



Annual Progress Report

2022-2023

Centre for Rural Education and Development Action (CREDA)

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Move & Improve Project (Phase 2)

Supported by Swiss Academy for Development (SA4D), Switzerland

Remedial Teaching Programme (Apr 2022 – Mar 2023)

Engagement of government line departments and panchayati raj system

Government liaison for project support

The project staffs contacted government primary and upper primary school teachers, Aanganwadi Workers, and officials of Health Department and Panchayati Raj department. Explained about the project activities and motivated them to support in the project activities specially monitoring of the centre to ensure better educational opportunities to the targeted children. The staffs also liaised them for formation of remedial teaching centre management committee and some of them have been put in the remedial teaching management committees as member.

The block facilitator in Lalganj block contacted the Medical Office In-Charge (MOIC) and discussed about the infectious diseases dengue and malaria spreading in the villages. The block facilitator in Madihan block met with Health Education Officer (HEO) of the block and requested him for vaccination of the girls studying at remedial teaching centre and the officer suggested the staff to provide the list of those girls so that he can arrange for the vaccination of the girls. Block Education Officers (BEO's) in all 3 project blocks have been contacted and informed about the remedial teaching centres run by the organization.

As result of this intervention, the school teachers, *shiksha mitras* (teaching assistants at government schools), government ICDS staffs started to visit the remedial teaching centres and giving their feedback. They appreciated the work done by the organization and efforts of the project staffs. They are happy seeing the improvement in education of children. To maintain the quality at the centre, the local officials who are member of management committee themselves come forward and make the visit to the centre from time to time.

Engagement of community leaders and elected officials for project support

The project staffs contacted the community leaders and elected representatives like gram pradhans, village council members, block development council members, and informed about the purpose and activities of the project and mobilized them to support in achieving the project objectives. The staffs met regularly with the community leaders and elected officials like gram pradhans (village council heads), members of village panchayats, and asked them to support in the project.

During the meetings the topics discussed were: Education of children, child right, child protection, health of children, arrangement for space, establishment of remedial teaching centre, enrolment of children, support in running the centre, motivate parents for regularity of children in school and remedial teaching centre, encourage mothers to attend the mothers' group meeting.

Through this activity, the community leaders and elected officials have been motivated to support in carrying out the project activities and achieve the project objectives. They are aware about the rights of children, child protection, child health, and importance of education. They encourage the parents for sending the children to school and visit the centre, observe and give their feedback for monitoring purpose.

The community leaders and elected officials especially gram pradhans are supporting the project in the form of providing space for running the centre, motivating the parents to send the children school and centre regularly and ensure the care and health of children, support of parents in sending the children to school. At some places, the local elected representatives provided space in *panchayat bhawan* or at their own home during the summer.

Mobilization of community specially parents and caregivers

Selection of target villages

The remedial teaching centres established in the last year ran upto July 2022 and later when the project period extended from September 2022, some changes took place. In the extension period, the centres in following villages closed:

Halia Block: 1. Baskop, 2. Pawari Kalan
Lalganj Block: 1. Zahdar
Madihan Block: 1. Sugapankh Kalan, 2. Hadaura, 3. Khantara, 4. Hinauta

Reason for closing the centres in the above villages was:

- Community got aware to an extent that understood the importance of education and work on the betterment of their children and send them to school on regular basis.
- Maximum number of children started going to private tuition classes.

For selection of the new village, the block facilitators visited in the villages, contacted the local people and got some first hand information about the village including communities in the village and their economic condition, educational setup and rough number of school going children, availability of potential candidates who can be placed as community facilitator, interest of community in supporting the project activities in various forms, etc. Then the peoples were told about the project and its benefits. If they showed their interest and ready to support then the staff proceeded for selection of the village and community facilitator.

During this period, new centre established in the following villages:

Halia Block: 1. Naudihwa
Lalganj Block: 1. Jaikar Kalan, 2. Patar Kalan
Madihan Block: 1. Pachokhara Khurd, 2. Gopalpur (2 centres namely Gopalpur-1 and Gopalpur-2), 3. Baghaila

The selection of the above villages was made on the following criteria:

- Due to bad economic condition parents cannot afford the private tuition classes for the improvement in child education.
- Number of marginalized children is very high in these communities.
- Number of illiterate families those cannot help their children in studying is high.
- Communities requested and demanded our block facilitator to start running the remedial teaching classes in their locality.

