

Workshop report on Farmers' Perspectives on Food and Nutrition Security IAPP in Focus



Organizer:
ActionAid Bangladesh
House 09, Road 128, Gulshan-01 Dhaka

কেন্দ্রীয় কৃষক মন্ত্রী
KKM
কৃষকের অধিকার আদায়ের মোর্চা



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The Workshop on “farmers’ perspective on food and nutrition security with focus on integrated agriculture productivity project” was held at the ActionAid Office, Dhaka Bangladesh on 12 December 2012.

The objectives of the workshop were:

- Share results and capture lessons learned from the implementation of “strengthening farmers organization “project
- Share updates about the implementation of the IAPP and its technical component managed by FAO
- Recommend a broad outline of forward looking strategies for effective implementation of IAPP and its TA component, specifically for 2013

There were 23 participants (18 male, 05 female), including 07 leaders of farmers groups in Kurigram and Patuakhali district, leaders of 13 civil society organizations, 1 journalist, 1 representative each from Food and agriculture organization- FAO, and Asian farmers Association . Attached here is the participants' list as annex.

The workshop was organized by Action Aid Bangladesh and Kendrio Krishok Moitree - KKM with the assistance of Asian Farmers Association (AFA) with the support of Agricord through AsiaDHRRA.

During the daylong workshop, issues related to the identification of the following were discussed:

1. Strategic challenges and options in capturing farmers perspectives
2. Potentials and limitations to incorporate farmers' voice and
3. Exploring common ground of government, FAO and CSOs perspective on the process of involving farmers in the development and implementation of food security projects.

The 1st half of the workshop was devoted to the discussion on the experience and lessons learned from the implementation of the “strengthening farmers’ organization Project”. The 2nd half was devoted to capturing the idea of the way forward to initiate a broad-based platform for addressing food and nutrition security issues of small-holder farmers in Bangladesh.

The workshop was concluded by enthusiastic comments from the participants. Evaluation of the workshop by participants was positive, and progress over the next will indicate the impact of campaign for future perspective.

Experience and Lessons Learned from Strengthening Farmers Organization (SFO) Project:

SFOs project initiated a broad based farmer’s platform at two project areas: Patuakhali and Kurigram district. During project period, about 65 (41 men and 15 women) farmers leaders received ToT on organization management, leadership and networking, which led them to create linkage with government and nongovernment organizations.

The farmers leaders who were present during this workshop shared their views and ideas and made commitment to extend their assistance to others farming community. They learned from the project activity why and how they can build effective farmers organization. They learned about farmers rights and where they should claim their rights. They said that now they are called by government organizations and agricultural extension departments are asked to share their ideas on current development activities.

The farmer leaders also shared their unpleasant learning regarding input distribution and extension services, saying that respective government departments consider political identity. Farmers’ organizations are created by government agencies for the purpose of particular project design fulfillment and there is no long term vision exercise prior to developing a farmer’s organization. Farmers’ organizations evolve with the hope of input or cash benefit; there is no ethical or political orientation from the very beginning of organization development. That’s why the very nature of the FO is very fragile nature and the FO evaporates with the duration of project ending.

Secretary General of KKM Mr. Alauddin emphasized that for effective farmer platform, we need representation from Ward—Union—Upazila, District and then National organization. Some of the farmer leaders also expressed that it is essential to get registration from the government authority for long term existence of the farmers' organization.

Executive director of AVAS- Barisal Ms. Rahima Sultana Kajal expressed her opinion that now the young field workers and farmers are very enthusiastic and that we need long term program planning for food security rather than small project.

Ex BAPA executive director Mr. Muhidul told that we need a long-term integrated approach through which the entire people of a target community are guided to adopt sustainable rural livelihood for them to live in harmony preserving the natural environment and bio-diversity of the area. For this particular work government must do it.

Mr. Talib Basher Noyaon executive director of Unnayan Dhara added that registration of farmers' organization is harmful. In the name of registration some farmers' organization is introduced for illicit activity which is not helpful to the growth of an effective farmer organization. He suggested that if needed FOs can register from ILO or government as trade organization.

