



2nd Interim Report

CARE-Austria COVID -19 Vaccine Initiative project

REPORTING PERIOD: October – December, 2021



Report Submitted to:
CARE Austria

Report Submitted by:
CARE Bangladesh

15 February, 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

- Targeted interventions made a union /community of 20000 population on the verge of 100% registration as an outcome
- Managing Director of Community Based Health Care Support appreciated CARE facilitated COVID -19 initiative at Khulna district while visited on November 2021 as part of monitoring and supervision
- Almost 1400 front line health workers oriented on COVID-19 vaccination and required awareness related sessions by CARE in line with GOB and WHO guideline at different platforms
- Local government and Community Support group continued their assistance in CARE's promotional work and on line registration
- Project effort continued to the uptake of COVID-19 vaccination coverage through providing promotional activity with the health system of government
- For COVID-19 vaccine recipients, rural team (under Khulna district) facilitated online registration of 23226 people while urban team completed 10009 people 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 1699 health education sessions at community level were conducted in this quarter (oct-Dec, 2021) by project staff in Khulna district and urban team for vaccination awareness among vulnerable segment of population
- Project team visited total 27168 household in the reporting period creating awareness on prevention of COVID-19 and motivate for vaccination

Budget status

Total Budget: **\$602,986**

Budget balance:

WHOME HAVE WE SUPPORTED?

Activity	# of Health Education	Total Population reached Oct-Dec 2021			Total population reached till to date		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Community Mobilization interventions:							
Facilitate # of people for on line registration for COVID-19 Vaccination		15256	17979	33235	27033	31137	58170
Provide follow up support to # of registered people for taking vaccine		13032	15036	28068	23862	29577	53439
Conduct # House hold visit for promoting vaccine awareness	27168	23829	43306	67135	38296	65868	104164
Facilitate # of Health Education session at community level for creating awareness on COVID-19	1699	4935	8933	13868	10338	17936	28274
Total		57052	85254	142306	99529	144518	244047

Total direct reach in this reporting period Oct-Dec 2021: Total 33235 (Female 17979 and Male 15256) completed registration and took at least the first dose of vaccine of which 54% are female.

Total direct reach till to date: Total 58170 (Female 31137 and Male 27033) completed registration and took at least the first dose of vaccine in the implementing areas.

Total Indirect Reach in this reporting period Oct-Dec 2021: Total 628442 people reached through community mobilization activities like household visit, health education session and follow up activity.

Total Indirect Reach till to date: Total 820457 people reached through community mobilization activities like household visit, health education session and follow up activity.

REPORT OVERVIEW:

With funding support from CARE Austria, Care Bangladesh started 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 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 online 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.

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 Austria COVID-19 Vaccine Initiative project 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 toon 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: Oct-Dec 2021

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

Capacity development on COVID 19 and vaccination modality for frontline health workers

For Capacity development of front line health workers, CARE used several plat forms like monthly coordination meeting of the front line health workers at Upazila Health Complex, on job training in the spot at community and campaign. In this reporting period total 993 Health Assistant and 776 Community Health Care Providers from Khulna district received capacity development support on COVID-19 that was designed for health workers and leadership on the frontlines of the crisis to increase their capacity to respond rapidly and efficiently to the threat of COVID-19, while also

protecting their own health. As part of the capacity building initiatives now a days front line workers are conducting awareness development health education session in the existing expended program on immunization (EPI) centers.

Similarly orientation also provided to Multi-Purpose Health Volunteer on COVID 19 registration & vaccination and community awareness. And all



health workers involved in implementation of COVID-19 vaccination need to have adequate knowledge and skills in order to ensure safe and efficient COVID-19 vaccine administration in the working area.

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

Facilitate Online Vaccine Registration:

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 expended 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 online 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, UH&FWC, Union Parishad (local government), Club and spot registration at UHC (upazilla health campus) in this reporting period project staff facilitated 33235 people to registration out of which 17979 are women.

Targeted interventions by COVID-19 Vaccine initiative of CARE Bangladesh put Dakhin Bedkashi Union at Khulna towards exemplary 100% vaccine coverage

Context and causes to target this union

Dakhin Bedkashi Union under Koyra sub district of Khulna is one of the hardest to reach and remotest coastal geographic location with nearly 20000 population and more than 100 km away from Khulna district. Since 2007 this area was shattered by calamitous cyclone Sidr and Ayla within its climate change impact that aggravated health care, agriculture, sanitation, education, communication and all other facilities to a great extent for the people.

Since inception of the vaccine initiative CARE prioritized the disrupted locations to ensure 100% online registration support in consultation with government health department at district and sub district level. However in this union online registration status was only 24% when CARE started intervening with the government.



