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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACF	Action Contre la Faim
ADP	Annual Development Program
ARI	Acute Respiratory Tract Infections
BDT	Bangladesh Taka
BCC	Behavior Change Communication
BUBD	Best-Use-By-Date
CBDMVG	Community Based Disaster Management Volunteer Group
CMAM	Community Management of Acute Malnutrition
CPP	Cyclone Preparedness Program
CODEC	Community Development Centre
CPMC	Collection Points Management Committee
DAE	Department of Agricultural Extension
DLS	Department of Livestock
DMC	Disaster Management Committees
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DRRP	Disaster Risk Reduction Action Plan
FBG	Farm Business Group
FBA	Farm Business Advisor
FFS	Farmer Field School
FF	Field Facilitators
FY	Financial Year
GME	Growth Monitoring Educators
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
HDDS	Household Dietary Diversity Score
HP	Health Promoter
HYV	High Yield Variety
iDE	International Development Enterprise
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
KG	Kilogram
LHW	Livestock Health Worker
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MYAP	Multi-Year Assistance Program
PCI	Project Concern International
PCSBA <sub>s</sub>	Private Community Skills Birth Attendants
PM2A	Preventing Malnutrition in Children Under 2 Approach
PNGO	Partner Non-Governmental Organization
PSF	Pond Sand Filter
PROSHAR	Program Strengthening Household Access to Resources
RUTF	Ready to Use Therapeutic Food
SAM	Severe Acute Malnutrition
SO	Strategic Objective

SOD	Standing Orders on Disasters
UDMC	Union Disaster Management Committee
UNO	Upazila Nirbahi Officer
UP	Union Parishad
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

## ***A. Annual Food Assistance Project Activities and Results***

### **Introduction**

The overall goal of the USAID funded Title II Program For Strengthening Household Access to Resources (PROSHAR) is to reduce food insecurity among vulnerable populations in selected upazilas of Batiaghata, Lohaghora, and Sarankhola in Khulna Division. This five year Multi-Year Assistance Program (MYAP) has three key strategic objectives (SO), namely:

- SO1: Income and access to food of poor and ultra-poor households improved
- SO2: Health of pregnant and lactating women and children under 5 (with particular attention to children under 2) improved
- SO3: Institutions and households prepared to respond effectively to shocks

ACDI/VOCA is responsible for overall program results, and directly manages activities related to SO1 and commodities. Project Concern International (PCI) directly manages the implementation of activities related to SO2 and SO3. At the community level, implementation of activities is led by three key non-government partners: Community Development Centre (CODEC), Shushilan and Muslim Aid. International Development Enterprise (iDE) provides technical support on market linkages, and builds the capacity of the three Partner Non-Governmental Organizations (PNGOs) to better promote a demand driven model for producers to strengthen their links to market networks.

As of September 30, 2014, a total of 63,061 households participated in either the livelihoods or health/nutrition program. A total of 14,547 community members have been trained in disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities<sup>1</sup>.

The results presented below come from a range of data, including monthly service data and the annual survey. All achievements with respect to the livelihoods sector have been calculated on the total of livelihood beneficiaries, regardless of the sub-sector with which they were directly connected. The achievements below, therefore, capture the multiplier effect across PROSHAR beneficiaries from learning through watching trained beneficiaries implementing technologies.

### **Strategic Objective 1: Income & Access to Food of Ultra-Poor Households Improved**

The development hypothesis of PROSHAR's livelihoods strategy is that vulnerable households will increase their income and access to food if the following barriers are removed: (a) producers knowledge of cost saving and improved productivity technologies; (b) lack of quality inputs, and distant points of sale; (c) producers overcome their resistance to bulking of inputs or sales products so that they can capture economies of scale, and fulfill the needs of the private sector from central points; and (d) local markets are not flooded with the increased production as a result of producers' access to a diverse market.

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<sup>1</sup> The dataset for DRR beneficiaries has not been finalized. However, PROSHAR assumes that the overlap between DRR and livelihood/health/nutrition beneficiaries will be no greater than 10%. As of September 30, 2014, 16.02% of PM2A beneficiaries are now actively engaged with livelihood activities through the program.

PROSHAR's livelihood beneficiaries are primarily ultra-poor and poor producers: 45% are ultra-poor producers who own no more than 10 decimals of land, 40% are poor producers who own no more than 50 decimals of land, and 15% are marginal-poor producers who own no more than 100 decimals of land. As smallholder producers, they more likely have access to less productive land, such as land with high levels of soil salinity in areas where cyclones, seasonal floods and tidal surges are common. These producers, of which 74% are women, have historically had very limited access to productive assets and knowledge of new technologies, and are dependent upon sharecropping or leasing land to survive as farmers. In these remote working areas where PROSHAR operates, particularly Sarankhola Upazila, there is a significant lack of private-sector service providers. Public-sector service provision is also limited due to limited numbers of public service providers within the agricultural sector. Finally, micro-finance institutions cannot sufficiently meet farmers' needs as the loan products are not customized nor do they have seasonal payback structures to support agriculture production.

In southwest Bangladesh, women's contribution in agriculture is often ignored despite women being responsible for the majority of homestead production of vegetables, fish, poultry and livestock. Women are involved in seedbed preparation and preparation of fields and ponds, and animal/poultry care and feeding, while men tend to do most of the transplanting and harvesting, and are responsible for the sale of commercial products, livestock and poultry. In effect, women are often "unpaid labor" whose decision-making on the use of the sales proceeds, particularly in the commercial sector, is limited.

PROSHAR made minor adjustments to its implementation strategy based on what it learned in Financial Year (FY) 2013. The major learning was in the area of bulking. Targeted results in the area of bulking were not achieved in FY 2013, PROSHAR made the following shifts: (a) separate sessions in the Farmer Field School (FFS) on bulking, facilitated by PROSHAR staff; (b) establishment of aggregation points managed by Farm Business Advisors (FBAs)/Master Trainers; (c) collection points managed by Collection Points Management Committee (CPMC); and (d) creation of Farm Business Groups (FBGs) of 10 Master Trainers, each of whom represent a minimum of nine producers. In addition, farmers who had not yet experienced the benefits of bulking conducted cross visits to geographical areas where bulking was increasing sales and profits in order to see for themselves the benefits of bulk sales and purchases.

PROSHAR's learned in FY 2012/13 that women's level of economic interaction with markets was limited due to cultural norms. Therefore greater effort was made to link more women to external networks or businesses, and provide a forum where role models could stimulate confidence. Through these networks, women were provided with opportunities to establish contacts with different value chain actors, build confidence in dealing with traders, and interacting with other micro-entrepreneurs. Master Trainers, FBAs, Union Parishad (UP) members, and local successful women entrepreneurs are all members of this network, where input suppliers are invited to the network development meetings.

***Intermediate Result 1.1: Agricultural productivity increased and diversified***

PROSHAR worked with ultra-poor, poor, and marginal producer groups in four sub sectors namely agriculture, poultry and livestock, and fisheries. Using the FFS approach, PROSHAR trained 3,373 Master Trainers, of which 2,445 of them were female and 928 were male. These Master Trainers were responsible for leading the adoption of new technologies through hands-on

training conducted at study plots/farms/ponds. In addition, Master Trainers were expected to provide follow-up support to trainees by visiting their plots to review progress and recommend actions.

A total of 42,198 households have now received training and technical support from PROSHAR (target: 43,102) reaching 98% of targeted households. Uptake of technologies by producers who have continued working with PROSHAR from a previous year has increased slightly (from 85% to 88%), indicating that this technical uptake will likely be sustained over time, due to the benefits it is providing to households.

During the reporting period PROSHAR beneficiaries growing field crops adopted on average 5.1 technologies out of 14<sup>2</sup> technologies introduced in training. The most common technologies adopted included the use of improved varieties and quality seeds, application of organic and balanced fertilizers, maintaining proper spacing, and practicing weed control. Integrated Pest Management (IPM) uptake was also lower than expected due to the challenges caused by the lack of use of IPM on adjacent lands. Uptake was much lower in intercrop/relay cropping, the use of green manure, conservation agriculture, and improved post-harvest management.

In homestead vegetable production, households cultivated an average of 3.13 decimals for homestead vegetable production, compared to an average of 3.00 decimals in the previous year. They also adopted, on average, 5.1 technologies out of a total of 14 introduced. The most commonly practiced technologies were the use of organic fertilizer, quality or improved variety seeds, staking/sticking/trellis gardening techniques, thinning and pruning. Relay cropping showed the lowest level of uptake.

In the poultry and livestock sectors, producers adopted, on average, 3.2 out of 6 technologies introduced. Although uptake increased in all technologies, except the use of supplementary poultry feed, the greatest change in uptake occurred in the areas of disease management and improved housing, followed by uptake in vaccinations.

In the aquaculture sector, producers practiced on average 4.5 out of 10 technologies introduced. Uptake increased in all 10 technologies introduced, the greatest change in uptake occurred in pond cleaning, liming, providing supplemental feeding, and fish disease management.

