



# Project Progress Report

*Scaling-up of community-managed ecological solution of  
stunting growth prevention among poor children and women of  
Barind tract in Bangladesh*

For the Reporting Period: January 2021 to December 2021



**Submitted To**

Ashar Gan Onlus, Italy

**Submitted By**

**Society for People's Action in Change & Equity (SPACE)**

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## Executive Summary

SPACE, with the financial assistance from Ashar Gan Onlus, is implementing a project named as *'Scaling-up of Community-managed Ecological Solution of Stunting Growth Prevention among Poor Children & Women of Barind Tract in Bangladesh'*, which started in January 2021. The project period is 3 years, starting from January 2021 to December 2023.

A number of activities, viz. project staff recruitment/rearrangement, project staff orientation, project information dissemination to Local Government Administration, Local Government Institutions (LGIs) and sharing project information among the local leaders were considered in the preliminary stage. The implementation stage included community sensitization (major is awareness rising), follow up & monitoring of the installed toilets & other facilities supported by the project.

The project, during the reporting period, indicates that 100% activities of the preliminary stage have been terminated while scheme under the implementation stage are also done about over 60% during the reporting period as the local situation are severely affected by the adverse effect of the second wave of Covid-19. Due to budget constraints of the project, there was a very few provision in the budget to install UDD toilets; but no installation of toilet was possible during the reporting period because of lockdown which also was the effect of higher level of Indian Covid-19 variant since the project locations are close to the Indian Boarder.

Despite such adverse situation generated from Covid-19, SPACE continued its effort to raise awareness such as follow up activities specifically on the installed supports, i.e. UDD toilets, Rainwater Harvesting Units, Improved Cooking Stoves (ICS), Waste Disposal Units and the Farm Demonstration Plots, etc. through mobile-base contacts & frequent spot visit in certain intervals as there were strong restrictions from the government on free movement due to Covid-19.

Utilizing comparative advantages & opportunities, SPACE could perform few activities and continue follow up activities through distanced time spanned spot visits (once in a month instead of week), mobile phone-based contacts with the toilet owners and owners of other components; contacting with the children leaders and community leaders along with the local elected bodies (LEB). SPACE had done all the works critically & duly followed the Covid-19 instructions given by the local administration.

## Report in Detail

From January 2021 with the funding by Ashar Gan Onlus, SPACE carried out a project titled on *'Scaling-up of Community-managed Ecological Solution of Stunting Growth Prevention among Poor Children & Women of Barind Tract in Bangladesh.*

To provide improved livelihood for 4565 vulnerable community from 922 households of selected 10 villages of ward No.8 & 9 under Gobratola Union in Sadar Upazila of Chapainawabgonj district, is the ultimate goal of the project so that they could rub out the imperceptible boundary of poverty and severe health risks causing massive fecal diseases and at the same time bear a better life by December 2021. Simultaneously for accomplishing SDG 1, 2, 3 & 5 other objectives, the plans are as follows:

- i) *Enhance knowledge on women empowerment, family health, sustainable farming, nutrition, stunting prevention and child protection among the target communities;*
- ii) *Increase access to gender sensitive, comfortable and environment friendly affordable and sustainable WASH, organic farming & marketing the eco-products in the project areas; and*
- iii) *Accelerate the strengthen capacities of target people on improved O&M, management, recycling, safe handling and reuse of treated human excreta in productive, economic & organic farming.*

In order to address the above, a set of activities had been undertaken relating to submission of project documents to the Local Administration & Local Government Institutes, project launching workshop, informal women & adolescent group formation & orientation (Cluster-based), formation & orientation of children's group, hygiene promotion session with mother and adolescent girls group members, hygiene promotion session with school going students, popular theater demonstration, celebrated Anti-Corruption Day, advocacy meeting with Local Government, training on eco-toilet sustainability and maintenance, eco-toilet installation, old eco-toilet beautification, village based demonstration (Organic Vegetables & Fruits), knowledge based documentary, etc.

## **Task performed by SPACE:**

### **1. Submission of project documents to the Local Administration & Local Government Institutes:**

For ensuring transparency and inter-agency collaboration & coordination towards sustainability following the given instructions by the NGOAB, SPACE project staffs have submitted the approved FD-6 containing project activities and budget to the local administration and the local Government Institutes (LGIs) to involve them in the project monitoring process.

### **2. Project Launching Workshop:**

Amidst Covid-19 pandemic, it was nearly impossible to formally organize the launching workshop; but the project information were disseminated among the defined audiences in the Upazila NGO's Coordination Meeting regularly organized by the Upazila (sub-district) administration through virtual method. 34 representatives from the local administration & Local Government Institutes, government departments, local NGOs, local journalists and private sector actors attended the meeting.

