

CSR Activities of ACME's Social, Environmental and Economic Development (SEED) Project

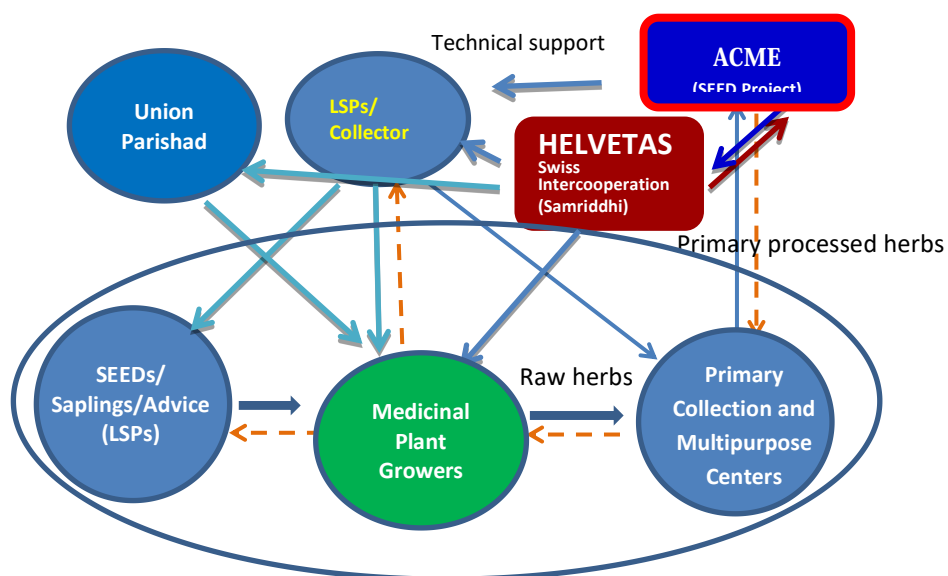
Commitment to social needs is an important element of good corporate citizenship, alongside sustainability and good governance. ACME is committed to achieving business and financial success while leaving a positive imprint on society and environment. One of the key company goals is to **promote CSR activities with a view to serve the people, the country and the planet for upholding corporate image among various stakeholder groups.**

As a part of CSR, ACME has been promoting nature positive farming practices of medicinal plants in different parts of the country through a dedicated project namely **Social, Environmental and Economic Development (SEED)** project. ACME started medicinal plant cultivation activities with the Livelihoods Empowerment and Agroforestry Project (LEAF) of Intercooperation(IC), a Switzerland based International NGO in 2006-07 financial year. The objectives of medicinal plant cultivation initiative were to collecting high quality herbs for producing quality herbal medicines in ACME and also addressing poverty alleviation, self-employment of poor and extreme poor in the North Bengal area. At the beginning a few poor and marginal farmers of Bogura and Gaibandha district were involved in the medicinal plant cultivation where ACME provided technical and logistic support together with buy back guarantee of herbal raw materials.



Nature positive medicinal plant cultivation initiative of ACME

ACME's Medicinal Plant Cultivation Cluster



Consequent upon the success of the North Bengal model of medicinal plant cultivation, capacity building initiatives and incentive program, the medicinal plant cultivation activities have been extended in many districts of Rajshahi, Rangpur, Khulna and Mymensingh division and also in Chittagong Hill Tracts region. Production of herbal raw materials has been increased significantly in the country despite of destruction of medicinal and herbal garden due to repeated natural calamities like, flash flood, cyclone along with tidal bore etc. in the recent past.

Deputy Commissioner, Gaibandha visiting ACME's medicinal plant cultivation activities in Gaibandha - August, 2008



Key CSR activities of SEED project

□ Nature Positive Medicinal plant cultivation activities involving small holder and marginal farmers

Started in a modest way with about 300 marginal farmers which eventually exceeded 50,000 thousands of medicinal plant farmers throughout the country where selective medicinal plant species along with medicinal plant that are facing extinction crisis are being cultivated organically.



Medicinal plant nursery

□ **Developed and published training materials on medicinal plant cultivation and collection for Training of Trainers(ToT) program and Uthan Boithak**

- In order to develop human resources and uphold the knowledge and skills of the medicinal plant Local Service Providers (LSP)/ moderately literate growers SEED project of ACME developed a comprehensive training manual for field level trainers titled, “প্রশিক্ষণ নির্দেশিকা - নির্বাচিত ঔষধি উদ্ভিদের পরিচিতি ও চাষাবাদ” in line with the **WHO guidelines on Good Agricultural and Collection Practices (GACP) for medicinal plants**. The manual focused on identification of different medicinal plants, their cultivation & collection procedures together with integrated pest management technology. The training manual has been used by the concerned resource persons and the trainees as well in the Training of Trainers (ToT) programs at different locations of the country.
- SEED project of ACME developed another training manual namely, “ঔষধি উদ্ভিদ চাষিদের জন্য ব্যবহারিক শিক্ষা” targeting the illiterate and semi-illiterate farmers which focused on Bengali alphabet learning, identification of different medicinal plants & their cultivation technique and other practical topics useful to their daily life (e.g. basic mathematics, weight & measures, primary



❑ **Human resource development on cultivation and collection technique of medicinal plants as per GACP guideline of WHO**

● **Training of Trainers(ToT) for medicinal plant Local Service Providers**

As a part of commitment to the environment and society, the project organizes Training of Trainers (ToT) programs for the medicinal plant LSPs on nature positive cultivation and collection of various medicinal plants following the WHO guideline on Good Agricultural and Collection Practices (GACP) for medicinal plant.

