



Impact Evaluation of
Five Projects of Heifer Project International
(22-0620-06, 22-0620-07, 22-0620-08, 22-0620-09, and 22-0620-10)



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Acknowledgement

Heifer International Bangladesh is a non-profit humanitarian organization committed to ending hunger and poverty while caring for the earth and to living its core values. Heifer International Bangladesh started working in Bangladesh from March 2006. Till date seven (7) projects have been funded by them. Among these projects, first five (5) projects (Project Number: 22-0620-06; 22-0620-07; 22-0620-08; 22-0620-09; and 22-0620-10) dealt with resource poor & marginalized communities as well as ethnic minorities where mostly livestock transfer along with trainings have been provided. In order to evaluate the impacts of these five projects, Heifer International Bangladesh awarded Human Development Research Centre (HDRC) for carrying out the assignment. The accompanying report is the outcome.

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HDRC Team

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Abbreviations

FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
HDRC	Human Development Research Centre
JCF	Jagorani Chakra Foundation
KII	Key Informant Interview
MM	Mixed Method
NGO	Non-Government Organization
OG	Original Group
PBK	Palli Bikash Kendra
PNGO	Private Non-Government Organization
POG	Pass on Group
SHG	Self-Help Group
SSI	Semi-Structured Interview
UP	Union Parishad
VAHW	Village Animal Health Worker
VAW	Violence Against Women

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Executive Summary

Heifer International Bangladesh is a non-profit humanitarian organization, committed to ending hunger and poverty while caring for the earth and to living its core values. Heifer International Bangladesh started working in Bangladesh from March 2006. Till date seven (7) projects have been funded by them. Among these projects, first five (5) projects (Project Number: 22-0620-06; 22-0620-07; 22-0620-08; 22-0620-09; and 22-0620-10)¹ dealt with resource poor and marginalized communities as well as ethnic minorities where mostly livestock transfer along with trainings have been provided.

Heifer's Cornerstones is one of the basic trainings developed by the Heifer Project International (HPI). This is a set of essential principles to stimulate group wisdom and personal insights and keep people's heart, minds, and actions – balanced, focused and productive. The Project provided this training to all the members and their counterparts i.e., husbands; which motivated the members and their husbands and infused values into them. As an outcome of this training, it is unanimously agreed that faith and trust between themselves has increased remarkably. OG members offered the same valued gifts received from the project to the POG members and also were practicing this within the community. Besides Cornerstones training, other life skill trainings were also provided. Almost all the project participants have reported about sharing knowledge gathered from the training with other household members and community people. The project participants were asked to recall the names (*unprompted without help from the data collectors*) of the 12 Cornerstones training provided by the HPI. It is interesting to observe that majority of the participants, in spite of lower level of formal education, could recall a good number of Cornerstones training. A majority (70%) of the respondents could recall at least 6 separate names of the Cornerstones out of 12 even after few years of project completion. This percentage indicates a clear internalization of the Cornerstones amongst its participants. "Passing on the Gift" is categorized as "Most Recalled Cornerstone" for all projects though the percentages of recalling vary depending on areas. To illustrate, the percentage of "Passing on the Gift" in Baraigram is 91.7. Situations of other projects are very similar, 96.7%, 81.7%, 91.7%, and 86.2% respectively for Raipura, Paba-Indegenous, Bhairab, and Paba. On the contrary, the names of "least recalled cornerstones" are not same for all projects. To illustrate, "Genuine Need and Justice (16.7%)" is categorized as "Least Recalled Cornerstones" for Baraigram". "Least Recalled Cornerstones" for other projects areas are "Training and Education (21.7%)", "Spirituality (13.3%)", "Genuine Need and Justice (46.7%)", and "Genuine Need and Justice (19.0%)" respectively for Raipura, Paba-Indigenous, Bhairab, and for Paba projects. However, the rate of recalling the Cornerstones by the OG members is notably higher than the recalling rate of POG members. Since project perception, Heifer's Project aimed at increasing practice of the Pass on Gifts with the community people/ neighbors. Within the groups, most of the members practice the Pass on Gifts principle among themselves. Project participants have internalized this practice and this is widespread within the community. In the Eastern culture, *giving to others* and *receiving from others* are viewed as a common phenomenon. But, in reality, these were not practiced to a particular extent in which it could be denoted as *regular participation*. But, the Cornerstones training have played a notable role in giving into that *latent habit* into a *regular* look. In the post-project scenario, almost all the respondents stated that they help neighbors by giving gifts. The dynamics, underlying the extension of cooperation and help between each other through the exchange of gifts demonstrated an impressive picture. The percentages of those helping each other by means of a gift in pre-project were 56.7%, 91.6%, 76.6%, 93.4%, and 78.6% respectively in Baraigram, Raipura, Paba-Indigenous, Bhairab, and Paba; but these percentages have jumped

