NUTRITION SMART VILLAGE

A multisectoral approach to strengthen nutrition and food security in rural areas

WELTHUNGERHILFE
INTRODUCTION

The multisectoral approach to address 'hunger and under-nutrition' focuses on empowering communities to be able to demand for entitlements and influence government development plans and budget at local level. To sustain the efforts of community empowerment; capacity building of service providers, demonstration of good practices, networking with civil society and advocacy with government departments is the strategic approach.

The multisectoral approach started as the Fight Hunger First Initiative, a rights-based, long-term program with specific focus on improving income, food and nutrition security of deprived communities. The initiative was introduced through a consultative process with 10 Indian partners in early 2011 with a vision that good programming will also attract funds.

Today, 15 partners across 3 countries have tried and tested the approach. Currently, 10 partners are implementing the initiative, now known as the Nutrition Smart Villages approach, in Bangladesh, India and Nepal.

The Fight Hunger First Initiative is designed on the premise that, in the longer term, poor people can only break out of this cycle if adequate welfare systems are in place and basic rights such as access to proper education, sufficient and adequate access to food and income, better health services and all people are treated like equal citizens by the state are fulfilled. Only, then, can the new generation of marginalized groups look forward to a new and better future. And only then, can growth benefit the entire society.

The '5 Good Practices' have been tried and tested, and are essential for ensuring community participation in the development of the village. However, if some of the activities already exists at the grassroots they should be linked to the “Multisectoral Approach” without creating parallels. Social Accountability process may be conducted in the community depending on the socio-political conditions of a country such as India as there are a large number of Government entitlements under the Right to Food act.

This approach is a long-term approach and one village needs 4–5 years to metamorphose to a self-sufficient hunger free community. This initiative has been supported by BMZ since 2011.
WHAT IS A **NUTRITION SMART VILLAGE?**

An informed village that understands 'nutrition' in its practical terms and takes appropriate steps to address them. It is a village where –

- There is **no hunger and food insecurity**.
- All families are aware about the importance of *'First 1000 days'- window of opportunities*, for healthy children and healthy mothers.
- Community is **aware of the linkages** between agriculture, natural resources, WASH, income and nutrition education with nutrition.
- Every woman in the reproductive age group and adolescent children **consume at least 5 food groups out of 10** on a regular basis.
- Every child receives **home cooked balanced diet** in appropriate frequency and consistency.
- An active village committee which promotes **interconnections between agriculture, natural resources, WASH, nutrition, and protection of natural habitats**.
- Families **grow and buy safe, seasonal and local produce**. Communities drive the local 'haat' or market by creating the demand for safe and environment friendly products.
- The community value **uncultivated foods and traditional recipes**.
- Every family has access to **safe drinking water**.
- Every family maintains safe **sanitation and hand washing** practices.
- Communities are **aware of the government schemes and entitlements** and can make service providers accountable.
**THE PROCESS**

A NUTRITION SMART VILLAGE

- Screen children aged 6-36 months
- Share screening status and address child care practices through community meetings and nutrition camps
- Support mothers to start nutrition gardens to improve MDDC
- New village - identify gaps (PRA&FDG) and potential CBOs for collaborations
- Facilitate village development plan, and strengthen linkages with Govt. schemes
- Work at household level and plan to improve food availability and WASH practices
- Initiate WASH entry point programs & FFS and SIFS
- Sensitize community on LANN+

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5 GOOD PRACTICES
The checklist
SUSTAINABLE EVIDENCE BASED
NUTRITION SENSITIVE INTERVENTIONS

15-day Nutrition Camp
Screening for undernutrition in children (6-36 months), followed by capacity building of mothers of the malnourished children on infant feeding, hygiene and care practices.

Sustainable Integrated Farming System (SIFS)
Developing home-based nutrition gardens focusing on integrating crops-trees-aquatic system-bird-livestock so that all the resources are optimally used to increase dietary diversity, reduce cost in food production, consume safe food, and increase income through marketable surplus. The approach ensures improving natural resources, like forest etc., around the village to include uncultivated food in the diet.

