

RELACTATION PROTOCOL IN BANGLADESH

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SUMMARY

With cordial efforts and dedication from both mother and the team working in the stabilisation centre, they managed to realise the relactation of the mother, by following the Action Against Hunger protocol and doing extensive research.

CHALLENGE

The mother of a three-month old baby visited the Nayapara Stabilization Center in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. She was experiencing issues with breastfeeding: her baby had stopped drinking since it was one month old. Clinical examination of the baby and her mother revealed that the mother was not lactating as no breast milk was present, and that the baby was suffering from Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM). The staff of the centre, including the medical doctor, had any experience in handling a situation like this. Likewise, the Bangladesh National Guidelines for SAM management included little information on how to establish relactation.

SOLUTION

Action Against Hunger guidelines include a protocol on how to establish relactation. The team decided to implement this protocol for the first time, and also did more reading and research into the issue they faced. Through the dedication and cordial approach of the team, the mother herself became more confident and convinced of a successful outcome as well. After four days, the mother started producing breast milk, and after 13 days the baby began to gain weight through breast milk only.



Nur Sadia with her mother after successful relactation, by Jubayer Mumin.

LEARNING

Through this experience, the team learned that even in difficult scenarios such as a complete lack of lactation for two months, following the recommended protocol with a committed team and motivated mother through their efforts can overcome these challenges and result in the desired outcome.

The team shared this learning with all their colleagues from the mission in Bangladesh through e-mail communication. Jubayer visited other stabilisation centres to talk about the relactation protocol with the staff there. As a result, all stabilisation centres started treating babies under six months with breastfeeding difficulties in the same way. In 2018, the teams in these centres successfully established relactation for over 40 mothers.

To monitor this learning, the team wrote case studies about these experiences. This has proven to be fruitful, as they have recently managed to establish relactation of a foster mother who had last breastfed two years ago, and another foster mother whose last breastfeeding experience was four years ago.