

Fifth Learning Hub Event on “Nutrition and Food Security: A Comprehensive and Adaptive Agricultural Development”



Learning Hub Event report

August 05, 2015 | Dhaka, Bangladesh

Venue: NEC Conference Room, Planning Commission
Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207

Event Organizers:

GENERAL ECONOMICS DIVISION (GED), PLANNING COMMISSION;
INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT (ICCCAD)
INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (IIED)



About the report

This report was prepared by Galib Ahmed Chowdhury, Jennifer Khadim, Yousuf Mahid and edited by Masroora Haque from ICCCAD. Photos are taken by Syed Tasfiq Mahmood.

Acknowledgements

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About IIED

IIED is a policy and action research organisation. It promotes sustainable development to improve livelihoods and protect the environments on which these livelihoods are built. We specialise in linking local priorities to global challenges. IIED is based in London and works in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and the Pacific, with some of the world's most vulnerable people. We work with them to strengthen their voice in the decision-making arenas that affect them — from village councils to international conventions.

For more information on IIED's work on political economy, visit <http://www.iied.org/political-economy-climate-resilient-development-planning>, or contact: Neha Rai at Neha.Rai@iied.org

About ICCCAD

ICCCAD at Independent University, Bangladesh is a centre of excellence on climate change policy, action and development research based in Bangladesh, where climate change has a significant impact. As a global centre, ICCCAD is building and leading a network of Southern based partner institutes, together educating the world about climate change and development and increasing capacity in the South and Southeast Asia.

For more information on ICCCAD's work on climate change governance in Bangladesh, visit <http://www.icccad.net/climate-change-governance/> or contact: Yousuf Mahid at yousuf.mahid@icccad.net

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International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)

80-86 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8NH, UK

email: info@iied.org

www.iied.org

@iied

Download more publications at www.iied.org/pubs

International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD)

Independent University, Bangladesh

16 Aftabuddin Road, Basundhara Residential Area

email: icccad_team@googlegroups.com

www.icccad.net

@icccad

Download more publications at www.icccad.net/pubs

Summary

On August 05, 2015 participants from General Economic Division (GED) including other divisions, many national and international development professionals, climate change experts and donors gathered in NEC Conference Room at the Planning Commission premises, Dhaka, Bangladesh to take part in fifth Learning Hub dialogue on 'Nutrition and Food Security: A Comprehensive and Adaptive Agricultural Development'.

The Learning Hub Events (LHEs) are jointly hosted by the GED Planning Commission; the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) at Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) and the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). The GED-ICCCAD-IIED joint collaboration has already organized four events of this kind between last year and this year on various prevalent themes on climate change issues. In its second year, there will be four half day LHEs which are knowledge sharing events to support the General Economic Division (GED) of the Planning Commission of the Government of Bangladesh in integrating climate change into the upcoming Seventh Five Year Plan (7FYP) (2016-2020). This Five Year Plan is focused on creating a people oriented framework where the basic needs of everyday Bangladeshis can be met. In short, the overall development process is largely dependent on how climate change issues are properly integrated with the national policies of different sectors. Among these agriculture and food security have been given substantial importance.

The overarching aim of the Learning Hub Events is to enhance the capacity of the General Economic Division in climate change resilient development, bringing together the expertise of research partners, bilateral and multilateral agencies, practitioners, financial actors and local beneficiaries to a common platform.