Gains made in all sectors was the result of (a) increased oversight by PROSHAR through the relocation of Technical Coordinators at the upazila level to support PNGOs and increase random monitoring of households' activities; and (b) increased pond productivity seen in the first year.

A total of 46 PROSHAR trained Livestock Health Workers (LHWs), of which 20 are female, and 26 are male, have been providing commercially viable services in 23 unions since mid-2013. This increased the number of poultry and livestock animals vaccinated and adoption of improved bio-security practices as noted above. However, in Sarankhola, an outbreak of Newcastle disease in 10 villages resulted in the death of approximately 1,200 birds. Follow-up confirmed that the birds had been vaccinated with vaccines purchased from the Department of Livestock (DLS).

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<sup>2</sup> Note that data analysis aggregated responses for using improved varieties or quality seed, which reduced the total number of technologies introduced from 15 to 14.

Given that Sarankhola Upazila is remote and the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) has limited cold-chain facilities, PROSHAR concluded that the vaccine may not have remained live, and was not, therefore, effective. PROSHAR then began to promote procurement of vaccines from private suppliers, as they were more likely to maintain their cold chain, because their business depends on it.

The heat wave experienced from April-June of 2014 negatively affected a number of farmers in multiple sub-sectors. Preparation of aman seedbeds, the rice most commonly grown in the PROSHAR working area, was delayed, putting farmers at risk for low yields. Accordingly, PROSHAR, with support from Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), organized a rapid session on preparation of dry seedbeds for aman rice farmers. Approximately 60% of farmers adopted this technology and were, therefore able to make up for the late rains. These farmers are expected to have normal yields, if not even higher yields.

Similarly, given the risk to livestock mortality and morbidity from exposure to excessive heat, PROSHAR, together with DLS, held a joint workshop on poultry and livestock management in focusing on the importance of fresh water, green grasses, shade and/or ventilated areas during day and night, and changing foraging patterns to early morning and later evening. This reduced the livestock mortality rate for PROSHAR beneficiaries who applied these techniques to 7% from the national average of 10% (DLS data).

Finally, the heat wave and late rains delayed fish producers in stocking fingerlings, which was a particular problem for commercial carp polyculture producers; carp are raised in ponds that are expected to maintain a level of water year round. However, until mid-June, the water level of ponds was very low and, in some cases, inadequate to keep fingerlings alive. Where ponds still held moderate levels of water, PROSHAR advised farmers to maintain the fingerlings they had in their ponds already and not stock additional fingerlings until the rains came. Where pond levels were low, PROSHAR recommended that producers harvest whatever fish were left in the pond before the water completely evaporated. By late June, sufficient rains fell for farmers to re-stock their ponds with fingerlings and start cultivating fish, although it may have reduced their commercial production.

Heavy rains in early June negatively affected crop production of sesame in two unions in Batiaghata. Thus PROSHAR beneficiaries who received micro-grant support for sesame lost a season of production on their limited landholdings. Follow-up by PROSHAR with the DAE confirmed that sesame production in low-lying areas in Batiaghata, which significantly affected the large majority of producers this year, as well as two years' earlier. PROSHAR is now assisting these sesame farmers through the provision of in-kind micro-grants of goats and tin roofing for the animal's shed, so that they can transition from sesame to an alternate economic opportunity, as this crop presents an unacceptable risk to vulnerable farmers in low-lying areas.

Finally, some scheduled activities were postponed due to political disturbances during the first quarter of this FY. Most specifically, procurement of in-kind micro-grants and their subsequent disbursement to community members was delayed, as were linkage-building workshops. Often the private sector and producers were uncomfortable to participate in any official meetings that could possibly be viewed as a demonstration, where they might be at risk.

### **Sub Intermediate Result 1.1.1: Access to agricultural inputs and technology expanded**

According to the annual survey results, 50% of beneficiaries are engaged in growing field crops. Among them, 57% are cultivating High Yield Variety (HYV) rice. The gross margin per unit of HYV rice increased by 10% over last year, as targeted. A comparison of data collected over the two years has shown that the value of the HYV rice per decimal of land increased by 33.6% over the last year, which is the result of increased production from technology adoption plus price inflation of approximately 11%<sup>3</sup>. On the other hand, cash costs of inputs have increased by 23.2%, which also indicates that farmers are continuing to use promoted technologies. The average gross margin for HYV rice per decimal land has increased by 24.7% from the previous year.

Annual survey results indicate that the average per unit weight of key poultry or tilapia production has shown positive gain. Targets were exceeded by 30% and 44% respectively. These significant results are attributed to higher than expected levels of uptake of technologies, as noted earlier

Carp polyculture production, on the other hand, did not meet its target, due to the late arrival of the rains in June. As carp polyculture requires permanent ponds, unlike tilapia, which can be cultivated in temporary ponds, this technology may pose unacceptable risks to low-income commercial producers, given the reality of climate change.

#### **Sub Intermediate Result 1.1.2: Producers have improved knowledge**

Women serving in leadership positions within targeted groups, the key outcome indicator for this sub Intermediate Result remains more than 70%, similar to FY 2013. This may be the result of the high number of producer groups made up of women only. In order to better understand growth in women's leadership, PROSHAR has collected information on number of women business leaders; defined as women actively participating in markets. Using this measure, PROSHAR has seen significant changes in the number of women who are directly accessing market channels, rather than relying solely on husbands to purchase inputs or sell goods. For instance, 73% of women are involved with bulking compared to men (58%), and 75% of FBAs are women who support others to make linkages with buyers and sellers. Finally, women make up more than 50% of users of collection points, which are closer to them than regular markets, and where they are confident that they will not be harassed.

#### **Sub Intermediate Result 1.1.3: Producers adopt improved/appropriate practices**

During the fiscal year 23,999 (F: 14,556, M: 9,443) farmers received training against the target of 28,138. Since the remaining participants are yet to complete their FFS sessions, they are not included here. These remaining sessions, which are in the areas of mix-mini orchard, aman rice and aquaculture, will be completed by November of 2014. Overall Life of Activity targets will not be affected.

#### ***Intermediate Result 1.2: Market linkages developed and strengthened***

This year's annual survey revealed that households sold their produce through multiple channels. The greatest change highlighted by the survey was the decrease in reliance on the local market to sell to traders (21.5% compared to 30.4% in 2012/13), and a significant increase in either a trader

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<sup>3</sup> WFP Food Security Monitoring Quarterly Bulletin April-June 2014 (Issue #17).

purchasing at the homestead (33.6% compared to 15.9% in 2012/13), or a buyer who then sells the product from their permanent shop (10.1% compared to 15.9% in 2012/13). These results suggest that producers are choosing to sell directly to collection points or aggregators, rather than going to markets to sell to traders or permanent businesses. Discussions with producers have highlighted the household savings from the use of these new market channels, in terms of transportation, and reduced burden on a household member to travel to the formal market, remain there all day to sell their production, and then possibly return home with product. Linking with collection points and FBGs has strengthened the market chain for small-scale producers.

Pre-season production and marketing planning through FBGs is another reason why market linkages and commercial sales have been strengthened. This planning allows FBGs to target their potential buyers, or sources of supply, and has given confidence to the private sector that, should they work with FBGs or other mechanisms managed by producer groups, the supply will meet quality and quantity expectations.

Changes have also occurred since last year's survey related to the purchase of agricultural inputs. In FY 2013, the ratio of males to females purchasing agricultural inputs was 1.33:1. In FY 2014, the ratio dropped to 1.22:1, indicating that these mechanisms are providing opportunities for economic empowerment of women. Equally important is the fact that the percentage of continued households purchasing agricultural inputs has increased considerably, from 60.1% to 82.6%, indicating that benefits to households of purchasing inputs, based on knowledge gained from PROSHAR, are greater than if inputs are not purchased.

#### **Sub Intermediate Result 1.2.2: Producer cooperation improved**

The annual survey showed that a total of 71.23% of producer group members bulked their product in FY 2013/14, significantly over-achieving the target of 15%. Bulking in rice, vegetables, pulses and poultry (eggs) has increased compared to last year. Within the off-farm sector, bulking is occurring for a number of products, but it has increased most notably in karchupi. Master Trainers and FBAs from the producer groups are also playing a vital role for buying inputs and selling on-farm products. The over achievement of targets in bulking happened as a result of initiative such as Training of Trainers on bulking for Field Facilitators (FFs), who then have supported Master Trainers during the FFS, and who have stimulated motivational discussions at the collection points, aggregation points, which are now functioning, as well as cross visits to successful groups of producers bulking their product, or purchasing inputs in bulk.

