



# PROJECT PROGRESS AND LEARNING SHARING REPORT

Based on the Findings of Baseline Survey,  
Sample Survey and Learning Workshop



# BACKGROUND

In August 2020, FCDO, Mott MacDonald, Mark & Spencer and CARE International launched a one-year partnership project in Bangladesh called Preventing COVID-19 Garment Health Worker and Supply Chain Crisis (VSCF) Project. The project aims to help and support its people during and after the pandemic to mitigate and overcome the health and gender based violence (GBV) related challenges they suffered in the factories and the adjacent communities due to COVID-19. To do so, the project activities were designed to build capacity, create awareness for project participants and establishing linkage with public and private sector for supplying of certain commodities and products in both the factories and communities. The area of focus for these activities are mainly preventive and safety measures of COVID-19, Gender Based Violence (GBV), Balanced diet and other health and hygiene related topics that increases the vulnerability to health crisis. Moreover, the project developed partnership with digital-based health service providers and also established 5 Wellbeing centres in the communities. The project activities also strengthens community resilience and support system by establishing community-based quarantine center and strengthening community-based water and waste management system.

During the onset of the VSCF project, a baseline survey was conducted focusing on the major areas or topics that the project designed their activities with. The baseline survey assessed the COVID-19 effect on RMG workers of 25 factories and 15 communities under VSCF project during the time when the project was just launched. Another Sample survey was conducted in mid-December 2020 with 13 factories and 5 communities to assess the knowledge level, accessibility of the commodities provided by the project and the level of awareness regarding healthy behaviours and safety measures. A total of 90 participants were surveyed in both factories and communities. Furthermore, a Learning Workshop was also organised by the VSCF project after conducting the sample survey with participants from factories, communities and government offices. This report represents a comprehensive and comparative analysis of the baseline and sample survey followed by the reflections of the participants from the learning workshop which gives an overall overview of the progress of the project activities so far. The common areas of focus for the comparative analysis between baseline and sample surveys are:

- **Knowledge, Information & Safety measures on COVID-19 Situation**
- **Nutrition Related Knowledge & Practices**
- **Gender Based Violence (GBV)**
  - Knowledge on Sexual Harassment and Available GBV Support in the factories and communities
  - Knowledge on Relevant Laws Related to Domestic Violence & GBV
  - Knowledge on Mental Health Issues and Sexual & Reproductive Health (SRH)
- **Linkage for Access, Knowledge & Practice on Using commodities**
  - Access and Proper Use of Sanitary Napkins



# COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BETWEEN BASELINE SURVEY AND SAMPLE SURVEY

## Demographic Information of the Surveys:

Baseline Survey: Timeline: 12-23 August 2020	Sample Survey Demographics: Timeline: 7-10 December 2020
<b>Factories:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Total 383 respondents in 25 factories</li> <li>2 Female: 73%, Male: 27%, Average age: 26 years</li> <li>3 Average Education: SSC</li> <li>4 Average # of dependents: 3-4</li> <li>5 Sole earner: 16%</li> <li>6 Average working experience: 17 years</li> </ol>	<b>Factories:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Total Respondents: 65 in 13 factories (45 females and 20 males)</li> <li>2 Female: 69%, Male: 31%, Average age: 26 years</li> <li>3 Average Education: SSC</li> <li>4 Average # of dependents: 3</li> <li>5 Sole earner: 17%</li> <li>6 Average working experience: 4 years</li> </ol>
<b>Communities:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Total 320 respondents in 16 communities</li> <li>2 Female: 58%, Male: 42%, Average age: 29 years</li> <li>3 Average Education: SSC</li> <li>4 Average # of dependents: 2</li> <li>5 Sole earner: 33%</li> </ol>	<b>Communities:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Total Respondents: 25 in 5 communities (21 females and 4 males)</li> <li>2 Female: 84%, Male: 16%, Average age: 27 years</li> <li>3 Average Education: Below Grade-10</li> <li>4 Average # of dependents: 2-3</li> <li>5 Sole earner: 53%</li> </ol>

