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Blue Gold Program success story

Commercialising watermelon farming

Context

The Blue Gold Program (BGP)'s business development initiatives are for communities that are remote and isolated from established markets. High yields, and higher income for farmers growing high value crops such as watermelon, are dependent on quality seeds and sufficient irrigation.

Challenges to watermelon farming

- Commercial farming is resource-intensive
- Optimal yield requires proper inputs
- Quality seeds and fertiliser are expensive
- Water for irrigation is essential
- Harvest periods are labour-intensive and time-consuming
- Transportation and market linkages are vital for making profits

Farming as a business

The BGP identified constraints in the watermelon value chain in polder 22 and initiated market development which resulted in the commercial farming of watermelon.

The BGP organised Farmer Field Schools (FFS) to transfer improved production technology. The program also set demonstration plots.

Market Oriented Farmer Field Schools

(MFS) initiated collective actions and networking among participating farmers and enhanced market orientation (MO) for farmers.

MO comprised simple production planning, demand accumulation for inputs, collective purchase, record keeping of expenses, and income to assess profit. It also included guidance on associated risks to help farmers make better production decisions based on opportunities to make profit.

The 'farming as a business approach' enables farmers of small plots to take advantage of market opportunities by forming production groups and taking collective actions. The high involvement of women in watermelon production has been essential for success.

Networking

The BGP trained Resource Farmers (RFs), and developed their networking capacity as service providers. The program also improved business linkages among RFs, the leaders of Water Management Groups (WMGs) with private seed companies and input retailers.

This allowed farmers to take effective decisions and participate in collective actions for input purchase, tillage services and product sales. The process was often led by RFs. Collective actions allowed farmers to purchase quality seeds on time from reliable sources at satisfactory prices.

Resolving issues of water scarcity in polder 22 in Khulna



Water scarcity for irrigation is a major problem in polder 22



The BGP has facilitated the excavation of canals within WMGs to address this issue



The cost of excavation of canals ranged from BDT 15,00,000 to BDT 20,00,000



The WMG took a lead on this, following collective action as learned at MFS, and excavated 500 mini ponds in polders in polder 22 using a hired excavator

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Summary

Commercialising watermelon farming

File history

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Date/Time	Thumbnail	Dimensions	User	Comment
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Variants

This page was last edited on 18 March 2021, at 05:21.

Blue Gold Program Wiki

The wiki version of the Lessons Learnt Report of the Blue Gold program, documents the experiences of a technical assistance (TA) team working in a development project implemented by the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) and the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) over an eight+ year period from March 2013 to December 2021. The wiki lessons learnt report (LLR) is intended to complement the BWDB and DAE project completion reports (PCRs), with the aim of recording lessons learnt for use in the design and implementation of future interventions in the coastal zone.

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