#### ***Intermediate Result 1.3: Non-agricultural opportunities expanded and diversified***

A total of seven Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) have been signed between off-farm producer groups and traders, five MoUs for bamboo products and two for tailoring products. The Annual Survey revealed that only a small amount of households decreased their amount of product sold (3% compared to 20% in FY14), suggesting that agreements between producers and buyers, as demonstrated by these MoUs, confirmed the effectiveness of PROSHAR's strategy to reduce vulnerability by: (a) an increase in the number of buyers (from close and greater distances) representing an increase in demand, particularly in the area of karchupi (needle work), bamboo products (fish trap, crab trap, house were items), hogla products, and nol (sea grass) products; and (b) improved technical and management knowledge supports producers' capacity

to engage in new product design required to meet increased quality demand; and, (c) bamboo production (pieces sold) has shown the greatest gain in FY 2014, with a 42% overachievement. This significant increase is attributed to the number of MoUs signed between producer groups and buyers, and their continuance due to the quality and demand for these products. Karchupi also showed an overachievement in the average number of pieces produced per household by 20%. Given that production of karchupi pieces also exceeded targets in FY 2013, this likely demonstrates the unmet demand for these products that continues in Bangladesh.

#### **Sub Immediate Result 1.3.1: Entrepreneurs have improved knowledge**

During FY 2014 PROSHAR trained 1,164 out of 1,363 beneficiaries, falling short of its target by 14.6%. This stems from a number of basic trainings having been cancelled due to the political instability in early 2013/14. These trainings could not be reprogrammed within this fiscal year, as they are reliant on a number of organizations to provide market information and facilitate the linkages between producers and different buyers with which they already have relationships<sup>4</sup>.

#### **Sub Intermediate Result 1.3.2: Entrepreneurs adopt improved/appropriate practices**

In FY 2014, the annual survey data showed that 99.5% of off-farm beneficiaries adopted at least one technology as a result of their participation in skill-development trainings. This result did not differ significantly across men and women. Improvement to product design was the technology most adopted by beneficiaries, at 93%, which was a significant increase over the FY 2013 results (40%). The use of improved raw materials has also increased significantly, from 0% in FY 2013 to 33.3% in FY 2014. Two other practices were commonly adopted: (a) the use of careful measurement when measuring for clothing or responding to orders, and (b) proper product storage of both inputs and final products to maintained quality. The technology that was least adopted was product diversification within a single line (for example, from men's tailoring to tailoring for women, or for a shift from bamboo baskets and traps to non-fishing related products).

### **Strategic Objective 2: Health of Pregnant and Lactating Women and Children Under Five (With Particular Attention to Children Under 2) Improved**

In the area of health and nutrition, PROSHAR's development hypothesis is that improvement of malnutrition and stunting in children requires that barriers to health and nutrition of women and children, particularly those under the age of two, must be overcome. This includes changing household: (a) attitudes that health can only be managed by addressing illnesses as they occur; (b) perceptions that health services are not consistently available; and (c) traditional practices related to children and maternal diets, which are often lacking in key micro-nutrients and protein (both animal and vegetable).

To change these misconceptions among targeted households, PROSHAR implemented health and nutrition activities in three upazilas, two of which have unique characteristics that affect

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<sup>4</sup> These organizations include Rural Reconstruction Foundation in Jessore, and Khan Jahania Gono Bidyaloy in Bagerhat. These training institutes work as mediators to link PROSHAR beneficiaries with buyers. This activity is at the level of sample exchange, if the buyers are satisfied, this relationship will be long lasting

availability of services. Batiaghata Upazila is adjacent to the City of Khulna, so households have better access to quality health services. Households in Sarankhola Upazila on the other hand, are more isolated and must travel greater distances to gain access to ambulatory services, clinics or hospitals. In all three upazilas, availability and regularity of quality service provision is a challenge in the geographically remote areas.

In FY 2013 PROSHAR saw a reduced number of underweight children under the age of two years at 21.2% against a target of 19.6%. Sarankhola continued to show the highest level of malnutrition among the three upazilas. Based on these results, and considering the distances households in each of the three upazilas must travel to receive quality health services, PROSHAR adapted its strategy to improve the capacity of Health Promoters (HPs) and Growth Monitoring Educators (GMEs) to provide effective counseling during household visits.

In addition, the FY 2012/13 survey revealed that solid food consumption by children included limited micronutrient rich vegetables and fruit. In order to address this problem, PROSHAR promoted greater awareness of dietary diversity and behavior change. It did so by supporting care trio groups and their work to enhance key messages covering nutrition and by including cooking demonstrations, where women can learn to cook with more diversified foods.

Finally, the reductions in number of severe acute malnourished (SAM) cases compared to baseline figures, is credited to earlier identification of cases which reduced the need for Community Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) services and subsequently Ready to Use Therapeutic (RUTF). In August 2013, PROSHAR, with the agreement of the GoB and USAID, transferred 26.9928 metric tons of RUTF to *Action Contre la Faim* (ACF) who was managing extensive CMAM programs in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. While ACF distributed RUTF in its intervention area, PROSHAR continued to deliver the final batches of RUTF to clinics in the project area, based on the historical case load or need. Clinics had sufficient stock to meet demand until July 31, 2014, after which the RUTF product's Best-Use-By Date (BUBD) had expired. For its part, PROSHAR adopted a strategy of using community awareness and quarterly surveillance from mother leaders in the area to continue enrolment of CMAM cases at clinics, while continuing its strategy of follow-up monitoring to maintain low default rates for maximum outcome.

### ***Intermediate Result 2.1: Malnutrition Prevent and Treated***

A total of 19,362 children were supported under the United States Government nutrition program in FY 2014 out of a target of 21, 283, resulting in a deviation of 9%.

In FY 2013 the reduction in cases of malnutrition was slightly less than planned, although the shortfall did not exceed 10% of the target. In order to improve upon this in FY 2014, PROSHAR began to implement its negotiated counseling training for HPs, GMEs and selected mother leaders to improve optimal feeding and care. It was tested in five batches over a three-month period to determine its effectiveness. The scale up plan of the training activity was later dropped after the pilot did not affect levels of growth faltering over that period, compared to growth faltering rates in areas where the pilot was not conducted. As a consequence, PROSHAR acted instead to increase the frequency of household visits, from monthly to weekly visits. This helped to strengthen the amount of household support desired as was requested by Preventing Malnutrition in Children Under 2 Approach (PM2A) beneficiary mothers. This request was captured during a semi-annual survey conducted in March 2014, where 56% of households

receiving counseling recommended that more time be allocated by the service provider to support household level behavior change.

As a result of further decreases in number of SAM cases over the period, from 1% to .5%<sup>5</sup>, PROSHAR worked with USAID to quickly transfer 299.368 kilograms (kgs) to Save the Children who has a MYAP program that was distributing RUTF under its CMAM program. The aim was to transfer and use RUTF before the product's BUBD. These resources were transferred on July 1, 2014, and all resources transferred were utilized by this project by the end of the BUBD of July 31, 2014.

With multiple batches of RUTF in clinics, a major focus under PROSHAR was also to ensure that Ministry of Health (MoH) trained staff was using the first-expiry-first-out method of medicine management. Clinic managers did not follow this practice in several weekly distributions, resulting in a loss of 128.616 kg of RUTF and who's BUBD had subsequently been exceeded.

### ***Intermediate Result 2.2 Improved Effectiveness of Health Clinic Services***

PROSHAR adapted its strategy to promote better hygiene behavior by introducing simple and easy to use mechanisms (tippy-taps) to health/nutrition beneficiaries. A sample survey conducted in March 2014 indicated that there was significant uptake of the equipment, particularly in Sarankhola. Regular monitoring across all upazilas identified that the quality of water used for hand washing was still a concern. As a result, safe water use was emphasized at the bi-weekly and monthly care group sessions, in addition to promoting the use of water available at Pond Sand Filters (PSFs) constructed or rehabilitated by PROSHAR.

PROSHAR's strategy of forming and training community support groups as mandated by the MoH was enhanced by building linkages between community support group members with PROSHAR health volunteers (mother leaders, GMEs) to promote sustainability of community mobilization after the project ended.

With the messaging focused on including different food groups in children's diets, and frequency of feeding, the average number of feedings increased from an average of 4.0 to 4.6 times per day. The greatest gains in frequency of feeding were in Sarankhola, which showed an increase from 3.6 times per day to 5.1 times per day. There was also a positive shift in consumption of food groups overall. Data in annual survey for FY 2014 showed variation in consumption of different food items in the same food groups in the day before the survey. For example, fish intake for children under the age of two remains a challenge, particularly for male children. This may be due to the need for more time to prepare fish dishes for children (removing bones, etc.) and the sensitivity of children's palate. Milk and milk products and egg consumption by children showed a significant improvement across the upazilas, and may reflect the acceptability of these two foods to young palates. Micronutrient-rich vegetables and fruits consumption increased across all upazilas, reflecting the results of more integration of SO2 families with SO1 homestead approaches or its products.

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<sup>5</sup> Between August 2013 and March 2014,

These results demonstrate that household behaviors are changing with respect to dietary diversity of children under the age of two years', particularly overcoming the belief that green leafy vegetables cause loose stool, that fruits are not important components of a child's diet, and that animal proteins are not necessary for a child's development.

Sarankhola has shown the lowest gains in increases in milk consumption by children, compared to the other two upazilas. Given that milk products and eggs are often more easily introduced as complementary foods, compared to meat or fish, more information is required to understand why milk product uptake is not increasing in Sarankhola at the same rate as the other two upazilas. One reason may be that milk powder; the most common type of milk consumed in rural areas, is not available in the markets or sold in the right size packages for households to regularly purchase in Sarankhola.

