

Accelerating Horizontal Learning in Bangladesh Polders ICT as Force Multiplier



Evaluation Report December 2019

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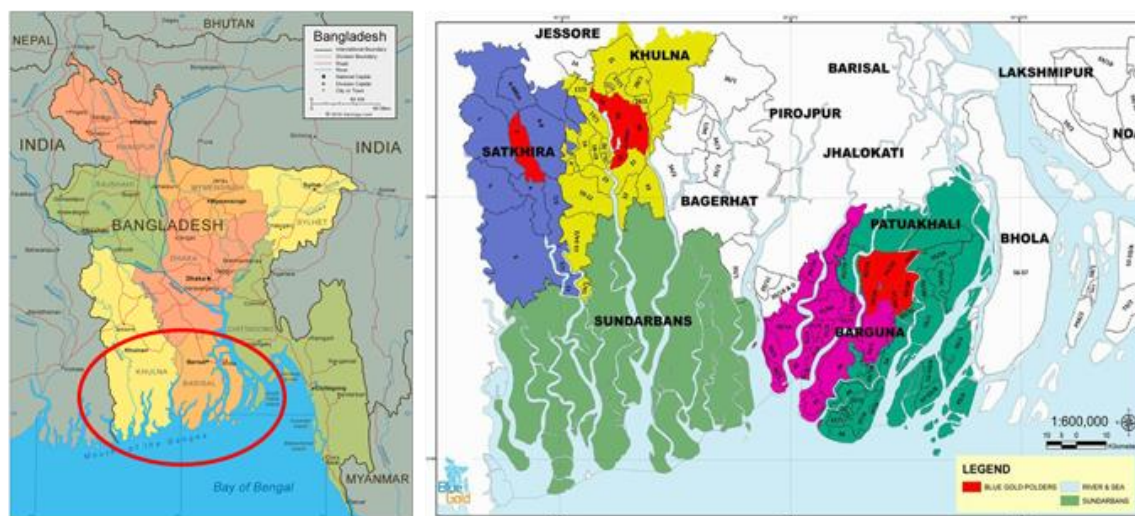
<i>WMG members</i>		
1	Polder 25	Rejoan Fakir
2	Polder 25	Parvin Akter
3	Polder 2	Al-Imran
4	Polder 2	Nazmul Hossen
5	Polder 43/2A	Pyari Begum
6	Polder 43/2A	ABM Moshiur Rahman
7	Polder 43/2D	Tanzila Begum
8	Polder 43/2D	Md. Imran Hossain
9	Polder 28/2	Prodip Hira
10	Polder 28/2	Minati Mallick
11	Polder 30	Nipa Biswas
12	Polder 30	Chandan Bachar
13	Polder 22	Rina Rani
14	Polder 22	Ashim Kumar Rai
15	Polder 27/1	Md Sumon Sarder
16	Polder 27/1	Parul Afroj
17	Polder 47/4	Rabeya Sultana
18	Polder 47/4	Zahirul Islam
19	Polder 55/2A	Shahina Akhter
20	Polder 55/2A	Abdullah al-Zahir
<i>CDFs</i>		
1	Polder 25	Abdus Salam
2	Polder 2	Dino Bandu Sarker
3	Polder 43/2A	Anwar Hossain Sujon
4	Polder 28/2	Late Mr. Basudev Roy
5	Polder 22	Omar Faruq
6	Polder 27/1	Md. Kawser
7	Polder 30	Uzzal Narail
8	Polder 55/2A	Md. Zafor Hossain
9	Polder 47/4	Md Shohidul Islam

Disclaimer

These are the views and expressions of the author, and do not necessarily represent the view of the Netherlands Embassy in Dhaka or the Blue Gold program.

1. Introduction

1.1. Context



Southern Bangladesh is a deltaic region with largely rural communities, that have always been at risk from cyclones, floods, and salinization of land and water. Since the 1970s, largely through bilateral cooperation with the Dutch government, Bangladesh has built a network of 139 polders. The polders enclose and protect its coastal communities from flooding and saline intrusion, allowing for controlled intake and outflow of water.

Living within polders requires doing a new kind of water management—managing sluice gates at water intake and outflow points, maintaining drainage canals (*khals*), building and maintaining drainage structures across roads, etc. It also requires new kinds of agricultural practices-- utilizing land and water in a way that is more productive and more adaptive to climate events.

At this point, good practices related to both water management and agriculture within polders need to be disseminated widely among polder communities. Currently, this happens through exchange between Water Management Groups (WMGs), most of which have been set up under the Dutch-Bangla Blue Gold project. WMG members share experiences and good practices within each other and with other WMGs through meetings, field visits, Farmer Field Schools, and *melas* (fairs).