Participant List

Name	Designation	Organization
Kousik Ahmed	Technical Assistant	WUR, POD
Masud Ahmed	Joint Director	BADC
Dr. Md. Mustafizur Rahman	Joint Chief	GED
ABM Firoz	Researcher	University of Cologne, Germany
Md. Emdad Hossain	Project Leader	World Fish
Md. Anwar Hossain	Joint Chief	IMED
Murtuza Zulkar Naim	Senior Assistant Chief	Planning Commission
Galib Ahmed	Research Associate	ICCCAD
Kasia Wieszczyzna	Researcher	ICCCAD
Md. Shahjahan	Joint Chief	GED
Dr. Mohd. Gulzarul Aziz	Professor	Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU)
O. N. Siddiqua Khanam	Additional Secretary	Planning Division
Mohammad Abdul Kader Azad	Monitoring Officer	
Sheikh Moinul Islam Moin	PS to Member (S. S.)	General Economic Division, Planning Commission
Md. Mahabubul Alam Siddiqua	Senior Assistant Chief	General Economic Division, Planning Commission
Josefa Yesmin	Assistant Chief	General Economic Division, Planning Commission
Liaquat F. Rashid Chandan	Vice President	Mercantile Bank
Romana Afrose Mee	Project Analyst	5-R
Ina F. Islam	Deputy Director	ICCCAD, IUB
Bixash Chandra Saha	Director	BSFIC
Md. Saiful Islam	Assistant Chief	General Economic Division, Planning Commission
Kohinoor Akter	Assistant Chief	General Economic Division, Planning Commission
Dhusar Prokriti Gain	Research Officer	General Economic Division, Planning Commission
Md. Liakot Ali	Deputy Chief	M/D Food
Dr. Abu Wali Raghieb Hassan	DD	Department of Agricultural Extension
Dr. Tapan Kumar Paul	CSO	BARI
Dr. Kamrul Hassan	Professor	BAU
Shafat Ahsan	Intern	ICCCAD
Musrat Mehjabin	Deputy Chief	General Economic Division, Planning Commission
Golam M. Sarwar	Asst. Director	BSTI

Dr. Atiq Rahman	Director	BCAS
Bowen Wang	Researcher	ICCCAD
Md. Zainul Abedin	Team Leader	PPCR at AFC
Md. Mafidul Islam	Joint chief	General Economic Division, Planning Commission
Sadia Sharmeen Huq	Assistant Chief	General Economic Division, Planning Commission
Md. Rafiqul Islam	Joint Chief	General Economic Division, Planning Commission
Mohammad Tasharuf Hasan Faraizi	Joint Chief	General Economic Division, Planning Commission
Naquib Bin Mahbub	Assistant Chief	General Economic Division, Planning Commission
Dr. M. Rafiqul Islam	Professor	BAU
Maliha Muzammil	Researcher	CCAFs, Oxford
Ashfaq		IOM
Dr. Taibur Rahman		General Economic Division, Planning Commission
Dr. Pallab Mazumder	FIU	USA
Erica Allis		IRI, USA
Dr. Shahjahan Ali Khandaker		General Economic Division, Planning Commission
Faizul Islam		General Economic Division, Planning Commission
Masroora H.		ICCCAD
Md. Monirul Islam		General Economic Division, Planning Commission
Md. Ekram Ullah	PSO	WARPO
Md. Arifur Rahman	DPD, DAE	
Abdul Azim Chowdhury	Joint Chief	General Economic Division, Planning Commission
Dr. Md. Rafiqul Islam	Project Director	DCRMA, DAE
Ritu Lohani		IFC/WBG
Mahbuba Hasin	Assistant Chief	General Economic Division, Planning Commission
Moriom Jahan		General Economic Division, Planning Commission
Shaheen Parveen		The Asia Foundation
Sabira Yesmin		General Economic Division, Planning Commission
Prashanta Kumar Chakrabarty	Programming Division	Planning Commission

Dr. Monowar Hassan Masud A. Khan	Advisor Deputy Chief	IFC General Economic Division, Planning Commission
Abida Sultana	Assistant Chief	General Economic Division, Planning Commission
Nurul Amin	Oxfam	Programme Coordinator