To maintain the nutritional gains in Lohaghora and Batiaghata and to sustain mother leaders' support to communities in all three upazilas, PROSHAR will increase the emphasis on engaging mother leaders in weekly household visits, so that there is a demand driven practice from the community to seek counseling from mother leaders even after program ends. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) team members will also do further assessments on the level of engagement from mother leaders in household visit to measure the progress in voluntary commitment.

A semi-annual survey conducted in March 2014, to assess hand washing behaviors at the household level revealed that 30% of households had adopted the Tippy Tap as a hand washing device. As a result of this success, PROSHAR introduced the concept to livelihood FFs who trained Master Trainers in the importance of good hygiene behaviors, and the installation and use of the tippy-tap, expanded the coverage at schools from 42 to 80, and engaged interested tea stall owners (3 per union) to maintain the use of a tippy-tap with critical hand washing practices at their tea stall. As households may already have access to water points, traditional use of safe water was also supported through the promotion of best practices related to hand washing to promote this critical behavior change.

Washing hands during the five critical times showed a significant improvement from 2012 (1.9%) when proper hand washing information and skills were introduced to 2013 (5%) and the progress continued in 2014 (43.6%). Nonetheless, in Sarankhola, the access to safe water during dry season for household work and hygiene may be a barrier for making a positive impact on reducing child under weight and illness episodes. PROSHAR field teams will work closely with the SO3 team to ensure that PSFs are functional and that mother leaders are aware of the location of these PSFs when counseling families.

In 2014, household health-seeking behavior for children with acute respiratory tract infections (ARI) being treated showed positive changes, with 94.3% of children suffering from ARIs compared to 64.5% in 2013. Most importantly, the most common place for treatment, shifted from local drug stores in FY 2013 (41.6%) to hospitals or clinics in FY 2014 (45.5%). Improved service delivery with trained staff, availability of medicine from community clinics, provision of regular services ensured by functioning community groups, information sharing in care groups and community meetings to strengthen the referral system, have all contributed to this shift. In Batiaghata, service seeking in childhood illness was less than that of Lohaghora (68% compared to 92%), which may also hinder the level of achievement in reducing underweight in Batiaghata compared to Lohaghora in FY 2014.

### **Strategic Objective 3: Institutions and Households Prepared to Respond Effectively to Shocks**

The PROSHAR development hypothesis for this strategic objective is that, if households better understand the risks they face (either in terms of short-term natural disasters, or long-term chronic disasters), they can better contribute to strengthening their community resilience and their own household level resilience to shocks. PROSHAR has adopted an integrated approach of evidence-based planning and social mobilization, which supports the GoB Standing Orders on Disasters (SOD), in order to ensure long-term sustainability of knowledge and behaviors. The PROSHAR geographical area is highly vulnerable to rapid and slow onset of natural disasters due to extreme climate variability, higher incidence of poverty, inadequate/poor infrastructure and heavy reliance on the natural resource base (soil and water). Assessments of, and consultations with, local communities suggest that while cyclones, floods, droughts and other major hazards pose serious threats to vulnerable populations in Batiaghata and Sarankhola, livelihood structures in Lohaghora are affected by water logging, thereby reducing the use of arable land to one season only.

#### ***Intermediate Result 3.1: Disaster Risk Reduction Action Plans (DRRAPs) functional***

In FY 2014, PROSHAR supported the most vulnerable 13 Union Disaster Management Committees (UDMCs) in organizing their regular monthly meetings. Despite not receiving any direct support from PROSHAR, the remaining 10 UDMCs continued to conduct their regular monthly meetings as planned. Monitoring data estimated an average 20% lower attendance at self-organized UDMC meetings but met the minimum attendance requirement (one third of total members) as per SOD. In addition, 13 Disaster Management Committees (DMCs), representing the most vulnerable unions, updated their DRRAPs, indicating a step in reducing dependency upon PROSHAR.

In FY 2013 UDMCs began to utilize their own resources in support of priorities identified through the DRRAP. As a result, 156 schemes identified by the DRRAPs were implemented through mobilizing non-PROSHAR resources, including resources from the Annual Development Program (ADP) and resources from other donors supporting infrastructure projects in their union. PROSHAR has estimated that the value of these schemes is approximately BDT 35,000,000<sup>6</sup> (approximately USD \$452,196), which is almost the same amount as the resources received from the central government under PROSHAR's Host Country Agreement with the GoB.

In FY 2014, PROSHAR implemented 233 DRR schemes, which covered 55% of the communities (exceeding the target 40% of total 207 communities) and also improved the conditions of 64.74 km of rural roads, exceeding the target by 27%. Overachievement in the target of road rehabilitation occurred due to feasibility studies by roadworks to ensure that roads

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<sup>6</sup> During the 2013-14 GoB fiscal year, the Rayenda UDMC implemented a total of 12 DRR schemes using resources from the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, and the Annual Development Programme, as well as funds from other agencies such as the Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme and Muslim Aid Bangladesh, amounting to BDT 4,545,929 (approximately USD \$59,038). PROSHAR is working in 13 vulnerable unions.

were not raised further than the 25-year flood level, compared to the preliminary estimate made prior to completion of technical feasibility studies. This freed up resources for more roadwork, extending the amount of rural road rehabilitated.

In FY 2013, PROSHAR undertook implementation of rural earthworks rehabilitation schemes using the majority of GoB cash contributions in that year for rehabilitation<sup>7</sup>. These schemes were identified from the DRRAPs, and utilized bKash as a transparent mechanism for managing cash transfers. Although there were drawbacks to using bKash, due to the need of all participants to have national identification cards to open bKash accounts, which affected participation of approximately 10-15% of interested households, the transparency of this system was considered by beneficiaries to be highly important. PROSHAR raised the request to the Steering Committee to facilitate the processing of national identification cards, and the Secretary instructed the Project Director accordingly.

In FY 2014, PROSHAR increased the number of rehabilitation schemes implemented by complementing the cash for work with food. A total of 266,531 person days of work was provided to 9,876 laborers, of which 30% were female. Payment was a combination of cash and food, with the first 5 days' of a 12 day work period being paid in food valued at BDT 250 per day (wheat, lentils and vegetable oil), and the last 7 days of a 12-day work period being paid in cash at the same rate. Each laborer worked an average of 27 days', which contributed approximately BDT 6,750 to each household<sup>8</sup>.

Field observation and discussions with the laborers during field visits revealed that women laborers preferred the combination of food and cash because of the quality of the food distributed particularly the oil and lentils. On the other hand, male laborers were ambivalent, as they did not necessarily see the benefit of quality food distribution. That said, all laborers agreed that the transparency with which both the food and cash was managed by PROSHAR was a model that should be adopted by other organizations, as well as by the government. Equally important, laborers noted that bKash effectively created a 'virtual bank account', which helped laborers to withdraw the resources as needed for the household.

Lessons learned in FY 2013, also led to changes in PROSHAR's rehabilitation approach. Specifically, the lack of non-productive soil for rehabilitation led to the adoption of top soil management, which requires lifting the top soil from agricultural land, digging out the lower levels, and then replacing the top soil. This reduced the environmental impact of earthworks collection.

During FY 2014 implementation, specific challenges arose, including: the lack of adequate drainage systems in roads being rehabilitated, which increased the risk of expanding the amount

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<sup>7</sup> Late receipt of the GoB contribution, together with the political tensions in the rural areas leading up to the January elections, resulted in non-utilization of approximately 54% of the fund, which was returned to the GoB.

<sup>8</sup> Historically, non-marginalized households have not participated in earthworks rehabilitation, due to the perception that this is a lower class occupation. In addition, the daily payments for CFW/FFW were at least 40% lower than labor rates in that upazila. As upazila labor rates are based upon demand, few non-marginal households participated in these schemes (estimated at between 5% and 10% per scheme).

of land waterlogged, and unable to be used for more than one season. As a result, PROSHAR took the decision to only support rehabilitation of earthworks where the local government agreed to fund culvert installation. However, delays in receiving ADP funding, and other competing priorities, prevented all UPs from meeting their obligations. As five schemes were not started due to political rivalries following upazila elections, PROSHAR utilized the resources budgeted for these schemes to install the necessary culverts.

In addition to earthen-works rehabilitation, PROSHAR constructed or rehabilitated a total of 60 PSFs against a target of 50, and conducted shelter repair in 12 shelters against a target of 17. The overachievement in PSFs was the direct result of savings from FY 2013. As a result, 3,000 households (15,000 persons) were provided with access to drinking water as a result of construction and repairing of these PSFs<sup>9</sup>. Underachievement in shelter repair was the direct result of the decision by the GoB to undertake the repair in five of these shelters and may indicate the willingness of local government to support priorities identified through the DRRAP prepared with evidence by local communities during Community Risk Assessments (CRAs).

