



# FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

## Feed the Future Bangladesh Accelerating Agriculture Productivity Improvement Activity

# AAPI NEWS BULLETIN

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International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC) is a Public International Organization (PIO) based in Alabama, USA. IFDC's vision is a world of healthy, prosperous people who are well-served by productive agricultural systems functioning in harmony with the environment.

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### Notes from Chief of Party, AAPI

This is the last issue of the *AAPI Bulletin*, completing six years of the Feed the Future AAPI project. As many of you know, AAPI will close all its activities on December 31, 2016. I have been working as the

project coordinator since its inception on September 29, 2010. Mr. Grahame Douglas Hunter joined as the chief of party of AAPI on December 16, 2010. During his tenure, Grahame led the AAPI team with outstanding performance, efficiency, and contributions to achieve the project's mission. On April 1,

### AAPI Chief of Party Attended CSIS Launching of *Tracking Promises: Analyzing the Impact of Feed the Future Investment in Bangladesh*

The Washington, D.C.-based Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS) invited the AAPI Chief of Party (COP) to the launching of their report, *Tracking Promises: Analyzing the Impact of Feed the Future Investments in Bangladesh*, held in Washington, D.C., USA, on September 9, 2016. CSIS evaluated the USAID Feed the Future programs in Bangladesh, including IFDC's AAPI Activity. Ms. Ishrat Jahan, AAPI COP, attended the event as one of the four panelists. The USAID Mission Director, Ms. Janina Jaruzelski, was the keynote speaker.



Ms. Ishrat Jahan, Resident Representative, IFDC Bangladesh, and Chief of Party, AAPI, addressing the audience. The other panelists pictured include Mr. Nazmul Islam, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of Bangladesh (left), and Dr. Akhter Ahmed, Chief of Party, IFPRI (right).



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**AAPI News Bulletin**

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2014, Grahame left AAPI to undertake a new IFDC assignment in Myanmar. In addition to my responsibility as project coordinator, I became the chief of party of AAPI after he left and I have tried my best to maintain the high degree of energy, commitment, flexibility, and professional conduct that Grahame set within AAPI. I echo Grahame that, in my long career, AAPI is one of the best projects I have worked on. The project's excellent staff have delivered effective farm management practices and technologies that are welcomed by the rural farmers and entrepreneurs of Bangladesh. The change that the technology makes in the lives of small, poor farming families and rural entrepreneurs makes all the effort worthwhile. And it does make a difference. This newsletter has regularly published case studies and success stories of our rural farmers and entrepreneurs.

For nearly as long as I have worked for AAPI, I have known that one day the project would end with great success. And now that this dream has become a reality, please know that AAPI could not have reached this goal without your unending support. Over the past six years, you have taught me more than I could ever ask for and, in most cases, did ever ask for. I have been fortunate enough to work with you on a wide variety of seemingly identical subjects – an invaluable lesson in overcoming daily tedium.

I have been extremely satisfied with my work at AAPI. Working under the guidance of Mr. John Allgood, Chief Operating Officer (retired), from September 29, 2010 through February 2014 and later Mr. Josh W DeWald, Asia Division Director, since July 2014 has been an enjoyable learning experience. I thank you for your support and encouragement during the implementation of AAPI.

I have enjoyed working for AAPI and I appreciate having had this wonderful opportunity to work with all the stakeholders, both private and public sector actors. I would especially like to thank the officials of the Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), and all institutes under the national agricultural research system (NARS) for their continuous support from top to bottom. However, without USAID, implementing AAPI would not have been possible. I have shared a unique camaraderie with the officials of USAID, which I hope will continue in the years to come, even after AAPI has ended.

I do wish all AAPI staff and IFDC every success in all future endeavors.

Ishrat Jahan

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**AAPI Opens New Door to Better Future for Rural Women**

Bangladesh is an agrarian country, and agriculture plays an important role in the economy. With food security and import replacement as pillars of national development, agriculture must show an increase in productivity. Lack of access to land, water, credit, technology, and services constrains development and contributes to a large rural poor population. According to the latest statistics of the World Bank (2014), about 67 percent of the total population live in rural areas, and 50 percent of the rural population are women. While women share the burden of poverty, they do not have equal access to resources. In particular, women have limited access to and control of land, water resources, credit, and means of production, skills, training, and information. Improving women's

accessibility to these resources and knowledge would lead to higher potential production, improve management efficiency, provide more equal distribution of income, and improve human resources development, ultimately leading to increased growth. Therefore, the USAID Feed the Future AAPI project set a target to involve women in all its activities. Recent literature shows that women's control over resources—particularly assets—may have important implications, including greater intra household bargaining power for women and improvement in children's education, health, and nutrition. These findings have stimulated interest in targeting women for transfers of assets or other resources.

AAPI specified a 20 percent women participation target in project activities at the start of the project. AAPI gender strategy aimed at generating family and community acceptance of women's participation in agriculture is improving women's access to means of production, skills, training, and information. AAPI strongly encourages women's contribution in the promotion of new technologies and supports women to have access to project benefits. AAPI has initiated the whole model village approach in its model village program to establish gender equity and access to resources and benefits. AAPI increased women's skill in rice and vegetable production, thus helping them strengthen food security and nutrition of their households, improve understanding of better market prices of vegetables, and generate interest in entrepreneurship development through the purchase of fertilizer briquetting machines.

