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Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock
Building Resilient Commercial Smallholder Project
Pelrithang: Sarpang



Report on Nutrition Education for Women and Youth groups

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Contents

Contents	2
1. Introduction	3
2. Objectives	3
3. Methodology	4
4. Implementation	4
5. Challenges	5
6. Recommendations	6
7. Conclusion	6
8. Annexure	7

1. Introduction

Community-based groups play a vital role in advancing development initiatives by serving as effective channels for education, empowerment, and social mobilization. Under the BRECSA project, nutrition education was extended to women and youth groups across 37 gewogs as a follow-up to earlier Training of Trainers (ToT) sessions for agriculture and livestock extension officers and Sanam Japchorpas (SJs).

These activities were grounded in formative research findings, including Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women (MDD-W) assessments and nutrition knowledge gaps identified during community consultations. The initiative aimed to strengthen nutrition-sensitive agriculture interventions by ensuring that women and youth that is two critical groups for household-level change were engaged in nutrition education programs.

To maximize reach, the intervention adopted a dual-channel approach, combining digital platforms (Telegram and WeChat) with regular in-person community gatherings. This hybrid model sought to overcome geographical barriers, enhance accessibility, and create sustainable local platforms for continuous nutrition learning.

2. Objectives

The primary objectives of the nutrition education for women and youth groups were to:

- Establish 164 women groups and 105 youth groups events across 37 gewogs.
- Deliver context-specific nutrition education to improve dietary diversity and awareness of age- and gender-specific nutrition needs.
- Strengthen community engagement through combined online and offline approaches.
- Build the facilitation and communication capacity of SJs to manage both digital and physical group interactions.
- Promote sustainable community structures that continue functioning beyond the project's duration.

3. Methodology

The initiative followed a structured methodology integrating digital engagement and in-person learning:

- **Participant Identification:** SJs identified women and youth participants through outreach and local consultations.
- **Capacity Building:** SJs were trained on formative research findings (MDD-W, dietary diversity, food plate concepts) and equipped with facilitation skills.
- **Dual-Channel Education:**
 - **Digital Platforms:** Telegram and WeChat groups facilitated information sharing, Q&A sessions, nutrition tips, and infographics.
 - **Community Gatherings:** In-person sessions included discussions, demonstrations, and role-play activities using flipcharts, posters, and local food items.
 - **Monitoring & Engagement:** Participation was tracked through digital activity logs, meeting attendance, and feedback sessions.

4. Implementation

Implementation was carried out in phased steps:

1. **Community Sensitization:** Awareness-raising sessions introduced the purpose of women and youth groups.
2. **Group Formation:** Online groups were created in parallel with structured in-person meeting schedules.
3. **Content Delivery:** Nutrition topics covered balanced diets, age-appropriate feeding practices, dietary diversity, and the role of protein and micronutrients.
4. **Resource Support:** Digital infographics/videos and printed materials (discussion guides, flipcharts) were adapted to local language and context.
5. **Sustained Engagement:**

- Digital: Regular posts, interactive chats, polls.
 - Physical: Monthly meetings, participatory discussions, practical demonstrations.
6. Monitoring: Ongoing supervision ensured active participation and allowed adjustments to address gaps.

5. Challenges

Several challenges emerged during the activity implementation:

- *Digital Divide*: Limited access to smartphones and internet excluded some participants.
- *Geographical Barriers*: Distance and time constraints hindered attendance at in-person meetings.
- *Digital Literacy*: Older women required additional support to navigate digital platforms.
- *Connectivity Issues*: Poor network coverage disrupted digital communication in some gewogs.
- *Logistical Constraints*: Limited venue availability and weather disruptions affected physical sessions.
- *Language & Standardization*: Variations in dialects complicated uniform delivery of content.
- *Youth Engagement*: Outmigration reduced youth group participation in certain villages.
- *Sustaining Participation*: Maintaining consistent activity levels in both digital groups and in-person meetings required continuous effort.

6. Recommendations

To strengthen the model and enhance outcomes, the following actions are recommended:

1. *Integrated Model:* Treat both digital and in-person platforms as complementary and non-negotiable components.
2. *Digital Literacy Support:* Organize short training sessions and explore shared community devices for those without access.
3. *Improved Access:* Adjust meeting schedules and provide transport support where needed.
4. *Multi-Channel Materials:* Develop nutrition education content optimized for both print and digital use.
5. *Participation Incentives:* Recognize active members through small rewards, mobile data top-ups, or travel stipends.
6. *Enhanced SJ Capacity:* Provide advanced facilitation training in both digital management and in-person group leadership.
7. *Feedback Mechanisms:* Establish digital surveys/polls and offline suggestion boxes.
8. *Partnerships:* Link with schools, health centers, and CSOs to reinforce nutrition messages through existing structures.

7. Conclusion

The successful formation of women's and youth groups across 37 gewogs marks a significant milestone in BRECSA's nutrition-sensitive agriculture interventions. By leveraging both digital platforms and in-person gatherings, the initiative created sustainable and inclusive avenues for nutrition education, community engagement, and behavior change.

Although challenges related to digital access, literacy, connectivity, and logistics were encountered, the initiative has demonstrated the synergistic power of combining modern communication tools with traditional community structures. Women and youth participants reported increased awareness on dietary diversity, age-appropriate feeding, and the

importance of balanced nutrition, positioning them as agents of change within their households and communities.

With sustained follow-up, strengthened facilitation capacity, and improved digital inclusion, this model has strong potential for replication and scaling across other districts. Ultimately, the approach contributes to improved nutrition awareness, healthier food practices, and stronger community systems that align with BRECSA's long-term goals for food and nutrition security in Bhutan.

8. Annexure

- women and youth groups list (Attached the sheet)
- Photographs from the field

Annex. Photograph from the Field



Fig Nutrition education to women and youth groups