PROSHAR carried out comprehensive environmental monitoring of all schemes and planned for implementing recommended measures to mitigate adverse effects for the schemes on environment. As part of it, construction of 37 road culverts, of the planned 59, was completed by the end of September 2014 using government and USAID resources. The remaining 22 culverts will be constructed using USAID resources, which will be completed by the end of October 2014. In Sarankhola<sup>10</sup>, training provided to Cyclone Preparedness Program (CPP) volunteers in FY 2012 and 2013 revealed a significant difference in the knowledge base of volunteers, many of whom had never been formally trained on basic disaster management, first aid and search and rescue. However, concerns raised by the trained volunteers about the lack of supplies to perform their tasks led to an assessment being undertaken in February, 2013, of the quantity and quality of early warning and response materials available to CPP. PROSHAR then adjusted their implementation strategy to include the provision of critical early warning and search and rescue materials, which was transferred to CPP for volunteer use.

Despite handing over maintenance plans and providing necessary training to UDMCs, periodic maintenance of rural earthen roads is still a major challenge. PROSHAR during joint meeting among UDMC, CPP and CBDMVG, continue to clarify roles and responsibilities related to future maintenance, in addition to improving the quality of the maintenance plan by noting the responsible party.

### ***Intermediate Result 3.2: Early warning systems functional***

PROSHAR's Annual Survey in FY 2013 revealed that early warning system of only 63% of the targeted 84 communities (wards) was functional which was not up to the expected level. Based on learning from the annual survey and other monitoring reports, PROSHAR shifted the

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<sup>9</sup> PROSHAR constructed and repaired 93 PSF in all 4 unions of Sarankhola, which provided access of 22.7% of total population (102396). In Batiaghata, PROSHAR constructed and repaired 8 PSF in two unions (Ganagrampur and Surkhali) which provided access of only 4.7% of total population of two unions (42,661) to drinking water

<sup>10</sup> CPP volunteers do not exist in either Batiaghata or Lohagara.

responsibility for management from CBDMVG members to one CBDMVG Champion per group and provided them with refresher training to ensure that the materials were kept functional. In addition, keys to the trunks in which the materials were kept were handed over from the school principal (where the stocks were being held) to the UDMC Secretary for monitoring. This strategy resulted in improvements to the management of early warning materials. In FY 2014, 87.9% of targeted communities had kept all materials functional. Analysis of survey data shows that 100% of megaphones and 96.7% of radios were in good condition and functional at the time of physical verification. The conditions of the materials improved in FY 2014 as a result of shifting monitoring responsibility to CBDMVG Champions.

During the annual survey, all CBDMVGs interviewed could show contingency plans with 93.3% of plans clearly specifying volunteers' roles before, during and after a disaster. At least 10 members of each CBDMVG were trained on prevention, mitigation, preparedness and response.

### ***Intermediate Result 3.3: Increased knowledge and skills on DRM***

In FY 2014 PROSHAR began to promote joint meetings between UDMC, CPP and CBDMVGs in Sarankhola to ensure that early warning was more coordinated. These joint meetings discussed the status of early warning materials available, in order to increase the level of attention paid to protecting equipment and using it for disaster warnings only.

PROSHAR also provided training to DMC members on the Disaster Management Act and leadership in emergency, to village police on security in emergency, to boy scouts and girl guides on voluntarism in emergency work, to shelter management and PSF management committees on operation and maintenance, and to religious leaders on prevention, mitigation, preparedness and response. A total of 3,510 people of a targeted 2,484 received training. This positive outcome was the result of adding training to a new target group, deep sea fishermen, who were trained on early warning and response, and training of 278 new DMC members on disaster preparedness, mitigation, early warning and response.

In FY 2014, in recognition of the role that some religious leaders played in preparedness activities during Cyclone Mahasen, PROSHAR increased its emphasis on training of religious leaders. However, as a result of political instability, police stopped the training at the community level due to increased action by fundamental religious leaders before the national elections. PROSHAR staff then enlisted the support of the Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO), who was aware of the purpose of this training. The UNO then advised the police that he had endorsed the training, at which time the training was able to take place.

In order to identify those deep-sea fishermen who could most benefit from prepared and early warning knowledge, the Upazila Fisheries Officer provided PROSHAR with a list of 4,300 fishermen. PROSHAR selected 750 fishermen for training from the list using the following criteria: (a) identity card provided by government; (b) are conducting deep sea fishing for at least 15 days in the last season; and (c) family living close to the river embankment.

PROSHAR, in collaboration with Khulna University carried out a study into the impact of Behavior Change Communication (BCC) events that have taken place to improve the preparedness level of communities to rapid onset disasters. In Sarankhola and Batiaghata, the study team interviewed 400 individual in Sarankhola and Batiaghata, conducted 15 focus group discussions and 25 key informant interview. According to the draft report, the study revealed 62% of people prioritized shifting women, elderly, children and people with disabilities to safe

places if signal VI is declared. Around 71% people would preserve important documents such as vulnerable group feeding card, national identification card, children's immunization card and deed documents; while 76% would preserve dry food to cope with acute food shortage in safe places/cyclone shelter.

The PROSHAR annual survey also revealed that the DMC members retained an average of 60% of training knowledge transferred to them in the following important areas: (a) Authority responsible for disseminating early warning messages; (b) when to shift the most vulnerable households members, including pregnant women, disabled person and children to cyclone shelter; (c) number of flags hoisted which show that levels VI and VIII, two levels that apply to personal safety, have been declared; (d) which major preparedness actions need to be taken when danger signal VI is declared; and, (e) which agency is responsible for coordination of a response. The percentage of DMC members understanding the importance of vulnerable persons is of particular concern, as the sample survey also asked PROSHAR beneficiaries undertaking livelihoods activities, who are represented by DMCs, clearly showed that more than half of women surveyed could not move without the permission of the spouse or other male household member. Given that a large percentage of livelihoods beneficiary households are dependent upon day labor for income, which may mean that they are not working closely to their home, PROSHAR has recommended that officials need to increase messaging about moving vulnerable household members during signal VI, and engage male heads of household to support movement of vulnerable members by signal VI, whether the males have returned to the household or not.

### ***B. Challenges, Successes and Lessons Learned***

PROSHAR experienced several challenges as well as successes that are identified in Section A above. This section encompasses the most significant lessons learned from FY 2014 and how they have been and/or will be applied. These lessons have been organized under key themes of programming below and are considered priorities for the program to continue addressing for the remainder of the project.

#### **Women's Empowerment**

- PROSHAR has learned that the combination and proportion of food and cash has advantages and disadvantages. Women laborers indicated their satisfaction to the combination of food and cash due to the quality of the food distributed, particularly lentils and vegetable oil. However, the provision of cash only is also appreciated by men and some women, as it provide beneficiaries with choices in the use of the cash, without tying them to the consumption of commodities provided by PROSHAR.
- Development literature suggests that economic empowerment of women provides the basis for empowerment in other household decisions seems to hold true in PROSHAR, if empowerment is defined as having autonomous or equal decision-making in household purchases/investments. PROSHAR's annual survey<sup>11</sup> conducted with female beneficiaries of

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<sup>11</sup> Questions asked were related to spending money the respondent has earned herself, buy or selling major productive assets (land, livestock, crops), buying inputs, selling product, adoption of expensive or labor intensive technologies, use of loans or savings, expenses for children's education, medical expenses for the respondent or her children, expenses for family planning (contraception) and moving to shelter in advance of onset of disaster.

livelihoods activities and health/nutrition female beneficiaries confirmed that, with the exception of expenses for family planning (contraceptives), a higher proportion of female livelihoods beneficiaries were able to take the decision autonomously or jointly with spouse or other adult male in the household compared to health/nutrition female beneficiaries.

- PROSHAR's approach to working with mothers, fathers and grandmothers in households with pregnant and lactating women and children under the age of two years, however, is also having an impact on empowerment of women, particularly if the woman subsequently participated directly in livelihood activities. In all cases, except for the decision to move to a shelter during the time of disasters, the percentage of joint health/nutrition/livelihoods beneficiaries who were able to take the decision alone or along with male household heads, increased when compared to the other two groups.