1.2. Horizontal Learning

The term 'Horizontal Learning' is defined in many different ways in many different contexts. At its very core, it is a peer-to-peer learning process. Thus, it is different from formal education systems where teachers and students come from different walks of life; i.e. where they are not peers. In formal education systems, teachers and students have a hierarchical relationship, in which teachers determine the topics and design the pedagogy. In peer-to-peer learning systems, the peers set the learning agenda and pedagogy themselves.



In the context of agriculture, 'Horizontal Learning' is just how farmers have been learning from each other since the first farming communities came into being. There is a natural need for farmers to learn from each other what cropping patterns, irrigation techniques, or poultry/livestock rearing practices work and what does not; i.e. what are 'Good Practices' to follow and what are bad practices to avoid. Thus, Horizontal Learning in agriculture is practical and demand-driven, not undertaken for academic interest.

None of this is to suggest that Horizontal Learning systems are in conflict with or are superior to formal learning systems. They both have comparative advantages which complement each other. In Bangladesh, as in many other countries, a system of formal agricultural education and research has been set up in the form agricultural universities and research organisations. By any yardstick, these institutions and programmes are of good quality and have generated substantial amount of useful research over the years. Farmer networks cannot be expected to carry out the cutting-edge, high-tech research that these universities and research centres do, such as in the field of genetics or data-driven decision support systems (DSS). At the same time, the adoption of new crop varieties and use of DSS can be spread among farmers only by engaging farmer-to-farmer horizontal learning systems.

There is precedence and several examples of how external interventions (governmental and non-governmental) can strengthen/utilize formal learning systems. On the other hand, while the existence and importance of horizontal learning systems is acknowledged, ideas as to how to engage with them are few and far in between. One of the earliest efforts in Bangladesh was the World Bank-funded Horizontal Learning Programme (HLP) in 2007. It fostered learning amongst Local Government Institutions, in the fields of Water & Sanitation, Governance, Health, and Education. In agriculture and water management, a notable large-scale effort to utilize Horizontal Learning is the Blue Gold project. Across various thematic areas, Horizontal Learning events such as Farmer Field Schools, *Melas*, and Crop-Cutting Festivals, etc. are organized to introduce Good Practices to farmer groups (organized as Water Management Groups- WMGs) and stimulate farmer-to-farmer learning.



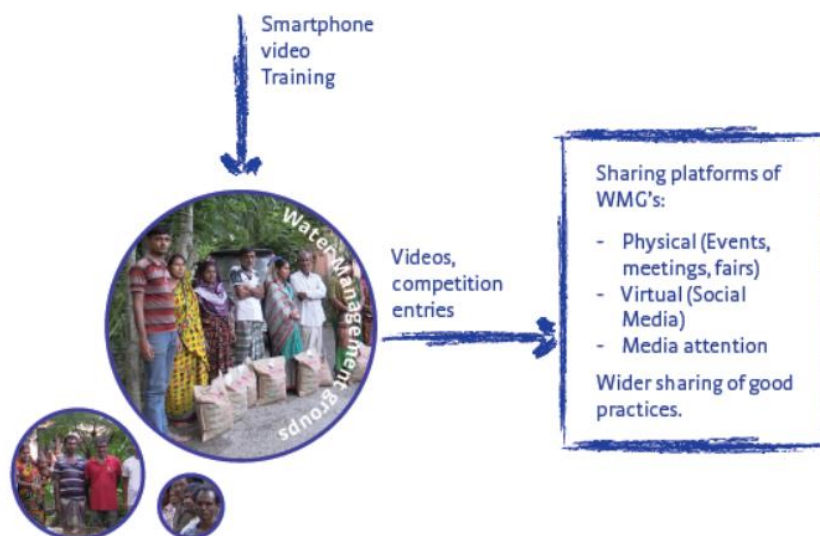
A Krishok Mela (Farmer Fair) organised by Blue Gold, 2016

1.3. Project Design and Outcomes

The project was designed with the aim to boost Blue Gold’s ongoing Horizontal Learning activities among WMGs, by building the capacity of a critical mass of WMG members to capture and share Good Practices in agriculture/water management, using smartphones.

The choice of the medium of videos and smartphones was based on the understanding that the audiovisual format appeals to farmers across different levels of education; and that the rate of smartphone penetration in Bangladesh is among the highest in the world (from 5% of the population in 2017 to 16% in 2018- an addition of 18 million over 1 year).¹

Apart from the training component, the project had a competition component, video screenings, video productions, and an element of online dissemination (through facebook). The various components are described below:



¹ Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_smartphone_penetration

Component 1: Mobile video training:



Select WMG members (majority of young ones, who already use smartphones as second nature) were provided training in basics of shooting videos with smartphones. Anyone can press the record button. However, with knowledge of concepts such as framing, planning shoots, managing light and sound, and compiling shots, one makes good videos that others can effectively learn from.

