



Bangladesh Updates

on Gender and Nutrition in Agricultural Extension

June 2016

About

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. ingenaes.illinois.edu/about-us

In This Issue

- Gender Rural Assessment Survey Tool (GRAST)(p.1)
- Announcements (p.1)
- Women and marketing impacts with CRS and Caritas (p.2)
- ICT for women farmers webinar (p.2)
- Food plates and dietary diversity (p.3)
- Gender issues in value chains and tech (p.4)
- Nutrition-sensitive agriculture (p.4)

Assessing the Gender-Sensitivity of Rural Extension Advisory Services

Women are major producers, marketers, and buyers across the agriculture sector, therefore, it is crucial that rural extension advisory services meet the demands and needs of women farmers as well as men. Through the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)'s GRAST, the Gender Rural Assessment Survey Tool, development organizations and private companies can assess the gender-sensitivity of given extension advisory services to help introduce improvements. GRAST has two main objectives: to understand what works to design and deliver gender-sensitive extension and facilitate sharing of innovative approaches; to shed light on areas within the assessed organizations and their programs that require improvement in order to increase gender-responsiveness and the effectiveness of the extension system design and delivery.

In early March 2016, Andrea Bohn and Hajnalka Petrics (Gender and Development Officer, FAO/Rome) met with a large group of stakeholders to introduce the tool and garner interest in testing the tool in their organizations and giving feedback on its usefulness and how to improve it. A team from Bangladesh Agricultural University, led by Dr. Wakil Rahman, is conducting the enabling environment assessment. Seven organizations agreed to test the tool in 2016; the tests are ongoing. The testing will lead to improvements in the tool so that it can be rolled out to other organizations nationally and globally. It is anticipated that the pilot process will identify the strengths and weaknesses in the seven organizations themselves (through applying the GRAST), and that an understanding of how to address the weaknesses (which would be indicated in the tool) will trigger institutional change. INGENAES will track and report on this institutional change.

Announcements

Save the Date for the [INGENAES Global Symposium and Learning Exchange](#) in Lusaka, Zambia January 23-25, 2017!

By joining us, you will participate in three days of sharing past experiences, human-centered design, and innovations in gender and nutrition issues in extension. Go to <http://bit.ly/1XCwkr9> to register.



Photos

Right: Women farmers and CRS/Caritas staff gather after the May training event

Top: A woman farmer with her pumpkin harvest ready for market

Middle: Dr. Kamal points out a weather info board at the village center

Bottom: A woman farmer with home-made vermiculture (worm composting) that she sells at a profit

All © P. McNamara 2016

Women and Marketing Efforts Activity: What are the Impacts?

Bangladeshi women face barriers in accessing markets for their agricultural produce. Through using community-based buying events that are more accessible venues for women’s involvement, access to markets is being re-envisioned. Caothic Relief Services/ Caritas Bangladesh is carrying out two projects that link women farmers to agricultural marketing opportunities and strengthen nutrition at the household level. INGENAES has joined the efforts of both the Nigera Gori Project in Dinajpur district and the Egiye Jai Project in Rajihar Union of Barisal district to assess the impacts of the projects’ marketing efforts on linking women farmers to markets and documenting the projects’ nutrition-strengthening actions. Both projects utilize an agricultural extension and training program that uses demonstrations, learning groups, and provides coaching to women farmers.

As a result of these projects, the woman farmer who grew the 33 multicolored pumpkins pictured (top-left) will bring this harvest to a local market where a male trader will pay her and take them to a larger market further away, allowing more people to see and purchase her goods. This woman has access to a market, but many others do not. Through the CRS/Caritas projects and INGENAES’s involvement, more women farmers will have improved access to marketing opportunities like she does. INGENAES conducted an assessment and reported preliminary results during a two-day training and workshop event in Dinajpur on May 24 and 25, 2016.



INGENAES Project Director Dr. Paul McNamara and Dr. Han Bum Lee from the University of Illinois are working on the action-oriented research along with CRS Bangladesh Agriculture Technical Advisor, Dr. Kamal Battacharyya, on strengthening their approaches to nutrition through mapping project activities into nutrition strengthening avenues and identifying gaps. Additionally, the enhanced Monitoring & Evaluation work together is building the capacity of the organization’s staff for applying experimental design and statistical approaches to learning about project impacts and mechanisms of impact. The findings from the action-oriented research serve to generate lessons for further work and program designs as well as information that can be shared with other country programs about effective means of linking unedserved women farmers with market opportunities in similar social contexts.

ICT for Women Farmers in Bangladesh Webinar Resources

INGENAES is working with partners in Bangladesh to improve gender equity of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) based agricultural extension. This webinar presented findings on challenges and best practices for reaching women farmers through ICT-based extension, shared examples of how gender is currently being addressed, and hosted a dialogue around next steps and ideas. Watch the [full webinar here](#).



