

Celebrating the **diversity of entrepreneurship** in Bangladesh.



Tailoring market support activities by groups to achieve maximum impact

Of all the iDE country Farm Business Advisor (FBA) programs, Bangladesh has hosted the largest and most diverse. Over the course of the last half decade, more than 1,000 FBAs have been trained and supported. What we discovered: each FBA is truly a unique business, each having a different business plan to meet its specific challenges and desires. For example, some FBAs are schoolteachers during the day who spend their evenings selling agricultural inputs, seeds, fertiliser, pesticides, etc.; another is a pharmacist who expanded his shop to include quality vegetable seeds. While this may seem daunting, iDE has embraced the diversity of the FBAs in Bangladesh and developed a methodology to support them based on the roles they plan in their communities.

FBAs self-select whether they provide input or output support to farmers. Some FBAs had pre-existing agri-businesses and used the training to expand their services and offerings. Yet other FBAs were part of an association or farmer's group, which would select a particular member to act on behalf of the group to interact with suppliers and buyers. Using our understanding of these dynamics, iDE created six typologies by which FBAs could be classified and receive necessary training and support.

For the existing businesses, sales training was provided that encouraged them to expand their business by moving sales from a physical location (e.g., an input or output storefront) to making direct sales by traveling to

the farmer's field. This encourages FBAs to expand their business by moving from market to community level to build trust with farmers by providing technical information and follow up support. Newly established entrepreneurs were provided training and assistance in the creation of business plans, connections to suppliers and buyers, and strategies for sales.

Many challenges remain. To date, only 10% of Bangladesh FBAs have been women, mainly due to cultural norms that make it difficult for women to travel alone or interact with males who aren't in their extended family. Limited access to capital prevents many FBAs from being able to provide a range of inputs. And the issue of sustainability to pre-existing business practices remain. Active FBAs will continue their businesses with or without iDE, it's the inclusivity of the business practices that is a challenge.

The diversity and sheer number of FBAs in the Bangladesh program, however, has supplied an incredible number of lessons learned, data that iDE continues to analyze and explore as we press forward on increasing the income and improving the lives of the rural Bangladesh population.

Photo Caption

Shaheen Hossain Khan (Farm Business Advisor (FBA), AKA Lead Facilitator(LF), Chars Input Dealer(CID), owns Khan Traders in Babuganj Bazar, Barisal. Local retail stores like this give local farmers access to pumps and after-sales services.



renewable
energy
& energy
efficiency
partnership

The Bangladesh Context

One of the most densely populated countries on Earth, Bangladesh has significantly reduced the number of its people that are living in poverty, from 57 percent in 1990 to 25.6 percent in 2014. However, the country still faces challenges in improving food security, as agricultural productive capacity struggles to keep up with population growth. Bangladesh faces an agricultural labor shortage, partly due to urban migration trends, contributing to a four-fold increase in labor costs over the last decade. While the country has made tremendous progress in improving public health through investments in water, sanitation, and hygiene, nearly half the population still lives without a fully hygienic toilet or access to safe, clean drinking water, resulting in health-related losses estimated at \$4 billion, more than 5 percent of total GDP.

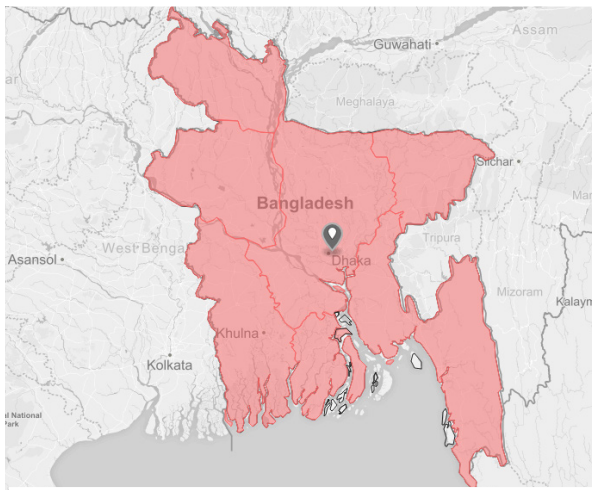
Bangladesh FBAs By the Numbers

322 clients per 1 FBA

168,493 clients served to date

39% of profit reinvested by FBA into business

97% of FBAs have increased their income since starting their business



iDE

iDE creates income and livelihood opportunities for poor rural households across Asia, Africa, and Latin America. iDE builds markets in a range of sectors, including agriculture, water, sanitation, hygiene, and access to finance.

Contact Us

Phone: (+88 02) 9886515, 9886529, 9883901

E-mail: Bangladesh@ideglobal.org

Deepak Dhoj Khadka

Country Director, iDE Bangladesh

ideglobal.org