Besides, video editing trainings were provided to Union Digital Centre (UDC) entrepreneurs—information intermediaries who provide rural communities services like internet access, printing, smartphone repair; and media content such as videos and songs for smartphones. UDC entrepreneurs will play a key role in making capturing and sharing of good practices through videos becoming common practice, in the long term.

Component 2: Mobile video competition



Open to all WMG members. Entries were videos that demonstrate good practices in water management, profitable agriculture, and WMG management. They also act as incentives to immediately implement learning outcomes from the trainings.

The competitions generated videos that have been circulated among WMGs through video screenings, online, and peer-to-peer sharing. As a result, Good Practices that were the subject of the videos have also been circulating.

(Watch videos received as entries by WMGs from Polder [28/2](#) ; Polder [25](#); Polder [2](#); Polder [27/1](#); Polder [30](#); Polder [22](#); Polder [47/4](#); Polder [55/2A](#); Polder [43/2A](#); Polder [43/2D](#)).

Component 3: Video Production

The project team has produced 18 videos, capturing 18 most promising good practices.

(The videos can be seen here: <https://vimeo.com/album/5799492>)

Component 4: Video screenings



Gatherings of 30-50 WMG members where they watch and discuss videos produced by other WMG members as well as those produced by the project team. The audience chose what videos to watch and discusses relevance/replicability of the good practices. Discussions were mediated by experts in various fields also invited to the screenings.

Component 5: Horizontal Learning Manual

Learnings from the project will be used to produce a Horizontal Learning Manual. This document can be used to implement similar Horizontal Learning interventions.

Component 6: Online Dissemination

A facebook-- [উপকূল চিত্র Polder WMG Sharing Platform](#)-- group was set up in course of the project, upon learning that a very high proportion of WMGs – young and old-- are active on the social networking website. This was not part of the original project design. However, the group proved to be a useful channel of dissemination of videos made by trainees, competition winners, as well as the project team, with each posted video seen by 50-60 people on average. Apart from the immediate group members (244 as of December 2019), the video were also exposed to a much wider audience when they shared posts on their personal profiles.

Online dissemination is also being carried out through www.agtube.org, an international platform for dissemination of agricultural videos.

<https://www.agtube.org/en/search?search=polder&language=All>

(A short video providing an overview of the project and its various components can be watched here: <https://www.facebook.com/100009868878624/videos/1020626418276311/>)

Project Outcomes

- **10** mobile video trainings, **250** WMG members trained
- **2** video editing trainings organized, **25** UDC entrepreneurs trained
- **10** rounds of competition
- **122** WMG-produced videos generated
- **18** videos produced
- **50** screenings organized, reaching **1700+** WMG members
- Facebook group set up with **245+** members (as of December 2019)

2. Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation process consisted of the following components

2.1. Interviews:

Interviews were carried out with:

a) Project participants: 20 select WMG members from among those who participated in the project activities (trainings, competition, screenings) were interviewed. The interviews were semi-structured, but were guided by the following questions

- How useful did you find the project activities (trainings, competition, screenings, video productions)?
- What were some of the most useful aspects of the project?
- Will you apply the outcomes (video-making ability, videos) in your work as WMG/WMA members, or as farmers? How?
- In general, what do you think is the potential of using videos as a means to spread good practices?
- Has the programme had any immediate, short-term impact that you can identify?
- What were some of the less useful aspects of the programme?
- What improvements could be made?

b) 10 Community Development Facilitators (CDFs): CDFs are Blue Gold's polder-level staff members who live and work within the polders of operation. They have a deep understanding of WMGs and their activities.

CDFs lent crucial support to organizing of the various project activities. Many of them participated in the trainings as well. Thus, they had insight into the organization of the project, their immediate outcomes, as well as their impact in the medium and long term.

Therefore, 10 CDFs corresponding to 10 polders where trainings were held were interviewed. The interviews, again, were semi-structured to allow for reflection. Apart from the questions also put to WMGs, some additional questions were put to CDFs such as:

- What were the challenges faced in supporting the organizing of different project activities?
- What has been the impact of the project activities in your polder? What do you think the impact will be in the long term.

2.2. Learning Workshop



Participants at the Learning Workshop (November 27, 2019, Dhaka)

A 'Learning Workshop' was organized in Dhaka on November 27, 201, upon completion of the project activities. Participants included Blue Gold senior project staff and representatives from Blue Gold partner organisations such as Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB), Department of Agricultural Extensions (DAE), and Department of Livestock Services (DLS). Other participants included representatives from Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute (BFRI), Caritas Bangladesh, Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh (CCDB), FAO, Hellen Keller International, International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCAD), IRRI, Max Foundation, Practical Action, SAARC Agriculture Centre, Save the Children, Shaplaneer, Stichting Landontewikkelingsproject Bangladesh (SLOPB), World Vision, and World Fish Centre.

