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Gaindya Union Multi Stakeholders Platform: Grassroots Governance Creates New Nutrition Demand in the Chittagong Hill Tracts



Uthan Marma is the Chairman of the Gaindya union parishad of Rangamati Hill District. Recently, he has also become a member of the local multi-stakeholder platform (MSP). Uthan explains, “It's my pleasure to be an active part of this committee. Through this work, I think we have the opportunity to achieve Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and 2nd National Plan of Action for Nutrition by 2025 with the Multi stakeholder platform approach. This is a new way for us to actively work together on nutrition programming”.

Gaindya union MSP is one of 28 active MSPs in Rangamati hill district which act as bridges between local government institutions, community leaders and community people. Through increased coordination and collaboration, members are able to coordinate on the creation of demand for nutritious products and nutrition programming amongst their communities. It also extends an opportunity to strengthen the linkages among union parishad, Upazila Parishad, UNCC, DNCC and Hill district council to include private sector and community representatives.

Prior to the involvement of the Leadership to Ensure Adequate Nutrition (LEAN) project, funded by the European Union, a number of committees formed and dissolved attempting to achieve coordinated approaches to nutrition promotion in CHT. However, they faced significant challenges in service delivery, accountability and coordination, as well as funding since nutrition was not focused as a priority in budgeting processes. Now, members have been working in close collaboration with LEAN to achieve proper implementation of the 2nd National Plan of Action for Nutrition (NPAN 2) and National Nutrition Policy adopted by Bangladesh Government for achieving SDGs goal. This is the case in Gaindya as well as the other regions of CHT.

Since its formation in November of 2020, LEAN has continued its work with the Gaindya MSP and its members by providing training and workshops. As a continuation of this process, the project has arranged numerous meetings with the standing committees on union nutrition-related planning, budget analysis for nutrition, annual action plan development, demand generation and awareness raising activities. The Union nutrition coordination committee is working according to their plan to ensure nutrition services in Gaindya union. Their work is augmented by MSPs who assist with nutrition advocacy and identifying malnutrition issues and the needs of their communities as they emerge. They do so by ensuring local policy and budgets include allocations for nutrition while also organizing nutrition awareness programming and local celebrations and events.

Now, after forming MSPs, Headman and Karbaries are supported to take ownership of community nutrition development and be a source of positive nutrition information and practice. In this way, MSPs allow the combination of local knowledge, traditional practice, private sector enterprise, and cutting-edge nutrition knowledge to best meet the needs of their communities in terms of achieving nutrition goals across the region.