Learning Hub Event Agenda

August 05, 2015

Registration	ICCCAD Team
Opening remarks and introduction	Chair: Dr Shamsul Alam , Member, GED, Planning Commission Facilitator: Dr Saleemul Huq , Director, ICCCAD Senior Fellow, IIED
Session 1: Presentation One <i>Climate Resilience in the Agriculture Sector and The Important of Resilience in the Seventh Five Year Plan</i>	Maliha Muzammil CCAFS Scenarios & Policy Researcher Environmental Change Institute, University of Oxford
Question- Answer Session	All Participants
Session 2: Presentation Two Adaptive Agriculture in Relation to Climate Change in Bangladesh	Dr Abu Wali Raghieb Hassan Deputy Director, DAE Ex. Climate Change Specialist, FAO
Question-Answer Session	All Participants
Open Discussion	All Participants
Conclusion and thank you	Mohammad Rafiqul Islam Joint Chief, General Economic Division

Introduction

The policy oriented Learning Hub Events (LHEs) will comprise of dedicated dialogues to mainstream climate resilience and build shared understanding of priorities amongst development planning ministries (particularly finance and planning) and sectoral ministries by bringing them together with experts to discuss concrete issues facing the country. The overarching goal of the LHE is to create a knowledge based platform to exchange various dialogues on environment and climate change issues in Bangladesh.

The target of this LHE was to support policymakers of the General Economics Division (GED) of the Planning Commission and law makers of several line ministries responsible for creating the Five Year Plans for Bangladesh. Integrating climate change into the upcoming Seventh Five Year Plan (2016-2020) is crucial to the government's goal of alleviating poverty. The event was attended by representatives from the GED, INGOs, NGOs, academia, multilateral agencies and research institutions. The experts provided inputs on agriculture that the GED needs to consider in building a resilient Seventh Five Year Plan given the climate change impacts the country faces and to encourage comprehensive agricultural development and ensure food security.

The event had the following components:

1. Presentation on "Climate Resilience in the Agriculture Sector and The Importance of Resilience in the Seventh Five Year Plan"
2. Question-Answer session
3. Presentation on "Adaptive Agriculture in Relation to Climate Change in Bangladesh"
4. Question-Answer session and open discussion

Opening Remarks

Nutrition and Food Security: A Comprehensive and Adaptive Agricultural Development

Dr. Shamsul Alam, Member (Senior Secretary) General Economic Division (GED), Planning Commission, chaired the Fifth Learning Hub Event on 'Nutrition and Food Security: A Comprehensive and Adaptive Agricultural Development.'

The impact of climate change on agriculture is a pressing issue facing the country which has implications on nutrition, food security, food consumption habits and employment. The need to ensure food security is prime as it is connected with all the other development areas such as nutrition, employment, supply chain, health and social development.



Dr Saleemul Huq, Director,
ICCAD

Policymakers need solutions to better use the country's limited natural resources effectively so that environmental degradation is kept to a minimum as they are a major source of food and agricultural income of the country.

Dr. Saleemul Huq, Director, ICCCAD stated that these Learning Hubs are not about teaching, but rather about learning. Therefore, the format of these events focuses more on open discussions, question and answer sessions. The theme of each event is chosen based on

suggestions from different development expertise and GED participants.



Dr Shamsul Alam delivering
his opening remarks.

Two topics to consider might be: forestry and the Delta Plan. Setting the stage for the first presentation, **Dr. Huq** mentioned that resilience is a framework in which water, agriculture, food security all are integrated.

Presentation 1: Climate Resilience in the Agriculture Sector and the Important of Resilience in the Seventh Five Year Plan (7FYP)

Ms Maliha Muzammil, CCAFS Scenarios & Policy Researcher, stressed that resilience thinking should underpin the policies of the 7FYP. In the context of food and nutrition security, climatic stressors such as droughts, floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, and conflicts can affect the food and nutrition security of individuals, communities and states. Food security is a web of different socio-economic factors. The 7FYP being the main socio-economic plan of Bangladesh, has to deal with a range of shocks and stressors in all sectors. Resilience thinking allows a thorough assessment of sudden socio-economic, climatic and novel stressors by considering how various factors interact in a certain context. By building resilience into development programs, investors and governments are better able to deal with shocks and stressors. In the context of food security, climate-smart Agriculture can be a vehicle for moving the resilience agenda forward, particularly in the face of climate related shocks and stressors.