Linking Agriculture and Natural Resource Management towards Nutrition Security (LANN)
Facilitating PLA based meeting cycles to sensitize communities on the immediate, underlying and basic causes of malnutrition. The knowledge and skills acquired through the meetings support the community to plan, take actions, and evaluate the status of food security in the village in terms of availability, access, utilization, and stability.

Nutrition Sensitive Micro Planning (NSMP)
Supporting communities to prepare village development plans that are inclusive, especially catering to the needs of the families with undernourished women and children. Sensitized families then plan the use of their resources to maximize food production, maintain personal and environmental hygiene and demand legal entitlements.

Strengthening institutions
Strengthening village institutions, SHGs and local committees within the community to be informed, skilled and able to monitor the good practices, make service providers accountable and help people access their rights.
The 15-day camp also known as the 'positive deviance' camp is attended by all moderately acute malnourished (MAM) and severely acute malnourished (SAM) children (aged 6-36 months) accompanied by their mothers or guardians. Nutrition volunteers from the community are trained on infant feeding, hygiene, child care practices and facilitation skills to enable mothers/care givers adopt positive child care behaviours.

**PRE-NUTRITION CAMP**
- Every child in the village is screened and MAM and SAM children are enlisted.
- Every SAM child is referred to the nearby government Nutrition Rehabilitation Center (NRC) or OPD.
- Community is informed about the health status of the children and the upcoming nutrition camp through a local meeting.
- An easily accessible venue is chosen for the camp, most preferably the local Anganwadi center or community centers/schools or at a community member's house.

**DURING THE CAMP**
- Daily attendance of the children accompanied by their mothers is maintained. 100% attendance of the identified MAM and SAM along with their mothers is to be ensured.
- The day-wise scheduled activities, discussion topics and local low-cost local recipes are displayed at the camp venue.
- IEC materials on nutrition education, child feeding and child care practices are available and used at the camp.
- The mothers are oriented on the importance of 'First 1000 days' including healthy and adequate food for pregnant women, care and rest during pregnancy, safe delivery at institution level, exclusive breast feeding up to 6 months, timely initiation of appropriate complementary feeding (quality, consistency, frequency and quantity), timely immunization, micro nutrient supplementation and hygiene.
- All measuring equipment such as weighing machine, height/length boards, MUAC tapes are kept available at the camp venue.
Cooking utensils necessary for recipe demonstration are available at the camp. The community also contributes ingredients for cooking local and low cost traditional healthy recipes.

- Hand washing and sanitation sessions are conducted daily.
- The camp is conducted in collaboration with government grassroots service providers such as the AWWs, health and nutrition workers and others.
- Mothers of positively deviant children are invited to the camp to share their practices.
- Feedback, learnings and suggestions are taken from the participants at the end of the camp.

**POST NUTRITION CAMPS**

- Nutrition volunteers undertake regular home visit and maintain a child health tracking register.
- Mother track child growth at the nearest health centre.

**Outcomes**

- Adopting appropriate complementary feeding practices by mothers of malnourished children.
- Understanding linkages between hand washing, safe disposal of feces, environmental hygiene, safe food handling and infections with nutrition by mothers.
- Immediate action taken by mothers to ensure safely managed drinking water at household level.
- Mother and family understand the importance of dietary diversity and use of locally available low-cost foods for preparation of daily meals.
- Family starts a small integrated nutrition garden to be able to access diverse foods throughout the year.
All families who attended the nutrition camps receive training on nutrition garden on homestead land or any space adjacent to the house.

Interested farmers from the village are trained on sustainable integrated farming system (SIFS) as demonstration farmers under the Farmer Field School concept. These farmers demonstrate on their own farms and train any other person/farmer interested in replicating the farm design.

