

OUR PARTNERS

The activities are implemented through partnership and collaboration with

- Cluster platforms (secondary level organisations), a main partner for the implementation of activities.
- Union Parishad (UP), Upazila/district administration and line agencies to address community-based organisations' demands and to develop functional linkages.
- Private sector (service providers, input sellers, buyers, large companies) and financial institutions for rural communities, for easy access to innovative services and to upscale group business activities.
- 20 local NGOs - as implementing partners who facilitate our interventions and approaches at community organisation level.
- SAAKTI, AFIP, SHARIQUE (SDC projects) and KATALYST as collaborative partners to promote collaboration with the local government and the private sector.
- Development agencies, other organisations and like-minded projects at the regional and national level.

OUR ASSETS

- 2,750 groups of 78,000 rural poor and extreme poor households, well organised and actively involved with local government and market actors.
- 870 cluster platforms have established secondary level organisations in 57 Upazilas of Rajshahi Division and Sunamganj district.
- Knowledge of the context of small farmers in Bangladesh and of the technological aspects of Agroforestry - gained through 19 years of field experience.
- Experience in HID and participatory planning and monitoring at the community level as well as in supporting the extreme poor through a flexible approach.
- Expertise and experience in 15 sub-sectors (fish, milk, vegetables, spices, handicrafts, medicinal plants, etc.) in identifying market opportunities, promoting micro and small enterprises and linkages with large market actors and service providers.

OUR ACTIVITIES - A FEW EXAMPLES...

LOCAL PLANNING PROCESSES



"This year our group planned 18 different activities: training sessions in agroforestry, development of our organisational capacities, problem of dowry... With the other groups of the village, we made a joint plan to tackle gender wage discrimination."

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

"Since I do not mind raising my voice, my group selected me as female mentor. I received training on gender issues. We organised a participatory gender analysis in our community and decided to stop the practice of early marriage, dowry and family conflicts resolution in our village."



PROMOTION OF IMPROVED AGROFORESTRY PRACTICES



"In the past, my jackfruit trees only produced a few fruit. Last year we learned how to control the dropping of jackfruit, and this year I was able to more than double production - and even to sell some fruit."

SMALL ENTERPRISE PROMOTION

"I did a tailor training course. During an exchange visit I learned about the potential of making and selling low-cost baby and ladies clothes. Along with ten other trained women of our community we set up a small garments factory. We did not have any income before, but now each of us earns Tk. 60 a day."



MARKETING EXTENSION



Through a cost analysis and a market assessment, we discovered that our jute mat business was losing money. We now produce new types of jute products, with attractive designs and colours. We identified good markets outside our village, where we now sell our products at four times the old price."

ACCESS TO PUBLIC LAND

"We convinced the chairman and members of our UP and signed a roadside plantation contract on a Tk. 150 non-judicial stamp. After 15 years our cluster members will get 80% of the income from the roadside plantation and the UP 20%. We planted 1,440 saplings with a combination of fruit, timber and medicinal plants on 1.2 km of roadsides."



ORGANISED MARKETING THROUGH VALUE CHAIN APPROACH



"We used to produce milk and sell it on the local market, but there was no price consistency. We established a linkage with Milk-Vita and joined its cooperative. We now have access to a permanent chain to sell our milk at a higher price. We also learned improved cow management practices with support from local Para-vets and Milk-Vita experts."

SPECIAL INITIATIVES FOR THE EXTREME POOR

"Our cluster organised a livelihoods fair to show different income-generating activities, such as handicrafts, paper bag making and beef fattening, to be selected by the extreme poor, depending on their situation. This encouraged me to start making and selling puffed rice as a low-cost, low-risk income-generating activity. I am now earning Tk. 60-70 a day on a nearby market."



HOW TO CONTACT US?

LEAF has a Project Support and Management Unit (PSMU), based in Rajshahi, and four Regional Offices

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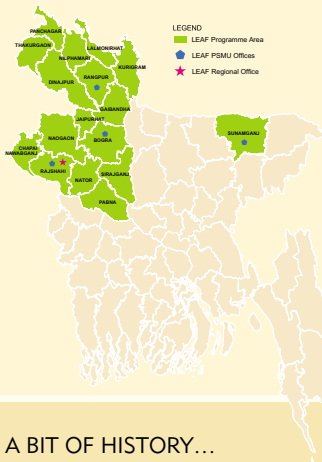
LEAF: Livelihoods, Empowerment and Agroforestry



SUSTAINABLE LAND USE PROGRAMME, SDC

WHERE DO WE WORK?

LEAF's interventions are concentrated in Rajshahi Division and Sunamganj District.