## Major outcomes:

<b>34%</b> increase in the practice of health and hygiene measures, such as, wearing mask, handwashing frequently and maintaining safe distance, by the factory workers.	<b>23%</b> increase in the practice of using face masks properly among the factory workers.	<b>100%</b> increase in the availability of soap, water and other handwashing facilities in the factories.	<b>18%, 50% and 33%</b> increase in the knowledge of COVID-19 transmission, participation in COVID-19 related workshop and proper use of face masks respectively in the community.
<b>28%, 6% and 19%</b> increase in the knowledge about balanced diet, consumption of deworming tablets and Iron Folic Acid tablets respectively in the communities.	<b>100%</b> have access to low-cost sanitary napkins and <b>100%</b> have knowledge on the proper use of sanitary napkins	<b>11% and 31%</b> increase in the knowledge of proper disposal of the sanitary napkins in the factories and communities, respectively.	<b>9%</b> increase in the knowledge of the factors of the sexual harassment in the factories;
<b>100%</b> of the workers know where to get support from in case of any sexual harassment.	<b>23%</b> increase in the knowledge of laws related to domestic violence among the factory workers.	<b>7%</b> increase in the knowledge of what should be done in case of domestic violence in the communities; <b>44%</b> community people have knowledge of laws related to domestic violence.	The percentages for knowing the factors of mental health, sexual harassment, GBV and SRH by <b>20%, 25%, 14% and 37%</b> , respectively.



# REFLECTIONS FROM LEARNING WORKSHOP

After the end of first quarter, the VSCF project organised a 3-day Learning Workshop from 21-23 December 2020 in Dream Square Resort, Gazipur. The workshop was graced with the participation of 67 people in total. There were 3 categories of participants, one for each day, as the following:

**Community:** Direct Beneficiaries, Community Support Group Members, Ward Health Development Committee Members, Frontline Health Workers

**Factory:** General Workers, Health Champions, Master trainers, Factory Focal Person, Management Staff

**Project:** CARE, M&S, SHEVA, Maya, representative from MoHFW, representatives from Local Government.

## The main objectives of the learning workshop were:

1. Assess the Inception and Instigation of the project's success & results through impacted population's perspective.
2. Know the project participants' reflection and experience regarding their challenges and recommendations for better quality of project implementation.

Each day, the sessions were broken down into different segments facilitated with participatory approach to receive feedback, recommendations and initiate open discussion among the participants on the successes, challenges and the respective way forward. There were individual sharing, group discussion and poster presentation. This report is comprised of the findings and feedback that were gathered from this 3-day workshop.



## Significant project activities:

- Service linkage with Government authorities in factories for low price family planning commodities, sanitary napkins, cervical and breast cancer screening, campaign for TT vaccination and especially EPI and evening EPI program established and functioning at community.
- Day observations at both factory and community level such as 16 Days of Activism for Violence Against Women (VAW), World AIDS Day, Global Handwashing Day, etc.
- Distribution of materials on behavioral change in both factories and communities such as posters/stickers/guidelines on COVID-19 prevention and safety measures, Gender Based Violence (GBV), Balanced Diet and Nutrition, etc.
- Providing referral cards, elderly allowance, widow allowance to community people
- Ensuring safe water and proper waste management in communities through Water Management Committees and forming Waste Management system.

The participants shared that they have observed drastic changes in their attitudes and practices after the participation with the VSCF project. For instance, the women now have more awareness about their rights and dignity and, therefore, do not hesitate to openly ask for sanitary napkins or discuss about menstrual hygiene. Through this abovementioned activities, the knowledge level and access of the project participants in the factories and communities have increased regarding services of Gender Based Violence (GBV), Menstrual Health and Hygiene, safe drinking water, digital healthcare and so on.



## Effectiveness of VSCF:

- Number of workers taking sick leaves reduced drastically in factories due to more awareness on healthy habits and practices such as handwashing, eating nutritional food, wearing masks and so on.
- Women freely ask for sanitary napkins due to more awareness on menstrual hygiene which is eventually breaking the cultural stereotypes.
- Female workers can provide vaccine to their children timely through Evening EPI without worrying about taking leave from the factories.
- GBV sessions have been very effective in both factories and communities to reduce the cases of sexual harassment and increase the knowledge of the people regarding GBV and domestic violence.
- Women participation and awareness about their dignity was a primary focus, and hence, women are now more vocal and empowered to ask for their rights and protest for injustice.
- People are aware about keeping their community clean.
- People are now more confident to go for COVID-19 testing and find it hassle-free.
- Digital healthcare service builds confidence on community and factory workers to maintain their wellbeing through access to online video counselling, tele counselling and basic health check-up.