The project activities, outcomes, and a preliminary analysis of the qualitative data collected through the interviews were presented to the participants. Based on the presentations, a group discussion was carried out with the following questions put to the participants:

- What are your general impressions & comments, regarding the project/ the approach (video-based horizontal learning)?
- How applicable and replicable do you think it is, in Bangladesh?
- What can we do to build upon the outcomes and impact of the project?

Their responses contribute towards an evaluation of the project approach, activities, outcomes, and impact.

The involvement of external organisations was sought in this exercise in order to:

- collect feedback from a wider range of perspectives than those of project staff and the Blue Gold programme
- to present the concept of Video-Based Horizontal Learning to these organisations, as a premise for collaborating with them to build upon the project outcomes and impacts

3. Evaluation Insights

Following are the key insights drawn from the evaluation exercise:

3.1. What were the positive impacts of the project activities?

According to the project participants and CDFs, the following were some of the positive impacts of the project activities:

3.1.1. Learning something that has utility

When asked to list reasons why they thought the project was ‘useful,’ most participants said that what they learnt was something of utility, especially to their activities as WMG/WMA members. (Further explanation below under ‘*How much of a utility do videos have in Water Management/ Agriculture*’)

3.1.2. The joy of learning something new:

Even though participants already had smartphones and used them to make video clips, they valued what they learnt in the trainings regarding how to better frame shots, managing available light and sound, and shooting clips in a systematic way to tell a coherent story. Most participants were not familiar with how to use the Pause button to combine various shots into one video. They valued these insights as ‘something new’ that they learnt.

3.1.3. Personal development

Many respondents used the term ‘Personal Development’ to describe one set of outcomes of the project. They said that video training, competition, and screenings “brought out talents of common men and women in the area,” “removed fears, inhibitions, and doubts in the minds of people regarding their potential.” Many said that they were happy to learn that “it does not take many people to make a video—one person like me can make a video on their own.”

3.1.4. A sense of outreach to the wider world

A recurring response was that participants valued videos as a way to spread stories of successful farmers in their areas “across Bangladesh, and across the world.” This was connected to: (a) participants watching videos from other polders during screenings and (b) participants seeing their videos uploaded on facebook getting views and comments from beyond their local area.

Responses 3.1.2., 3.1.3., and 3.1.4. can be connected to an aspect of Participatory Video theory, which proposes that being able to construct and tell stories provides people a sense of empowerment and representation.²

² Richardson-Ngwenya, P., Restrepo, M.J., Fernandez, R., Kaufmann, B.A. ‘*Participatory video proposals: A tool for empowering farmer groups in rural innovation processes?*’ Journal of Rural Studies Volume 69, July 2019, Pages 173-185 (Link: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0743016718309744>)



Participants at a training practicing shooting

3.2. How much of a utility do videos have in the fields of Water Management/ Agriculture?

This was a key question, as it tests the basic premise of the project design and approach: that videos are an effective way of spreading good practices in agriculture/water management.

3.2.1. Why Videos?

Most participants—WMG/WMA members and CDFs-- agreed that videos can be useful in spreading good practices, due to following characteristics of the medium:

- Videos are a visual medium. They are an easy way to explain a concept in 5-10 minutes, especially to those not used to reading on a regular basis (like most farmers in Bangladesh).
- Videos capture some details that printed material does not, because they capture time and movement. For example, farmer testimonies on video are more credible because one can sense how genuine he/she is based on their body language.
- Making a video is less demanding than writing a book. (The reference here is to simple videos made using phones, the kind that were discussed in the trainings)

3.2.2. Why farmer-made videos?

Under the project, 250 WMG members were trained in making videos using their smartphones. Besides, 18 videos were made on select good practices by professional documentary teams. Both are being disseminated through screenings, and online. The 18 videos made by video professionals, obviously, had higher production values. So what is the comparative advantage of farmer-made videos? Here are the 3 distinct sets of responses to this question, with the central theme being 'credibility':

- Farmers find videos made by fellow farmers more trustworthy. They think that professional, slick videos can have tricks and traps.
- Interviews in farmer-produced videos are more rough. You can hear both questions and answers, the conversation is not edited like in professional videos, so it is more believable.
- Farmers find those videos more credible wherein they know the person making the videos and/or the person who is the subject of the video.
- Farmer-made videos make farmers more confident that they can adopt new practices successfully.

