



1st Interim Report

CARE-Austria COVID -19 Vaccine Initiative project

REPORTING PERIOD: July – Sept 2021



Report Submitted to:
CARE Austria

Report Submitted by:
CARE Bangladesh

11 November, 2021

Project goal and objectives

Goal: Increase awareness and uptake of COVID-19 vaccine among urban and rural marginalized population by strengthening the vaccine deployment system and community engagement in Bangladesh.

Specific Objective: Increase access to COVID-19 vaccination and reduce misconceptions and taboos related to vaccination by marginalized population in proposed geographical areas.

Objective:

1. Strengthen the capacity of frontline health workers to improve the quality of the vaccine deployment system.
2. Increase knowledge on vaccine registration and community engagement to disseminate correct information, thus reducing stigma and misconceptions around vaccination.
3. Ensure PPE and safety materials for frontline health workers and volunteers at vaccination centres.
4. Increase the functionality of Vaccination Working Groups and coordination among relevant platforms at the national and sub-national levels.

Project location :

- Dhaka City (Ward# 22, 27, 32, 40, 50, 53 and 59).
- Gazipur City (Ward# 12, 17, 19, 22 and 37).
- Narayanganj City (Ward# 3).
- 09 sub-districts of Khulna district.

Duration : 12 Months (July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022)

Target population: Daily wage earners (rickshaw pullers, transportation workers, market vendors), garment factory workers, slum dwellers, and other vulnerable segments of population.



Key achievements

- In the first slot of the reporting period, ground work included project staff on boarded along with team office set up, kick-off preparatory tasks and required coordination with vaccination working group at all levels.
- 02 project inception meetings were organized- one at Khulna district and another one was at Gazipur City with the participation of relevant stakeholders from health system, local administration and civil society in September 2021.
- All project staff oriented on project concept, strategic planning, monitoring system with a detail implementation plan for three day long by end of September 2021
- For COVID-19 vaccine recipients, rural team (under Khulna district) facilitated online registration of 17153 people while urban team completed 7782 people for last couple of months in this reporting quarter engaging community platforms like community support group, local government, civil society and front liners from the health system.
- Promotional activity continued with 1189 health education sessions at community level were conducted in this quarter (August-September, 2021) by project staff in Khulna district while urban team conducted 777 sessions promoting vaccination awareness
- Project team of Khulna district visited total 11081 household while urban team 1640 household in the last two months creating awareness on prevention of COVID-19 and motivate for vaccination
- Project team at Khulna reached 20662 people through facilitation support for uptake of COVID-19 vaccination in the last (August, 2021) month while the urban team reached 4078 people

Budget status

Total Budget: \$602,986

REPORT OVERVIEW:

With funding support from CARE Austria, Care Bangladesh started CARE-Austria COVID -19 Vaccine Initiative project since July 2021 with an objective to support government initiative of COVID-19 vaccination. Project was designed to support government ask to support vaccine registration and update in some low performing areas. In this reporting period, CARE Bangladesh made some significant work progress against its plan what we are going to share with this report as per activities identified under each objectives along with major challenges and lessons learned. At the end next steps of the coming days are highlighted as well.

As the major achievements of this reporting period were highlighted above and in next step along with the interventions started resuming to reach the impact population directly with promotional activity through community mobilization including household level visit, facilitating on line registration, follow up support with health education sessions are detailed with process, reach numbers immediate outputs/outcome. Besides project inception meetings along with ground works are elaborated for understanding of the process and way forward as well. In addition, CARE is closely working with Dhaka, Gazipur, Narayanganj and Khulna health departments for COVID-19 response and vaccination activities to save lives and promote fast and fair allocation of vaccines for the most marginalized populations. Moreover media coverage are also highlighted as part of promotions and advocacy works.

Anyway for better comprehension, all the executions of the reporting period are segmented and specified under each objectives to reach the goal incorporating key challenges and lessons learned.

WHO HAVE WE SUPPORTED?