Community mobilisation for project support

For mobilization of the community, the project staffs organized community meetings, personally contacted parents, and conducted home visits. The communities were made aware about the project activities and mobilized to provide their support in carrying out the activities. The project staffs regularly met the community members and mobilized them for their support in successful implementation of the project and achieve the targets.

During the meetings and contact with community, following topics were discussed: encouraging parents to send the children regularly and timely to the school as well as the remedial teaching centre, importance of school education, care and health of children, education of girls, hygiene, benefit of remedial teaching, responsibilities of parents towards children, support in running the centre, non consumption of any type of substance like tobacco, child labour, not engaging children in household chores or agriculture.

A 2-page handbill was published and distributed among the community during mothers' group meetings and community meetings. Wall writing was done in 60 villages to spread the messages. 60 flex boards were also been placed at prime locations to convey the message on importance of education and rights of children.

The community provided proper support in the form of space especially in summer and rainy season to run the remedial teaching centres. After seeing the changes taking place in the children, the community also supported in motivating the parents in their neighbourhood to send the children to the centre. The parents assured that they will send their children to the remedial teaching centre and not involve them in household chores. The mothers accompanied with community facilitators in some villages during home visits as well as supported project staffs in organizing the mothers' groups meeting.

Engagement of mothers' groups

3,218 members of 180 mothers' groups formed in the last reporting year continued upto July 2023. Due to decrease in the number of target children from 5,000 to 3,600 in the extension period started from September 2022, the number of batches reduced from 180 to 120 and hence number of women's groups also reduced to 120 and the mothers of all children enrolled in the batch were a member of the group. Now the total number of members became 2,177 members in 120 groups on an average of 18 members per group. Block-wise number of members in mothers' groups is as under:

The group members have been made aware about the project objectives, activities to be carried out and its benefits to the children and community. They have been made aware on the importance of education, child rights, child protection, health and hygiene, importance of girl education, etc. and encouraged to send the children to the school and remedial teaching centre regularly and timely in clean cloths and taking care of children well. The meeting of the groups was organized on monthly basis.

The mothers were also told that they should pay attention on the child at home and give them proper time for studying. The mothers were made aware and encouraged to keep the environment clean and green. They were encouraged to provide nutritious foods to children and get them immunized. Human trafficking and its harms were also discussed with the group members. During the winter season, the mothers were asked to send the children with warm cloths. The mothers have also been made aware about the nutritious food for children.

Remedial Teaching Centre Management Committee

A committee in the name of remedial teaching centre management committee has been formed in each project village. The purpose for forming the committee is to ensure the monitoring and provide support to the remedial teaching centres and ensure that facilitators give their best in imparting knowledge to the children to uplift their life.

Each management committee is comprised of 7 to 9 members, who are active at block and village level. There are 215 members in 29 committees. Two community facilitators are working in Gopalpur village of Madihan block and one committee has been formed for whole of the village. Hence, there are only 9 committees in Madihan block instead of 10.

The members are selected from following: Aangnwadi Workers, Gram Panchayat Members, Self Help Group members, Retired government teachers, Government school teachers, *Shiksha Mitras* (Batchmates / Teaching Assistants), Active member of community, Literate mother from mothers' group, ASHA workers from Health Department, Principal from government /private school, and School management committee member.

The members of the committee visit the centre and observe the activities being carried out at the centre, give the feedback, and support in solving the problem, if any, faced at the centre. If any kind of challenge is faced then the committee can identify several possible alternatives to solve the problem because of the collective knowledge of highly experienced and supportive members of the committee.

Progress monitoring (follow-up visits at school and with parents)

Progress monitoring of the children continued during this year. During the home visits, some of the parents told that earlier the child was very weak in the education but now the level of knowledge has increased. When the project staffs visited primary schools to know progress of the children who were attending the remedial teaching class, the school teachers told that the children's interest in education has increased and they are performing well after enrolment at the centre.

Capacity building for community facilitators

First Training

For the capacity building of Community Facilitators, the training module which was adopted last year was re-adapted in the month of September 2022. Some new topics were also introduced in this training to make them learn some techniques to be a prompt and swift teacher for remedial teaching. Community facilitators were instructed how to manage different grade students at one point of time.