3.3. How did good practices spread?

Through the interviews, and through analysis of the various project activities, it was observed that awareness regarding good practices spread at various points through various processes:

- a) **During screenings:** Around 1750 people were reached through the 50 screenings held during the project. This included a mix of small screenings (25-30 people) and larger ones (50+people). Present at the trainings were experts such as local DAE extension workers, CDFs or other Blue Gold staff, who would respond to questions and comments that the audience had regarding the good practices being shown. There was greater interactivity at the smaller screenings. The larger screenings were also of great value for the sheer number of people they were reaching out to (70+ in one instance).



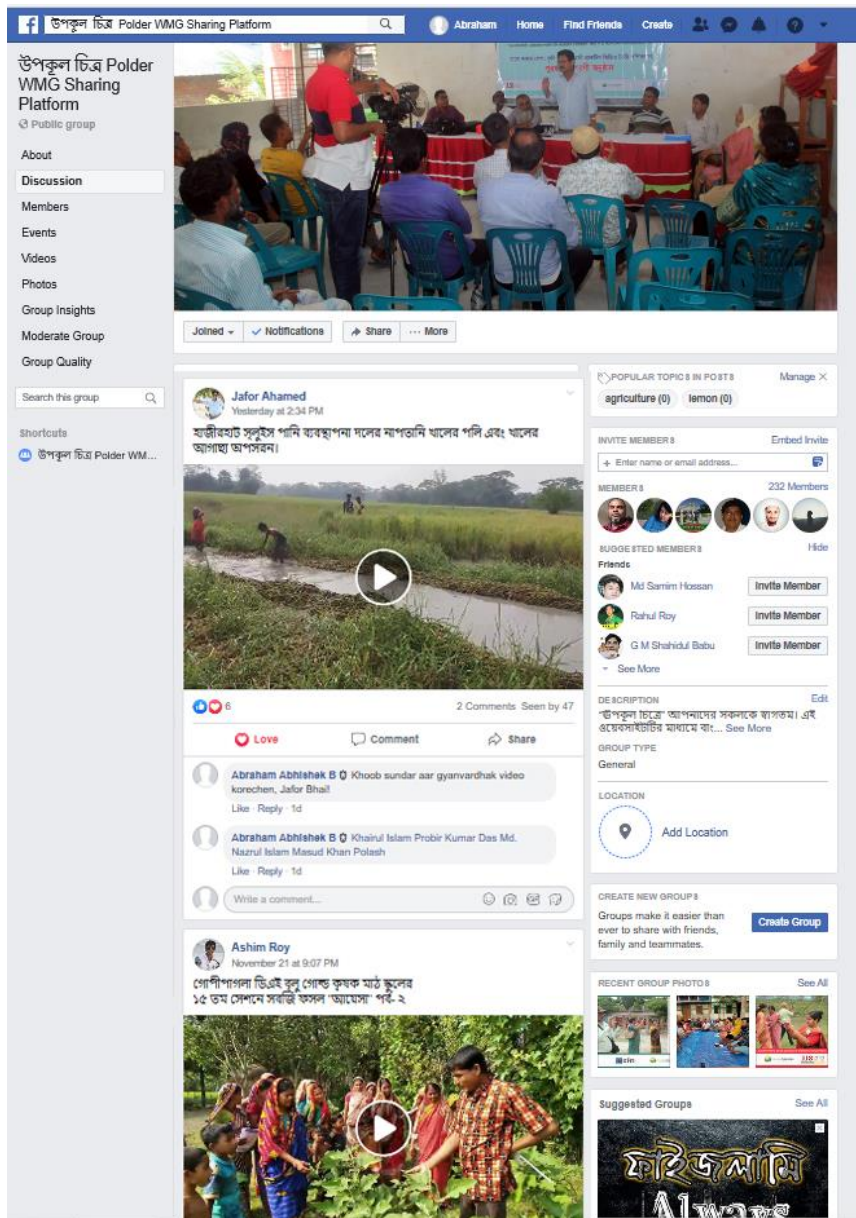
Screenings underway in Patuakhali (left) and Khulna (right) regions

- b) **During award ceremonies:** Prize-winning videos were also screened during award ceremonies, to a gathering of WMG members from the area and guests which included local leaders, DAE/DLS staff, local Blue Gold staff.



Award ceremony for the video competition in Polder 43/2D (Patuakhali)

- c) **Online:** A significant number of people were reached through videos and other material shared on the facebook group [উপকূল চিত্র Polder WMG Sharing Platform](#), with each post reaching an average of 50-60 people. More people were reached when posts were shared by group members on their individual profiles. Through facebook, some videos travelled further and wider than the project areas.



Screenshot of the Facebook Group

Additionally, discussions around good practices were triggered at the following points.

- d) **During the training:** Day 2 of the trainings were spent discussing (a) what good practices were prevalent in the polder, (b) what makes those practices good, and (c) what should the content of a video on the good practice be. Through these discussions, many within the training group learnt about good practices in their areas.