IFSN global coordinator Mr. Shahidur Rahman expressed his opinion that we need to be more specific and organized if we want to see the effective and sustainable farming system. In Bangladesh plenty of farmers organizations evolved by the GO and NGOs initiative but maximum is disappeared due to no specific direction of economic development of individual farmers. If the farmers have no financial benefit from their organization the FO becomes an illusion to them.

He added that, Government budget for agriculture is presently less than 5%; it should be at least 10% and the budget should include sustainable farming actions. Land right is another complicated issue and small farmers do not have lands. Market is trapping small and marginal farmers. Farmers are always cheated from market by middlemen and market syndicates. With respect to farmers' actions, they need to have their own seed bank and local market; they also need to have water resource management and stop extracting water from ground.

He informed that we have two types of farmers – one type is having own land -they are 7-8 million and others are landless minimum 20 million. So we need to set first if we want to organize producer organization or farmers' organization. In other side we have to consider the production methods and marketing system. We need to think our women farmers interest as 70% of small farmers are women and they suffering their recognition from the state. Thus, farmers need to improve food production by adopting sustainable agriculture as well as agro-ecological approach.

Executive director of PMID focused the issue of existing government policy of agriculture. He suggested that we need to review government policies and create pressure group for implementing the existing services and policy benefit among the farmer community.

Mr. Zakir Shain from Krishoker Sor (farmer's voice) said we should consider our traditional practices of agriculture and that he is scared to follow the western agricultural practices that not considering the situation. He informed that we produced excess food for the 7 billion people but the multination company agents are always says we need more production.

Dr. Sobhan from UBINIG pointed that they have around 2700 variety of local rice and we need to protect our native varieties. Chemical farming destroyed our soil and water resources and also organic vegetation. So, now the time to go back to organic and sustainable farming practices for keeping our civilization. Cuba is the example of urban agriculture now. Once Cuban agriculture was contaminated by chemical but they realized organic culture is the only way for long term sustainable agricultural production. Now they are food self sufficiency by practicing organic farming. Interesting information is that about 79% of its agricultural production is urban agriculture. Cuba is now the pioneer of urban agriculture.

We had the golden history of sustainable agriculture but now we are engaged in poison based farming. Our agriculture is 5000 year old heredity of culture, we had different variety and type of crop but now we practicing mono culture only rice. We forgot our oil, spices, fruits, cereals because of the green revolution. We need to return to mixed farming and vermi compost for sustainable soil development.

A farmer leader asked why the government is now encouraging them to do sustainable organic practices when before they were promoting chemical agriculture. AFA Secretary General Esther Penunia said that this is the result of the work of many civil society organizations from the national up to to the international levels who have consistently pushed for sustainable agriculture in decision making arenas, through various researches, on-ground initiatives and campaigns. So ,a sCSOs we must continue this advocacy work.



Asgar Ali Sabri, Director- Program policy campaign of Action Aid concluded the first half of the workshop with some specific points, which is required to remove for future food security and successful farmers' platform building.

1. Farmers are facing identical crisis
2. Farmers are confusing the way of sustainable farming technique
3. Lack of unity and specific target of farmers community
4. New liberal economy or market economy

FAO Technical Component and Activity Plan for 2013:

Consultant of FAO Mr. Imanun Nobi Khan presented the information of IAPP TA component detail. He stressed that GoB received USD 50 million in 2010 from Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP) for the Integrated Agricultural Productivity Project (IAPP). Objective of the overall IAPP is to sustainably enhance productivity of agriculture in two agro-ecologically constrained and economically fragile areas Rangpur and Barisal. IAPP Components is, technology generation (research: BARI, BRRI, SCA, BFRI), technology adoption (extension: DAE, DoF & DLS), irrigation and water management (BADC) and technical assistance for capacity development.

