Risk Communication and Community Engagement in Tribal Community

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Background

• Chattogram was the second highest COVID-19 affected district in Bangladesh
• Region is comprised of hilly areas, costal belt/ islands/ riverine/marshy land
• Difficult to reach at hilly areas with live-saving information
• Target audience: Selected Tripura Tribal Community among diversified ethnicities

Strategy:
➢ Partnering with Government using community media to reach at Tripura tribal community
➢ Engagement of local youth volunteer group
Tripura Tribal Community

• Numerous people of Tripura community live in the Chattogram district
• Scattered in media dark areas
• Limited access to the basic social services including life-saving information
• Low literacy rate
• Speak in Kokborok, no own alphabet and the state language is Bangla
• Exist some harmful social norms and superstitions on COVID-19
• Disease outbreak is common in community
Perception/Superstitions of Tripura Community on COVID-19

‘I won't take the vaccine; it's not good. If I take the vaccine, the blood will turn into white. You please leave me; I won't take the vaccine. Don't catch us’.

---- Rushmi Tripura (35)

‘Corona will never be able to attack me if I stand for half an hour under the sunshine after anointing cow dung on my body’.

---- Fulki Tripura (40)
Implementation Partners

• District Information Office under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in Bangladesh

• A local youth voluntary group, "Vorer Alo“ in Chattogram

• UNICEF
Intervention Cycle

Assessment (based on data collected from Union Council and KII)

Communication Analysis (Audience, Behaviours, Communication Channel)

Human Resource (Explore youth groups, select volunteers and agreement with District Information Office)

Programme Planning, design, development of messages & materials, pre-test, build capacity of Volunteers

Roll out of COVID-19 campaign activity

Monitoring programme by using google forms, collect community feedback by volunteers and linkage with health department for ensuring services
Roll out of COVID-19 Campaign Activity

- Involved representatives of local government
- Engaged community leaders to check in with the community
- Drum announcement through walking house to house/community
- Message dissemination by using megaphone through
  - arrangement of distance gathering at court-yard
  - followed by quiz competition
  - mask distribution among quiz winners
- Displayed festoons on preventive messages and COVID-19 vaccination at public places
- Coverage: Around 10,000 population including children and adolescents were interacted
Challenges

• Language barriers as targeted community speak in Kokborok and the state language is Bangla
• Difficult to reach remote areas physically
• Acceptance of the messages/information by community
• Mobilization of community leaders
Way Forward

• The experiences can be applied to other remote areas of Bangladesh
• Build capacity of youth volunteers from respective tribal community to build community acceptance
• Scripts can be prepared in respective tribal language
• Message dissemination by using tribal folk cultural instruments and activities
• Interactive community dialogue sessions backed by campaigns help addressing existing norms
• Need to continue the intervention in certain interval
Thanks