Participants at a training discussing Good Practices in their area (Kismat Phultola, Polder 30)

- e) **While shooting videos:** Invariably, the process of shooting videos attracted many people—onlookers and neighbours of the subject of the video. When they joined in, they discussed the good practice being captured.
- f) **During collection of videos:** When project staff/CDFs went to the field to collect videos as entries to the competition, they would transfer videos from participants into a computer, typically at a public place like the local market. This, again, would attract attention and often videos were played back to small audiences of 5-10 people.

3.4. Impact

The key outcomes of the project were to impart skills (making smartphone videos), making application of those skills WMG members' second nature, generating a number of videos, and putting them in circulation among WMG members. The intention was that the ultimate impact of these outcomes would be spreading of Good Practices in agriculture and water management.

Such impact is expected to be visible in the medium and long term. However, some impact was already felt in course of the project, as evident from the stories below. These stories are also indicators of further impact in times to come.

Ashim Kumar Rai, Gopi Pagla WMG, Polder 22, Khulna



As his entry to the competition in Polder 22, Ashim Kumar Rai submitted a video about the dragonfruit orchard he and his wife Gita Rani Rai maintain and profit from. He eventually won the first prize. This video was shown at several screenings and also shared on উপকূল চিত্র facebook page. Ashim shared the video on his profile too. Among those in his facebook network who saw the video:

- 2 acquaintances from Paikgacha (100 km from Gopi Pagla) sought his help and have now set up dragonfruit plantations of their own
- an acquaintance from Barisal has done the same
- a friend who lives India has also started his own small dragonfruit plantation.
- an acquaintance who works for BWDB Khulna asked Ashim to supply him with 4-5 kilos of dragonfruit everytime he travelled to Khulna

Anowar Hossain Sujon, CDF, Polder 43/2D, Patuakhali



Sujon Bhai is the Blue Gold Community Development Facilitator (CDF), living and working within Polder 43/2D. As such, he has close relationships with WMG/WMA members in the polder. He travelled around in the area helping project staff collect video entries for the competition. During the process he showed some of these videos to small groups of people, on phones or on his laptop. As a result, Mstafizur Rahman Manju (Barabighai WMA Sabhapati, Purva Kevabunya village) and Maniruzzaman Swapan (member, Paschim Bara Bighai WMG) took up chicken and duck rearing following improved methods captured in the videos (using Hazol Pans and improved chicken coop).

Mehedi Hasan Sumon, Araj Sajaria WMG, Polder 27/1, Khulna



Sumon Bhai won first prize for his video in the Polder 27/1 competition, a portrait of a successful woman chicken keeper. Many in his neighbourhood saw his video, either on his phone or on one of the screenings in his polder. 4 of them contacted him separately for details regarding Hazol pans, and are at various stages of taking up chicken keeping themselves.

These are 3 of the several examples recounted in the interviews, of people taking up good practices after watching videos produced in the project.

3.5. Screenings

As mentioned earlier, screenings with different audience sizes were organized as part of the project. Those interviewed (WMG members, CDFs) made special mention of screenings as a way of disseminating good practices that (a) they thought was very effective and (b) relatively easy to

organize. The CDFs interviewed in particular mentioned that they would recommend/endeavor to organize more screenings in support of their future activities.



3.6. Online Dissemination (facebook)

Facebook was not part of the original project plan, as the consortium did not realise how widespread the social networking platform has become. During the preparatory fieldwork and in the first two trainings, the project team realized that WMG members across the board were on facebook: young, old, technically savvy or not. Even many who do not own smartphones/computers borrow others' to use facebook. Thus, the facebook group [উপকূল চিত্র Polder WMG Sharing Platform](#) was set up in July 2018 which currently has 245 members (and counting). Shared on the group are mainly videos—including those produced by WMG members, those produced by project team, as well as select 3rd party videos on relevant topics. Also shared from time to time are relevant images, documents, and links to online resources. A typical post is viewed by 50-60 members.

At the same time, data comes at a cost prohibitive to most WMG members. They use it conservatively. Thus, while many people watched, shared, and commented on videos, few uploaded them. Thus, the project team collected videos from WMG members and uploaded them.

Overall, while facebook was a small part of overall dissemination, it was not insignificant. Besides, it clearly had a role in some of the identified cases of adoption of good practices (See 3.4: *Impact*)

3.7. What could have been better?

The WMG members interviewed were asked where they thought the project fell short, and what could be improved the next time around.

Training Duration

Most of the WMG members interviewed called for longer trainings. According to a participant from the training in Polder 2, Satkhira, "... we haven't had a training on videomaking before. We did not know what to expect and how it was related to water management. It took us half-a-day to figure that out, and by that time a quarter of the training was over."

