



Photo: Kashiyaong Marma



SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND PRODUCTION LINKED TO IMPROVED NUTRITION STATUS, RESILIENCE, AND GENDER EQUITY

## SAPLING PROGRAM LEARNINGS AND RESULTS: COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICE WORKER (CHSW)

### DU MA AUNG MARMA'S STORY OF PROVIDING HEALTHCARE SERVICES TO HER COMMUNITY

Du Ma Aung Marma, a government healthcare worker of Gajalia Union in Lama Upazila, started her career as a Community Health Service Worker (CHSW) under USAID's Sustainable Agriculture and Production Linked to Improved Nutrition Status, Resilience, and Gender Equity (SAPLING) Resilience Food Security Activity (SAPLING). As a SAPLING CHSW, she supported pregnant and lactating women (PLW) at the community level from 1 April 2018 to 28 February 2021.

As a CHSW, Ms. Du Ma Aung received a range of training to equip her with technical knowledge and the communication and facilitation skills necessary to thrive in a multicultural healthcare environment.

Du Ma Aung was trained on essential care as a CHSW:

- Application of the the Essential Nutrition Actions (ENA)-Essential Hygiene Actions (EHA) framework
- Carrying out awareness raising sessions with pregnant women, mothers, and other caregivers on topics including optimum infant and young child feeding (IYCF) practices, the importance of antenatal care (ANC), postnatal care (PNC), safe delivery, and hygiene
- Trained to conduct individual household visits with PLW and growth monitoring and promotion (GMP) with families of children under two

Under SAPLING, Ms. Du Aung Marma spent two years translating her training into practical skills with supportive feedback and continued education and peer network opportunities. She supported dozens of families, educating and counseling them



and encouraging them to attend essential health services.

### THE CHSWs PROVIDE CRITICAL HEALTH SERVICE OUTREACH AND FILL A GAP FOR CONNECTING PEOPLE TO SERVICES.

Operating in the remote Gajalia Union, much of her work centered around community facilitation for accessing healthcare services. She was also a vital asset for helping participants understand healthcare systems and processes as she speaks the participants' native language. This experience has since proved invaluable for her career, as she was offered a position by the Government of Bangladesh as a Family Welfare Assistant, on March 1, 2021. Her current schedule consists of six-day work weeks, in which she provides support in her area's Community Clinic for three days each week, while spending the other three days doing field visits to conduct individual household monitoring and counseling for PLW and adolescent girls, supporting paid peer volunteers to conducting courtyard sessions for PLW and women of reproductive age, and sessions specific to adolescent girls. She also supervises volunteers who work in the same locations.

### DUTIES AS A FAMILY WELFARE ASSISTANT

Household monitoring enables her to work one on one with caregivers and their children, ensuring they are staying healthy, and addressing any issues or questions that may be present. During courtyard sessions conducted by volunteers and supported by her, she covers topics related to ANC, PNC, diversified foods, IYCF, family planning, and mobilizing individuals to visit health centers. Adolescent girl sessions offer her an opportunity to educate girls on topics including diversified foods, menstrual hygiene, and micronutrients. She helps to ensure girls receive key nutrients by distributing iron tablets at these sessions.

“As the Chittagong Hill Tracts is geographically scattered, so is Bandarban District. So, the Government started categorizing remote areas as pocket areas, and I am proud of being a part of the Government health service. This service is increasing diversified healthcare in these remote areas. I would like to continue my service towards the community's people. That is why I want to thank USAID's SAPLING for empowering me. I can easily talk to the participants confidently and disseminate the relevant messages, such as antenatal care and postnatal care check-ups.”

DU MA AUNG MARMA, A FORMER SAPLING CHSW AND NOW A GOVERNMENT OF BANGLADESH FAMILY WELFARE ASSISTANT, CONDUCTS A HOUSEHOLD MONITORING VISIT WITH A CAREGIVER AND HER CHILD IN GAJALIA UNION



Photo: Kashyaong Marma

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