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UPDATES

Girls Gaining Ground (Gheu Bharari) – Phase II started:

The second phase of the 'Gheu Bharari' program has started with the facilitator's selection in Gadchiroli and the process expected to be over in all other intervention blocks by mid of September'09.

Based on the learnings from the first phase a slight change is made in the process of training for the second Phase. In this second phase the training is provided by Media Matters directly to the facilitators to avoid any transmission loss instead of the ToT approach followed in the first phase. Nearly 180 facilitators will be trained in batches of thirty each in altogether 6 training sessions. The Coordinators and the Assistant coordinators who were already been given training in first phase will also remain present during the training of facilitators. Training of the first batch of 30 facilitators will start in Gadchiroli on 25th September 09. All the facilitators are expected to be trained by the mid October 2009.

In addition to the life skill support program under this project, BA is partnering with 'Ants and Partners' to design an entrepreneurial promotion initiative for financial empowerment of these adolescent girls. The team from 'Ants and Partners' already visited five intervention blocks viz. Nasik, Gadchiroli, Amaravati, Thane and Mumbai and conducted interviews of around 863 respondents to understand the needs and aspirations of the girls, entrepreneurial skills that could be promoted and vocational skills imparted. An initial intervention design based on their findings has been shared by them which is expected to be finalized very soon for sharing with BA partners.

An Assessment of phase I of GGG project by NYU Capstone students

At the request of Bhavishya Alliance, Five Graduate students from Capstone Program at Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, New York University Ms. Amber Baker, Ms. Emily Goldman, Ms. Mutsumi Nakagami, Ms. Tara Noronha and Ms. Katherine Potaski conducted field research from 8 July to 23 July in Mumbai, Nasik and Thane interviewing a range of stakeholders to get insights on the impact of the GGG project on adolescent girls and for overall social development, especially addressing health & nutrition issues.

The research involved interaction with the GGG-NGO coordinators (VACHAN, SNEHA, BAIF and AROEHAN), Village health post, facilitators, GGG girls group, Parents of GGG attendees, Anganwadi worker, girls groups, Ashram schools, Government representative ITDP



NYU Students interacting with Facilitators of Adolescent girls program in Ghatkopar, Mumbai

and NRHM, ICDS, and attending girls sessions in the respective areas. Their complete report will be presented to Bhavishya Alliance in November 2009. Their initial report, identifies the following successes:

- Girls universally reported increased awareness of the menstrual cycle and sexual reproduction
- Collective and individual action has been taken by the participants to improve their communities (see below).
- The girls show increased awareness of available government services and structures (Primary Health Centers, Panchayats, Gram Sabha, anganwadi centers and Self-Help Groups).
- The girls show greater awareness of available choices for their future (i.e., marriage after age 18, occupational choices).
- The girls expressed desire for continued schooling.
- The girls expressed greater interest in personal hygiene and responsibility for their own nutrition.
- Information from the Girls Gaining Ground curriculum is disseminated by participants and facilitators to their immediate families and to the greater community.
- Facilitators also expressed an improved sense of awareness and empowerment in the form of personal choices, decision-making, greater knowledge and elevated status in the community.
- Improved communication skills with peers, family, community and government.
- Sessions provide a safe haven for girls to interact and communicate with peers.

At the same time the team also identified some of the following Challenges:

- Difficulty in securing adequate meeting locations (i.e. lack of space, no electricity, poor building quality)
- Girls face time constraints, especially in rural areas, that result in erratic session attendance
- Facilitators and participants universally reported difficulty in understanding certain aspects of the curriculum and the relevance of particular topics to their lives
- Parental involvement is necessary for participant attendance but may be difficult to obtain
- New facilitator training, engagement and facilitator turnover can hamper program continuity
- Low levels of literacy and education limit curriculum comprehension

Hand Washing: ICDS supervisors assessing effectivity of Hand washing campaign in Nawapur, Nandurbar

While Micro planning exercise with hand washing as one of the component has been completed in 143 villages of Nandurbar district, a set of 29 more villages in Nawapur are taken up for microplanning activity along with other villages in Nandurbar. ICDS Supervisors of Nawapur are assessing the effectivity of the hand washing campaign through pre and post evaluation in a set of 15 villages in the Gram Panchayat of Padsun and Dogegaon in Navapur by employing MSW students for study. The study is expected to be completed by end of August'09. The program is expected to cover approx 4 lakhs people including children, women, and other members of families from 330 villages in the next few months. The BCC processes adopted based on the designs of HUL's Lifebuoy Swasthya Chetana program with added inputs from UNICEF are being received very well by community with great curiosity and interest.



Appropriate behaviors on Hand washing explained through games in villages of Nandurbar

Improving the payment systems in ICDS and MREGA:

A Long pending project that was conceived some time back to address the procedural delays identified in the payment of funds to SHGs, Anganwadi Workers and Helpers and improving the functioning of Anganwadi Centers has moved a step ahead. Now to have more efficient scale of operations the beneficiaries of MREGA are also planned to be included in the project for the payments.

This project is planned to be implemented in Melghat, Amaravati in partnership between FINO (Financial Information and Network Operations Ltd.) and ICDS and MREGA with financial support from IFMR Trust. FINO would be supporting ICDS by introducing the biometric smart cards to the functionaries in conjunction with local banks and necessitating offline instant payments to them upon instructions from ICDS. This intervention is envisaged to bring in significant reduction in delays in financial transaction thereby expected to improving working efficiency of AWCs in the target area.

An introductory meeting between representatives of FINO, ICDS, and MREGA and Bhavishya Alliance was held in Amravati to discuss the project in July'09.

Five gram panchayats have been identified in Dharni to start with, where both ICDS and MREGA will partner with FINO. Government Order in support for the same has already been issued by ICDS and the same is awaited from MREGA for moving further.

Day Care Centre in Construction sites: - Varsha Pathre, Anganwadi worker of ICDS shares her experience in DCC



Varsha Pathre is the Anganwadi worker with ICDS since 10 years and now working at the Anganwadi cum Day Care Centre in Pratiksha Nagar which has been set up in partnership between ICDS, Mumbai Mobile Creches, Nirman, BG Shirke Builder and Bhavishya Alliance.

She has been a dedicated worker and feels that the service being provided for the children in the construction site through the DCC is really making a difference to the children at such sites who otherwise are neglected from any services. The aids used, methods of teaching, full day attention given to the children, regular weight monitoring, nutrition, diet and vitamin supplements given at this centre is important for the development of the child otherwise the children are either left playing here and there in unhygienic and dangerous conditions or left home with older siblings during the day. Her teaching skills have been refined due to the training and hand holding provided by Mumbai Mobile Creches. Sufficient space and facility provided by B.G.Shirke builder enables to conduct more activities/ teaching aids at the centre and thus helps in better communication with children which are important for the development of children.

Apart from this the Pregnant and the lactating mothers in the sites are also provided supplementary nutrition by the SHG who prepares food for the children at the centre. I feel more of such Day Care Centres shall be opened for these children.

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