

Making Horticulture Markets Work for Women

Supporting vegetable production in coastal Bangladesh

Women Onset Technologies for Sustainable Homestead Agriculture in Bangladesh (WOTSHAB) (2011- 2014)

Homestead Farming is a Critical Livelihood Strategy for Poor Women

For extremely poor women living in coastal Bangladesh, adoption of **homestead farming for the production of high-value and nutritious vegetables** is essential if they are to meet their families' basic food needs and generate a consistent income from the sale of surplus. Vegetables typically receive higher prices than cereals, increasing income as much as 3-5 times. Focusing on women's access to and adoption of **low cost, simple technologies** can greatly improve the productivity of even marginal land and substantially enhance food and nutritional security.

Improving agricultural productivity is central to alleviating poverty for women in Bangladesh

- 79% women employed in agriculture
- 57% vulnerable households depend on manual labour jobs from their income

Women in the Chars are integral, but largely unrecognised contributors to agricultural and economic productivity and are increasingly responsible for the provision of their families' food. As rising salinity and flooding is reducing the amount of cultivable land, demand for farm labourers has been greatly reduced: a major income stream for those with no access to land. Seeking alternative income, male earning members are migrating to the cities, leaving many landless women and children highly vulnerable as they struggle to achieve even basic food security.

Innovative Technologies can Help Meet Basic Food Needs

Above- ground homestead farming such as **hanging jute nets** and **sag bags** are women friendly, low-cost and widely adaptable ways of growing high value crops where access to productive land is limited;

- **Hanging jute nets:** An above- ground trellis structure which can significantly increase crop yields and productivity as produce remains unaffected by salinity and flooding and an additional crop can be cultivated below.



- **Sag- bags:** Simple technologies which use good quality soil and fertilizer in polymer bags as a medium to grow vegetables, such as gourd, which are protected from salinity and flooding. Being easily transportable they can be located along roadsides, embankments or around the homesteads.

Yet innovative technology alone is not enough. Improving homestead production also depends upon the sustainable distribution and marketing these technologies through markets-based supply channels. To this end, **DFID's Women Onset Technologies for Sustainable Homestead Agriculture in Bangladesh (WOTSHAB) (2011-2014)** was developed to demonstrate and sustainably market hanging jute nets and sag bags to women farmers in remote upazilas in the Barisal region.

WOTSHAB is a regional project supported by **DFID Shiree** to improve access to low cost above-ground farming technologies and working capital to poor women in the coastal areas of Barisal in Bangladesh. This project is managed by **International Development Enterprises (iDE)**, an international non-profit with a mission to enable poor rural households to participate effectively in high-value agricultural market systems and to progress from subsistence to small-scale commercial farming.

Marking Horticulture Markets Work for the Poor

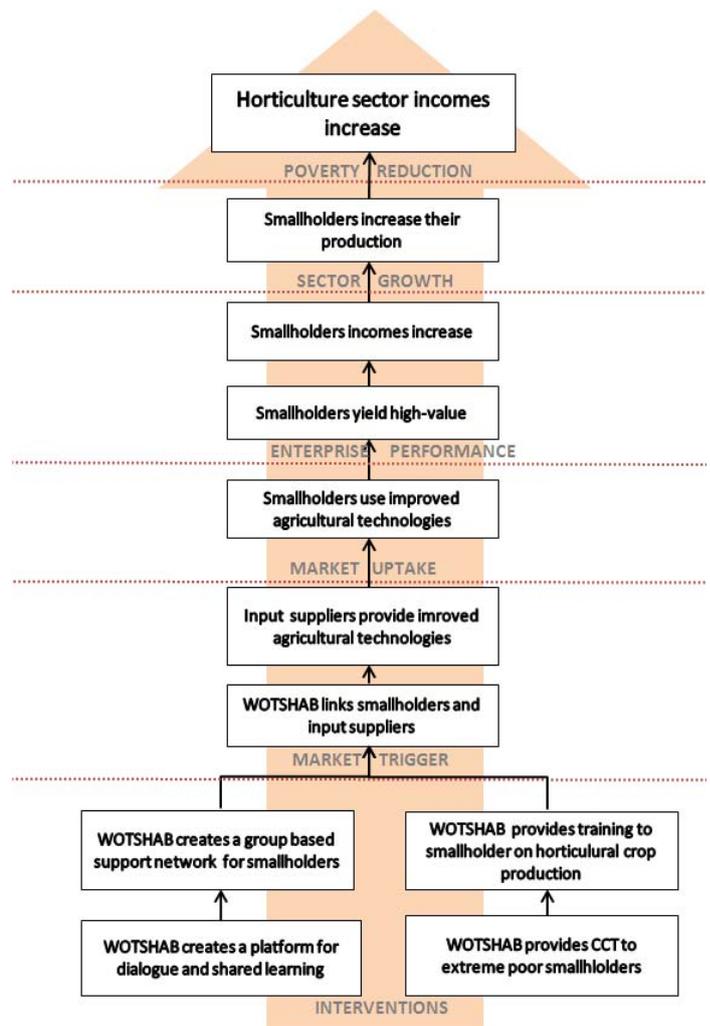
iDE Bangladesh has significant experience harnessing the power of the private sector to achieve high scalability for low-cost agricultural technologies. From treadle pumps in the 1980s to hanging jute nets today, iDE employs a market systems approach to economic and social development focused on engaging the private sector to maximize the sustainability of its results.

To make WOTSHAB a reality in Bangladesh, iDE is leading the project with sole responsibility for the implementation and management process.

The Challenge: How Can Women Become Successful Homestead Farmers?

In order to improve homestead productivity and income WOTSHAB will promote agro-based technologies and business planning based on the diversified needs and living conditions of poor women and girls. The project relies on the following three key steps;

- 1. Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT):** provide cash to enable them to meet basic needs and invest in horticulture. Without this initial step, the substantial debt experienced by these households would deter them to from considering investing in vegetable technologies;
- 2. Group-based support network:** develop market linkages throughout the value chain by developing economic and social support networks which are needed to sustain and grow women's micro-business';



What will WOTSHAB deliver?

- Above ground homestead production technology is disseminated to target HHs.
- Target HHs are provided with the resources for undertaking new production techniques (IGAs).
- Extreme poor women are supported to understand the commercial viability of above ground homestead production.
- Extreme poor women are supported to form group-based support networks.

- 3. Stakeholder Meetings:** hold annual meeting involving key research, government, local NGO's and universities to create a platform for shared learning and knowledge dissemination: enabling WOTSHAB to respond to key social and economic constraints as they arise.

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