the Nobo Jatra team including consortium partners World Food Programme and Winrock International at the Divisional office in Khulna, frontline program staff in a working Upazila and subsequently observe tangible Nobo Jatra activities at ground level and also leverage the opportunity to interact first hand with direct program beneficiaries in their local communities.

Accompanied by Nobo Jatra senior management, the Additional Secretary travelled to Dacope, a Nobo Jatra working Upazila where the first stop was at the Upazila office allowing the Additional Secretary to meet the field level staff and make the inaugural address at the training for newly recruited Community Nutrition Facilitators (CNFs) and Organizers. As frontline program staff recruited from the local community, CNFs and Organizers are critical actors in the interface with beneficiaries and will be instrumental in the delivery and follow up of many planned activities across Nobo Jatra components such as WASH and MCHN.

During the course of the Dacope field visit, the Additional Secretary travelled to a number of program locations to witness outreach activities at first hand. At Baroikhal village,

Pankhali Union, a community meeting was observed. Facilitated by the Entrepreneurship Officer from Winrock International, this was the first meeting of the local community where direct beneficiaries were identified through a list generated by the Nobo Jatra ICT based beneficiary registration app.

Large scale beneficiary registration is a huge Nobo Jatra priority with all frontline program staff across all four Upazila's fully engaged in the data collection process. The Additional Secretary was able to observe the methodical and thorough registration process including the verification and triangulation measures undertaken by Organizers and Facilitators in Poshurdham Village, Laodob Union. Given the vulnerability of the local area, the Additional Secretary was able to further understand a number of critical challenges faced by the communities such as chronic salinity and water logging, poor latrine status', impediments to potable and safe water options and critically, how Nobo Jatra intends to address these underlying challenges through an integrated package of gender sensitive activities under its WASH component.

Nobo Jatra follows a comprehensive social mapping exercise in each village to identify the number of households based on predefined indicators relating to socio economic conditions. The wellbeing of the households is then ranked (by those living in the village) according to which household is better or worse off in terms of the selected indicators. Social mapping is an ongoing program activity and the Additional Secretary was able to observe an exercise in Kotakhali village.

Upon return to Khulna, the Additional Secretary visited the Nobo Jatra Divisional office in Khulna where he was able to

meet and address the Nobo Jatra team including management from WFP and WI. As part of bilateral engagements and in adhering to the objective to strengthen local administration ownership of the Nobo Jatra program, a meeting was held with the Khulna Divisional Commissioner, and Khulna Deputy Commissioner and Magistrate. The Union Nirbahi Officers from Dacope and Koyra were also present at the meeting. This served as an ideal platform for the Additional Secretary to provide a comprehensive overview of the Nobo Jatra program and strongly emphasize the requirement to work in close coordination and in partnership with the Divisional, District and Upazila level administration. Given the scale and holistic multi sectorial approach taken by Nobo Jatra, discussions

also focused on sustainability, replication and scaling up similar and new programs. Fostering a close partnership with the Government across all levels will help this objective in the longer term as emphasized by the Additional Secretary.

Overall, the Additional Secretary's visit proved to be a tremendous boost to Nobo Jatra's existing relationship with the Government of Bangladesh and further strengthened linkages with the Administration at the Divisional and Upazila level. Given that Nobo Jatra is dedicated to working with existing Government of Bangladesh structures, we anticipate and welcome further visits from the Ministry of Disaster and Management and Relief.



Integrating Extremely Poor Producers into Markets' Field Guide Training

Led by World Vision Bangladesh, a market field guide training on 'Integrating Extremely Poor Producers into Markets' took place in Manikganj, Bangladesh in August 2016. The training included a field visit and assembled 34 participants from all three USAID Food for Peace Development Food Assistance Programs (DFAPs) (World Vision including consortium partner Winrock International, CARE and Helen Keller International) with a number of clear learning objectives including increasing familiarity with value chain development and market system development and understanding of constraints to market participation of extremely poor producers. Building knowledge on tools for linking producers to suppliers and buyers, linking producers to producers and using tools to better integrate vulnerable groups such as women into value chains also formed a crux of the training agenda. An underlying aim was also to leverage the opportunity of convening all three DFAPS to understand the market development approaches of other projects.