¹ In this report Baraigram, Raipura, Paba-Indg, Bhairab, and Paba projects extensively refers to Project Number: 22-0620-06; 22-0620-07; 22-0620-08; 22-0620-09; and 22-0620-10 respectively.

to 91.7%, 100%, 96.7%, 100%, and 96.7% respectively for five projects areas. (Baraigram, Raipura, Paba-Indigenous, Bhairab, and Paba).

The most impressive area of development has been observed in the field of “livelihood and economic status”. The percentage of income-earner among the project participant households has jumped up almost two times amongst the participants of the projects. Eventually the rate of involvement in income generating activities has been triggered up. The rate of change is notably higher among the OGs compared to POGs. Project participants are now involved in greater extent in economic activities such as *skilled labor, salaried employment, and small trade*-compared to the pre-project situation. In the project period, sources of income such as *livestock selling, selling milk, crop production, horticulture production, small trade, and cottage industry* have been added to in the households’ list of income source for many of the households. With the incremental income sources, the net amount of income has also increased over time. Respondents stated that their income has increased compared to pre-project scenario. A 79.5% respondent of Paba-Indigenous project has stated about increase in their income level. Same situations have been observed for other projects- that is 77.7%, 66.4%, 75.4%, and 49.2% respectively for Baraigram, Raipura, Bhairab, and Paba projects. After participating into the project, many of the household members among the project participants have changed their occupation. For example, those who used to work as laborer in other’s land before have purchased their own lands or leased in lands and are producing many kinds of crops and vegetables over there. These brought forth a change into their occupational pattern and increased their income, which made a visible change in the trends of livelihood. There is also an increase in their amount of property, because they have been aided with capital and training by Heifer. It is revealed that the impacts of the Heifer’s projects are been attributed behind improvement of household income status among the project participants. A notable portion of the project participants reported about Heifer’s Contribution to the increase of their income. It is interesting to observe that a majority of the project participants have reported about contribution of project for increase/improvement on type of household assets over time. Major asset creation and/or improvement, due to project intervention have been occurred over *animal assets, household savings, and electrification at household*. It is also mention worthy that, in most cases, the reported improvements have been reported in larger extent among the OG members, compared to the reporting on the same issues by the POG members. Participants’ access to credit sources is increasing gradually. On an average 49.7% of the respondents stated that they have received loan within last one year what they usually could not access due to their economic limitations. After receiving training from Heifer, they learned how to boost their income and thus they started taking loan/credit from different sources. It is interesting to observe that almost no project participants took loan from the traditional money lenders- the *mahajans*; who charge a very high interest rate. Mostly, they are accessing the loans from (i) own samitis, (ii) formal and/or other semi formal credit institutes. A positive relationship between increase in income and increased access to credit has been found in all the projects. The increased access to credit is positively correlated with the increase in income; and it is also been found that the projects had played major role in paving the way in income increase. A combined data for all the five projects shows that whose income increased, 66.5% of them have reported that their access to credit has also been increased.

The food security status in the form of availability and consumption has improved over time among household of the project participants; and the number of food-insecure days is a small fraction to the total number of days in a year. Majority of the project participants have reported that they now have sufficient and/or almost sufficient income to meet demand for food. In Baraigram 71.7% respondents have reported about their improvement in food consumption compared to pre-project scenario. Other project areas demonstrate similar condition in the