The contents for this training was: Introduction of the project; Identification, survey and enrolment of children; How to form Remedial Teaching Centre Management Committee; How to evaluate the progress of children; Qualities and skills of a facilitator; Pointers to designing a remedial teaching classes: Uncover the why, Evaluate your performance, Let your curiosity lead you, Create your own assessment tools, Step back a little and think to re-adapt your teaching strategies, Meet with fellow facilitators for sharing experience, How you treat students matter, and Plan your upcoming classes.

After the training, the trainees expressed their feedback as follows:

- The training was extremely interesting and useful. Many of the staffs remarked how helpful it is. CREDA presents the material like toolkit with points to lead in field skilfully. It gives lots of ways and genuineness.
- Facilitators appreciate the concise handouts that can be used for future references.
- We have received much better ideas to deal with uncomfortable issues.
- Trainees mentioned that they would feel easy and comfortable contacting the official, community and parents and working with them because of the excellent and detailed training.
- The text material related to body language really helps to enhance our personality and community skills.

- This training was very helpful to understand how we can better manage our own responsibilities, work and deal with the students and community.

One-day training was also organized jointly on 28th September 2022 for all 30 community facilitators working in three project blocks. The trainees were provided training kit having training module and important notes, note pad, pen, pencil, sharpener, eraser, and one folder to carry important documents and survey guideline. The training module used in the last year was used with adding some new topics.

Second Training

For the capacity building of 30 community facilitators, the training module was prepared by SA4D. All the new topics were introduced in this training to make our facilitators more productive and motivated. The training was organized on 1st and 2nd March 2023. This training was facilitated by Ms. Luise Schurian-Dabrowska from SA4D. Dr. Connor Spreng, Executive Director of SA4D also addressed the participants and appreciated the work done by them and motivated to do better work in future too.

It was a cognitive and behavioural skills training as it improved the interpersonal communication skill of facilitators. Now they efficiently communicate and interact effectively with the beneficiaries. It was so efficient that it boosted the morale of facilitators and increased their knowledge and skills of their field.

This training improved abilities in solving everyday small problems like how to make their session more effective and interesting as they have learn lot many games related to the topics to be taught. The training was so interesting and full of enthusiasm that it strengthened the bond between the trainers and trainees.

Topics of the training:

First Day – Interactive Teaching Methods: Introduction, Why play games in the classroom?, What is interactive teaching, How to plan a session: Safe and positive learning environment, How to plan a session (Different types of activities).

Second Day – Teaching Health and Hygiene through Playful Activities: Introduction (Hygiene, Health and Education), Sport and play for health and hygiene (Connect, Reflect, Apply), Identifying key health issues Communicable diseases), Identifying key health issues (Non-communicable diseases), and Prevention (Key hygiene practices).

The training was very much effective and impactful, everyone was carried along during the training and it was fun and very practical approach which was the need of the facilitators for future challenges. At the end of the training, Dr. Connor Spreng and Ms. Luise Schurian-Dabrowska awarded the training certificate to all participants.

Improvement of capacity of project staff to effectively assess, implement and evaluate project activities

Monitoring and Evaluation capacity building to staff

In the month of February 2023, a monitoring form (developed by SA4D) was introduced to CREDA Core staffs. It was a classroom observation form designed in an efficient way for monitoring ongoing remedial teaching classes by community facilitators. Ms Luise trained the core staffs how to use it. It is periodically using tools to analyse and use information to actively manage performance of facilitators, to maximize positive input and minimise the risk of below the level output. Core staffs were explained each and every point so that they do not face any problem while filling in the observation form.

When classroom observation form was introduced in the training they very enthusiastically got ready to adapt it as they have a sense that it will make their work of upgrading the community facilitator more comprehensively. As now block facilitators will have much more areas and points to monitor and work on it to make it better and organise the right solution for improvement.

Remedial teaching class for 5,000 children aged 6 to 14 years

Enrolment and continuation of children

5,097 children enrolled in remedial teaching class in three blocks last year, continued upto July 2022. Due to the large number of children (upto July 2022), each community facilitator had to teach 170 children divided in 6 batches. Therefore, they faced difficulty in giving proper time and attention to individual children of different standards and their learning capacity. To overcome the problem, number of targeted children in the extension period decreased from 5,000 to 3,600 so that the staffs are able to give proper attention and time. Therefore, each staff covered 120 children in 4 batches, instead of 170 children in 6 batches.