When a woman participates in a project activity, it is assumed that she will share her knowledge, influence family decisions, and share in the benefits even though her father, husband, or brother may be the head of the household. Women's participation rate in project activity was gradually raised through seasonal work plans, first to 25 percent in *Aus* 2012, then to 30 percent in *Aman* 2012, and to 50 percent in *Boro* 2013. However, field experience indicated that this is not actually translating into 100 percent of trained farmers adopting fertilizer deep placement (FDP) technology, which is AAPI's main objective. The question arises: Does attendance represent

participation? This is because only 3 percent of the total farm households in Bangladesh are headed by women. AAPI, therefore, changed its strategy again and is involving at least 20 percent participation of women in all activities. However, in the case of vegetable production activities, AAPI is involving almost 90 percent women.

### *Limitations of Women for Involvement in Economic Activities*

The project encountered multiple barriers in its efforts to increase participation of rural women in economic activities. Limitations included:

- Prevailing socio-economic conditions, cultural settings, and environment.
- Engagement of women in mostly home-based activities.
- Lower wages compared to male labor.
- Lack of awareness and skills due to less education and training.
- No or less access to land and financial resources.
- Social and religious restrictions on mobility.
- Dependence on male family members.

### *Strategies to Promote Women Participation in AAPI*

Considering the barriers to women participation, AAPI undertook strategies that allowed greater participation of women in AAPI activities. The strategies mainly included the following:

**Affirmative Action:** All AAPI staff were trained to apply principles of affirmative action<sup>1</sup> to ensure women are included in all AAPI activities. The AAPI Gender Specialist acted as the master trainer to conduct regional orientation training for all staff, including field staff for preparation of training materials (hand-outs, posters) in order to prepare them in mobilizing the community for at least 20 percent participation of women in all AAPI project activities. These orientation sessions discussed the entire issue of women's participation and strategies.

**The Family Approach:** AAPI sees the farm family as its primary beneficiary. While there are

<sup>1</sup> Purposely select women to ensure at least 20 percent participation in all activities. 3

gender-specific activities in farming, it is the whole family that shares in the decisions and benefits. AAPI encouraged husband and wife, father and daughter, and brother and sister to share their participation according to their best advantage. AAPI sought support in this approach from government, community, and religious leaders and in community meetings. This approach encouraged husbands, fathers, and brothers to respectively support their wives, daughters, and sisters in participation and share the decisions and benefits with them.

**Women-to-Women Approach:** Women (and their families) who are already active participants and beneficiaries are seen as advocates to promote gender balance in the project. AAPI sought out these women and supported them as farmers and entrepreneurs, as spokeswomen within their community, and as role models that can be followed by other women. Sessions were organized so that women could help one another to identify and support potential women farmers and entrepreneurs.

**Community Approach:** Community support is critical for the AAPI gender plan. If the (male) community leaders are comfortable with women participation in AAPI activities, a barrier is not only lifted, but these leaders have also become advocates for women participation. AAPI arranged community-level meetings, inviting community leaders to hear selected women advocates explain the project's approach to agriculture development and the benefits to be derived. The Gender Specialist conducted meetings in AAPI-selected project locations, where field staff and Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) sub-assistant agricultural officers (SAAO) attended and observed in order to conduct similar community meetings in their own respective assigned areas.

To motivate the community, respective SAAOs and AAPI field staff were assigned responsibility to conduct sessions in the local schools and colleges to discuss women participation in AAPI project activities. Students can play a vital role in motivating their family members to involve women in each of the project activities.

**Involve Integrated Crop Management (ICM)/ Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Clubs/ Common Interest Groups (CIG)/Village-Based Organization (VBO) Members:** Women are already active members of ICM and IPM Clubs, CIGs, and VBOs. Through these organizations, an already active group of women can be included in project activities. The confidence and support mechanisms already present within their groups was utilized by AAPI. Activities were made available to Clubs or their individual members. The Gender Specialist prepared plans for the SAAOs to conduct meetings with the ICM and IPM Clubs, CIGs, and VBO members to discuss the importance of women participation in AAPI activities.

**Mass Awareness Campaigns:** Sensitizing the general public to the importance of the role of women in the local economy in general and agriculture in particular created an environment of acceptance for women in AAPI activities. AAPI highlighted the role of women in all its promotional material, in its workshops, and in motivational visits. The project arranged video shows on women participation in farming in public places.

The Gender Specialist conducted discussion meetings with the local union parishad or upazila parishad chairmen and members regarding their actions and responsibilities to increase women participation in project activities, reminding them of their participation in upazila-level workshops.

**Media Advocacy and Publicity:** The electronic and print media were encouraged to promote examples of women farmers and women entrepreneurs and their activities.

**Success Stories on Women Participation:** Stories on successful women in agriculture were publicized as examples and role models to give other women confidence and allow men in agriculture to understand the benefits that women can bring into the sector.

