

Project No. 58

STRENGTHENING OF ARSENIC PREPAREDNESS AND MITIGATION PROGRAM (SAPMP)

Principle:

Health risk can be reduced by the way of capacity building on arsenic preparedness and mitigation of the community people.

Objectives of the Project:

- To promote awareness among people on the issue of arsenic poisoning, sources of arsenic contamination and the consequences;
- To enable people to complete arsenic testing of their tube wells and use arsenic free water; and
- To identify and enlist arsenic patients with health service institute for proper treatment.

Background:

The project started in 2004. The reporting period is the 2nd year of the current phase.

Staff Strength:

Total-12 (Male-10, Female-2)

Donor: Caritas Australia.

Expenditure:

Foreign Partner's Contribution :Tk. 10,140,561
 Local Partner's Contribution :Tk. 1,032,000
 Total :Tk.11,172,561

a) Beneficiaries (No.):

Direct: Male 23,103 Female: 25,447 Total: 48,550
 Indirect: Male 44,342 Female: 49,468 Total: 93,810

b) Beneficiaries Contribution (Tk.): Projected 8,08,000/-, Actual 8,22,000/-

Target and Achievements:

Sl.	Items / Activities	Achieve: as on June 2008	Performances in FY 2008-2009			Cumulative as on June 2009
			Target	Achieve:	%	
A Project Orientation Training						
1	Number of training	4	1	1	100	5
2	Number of Participants	460	151	130	86	590
B Community Mobilization Training for Caritas Formed Group Leaders						
1	Group leaders participated	9,936	3,025	2,852	94	12,788
C Awareness Raising Campaign						
1	Number of Campaign	0	206	207	101	207
2	Number of People Participated	0	24,824	26,847	108	26,847
3	Seminar for Civil Society Members	8,532	12,640	12,294	97	20,826
D Arsenic Test						

Sl.	Items / Activities	Achieve: as on June 2008	Performances in FY 2008- 2009			Cumulative as on June 2009
			Target	Achieve:	%	
1	Number of Volunteers Developed for Making Arsenic Tests	469	0	0	0	469
2	Number of Tube Wells Tested	186,188	0	0	0	186,188
E Implementation of Safe Water Option						
1	Plastic Tanks Distributed	0	180	180	100	180
2	Installation of Deep Tube Well	400	60	60	100	460
3	Installation of semi deep Tube well	0	64	71	110	71
4	Installation of Ring Wells		6	6	100	6
F Support to Arsenic Patients						
1	Organize Seminar for arsenic patients	0	54	46	85	46
2	Support for arsenic patients	0	540	514	95	514

Impacts:

- Community people are more aware than the previous time of arsenic poisoning, sources of arsenic contamination and their duties and responsibilities for arsenic preparedness and mitigation.
- Arsenic related a superstition in the community has reduced.
- The community people don't drink arsenic contaminated water and they collect arsenic free water from other nearby places even from distant areas.
- Installation of 137 deep/semi tube wells/ring wells has ensured 2,740 families of arsenic free water.
- Caritas has distributed 180 plastic tanks in the arsenic-affected areas, which has ensured arsenic free water for 900 families. This has become helpful to them for storing surface water for a longer period.
- The community people has borne minimum 20% expenses for the installation of deep/semi deep tube-wells, ring wells, plastic tanks which has built the ownership of the provided safe water options and future maintenance.
- In some unions the Local Government has allocated a fund in its yearly budget for conducting arsenic tests.
- A good number of arsenic patients have become cured and got back to normal life.

Conclusion:

During the implementation of this program the people were found keenly interested in having their tube-wells tested with respect to arsenic. Caritas field staff have provided the information to the community people that they could get the job done by DPHE (Department of Public Health and Engineering). They visited the project areas to make a list of patients for treatment. More coordination among the working NGOs on arsenic as well as communication and networking with the government for the implementation of arsenic free water options and treatment of arsenic patients is very essential. SAPMP has exerted its principles and experiences to achieve this object as much as possible.

Caritas saved my life!

“Caritas saved my life!” said Salina Dandali (38) who is a housewife and her husband is a teacher of a non-government high school.

They live in the village of Ramnathpur situated in the northern part of Bangladesh adjacent to Indian border. It belongs to Kalmakanda *upazila* (sub-district) under Netrokona district. The communication system over there is backward and most of the people live from hand to mouth. A number of *Adivasi* (indigenous) people live in the area with Bengali community for ages in social harmony.

Salina’s family consists of five members. In the village there was no tube-well previously. Six years ago Salina installed a tube-well from where the villagers would collect water for drinking and other purposes. In the past Salina’s family had to use canal and pond water. After having a tube-well they thought that they would be saved from water-borne diseases. But they did not know, another plight was knocking at their door. Two years ago Caritas volunteers tested her tube-well and identified it as arsenic contaminated. Caritas personnel suggested them not to use this tube-well water for drinking and cooking. But they continued to use its water. Soon Salina’s body became black spotted. Three months later she observed that her feet and toes had been spotted. She was afraid and wanted to come round soon. She went to a doctor for treatment. He advised her to get her tube-well tested first. In the meantime Caritas supervisors visited her house and identified that Salina and her mother were arsenicosis patients. The supervisors also detected six more arsenicosis patients in this village and took necessary steps for providing them with treatment facility.

Caritas personnel discussed different aspects of arsenicosis disease and conducted a training for the villagers on arsenic. Salina is recovering gradually. She and her neighboring families are now aware of arsenic problem and they do not use the red colored tube-well water. They now collect safe water from other safe tube-wells.

Now Salina and some of her neighbors advise the villagers to use safe water so that they do not suffer from arsenic related complications. She is very happy that Caritas has saved her and a number of community people from slow poisoning of arsenic.