Activity	Total	Rural (Khulna district)			Urban (Dhaka, Gazipur, Narayanganj)			Total Population		
		Male	Female	Sub Total	Male	Female	Sub Total	Male	Female	Total
Community Mobilization interventions:										
Facilitate # of people for on line registration for COVID-19 Vaccination		7750	9403	17153	4027	3755	7782	11777	13158	24935
Provide follow up support to # of registered people for vaccination from government facility		7979	12683	20662	2851	1858	4709	10830	14541	25371
Conduct # Household visit for promoting vaccine awareness	12721 visit	10790	20125	30915	3677	2437	6114	14467	22562	37029
Facilitate # of Health Education session at community level for creating awareness on COVID-19	1966 session	3127	6174	9301	2276	2829	5105	5403	9003	14406
Total		29646	48385	78031	12831	10879	23710	42477	59264	101741

Total direct reach in this reporting period: 24953 (Female 13158 and Male 11777) completed registration and took at least the first dose of vaccine of which 17153 from Khulna district and 7782 from urban areas.

Total Indirect Reach: 192015 people reached through community mobilization activities like household visit, health education session and follow up activity.

ACCOMPLISHED ACTIVITIES DURING THIS REPORTING PERIOD:

Background: Several risk factors associated with vaccine hesitancy and rejection have been reported across different segment of population focusing on vaccine acceptance; these comprise socio-demographic factors (age, gender, marital status, employment status, income), cost, access to services, safety and effectiveness, level of health literacy, and trust in government, health care systems, and mass media. In facilitation of the critical situation of vaccination uptake, CARE Bangladesh COVID-19 Vaccine Initiative has undertaken a comprehensive community mobilization interventions using existing community health system and it's platforms community support system, local government along with technical support to on line registration for the marginalized who do not have access to digital system both in rural and urban areas.



Activities (under each objective) executed during the reporting period: July-Sep 2021

Objective 1: Strengthen the capacity of frontline health workers to improve the quality of the vaccine deployment system.

Project Staff Orientation on project concept: with a view to advance staff understanding on vaccination and community awareness and clarify their roles and functions in developing activity plan a two days long orientation event was organized at AVA Center, at Khulna district from September 29-30, 2021. Total 30 project staff participated in this program. The sessions included CARE Bangladesh response to Covid-19 with Goal, Objective, Geographical coverage and target participants of Covid-19 Vaccine Initiative Project, monitoring and documentation system along with detail Activities of Covid-19 Vaccine Initiative Project, develop guideline for CHCP meeting, District and Upazila level Coordination Meeting, Health Assistant meeting and Health Education Session. Program Director of Health Unit CARE Bangladesh Dr. Ikhtiar Uddin Khandaker participated in this event while Health Advisor, CARE Bangladesh Health Unit S.M Rezaul Islam facilitated the orientation event.



Objective 2: Increase knowledge on vaccine registration and community engagement to disseminate correct information, thus reducing stigma and misconceptions around vaccination.

Household Visit: Project facilitators conducted household visit effectively according to project guideline in the targeted community. The main objective of household visit is to promote the awareness among the family members about basic concept of Covid-19, reduce misconception, importance of vaccine registration, vaccination and prevention. And also conduct spot online vaccine registraci3n and follow-up to take vaccine to the registered people. During household visit, at first project team members take permission from household head or right person then they share the objective of household visit. During this visit project staff demonstrated proper handwashing session with the information on social distancing, mask use to prevent Covid-19. After receiving the informations, most of the communitiy people appreciated the works and showed their gratitude for the support provided by the project. More that twelve thousand house hold were visited by CARE Facilitator in this reporting period.



Facilitate Online Vaccine Registration:

A Compulsory app-based registration system is developed by government of Bangladesh known as www.surokkha.gov.bd through which willing individuals from priority list categories will register their interest in vaccination against COVID-19. The vaccines are distributed primarily through tertiary healthcare centres like district hospitals, Upazila health complexes (1st referral centre at primary healthcare level) and also mass vaccination campaign from grassroots level expanded program on immunization. COVID-19 Vaccine Initiative is contributing to increase of vaccination coverage of Dhaka city, Gazipur city, Narayanganj city and Khulna district through facilitating on line registration. So project Facilitators are doing continuously online registration of the project targeted area’s people. Normally they do online registration at household level, Community Clinic, Unin Health & Family Welfare Center, Union Parishad (local government), Club and spot registration at UHC (upazilla health campus) in this reporting period project staff facilitated 24935 people to registration out of which 13158 are women.

Media coverage regarding on line registration by the facilitation of CARE Bangladesh was publicised in the top national daily newspapers establishing the credibility and put the spotlight of works.