**Networking and Collaboration:** AAPI facilitated women leaders to develop networks with one another, non-governmental organizations (NGOs),

and interest groups to communicate about technologies. These women were encouraged to monitor project activities and be involved in follow-up assessments to observe the percentage of women involvement and the benefits derived. The women who directly participated in the project activities and received benefits from AAPI-disseminated technologies were invited to share their experiences and the benefits they gained. They are presented as role models so that others become interested in following their example.

Also, the AAPI field staff attended the monthly meetings of the selected NGOs, discussed the project goal and activities, and sought their cooperation for technology transfer. The field staff provided promotional leaflets and brochures to the NGOs to motivate them to mobilize their women group members to be involved in rice production, vegetable growing, and purchase of fertilizer briquetting machines.

**Develop Festoons and Posters Related to Women Action in Project Activities:** The Gender Specialist designed and developed festoons and posters for use in farmers' trainings and workshops and NGO/local meetings focusing on women participation in AAPI activities.

**Conduct Post-Activity Follow-Up Assessment:** After completion of each crop season, the Gender Specialist conducted an assessment of the women farmers to assess the percentage of direct involvement of AAPI technologies and lessons learned. During the time of assessment, SAAOs helped to identify farmers from their respective blocks. The assessment findings were shared with project staff.

### *Women Involvement in AAPI Activities*

Rural women participated in all 23 AAPI activities as indicated in the following table. The table shows that women's attendance figures are between 1 and 100 percent for all activities (except those associated with DAE<sup>2</sup>, fertilizer dealers/retailers, and fertilizer briquette manufacturers<sup>3</sup>) during the six-year period. Those below 20 percent

are generally dictated by the gender of the fertilizer industry, the staff within the upazila, or membership of the committee; they are predominately men.

However, women are successfully participating in vegetable production, improving their economic empowerment, decision-making ability, and bargaining power through involving many of the CIGs and 50 percent of the members of the ICM/IPM clubs in AAPI activities. Women can also share their knowledge and influence by making the decisions in their households.

### *Women Benefits From Participating in AAPI Activities*

Women have experienced favorable results from participation in AAPI activities. Women report increased social capital, confidence, and skills, in part from increased access to consumer durables. They acknowledge increased workload and reduced mobility, but nevertheless report that they prefer to work inside the home due to the stigma associated with working outside the home. Indeed, qualitative analysis reveals that women measure project impacts largely by their intangible rewards (such as self-esteem, a contribution to the household, satisfaction in children's well-being, and social capital), rather than individual rights or material gains. The AAPI project:

1. Opened new opportunities for women to learn about new farming technology.
2. Strengthened women farmers' decision-making capacity with regard to intensive rice-based farming with a focus on vegetable production.
3. Increased awareness, skills, and knowledge leading to greater adoption of AAPI technologies, particularly urea deep placement (UDP) technology and balanced fertilization among resource-poor women farmers.
4. Strengthened capacity of women farmers and farmers' groups for using FDP and managing fertilizer briquette manufacturing and use on a sustainable basis.

<sup>2</sup> DAE staff is dominated by men.

<sup>3</sup> The fertilizer industry is dominated by men.

5. Built capacity on fertilizer briquette production, briquette machine operation and maintenance, disseminating technology, and assisting in the setup of profitable and sustainable supply chains.
6. Created a women-friendly environment in rural areas through active participation by women in agricultural development.
7. Increased social mobility and status in the family as well as society.
8. Saved family labor cost due to active involvement of women.
9. Developed good relationships among family members.
10. Improved nutrition status of households.

Activity	% Participation of Women							
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6		
						October-December 2015	January-March 2016	April-June 2016
Training of extension staff on UDP (DAE and NGO)	9	10			9			
Training of extension staff on NPK (DAE and NGO)			11	10				
Training of extension staff on vegetables (DAE and NGO)			9	10				
SAAO meeting		10	10	11	12	11	15	11
Farmers' training on UDP	23	28	48	38	38	14	16	13
Farmers' training on NPK			43	36	30	25	17	16
Farmers' orientation for demonstrations and	17	28	36	46		7	9	15
Field demonstrations (rice)	19	25	50	46	21	18	11	19
Field demonstrations (vegetable)	39	96	86	84	18	14	56	20
Field trials (rice)	17	32	52	38	28			
Field trials (vegetable)		94	100	100		33		
Field days	28	29	38	35	23	27	25	28
Motivational field visits on UDP	21	30	43	38	17	21	18	18
Motivational field visits on NPK				39				
Motivational (stakeholder) workshops	15	19	22	19	2	4		4
Sale of briquetting machines	13	20	39	17				
Technical training of briquette producers on	4	7	11	5				1
Training of briquette producers on NPK			1	1	8			
Business management training	4	16	12	12				
Motivational meetings with experienced farmers	20	25	44	37	29	30	31	26
Open-sky shows	13	15	26	18	14	15	11	14
Retailer/dealer training				1	1	1	1	2
Motivational meetings with retailers/dealers					1		1	1

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