

**Evaluation of
IND 1252 “Fight Hunger First Initiative in Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and West
Bengal”, India**

BMZ: 110-T 7360 IND-336

on behalf of Welthungerhilfe

List of abbreviations

AAY	Antodaya Anna Yojana, part of Targeted PDS
APL	Above Poverty Line
ASHA	Accredited Social Health Activist
AVF	Abhivyakti Foundation
AVVM	Adivasi Vanchit Vikas Manch (adivasi CBO)
AWC	Anganwadi Centre
AWH	Anganwadi Helper
AWW	Anganwadi Worker
BDO	Block Development Officer
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party (ruling party)
BMO	Block Medical Officer
BMZ	Bundesministerium für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung
BPL	Below Poverty Line (27 Rs./person day in rural areas, 32 Rs./day in urban areas)
CBO	Community Based Organization
CDPO	Child Development Programme Officer
CSC	Community Score Card
CWS	Centre for World Solidarity
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DeGEval	Gesellschaft für Evaluation
DRCSC	Development Research Communication and Services Centre
DVVM	Dalit Vanchit Vikas Manch (dalit CBO)
ENA	Emergency Nutrition Assessment
FCRA	Foreign Contributions Regulation Act
FES	Foundation for Ecological Security
FHFI	Fight Hunger First Initiative
FNS	Food and Nutrition Security
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GMO	Genetically Modified Organism
GP	Gram Panchayat
HH	Household
IAG	Inter Agency Group
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Scheme
IDHS	Indian Human Development Survey
JSY	Janani Surakshya Yojana (promotion of institutional delivery)
JH	Jharkhand
KVK	Krishi Vigyan Kendra (farm science centre)
MAM	Moderate Acute Malnutrition
MDM	Mid Day Meal
MGNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
MP	Madhya Pradesh
NADEP	Narayan Deotao Pandharipande (Ghadian worker, developed NADEP compost)
NFHS	National Family Health Survey
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NRC	Nutrition Rehabilitation Centre
NREGS	National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
NRHM	National Rural Health Mission
PDS	Public Distribution System
PIA	Participatory Impact Assessment
PLA	Participatory Learning and Action

PRI	Panchayati Raj Institution
RBA	Rights-based approach
Rs.	Rupee (1 € = approximately 70 Rs. In February 2015)
RTE	Right to Education
RTF	Right to Food
RTI	Right to Information
SAM	Severe Acute Malnutrition
SC	Scheduled Caste
SHG	Self-Help Group
SIFS	Support to Integrated Farming Systems
SMC	School Management Committee or Seasonal Malaria Chemoprevention
SDP	School Development Plan
SRAN	Sri Ramkrishna Ashram Nimpith
ST	Scheduled Tribe
SUW	Severely Underweight
TPDS	Targeted Public Distribution System
VHSNC	Village Health, Sanitation and Nutrition Committee
WB	West Bengal
WBEN	West Bengal Education Network
WFS	Women Feature Service

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1 Brief description of the project and framework conditions

Country:	India
Project title:	Fight Hunger First in Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and West Bengal
Project No.:	IND 1252 – P4054
Project holder:	Jan Sahas, FES, Pravah, CWS, PRADAN, DRCSC, SRAN
Approved budget:	Welthungerhilfe: 390.000 BMZ: 1.000.000
Committed funds:	1.390.000 €
Co-financer (line):	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project period:	11. Nov 2011 – 30. Apr 2015
Target group planned	38,089 households in 299 villages of 61 panchayats, population 196,708.
Target group covered:	42.725 households in 324 villages of 48 panchayats, population 166,973

The programme FHF1 followed a rights-based approach in order to improve food and nutrition security and primary education in selected backward blocks. It supported the creation and strengthening of organisations at village, block and district level and created awareness about rights, government programs, nutrition and child care. In addition, pilot interventions on food/nutrition, advocacy and education were supported as well as joint learning processes of all partners and advocacy work at higher levels.