### **Promoting Good Governance**

- A transparent process of scheme<sup>12</sup> identification, prioritization, approval, labor selection, food distribution and cash payments reinforces PROSHAR's commitment to being held accountable for the work it does at the community level, as well as resolving problems that often arise with Food for Work schemes.
- DRRPs are a useful tool that can assist Union Parishads and Upazilas to allocate resources to reduce vulnerability, either through the Annual Development Plan (ADP) or donor or private resources. DRRPs have guided the investment of approximately BTd 350,000,000 from other sources in the PROSHAR area, in the last year alone. PROSHAR will, therefore, continue to provide assistance to all DMCs in FY2015 to develop three year action plans with prioritization for implementation from the DRR schemes identified in the DRRP.
- Turnover in GoB Disaster Management Committees (upazila or union level) requires strong systems which can transition well to new members. For example, essential equipment must be inventoried and maintained, so that DMCs are aware of the resources they can rely upon.
- Lack of resources for training and equipment are presently critical gaps that are being filled by donors. Persons trained in various aspects of warning, first aid, and rescue should be responsible to keep a list up-to-date with their UDMC, who should report on the availability of these persons in their annual plans submitted as per the Standing Orders on Disasters.
- The joint GoB and Red Crescent Society program called the Cyclone Preparedness Program (CPP), has staff with in-depth technical knowledge and provides training to its volunteers and other volunteers operating in the areas of preparedness, early warning, search and rescue, and other response activities. The use of CPP staff as trainers provides the opportunity for all volunteers to be trained using similar operating procedures, thereby reducing confusion should a disaster strike. Involving CPP trained volunteers at the outset to facilitate trainings and events with the CBDMVG members strengthened the link between these two bodies, increasing the likelihood that CPP volunteers will reach out to persons trained during early warning and response in Sarankhola. On the other hand, where CPP volunteers are not available, CBDMVG members now have contacts with CPP institutionally, and can contact

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<sup>12</sup> Schemes are defined as any earthworks or rehabilitation or construction that will reduce the vulnerability of a given set of households.

them should they require support or instructions,

- The lack of MoH staff to cover large numbers of households limits the extent of coverage that the Ministry may have with outreach, particularly for pregnancy care and optimal child health and nutrition. PROSHAR will, therefore, increase its activities further link local MoH and community groups with both PCSBAs and the community in order to ensure continuum of care from the clinics to the household for improved pregnancy care and optimal child health and nutrition beyond PROSHAR.
- When two departments within a single ministry are responsible for service provision, such as the Community Clinic Directorate and the National Nutrition Services Directorate, responsibility for follow-up at the community level becomes more challenging. Once the two Departments sign agreements on roles and responsibilities for follow-up of growth faltering children at the household level, the Ministry of Health will be better able to ensure household level follow-up to maintain the reduction in malnutrition rates gained through work of NGOs. Until the end of the project, therefore, PROSHAR GMEs will continue to provide mentoring support at clinic monitoring sites. This mentoring will improve the quality of services provided by the newly trained MoH staff and mobilize communities to take advantage of a new structure of service delivery.
- Government extensionists from DAE, Livestock and Fisheries are limited in numbers and are, therefore, unlikely to conduct visits to poor households to provide technical advice. However, linking these extensionists to producers and engaging them already in technical training has provided the opportunity for all PROSHAR staff to create a relationship with these extensionists that can be drawn upon through direct telephone calls for advice.
- Learning from FY 2013, PROSHAR has confirmed that UP Chairmen may not be able to allocate resources for installing culverts to reduce water logging of agricultural lands upon short notice. PROSHAR has now allocated budget in the rehabilitation work budget. It is expected that longer-term planning may be able to address this issue.
- Government extensionists from DAE, Livestock and Fisheries are limited in numbers and are, therefore, unlikely to conduct visits to poor households to provide technical advice. However, linking these extensionists to producers and engaging them already in technical training has provided the opportunity for all PROSHAR staff to create a relationship with these extensionists that can be drawn upon through direct telephone calls for advice.
- Learning from FY 2013, PROSHAR has confirmed that UP Chairmen may not be able to allocate resources for installing culverts to reduce waterlogging. Accordingly, PROSHAR allocated budget for 20 road-drainage systems in the rehabilitation work budget. However, it is expected that longer-term planning may be able to address this issue.

### **Behavior Change**

- PNGO FFs, who are paid personnel, may not remain available to continue to promote uptake of technology and management practices that reduce the vulnerability of households after the project ends. Those MTs who have been visiting their producer group members on a regular basis will be engaged to expand the number of households that they support so that positive behaviors are sustained, recognizing that economic gains alone are not sufficient to ensure that technologies are being correctly adopted.
- “Knowledge” messages are not enough to change behavior- there needs to be repeated opportunities to practice the behaviors and to consistently include peer group support to

maintain them. While this holds true in many sectors, it is particularly critical in wellness and nutrition, where social norms can undermine any changes made within a single project.

- Based on annual survey results, care and feeding of sick children, especially during diarrheal episodes, did not change significantly in the last year. PROSHAR will, therefore, continue strengthening the quality of services through MoH community clinic staff and early identification of sick or malnourished children by care group leaders. In care group sessions, discussions on childhood illness will be a focus during the coming winter sessions, from November-January.
- Focusing mass communication on hand-washing through beneficiary groups, including high school students, resulted in significant changes in hand-washing behaviors. This indicates that using multiple channels, including adolescent groups accelerates effective community change on certain behaviors.
- The frequency of household visits where children are showing faltering growth is a key factor in addressing child malnutrition. PROSHAR has found that by counseling mothers on ways to improve infant breast attachment and positioning, the frequency, consistency and food diversification of child feeding can significantly and positively reduce growth faltering. In order to sustain gains made to date in reducing malnutrition, PROSHAR will work closely with Community Sub-Groups, PCSBAs and with GMEs so that a system of weekly household visit to growth faltering children can be maintained.
- The cultural tradition of decision-making with respect to moving to shelters in the event of a natural disaster remains a challenge. The Annual Survey results indicated that less than 2% of PROSHAR direct female beneficiaries indicated that they can decide alone to move to shelter during the time of disaster, and 63.5% of households can jointly decide with another household member. However, a survey of community members conducted on PROSHAR's behalf by Khulna University indicated that only 60% of households recognized the warning signal for moving vulnerable persons, including women, children, the elderly and infirm, in advance of all other persons in advance of cyclone landfall. PROSHAR will, therefore, increase BCC activities to increase awareness of the earlier warning signal when vulnerable household members should be moved.
- PROSHAR constructed and repaired 101 PSFs. Yet the sustainability of the operation and maintenance of the PSFs remain a challenge. Learning from previous years suggested that changing the mindset of the people for greater sustainability of the system. Based on PROSHAR's learning that community ownership of PSFs is not accepted, the project modified its approach and introduced a monthly contribution system for the users, which was determined by the water management committee in consultation with users. PROSHAR will now support water management committees to monitor maintenance over the next four months to ensure that the fee structure will be adequate to maintain the water point in future.
- Docudramas that capture the real life experience of households during a cyclone are a useful tool to illustrate the importance of household preparedness for disasters. The docudrama has been used in the last two years' as the basis for community meetings where the roles and responsibilities of households and government are reinforced. In the last months of the project, PROSHAR will begin handing over the docudrama CD and advocate to the member secretaries of UDMCs, Head Teachers of 72 Schools, CPPs and Upazila Offices to show and use the CD for community held awareness campaigns, as well as using this as a training aid in support of national campaigns in disaster risk reduction.

- Docudramas that capture the real life experience of households during a cyclone are a useful tool to illustrate the importance of household preparedness for disasters. The docudrama has been used in the last 2 years' as the basis for community meetings where the roles and responsibilities of households and government are reinforced. In the last months of the project, PROSHAR will begin handing over the docudrama CD and advocate with member secretaries of UDMCs, head teachers, CPP and UNO to show and use the CD for community held awareness campaigns, as well as using this as a training aid in support of national campaigns in disaster risk reduction.
- Dietary diversity<sup>13</sup> across households and within households is the greatest where households participated in both livelihoods and health/nutrition (PM2A) interventions, particularly if they participated in off-farm livelihoods sector. While the Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS) for this group was 5.9, off-farm livelihood beneficiaries who did not participate in health/nutrition interventions showed the lowest score overall at 4.8. This deviation is significant because it underscores the importance of integrating agriculture/livelihoods with nutrition and health as soon as new mothers are able to take on the additional workload of any livelihoods activity.
- PROSHAR's strategy to promote production and opportunities for sales has increased the average HDDS for livelihoods beneficiaries overall (5.2 compared to last year's score of 4) and reduced the percentage of households with poor food diversification (16.0% compared to last year's percentage of 28.7%). The percentage of households with well diversified diets also increased although not to the same extent (19.6% compared to last year's percentage of 14.1). PROSHAR will, therefore, continue to encourage livelihoods beneficiaries to transfer their knowledge to health/nutrition households.
- Overall, the percentage of health/nutrition beneficiaries receiving rations show a similar range of poor, moderate and well diversified diets as livelihoods beneficiaries. This outcome is significant, and positive<sup>14</sup>, compared with the previous year, and indicate that intra-household food distribution is improving as a result of the behavior changes at household level<sup>15</sup>.
- Since February 1, 2014<sup>16</sup>, PROSHAR has been registering pregnant women for the PM2A program, although they are not eligible for rations. Although the overall sample is small

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<sup>13</sup> Dietary Diversity is a qualitative measure of food consumption that reflects household access to a variety of foods, and is also a proxy for nutrient adequacy of the diet of individuals<sup>13</sup>. The household dietary diversity score (HDDS) is meant to reflect, in a snapshot form, the economic ability of a household to access a variety of foods. Studies have shown that an increase in dietary diversity is associated with socio-economic status and household food security (household energy availability) (Hoddinot and Yohannes, 2002; Hatloy et al., 2000).

<sup>14</sup> There is a higher percentage of health/nutrition beneficiaries with well-diversified diets compared to livelihoods beneficiary households. This may be because the health/nutrition program is a blanket coverage program.