He added the mapping and capacity need assessment of the FOs of the country done by FAO TAC of IAPP

Salient shots of FO Mapping

Throughout the country there are around 163000 FOs that are associated with numerous extension agencies in different typologies

Name of the agencies	Working with number of FOs	Types of groups
Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE)	43765	crop based FOs
Department of Livestock Services (DLS)	4489	livestock and poultry based FOs
Department of Fisheries (DoF)	3020	open water body, private pond, inshore marine fishing community
Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC)	18073	Water User Groups
Char Livelihoods Programme (CLP)	2272	extreme poor farmers of Chars
Social Development Foundation (SDF)	3262	village Institutions (Vis)

The Mapping study revealed 82853 FOs as farmers cooperatives legally registered with Department of Cooperatives (DoC) have been associated with different agencies like Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB), Samabay Bank (Cooperative Bank), Bangladesh Milk Producers Cooperatives Union Ltd., Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB), Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), Bangladesh Academy of Rural Development (BARD), Rural Development Academy (RDA), etc.

Capacity Needs Assessment

Score	Constraints with FOs	Capacity needs/Business Services
36	Lack of skill (organizational) organization management skill financial skill business service skill project management skill market linkage skill	Capacity needs related to organizational management training for selected ExCom members those in turn will act as Master Trainer financial management training for selected ExCom members advance skill training on area specific potential business services, market linkage development, negotiation, networking, lobbying and advocacy
19	Lack of information about market at FO FO not capable to gather market info FO cannot compete with large/medium local market actors	Capacity needs related to: establishing one stop information center at FO on market, technology, etc.
18	Price distortion at primary market Distorted price offered by syndicate during peak harvesting season Farmers have to sell produces immediately after harvest to repay credit Farmers are not interested in group/bulk marketing Lack of skill of lead farmers (Executive committee) to translate economy of scale	Capacity needs related to: generating alternative income just before and during peak harvesting season formation of bulk buying and selling group within FOs
12	Lack of skill (technical) Lack of skill on appropriate modern technology for value adding in crop, livestock, poultry, fisheries and agro-forestry sub-sectors Technology mostly owned by absentee farmers (rich)	Capacity needs related to: technology that reduces cost women friendly technology (less drudgery) establish Common Facility Center at FO
10	Rural elite capture often disrupts FOs in delivering community supports	Capacity needs related to: facilitation skills of extension agent in forming FOs using best practiced participatory processes
8	Problem with access to credit	Capacity needs related to: writing bankable business proposal writing develop linkages with MFIs and SME bank for Ex.Com
7	Lack of agribusiness attitude for group business	
6	Lack of purchase power of farmers	

After the presentation, there was a good exchange of discussion on what can be proposed for the IAPP and the technical assistance component. The following were the major recommendations from the participants:

1. There should be representatives of farmers and NGOs during project planning, implementation and evaluation of food security project of Bangladesh and ensure there is real farmers' representation at every level of intervention.
2. In line with this (number 1 above), it should be clear who is the NGO and the farmer representative in the national and regional management /steering committees of IAPP.
3. Need to open information flow by media, newspaper and mobile on new initiatives of production, processing and marketing of agricultural products.
4. Should be clear on agricultural budget allocation to the farmers representative and clear distribution mechanism of agricultural subsidies to the small and marginal farmers
5. Should protect agricultural land from industry and urbanization. i.e clear land/crop zoning.
6. Consider agriculture is a dignified profession to the young generation.
7. Use local expertise in the various training and capacity building activities. There are many NGOs in Bangladesh with training skills on agriculture, farmers' development, and organization development. UBINIG has expressed interest to conduct food safety and sustainable agriculture for farmers.
8. Support organizing and networking efforts of farmer leaders in the project areas as well as exchange of information and learning among themselves

Thanks goes out to the Action Aid Bangladesh staff for their incredible and efficient support in helping organize the workshop.



Prepared by

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Annex: Workshop participants list