Specific activities related to organizing ToT program include:

- Selection and hiring of appropriate venue for the training program.
- Development and procurement of training materials for medicinal plant cultivation and collection practices of herbal raw material.
- Development of appropriate training modules
- Ensuring availability of resource person and training material
- Invitation of appropriate chief guest, special guest, guest of honor etc. for successful inauguration and completion of training program.
- Arranging food and accommodation for the resource person and the trainees.
- Payment of honorarium, travel allowance, daily allowance to the guests, resource person, participants etc.



Inauguration program of Training of Trainers (ToT) in Bogura



Deputy Commissioner, Rangamati attended as Chief Guest in the inauguration program of Training of Trainers (ToT) in Rangamati , September, 2018



Deputy Director, Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) attended as Chief Guest in the inauguration program of Training of Trainers (ToT) in Gaibandha, October, 2019

- **Uthan Boithak (Lawn meeting) for medicinal plant growers**

The project organizes Uthan Boithaks for the smallholder and marginal farmers of medicinal plant in different areas of medicinal plant cultivation where they receive training on medicinal plant cultivation & collection technique as well as other practical knowledge and skills that are essential for the daily chores of the farmers such as, Bengali alphabets learning, primary health care issues, sanitation etc. ACME trained LSPs conduct these training sessions in Uthan Boithak. This unique approach of training at village level encourages spontaneous participation of women in the Uthan Boithak.

Specific activities related to organizing Uthan Boithak include:

- Selection of suitable venue for Uthan Boithak
- Ensuring availability of training materials and resource person
- Payment of honorarium for resource person, daily allowances for the participants
- Monitoring and supervision of training activities regarding medicinal plant cultivation, primary health care, sanitation, adult literacy etc. in Uthan Boithak.



Uthan Boithak in Baliaghata, Joypurhat



Uthan Boithak in Sundorgonj, Gaibandha



Uthan Boithak in Shadullyapur, Gaibandha

□ **Set up of demonstration plots at different locations for disseminating nature positive farming technology regarding medicinal plant cultivation**

Specific activities related to set up of demonstration plot include:

- Selection and hiring on rental basis appropriate land for demonstrating medicinal plant cultivation in the project area.
- Land preparation, collection of seedlings, saplings etc. of medicinal plant.
- Collection and sowing of seeds for the herbs like Tulsi, Kalomegh etc. in the demonstration plot.
- Harvesting from medicinal plant and herbs after maturity
- Primary processing and storage of the herbal materials harvested from the demonstration plot.
- Payment of wages and labor charges for the cultivation, nurturing and harvesting of the herbal materials from the demonstration plot.

□ **Construction of Multipurpose Primary Processing and Collection Centers at different strategic points of medicinal plant cultivation area**

Post- harvest activities of herbal raw materials at ACME financed Multipurpose Primary Processing and Collection Centers



□ **Providing production incentive and/or cash reward to the medicinal plant LSPs and growers as a part of CSR**

- In addition to the price of herbal raw materials, cash incentive has been paid on a regular basis to the medicinal plant LSPs and growers as a part of CSR activities.
- As a part of CSR activities, COVID-19 stimulus packages have been paid in cash for medicinal plant LSPs and growers.



Mr. Mizanur Rahman Sinha, Managing Director, The ACME Laboratories Ltd. distributing crest to a best medicinal plant



Mr. Md. Hasibur Rahman, ADMD, The ACME Laboratories Ltd. distributing crest to a best medicinal plant LSP

□ **Field Supervision and monitoring of medicinal plant cultivation and collection activities**

Supervision and monitoring of different field level activities regarding medicinal plant cultivation, collection, transportation and storage carried out on regular basis through visiting cultivation locations by project personnel of ACME and/or officials of the development partners.



Many medicinal plants do not require huge cropland; instead, they can be easily grown in the marginal and fallow land such as, road side, homestead areas in association with trees and other crops which helps to generate additional income for the smallholder farmers while enriching the ecosystem and biodiversity.

Thus, ACME has been contributing to poverty reduction, biodiversity conservation through promoting nature positive cultivation practices of medicinal plants including medicinal plant species that are facing extinction crisis.



Medicinal plant cultivation in Chittagong Hill Tracts by ACME's trained LSP



Cultivation of threatened medicinal plant species (e.g. *Piper longum*) Shalanga, Sirajgonj



Cultivation of medicinal plant in the homestead areas, Pirgacha, Rangpur



Herbal materials collection from the medicinal plant plantation

The nature positive medicinal plant cultivation initiative is a proven model for mass employment generation, women empowerment, poverty reduction and biodiversity conservation. In addition, medicinal plant cultivation activities contribute to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as, SDG-01 (No poverty), SDG-02 (Zero hunger), SDG-03 (Good health and well-being), SDG-08 (Decent work and economic growth), SDG-13 (Climate action) and SDG-15 (Life on land).