Grade-wise number of children covered:

Grade	April 2022 – July 2022				September 2022 – March 2023			
	Halia	Lalganj	Madihan	Total	Halia	Lalganj	Madihan	Total
Not enrolled	16	0	0	16	58	76	9	143
Dropout	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Nursery	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
LKG	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UKG	1	0	4	5	2	0	2	4
Grade 1	96	166	37	299	326	311	319	956
Grade 2	441	385	385	1211	239	192	212	643
Grade 3	329	212	262	803	184	178	173	535
Grade 4	417	276	269	962	193	180	175	548
Grade 5	300	227	261	788	181	250	176	607
Grade 6	218	249	226	693	13	10	100	123
Grade 7	40	11	124	175	3	1	26	30
Grade 8	8	3	72	83	0	1	8	9
Grade 9	2	0	59	61	0	0	0	0
Grade 10	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Total	1,868	1,529	1,700	5,097	1,200	1,200	1,200	3,600

Stationery to enrolled children

All of the children enrolled at remedial teaching centres were provided needed stationery as notebooks, pencils, sharper and eraser individually in main period whereas notebook and pencils individually and sharper and eraser in group in extension period.

Progress assessment

The progress of the children was assessed regularly to monitor the progress. Apart from this, during this period, special tests were also conducted. Total marks for these tests were 10. There were five questions each of 2 marks. The performance of the children in these tests is given below:

March 2022 – July 2022

Category: Marks Obtained	May 2022				July 2022			
	Halia	Lalganj	Madihan	Total	Halia	Lalganj	Madihan	Total
Between 0 to 4	99	189	225	513	2	43	28	73
Between 5 to 6	225	505	506	1,236	158	265	509	932
Between 7 to 8	677	572	549	1,798	659	515	669	1,843
Between 9 to 10	867	263	420	1,550	1,049	706	494	2,249
Total:	1,868	1,529	1,700	5,097	1,868	1,529	1,700	5,097

September 2022 – March 2023

Category: Marks Obtained	October 2022				December 2022			
	Halia	Lalganj	Madihan	Total	Halia	Lalganj	Madihan	Total
Between 0 to 4	1,020	1,072	667	2,759	47	125	1	173
Between 5 to 6	156	114	357	627	662	746	445	1,853
Between 7 to 8	24	13	171	208	414	303	544	1,261
Between 9 to 10	0	1	5	6	77	26	210	313
Total:	1,200	1,200	1,200	3,600	1,200	1,200	1,200	3,600

Safety measures undertaken to contain the spread of COVID-19

Guideline laid down by the government to contain the spread of COVID-19 was followed as far as possible during the project activities. Each block facilitator was provided with thermal scanner to measure the body temperature of the children during their visit. The children were provided face mask and their hands were sanitized at the centre using hand sanitizer. Hands of the mothers were also sanitized during mothers' group meetings. The children were also encouraged to wash their hands with soap regularly at the home. Proper physical distance was followed during the project activities.

Convergence with government initiatives ensured

Under the campaign '*School Chalo Abhiyan*' (school enrolment drive), rallies (foot marches) were organized by the education department through government primary and upper primary schools in the month of April 2022 and later in July 2022. Our project staffs collaborated with the school authorities in organizing the rallies in all three project blocks and encouraged the children and community to come forward and participate in the rally. The rallies were led by school principal, teachers and our project staffs and participated by school children. In these rallies, slogans were recited and some inspiring local songs related to education to evoke the importance of education were sung by the participants. CREDA's banner showing inspiring quotes "*School Chalen Hum, Gyan Ka Paath Padhen Hum*" (Let's go to school, Let's read the lesson of knowledge) was also used in the rallies.

Under this campaign, the school authorities and project staffs mobilized the community for enrolment of all children into school and no child is left without education. The project staffs supported in 20 rallies and covered 18 villages.

To make the initiative successful, the project staffs visited in the villages to find out out-of-school children i.e. the children who reached the age to get admission in grade 1, children who never enrolled earlier and those children who have dropped out of school for any reason, encouraged the parents for admission of the children into school, took the children to

school and got them enrolled. 648 children have been enrolled by the project staffs under the campaign. The related school authorities appreciated the efforts of CREDA and have certified it in writing.

