

NUTRITION CHAMPIONS

Orientation Workshop - A Report
Hotel Park Inn, Jaipur, Rajasthan

JUNE 07, 2018



Introduction

Nutrition is acknowledged as one of the most effective entry points for human development, poverty, and economic development, with high economic returns. The use of the word 'Champion' to describe people who formally or informally volunteer to promote nutrition and health in their communities is relatively a recent concept. Advocacy and communication play a unique role in creating demand and building consciousness about the importance of nutrition at all levels and among all key stakeholders in nutrition development. In the empowering process for promotion of Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition (IMAM) programme through Poshan Abhiyan, the role of nutrition champions are utmost importance as a facilitator, mediator, community mobilizer, brand ambassador, and an effective communicator through their knowledge, networking, liasioning and interpersonal skills etc. They are able to engage with some of the most hard-to-reach or seldom heard communities, making them a key asset in meeting the challenge of health inequalities at a local level and a source of rich intelligence and experience for service planning and delivery.* Nutrition and health champions as well as community champions are people able to inspire and motivate community members but also are able to advocate for change and influence local organizations.

*Davies, R. community health champions: one of the keys to unlocking the health inequalities challenge? Centre for local economic strategy (CLES). 2009.



Nutrition Champions with Mission Director-NHM and AAH/FHF Team



Identification of Nutrition Champions and their role as change agents

Nutrition champions are individuals who use their platforms and influence to position nutrition as a key priority at global, regional, national and local level. They contribute to raise awareness and change negative attitudes and behaviors related to nutrition and help foster collaboration. The role of nutrition champions in advocating for nutrition, formulating policies, and coordinating and implementing action in nutrition have increasingly been recognized in many countries



Shri Naveen Jain, Secretary-Medical Health & Family Welfare and Mission Director, NHM, Rajasthan is one of the Nutrition Champions who pioneered the Community based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) programme in Rajasthan.

The objective of the Workshop

The main objective was to mobilize public support to ensure child under-nutrition is the need of IMAM/POSHAN to make it a priority agenda.

- To promote awareness regarding the importance of Poshan Abhiyan program in each region,
- To share messages on the importance of good nutrition among the local community members or in surrounding area,
- Identify and promote peer to peer approaches and train more people at the community level as nutrition champions.

such as Peru, Brazil, Thailand, and the Indian states of Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. It is time that we too recognize our Nutrition Champions who otherwise are least known to the public.

In 2016, out of the 10 Global Nutrition Champions, selected by Transform Nutrition, 4 were Indians, viz. Mr. Basanta Kumar Kar, Mr. Debajeet Sarangi, Ms. Neerja Chowdhury, & Mr. V Ramani. These Champions use their own unique life experiences and skills to reach out to others to elevate the nutritional and health profile of the people around them through various means.

Action Against Hunger-India/Fight Hunger Foundation (AAH/FHF) identified twelve Nutrition Champions from the various districts of Rajasthan. Many of them were involved in POSHAN phase-I (Proactive and Optimum care of children through Social-Household Approach for Nutrition) a well-known programme of Government of Rajasthan, during 2015-16. The Champions will be working at a different level for disseminating information, knowledge, and awareness on Nutrition and IMAM programme and help local, block, district and state level works relating to child malnutrition.

Workshop Progress Details



The workshop started with a warm welcome, briefing the objective and a very encouraging note on the concept of 'Nutrition Champion' by Ms. Mousumi Gupta, Head of Department- Advocacy, Action Against Hunger-India/Fight Hunger Foundation (AAH/FHF). Ms. Gupta explained the objective of the workshop and roles & responsibilities of Nutrition Champions and how a nutrition Champion can empower the entire community by spreading messages regarding nutrition in a more effective way at the grassroots level. She also described that a nutrition champion should always be open to learning, be creative and should also engage the community, media, policymakers and other stakeholders to promote nutrition at local, regional, national and international levels.



Ms. Aakanksha Pandey, State Programme Manager-Health & Nutrition (AAH/FHF) shared about nutrition, malnutrition & types of malnutrition with facts & figures. She also shared the status of stunting, wasting and severe wasting in Rajasthan and the causes and effects of malnutrition on children. She informed about the initiatives of the government of Rajasthan to tackle the issue of malnutrition in the state while urging the active participation of champions to ensure a successful implementation of the schemes at all the levels to make Rajasthan a 'Kuposhan Mukta state'.



Mr. Sanjay Kumar, Programme Manager-Advocacy (AAH/FHF) further explained that Nutrition Champions should always encourage the nutrition practices within the community. He emphasized that Nutrition Champions should encourage the early registration of pregnancy, consumption of nutritious food during and after pregnancy, early breastfeeding, complementary feeding to the children after 6 months of age, planning a safe gap of three years between two pregnancies, referring for medical facilities in case of malnutrition with medical complications, regular visit to Maternal and Child Health Nutrition day and ICDS centers etc. The session was also followed by the experience sharing of Nutrition champions and their encouraging stories from the field which created a very positive environment.



Shri. Naveen Jain, Secretary-Medical Health and Family Welfare, & Mission Director, NHM, Govt. of Rajasthan, also appreciated the nutrition champions and discussed the behaviors that champions can adopt and also encourage the community to practice healthy and conventional food practices. Emphasizing local fruits, vegetables, millets, and pulses, he said nutrition is a part of life and it cannot be imposed by anything from the outside. He also requested the sarpanches to talk about stunting, wasting, underweight and anemia in their meetings. Later on, he decorated the nutrition champions with a badge to encourage and appreciate the efforts of nutrition champions to eradicate malnutrition from the state.



Mr. Arish Syed, Executive Director (AAH/FHF), discussed that Nutrition Champions can take the agenda of nutrition forward by filling the gap between facilities and beneficiaries. The champions should share and learn the innovative practices and implement in their area of work and community, the champions from NHM & ICDS can incorporate the issue of malnutrition in their development agendas and PIPs.

The workshop ended with a closing remark and thanks by Mr. Kuldeep Sinsinwar, Regional Advocacy Officer, AAH/FHF.

Our Nutrition Champions from Rajasthan



Mahendra Sharma
Sarpanch (Matunda
village), Bundi



Mr. Devi Singh Bhati
Block Program Manager
Jaisalmer



Dharmendra Nirvikar
Dist. ASHA Coordinator
Baran



Dr. Vinita Trivedi
DPM NUHM
Banswara



Pooran Mal
Sarpanch (Shahbad)
Baran



Mehmood Khan
Social Worker
Baran



Ranjana Upadhyay
DPM ISSNIP
Rajsamand



Dilip Sharma
DPM
Baran



Nitisha Cedric
District Consultant
Udaipur



Mr Umesh Pareek
Dist. ASHA Coordinator
Jaisalmer



Puranmal Sharma
Social Worker
Chittaurgarh



Dr. Mansoor A Khan
BCM&HO
Chittaurgarh

Conclusion

The workshop turned out to be very successful in encouraging the nutrition champions along with clarifying their roles and responsibilities as nutrition champions and made them realize their power of encouraging more people to become nutrition champions. The concept of nutrition champion is like lighting candles which can also light more and spread the light of good health and happiness in creating Kuposhan Mukht Bharat.