improvement of food consumption- 76.7%, 75.0%, 56.7%, 46.7%, and 71.7% for Paba, Bhairab, Paba-Indigenous, Raipura, and Baraigram respectively. Household food availability, the necessary condition for food security, has been contributed by Heifer intervention to some certain extent as milk, meat and some other dairy as well as poultry meals are available from household production. Again, income generation through livestock rearing and attainment of other professional skills also contributed significantly to accessibility of food. This comfortable situation (both food availability and accessibility) is manifested in their lowest number of hardship days in terms of food security. The project participants argued that, they were not much aware about the issue of improved animal management, before the trainings provided by HPI. This training has increased their income and social status as well as the production of livestock. Members are now planting trees and initiating homestead gardens in which they produce vegetables that also have increased their income. Every family has homestead garden and some poultry farming from which they can have eggs. They can sell these eggs as well as can consume. Some family has milking cow and their family members consume milk. Before the project, during the lean season, many of the poor people, particularly male agricultural and day laborers, had to migrate to the other parts of the country in search of work. For this reason, their wives had lesser scope to do any work and earn money. But after the initiation of the project, both the male and female have scope to work as well as earn their living. These have also added a supplement to their daily food items and have increased their food security. There has been reported a substantial contribution in improving the food availability status by HPI. A 97.8% respondents in Paba have reported about substantial contribution in improving the food availability status by HPI while in Bhairab, Paba-Indigenous, Raipura and in Baraigram these responses are 93.3%, 97.0%, 82.1%, and 90.7% respectively.

A positive relationship between increase in income and increased food availability has been found in all the projects. A combined data for all the five projects shows that whose income increased, 71% of them have reported that their food availability status has also been increased.

Environment is a major concern for the rural livelihood, which is mostly dependent on agricultural practices. For sustainable agricultural livelihood, environmental sustainability is a prerequisite. In the Cornerstones training, participants were taught various sustainable farming techniques. They were encouraged to plant trees and to adapt other environment friendly practices to improve the environment. They were taught that adapting an environment friendly practice is essential to ensure a sustainable livelihood. Participants were also motivated to think over the intergenerational benefits of a better environment. The *knowledge level* on various environmental aspects among the project participants has increased significantly over time since the pre-project scenario. The change in practice level on various environmental aspects shows a positive outcome. Knowledge on negative impacts of using chemical fertilizers was found to be 85.0%, 90.0%, 73.3%, 98.3%, and 98.3% for Paba, Bhairab, Paba-Indigenous, Raipura, and Baraigram respectively. But these percentages were 48.4%, 25.0%, 46.7%, 65.0%, and 35.0% respectively for Paba, Bhairab, Paba-Indigenous, Raipura, and Baraigram in the pre-project case. However, despite their good knowledge on negative impacts of using fertilizer, in many a case, they cannot stop using chemical fertilizer on their land for agricultural cultivation. Most of the participants reported that they have very small piece of land or they took lease. Because of their land size constraints, they would like to get more crops within short time in a small piece of land. Thus they could not but use chemical fertilizer on their land. For developing an environment friendly practice among participants, Heifer Projects provided their participants with different types of tree (mainly fruit tree). It has been found that all participants have planted those trees though the place of tree plantation varied based on land availability and surrounding environment of their homestead. Though most of the participants planted tree around their homestead but some of them could not do so because of scarcity of land; where they planted the trees beside

nearby road or gave their trees to neighbors who have enough high land. Besides planting Heifer's provided trees, members are now planting trees and initiating homestead gardens by their own. Participation rate in tree plantation is impressive for all projects. On the contrary to 35.4%, 42.4%, 50.0%, 60.0%, and 33.4% participation on tree plantation in pre-project scenario, these figures have jump up to 58.3%, 83.4%, 71.7%, 64.9%, and 65.0% in the post-project context accordingly for Paba, Bhairab, Paba-Indigenous, Raipura, and Baraigram projects.