The project staffs also supported in organizing the rallies to make the community aware on communicable diseases. The rallies were organized by Department of Health, Uttar Pradesh Government.

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme (16th Dec 2022 – 31st Mar 2023)

Government Engagement

ECCE Management Committee

One ECCE management committee has been formed at each ECCE centre in the month of February 2023. There are 10 ECCE management committees with 10 members in each committee. During the community meeting, the project staffs informed them about establishment of ECCE management committee, its role and responsibilities. The community suggested the name of active and literate women who can lead the committee and play a vital role in management of the centre. Other 8 members were also selected from the mothers of ECCE children with the consent of participants.

The role of the management committee is to encourage the parents to send the children to the centre regularly with proper preparation like with clean clothes and with nutritious food in the lunch box, organize monthly meetings, support in decorating the centre, motivate mothers to participate in the open meetings of the *gram sabha* (village council), help in reaching out to the family of all children through home visits, keep watch on the ECCE centres. They also mobilize the parents of those children who were not full time staying at ECCE centre for all activities set for the day and encouraged the children not to leave the centre and attend all the sessions.

With formation, the first meeting of the committee was organized in February 2023 and participated by 99 members out of 100 members.

Community Mobilization on Various Issues

Selection of target villages

10 villages were selected for implementation of the programme. Criteria for final selection of villages was: non availability of AWC in the community, enough number of children to be enrolled at ECCE centre is available, the community belong to dalit/ backward/Muslims, community can provide building/space for running the ECCE centre, illiteracy is very strong in the community, mothers were specially enthusiastic to support the establishment of the ECCE centre.

The community was made aware on the project activities and benefit of the ECCE centre and was motivated to support in the programme. Gram Pradhan (elected village council head) provided support and cooperation in establishment of the centres. Priority was given to the villages where earlier CREDA has run ECCE centres and Remedial Teaching classes.

Community mobilisation for project support

To get their support, the community was introduced with the project and mobilized to support in the activities, especially mothers were made aware on the importance of early childhood care and education and how they can play their role in holistic development of their children. The ECCE Centre management committee members were made aware about their roles and responsibilities and they were mobilised to monitor and support in running the ECCE centre smoothly.

The parents of the ECCE children were contacted through home visits and mobilised to send the children regularly to the ECCE Centre, take proper care of the children and prevent them from heat, and provide support in running the ECCE centre. Local elected representatives like *Gram Pradhans* (village council heads), block development council members, and village council members were mobilized to get their support in the project.

During all mobilisation activities, the focus was given on sending the children to ECCE centres regularly with proper cleanliness, fresh food and safe drinking water, support in running the ECCE centres, monitoring and management of centres, delivery of ICDS and health service to the ECCE children and pregnant women, safety of children from cold, heat and communicable disease, sanitation and hygienic practices, and rights of children.

Mothers' groups

One mothers' group has been formed at each of 10 ECCE centres. There are 291 members in total in 10 groups. Although no formal training was given to mothers' group but their capacity was built up during the group meetings and home visits. They were oriented on overall development of children, role and responsibilities of mothers in upbringing of child, hygiene practices, healthy and nutritious foods, safe drinking water, need and care of children of 3-6 years age, sending children with clean clothes and with nutritious food in the lunch box, consulting medical doctor if the child faces any type of health problem and not go to quack or witchcraft practitioner.

Project Structures and Systems Set Up

Placement of field staffs

The block facilitator selected for ECCE programme has worked with CREDA in the past in various important projects. He has experience of working in various projects including on child right, child protection, education, empowerment of adolescent girls and women.

The selection of ECCE facilitators was done in December 2022. In this process, firstly target village was decided. During the staff selection, preference was given to one who has proper space for establishing ECCE Centre and the family was ready to support the organization smoothly with recommended space. Secondly, the education level of the women at least they should be graduate and have personal attributes and knowledge to carry forward with early stage of children.

Training of ECCE Facilitators

First Training

We felt that at the beginning of the project, any change in the training module is not required. The available training module was re-established in the month of December 2022. The module is divided into two parts - part 1 is the presentation of the topics whereas the part 2 is the toolkit with all the playful activities which has to be conducted in ECCE centre.

