**Nutrition Partners’ Alliance Meeting minutes on COVID-19 Sensitive Nutrition response in Bihar**

3rd March 2020 (via Zoom)

1. Alive & Thrive (A&T)
2. Aga Khan Foundation
3. Care India
4. Caritas India
5. Centre for Social and Behavior Change
6. Digital Green
7. PCI India
8. Piramal Foundation
9. TATA Trust
10. World Vision
11. Save the Children
12. McCain (Through C4D, UNICEF)
13. UNICEF (Nutrition and C4D)

The objective of this meeting was to discuss

1. Any Covid-19 sensitive Nutrition Intervention that we are doing / supporting the Government department as an Organisation in the present context
2. Wat we are planning for continuity of essential nutrition and health services post lockdown and how to harmonize our efforts.

**The key discussion points:**

In the present context of COVID-19 pandemic, all regular community-level nutrition programmes are closed including AWC services, VHSND and schools. Routine immunization, supplementation and ANC services at the community level has been adjourned till the lockdown period. The AWWs are engaged in the collection of beneficiary account for cash transfer also an application has been developed by the ICDS for the same. The AWWs are also involved / providing support in contact tracing, home quarantine in this period.

In the present scenario, all partners in the State are working remotely and providing need based to the departments mostly behaviour change communication activities. The Nutrition team at CARE is coordinating all Covid-19 response activities with Darbhanga district.

The nutrition program specific updates on COVID-19 response by the partners are as follows:

* UNICEF has been working closely with State Health Society (SHS) and facilitated to develop 3 PSAs – one related to breastfeeding, one related to nutrition in pregnancy and one for the adult population. This has been shared with the State Health Society for approval and wider dissemination. Also, in collaboration with CoE on IMSAM (Dept. of Pediatrics PMCH) drafted guidance for the NRC functioning considering COVID-19 situation and shared with SHSB for approval and onward sharing with the NRCs at district. Similar guidance has been developed for the IYCF counselling centres and MAMATA in the form of a FAQ. Another FAQ developed for pregnant women addressing key question related to COVID-19 and pregnancy has also been shared.
* Digital Green working on developing short video messages (30 sec to 2min) and same are being prepared from the already available messages on health and nutrition considering the special need during COVID-19 situation. These will be disseminated in the villages through JEEViKA (Bihar Rural Livelihoods Promotion Society) channel. The same will also be shared with district-level FLW WhatsApp group.
* CARE India, at present closely working with SHS on streamlining the COVID-19 response from the state and all the district personnel are working in close coordination with district administration on COVID containment. There are different verticals of support and all workforce of Care India involved in COVID-19 response. One person from CARE state team has been made nodal for each 38 districts for coordination. Nutrition team for the Darbhanga district.
* World Vision – The most interventions are focusing on DRR. Also considering the NRCs are not functioning in the present situation, they are providing food basket support to the families in the one of the blocks of Madhepura district.
* Piramal Foundation has a presence in five (5) aspirational district and the field team are supporting as per the requirement of the district administration. In two districts they are involved in monitoring the work of ASHA in terms of the home visit of quarantine people and in other districts the filed team involved in training and other COVID containment activities. The team’s work is fully centred on COVID response.
* PCI is working in close coordination with JEEViKA (on virtual mode) and they had facilitated to develop a one-pager focus on COVID-19 and this has been distributed to 65000 JEEViKA community mobilizers. This is being used to orient the other members of JEEViKA. PCI also engaged in the training of JEEViKA health and nutrition manager on COVID-19 response and are coordinating with UNICEF in Risk communication and community engagement activities.
* Save the Children is in an exploratory stage and they emphasized on the need for food security and how to go ahead with the nutrition intervention considering the present situation. Also raised the issue of the migrated people from other states especially children and pregnant women’s’ need and how the partners can support to the government on containment of the disease as well as ensure the basic services including food availability at the community level.
* Aga Khan Foundation is working on early childhood development and sanitation program in selected geography. They hoped that their engagement with farmer families in select geographies on pulse production will help support the nutrional need of the families in this crisis.
* TATA Trust’s Swasth Bharat Preraks (SBPs) are working in close coordination with the district administration. They are in regular touch with the district ICDS and facilitating the documentation part under PA and helping the district on the coordination of FLW’s work at field level and uploading of the account details of the beneficiaries for cash transfer.
* The World Bank representative briefed on the E-ILA – a whopping 60% Lady Supervisors have completed all 21 modules during the lockdown and 25% AWWs have also completed ELA. For Bank, the immediate priority is continuity of POSHAN activities – CAS, SCAP etc etc.
* Caritas India is working on strengthening hygiene practices at village level and the volunteers are helping the panchayat on hygiene and sanitation. Also engaged in IEC activity in the selected area.
* Centre for Social and Behaviour Change – as a centre supporting at the national level and helping the PCI team and CARE TSU in developing the content for messaging including nutrition-specific messages like breastfeeding and in general COVID messages.
* Alive & Thrive is working at the national level on messages and supporting government, ministry of health fir the guidelines. In Bihar, at present getting support to three districts remotely on nutrition issues and awareness generation on Covid-a9 through ASHA, emphasizing more on handwash, hygiene and social distancing. A&T is willing to work on advocacy and nutrition security after lock down crisis.

Action Points / key priorities:

* The COVID BCC group (set up at the SHS level) will come up with appropriate messages focusing on nutrition on COVID situation and advocacy with the SHS for wider dissemination. The partner organizations will share the thematic areas with the BCC group on an immediate basis by CoB of 3.4.2020.
* The partners alliance will come up with a medium term and long-term strategy based on the emerging situation and considering the nutrition indicators of the state. The plausible impact of this pandemic situation and how best we can support the government while streamlining the routine services. Some of the services such as CBEs, Growth Monitoring etc will be difficult to resume on an immediate basis; so how best to strategize so that key messages can be delivered, growth promotion activities can be continued. If IFA could not be provided from Schools, can the VHSND platform be used for the same etc etc . – UNICEF to coordinate with input from partners
* A long-term advocacy strategy considering the multiple frontages in the states including the most vulnerable Minority, Mahadalit, Urban and the migratory population. – UNICEF, World Bank, Piramal Foundation, Digital Green and CARE to work on the same with input from partners.
* It was agreed to have the next partners meeting on 10th so as to update and discuss the draft short- and medium-term strategies.