Given the stark geographical and socio economic landscape of all three Development Food Assistance Programs, this training provided an invaluable forum to share the market development scenarios in each program working area, analyze existing and potential future livelihoods, and focus on the design of interventions specific to the needs of the local communities. Facilitating large scale extreme poor participation in market systems and critically, ensuring gender integration into economic activities across all tiers underpinned dialogue and strategies throughout the training. There was key learning with the staff present across all three DFAPs regarding approaches to link extremely poor producers to buyers and suppliers.

A number of key concepts were covered during the second day of the training including the value chain framework with emphasis on the market system development framework. Discussions focused on the resources (Human (Labor), Physical (Land) and Financial (Capital) and activities

(production, consumption, investment) of households and how market development can impact DFAP activities. Overall, there was consensus that market development can contribute to an increase in skills, production, income, purchasing power, nutritious food consumption, health and education investment, whilst also having a positive impact on women's empowerment through increasing social acceptance. Buyer and supplier linkages to extremely poor producers was also an area of focus with deliberations centering on embedded services with experiences shared by participants on embedded services in the maize, potato and vegetables sub-sectors. Win-Win relationships and developing trust building strategies through continuous dialogue, low risk and early return activities, repeated exposure, cross visits, and contracts was also covered. Pre-season business planning was cited as an example of continuous dialog for win-win relationship development whereby input sellers can provide seeds to farmers on credit. The negotiation process also merited attention particularly in terms of effective negotiations, clear expectations, understanding of agreement terms, understanding each other's risks and clear specification of responsibilities and time schedules.

Participants also shared their practical experiences on formal versus informal group formations for extreme poor producers with consensus that decisions need to be led by the community in order to increase local ownership and buy in. Strategies to potentially improve the ability of poor producers to take on additional risks were identified as developing business plans at the HH level, strengthening skills on specific business – technical, market, and operational level, identifying feasible and high volume products and developing skills on products and business plans. A number of strategies to improve access to resources were also highlighted including but not limited to; forming savings groups to accumulate savings, developing rural sales agents, and advocating local Union Parishad administration for youth development training and extreme poor representation in committees.

Given the remit to improve gender equitable food security for all three DFAPS, women's inclusion in market systems formed a crux of reflections throughout the training. Women's leadership and participation improving group performance was an area of focus with further consideration placed on reducing logistical burdens on women thus increasing participation. A number of preconditions were cited by participants including rural service agents, gender balanced market place, involvement of other family members in daily HH activities, modern equipment support – tube well, cooking stove, and child care facilities. Developing women's skills and confidence through a number of channels

such as leadership training, skills based training, cross visits, technical training, and ensuring legal rights were also considered useful.

A further segment of the training focused on nutritionally sensitive market development whereby a number of key factors such as contribution to households' consumption, and production of high value and nutritious food or safe products need to be added in the value chains selection criteria. A nutritionally sensitive value chain approach includes analysis of dietary habits –identifying gaps under daily food consumption considering nutrition value. This covers less vegetable consumption, inappropriate cooking method, less intake of animal protein and personal hygiene. Homestead gardening – of vegetables and animal as well as group based household nutrition session in the courtyard can be organized to address the above gaps. To increase availability of diversified varieties of food to overcome the nutritional challenge of the poor, linkage with buyers and market actors is necessary. Furthermore, practitioners can use seasonality calendars to determine area specific crop at different times of the year. Diversified varieties of food can be ensured through nutrition sensitive agriculture, integrated agricultural production – vegetables with poultry, and creating awareness among community members on nutritional food. The implementation of certifications of government nutritional policy and regulation can support nutritionally sensitive market development. In order for this to happen, effective coordination with government and dissemination of their policy is imperative. Advocacy of nutritional analysis and food labeling can also be effective in the context. In this case, efforts might include distribution of food posters and food calendars, awareness development on food behavior, video documentary on child and maternal nutrition, linkage with government health and agricultural ministries, and advocacy with food processors to label the nutrition on their food packets.