For the capacity building of ECCE facilitators, two-day training was organized for all 10 ECCE Facilitators appointed for ECCE centres at CREDA Rural Resource cum Training Centre, Sukhra in Halia block on 28th and 29th December 2022. This training programme was tailored in such way which increased the efficiency of the ECCE facilitators. The training benefited the newly appointed facilitators to get aware with functioning of the organization and project. It also helped them to gain knowledge, motivation and self-confidence.

On first day, the topics and activities covered were: Introduction and prayer; Holistic development; Child protection; Session planning and session evaluation; Roles and responsibilities of ECCE facilitator; and Playful activities.

Following topics and activities were covered on second day of the training: Milestones; Community Mobilization; Role modeling; Positive discipline; Daily programme; Identification, survey and enrolment of children at ECCE Centre; How to form mothers' groups and conduct the monthly meetings for awareness; How to form ECCE management committee; and Playful activities:

Also, in the monthly learning and sharing meeting organized on 31st January 2023, The first monthly learning and sharing meeting was organized on 31st January 2023. In the meeting, the ECCE Facilitators were provided training on couple of the playful activities and the work done by ECCE facilitators in the month and the documents they maintain were reviewed. The facilitators were oriented on how to write success story and case study, and effective communication. They met in the group and shared their experience with others. Also they got introduced with other project staffs working in all three blocks. In the second half of the day, training on playful activities was organized.

Second Training

Along with community facilitators, the ECCE Facilitators also attended the second day training provided by Ms. Luise Schurian-Dabrowska from SA4D on 2nd March 2023. The second day training focused on Teaching Health and Hygiene through Playful Activities.

Following topics were covered in the training: Introduction (Hygiene, Health and Education), Sport and play for health and hygiene (Connect, Reflect, Apply), Identifying key health issues (Communicable diseases), Identifying key health issues (Non-communicable diseases), and Prevention (Key hygiene practices).

At the end of the training, Dr. Connor Spreng and Ms. Luise Schurian-Dabrowska awarded the training certificate to all participants.

Children got opportunity for their holistic development

Enrolment of ECCE beneficiaries

After final selection of the project villages, the survey of children was conducted and children enrolled in ECCE centres. The criteria for selection of the children were age of the child (3-5 years), belonging to dalit/backward/ Muslim community. Priority was given to girl child. 35 children were enrolled at each ECCE centre and hence 350 children were enrolled in 10 ECCE Centres in Halia block.

ECCE classes

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) classes were conducted at each ECCE centre for holistic development of the children. The classes were run from Monday to Saturday in the week for four hours a day.

The activities at ECCE Centres give the opportunity for most disadvantaged children to develop their full potential, to build necessary life skills and more positive attitudes towards learning, thereby increasing their chances of success in further education and in life.

The play-way method or learning through play methodology was adopted at the ECCE centres for imparting education to the children. The playful approach facilitates holistic child development (physical, mental, emotional and social). We believe that this approach is most suitable method for the pre-primary level children.

At ECCE centres, learning was made easy and enjoyable. Each child was given equal opportunity for full participation. Each child was provided more opportunities to learn the way s/he feel easier.

Stationary provided to children

The children enrolled at ECCE centres were provided slate, chalks and a drawing copy individually, whereas pencil, sharpener, eraser and wax colours were provided in groups.

Activities undertaken to monitor children's progress

The progress of children's learning was regularly monitored during classroom activities. The facilitators observed development in the children as they play in group, share their toys with other children, they happily spend four hours in the centre and never leave the centre in between the activity, and excitedly ask the facilitator about the next day playful activities.

Details of children enrolled

Out of 350 children enrolled at the ECCE centres,

- 274 children belong to dalit community, 69 to backward community, 5 to Muslim community and 2 to general (upper castes) category.
- 155 children are 3 years old, 125 children 4 years, and 70 children are 5 years old.
- 31 children are first generation learners i.e. their parents (mother and father both) are illiterate.
- 262 children belong to Below Poverty Line (BPL) families, 32 children belong to Above Poverty Line (APL) families, whereas the family of 56 children do not have any ration card so they can not be categorised.

Integrated Child Development Services provided at ECCE centres

Lunch box to children and provision of home-made meals

A set of one lunch box and a water bottle has been provided to each children enrolled at ECCE centre. The mothers provide fresh cooked healthy food in the box and safe drinking water in the bottle when send the children to ECCE centre. This helps in fulfilment of nutritional needs of the children and they do not feel hungry during playful activities. This keeps them active throughout the day.