Provide Follow up support to the registered people for Vaccination:

Another strategic activity undertaken by CARE Bangladesh COVID-19 Initiative is to facilitate the follow up Support to the registered people for vaccination which is to increase vaccination coverage of project targeted areas; still now country’s people are unaware about Covid-19. That’s why many people are completed vaccine registration but they are not going to vaccine point to take vaccine. Project team members are trying to send them to take vaccine through facilitation support. More than 25000 people were given follow up support by the project facilitators in this reporting period.



Conduct Health Education Session: Project facilitators under Covid-19 Vaccine Initiative Project conduct the health education session with community people on Covid-19 regularly at community level. This is to promote the awareness among the male and female about basic concept of Covid-19, reduce misconception, importance of vaccine registration, vaccination and prevention. Each facilitator facilitates at least one session in a day; every group contains 7-8 participants. Union Facilitator sit with the participants at a pre-fix particular place for this session. Nearly 2000 Health education sessions were facilitated in this reporting period using SBCC materials as government and WHO guidelines.



Objective 3: Ensure PPE and safety materials for frontline health workers and volunteers at vaccination centres.

Project has made procurement process to ensure PPE and safety materials to the front line health workers and it is expected to be disseminated in the next quarter. By this project made linkages with local health system to supply the required PPE for the front liners associated with vaccination program at the vaccine point.

Objective 4: Increase the functionality of Vaccination Working Groups and coordination among relevant platforms at the national and sub-national levels.

Project Inception Meeting at Gazipur City Corporation

“CARE Bangladesh is our trusted partner. During the Covid-19 period CARE Bangladesh extended their support very quickly and hope this support will continue more to fight COVID-19.-Mostafizur Rahman, Secretary Gazipur City Corporation”



COVID-19 Initiative supported by CARE Austria was inaugurated at Gazipur city and Khulna district to set strong coordination and collaboration mechanism in between key stakeholders from health system and local government and COVID-19 Vaccine Initiative through the inception meetings in month of September. This events was to share the goal, objectives and overview

of COVID-19 Vaccine Initiative Project with stakeholders and sort out the coordination points for effective implementation of the project within the project working area. **Major issues discussed:** Overview of COVID-19 Vaccine initiative project. Determine the coordination and collaboration mechanism in between Gazipur City Corporation and COVID-19 Vaccine initiative project.COVID-19 Vaccine initiative project’s reporting mechanism with the Gazipur City Corporation and health system. Total 35 participants joined the inception meeting showing solidarity with the efforts initiated by CARE Bangladesh.

District Level Inception Meeting at Khulna: As CARE Bangladesh COVID 19 Vaccine Initiative project is working closely with government health department of Khulna district to increase mass awareness and uptake of COVID 19 vaccine among marginalized population by strengthening the vaccine deployment system and community engagement with the support of CARE Austria.

However a project Inception Meeting was held on 21 September, 2021 at School Health Clinic Conference room, Khulna. The meeting was chaired by **Dr. Niaz Mohammad**, district **Civil Surgeon Khulna** and **Dr. MD Jasim Uddin Hawladar Director (Health), Khulna division** attended as Chief Guest. Moreover, Deputy Civil Surgeon (DCS) Khulna, Upazilla Health and Family Planning Officer (UH&FPO) of 9 upazila, and government health officials of district and upazila, representative of media and World Health Organization (WHO) also presents here. *chief guest Dr. MD Jasim Uddin Hawladar Director (Health), Khulna division said, "We need to be aware about two issues- vaccination and following health guidelines to curb Coronavirus." The program was a successful start-up event for COVID-19 Vaccine Initiative Project, CARE Bangladesh.*



Frontline Health workers monthly Meeting at Sub-District (Upazila) Level:

Frontline health workers meeting is a regular activity of government health system at sub district level with the objective to share the project update, problems and next plan at the meeting and solve against problems. Participant of the meeting were all Health Assistant (HA), Assistant Health Inspector (AHI), Health Inspector (HI), MTEPI, Statistician, Sanitary Inspector (SI), MODC, UH&FPO and Union Facilitator of 9 sub-districts from COVID-19 Initiative. In that meeting CARE staff participated and updated on Covid-19 Project and it's next plan including project monthly update, next activity plan and challenges of sub district level in the meeting.



Decisions taken:

- Upazilla Health and Family Planning officer (UH&FPO) has taken decision that from now CARE will attend at the Health Assistant monthly meeting regularly and will share monthly update.
- Upazila Health Department and CARE jointly will work on awareness on Covid-19, Online registration and increasing of vaccination at field level.

