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USAID Agricultural Extension Support Activity (AESAs) Project



Daily time use tool for the Farmer Producer Groups (FPGs) of the USAID Agricultural Extension Support Activity (AESAs) Project

Dhaka, April 2015

Project Implemented by: Dhaka Ahsania Mission
Technical Partners: CARE Bangladesh and mPower
Funded by: USAID

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USAID Agricultural Extension Support Activity Project at a glance

The USAID Agricultural Extension Support Activity (AESAs) project is a USAID funded project implemented by Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) in partnerships with CARE Bangladesh and mPower.

The project's goal is to "strengthen the existing agriculture extension system in southwest and central Bangladesh to sustainably improve food security and nutrition for smallholder farmers with an emphasis on women".

The project's time frame is from October 2012 to October 2017 and it works in 12 districts in the central and southwest areas of Bangladesh in three divisions: Dhaka, Khulna and Barisal in order to sustainably improve the food security and nutrition for the smallholder farmers.

For project administration purposes, these 12 districts have been divided into 3 regions: Barisal (comprises 5 districts of Barisal division: Barisal, Patuakhali, Barguna, Pirojpur and Bhola), Jessore (comprises 2 districts of Dhaka division: Faridpur, Rajbari and nearest 2 districts of Khulna division: Jessore, Magura), Khulna (comprises 3 districts of Khulna division: Khulna, Satkhira and Narail). Project is working in total 231 unions in these 26 upazilas.

The project aims to increase and enhance the access of smallholder farmers to improved extension services which ultimately will lead towards increased household incomes, improved nutritional status and food security for almost 108,400 participating farmers. These farmers are mobilized into 3,942 farmer producer groups (FPGs) on 6 selected value chains including: jute, chili, mung bean, dairy, beef fattening and fish.

Project's objectives, components and approach

The major objective of the project is to enhance access to and utilization of agricultural extension services by smallholder farmers – both men and women. The project works to build capacities and support a farmer demand-driven agricultural extension system, synergized by the use of information communication technology (ICT). The project objectives are realized through the implementation of activities organized under the following three project components:

- I. Enhance access to and utilization of agricultural extension services by smallholder farmers (with an emphasis on women farmers);
- II. Expand and strengthen ICT mechanisms to increase access to agricultural market information, knowledge and technologies;
- III. Strengthen capacity of agricultural extension service agents (public and private) to proactively respond to the needs of small holder farmers (including women farmers).

The Project follows following approaches to implement its activities:

- **Farmer Producer Group (FPG) formation** as an approach to give small holder farmers (and women) a voice and to enable agricultural extension agents to work with small holder farmer groups;
- **Focus on Public and Private Extension Agents** realizing that many small holder farmers informally use input providers as extension agents, the project is building capacities of input providers and other informal extension agents in addition to Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) extension agents;
- **Information Communication Technologies (ICT)** is a key focus of the project in expanding and strengthening channels through which farmers and extension agents access technical agricultural information;
- **FtF Collaboration** is an underlying assumption whereby the project has started collaborative activities with other FtF projects on areas of mutual interest and benefits across projects.

Key beneficiaries of the project

- Around 110,000 smallholder farmers including 48% women;
- Around 4,000 Farmer Producer Groups (FPGs);
- Each FPG focused on one of six selected value chains;
- 1,000 Agricultural Extension Agents (approximately 65% government extension agents and 35% private/informal extension agents).

Women in AESA project

Women are usually not recognized as farmers in Bangladesh despite their huge involvement and contributions in the agriculture sector. They lag behind and are deprived of getting quality agricultural inputs, access to knowledge, technology and access to markets. It is time to recognize and acknowledge the contributions of women farmers and also to support them for availing necessary agricultural related assistances). Women's contributions as women farmers to the sector should be encouraged and supported.

AESA project has mandated to involve women farmers to its value chain based groups and it has taken initiatives to enhance leadership skills of the group leader especially for the women leaders. Accordingly, the project has developed a training module and provided orientation to the field staff for quality implementation of the activities at farmer level.

Daily time use tool

Men's awareness and involvement is very important to increase women's participation in decision making and also women's access to and control over agricultural resources. Regular participatory analysis of men and women's role helps to understand the division of labor, patterns of poor men and women in agriculture and family work load in the rural society. The analysis also sensitizes men to take responsibilities of household farm duties and to balance the workload of women, particularly those who are involved in agriculture production during peak harvesting seasons.

As part of the analysis, the project initiated sessions on "daily time use tool" and together with family members discussed ways of more equitably distributing household and farm tasks for women. Here both male and female together analyze the workload of women in the household level in order to better understand the roles, workloads and contributions of women.

Facilitation process of the Daily Time Use exercise

➤ **Step 1: Introduction with each other and sharing exercise objectives:**

- **The facilitator will:**
 - explain the objectives of the session: 'the purpose of this exercise is to understand the division of labor between men and women, while seeking ways to balance the workload by sensitizing men';
 - greet all the participants and will tell them to introduce themselves among each other;
 - divide the participants into two groups – men and women.

➤ **Step 2: Drawing a daily time line, covering 24 hours of the day**

- **The facilitator will:**
 - draw three long lines with considerable spaces between them on the ground. S/he will mark sunrise and sunset with symbols that can be easily understood by all the participants, thus making the line to represent a 24 hour day timeline.

➤ **Step 3: Placing daily activities in terms of time (hours)**

The daily activities performed by the participants in each day will vary according to class, season, age, sect, and gender. It is advisable to consider homogeneity of the group and seasonal peak periods to understand broader household implications.

- **The facilitator will:**
 - ask each group to place cards with symbols on the timeline, marking the time as they wake up and go to sleep;
 - ask each group to place cards with symbols or household utensils on the timeline indicating the time they take their meals;

- ask each group to place daily activities on the timeline. Here, cards that indicate activities through symbols or household utensils could be used. It is found that the session becomes more attractive and lively when household utensils are used.

➤ **Step 4: Scoring of work concentration for each category of activities**

- **The facilitator will:**
 - ask about the work that reflects diversity in the community, meaning that they are not all the same in terms of occupation and time. S/he should ask to mark the amount of time that the activities take each day accordingly, placing a score for each one with small pebbles or seeds to indicate intensity of work;
 - ask participants to mark leisure time with a dark color to visualize the variety of daily activities in relation to time.

➤ **Step 5: Discussing and summarizing the findings**

- **The facilitator will**
 - ask each group to present the findings to the broader audience, highlighting leisure, intensity of work and their feelings when practicing each activity;
 - ask participants who they think are working more – expressing how it impacts on the family;
 - analyze how much time women work and men work in a day? It will come out that women is working more than men, then the facilitator should ask the participants that who controls the household resources? Do they take joint decisions? Is joint decision important?
 - finally, ask the participants to reflect on the division of labor – how can work be balanced more fairly? Make a plan of action, assisting participants to change age old behaviors and balance the work.