<sup>15</sup> Although the HDDS score for lactating women is the same as the livelihoods HDDS noted earlier, the two numbers may not be comparable, as lactating women come from all socio-economic strata, whereas livelihoods beneficiaries do not include any non-poor households

<sup>16</sup> Ending the ration component of the PM2A program for newly registered women occurred over the period from February 1, 2014, to April 1, 2014, depending upon the union. Not all women registered since April 1, 2014 have received rations.

compared to the other beneficiary sample base, the HDDS score for these lactating women is 4.1. A larger number may need to be sampled to ensure that these results hold true with a larger sample, as this might suggest that the provision of conditional rations may be a necessary “economic” incentive for households to increase the quantity and quality of foods provided to this group.

- Cultural norms regarding complementary feeding can be overcome through intensive BCC activities. However, those that have a high economic impact (“luxury foods”, such as milk products<sup>17</sup> or fruit with orange color flesh) are still, on average, fed to more male children than female children. This, however, will only be a problem if female children are not accepting another food that is part of the same food group. For this reason, PROSHAR will continue to promote foods that will be consumed at the “180 day old” celebration to demonstrate a number of options.

### **Private Sector Engagement**

- The demand for quality products sold by major input suppliers exists at the upazila level. FBGs that are conducting pre-season planning are able to identify sources of supply at the best price for all members. PROSHAR will increase its support to FBGs in the next period so that they will be able to continue to undertake pre-season planning profitably.
- Establishing collection points where a trader can come to purchase produce increases the opportunities a household has to market its product. So long as the product is of consistent quality, and is generating a profit, these traders will continue to purchase from these collection points.
- LHWs are a necessary complement to government services, if regular vaccination services are to be sustained. LHWs trained by PROSHAR that are providing these services and earning income will be supported with financial management training, so they can continue providing services profitably.
- Despite the success of the market development initiatives in most areas of the project, there remain challenges in areas with fragmented and thin markets (such as Sarankhola) where “last mile delivery” of market services (specifically inputs and aggregation services) are yet to be taken up sustainably by private market actors. For this reason, PROSHAR will deepen the linkages with private actors in areas where considerable progress has not been made, and will widen the linkages of successful producer groups with larger market actors. This will be done through informing national private sector actors about the opportunities which exist in the project areas, and encouraging them to test and try innovative business practices such as offering minimum guarantees for sales volumes and profits to local retailers.

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<sup>17</sup> Field level observations indicate that the most common form of milk consumed at the household level is powdered milk which is reconstituted. This is likely because of its shelf life compared to other milk products, and the lack of access to a reliable source of power supply for refrigeration.



Agreement signing between Suprita Rani Golder (left), Bidhan Kumar Hawlader (middle) and bamboo craft shop owner, Shadhon Kumar Sarker (right). Photo by: Md Helal Uddin Bhuyain, Specialist-Private Sector Engagement, iDE-B, January 9, 2014, Signboard, Kachua, Bagherhat

Suprita, of Purbo Khada village located in the Sarankhola Upazila, joined PROSHAR in November of 2011. Since she already had a little experience in bamboo crafts production, she became a member of PROSHAR's Bamboo Crafts Producers' Group. She learned how to diversify her product line for greater sales, as well as received basic equipment to improve the quality of her products. Suprita soon found that engaging in higher-quality craft production provided her with a stable income. By the end of 2012, she had invested a total of BDT 70,000 (approximately US \$906) in her bamboo crafts' business which she had cobbled together from savings from sales, as well as a loan from a micro-finance institution.

In April, 2013, based on her experience and enthusiasm, Suprita was selected by her Producers' Group to become a Farm Business Advisor. Due to the success

## **SUCCESS STORY**

### **CRAFTING A BETTER LIFE BY INVESTING IN BAMBOO IN BANGLADESH**

Three years ago, Suprita Rani Golder, a forty year-old mother of one with responsibilities for her brother-in-law and his wife as well as her own husband and child, could not ensure three meals a day for her five-member household. She explained that they were living in despair, dependent on donated clothes and had no permanent place to call home. She added that the family was living without proper sanitation, hygiene facilities or medical treatment. However, soon after becoming a livelihoods' beneficiary of the USAID funded Program for Strengthening Household Access to Resources, her situation began to improve.

#### **PROSHAR**

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PROSHAR aims to reduce food insecurity and chronic malnutrition, and increase resiliency to shocks, in three Khulna division Upazilas (Batiagiata, Sarankhola, Lohagara). As of September 30, 2014, a total of 63,061 households participated in either the livelihoods or health/nutrition program. A total of 14,547 community members have been trained in disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities.

## Attachement Ci: SO1 Success Story

she was having in production and sales, she was chosen to represent the interests of 100 other PROSHAR bamboo craft producers in planning and decision-making.

Suprita's involvement as a Farm Business Advisor has increased her confidence to deal with private sector actors on her own. She demonstrated this last year when she made a business deal with a bamboo craft shop owner in the Kachua Upazila of Bagerhat. She also communicates regularly with buyers in the Khulna Division in order to provide them with new types of products including bamboo crab traps and appliances. "There are around seven buyers who come and purchase products directly from my house. In the last year, I have sold products of around one lac taka (US \$1,304) and had a net profit of 60 thousand taka (US \$782)", Suprita said adding that now her family's monthly income is around BDT 10,000 (US \$129). She explained that her income is not only from selling products, but a portion is also coming from commissions related to business dealings (bulking) that she makes on behalf of other producers.



Suprita is working to produce bamboo product. Photo by Md. Mamunul Islam, Specialist- CBOD, iDE-B, September 14, 2014, Khada, Rayanda, Sarankhola.

She regularly participates in linkage workshops, exposure visits, and any training available through PROSHAR, which has enhanced her technical and business knowledge about bamboo crafts. As Farm Business Advisor, and a successful entrepreneur, she is a role model for other women wanting to start businesses.

Suprita now owns a three-room, tin-roofed house with a tube well and a sanitary latrine. She is not only able to provide three full meals a day for her family, but she can also afford healthcare services. Furthermore, the profitability of her bamboo production has added another option for her husband to make money. When there is limited day labor available, he has learned the skills from Suprita necessary to assist her with making bamboo products.

"I love guiding others; my neighbors often come to me for advice and training on bamboo crafts," stated Suprita, a Farm Business Advisor for PROSHAR.



Setara Begum (Left) with her daughter-in-law, Ms. Rumi (Right), and her grandson, Rabiul. *Photo by Md. Motin, Care Group Supervisor, CODEC. June, 2014*

### PROSHAR

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### SUCCESS STORY

#### SETARA BEGUM: A GRANDMOTHER LEADER TRANSFORMING COMMUNITY LIVES IN SARANKHOLA UPAZILA BANGLADESH

Fifty-five year old Setara Begum is devoted to improving the health and nutrition of pregnant women and children under two in her community of North Kadamtala, one of the remotest villages of Rayenda Union located in the Sarankhola Upazila. Setara is the matriarch of a joint family of six, including her son who works in a sawmill, earning around BDT 5,000/month (approximately USD \$65), and daughter-in-law Rumi.

Setara became a grandmother leader when Rumi, her daughter-in-law, joined PROSHAR in July 2012 during her fourth month of pregnancy. This was Rumi's first pregnancy and, as advised by the local mother leader, she had sought antenatal services starting in her third month.

Setara's grandson, Rabiul was born a healthy baby boy who was delivered at home by a trained birth attendant. Rumi and Setara, who were both trained in the importance of preventive health care practices, supported each other in the adoption of many of these practices including: (a) proper positioning and attachment for breastfeeding, (b) colostrum feeding within the first hour of birth, (c) exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months, (d) introducing appropriate complementary foods after six months; and, (e) early identification of danger signs signaling the need for healthcare.

Rabiul is now a well-nourished 19 month-old. His development is tracked during monthly

growth monitoring sessions where his mother takes him to receive a nutritional checkup which

## Attachment Cii: SO2 Success Story

includes assessing his weight by age, measuring his mid-upper arm circumference and counseling as appropriate.

Setara's commitment to support her daughter-in-law's new behaviors was driven by an experience when a distant relative, who planned to give birth at home with the help of an untrained person, had complications. Although she was transferred to a hospital, the complications of delivery were too great and she did not survive.

During the care group meetings, Setara learned ways to prevent this type of death, including the need for pregnant women to receive monthly check-ups by trained healthcare providers, take rest during the day, consume a diversified diet with additional calories during pregnancy and develop a birth preparedness plan, which included a skilled birth attendant to perform the delivery, readily available emergency transportation, and the contact information of a referral center in case of emergency.

Now, whenever Setara comes to know of a pregnant woman in her community, she works with the assigned mother leader and visits the newly identified pregnant woman's house to reinforce the family's learning about optimal care and planning for a safe delivery. Since joining PROSHAR, she has directly worked with 30 pregnant women and families in addition to her own group members. During her 23 months of activities as a grandmother leader, she has directly motivated and supported 12 families in developing their birth preparedness plans which resulted in 12 safe deliveries. She stays in communication with the local Ministry of Health staff including family welfare visitors and upazila medical personnel to ensure timely support for the referred cases from her community. Thus far, her active communication and timely management has assisted at least 21 complicated deliveries with healthy outcomes at the upazila health complex.