### **3. Informal women & Adolescent Group Formation & Orientation (Cluster based):**

Trained project staffs organized & formed 10 Women & Adolescent Groups (WAG) involving 146 women & adolescents aging from 11 to 15 in each group. Upon forming those WAG, the project staffs imparted them, executed orientation on their roles & responsibilities for the result-based implementation of the project. After approval by the LGIs and maintaining almost all safety measures during the pandemic, the project staffs duly formulated the scheduled orientation sessions at the doorsteps of the audiences. In consequent of the formation & orientation of WAG, the targeted women and adolescent girls could realize their local situations/problems and became sensible of their roles & responsibilities. From the field observations it was found that the trained girls & women are more active in hygiene practicing and monitoring the project components.



### **4. Formation & Orientation of Children's Group:**

In response to project needs and enhancing people's knowledge through effective communication agent, SPACE project staffs are reviving their experiences from their past project. On cluster basis the whole number of children are distributed whereas 10 children in each group. The main purpose of this effort is to effectively disseminate project information, focusing on improved environment and health status among their peers and adult groups. A total of 132 children from the project villages were involved in the Children's



Group so far. Furthermore, the project staffs then reformed & reactivated the student council through imparting orientation individually and group discussion wherever it was possible in the lockdown situation. Besides, SPACE project staffs involved the local leaders through mobile-based personal contacts in the site selection process. Major portion of possible conflicts was reduced after involving community leaders in the site selection process making the citizen happy.

#### **5. Hygiene Promotion Session with Mother and Adolescent Group Members:**

The vulnerable community exists in our society is mostly illiterate regarding hygiene, and nutritional foods. 50 hygiene promotion sessions were conducted by SPACE amidst pandemic



situation regarding fresh water, environmental sanitation and nutritional food for stunting growth prevention among the mother and adolescent group members with a view to upgrading their knowledge and good practices. Almost 150 mothers & adolescent girls were present in this session. After receiving the above sessions they moved to the hospital for

examining their physical health condition, brought changes in their practice manner & started cultivated vegetables & fruits. Subsequently, the diarrhea related disease has been shortened that simultaneously affected in the mortality rate. Besides the community leaders are visiting the household's & having conversation with the community people regarding hygiene practices.

#### **6. Hygiene Promotion Session with the Child Groups**

A total of 40 sessions were conducted with the child group members about hygiene practices, COVID-19, safe drinking water and sanitation. In the above mentioned sessions, 150 children in each month. After completing the learning session they are trying to practice hygiene for themselves, and convincing their family members and friend circles as well. After coming back from the school they are monitoring each other family members & surrounding areas.



Now they have obtain knowledge about hygiene, COVID-19, safe drinking water and sanitation. As a result each of the family have hygienic latrine, drinking safe water, cleaning surrounding area, practicing personal, family and environmental hygiene. Gradually, there is a reduction of the water-borne diseases due to regular practicing of hygiene.





### 7. Hygiene Promotion and Nutrition Session with School Students

To raise awareness among children on hygiene practice, sanitation, fresh drinking water and nutrition, 15 school sessions were held attended by 425 students. The student leaders & teachers always monitored each class, source of drinking water, sanitation facilities & surrounding area of school. Not only the monitoring of the school, they are also discussing the learning points among the family members & friends. School teachers discussed with government representatives & students' guardians and providing protein and rich foods to the students during school for their stunting growth prevention.



### 8. Popular Theater Demonstration

SPACE and local community leaders formed one popular theater group & demonstrated several places for increasing the community knowledge & hygiene practices. They performed programmes on water, sanitation, hygiene practices and nutritional foods. The community peoples became happy and became motivated observing their performance, and they tried to increase their practice level in their household & environment as well. It is a very powerful method to remember all levels of peoples. After gradual boosting the theater presentation at this remote level, the citizens are now habituated to watch the movie, television, mobile & face book. It is an artificial mechanism and popular theater as well as practical method for creating emotion among those people.



### 9. Observance International Anti-Corruption Day

SPACE, in collaboration with the Local Government, celebrated the International Anti-Corruption Day at the Upazila level. "Your Right, Your Role: Say No to Corruption" was the theme of this day - Corruption affects each and every corner of our society. Preventing corruption which unlock progress towards the sustainable development goals helps to create job achieve gender equality and secure a wide access to essential services such as healthcare and education. The 2021 International Anti-Corruption Day seeks to highlight the rights and responsibilities of everyone.



### 10. Advocacy Meeting with Local Government Institution:

A day-long session with Local government officials as well as local leaders in the union parishad bhaban was organized where almost 25 persons participated. They have been informed about the objectives, activities and process of installation of hardware supports of this project. All the community think tank are committed to help the execution and ensure qualities. They declared that they are prepared to secure good governance in the community.