She highlighted certain challenges around food planning systems relevant for policymakers:

- Food systems are entangled with many dimensions of human-natural systems at multiple levels, time frames
- Uncertainty generated by markets, governance, social issues, inequality, climate change, etc.

- Fragmented decision-making and power inequalities
- Partial views: e.g. agriculture, food systems (vs. larger contexts)
- Multiple and conflicting discourses: food security, food sovereignty, agriculture and consumption that prioritise different factors related to food planning

In dealing with these challenges certain recommendations to make the agricultural sector more resilient include:

- Inclusive decision making processes that are linked across levels and sectors
- Knowledge: multiple perspectives to help tackle uncertainty, complexity. Knowledge on community resilience needs to be generated, captured and shared, establishing learning platforms with relevant stakeholders
- The voices of vulnerable, less powerful to be heard
- Improved governance to sustain community-led initiatives and linking local bodies with national funds
- Effective use of weather forecasts and flood early warnings
- Make flood and salinity resilient technological solutions available



Ms Maliha Muzammil, Researcher, CCAFS Scenarios & Policy, Environmental Change Institute



Mr. Nurul Amin from Oxfam discussing their activities

Question-Answer Session

According to **Dr. Huq**, the term 'resilience' is accepted widely because of its global usage. However, he cautioned the implications of its uses, citing that there is good resilience and bad resilience. For example, the mafia is a good example of a resilient society, which is an example of bad resilience. In the context of the country, **Dr. Huq** said that Bangladesh is already much resilient compared to other climate vulnerable countries.

Dr. Alam said that the practice of good resilience might lead us to derive optimum result in our development planning, because rural people are quite proactive.

Mr. Nurul Amin from Oxfam brought examples from their work in the northern and southern region and Haor areas of Bangladesh, which are prone to flooding. NGOs are contributing alongside the government. He also gave a brief on how can we transfer the flood risk to the insurance market. He revealed that a scoping study report is already developed on insurance product to transform the flood risk.

A representative from UNDP also spoke about the possibilities of transferring risks to the capital market. According to him, the government has a role to play in making this a reality. He suggested that 10% from the allocated Tk 800 crore for disaster management in the national budget should be given to rural people.

Senior Assistant Chief of General Economics Division, Planning Commission, also discussed resilience and some key issues of the presentation. The socio economic culture, which includes history and culture, makes Bangladeshis inherently resilient. He also mentioned that they are creating a resilience index similar to the existing risk index. He suggested that sector based investment will be easier if we can incorporate resilience into the 7FYP.

A participant from the Ministry of Food (MoF), spoke about the importance of food storage and introducing silos (a food storage unit), increasing food storage capacity and bringing progress and change in different parts of Bangladesh. Five hundred thousand modern silos installed in 19 districts resilient to food threats increased the adaptive capacity at the household level.

Participant from Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR), International Finance Cooperation (IFC) also reiterated that 13 ministries are connected to food security in the country and a policy on food security is well on the way. There is now a growing habit of taking whole grain foods to keep the nutrients intact. The reason behind it is that using machines to process whole grains kills the micro nutrients in the food. Therefore, micro nutrients should be taken into

consideration as well. There are benefits to growing high value vegetables at the community level and also spoke highly about the 'One House One Firm' project of the Government of Bangladesh which has made incredible progress within 2 to 3 years of its commencement.



Participants from Bangladesh Agricultural University and others during the question answer session

Trees such as Jhau and Hijol in the southern part of Bangladesh which are able to withstand cyclones are good examples of resilience.