**NUTRITION GARDEN THROUGH INTEGRATED FARMING SYSTEM**

- The garden includes fruit trees, variety of vegetables including green leafy vegetables, legumes, tuber crops, spices and some medicinal herbs.
- Families use already available seeds or traditional variety of seeds.
- Crops of different families are grown together through intercrops, relay crops, mixed crops for optimum utilization of space time and nutrients.
- Trees and creepers are introduced in the fence to get more output and protect the garden.
- Fruit trees such as papaya, moringa, banana, guava and lemon that are grown also serve as a good source of income.
- Plants are arranged, shortest towards east and tallest towards western end, to optimally use sunlight.
- Organic compost; vermi composting, liquid manure with locally available weeds, chicken shit, goat shit is used to improve soil health. This also leads to reduction in cost of production and availability of chemical free food.
- Bio pesticides like pest repellent with locally available materials such as ginger, chili, wood ash and neem leaves are used.
- Recycling of waste water like rainwater harvesting and improving irrigation through pitcher irrigation and improving moisture retention through mulching (key hole) for gardens in dry area are promoted.
Families are oriented on recycling of household waste, composting of kitchen and farm waste and/or vermi compost preparation.

Integration of duck, hen, goat, cow, pigeon or other animals with the garden for improving nutrition, income and manure are promoted.

Nitrogen fixing trees are used for green manuring with leaves.

Addition of fodder like Azolla, close to the garden or within the homestead is promoted.

Dependence on market for green leafy vegetables and fruits decreases; savings are used to buy other food from the 10 food groups.

Average food availability from nutrition garden and farms increases by 3-4 months.

Families received increased income from excess production.

Outcomes

- Produce from the garden and farm increases consumption of food groups in the daily diet.
- Dependence on market for green leafy vegetables and fruits decreases; savings are used to buy other food from the 10 food groups.
- Average food availability from nutrition garden and farms increases by 3-4 months.
- Families received increased income from excess production.
- Purchase of unsafe food and fast food from the market by communities reduces considerably.
- Strengthens linkage of resource poor families with Government schemes- agriculture, horticulture, fisheries, animal husbandry permaculture, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, agriculture farms/university, etc.
LANN+ is a multi-sectoral approach centered around family nutrition and has an explicit focus on integrating nutrition-sensitive sectoral elements that address underlying and basic causes of malnutrition to achieve nutrition security at the household level.

5 KEY ELEMENTS AND ITS LINKAGES:

- Linkage between agriculture and nutrition
- Linkage between natural resources and nutrition
- Linkage between WASH and nutrition
- Linkage between nutrition education and practice
- Linkage between income generation, market and nutrition

The Participatory Learning for Action (PLA) methodology has been adopted for conducting LANN+ meeting cycles in the community to ensure knowledge and behaviour change through actions at the village level. The LANN+ process also helps the community to plan resources both at family level and commons.

The LANN+ PLAs are facilitated by representatives from the community, ideally members from the SHGs, grassroots service providers or village committee members. The facilitators are systematically trained on technical, communication and leadership skills, and are familiarized with the local dynamics, and causes of hunger and food insecurity.
**MONITORING CHECKLIST**

- Facilitator’s training are completed in a phased manner to ensure that they understand the PLA processes well, and are able to follow the methodology described in the manual.
- Manual and picture cards are made available to the facilitator.
- IEC and stationary materials are available with the facilitator.
- The facilitator is able to conduct PLA meeting as per the manual, ensure active participation, and has the necessary leadership and knowledge.
- Community based organizations and groups actively participate, and support in organizing meetings, follow-ups and evaluate the changes.
- Both men and women of different ages participate in the meetings.
- The grassroots service providers from govt. organisations and NGOs also participate in the meetings.
- Collective action plans are prepared after every meeting. These plans are then followed up by CBOs/SHGs.
- The facilitator maintains a LANN+ register throughout the process.

**Outcomes**

- Community can link the relationship between agriculture, natural resources management, WASH, income and education with nutrition.
- Community can identify probable underlying and basic causes of malnutrition and take actions to resolve them.
- Community is able to identify families with malnourished children and encourages them to participate in the village planning and budgeting.
Emphasis is laid on resource planning of individual families where they are able to maximize the available resources for food production, safe water, and sanitation.