Food Plates and Dietary Diversity

INGENAES is evaluating the impacts of the Shika project food plate, designed by FHI360 to promote dietary diversity among pregnant and lactating women. To better understand if men and women will make more diverse food choices if they use a food plate as a guide and to what extent factors like market access, income, and cultural norms affect nutrition decisions in Bangladeshi households. In a research experiment, Ms. Kelly Davidson (University of Florida) will introduce a modified version of the food plate to men and women from poor and ultra-poor households in Bangladesh, subsequently observing participants' food choices in two buffet meals. Some individuals will also receive nutrition and gender training to complement the food plate, based on activities from the INGENAES Gender and Nutrition Facilitator's Manual. Ms. Davidson anticipates the food plate will be most effective at encouraging dietary diversity for men and women when combined with nutrition and gender education. The results from the study will inform extension agents, health and nutrition workers, government agencies and NGOs on the best methods for communicating nutrition and dietary diversity guidelines to Bangladeshi families.



Ms. Davidson, along with University of Florida's Dr. Jaclyn Kropp, traveled to Bangladesh this month to coordinate logistics and partnerships for the research. The project will be a collaborative effort between the University of Florida, Bangladesh Agricultural University, and BIID. The project investigators plan to work closely with CRS and Caritas to recruit participants for the study. As such, Ms. Davidson and Dr. Kropp visited the Caritas Nijera Gori field office and observed cluster meetings for three beneficiary communities in the Dinajpur area. They were also invited to present a seminar on the Applications of Behavioral Economics in Nutrition at the Bangladesh Agricultural University Faculty of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology (AERS) in Mymensingh. With the help of Olyul Islam and six graduate students from AERS, Ms. Davidson piloted the research methods at the BAU Extension Center (BAUEC) farmer's hostel, feeding a delicious buffet meal to seven female and eight male BAUEC cooperative members. Ms. Davidson will return to Bangladesh after the Eid holiday to train student enumerators from BAU and kick off the data collection period, scheduled to occur from August to October 2016.



Photos

Top: Shika food plate (FHI360) (Note: actually slightly modified version with logos at the underside of the plate is now being used)

Middle: Ms. Davidson with a family in Dinajpur district.

© K. Davidson 2016

Bottom: Fruit at the market

© P. McNamara 2016

Right: Families pose for a group photo with Ms. Davidson in Dinajpur district

© K. Davidson 2016



Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture

Highlighting the links between agriculture and nutrition, and the necessity of nutrition education, and diversified food production to fight under-nutrition in the country, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) partnered with the Government of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC), Civil Society Alliance for Scaling up Nutrition, Helen Keller International, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the WorldFish Center, to organize the “Technical Symposium on Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture in Bangladesh: Bringing Agriculture into the Dialogue for Improving Nutrition Outcomes” that took place on April 10, 2016. [Read more on this event.](#) Download links to [presentations and resources.](#)

Why won't farmers grow pulses and why won't people eat them?

Prof. Siddique Kadambot, the UN Special Ambassador for the International Year of Pulses 2016, [talks about the challenges of getting people to grow and eat more pulses.](#)

Building understanding of gender issues in value chains and technology design and dissemination

INGENAES partner, Cultural Practice, LLC (CP) designed and offered two capacity building workshops in May. The first workshop topic centered on identifying and addressing gender issues in agricultural value chain at the Hotel Lake Castle, Dhaka, while the second workshop focused on understanding the gender dimensions of agricultural technology design and dissemination, taking place at the Bangladesh Agricultural University in Mymensingh with support from the university's Interdisciplinary Centre for Food Security. Both workshops developed participants' ability to identify practical interventions to address gender-based constraints in agricultural projects. Activities included both classroom and field components allowing participants to apply gender analysis skills introduced during the workshop. CP is producing a Facilitator's Guide for both workshops that will soon be available on the INGENAES website.

Participants at each workshop represented a range of development and research organizations including CARE-Bangladesh, iDE, International Rice Research Institute, YPARD, Helen Keller International, KSU-CIMMYT, and BAU in Bangladesh. A total of 36 participants attended the workshops; 18 were at each program. Five of the participants joined the workshops representing organizations in Nepal.

The value chain workshop is based on a methodology for integrating gender analysis into agricultural value chain assessments and interventions developed by CP with the former Development & Training Services, Inc. (dTS) for the USAID Economic Growth and Trade (EGAT) Bureau and Missions under the Greater Access to Trade Expansion (GATE) Project. The Integrating Gender into Agricultural Value Chains (INGIA-VC) methodology integrates a gender analysis framework with a value chain analysis to improve the participation and performance of, and benefits accrued to men and women. The INGIA-VC methodology is described in “[Promoting Gender Equitable Opportunities in Agricultural Value Chains: A Handbook.](#)”

The technology assessment workshop is based on a qualitative methodology developed by CP under the INGENAES project to understand the potential gender-related and nutritional impacts of agricultural technologies on men and women. Participants are introduced to a data collection and analysis process that allows them to recognize different types of agricultural technology design and/or dissemination challenges and to develop recommendations for improving the technological options for meeting men and women farmers' preferences and to organize distribution models to more effectively reach them.



This newsletter is made possible by the support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the U.S. Government Feed the Future project “Integrating Gender and Nutrition within Extension and Advisory Services” (INGENAES). Leader with Associates Cooperative Agreement No. AID-OAA-LA-14-00008. The contents of this newsletter are the sole responsibility of INGENAES and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

© INGENAES 2016

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License.

Technical editing and production by Kathryn Heinz