Livelihood remains a key component of all three DFAPS and overall, the training was considered a success with national media coverage and a concise follow up action plan agreed encompassing wider dissemination tactics for the learnings, cascading training for local partner NGO's, practical implementation of the field guide and wider coordination with Nobo Jatra program components such as Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition in the area of nutrition sensitive food production. The "Integrating Extremely Poor Producers into Markets Field Guide" can be found at the USAID Agrilinks site at: <https://agrilinks.org/library/integrating-extremely-poor-producers-markets-3rd-edition>.

Nobo Jatra Gender Analysis

An implicit focus on gender underpins all Nobo Jatra strategies and interventions. Gender inequality and women's disempowerment in Bangladesh – as seen by the widespread practice of early marriage, subsequent pregnancy during adolescence, and lack of ability of women and adolescent girls to make decisions regarding their own or their child's healthcare – adversely affect the nutritional status of children. A clear remit for Nobo Jatra is to assume a multi –sectorial approach to address the root causes of under nutrition through promoting integrated programming for multiple objectives. Furthermore, gender dynamics form a critical consideration in any activity falling within Nobo Jatra program components.

Given this reality, a major research undertaking over the course of 2016 was a comprehensive Gender Analysis carried out by Gender and Water Alliance (GWA) drawing a sample of six villages and 240 participants (120 male:120 female) in total from all four Nobo Jatra working Upazilas. The broader objective of the analysis was to understand the position of different categories of women and men at the beginning of the program with particular emphasis on gender relations, especially regarding agriculture, food security, nutrition, maternal and child health care, economic development, resilience against disasters, and women's and men's engagement in caregiving.

Led by World Vision Bangladesh, a workshop was held in August 2016, providing a forum for GWA to share the preliminary findings of the research analysis with an audience of stakeholders from Nobo Jatra consortium partners and representatives from the USAID Mission in Bangladesh including the gender focal points. The results extrapolated by GWA aligned with Nobo Jatra's existing understanding of the



local socio and gender specific landscape, however, the harsh reality at ground level was exacerbated further by the analysis. Only 17% of women respondents cited paid work as a first source of income indicating a severe shortage or lack of employment options for women in the Nobo Jatra working areas. The gender disparity in wages was also identified as a cause for concern, with women on average earning less than half the wages earned by their male counterparts for the same work. However, due to a lack of bargaining power and risk of further marginalization from work, women continue working for a lower wage. Food shortages are experienced by 58% of respondents starting in the rainy season, and reaching a peak towards the end of autumn, when amman crops are harvested and there is more employment opportunities.

A comprehensive national level dissemination event for the final Gender Analysis findings is planned during the first quarter of 2017.

Developing technology to increase transparency and accountability in Nobo Jatra

“Improved gender equitable food security, nutrition and resilience of vulnerable people within Khulna and Satkhira districts in Bangladesh.”

Aiming to reach 856, 116 direct beneficiaries across four Upazilas (sub-districts) in the climate and socio economically vulnerable south western region of Bangladesh is an ambitious feat for Nobo Jatra. A myriad of interventions are designed to achieve increased access

to clean water and improved sanitation, improved maternal and child health and nutrition practices, increased use of climate smart agricultural techniques and natural resource management (NRM), improved income diversity, asset maintenance and savings, more alternative livelihood opportunities for youth, strengthened community disaster preparedness and response, increased mobility and voice for women and engagement at national policy level.



At last count, within the 856,116 direct beneficiaries, Nobo Jatra further aims to target approximately 26 categories of beneficiaries through its diverse and holistic range of interventions. Challenges surrounding accurate tracking and recording of beneficiaries along with minimizing overlap between the numerous interventions have been at the fore since day one. Accountability and transparency of the selection procedure and the process and system used to capture, aggregate and disseminate data further underpins all program strategies.