Dr Abedin also suggested that government intervention should be community oriented. Some people do not seek relief after a disaster while some take it to support their lives. Poverty elevation is the key to empowering people. When people rely on individual capital it can serve them in times of need because savings can be reinvested. Introducing technology should be done in the longer term. Regarding the presentation, he suggested that this presentation could have some link with the market.

Additional Secretary, Planning Division, Ministry of Planning, commented that people of Bangladesh have taken the concept of resilience in a positive manner. During famines, it has always been the local community who tackle such disasters. Providing food and shelter to those suffering after a disaster is not as important as the community intention and strength. People should understand the situation and take action accordingly. She also stressed that our focus should be on building a nation more resilient to climate change.

Presentation 2: Adaptive Agriculture in Relation to Climate change in Bangladesh

Dr. Abu Wali Raghieb Hassan is the Deputy Director, Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) Ministry of Agriculture. His presentation outlined the major threats to food security and agriculture, current food availability in Bangladesh and adaptation technologies championed to boost agricultural

production in saline, drought and flood prone areas. The presentation concluded with lessons learned and recommendations useful for members of the GED looking to build a food secure 7FYP.



Dr. Hassan from the Department of Agricultural Extension talking about adaptation technologies in agriculture

Although both production and per capita availability of food is increasing in Bangladesh, the nutrient level is still lower among women and children. Given the country's growing population and rapid urbanization, the demand for food is high. Climate stressors such as drought, salinity, flood and changed pattern of rainfall is presently putting pressure on crop yields, disrupting the supply of food. Bangladesh might have to import some food items in the coming decades. Agriculture is the most important factor for the economic development and a broad and participatory approach should be followed for a sustainable agricultural development.

The DAE aims to provide eco-friendly, safe, climate resilient, sustainable agricultural practices and sustain natural resources to ensure food security as well as commercial agriculture with a view to accelerating the socio-economic development of the country. To meet this aim, the organization has championed the following adaptation technologies worthy of mention:

- Rice - piloting saline tolerant, short duration, early and late rice varieties in saline prone areas
- Water conservation - rain water conservation in mini-ponds and planting less water loving crops such as mungbean, kheshari and mustard in the fresh water starved coastal zones
- Cultivation practices - zero tillage, priming of seeds during sowing, mulching, relay, cropping, dry seed bed and using green manure and vermi-compost that improve soil quality

Tackling the 'zero hunger issue' will be the actual challenge while implementing the 7FYP. Suggestions specific to the 7FYP include:

- Short and long term capacity building for DAE, project and field staff
- DEA is the link connecting researchers and farmers and this link should be strengthened for development and dissemination of technologies
- Adaptation to climate change is very location specific, therefore, the research and interventions must follow a bottom up and decentralized approach, allowing room for micro planning
- Increasing awareness of relevant institutions and farmers, especially marginal, small, tenant and women farmers
- Eliminate gender disparity in agricultural wage, food consumption and household decision making
- Adaptive technologies is essential to sustaining food security in the country and must include both indigenous and scientific technologies
- Intensification of rice production and diversification of agricultural production

Open discussion

Dr. Shamsul Alam thanked **Dr. Raghib Hassan** for a comprehensive overview of the work being done to tackle the impacts of climate change in agriculture. He briefly talked about the opportunities of making greenhouses for farming, but it might not be viable in terms of our socio – economic structure. Dr Alam also mentioned that Dr Hassan's presentation was very rich in demonstrating technology, but it lacks the linkage between crop production and its link to the market. He briefly talked about the existing technology in Bangladesh which is very primitive. Also, crop diversification was considered as a necessary task. Dr Alam suggested that each district should produce one specific crop which might help in diversification. He mentioned that the farmers should have the opportunity to raise voice when it comes to decision making. Ensuring quality of food will be the government's responsibility. Dr Alam pressed the issue of freedom in marketing and creating a price map.