### 11. Training on Eco-Toilet Sustainability and Maintenance:

Training on Eco-Toilet Sustainability & Maintenance was conducted following the instructions of eco-toilet as suggested and published by the Department of Health in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the project where in total 15 women and 5 men were engaged. Upon receiving the training, the participants could share improved ideas and hygiene behavior at their personal, family and social levels.



### 12. Eco-Toilet Installation:

During the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the project, 7 targeted eco-toilets had been set up. Union chairmen, ward members and local community leaders were engaged in site selection & implementation process. After installation of the toilets they ensured proper using and maintenance by monitoring. The people are committed to its proper using and maintenance. Not only using and maintenance of the toilet, they are practicing hygiene, drinking safe water and managing waste management disposal units. As a result their surrounding areas are remaining very neat and clean.



Sl. No	Name of Toilet Holder	Husband/Father	Village	No of Toilet	NID No
01.	Ms. Babiara Begum	Mr. Salim	Gokul	01/2021	8247999637
02.	Ms. Soukatara Begum	Mr. Robel	„	02/2021	9146924403
03.	Ms.Sonia Begum	Mr. Toyel	„	03/2021	5508422762
04.	Ms. Sultana Begum	Mr. Bairul	„	04/2021	-----
05.	Ms.Poly begum	Mr. Samad	„	05/2021	3296965480
06.	Ms. Hafeza Begum	Mr. Asmaul Haque	„	06/2021	20017016633004757
07.	Mr. Mohidul Islam	Late Fazlur Rahman	„	07/2021	6446940386

### 13. Old Eco-Toilet Beautification:

37 old eco-toilets were installed in 2019 to 2020, and they were beautified meaning mirrors and hangers were installed inside the toilets. Toilet owners and their family members are very happy to see fitting the mirrors and hangers in the toilets. They look at the face and teeth after brushing and scratching the head. Especially young people are always enjoying. Moreover, they keep the toilets clean all the time due to frequent visits to the toilets. For this reason, there are no odors as well as hygiene practice is being strongly maintained among the community people.



### 14. Village Based Demonstration (Organic Vegetables & Fruits):

Technical assistance in demonstrating organic farming using the eco-products from eco-toilets has been delivered by SPACE. The main purpose of demonstrated farm is to make a comparison between the conventional farming and organic farming in the areas of investment, cost, yields, etc. due to its cost effective behavior. Crops are growing in large amount consequently which is bigger than that of the conventional which is more acceptable by the community once they tested the products.



### Knowledge Based Documentation:

We have collected and wrote two successful case studies from the previous activity. One is on eco-toilet use, maintenance and health advantages. Another one is on eco-product. SPACE officials input's to this project included conduction of hygiene promotion session at community, school and farmer levels. The participants were very excited and committed to install eco-toilet and expansion of the eco-product. Other people also visited the eco-toilet and eco-related product, where the firms used the eco fertilizer. These products are obtaining popularity gradually in the local market and community.

### Major results:

The government administration and community people have been inspired to install eco-toilets and using the eco-product in the field. The eco-products have been accepted by the community as they are low cost. Hand washing practices have been increased among the target households. Although it was not correctly & scientifically measured; but pressure in extracting underground water has been reduced for this reason even though it is not significant. Besides, water supply & environmental sanitation facilities have been increased at the targeted household level.



**Major challenges:**

- a) Effects of Covid-19,
- b) Heavy rainfall due to monsoon,
- c) Managing the emerging situations between higher demands and limited project resources;
- d) Lack of available funds,
- e) Organizing the households in cost-sharing through cash & manual labor due to financial poverty
- f) Travelling to field by the project staffs due to lockdown.

**Major learnings:**

- i) Improved rapport building, respecting people; effective communication, committed & quality works contributed to enhance people's trust upon the implementing & funding agencies;
- ii) Mobile phone has proved to be an effective communication & monitoring tool for project implementation during Covid-19 risks and disaster periods;
- iii) Better works come from effective & practical learning from the community stakeholders;
- iv) Effective communication & collaboration with the Local Government Institutes (LGIs), Local Elected Bodies (LEBs) and local administration along with the private sector operators contributed in risks management;
- v) Gender sensitive interventions with especial focus to safety & security of the children, adolescent girls and women lead in sustainability of project achievements;
- vi) Effective awareness leads in enhancing willingness to pay by the households for cost sharing to hardware supports contributed in enhancing ownership attitude of the households that drives in sustainability;

**Conclusion**

There is no denying to the fact that despite various challenges and obstacles during the reporting period, SPACE was able to effectively manage its committed project staffs in quality implementation of the project activities. From its learning and experiences, SPACE is glad to perform all the scheduled activities within the project period. SPACE, on behalf of the community, conveys a big gratefulness to Ashar Gan and the funding agency, Chiesa Valdese.