Maternal Child Health (MCH)

The project staffs have contacted the ICDS and health department officials at block and local level and requested them to provide the benefit of MCH service to the ECCE children and pregnant women. The officials have assured to deliver these services to the target beneficiaries as far as possible from the next round.

Empowering rural women through better health and equal rights opportunities

Supported by Embassy of the Kingdom of The Netherlands, New Delhi

The problems addressed

The practices adopted by rural adolescent girls to deal with the menstruation hygienically are very poor. This is the result of inadequate knowledge on menstruation. The confidence of the adolescent girls from rural poor household is undermined by poor knowledge about the internal changes in their body and hygienic management of period. This factor certainly affects their health and wellbeing and contributed to acceptance of strictly separate gender roles in the society and systemic gender discrimination.

Menarche and menstruation are topics that are not discussed openly – leading to a lack of accurate information and education – as well as embarrassment. A range of cultural taboos and myths surrounding menstruation – adds to a feeling of shame and embarrassment – on a monthly basis. Movement is restricted during menstruation and sometimes girls are prohibited from some religious and household chores. Embarrassment and lack of effective options of handling menstruation contribute to school absenteeism and even drop outs.

The solution

After understanding the challenges and issues, the organization decided to implement a project in selected villages of Halia block in Mirzapur district to spread the awareness about menstruation and to empower the adolescent girls to overcome the problem they face during the menstrual cycle.

Preparation and selection of villages and beneficiaries

The criteria for selecting the villages was that it should be largely inhabited by socially and economically weaker sections of the society i.e. tribals, dalits and backward communities. The team under the project held village level meetings with mothers groups, adolescent girls, Aanganwadi Workers, schoolteachers and village panchayats. The planned activities of the project were discussed with the target groups. A training module according to the situation was created. Awareness and training materials were developed and printed/procured for each adolescent girl trainee.

Formation of groups and training of adolescent girls

200 adolescent girls' groups comprising 3,600 members were formed. Similarly, 100 women's groups having 1,680 members in 90 villages were also formed, who were the part of project. Upto the end of this year, 3-day training to 1,540 adolescent girl members was organized in 77 batches having 20 trainees in each batch. The government schools and Aanganwadi Centres (government crèches) provided the facility of their space for the training. Aanganwadi Workers and schoolteachers of the respective village facilitated the training and awareness programme. Gram Pradhans (Village council heads) were present in some batches. Each trainee was provided a carry bag containing training materials, stationery, and three printed booklets: one booklet covering the session-wise contents of the training, second on health and nutrition and third on useful legal knowledge and important helpline numbers.

Topics covered in the training

The topics covered in the training were roles and functions of peer educators, quality of peer educators, effective communication, Interpersonal Communication (IPC) skills, the art of being a good speaker and a good listener, Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) skills, menstrual hygiene and its management through various life skills such as knowing self and empathy, facing and solving the problem by self-management skill, skill of developing critical and constructive thoughts, skill of communicating self feeling (controlling and expressing self emotions), skill of communicating with others, and skill of finding solution of the problem by talking with others.

The trainees were trained properly on the female reproductive system through a well designed apron. Question-Answer session on reproductive system and cause of menstruation was also incorporated in the training. The trainees desired for the continuation of such training in future as well.

Success factors of the project approach

Joint meetings of mothers and adolescent girls have resulted into proper communication and dialogue between mothers and daughters. The purpose was also to make the adolescent girls empowered in their future life.

Mothers were also concerned about this issue and they wanted their girls should be properly trained to maintain safety and hygiene, disposal of used absorbent materials, taboos associated with the period, and transfer of knowledge to younger girls, who are at the threshold to be adolescent.

The target group, who has received the training, is now transferring the knowledge to their peers in the community. Inhibition and shame associated with menstruation issues are now being shared and discussed with their classmates in various schools in the block. Thus, the approaches have multiplier effect in the community and among the school-going classmates/peers.

Safe disposal through burning and/or by putting the disposals underneath the soil is in practice. Another success factor of the approach is upper primary schools are demanding similar training to the adolescent girls admitted in various schools.

50 helpline numbers of central government, state government and district authorities have been provided to each trainee to use in the case of need. Important are police, ambulance, emergency, accident, women powerline, childline, education, employment, etc.

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