

SHOUHARDO III COVID Response Initiatives

USAID's Strengthening Household Ability to Respond to Development Opportunities (SHOUHARDO) III is a Development Food Security Activity which aims to achieve improved gender equitable food and nutrition security and resilience for 168,500 Poor and Extreme Poor (PEP) households living in the eight districts of Northern Char and Haor wetland areas of Bangladesh. After more than four years of operations, while preparing to start its extension phase in 2020, which specifically aims to bring sustainable changes in the participants' lives, the world was hit with the outbreak of novel coronavirus (COVID-19). With almost every country adopting aggressive non-therapeutic measures to control the spread of COVID-19, Bangladesh, one of the world's most densely populated country in Southeastern Asia, has followed the same trend. Since March 2020 SHOUHARDO III suspended almost all field operations for ensuring the safety of the community and the staff. It was time to rethink the interventions for customizing them with the 'new normal'.



COVID-19 Response Strategy:

CARE had proven experience against fighting against Ebola, SARS, and cholera, providing access to safe water, hygiene kits, and hygiene education in previous days. With supplementary funding from USAID, SHOUHARDO III undertook strategies for responding to COVID-19 in 23 Upazilas under its eight working areas. These include,



Strengthening capacity of health facilities, including District Hospital, Upazila Health Complex (UHC), Union Health & Family Welfare Centers (UHFWC), and Community Clinics (CC) for providing effective service to vulnerable people including addressing any COVID-19 cases.



Mitigate economic shock of the vulnerable household through livelihood and nutrition support.



Strengthening hygiene activities, including handwashing demonstration with hygiene materials distribution to communities.

Support to Health Care Providers:

SHOUHARDO III targeted to establish **handwashing stations, provide thermal scanners, and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** as per the Government of Bangladesh's guidelines. To date, the following number of medical equipment have been distributed at different levels of government health facilities;

List of Materials	District Hospital	UHC	UHFWC	Community Clinic	Total
Oximeter	20	46	0	0	66
No-Contact Infrared Thermometer	20	69	48	102	239
Oxygen Cylinder	8	0	0	0	8
Liquid Soap (1 liter)	0	552	192	408	576
Anti-septic Sprayer (2 Liter)	0	276	96	204	265
Bleaching Powder (1 Kg)	0	115	48	102	265
Handwashing stations	0	77	48	149	274

Awareness Raising through Messages

In partnership with Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES), SHOUHARDO III provided voice messages to the program participants. To date, 46,659 people received voice messages on COVID-19 safety measure and encouraging men to speak up opposing violence against women during the pandemic, which saw a steady increase, since in the following themes.

92,836 participants received voice messages and Public Service Announcement (PSA) utilizing Community Radio station, Radio Sharabela in Gaibandha. The broadcast has reached 11,527 households (approximately 50,719 people) within the coverage area.

Cash support for Overcoming Pandemic Challenges

USAID provided USD 2.83 million for supporting the most vulnerable people from the remotest chars and deep haors. 18,795 extreme poor program participants were targeted for this cash support to meet livelihoods need for four months. The cash support was provided through the leading mobile financial service provider, bKash. This cash was provided in two installments, each worth BDT 6,000 (USD 120).

To date, a total of 18,191 households from 10 SHOUHARDO III Upazilas received the first round of cash support, out of which 17,171 households have already received their 2nd round of cash support. Among these households, 12,621 households were extreme poor, and 5,570 were poor households.

SHOUHARDO III General Intervention's COVID-19 Adaptation



Farmers with android phones with agriculture and weather-related Apps.



1208 (Female-816, Male-392) beneficiaries received free telemedicine services from the Shara platform.



171 youth was engaged with community awareness-raising. The skilled dress-makers shifted their focus toward making face-masks.



3366 pregnant and breastfeeding women have been provided with cash support of BDT 500 (USD 5.90).



154 trained vaccinators (35 female and 119 male) received technical services on livestock disease management and uses of vaccines from Square Veterinary Doctors over mobile phone.



690 VSLAs got assistance from the liquid money for maintaining their livelihood with their savings.

Flood Response:



As a part of the Emergency Flood Response (EFR) 2020, 1460 families in Gaibandha and Kurigram were provided with cash support of BDT 4500 (USD 53.08) and a hygiene bundle worth BDT 700 (USD 8.26). The bundle includes a laundry soap, a bath soap, two KG of detergent powder, a pair of reusable masks, two packets of total 20 sanitary napkins, a bucket with a lid, and a mug.

“Receiving cash support was a lifesaving experience for my family. I purchased food, some ducks and chickens, livestock feed to support my family. Hopefully, I will be able to earn again after the crisis goes away”

Surijon Khatun
Participant, SHOUHARDO III
Fulchari Upazila, Gaibandha

Recurrent Monitoring System (RMS) findings:

To understand the actual situation and challenges in the communities, five rounds of RMS were done with randomly selected 425 households per round. It investigated the income status of the households, both pre and post-COVID lockdown, consumption situation, the knowledge and practices for COVID prevention, and more.

The findings show the average monthly income for all households has decreased compared to their income in the pre-covid situation. Nearly 60% of the RMS respondents have stated that their income is either the same (27.1%) or showing an increasing trend (32.9%) since.

