



Bangladesh: January 2016

INGENAES stands for Integrating Gender and Nutrition within Agricultural Extension Services. We aim to assist partners in Feed the Future countries to build more gender-responsive and nutrition-sensitive extension approaches and tools to improve agricultural livelihoods for women and men and enhance household nutrition.

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Begum Rokeya Training Centre
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Collaboration with the Bangladesh Agricultural University Extension Center

Back in July 2015 INGENAES team members and partners at BIID visited the Bangladesh Agricultural University Extension Center (BAUEC) and identified areas in which to partner. As a follow-up, a half day workshop session was organized in October 2015 with the BAUEC team to identify the existing challenges facing, limitations identified and brief discussion on the projects (past and ongoing) of BAUEC. As outcome of the workshop BAUEC and INGENAES agreed to focus on staff development on gender and nutrition-agriculture issues, review the effectiveness of several, women oriented programs run by BAUEC, and support the development of an institutional website. In early December we met again for a joint field visit to speak with farmers and staff. About 50 members (mostly women) of local cooperatives joined a courtyard meeting at the site. It was inspiring to listen to an outspoken young woman talk about their desire to become entrepreneurs but also clearly point out the challenges she and others face in generating income from agriculture.

How Men View their Roles in Household Decisions on Food in Rural Bangladesh

Currently, extension agents (called animators) deliver agricultural information and assistance to villagers in Barisal and Dinajpur through local agricultural development projects. Along with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and Caritas, INGENAES is seeking to identify men's beliefs about their contributions to household decisions, particularly around food preparation and purchases. Traditionally, men have the final say on bigger decisions (e.g., whether to purchase a cow or replace roofing), and leave day-to-day decisions about food preparation and distribution to women. *Continued on second page...*

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Other Activities

- Lobbying for stronger and more explicit consideration of nutrition –agriculture linkages among existing nutrition and health behavioral change working groups

Men's perceptions continued...

However, men market women's produce, purchase items at market, and may have certain preferences for what they and their families eat. It is also important to understand the roles and responsibilities of mothers-in-law, who traditionally guide food preparation decisions.

Connecting Smallholder Farmers to Markets

In October 2015, staff from the University of Illinois travelled to Dinajpur and Barisal to learn about how social networks and values connect farmers with markets directly from those who understand best: smallholder farmers. How does a farmer's connections with others as well as their local cultural context affect how well they are linked with markets to buy and sell agricultural goods? Dr. Paul McNamara (University of Illinois) has teamed up with Dr. Kamal Bhattacharyya (Catholic Relief Services) to study an approach of a specific method to connect smallholder farmers, mostly women, to markets in agriculture in the context of rural Bangladesh. The effort will continue later in 2016 along with a workshop focused on developing staff capacity of NGOs and agencies in Bangladesh to better comprehend the dynamics surrounding gender in agriculture.

Gender and Nutrition Workshop with University Students

Partnerships have been built with the Institute of Food and Nutrition Sciences (INFS) of Dhaka University and the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB) under which nutrition clubs were formed so that the young students can be trained and deployed as volunteer change agents in building awareness among different segments of population and sharing knowledge, especially in the rural areas through voluntary engagement (pictured below). In this backdrop, the first workshop was arranged on "Understanding Basic Nutrition Components for Nutrition Club Members" on 12 December 2015.

The training was provided by nutrition experts from Hellen Keller International, which is a leading organization working in the field of health, nutrition, and agriculture. Topics such as importance of nutrition, relevance to health especially for women, children and adolescent girls, smart cooking steps for preserving food nutrients, importance of proper hand washing, etc. were covered given their relevance in the rural context in Bangladesh.

Read more at <http://ingenaes.illinois.edu/wp-content/uploads/Article-1-Nutrition-Workshop.pdf>



Photo: Nutrition Club member converge in Dhaka. © Sumaiya Noor

The USAID funded Integrating Gender and Nutrition within Agricultural Extension Services (INGENAES) project is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). INGENAES is designed to assist partners in Feed the Future countries (www.feedthefuture.gov) to build more robust, gender-responsive, and nutrition-sensitive institutions, projects and programs capable of assessing and responding to the needs of both men and women farmers through extension and advisory services. Please email abohn@illinois.edu with questions or comments.