Partnership for a purpose

The Kansas State University (KSU) and International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in partnership with Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), Institute of Water Modeling (IWM), Shushilan and international organizations is implementing a project entitled “Pathways of scaling agricultural innovations for sustainable intensification in the polders of coastal Bangladesh”. The project is closely working with other USAID initiatives and R4D projects in the region as well as leveraging engaging with local universities and national agencies for their capacity building and exploring pathways of scaling key innovations.

Sustainable intensification in the coastal zone

The aim of the project is to improve food security, human nutrition, and livelihoods of the rural polder communities in southern Bangladesh through scaling and evaluating pragmatic and feasible farming approaches or more efficient utilization of available resources to sustainably intensify the polders. The geographic focus in phase 2 is four polders (Polder 22, 29, 30, 34/2P) having an area coverage of about 22,000 ha of the southwest Bangladesh.
Livestock and sustainable intensification

As part of its sustainable intensification strategy, the project is evaluating performance of various forages including barley, triticale, sorghum, foxtail millet and maize along with doing palatability assessment and monitoring behavior of livestock. The team is collaborating with CIMMYT and Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute (BLRI) to integrate livestock component to agri-food systems.

Engaging women and youth

To engage youth and women, and to address labor scarcity in agriculture, the project provided training on mechanization. In aman 2020, six service providers, four women and two youth harvested paddy from 11.4 ha and earned USD 525 within 10 days. The project has also co-designed a mini-tiller with local manufactures for intercultural operation in dry season crops viz. sunflower, maize, etc.

Seeing is believing

The project in collaboration with Department of Agricultural Extension organized a field day in Polder 34/2P to showcase various innovations including early planting of maize and sunflower with residual moisture, mechanized intercultural operations etc. The event was attended by 164 farmers including 43 women. DAE was very pleased to see the response from farmers and replicated the event in Polder 29.
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