Despite India's continuous economic growth, hunger is still widespread, especially in rural areas. India's Global Hunger Index 2013 was alarming, with India ranking 63rd of 78 countries. Although important rights and entitlements on food/ nutrition, poverty and basic education exist in India, rural poor do not easily access these. The programme aimed at improving the access to these rights and entitlements, with focus on the following:

- the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) guaranteeing wage employment to each Indian household (since 2005),
- the Public Distribution System PDS providing subsidised food and kerosene,
- the Forest Rights Act for tribal communities and other traditional forest dwellers (2006),
- the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), the development programme for children implemented since the 1970s,
- the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) aiming at improving rural health services,
- the Right to Education (RTE) Act of 2009 and
- the Right to Food Act (RTF) of 2013.

2 Relevance

The programme addressed the main problems faced by the population, the malnutrition of children and mothers, food scarcity or hunger periods of 2 to 4 months and migration, high interest rates paid to money lenders / not enough money to buy food, insufficient access to safe drinking water, irrigation water and toilets, corruption and limited access to government services. It corresponds well to Welthungerhilfe's vision of "fighting against global hunger and for sustainable food security". FHF1 tackles also the main problems identified by the partner NGOs, the lack of awareness of the target population on nutrition, health, hygiene, rights and entitlements, poor utilization of food, gender discrimination, degradation of natural resources, migration, illiteracy, alcoholism and those mentioned by the population.

The programme supports the implementation of Indian laws and policies in districts where they have not been implemented in a satisfactory way. The programme also corresponds to the special initiative "One World, No Hunger" of the BMZ and its proposal to develop an "expanded food security agenda". **The relevance of FHF1 is very high.**

3 Effectiveness

The project purpose, **to improve key indicators related to food, income and nutrition security in 11 selected blocks (sub-districts) through community institution building, innovative piloting and advocacy at different levels**, has been achieved in the case of three of the six key indicators (reduction of malnutrition, graduation from poverty, school attendance), for two indicators targets have been achieved partly (household food security, formalization of forest rights). For the indicator on child mortality only few data are available, but the probability is high that the target is achieved.

FHFI resulted from the dialogue of Welthungerhilfe with Indian partner organisations, leading to the conclusion that a new approach to food and nutrition security is necessary, especially to improve the access of marginalized groups to government programmes. In 2012 baseline studies were realized in all project blocks, confirming the need to work there.

The project planning matrix is well structured. Result 1 (strengthened self help groups) improves the access to public programmes through community-based advocacy, leading to result 3 (advocacy and networking). Result 4 (exchange civil society organisations and administration) supports the NGOs' capacities and focuses on advocacy at higher levels. Result 2 (pilot measures) produces immediate results and serves to identify suitable instruments for up-scaling in the second phase (FHFI II). In their combination the four results are able to make important contributions to the project purpose. There are limitations regarding some indicators which require more time to show changes or are difficult to measure (graduation from poverty).

The seven implementing NGOs have sufficient staff and are well equipped for the programme. Financial administration and steering by Welthungerhilfe was functioning smoothly. However, not all planned activities and results were realized. Weaknesses were identified in advocacy at higher levels and in establishing a common monitoring of the project purpose by all seven partner NGOs. **Overall, effectiveness was good.**

4 Efficiency

The programme costs are 1,390,000 € for 42,725 households, costs per directly benefitting household are 29 €. Monetary benefits are the increased income of 11,000 households (appr. 780,000 € per year) from increased agricultural productivity and MGNREGA employment, 184 hectares of land accessed or brought under cultivation (appr. 900.000 €) and improved infrastructure (at least 500.000 €). Non monetary benefits are organisation, awareness, increased school attendance and the reduction of malnutrition. The figures indicate a positive cost-benefit relation of the program. Individual measures were performed cost efficiently.

Monitoring and reporting still is a challenge for most partners. The time intensive baseline study realized in 2012 created resistance of partner NGOs towards monitoring, as many consider this an activity comparable to the baseline study. Monthly child weighing and measuring and processing of data on weight, height and age of children have been introduced among all partners, producing data on stunting rates. For the other five indicators of the project purpose, data are partially available, but not yet systematically collected. The partners' half yearly reports focus on results and activities, in 2013 only few considered the indicators of the project purpose, in 2014 this has improved. The process of joining the monitoring of eight individual projects into one was difficult. Although similar, distinct formulations in the logical framework and distinct indicators remained.

37% of total costs were budgeted for local project staff. The partner NGOs worked with very different staff intensity, between 306 and 2078 households per employed staff, averaging 606. The high number of households per staff is due to volunteers or gender trainers from the communities. The average of 606 accompanied households per staff member show a high level of staff efficiency.