A participant from IFC mentioned that food resources should be used effectively after extreme events such as cyclones. To do this, a strategic plan should be followed to tackle the aftermath in terms of food. At the same time, both physical and mental health of affected people should be prioritized after an extreme event. His emphasis was also placed on the matter of having counselling sessions to ensure a steady mental health. Education to build awareness is also crucial. A talk on developing and implementing zone specific technology was suggested. Introduction of bio technology and encouraging market intervention is necessary.

A participant from Mercantile Bank proposed to include the private banking sector for food and nutrients security and in building self sufficiency in the country.

Another participant from IFC brought to light her organization's financial and non – financial sectors and reiterated that the private sector should be actively engaged in tackling climate change problems.

A participant from Oxfam recommended investing more on the government's knowledge management. He also suggested that private sectors should be engaged in the 7FYP to facilitate in tackling climate change.

Researcher from University of Cologne also suggested that including foreign technologies will be an added advantage.

Team Leader of PPCR-IFC reiterated that indigenous knowledge should be integrated with technological implementation. Food security will be a matter of concern for the future with or without climate change. Contaminated food is a present threat which can be handled through introduction of alternative farming

options. This will initially provide the farmers with income security. His suggestion was turning roof gardening into a large scale urban agriculture to combat future food security.

Concluding remarks

Dr. Huq thanked the participants for their valuable inputs. He mentioned the Gobeshona programme, a knowledge sharing platform for climate change research in Bangladesh. The Gobeshona Conference for Research in Climate Change in Bangladesh to be held in January 2016, could be an avenue where the Planning Commission could find ways to get involved and share their learning.

Dr. Atiq Rahman, Executive Director, BCAS, suggested that food security should be observed and studied from a wide range of factors and not just in terms of nutrients. He talked briefly about food security, availability, distribution, and market development and the role of farmers. Dr. Rahman mentioned that there are opportunities to study the link between climate change and nutrients as well as diversification of crops.

Mr. Rafiqul Islam, Joint Chief, General Economic Division stressed the importance on food and nutrition security encouraging all ministries to work together to ensure food and nutrition security in Bangladesh.

After two engaging sessions including question answer sessions and one open discussion session, the Learning Hub Event organisers wrapped up the dialogue – thanking the presenters for their enlightened presentations and participants for their important contributions to the discussions. ICCCAD and IIED representatives thanked **Dr. Shamsul Alam** and his team from GED and other personals from Planning Commission in particular, for organising an excellent workshop, and acknowledged all the hard work that went into planning a successful event.

Evaluation of Learning Hub Event

ICCAD conducts an evaluation immediately following the event to get their feedback on how the event is running. We found that 51% of the participants said that the LHE was excellent and 44% of the participants thought that the event was good.

Most of the participants from government agreed that the learnings from the 5th LHE would be helpful to incorporate in national planning. Their concept and understating of agricultural development became quite clear after the sessions. Events like this would provide an opportunity to learn about relevant primary climate change issues. The participants stressed that sharing information and discussions should be given priority in the next sessions.

Feedback from participants include the following comments:

"LHE will be helpful in the preparation of Seventh Five Year Plan and Delta Plan"

"Gave a comprehensive idea about climate resilience and agriculture"

"Good opportunity for learning and networking"

"LHE enabled evidence based analytical paper presentation"

ICCAD is always interested in learning how the LHEs could be improved. Participants suggested the following ways ICCCAD could enhance engagement at these events:

- Group work can be included in the event for hands-on engagement and active involvement of the participants
- Presentations and relevant materials could be disseminated before the event if possible
- Video presentations could be incorporated to strengthen the event

Though this year's LHEs would be supporting the sectors related to Seventh Five Year Plan for Bangladesh, ICCCAD will organize topics based on the need of policymakers. Suggestions include climate resilient agricultural practices, private sector inclusive approach, migration, environment, biochemistry, water management and waste management.

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