Against this backdrop and with the clear incentive to efficiently manage the huge number of program beneficiaries, Nobo Jatra has developed a cutting edge real time Management Information System (MIS) to register households, enroll program beneficiaries assigning a unique ID to each individual, maintain up to service records and also produce accurate and valid analyses and reports. Aggregating data centrally through a robust MIS system will also increase the efficacy in consigning beneficiaries to appropriate and relevant program interventions. Reinforcing benefits of the technology also comes in the form of maximizing resources whilst minimizing cost and time implications in capturing and compiling critical program data. In positioning itself as a thought leader, there is a clear intention to move beyond tried and tested models that are not fully appropriate to and do not holistically meet the needs of a large scale program such as Nobo Jatra. Rather, the MIS system was conceptualized and designed to capture diverse ranges of program data and further provide regulated access to this data to all relevant stakeholders including the Government of

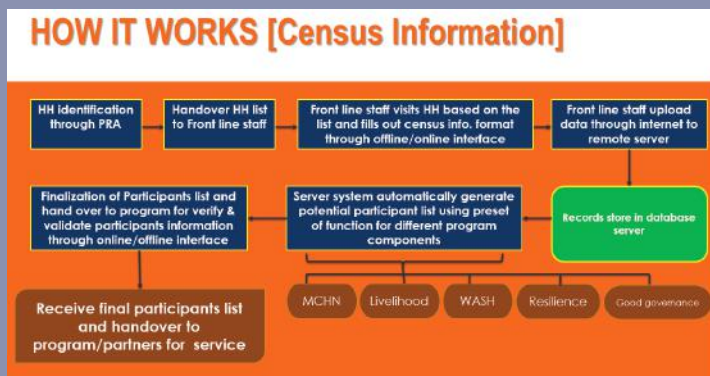
Bangladesh, USAID, World Vision as a whole and Nobo Jatra consortium partners. Validated and accurate information relating to Nobo Jatra can subsequently be used to inform, adapt, scale and replicate future programs and also be leveraged for further research across Bangladesh and the region.

A further ambition in developing this specific technological intervention tailored to advance Nobo Jatra goals and purposes is to amplify capabilities and strategies to highlight the intersection between technology, transparency and accountability in a flagship food security, nutrition and resilience program such as Nobo Jatra. Given the complex and intersected design of interventions, the system can effectively monitor the authenticity of activities such as the formation of Village Development Committees, attendance at SBCC sessions as well as other nutrition monitoring services such as GMP sessions, entrepreneurial literacy training therefore maximizing the overall transparency of the program.



How does the entire process work?

Naturally, given the scale of the task, a comprehensive chronological process is followed throughout the registration system. As a first step, at ground level, the program frontline team undertake a participatory rural appraisal technique involving a transect walk in order to demarcate village boundaries and enhance understanding of local vulnerabilities and risks. Concurrently, led by the local community in each village, social mapping also takes place in order to identify and provide each household with a unique code and wellbeing analysis to further identify potential households via socio-economic category.



Upon handover of data from the social mapping and wellbeing analysis, the Nobo Jatra MIS team reviewed program requirements and proceeded with the actual development of an android app designed to capture offline/online household census data in remote program locations using Huawei MediaPad 7" tablets. Once connected to the internet, the data automatically syncs to the secure web database server with stored data then used for analysis, reporting, judicious decision making and recalibration of program interventions or purposes based on location, intervention, timeframe and population demographic.

Further enhancing transparency and accountability in the selection process as well as the mechanism to verify and validate data, an online interactive application has also been developed whereby assigned users are able to validate household information by tracking individual members of households and enabling real time access to generate data. Significantly, the system enables respective teams within Nobo Jatra to generate beneficiary lists based on category and type of intervention. For example, the number of pregnant and lactating women by village in order to finalize participants who receive conditional cash transfers as part of MCHN interventions, children under 5 by union who are eligible to attend GMP sessions along with a mechanism to track attendance which is a prerequisite to receive conditional cash transfers.

Overall, the system has been designed to strengthen accountability and accuracy by assuring that the data reported on the number of households and beneficiaries along with GIS coordinates that will generate geo partial reports that promote aid transparency are valid, impartial and up to date. In turn, this validation of data helps the analysis of the numerous activities implemented by different program components, along with the services provided and committees formed or reactivated. Furthermore, the technology developed produces critical reports that allow the M&E team to review data, identify inconsistencies and other anomalies which can then be directly addressed as part of ongoing program modifications and improved decision making.

A snapshot from Uttar Sripur Village

Thus far, the discussion has focused on technology and innovation in the abstract. A clearer indication of how the system works can be garnered at ground level where Nobo Jatra frontline staff engage in the data collection process whilst simultaneously building a level of trust and rapport with the local community and laying the groundwork for cooperation over the program cycle.