At the same time, some trainees suggested that if there were to be further trainings, the extra day/days could be planned not immediately after the second of the 2-day trainings, but a few weeks later. This would give participants time to practice shooting enough in their own time, and then get an opportunity to put to the trainers doubts/questions that might arise in the process.

Training Content

During the 10 video trainings, trainees were shown how to put their shots together using the Pause button. Many participants showed interest in learning video editing. In response, 2 video editing trainings were organized for interested participants along with Union Digital Centre entrepreneurs (UDCs- see above *1.3: Project Outcomes, Component 2*). However, since these trainings were not part of the original plan, only a limited amount of time/resources could be spent on these trainings.

In any subsequent iterations of the project, more elaborate video editing trainings will be planned well in advance.

Participant Selection

Many of the participants interviewed pointed out that their training groups had participants that were not sufficiently interested/motivated in the training, and that the project team should have spent more time on participant selection. Some further suggested that each potential participant should have been approached individually, and his/her interest in the training ascertained through a conversation with them.

Video Competition

Each competition offered 3 prizes to the 3 best videos. A number of the interviewed participants suggested that the remaining participants should have been given consolation prizes, since making videos is way out of their comfort zone and rewarding their efforts would give them much-needed encouragement.

Conclusion

The evaluation results show that the project was reasonably successful in achieving its goals. More importantly, it provided an opportunity to test the relatively new approach of video-based horizontal learning, and understand its possibilities and limitations. The project was designed with the conviction that videos and horizontal learning can be harnessed much more than they currently are, towards improving agriculture and water management in Bangladesh. Project results and insights have confirmed this conviction, and have provided a blueprint for how a video-centred horizontal learning intervention should be implemented in the country.

Apart from the internal evaluation carried out by the project team, this conclusion is also informed by discussions with a number of prominent organisations working in Bangladesh's water/agricultural sector (see Section 2.2. *Learning Workshop*). Apart from providing an evaluation of the project itself, the workshop provided a number of pointers as to how videos should be further used to boost horizontal learning in the country, listed below as Ways Forward.

Ways Forward

What should be the role of videos in Horizontal Learning?

SM Zunaed Ali, Executive Director of van Stichting Landontwikkelingsproject Bangladesh (SLOPB), suggested that using videos could **help significantly bring down costs of disseminating Good Practices**. Similarly, Tahmina Begum, Farmer Field School Specialist at FAO, said that **videos could be used in trainings** to boost their quality and to bring down costs.

While appreciating the potential of videos to spread agricultural information, Humayun Kabir (DAE-Director, Blue Gold), and Md. Rezwanul Islam (Agri Extension Officer, DAE) expressed concerns regarding the potential of videos to misinform. The DAE representatives in particular emphasized that any agricultural intervention involving production and dissemination of videos **should have a strong mechanism for controlling quality of the videos and the accuracy of the information they provide**.

According to Alamgir Chowdhury, Deputy Team Leader, Blue Gold Project, it is important to ascertain what is the best role for videos to play in the larger process of Horizontal Learning. He opined that for a farmer to take up a Good Practice, he needs detailed information and support that can only be provided through events like Field Days and Farmer Field Schools. **Videos perform the very important function of creating interest, enthusiasm, and demand, which will drive people to sources of more detailed information**. "Inspiring people is a project by itself," he said.

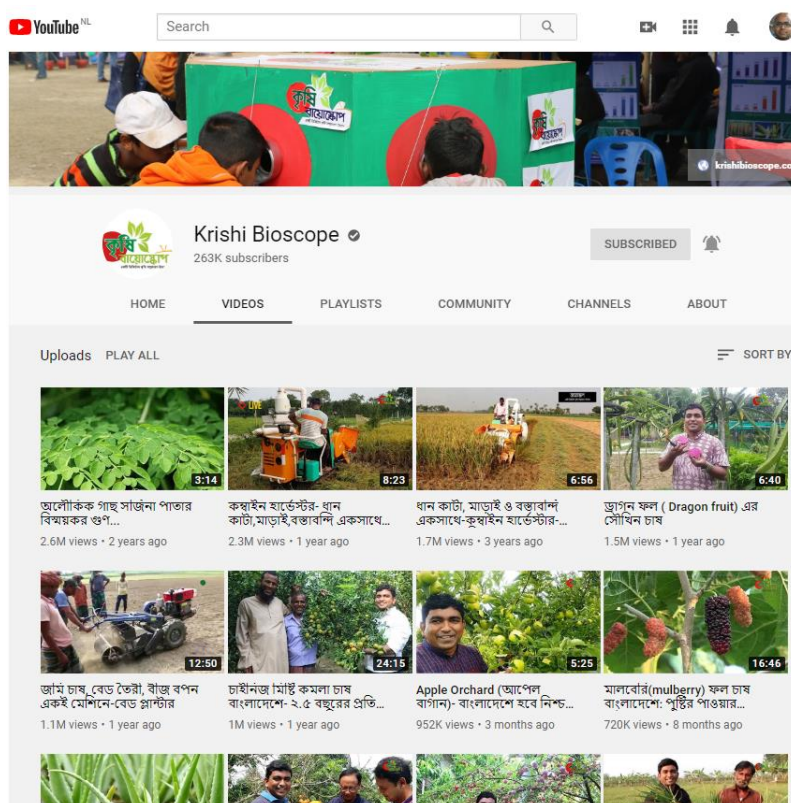
Bringing together dispersed activities related to Videos and Horizontal Learning