The study indicates that the ability to influence the mobilization of local resources among the participants has increased. Participants are more organized with the help of the groups. With the increased income and improved livelihood status, people have greater access in associations and organizations in pursuit of collective goals. Members of OG and POG were capacitated to mobilize the local resources. Access to financial institutions has increased significantly. All the OGs and POGs, fully consisting of women, along with the Self-help group, facilitated the operational scope to the pertinent women. Besides their improved livelihood and living avenues, these opportunities have paved the way of leadership for the village women under intervention. This leadership attainment is reflected from their household level role to community level role, especially in the role-play of maintaining their organization. Higher income status inspired them to mobilize local resources for their development. Equipped with different kinds of training from Heifer Project, they strive towards the aggregation of local resources with the help of other group members. Participants keep trying to utilize local underused resources as much as possible. Field observation found that women have become more empowered compared to those of the pre-project scenario. Heifer's Trainings helped women of the OGs and POGs to develop a sense of entrepreneurship and leadership amongst themselves. Women are going to Upazila Livestock Office, Upazila Nirbahi Office, Upazila Agriculture Information Centre, Union Parishad, and other places to get their service. Women are going to marketplace for different purpose. Women can easily go to Upazila Health Complex, towns, and different place to do their necessary activities. Before joining the project, women's access to different places suffered restriction and deprivation to a great extent. This situation has changed. With the changing livelihood status, they contribute to the family income, and thus their freedom of movement has increased. After the project intervention, women's agency in choosing occupation, equal entitlement of male and female in education, healthcare, and consumption of food have increased remarkably. In the pre-project context, about 13.3%, 41.7%, 28.3%, 15.0%, and 8.3% of women could choose occupation by themselves respectively in Baraigram, Raipura, Paba-Indigenous, Bhairab, and in Paba project. On the contrary, 38.3%, 81.7%, 55.0%, 50.0%, and 30.0% respondents can now choose occupation by their own. In the post-project scenario these percentages now reached at 38.3%, 81.3%, 55.0%, 50.0%, and 50.0% respectively for Bariagram, Raipura, Paba-Indigenous, Bhairab, and Paba projects. Awareness training as well as skill development training and follow-up activities have led to the production of human capital among the female participants. Women's importance in the family affairs has considerably increased as they have more economic power. In the case of women's decision-making status, there has emerged a positive picture for all the projects. A number of the households of the project participants have reported about having access to Government social safety-net programmes. It has been reported by the project participants that Heifer has enabled them to pick up many a new piece of information inspired them in active persuasion to be included in the safety-net programmes which are eligible for their family. Besides, group formations of Heifer have created a powerful group in the community to ensure access to safety-net programmes. Comprehensive awareness and augmented demand for service let them realize their rights to access to public services.

People's perception of gender in the intervention areas has undergone a change as women started contributing to the income generation process. The matter of fact is that they are no

longer subservient to male. Women are treated more equally in the society compared to the pre-project scenario. In the project area women are less discriminated by their sexual identity than before. Due to the effect of Heifer's Cornerstones training provided to the spouses of the women, they are now working together inside and outside the house. In the pre-project context 31.7% women in Baraigram could go alone to field for agricultural activity which has now reached at 40.0%. These figures have also changed for other projects - from 20.0% to 55.0%, from 16.7% to 41.7%, from 33.3% to 70.0%, and from 20.0% to 35.0% respectively for Raipura, Paba-Indigenous, Bhairab, and Paba projects. During the pre-training period, it was almost impossible for a good number of women to do so. Internal cohesion increased in family and in group that makes a difference in their life and livelihood. Prior to the project intervention, a good number of women cannot go to roads and highway alone in their need, but after the project this percentage has fallen remarkably and woman can move easily in their needs. The visible improvements have also been found about women's mobility towards the Government offices; which is a clear indication of *initiation of culture of practicing rights*. The similar scenario is found about the mobility of women towards the health facilities. It is note-worthy that an indication of freedom in being engaged with income generating activities is manifested through a tendency to go to field for agricultural work. The situation of Violence against Women (VAW) in the community has decreased during the project period- mostly due to the economic and mental empowerment of the women. The magnitude of violence in the household level and community level has fallen to a notable extent. Field findings indicate that the prevalence of verbal abuse and manhandling was pretty high in the project area but these percentages have fallen down after the project intervention. There has been reported a 31.6 percentage-points reduction in torture on dowry at household level in Baraigram compared to pre-project scenario. Similarly torture on dowry at household level has decreased by 28.4 percentage-points in Raipura, 18.3 percentage-points in Paba-Indigenous, 25 percentage-points in Bhairab, and 12 percentage-points in Paba. VAW has decreased not only at household level but also at social level- that is, *violence at local arbitration*. Study has depicted that there has decreased by 10percentage-points, 3.4 percentage-points, 18.3 percentage-points, 16.7 percentage-points, and 6.7 percentage-points in Paba, Bhairab, Paba-Indigenous, Raipura, Baraigram respectively. Improved economic status, the Cornerstone Trainings, Gender Training are mostly responsible for the changing situation of VAW in the project areas. However, it might be noted that, the VAW situation has developed than before because of the Heifer project; but it is still not a situation where the women can be mentioned as 'free from violence'.

Even after phase-out of this Heifer Project, numbers of self-help groups are still continuing which is an exemplary sign of their sustainability. They have sustained some of their main interventions. Though the gift pass-on is not widely available, awareness sharing, community approach to problems are promoted by the groups. The glaring evidences of the Self-help groups are the functions of their saving initiatives. The project participants, who are still running their initiatives, opined that they would continue their initiatives overcoming all the ups and downs. Some of them even dream to be larger both in operational and organizational scale. Future will provide the verdict but their intense will and active participation may show them the destination.