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Bangladesh



Background

The Bangladesh Youth Employment Pilot project, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), helps young women and men build skills and improve their livelihood prospects. BYEP has trained nearly 400 out-of-school youth—40% of them women—to be placed into jobs or self-employment in the prawn farming industry. The project has collaborated closely with a private hatchery enterprise to adapt an existing Bangladeshi training curriculum to meet international compliance standards and to place BYEP training program graduates into jobs or self-employment. Participating youth learn not only technical skills, but also the work-readiness and entrepreneurship skills needed to support their long-term economic and social development.



Hosne's Success Story

Women do not traditionally work in the high-potential freshwater prawn farming industry in Bangladesh. Hosne Ara, however, has become a pioneer in the field, as the first woman in Bangladesh to be employed in a prawn hatchery as a hatchery technician, thanks to in-depth knowledge gained in the BYEP project.

During a break in her training, she went to visit a hatchery in the Barunga district. Upon arriving, she found a floundering establishment with poor management and an under-skilled staff. Hosne immediately found the owner and began to share her ideas for improvement with him, based on her BYEP training. Her knowledge of the subject and confidence in her ability inspired him so much that the owner temporarily hired her on the spot. She returned to the BYEP training program to complete the second set of trainings on prawn farming and upon completion, gained employment at Shiblee Hatcheries & Farms Limited.



Hosne is one of 155 women who have gained the skills and self-assurance necessary to succeed in the prawn hatchery sector. Some are already working in a hatchery and many can even envision a future where they will have the opportunity to run a prawn hatchery of their own. The future is bright for young women like Hosne throughout Bangladesh, who now have greater access to sustainable livelihoods thanks to BYEP.



Particular emphasis is on young women and on empowering them with the necessary skills and know-how for them to gain employment and increase their livelihoods.

Impact

- 172 BYEP trainees are currently employed in hatcheries or self-employed in agriculture and non-agriculture related work
- 40% of BYEP graduates are female, leading to women being employed in hatcheries for the first time in the traditionally male-dominated industry
- 55 new farmers developed skills in contract farming
- 531 farmers from 265 farmer organizations learned Good Aquaculture Practices in workshops on golda prawn farming
- Interviews with female graduates reveal, in addition to increased knowledge and skills related to prawn farming, improved self-discipline, self-confidence, communications skills, and even personal hygiene.



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The Future of Prawn Farming

The Bangladesh Youth Employment Pilot (BYEP) convened over 85 key stakeholders of the freshwater prawn industry at the Lessons Learned Conference held in Kuakhta, Bangladesh, in April 2010 to discuss the future of prawn farming in Bangladesh. Stakeholders from all levels of the industry attended, including hatcheries, farmers, associations and BYEP participants, as well as donor organizations including USAID, DANIDA, and Katalyst.

During the two-day seminar, participants agreed that ensuring the quality of prawn produced through value chain stakeholder collaboration would aid the growth of the sector, particularly for exportation, and worked to find ways to begin cooperation. Even female BYEP trainees participated actively in the lively discussion, stating that their training gave them the confidence to speak out publicly.



Now, as a result of the conference, there is an unprecedented opportunity for BYEP's private sector partner, Shiblee Hatchery & Farms Limited, to lead the development of the freshwater prawn sector in the Barisal region. Through this leadership, including a quality increase and the meeting of international standards, Bangladesh could dramatically increase its export revenues from the prawn farming sector, guaranteeing jobs not only for BYEP graduates, but also for many more workers across the country.



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