## Uniqueness of VSCF:

- Project training and sessions are precise with contents which are aligned and useful with their daily lives, such as, handwashing, EPI, menstrual hygiene, balanced diet and many others.
- Continuously evaluates and revises the activities for better performance and effectiveness
- Includes people from all dimensions of age, gender, physical condition and others for more inclusive approach.
- Emergency services to pregnant mothers which helped to ensure safe deliveries and quick access to medical services as per requirement.
- Child vaccination and FP program are highly focused ensuring more awareness raising activities and maintaining them consistently.
- Project includes Breast cancer, cervical and TB screening services which provides the factory workers and community people with opportunities for testing and diagnosis.
- This project works for system strengthening and sustainability of the present modality rather than developing any parallel or new system.



“One day during the evening EPI session, a mother came to me, hugged me and cried. She told me that due to schedule mismatching she couldn't vaccinate her child and time was running out. But she is glad that this evening EPI session is happening. Never in my professional life have I been this happy and proud that I could help a mother in need.”

– Shireen Akter  
(Vaccinator, Gazipur City Corporation)





## Area of Improvements:

The project participants also shared their opinions regarding the challenges or the area of improvements of the project which are mentioned below:

- Aware the male partners of female participants about the use of family planning commodities so that the male partners can share equal responsibilities for effective family planning. Sometimes the women workers take all the steps of family planning such as having pills which could be harmful in the long run. However, the husbands remain demotivated to take other forms of contraceptive. As a result, it is essential that the male partners also have awareness on the responsibilities for family planning.
- Involve more male participants in the project activities to ensure full participation of the targeted population- Activities are more women oriented which upsets male in the communities. Men in the community feels lagging behind and abandoned when most of the sessions are organised with women.
- The waste management system which is already running just work for primary collection of the waste. It needs to include secondary collection and dumping system to ensure a complete waste management cycle in the communities.
- Quarantine centre needs to be promoted more to ensure that it is adequately accessed whenever and however needed.

There were also a general concern from the factory workers that the project activities implemented in the factories sometimes hampers the production time even though the workers want to participate. The factory workers requested the VSCF project personals to sit together with top-level management staffs and implore on the importance of these sessions & activities.



## Further Scope of work:

During this workshop, the participants also outlined further scope of work for the VSCF projects which might result into some effective implementation of some innovative activities. The following mentions some salient points on what more could be done through project's intervention:

- More focus on GBV activities and awareness at community level.
- Include awareness raising session about risky relationship by the newly migrated workers- Sometimes, female workers who are newly migrated gets involved with male co-workers in a romantic relationship without sound thinking and proper judgement. However, it is seen that in most of the cases these relationships ended up badly, with the female partner being abandoned or even being pregnant. Frequently, the management has to face these complications which also impedes their productivity.
- Establish a waste disposal system segregating perishable and non-perishable wastes.
- Establish streetlight for female's security in community- Most of the factories close after evening and nightfall which poses a threat to safety of the women workers who works till late at night due to lack of streetlights resulting into dark roads. Many cases of sexual assaults has occurred by taking the advantage of this darkness and as a result it is a great threat for the female workers.
- Increase health services dedicated to COVID-19 and Satellite Clinics
- Work for Medical Waste Management System so that the used products, such as syringes and

needles, are disposed properly after being used and are not unethically recycled.

- Establish a team which will work for Anti-drugs issues as few of the community representatives observed this to be a pressing issues in their respective areas.
- Arrange cost effective 'delivery services' for pregnant mothers of low-income families
- Establish Adolescent Corner in Health Facilities to ensure proper knowledge level and practices of healthy habits among the adolescents.

Overall, it can be seen that the findings from the sample survey are very much aligned with that of the reflections from the participants in the Learning workshop. Evidently, this depicts that the activities of the project are catering to the need and expectation of the targeted participants and thus, the project is progressing in the right direction with effective implementation of the targeted activities.



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**Sometimes during work we get touched by our male colleagues but we didn't realize that it was an intentional or unintentional touch. After learning from the project about the factors of harassment, I could identify the type of harassment and am aware about it.**

- A female factory worker.





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