Md. Abdul Batan from World Fish Centre spoke about how they already make and utilize videos in their work. Md. Rezwanul Islam from the DAE mentioned how his colleague from the Ministry of Agriculture (Talha Masror) runs the popular YouTube channel '*Krishi Bioscope*' where he produces and uploads videos on good agricultural practices. The channel is immensely popular, with 260,000 subscribers and a number of videos with 1 million plus views



. The Blue Gold project has produced a wealth of material on good farming and other livelihood practices, which are relevant to rural communities beyond its work area. The DAE, under the National Agricultural Technology Programme (NATP), have been setting up Farmer Information and Advice Centres (FIAC) at Union Parishad offices, which are equipped with audio visual equipment such as pico projectors.

All these initiatives will benefit immensely from being able to leverage each others' outputs and outcomes. A first step towards that would be to create awareness among them about each others' work. This could be followed by efforts to facilitate greater cooperation among them. The project team members—MetaMeta, Access Agriculture, and Jagrata Juba Sangha—will continue to work on creating such opportunities in the future.



The 'Krishi Bioscope' YouTube channel

Engaging Union Digital Centre (UDC) entrepreneurs

UDC entrepreneurs (See 1.3, Component 1) operate from Union Parishad offices and have a close relationship with WMG members (often they themselves are WMG members). They already have advanced IT skills and are quick to acquire new video shooting and editing skills. This was realized after the project was already underway, so their potential to support production and dissemination of videos among WMGs was perhaps not fully realized. Any subsequent efforts pertaining to videos and horizontal learning should **make UDC entrepreneurs a key part** of the project design and engage them from the very beginning.



2 Video editing trainings were organised for UDC entrepreneurs

Building upon the high-potential, high-interest alumni



Mehedi Hasan
Sumon,
Araji Sajaria WMG,
Polder 27/1,
Khulna



Md Nazmul
Hossen, Beula
Nayeber Khal
WMG, Polder 2,
Satkhira



Al Imran,
Ghoshkhali WMG,
Polder 2, Satkhira



Jafor Ahmed,
Community
Development
Facilitator, Polder
55/2A, Patuakhali



Ashim Kumar Rai,
Gopi Pagla WMG,
Polder 22, Khulna



Zohirul Islam
Monir, Modukhali
WMG, Polder
47/4, Patuakhali

In course of the project, around **10-15 WMG members were identified as having special ability and enthusiasm in shooting, editing, and storytelling in general** (some are featured above). They took keen interest in the trainings, made multiple videos, won prizes in the competitions, and thereafter continued to make videos and share them on the facebook page. Some of them also showed interest in learning editing, and attended the video editing trainings originally meant for UDC entrepreneurs.

The project team is making efforts to create opportunities to continue engaging these highly motivated individuals, and harness their ability to capture and share good practices. It will try to engage them in any subsequent projects to carry out video-based horizontal learning activities in Bangladesh.

Engaging mass media

For all the growing influence of social media, mass media continues to have the widest outreach in Bangladesh. **Television reached around 80% of the population as of 2017**, while internet penetration was a little under 50%. Broadcast networks hold sway even on social media, with TV networks' YouTube Channels having some of the highest viewerships and subscribers. Thus, Dr. Sreekanth Attaluri from SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC) suggested that linkages be made between projects producing videos for agriculture, and broadcast networks.

Steps could be taken towards this during the project itself. Rezaul Karim Siddique, host of *Mati O Manush*-- the popular agriculture show on Bangladesh Television—was involved in the shooting and scripting of some of the videos produced by the project team. He was also the chief guest at one of the award ceremonies, where he gave away prizes to competition winners and motivated WMG members to make and share videos. An arrangement has been reached with BTV wherein they will broadcast a selection of videos made by WMG members and the project team.



Mati O Manush Ancor Rezaul Siddique handing out award to a competition winner (above) and addressing WMG members (below)