Setara Begum (middle) discussing with her peers using Flash Cards. *Photo by: Azhar, Documentation Coordinator, PCI, May, 2014*

Setara continues to motivate lactating women to maintain continuous breastfeeding up to six months and participates in the 180 days first feeding celebrations in the presence of grandmothers and other care group members. All 12 mothers who participated in her group exclusively breastfed their babies until they were six months old.

“With the information I learn from care groups’ meeting, it gives me a chance to reduce suffering of women during delivery and prevent any death of a mother or child. I feel happy when I see smiling parents holding their healthy baby. I believe in my work and know that if I can motivate my community by sharing what I learned in care groups, I can make a change in my area”, said the proud Grandmother leader with a glowing face.

## SUCCESS STORY

### UNION DISASTER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE IN RAYENDA, BANGLAESH TAKES OWNERSHIP OF COMMUNITY RISK ASSESSMENT AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION ACTION PLAN

#### PROSHAR

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Rayenda, one of four unions in the Sarankhola Upazila, is located along the edges of Baleshwar River, very close to the Bay of Bengal. Due to its location and poor quality infrastructure, the union experienced severe devastation from cyclone Sidr in 2007.



Technical Coordinator-Disaster Risk Management, Mr. Abonindra (left), and Chair of Rayenda UDMC, Md. Asaduzzaman Milon (middle - in red coat), inaugurating a pond re-excitation scheme in Rayenda Union with villagers. Photo by: Azhar, Documentation Coordinator, PCI. November 15, 2013

In accordance with the Government of Bangladesh's Standing Orders on Disaster which have been in effect since 2010, and serve as a national level framework to manage disaster risks through horizontal coordination

between sectors and vertical coordination between district, upazila and union levels, the Rayenda Union Disaster Management Committee was formed. This body is comprised of 39 members including elected local government representatives, NGO representatives and civil society members.

Since its inception, the Rayenda Union Disaster Management Committee had existed on paper only. None of the members knew their roles and responsibilities nor had they received training or

## Attachment Ciii: SO3 Success Story

equipment for disaster risk management. Although the Union Disaster Management Committee implemented projects using small budgetary allocations provided by the government's Annual Development Programme it did not use a participatory approach that facilitated project selection by the community, nor did it make disaster risk reduction its main objective.

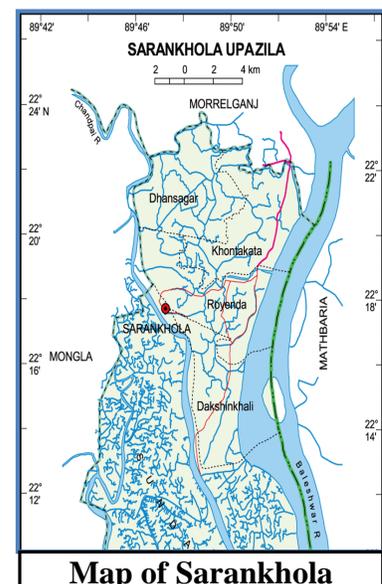


UDMC used GoB funds to add a brick surface to an earthen road which had been rehabilitated by PROSHAR. The road connects with Rajeshwar Govt. Primary School cum Cyclone Shelter at Rayenda Union. Photo by: Azhar, Documentation Coordinator, PCI, September 16, 2014

action plans are developed to efficiently manage risks and enhance livelihoods' security across all sectors.

PROSHAR trained Union Disaster Management Committees on prevention, mitigation, preparedness and response to shocks, and involved them in the community risk assessment and disaster risk reduction action planning process. This training has led to a significant change in how projects are identified and how the Union Disaster Management Committees understand their roles and responsibilities. The Union Disaster Management Committees now own the community risk assessments and disaster risk reduction action planning process. Not only are regular monthly meetings which are mandated by the standing orders on disaster taking place, but disaster risk reduction is now mainstreamed into development plans and the implementation of disaster risk reduction schemes are being supported by non-PROSHAR resources. The actions of the Rayenda Union Disaster Management Committee demonstrate that the transfer of knowledge and ownership has taken place and are being applied at the community level.

PROSHAR's disaster risk management strategy focuses on reinforcing the local capacity of disaster management committees at the upazila and union levels and improving the resilience of rural infrastructure. As part of its capacity building efforts, PROSHAR conducted community risk assessments involving Union Disaster Management Committee members and vulnerable community groups, and led the development of disaster risk reduction action plans for the 13 most vulnerable unions within PROSHAR's working area. Community risk assessments focus on types of hazards, hazard calendars, spatial distribution, intensity and frequency of hazards, threats, and magnitude of damage, etc., while disaster risk reduction



During the 2013-14 Government of Bangladesh fiscal year, the Rayenda Union Disaster Management Committee implemented a total of 12 disaster risk reduction schemes using

### Attachment Ciii: SO3 Success Story

resources from the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, and the Annual Development Programme, as well as funds from other agencies such as the Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme and Muslim Aid Bangladesh, amounting to BDT 4,545,929 (approximately USD \$59,038). These schemes were identified using the community risk assessment and disaster risk reduction planning process and were included in the Rayenda Union Disaster Risk Reduction Action Plan.

The Government of Bangladesh funded schemes included the resurfacing of an earthen road with herring bone brick to increase its durability, re-excavation of ponds and canals, construction of culverts, and maintenance of rural roads. In addition, the Union Disaster Management Committee made a contingency plan for the Government of Bangladesh's fiscal year of 2014-15 in which it allocated BDT 50,000 for immediate emergency response.

In addition to the implementation of infrastructure-related activities to reduce disaster risk, the Rayenda Union Disaster Management Committee provided a tremendous amount of support to the PROSHAR-funded community awareness campaign which used behavior change communication media outlets such as a docudrama, folk songs, drama performances, volunteer convention and emergency simulation. The support provided included community mobilization, assistance in organizing events and free meeting room space. Now, the Rayenda Union Disaster Management Committee is leading events to promote observance of national and international days on disaster such as National Disaster Preparedness Day and International Day for Disaster Reduction.



UDMC used GoB funds to add a brick surface to an earthen road which had been rehabilitated by PROSHAR. The road connects with Jilbunia Cyclone Shelter at Rayenda Union. Photo by: Azhar, Documentation Coordinator, PCI, June 14 2014

*“PROSHAR has opened up our eyes. We realized that we have many things to do and can drive people to bring about change in the current situation without waiting for someone else. Now the Rayenda UDMC can take disaster risk management challenge”, stated Mr. Aasaduzzaman Milon, UDMC Chairman, Rayenda Union.*

## Agriculture (SO1)



Farmers' Field Day on Homestead Vegetables Garden, Baliadanga, Batiaghata organized by Shushilan. Photo taken by Md. Abdur Razzaque- Training Curriculum Development Specialist on March 4, 2014



Nasima Brgum , a carp poly culture farmer is applying Supplementary feed in her pond -Dawniafat, Zalma, Batiaghata, Photo taken by Md. Abdur Razzaque-Training Curriculum Development Specialist on May 15, 2014



Makrail Karir More Crossroad, collection point, 19 July 2014, Lohagora, Photo taken by Altaf Hossain, Officer Business development, iDE



Block-Batik Training at Dighulia Union Parishad Hall Room, Lohagara on 20 February, 2014. Photo taken by Moniruzzaman, Technical Officer- Muslim Aid Bangladesh.

## Health and Nutrition (SO2)



Community celebrating first solid diet of six months old child (180+days celebration) in Gangarampur, Batiaghata. Photo: Md. Rafiqzaman, technical coordinator, August 2014



Community group member of Dhadua clinic of Batiaghata recognizing successful completion of exclusive breast feeding of a child during 180+ day celebration as their own initiative. Photo: Md. Rafiqzaman, technical coordinator, July 2014



Ripa Begum, Mother Leader, shares the status of pregnant women and children of her area with Father, Grandmother and other Mother Leaders’  
Photo: Abu Anis community clinic liaison officer, Sranakhola, September 2014

## Disaster Risk Reduction (SO3)



Mr. Bikash Chandra Bachar, CBDMVG Champion (right) along with Mr. Pankaz Kumar Mollik, head teacher (left) checking the megaphone for functionality. Government primary school, Batiaghata, Khulna. Photo by: Azhar, Documentation Coordinator, PCI, August 11, 2014



One of the Fisherman shares his experience how he saved his life during SIDR at Fisherman Training at Southkhali Union Parishad, Sarankhola. Photo by: Azhar, Documentation Coordinator, PCI, April 13, 2014



Southkhali Govt. primary school cum cyclone shelter, Southkhali, Sarankhola- before repair

Southkhali  
shelter, So



Women are collecting water from PROSHAR constructed pond sand filter (PSF) in Southkhali union of Sarankhola upazila, Photo Md. Nasir Uddin, DRM Engineer PROSHAR