Community Health Care Provider (CHCP) Monthly Meeting at Sub-District Level:

The community based health care provider (CHCP)'s monthly meeting is also a regular activity by government health system to share the project update, challenges and next plan at the CHCP monthly meeting and solve against challenges. All Community Health Care Provider (CHCP) of Upazila, Assistant Health Inspector (AHI), Health Inspector (HI), MTEPI, Statistician, Sanitary Inspector (SI), MODC, UH&FPO and Union Facilitator were present at the meeting. Agenda of the meeting were previous meeting resolution and approval, online monthly report, discussion on Covid-19, CARE Project update and next plan and others. CARE representative shared the project monthly update and next plan in the meeting.



Decisions taken:

- UH&FPO has taken decision that from now CARE will attend at the CHCP monthly meeting regularly and will share monthly update.
- Upazila Health Department and CARE jointly will work on awareness on Covid-19, Online registration and increasing of vaccination with support of frontline supervisors (HI &AHI), all CHCPs, all HAs, Community Group(CG) and Community Support Group(CSG) at field level.

Union Development Coordination Committee (UDCC) Bi-Monthly Meeting:

The Union Development Coordination Committee (UDCC) Bi-monthly meetings is held at the Union Parishad (lowest tier of local government). To share the project update of, problems, challenges and next plan at the UDCC bi-monthly meeting and solve against problems and challenges. UP Chairman, UP Member, UP Female member, 1st line supervisors of health and family department, Livestock, Agriculture, Fisheries, NGO, selected civil society and other relevant participants were present.

At first UP chairman delivers welcome speech and meeting objective and agenda of the meeting and introduce to CARE representative with all meeting participants. All agendas were discussed and taken decision one by one. CARE representative present the project update and next plan in the meeting.

Decision taken:

- UP chairman requests to all participants of different department including UP member and Union Secretary to support to the CARE staffs at field level to increase the vaccine coverage.

In this reporting month we have facilitated 2 UDCC bi- monthly meetings of nine upazilas/sub district.

CHALLENGES:

- The ongoing app-based registration for vaccination increased hesitancy and reluctance in low-educated group.
- A high prevalence of vaccine refusal and hesitancy was observed in rural people and slum dwellers in Bangladesh due to lack of smartphones with internet access and understanding of how to register on the website.
- People in some communities of urban areas (Dhaka and Narayanganj) less interested to allow facilitators at their home to conduct household visit.
- Illiteracy of community people (A large number of people has been already registered, but they are not able to read the message from the system containing their schedule for the vaccine).
- Some factors such as religious principles, superstitions, rumors and fears about COVID-19 vaccine still works in the mind of community people.
- Lack of awareness among people; i.e. most of the people don't use face mask, don't maintain social distance during registration, vaccination and health session.
- Due to government's initiative for on the spot vaccination campaign, some people showed less interest in online registration.

LESSONS LEARNED:

- For rural, semi-urban, hard to reach, and slum people, outreach centres for vaccination can be established to ensure the vaccine's nearby availability and limit associated travel costs and wedge loss
- In rural areas, community health workers, valued community-leaders, and non-governmental organizations can be utilized to motivate and educate people for vaccination against COVID-19.
- The media may play a responsible role with the vaccine education program and eliminate the social stigma about the vaccination.
- COVID-19 Vaccine Initiative team has learnt how to aware people through conducting awareness sessions and house visit/counselling.
- The team has learned how to deal with challenges for accomplishment of works.
- Sharing of information among team members is very much effective for project works.
- People welcome us, when they can feel that we have come to provide them the services they need indeed.
- It is easy to accomplish project works in city corporation area with the help of convinced or motivated influential persons of the societies such as local/political leader, local government, religious leader, persons involved with social clubs etc.

NEXT STEPS:

- Project management team has undertaken a comprehensive capacity building package for the front line workers to improve their skills in vaccination and centre management as well.
- Required logistics will be supplied to the front line health workers as the procurement process which is under process.
- A systematic exploration on project efficiency, program quality and effect COVID-19 on the marginalized and vulnerable population is on process.
- An special drive will be planned to cover some isolated land people to reach to them for vaccination with joint planning and support from government

PHOTO GALLERY OF DIFFERENT PROJECT ACTIVITIES



Project inception meeting in Khulna district with government officials



Project Staff orientation on project concept and interventions



Capacity building initiative of government Health Assistant, Health Inspector



COVID 19 awareness session at rural Community



COVID 19 Vaccine registration at Community level



COVID 19 vaccine registration during household visit by project staff