One of the first sights upon entering Dakhim Sripur Union in Kaliganj Upazila, a Nobo Jatra working area, is that of young women cycling to school. The roads are lined with local vendors selling water chestnuts with small ghers (water bodies) as far as the eye can see cultivated with local varieties of small fish. The image is somewhat starker the further you travel within the Union to reach remote villages such as Uttar Sripur Village. Homes are basic one room mud structures often housing families of five or six, latrine conditions are poor at best and local residents are largely dependent on seasonal migration or day labour in local ghers averaging a week of work in a month. There are some signs of small scale poultry or duck rearing with little indication of homestead gardening given the rife salinity and ground water contamination that affects the area.

Nobo Jatra Community Nutrition Facilitators (CNFs) and other frontline program staff are systematically working their way through the village registering participants, household lists and tablets in hand. Significantly, the staff all hail from the union and understand the landscape including the challenges and adversities experienced by each household. Data from

each household is captured efficiently through the offline app following a thorough and diligent process.

Ador Ali, an elder gentleman and lifelong resident of Uttar Sripur Village, heads a household of 4. Roshanara, his wife, interacts shyly with the CNF collecting the data, providing full cooperation and information.

'My husband is old and suffers from dementia. We stay afloat on the income from a small 7 kata gher. That's our only source of money now.'

Whilst they own the land their one room home is built on along with their own latrine as well as a functioning tube well, the family have little in the way of assets. Roshanara provides her son's mobile number as contact information along with the national ID cards of everyone in the family. All of this information is critical to store in order to assign and include the household in upcoming program activities.

Data captured by CNFs on a female headed household further inside the village presents a more dire picture of the hardships endured by the local population. The household comprises an elderly mother, Joru, her divorced daughter and 10 year old grandson. Built on the bank of a small pond, the home has one elevated mud room with drinking or cooking

water having to be collected from a neighbor. Intermittent daily labor in the local ghers is the only source of income for the small family with an average of one week's work in a month earning approximately 80 taka per day. A CNF systematically works on the tablet carefully recording data in the provided format whilst taking every care to clarify questions and requests to the household.

Following a carefully designed process, household lists for each village generated through the initial PRA exercises are further streamlined into lists per area of a village with each CNFs allocated a list to cover. All data captured offline is systematically uploaded to the MIS system when CNFs return to each respective Nobo Jatra Upazila office with all data downloaded at the end of each week and stored in the system in chronological folders for ease of access and sorting. Multiple users who are allocated access such as Technical Managers are then able to access up to date data in order to generate lists of potential beneficiaries by program intervention, draw up lists of participants for various trainings and also monitor attendance which is critical in SBCC outreach activities and also a prerequisite for certain interventions such as conditional cash transfers and cash grants for business plan development.

Baseline study workshop for Development Food Assistance programs in Bangladesh

Published in October 2016, the Bangladesh Baseline Study is part of a series of U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Office of Food for Peace (FFP) baseline studies. Contracted by the FFP, ICF carried out the baseline study for all three Development Food Assistance Programs (DFAPs) in Bangladesh including Nobo Jatra. Facilitated by USAID, a tri party baseline workshop was held on 15th November 2016 in Dhaka assembling participants from all three DFAPs by providing a platform for ICF to share the baseline findings. In the true spirit of partnership and collaboration, representatives from the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, Ministry of Food and Economic Relations Division also comprised attendees at the workshop. During the course of the day, a further goal was for each program to review baseline results presented and deliberate if each respective program Theory of Change (ToC) includes necessary and sufficient interventions to influence the results. ICF presented the data from the baseline according to baseline values of FFP and project specific indicators as a point of comparison for a final evaluation. Bivariate analysis

were also provided where possible in terms of measuring two different indicators or variables for the purpose of determining how they relate with each other. Discussions were fruitful and engaging with a number of key concerns raised by all three DFAP programs with ICF providing clarifications and justifications as appropriate. There was consensus from all participants that in analyzing and leveraging the data, careful consideration must be given to other programs (DFAP, Government of Bangladesh or otherwise) that are operating in the same geographical areas as each respective program and the associated impact these will have on the data emerging. This is a pertinent issue, particularly for Nobo Jatra, as Khulna and Satkhira districts are within the Feed the Future Zone of Influence and as a result attracted significant investment. Moreover, the Southwestern coastal area has also been prioritized by the Government of Bangladesh at the national level for development investments, particularly through its 'Master Plan for Agricultural Development in the Southern Region of Bangladesh.'