A BIT OF HISTORY...

The first Sustainable Land Use (SLU) Programme of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) ran from 1987 to 2003 with two field-based projects: VFFP (Village and Farm Forestry Project) and CARE-SHABGE. A merger of these projects in 2004 resulted in a new project called LEAF (Livelihoods, Empowerment and Agroforestry).

The first phase of LEAF has been very successful in achieving its objectives with regard to knowledge and skills development, capacity building of groups and communities and the enabling environment. Community-based organisations have learned how to access resources and

services, build linkages, address gender inequalities and involve the extreme poor in income-generating activities. LEAF developed two innovative approaches, Market Extension and Participatory Gender Analysis, which helped diversify and increase income opportunities and mainstream gender.

The second phase of LEAF aims to consolidate and upscale the most promising activities of the first phase. This includes promoting self-propelling processes and a human rights-based approach as a cross cutting issue. LEAF focuses on the "demand side" by facilitating community organisations and networks to improve their position and access stakeholders. It is also linked up with other SDC projects (SAAKTI, AFIP, SHARIQUE) which focus on the "supply side".



WHO DO WE WORK FOR?

We work for (extreme) poor households in all 16 districts of the Rajshahi Division and the Sunamganj District in the Sylhet Division, which represent 50% of the poorest districts of Bangladesh. More than 50% of the population here live below the poverty line. These households have less than one acre of cultivable land. One third of the population has no land except for a homestead, on which many depend for about half of their food and cash needs. The other half comes from a wide range of often non-farming related activities.

We do, however, also work with other households within the communities like small and medium farmers. In fact, the process remains flexible and open to all community members. The project's operational principle is to act as a key entry point for the (extreme) poor to empower and enable them to interact with other wealth categories on an equal basis, while contributing to the local development process.

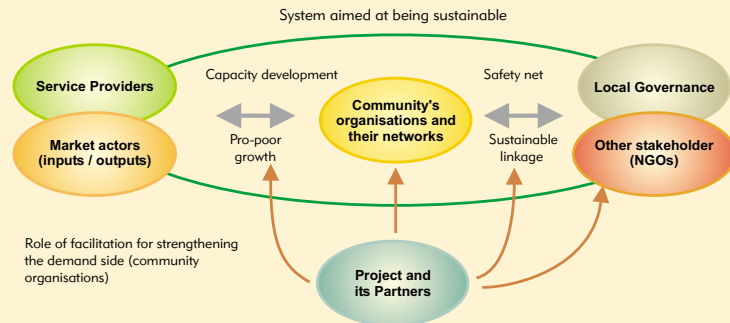


OUR PURPOSE AND VISION

LEAF aims to make a substantial contribution to long-term poverty reduction through a more sustainable and intensified use of local resources.

The project aims to improve the livelihoods of a total of 125,000 poor and extreme poor households of Rajshahi Division and Sunamganj District by developing human and institutional capacities for accessing and using social and economic opportunities.

In LEAF's vision community organisations and their networks will eventually be able to identify, organise and lead their own local development initiatives using the available resources and services. The benefits of the initiatives will be shared with the community's extreme poor and vulnerable households. This vision is illustrated below.



OUR OBJECTIVES

- Poor and extreme poor households will increase income and employment opportunities through skills and knowledge development in order to access and use local resources and services.
- Community organisations and their networks will improve their capacity to lead and manage local development process and their access to services and markets.
- Project efficiency and effectiveness will grow through the promotion of exchanges and collaboration with other development organisations that facilitate the leverage of interventions.



OUR APPROACHES

LEAF has a poverty focus: it targets poor and extreme poor households such as indigenous communities, women-headed households and the landless. In order to effectively address rural poverty, LEAF uses a combination of four approaches:

- A livelihoods approach aimed at identifying opportunities to develop farmers' human, social, financial, physical and natural capital.
- A market approach - targeting pro-poor economic growth through better market exploitation, the creation of new opportunities and the development of a socio-economic environment that benefits the poor.
- Human and Institutional Development (HID) - and its underlying values like empowerment, equity (including gender) and self-reliance acts as a link between the first two approaches. HID plays a major role in establishing new relations between stakeholders and in the promotion of self-help processes - prerequisites for the sustainability of interventions.
- Promotion of self-propelling processes aimed at developing the capacity of communities and groups to continue and expand their activities without the support of LEAF. This approach is linked to a repeat of activities conducted by other groups and communities.

LEAF uses gender mainstreaming as a cross-cutting issue, as to ensure an equal participation of women and men. LEAF has also integrated a human rights-based approach as a cross-cutting theme.

