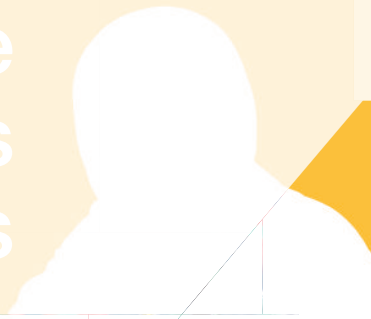


# Agricultural Development Where Innovation Brings Systemic Changes



Farmers in coastal and other climate vulnerable areas are now enjoying higher production after being trained and having better access to advanced farming methods, quality seeds and other facilities. This new approach is called the Farmer's Field and Business School, which builds on the traditional Farmers' Field school, but also includes a more holistic approach to smallholder farming, including sessions on gender equality, nutrition, marketing, and monitoring and evaluation. 242 Farmer leaders have received training on climate smart agriculture practices, including introduction to adaptive yield varieties and technologies. 3369 farmers have participated in technical sessions on dairy, rice and potato cultivation using the FFBS demo plots.

CARE's "Pathways to Secure and Resilient Livelihoods" project represents CARE's programmatic approach that promotes sustainable agricultural development for the smallholder farmers, especially the poor women farmers. One of the core visions of the program is to strengthen sustainable smallholder agricultural systems to improve food and nutrition security for farmers, workers, and consumers.

## Additional earning opportunity for women



The project team reviewed the existing FFBS toolkit to tailor the modules to the local context and translated them in Bengali. This included identifying existing climate smart practices and traditional agricultural practices, and identifying existing capacity gaps that the project can help fill.. Based on this needs assessment, the Pathways project has designed modules to train farmers and farmer leaders who worked as Community Based Trainers to reach the Pathways target of up to 5,573 women smallholders. The new agricultural techniques were applied using the demonstration plots under FFBS platform. The project also designed and implemented Participatory Performance Tracker (PPT) tool to capture the progress of individual farmer and group performance followed by the learning from these demonstration plot.

The project started working with farmers, helping them form savings groups to prepare for emergency shocks and losses and to ensure a sustainable supply of quality agricultural inputs and access to productive resources with the savings. The project helped create total of 102 community based savings groups to cover 112 communities.

The capacity building packages was initiated at community level through the Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (CVCA) sessions, where communities identified their vulnerabilities and their existing coping strategies in order to assess their current adaptive capacity, and then prepared a community adaptation action plan (CAAP).

The project facilitated technical sessions on climate smart agricultural practices, conducted market analysis at farm demonstration level, and facilitated gender awareness sessions at the community level, with the engagement of men, women and local leaders. Besides the technical training facilitation around agriculture, marketing and gender, the project team facilitated sessions on CVCA and market analysis, disaster preparedness and response.

The project developed a total of 134 demonstration plots to help farmers build their knowledge and information for sustainable and climate-smart agriculture practices. A total of 3,433 farmers worked on cultivation of tolerant varieties, efficient fertilizer use, use of compost & integrated pest management using those platforms. A total of 478 non-beneficiary farmers from community also learned under those platforms.

## How did we do it?

Recognizing that strong local institutions are a critical element of adaptive capacity building at the community level, this initiative worked to build local organization's capacity to facilitate adaptation. The FFBS employed a hands-on 'learning by doing' approach through which groups of farmers met regularly during the course of the cropping or livestock production cycle to experiment. They also learned about participatory approaches to community visioning, climate resilient agricultural production techniques, risk analysis, business management and market literacy, and gender equity. Some critical activities in this process were:

- Review the FFBS toolkit and add aspects of resilience, such as risk analysis, production, and packaging into a field user friendly version.
- Build on existing collectives such as Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) as platforms for implementing the program and assesses these for maturity, using the collective readiness tool.
- Identify and train CARE partners and Community Based Trainers to reach the Pathways target of up to 11,500 smallholders women effectively and sustainably as means of narrowing the farmer-extension agent ratio and building gender-sensitive extension systems.
- Build women smallholder farmers' capacity at the household and community levels
- Set up demonstration plots to share knowledge and information in sustainable and climate-smart agriculture practices.
- Off-field training of collective members for some agricultural activities, gender dialogues, market visits, nutrition lessons and cooking demonstrations.
- Track adoption of improved resilience, agriculture, market engagement and gender practices at individual and group level on a semi-annual basis through the Participatory Performance Tracker (PPT) tool.







## What we achieved?

**Access to Land:** The project has ensured access to road side and canal side land for poor women farmers and wage earners. A written agreement between farmer groups and Union Parishad is in place ensuring access to 11 kilometers road side and canal side land (around 5.5 acre) by 140 women smallholders.

**Access to savings:** A Total of 102 community based savings groups have been facilitated by the project to use savings money in emergency situations and to ensure agricultural inputs and access to productive resource from the input shops. A total of 1960 farmers now have access to savings and loan from the targeted communities.

**Access to agricultural inputs:** The project worked with a total of 16 high quality agro input shops and linked them with farmers group. Activities included build capacities of these local shop owners to be able to provide quality inputs and services for the farmers.

Effective linkages have been established between farmers' groups, the Department of Agriculture Extension, and the Department of Livestock Services and Agriculture Research Institutes. The team also worked to establish effective links between local government and Pathways farmer and wage groups. Farmers now have better access to the Government line departments for seeking support for their agro-production.

## For Further Query or Technical Assistance

### Anowarul Haq

Director- Extreme Rural Poverty Program  
CARE Bangladesh  
RAOWA Complex (Level-7)  
VIP Road, Mohakhali, Dhaka 1206  
Mobile: +880 1777 755848  
Email: [anowarul.haq@care.org](mailto:anowarul.haq@care.org)

### Ahmad Sadequl Amin

Coordinator, Agriculture & Value Chain  
Extreme Rural Poverty Program  
CARE Bangladesh  
RAWOA Complex (Level-7)  
VIP Road, Mohakhali, Dhaka 1206  
Mobile: +8801755500195  
Email: [ahmadsadequl.amin@care.org](mailto:ahmadsadequl.amin@care.org)