Experimental modality:

Enhancing support to the existing government effort was the focus of the experimentation in reaching the most vulnerable CARE took necessary data from government sources that helped to develop the 100% registration coverage plan. In this plan CARE did some demographic analysis to fix target and



strategic interventions to reach. In a population of 20,000 the target was determined 18,400 population who are 18 years of age and above within 17 villages and 4500 households (HH). After completion of the comprehensive plan, CARE Project team shared it with government health department, local government and community support groups along with religious leaders, civil society for ensuring necessary support to implement. CARE also engaged frontline health workers (Health Inspector, Assistant Health Inspectors, Health Assistants, and Community Health Care Providers) with necessary support, assistance and capacity development to increase the registration coverage.

Targeted key interventions:

- Identify the gap area to coverage the 100% vaccine registration of this union.
- Increase capacity of Community Group and Community Support Group (CSG) on Covid-19 and involved them with awareness and vaccine registration activities

- To create awareness on COVID-19 vaccination through miking and Multipurpose Health Volunteer (MHV) by using the government platforms (EPI Center, CC, Union Parishad and Education Institution etc.)
- Involved the civil society, club representative, religious leaders, NGOs, Political leaders, students and others with Covid-19 activity and they have assisted to achieve the 100% vaccine registration coverage.
- Aware the community people on Covid-19 through health education sessions.
- Individual counselling with pregnant women, old people, sickness people, disable people, maternal mother and taboos and misconception people etc.
- Online Vaccine Registration through household visit
- Online vaccine registration through established registration booth/ camp at community level
- Online vaccine registration at Community Clinic, Union Parishad, Vaccine Campaign at village level
- Conduct spot registration
- Update present status of vaccine registration with government health department and union parishad (Local Government) regular basis and take guidance from them.



As part of future plan CARE looks forward to complete the 100% vaccination coverage by 31, March, 2022 and declare by Government.

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 registraci3n, 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 than 27 thousand house hold were visited by CARE Facilitator in this reporting period which is almost twice of the last quarter.



Provide Follow up support to the registered people for Vaccination:

Another strategic activity undertaken by CARE Austria 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 28000 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 to promote the awareness among the male and female about basic concept of Covid-19, reduce misconception, importance of vaccine registraci3n, 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 1700 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 initiated to ensure PPE and safety materials to the front line health workers. By this project made linkages with local health system and local administration to supply the required PPE for the front liners associated with vaccination program at the vaccine point.

Safety Materials Distribution Ceremony by CARE Bangladesh:

With third wave of **Omicron**, **CARE Austria COVID-19 Vaccine Initiative Project**, **CARE Bangladesh** took initiative to distribute safety materials among the front liner to prevent COVID-19. As part of this **CARE Bangladesh** handed over total **120,000** pieces' mask and **4500** bottle of Hand Sanitizers to **Dr. Niaz Mohammad**, District Civil Surgeon of Khulna and **Md. Moniruzzaman Talukder**, Deputy Commissioner of Khulna and Md Mahabubur Rahman, Police Super of Khulna district for all Upazila Health Complex, all Police station and all Upazila Parishad of Khulna district. This safety material handover distribution ceremony separately organized at Civil Surgeon Office, district Police Super office and Deputy Commissioner Office of Khulna on 13 and 14 December, 2021.



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

High level Officials from national level visited the Covid-19 Vaccination activity facilitated by CARE at Khulna district: Mr. Tulashi Ranjan Shaha, Managing Director (Additional Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare), Community Clinic Health Support Trust visited CARE’s promotional and supporting activity on Vaccination at Khulna. During his visit he observed the Covid-19 Vaccination

campaign where CARE Facilitators were engaged in the campaign like vaccine registration, manage entry point, queue system, scanning corner and vaccination corner. Huge number of people were vaccinated by this campaign but they did not face any crisis due to system development.



CARE involved Community Group (CG) with this process and the CG members were always careful to the people, that’s why all people of campaign used mask and maintain social distance. After observing the campaign, he visited the registration booth facilitated by CARE, people came to take the vaccine without vaccine registration but they have taken vaccine from the campaign. Representative of CARE has done online registration through registration booth, CARE continued the process till end of the campaign. Mr. Tulashi Ranjan Shaha, Managing Director (Additional Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare), Community Clinic Health Support highly appreciated this activity.

Frontline Health workers monthly Meeting at Sub-District 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 CARE 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 HA 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 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 (UP) (lowest tier of local government). To share the project update, problems, challenges and next plan at the UDCC bio-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:

- Most of the garments workers and day labourers are unreachable during working hours in week days.
- The ongoing app-based registration for vaccination increased hesitancy and reluctance in low-educated group.
- Still 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 do not 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:

- Religious leaders, local representatives, local club members can be involved in online registration to get things faster.
- For hard to reach area 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:

- **As part of future plan CARE looks forward to** complete the 100% vaccination coverage at a total union (17 village) under Khulna district by 31, March, 2022 and declare by Government.
- Project management team will continue the capacity building package for the front line workers to improve their skills in vaccination and centre management as well.
- More 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.
- More special drive will be planned to cover some isolated land people to reach to them for vaccination with joint planning and support from government.