The programme showed good efficiency, with weaknesses in monitoring.

5 Outcomes and impacts

Food availability throughout the year: In most households the hunger period of two to four months was reduced by the project, due to 38 grain banks, access to loans from 341 self help groups for more than 4000 households, increased agricultural production for more than 6000 households, income from the employment programme MGNREGA reaching more than 5000 households and better access to food from PDS shops. The reduction of hunger is general.

Food diversity: The meals in most target households were limited to two food groups (cereals and pulses) before the project started, now food diversity has increased to 3-5 food groups consumed regularly, due to nutrition education, kitchen gardens, farm diversification, better income and improved mid-day meals in schools and ICDS centres.

Improved schools and school attendance: Through nutrition gardens, improved MDM, better installations and monitoring of school by local CBOs school attendance of students improved considerably.

Change of gender roles and attitudes: Most of the directly involved population was female. They acquired more knowledge about women's rights, gained more self-confidence and promoted the discussion of critical issues such as child marriage at community level.

Organisations: Approximately 800 CBOs have been strengthened by the programme, among these 500 newly created. Beyond village level organisations also 21 clusters and 10 federations or organisations at block level were created, the majority of these being women's organisations. The **empowerment** of the marginalized population through strong organisations was the basis of advocacy and other impacts. The role of strong organisations as a watchdog and support for the performance of public services is acknowledged by government officials.

Environment: Behavioural changes were observed in hygiene and cleanliness as well as healthier village and school environments. Soil erosion and the use of pesticides was reduced by sustainable farming practices.

Improved income: The household income has improved by SHG loans (appr. 4000 members) increased agricultural production (more than 6000 households) and employment in the MGNREGA (appr. 5000 persons). Improved income led to the **reduction of poverty**. The average annual household income increase by MGNREGA was appr. 6750 Rs., improved income from farming approximately 3500 Rs. This corresponds to an increase of average annual incomes of 20,528 Rs. for poor households of 33% in the case of MGNREGA and of 17% in the case of farming, allowing a number of poor households to cross poverty line.

Children's health and nutrition status: The nutrition status of more than 4000 acute malnourished children improved by nutrition and health education, monitoring and support of ICDS centres by CBOs, improved food in ICDS centres, nutrition camps, nutrimix, kitchen gardens and income-related measures. Chronic malnutrition (stunting rate) was reduced by an average of 8.3 percent points.

The seasonal migration of mainly male family members was reduced due to employment by the MGNREGA scheme and increased labour demand of integrated farming systems.

Better access to and improved government services: Better performance of ICDS centres, better mid-day meals in schools and ICDS centres, better performance of primary schools, better access to health services, less irregularities in PDS shops and the employment of poor by the MGNREGA scheme were important impacts, but some problems remain. These impacts were achieved by increased awareness on rights and advocacy by strengthened CBOs, participatory planning (School Development Plans and micro-planning) and advocacy at village and panchayat level, but also by some improvements of government policies.

The FHF programme produced contributions to all eight millennium development goals, especially to MDG 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. The rights-based and multi-sector approach focusing on hunger and nutrition has become an integral part of the partner NGOs and of Welthungerhilfe.

In summary, the programme has produced good impacts.

6 Sustainability

Access to land and the improved agricultural infrastructure will produce long-term economic benefits. New agricultural practices don't require outside support to continue, also grain banks are expected to continue without outside support. The sustainability of increased income through MGNREGA requires continuous efforts in the future. Conditions to reduce child malnutrition further have been established and are likely to be maintained. Not all elements for better food and nutrition security are sustainable. Although awareness about nutrition, health and child care has changed behavioural practices, some further support on nutrition and food practices is required. The awareness on women's rights and the change of gender roles have been initiated and will continue to develop. A part of the SHGs and CBOs is sustainable and strong to continue, others need additional training and support. Especially federations are not yet consolidated.

The sustainability of improved performance of and the better access to government programmes and services depends on monitoring and advocacy of civil society and on the willingness of government. Additional efforts are required to improve PDS and to derive continued benefits from MGNREGA. The environmental sustainability of most new practices is secured. Only irrigation infrastructure may be critical in terms of affecting groundwater.