Team Building Workshop

With the guidance of World Vision Bangladesh's People and Culture division, a Team Building workshop was held in Khulna for 35 key Nobo Jatra and Southern Bangladesh Region staff. Facilitated by a representative from the World Vision South Asia Pacific Office People and Culture team the

overall objective of the 3 day workshop was build a more cohesive team through underpinning basic concepts and rules of engagement on communications, behaviors and processes.

Observance of International Day for Disaster Reduction (IDDR) 2016

The International Day for Disaster Reduction, held on 13 October, celebrates how people and communities around the world are reducing their exposure to disasters and raising awareness about the importance of reining in the risks that they face. This awareness is critical for the local communities in the historically climate and disaster susceptible Nobo Jatra working area in the South West coastal region of Bangladesh. Nobo Jatra marked this momentous annual global event through holding colorful processions and stimulating post

rally discussion sessions in all four working Upazilas (sub-districts). With the theme "Live to tell" in Bangla: "দুর্যোগ ঝুঁকি কমাতে হলে কৌশলসমূহ বলতে হবে" the marking of the International Day for Disaster Reduction was momentous for Nobo Jatra given that the program has a clear focus on improving gender equitable resilience and a further remit to strengthen the ability to of people and households, communities and systems to mitigate, adapt to and recover from natural shocks and disasters.

World Hand Washing Day 2016



World Hand Washing Day rally

With the theme of "Unnato Sanitation; Shusto Jibon" ("Improved Sanitation: Healthy Life") Nobo Jatra observed

World Hand Washing Day 2016 and National Sanitation Month on 19th October'2016 jointly with the Upazila Administration and Department of Public Health Engineering in coordination with various NGOs across all four Upazilas. Rallies and discussions successfully mobilized the local communities on adequate sanitation and hygiene practices with focus on the local contexts highlighting the specific impact of hand washing on key areas, such as a nutrition or education. This event helped pave the way for forthcoming activities planned under the WASH component of Nobo Jatra and further strengthened linkages Government of Bangladesh structures at the Upazila level.

World Breastfeeding Week 2016

Nobo Jatra clearly aligns its strategies with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and recognizes that breastfeeding is a key to sustainable development. As part of the Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition component of the program, Nobo Jatra celebrated World Breastfeeding

Week 2016, to inform local communities about breast feeding and IYCF and engage and collaborate with a wide range of actors including the Government Health Administration at the Upazila level and beyond on the promotion, protection and support of breastfeeding.

Vice President for Resource Development and Management in the International Programs Group of World Vision – US field visit to Nobo Jatra



Vice President for Resource Development and Management in the International Programs Group of World Vision observes community support group meeting

Jed Hoffman, Vice President for Resource Development and Management in the International Programs Group of World Vision – US visited Nobo Jatra working areas in Dacope Upazila and surrounding villages in December 2016. As a flagship program for World Vision Bangladesh, the field visit was part of a wider objective dedicated to showcasing and leveraging Nobo Jatra as a benchmark for World Vision as a whole for future cooperation and partnership with likeminded donors to deliver high quality programs in the right places targeting the most vulnerable recipients. During the course of the field visit, the Vice President was able to interact first hand with frontline program staff and also visit Nobo Jatra established Climate Smart Agriculture plots and engage with local producer groups. A community support group meeting was also observed as part of planned activities along with a training session for Village Development

Committees. Overall, the visit was considered a tremendous auxiliary for all stakeholders particularly front line program staff including consortium partners World food Programme and Winrock International and served as a tremendous boost of motivation and morale for the entire team.



The Vice President is welcomed with a bouquet

Nobo Jatra goal: Improved gender equitable food security, nutrition and resilience of vulnerable people within Khulna and Satkhira districts in Bangladesh.



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