Families with undernourishment and lesser resources participate in the village development planning for common and shared resources, linking plans with government schemes, and budgeting sessions to ensure equity and food security.

Volunteers from the community are trained in coordination with the Block Development officials and Panchayat on the planning process which includes PRA processes, existing government schemes, the Gram Sabha/village planning formalities and budget templates. These volunteers facilitate the preparation of the village development plans, ensure the plans are incorporated in the village assembly plans and also follow-up with the fund sanctions. They are also trained on social accountability tools like social audit and public hearings where ever applicable.

Individual families of undernourished children have household plans for improving food and nutrition security, and prioritize their demands from the government schemes.

Crop planning is done to ensure Minimum Dietary Diversity (as per FAO) in women throughout the year.

Plans for inclusion of animal products and fruits throughout the year are made.

Hand washing structures are installed inside the household, and families construct working household toilets.

Households ensure easily available safe drinking water throughout the year, and safe storage systems are maintained.

Low-cost water filters are used by the households.

Wastes are segregated and compost pit are created inside the house.

Waste water is diverted to garden/farm, and land is not left unused/fallow.

Preservation techniques are used during season of excess production to be used during lean periods.

Family receives grants/funds under government schemes for various important issues such as sanitation, water harvesting, agriculture, animal husbandry, drinking water, electricity, housing, repair of animal sheds, land leveling, farm bunding, and irrigation.
Family accesses the government entitlements for health care, family planning, subsidized food rations, supplementary nutrition, mid-day meals, food for work, cash for work, and schooling.

**VILLAGE LEVEL RESOURCE PLANNING**

- Participatory – all families with malnourished children are aware about the date, time and venue of the meeting and contributes to the plan.
- Individual family Needs of majority of the families are incorporated in the plan.
- Planning meeting minutes are available in the village.
- Plans are submitted at the village assembly in the specified format/template.
- Plans are incorporated in the Gram Panchayat/wards/Union/Rural municipality/others.
- Village representative follows-up the plans at the respective offices.
- Community attends relevant hearings and meetings on issues such as social audits, budget sessions, and public hearings.

**Outcomes**

- Equitable development plans and budget focus on the needs of the families with malnourished children are developed in the village.
- The resource poor families plan their own resources and identify the support required from the government schemes to improve sustainable food security at household level.
- All families are informed and empowered to access entitlements under the government safety net programs.
Representatives from existing village level institutions that are inclusive and accepted by majority are selected as the Community Nutrition Volunteer. These volunteers form clusters called the Community Nutrition Support Groups. Monthly meetings with the Community Nutrition Support Groups are organized to plan awareness campaigns, monitoring of nutrition and WASH behaviours, and training on LANN+.

- The Community Nutrition Volunteer shares the learnings with their respective groups during group meetings.

**MONITORING CHECKLIST**

- Community volunteers are associated/member of another group.
- Community volunteers receive regular training and hand holding support.
- Community volunteers can conduct sessions independently.
- Community Nutrition Support Group conducts monthly meetings; and meeting minutes register is maintained.
- Community volunteers attend own group/CBO/SHG meetings and share learnings.
- The group members/CBO/SHG attend the LANN+ meeting sessions and village evaluation meetings.
- Group members/CBO/SHG attend the village nutrition sensitive micro planning sessions.
- Need based capacity building trainings of the CBO/SHG are regularly done.

**Outcomes**

- The village institutions are aware about the entitlements under the human rights provisions declared in the constitution of the country, esp, RTF, RTI, RTE.
- Strong leadership qualities among the group members are created.
- Community leaders are empowered to ask questions, make applications, access government offices and make service providers accountable.
- Village committees can monitor the village activities planned for protection of natural resources, safe agriculture practices, environmental hygiene and government services provisioning.
MANUALS AND TOOL KITS

Flip Chart - Infant and Young Child Feeding
CONCEPTUALIZATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING BY WELTHUNGERHILFE INDIA OFFICE

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