Not all outcomes and impacts are sustainable yet. Future NGO support is ensured in the case of Jan Sahas, SRAN, Pravah and CWS project areas through FHFII II, in the PRADAN project area by other financing agencies. PRADAN will upscale the rights-based approach with focus on nutrition in other states. Some additional support to DRCSC and FES for the necessary follow-up by NGOs is required.

7 Most important recommendations

The multi sector approach for food and nutrition security, combined with the rights-based approach, produced very good impacts to fight hunger in backward areas of India, addressing the four dimensions of food and nutrition security, availability, accessibility, utilization and stability.

Recommendations to partner organisations in the order of priority

1. Continue strengthening CBOs in organisational development and the use of community score card as an advocacy instrument and build adolescent girls groups also in other districts
2. Strengthen block and district level organisations
3. Stronger focus on advocacy at block and district level by block and district level organisations; use community scorecards repeatedly at different levels for permanent government monitoring
4. Support federations and volunteers for a limited period after the end of the programme as exit strategy
5. Continue advocacy for MGNREGA and other government schemes, using micro-planning
6. Consider strategies to improve household food and nutrition security for both landless (especially West Bengal) and land owning households
7. Support strongly the access to good quality and sufficient water, for drinking and irrigation, also by rainwater harvesting and watershed development
8. In monitoring of FHFII I consider the six indicators of the project purpose. Most data are available.
9. Partner organisations should find a common strategy to address the issuing of new BPL cards and the existence of ghost cards.
10. Use intensively the opportunity of the recent creation of PRI in Jharkhand to work intensively with PRI members
11. Support villages to access formalized forest rights, especially in Purulia district
12. Support CBOs in the establishment of seed banks for traditional seeds

Recommendations to Welthungerhilfe

1. In India and other countries characterised by a medium GDP per person, strong inequalities and poverty, the rights-based approach (RBA) should be supported.
2. Considering threats to partner organisations and the threat of the Foreign Contributions Regulation Act, Welthungerhilfe should be careful when the RBA is made public in India.
3. Welthungerhilfe India should give additional support to DRCSC during a brief follow-up.
4. Welthungerhilfe India should make information about relevant government programmes of the more than 600 programmes available to its partner NGOs and target groups on its website.
5. Welthungerhilfe India should consider the access to Indian private or corporate funds for project financing.

Conclusions and recommendations regarding FHFII – Upscaling Best Practices

- The FHFII I programme was a pilot phase where different measures were experimented, with more or less impacts on food and nutrition security. Lessons from the FHFII I were taken to the proposal for FHFII II.
- Community Score Cards, Participatory Learning and Action (PLA), micro-planning, tracking of malnourished children and nutrition camps were successful pilot measures of FHFII I.
- The strengthening of School Management Committees and the preparation of school management plans is a measure planned in all 303 villages. It is recommended to support other organisations if no active SMC is in place.
- The lower than expected advocacy at block, district and state level led to a stronger focus on strengthening block and district level federations in the new project, but state level advocacy may still be weak.
- The main success factor of FHFII I, the role of CBOs, should also be strongly supported in FHFII II. In 170 new villages the establishment and strengthening of CBOs is necessary; trainings for strengthening CBOs are planned, but beyond training, intensive accompaniment of new CBOs is required in the initial stage.
- The creation, training and block or district level federations of adolescent girls groups should be supported.
- The monitoring system has been simplified for FHFII II. A systematic data collection of data by all partners should be established from the beginning.

8 General conclusions and “lessons learnt”

The four pillars of the programme complement each other. Capacity building and awareness can build strong organisations, which are the basis of advocacy. Pilot measures are relevant because of their direct results and their potential for up-scaling. A major learning from the program is that the rights-based approach is not sufficient to achieve food and nutrition security, but must be complemented by the other elements mentioned above.

The rights-based approach is feasible in the case of countries with available government structures and budgets and sufficient space for civil society to act.

The FHFII program has produced several good practices which have proved successful:

- The organisation of CBOs into federations strengthened their advocacy capacities and allowed significant influence on policy decisions at higher (block, district) level.
- Community Score Cards (CSC) were used to address insufficient government services and to enter into dialogue by interface with the responsible persons.
- Micro-planning is able to improve the access to MGNREGA employment and to develop the productivity as well as social infrastructure of villages.
- Adolescent girls groups are best suited to change gender roles.