SI #	Name of the participants	Address
01	Ms. Morjina Begum	Facilitator Mithaganj Union Krishok Moyitri, KKM, Kalapara Patuakhali 01739909255, kkmlrp45@yahoo.com
02	Md. Alauddin Sikdar	Acting Secretary general of KKM Ghoraghat, Dinajpur 01718628302, kkmlrp45@yahoo.com
03	Shameem Mollik	Chairman Choyilbunga LFS, IAPP, Mirjagonj, Patuakhali, 01711347234
04	Mesbah Uddin Mannu,	Local Correspondent, Daily Janakantha , Patuakhali 01715605647
05	Md. Mokbul Hossain	Advocacy Unit Leader Chakirbasha Federation, RDRS, Rajarhat Kurigram, 01743207183
06	Md. Nasir Uddin	General Secretary Pandul Union Krishok Moitree, Ulipur, Kurigram, 01962406921
07	Emdadul Haque	Chairman Hokodanga Khamar para Krishok Dal JIBIKA Ulipur, Kurigram 01725673170
08	Abu Sayed Sharkar	Local Correspondent Daily Manab Jameen, Kurigram Sadar, 01713735667
09	Ms. Rahima Sultana Kajal	Executive Director, AVAS Amir Kutir Lane, Alekanda, Barishal-8200 rskazal@yahoo.com , 01711884551
10	Dr. Md Abdus Sobhan	UBINIG 22/13 Khilji Road, Shyamoli (Adabor), Dhaka-1213 dr.masobhan@gmail.com ,
11	Mr. Taleb Bashar Nayan	Executive Director Unnayan Dhara , 42 Magura Road, Dhopaghata Bride, Jhineda-7300 unnayandhara@yahoo.com
12	Imanur Nobi Khan	CEO - Agromech agromech@gmail.com , 01712918342
13	Mohidul Haque Khan	Ex Executive director BAPA mohidk@gmail.com , 01199076142
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15	AFM Shahidur Rahman	IFSN Global coordinator House # 19, Road # 128 , Gulshan-1, Dhaka Shahidur.rahman@actionaid.org , 01819280941
16	Parimol Chandra	Coordinator, Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD)
17	Mr. Rafiqul Islam Khan	Managing Partner Participatory Management Initiative for Development (PMID) 01711-731216, info@pmidbd.org , pmidbd@yahoo.com
18	Esther Penunia	General Secretary of Asia Farmers Associations Philippine, estherpenunia@yahoo.com
19	Shamsun Naima Rahman	Deputy Manager Sustainable Agriculture and Livelihood, shamsun.rahman@actionaid.org , +880 17 12028045
20	Farhat Jahan	Manager, Food Rights and Sustainable Livelihoods ActionAid Bangladesh, farhat.jahan@actionaid.org , +880 17 11 245707
21	Asgar Ali Sabri	Director, Program, Policy and Campaign, ActionAid Bangladesh
22	Shamsher Ali	Manager, Land Rights, ActionAid Bangladesh,
23	Amirul Islam	Manager, Sustainable Agriculture- FRSL ActionAid Bangladesh

Annex: Schedule of workshop

Farmers' Perspectives on Food and Nutrition Security I APP (Integrated Agricultural Productivity Project) in Focus

Organized by:

Action Aid Bangladesh and Kendrio Krishok Moitree - KKM
with the assistance of
Asian Farmers Association (AFA)
with the support of
Agricord through AsiaDHRRA

12 December 2012

Venue: ActionAid, House# 19 Road# 128, Gulshan-1, Dhaka-1212

Objectives:

- Share results and capture lessons learned from the implementation of Strengthening Farmers Organization Project
- Share updates about the implementation of the IAPP and its Technical component managed by FAO
- Recommend a broad outline of forward looking strategies for effective implementation of IAPP and its TA component, specifically for 2013

Time	Content
09.00- 09.30	Registration (with Tea)
09.30- 09.45	Welcome and introduction of participants Introduction of consultation
09.45 10.15	Presentation : Strengthening Farmers' Organization Project
10.15- 13.00	Strategic challenges and options: capturing farmers perspectives
13.00- 14.00	Lunch
14.00-14:30	Updates of IAPP Implementation 2012 – Potential and challenges to incorporate farmers voice
14.30- 15.00	Updates of FAO Technical Component– Potentials and limitations to incorporate farmers voice
15.00-16.0 (with Tea)	Discussion / Proposals : 1) on IAPP implementation 2) on Technical Component for 2013 or beyond
16.00-16.50	Exploring common ground - Government perspective - FAO perspective, CSOs perspective - Ways Forward : Action points for 2013 and beyond
16.50-17.00	Concluding and Vote of thanks