



Covid-19 & Amphan

Support to Sufferers

Selina Khatun
Birganj, Dinajpur



“If you paid me, I would have spent it in the market. But you have given rice and vegetable seeds. These will give me business.”

The first confirmed case of COVID-19 was officially declared in Bangladesh on 8 March. The virus spread over the country very quickly (133,978 reported by 27 June). The COVID-induced lockdown choked all parts of the agricultural value chain. It seriously affected the country's food system and daily consumption by low-income people.

On top of this, super cyclone *Amphan* roared over the country on 20 May, heaping on further sorrows. Food, cash and unemployed smallholders seemed to drown in a deep sea of frustration.

Syngenta Foundation reached out to support these suffering people in the northwest of the country.

Support Strategy:

We designed the support with two foci in mind - a) prevention of a health crisis b) maintaining agriculture to ensure food security. Our support is thus blended with emergency response and short-term recovery during and after the COVID-19 and *Amphan* damage. Strategically we emphasized on recovery, allocating 85% of our support budget here. The support goes exclusively to directly affected smallholders (male and female) and relevant agri-entrepreneurs in the northwest region of Bangladesh.



18,500 Farmers



\$71,000



100 Entrepreneurs



16 Sub-districts

29,400 kg rice seeds

8,440,000 seedlings

100 acre rice harvest

300 orchard spray

200 temporary jobs for women

21,600 masks

8,200 soaps

1,800 gloves

20 hand-wash systems

15,000 awareness leaflets

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Support from Agriservices - IWET Project

The Introducing Water Efficient Technology in Barind Track (IWET) project is sponsored by Coca-Cola Foundation. Staff rapidly assessed the project area to understand beneficiaries' current situation. We designed multiple support packages to meet farmers' crying needs during the pandemic. These packages mostly include rehabilitation supports and some emergency health safety measures. The budget allocated for this program was \$ 27,700.

Support distribution was completed by June with extensive assistance from DASCOH Foundation and overall guidance from 2030WRG and BWP. Officials from DAE and local administration were present during distribution. Support covered six sub-districts of Rajshahi, Chapai Nawabganj and Naoganj district.

Support from Insurance - Surokkha Project

With the slogan “**Standing Beside Farmers**” our crop insurance “Promoting Risk Mitigation Measures for Climate Change Adaptation” (*Surokkha*), co-funded by Switzerland’s SDC, designed equal support packages for 8200 farmers in ten sub-districts of Rangpur and Rajshahi Division. The project allocated some \$ 20,200 for COVID-19 protection, awareness materials and agri-inputs to reduce economic losses. These support packages are listed below.

Provide <i>Aman</i> seed to enable farmers to continue rice production	24.4 MT 3Kg/farmers
Support assorted vegetable seeds packets for homestead gardening and family nutrition	4 types of seeds
Support masks to protect farmers from COVID-19 when work outside home	16,364 masks 2 masks per farmer
Support soap to farmers for frequent hand-wash to protect against COVID-19.	8182 soaps and farmers
Distributed leaflet with awareness messages on COVID-19 for farmers	15,000 leaflets

In addition, *Surokkha* quickly settled Potato Late Blight insurance claims for around \$ 8000. Altogether, this support enhances physical, mental and financial stamina to fight against COVID-19. The insurance company Green Delta, aggregators GUK, ESDO, Farmers’ Hubs and private company Ejab Agro spontaneously assisted with this program. We also thanks donor SDC and managing agent Swisscontact for their guidance. Support distribution was completed by 26 June.

Support farmers to harvest <i>Boro</i> rice with combine harvesters	100 acre 203 farmers
Provide <i>Aman</i> seed to enable farmers to continue rice production	5 MT 1500 farmers
Support mango farmers with power crop protection spray machine	20 machines 300 farmers
Support Ultra-High-Density plantation with quality mango saplings	10,000 saplings 500 farmers
Support fruit bag for producing safe mango and getting higher prices	40,000 bags 200 farmers
Support vegetable seedlings for the farmers	350,000 saplings 500 farmers
Support in creating jobs for women at seedling nurseries	12 person-days 200 women
Establish public hand-wash system with awareness message in farmers’ gathering places (Farmers’ Hub) to protect against COVID-19	20 sets 10,000 farmers
Support masks to protect farmers from COVID-19 when work outside home	5250 masks and farmers
Support multipurpose gloves to protect from COVID-19 and use when spraying	1810 pairs and farmers

Support from Agriservices - FHAME

Farmers’ Hubs Agri-Marketing Enterprise (FHAME) is the flagship project of SFSA Bangladesh. We have been developing agri-entrepreneurs in rural communities to provide multiple commercial services to farmers. The Farmers’ Hubs (FH, agribusiness centers) face multifold problems due to COVID-19; *Amphan* made matters far worse. We assessed FH losses due to the cyclone and designed a recovery plan. This directly helps the entrepreneurs and indirectly benefits smallholders. 100 entrepreneurs affected by the cyclone lost an estimated \$62,000 of infrastructure, nursery, seedlings, raw material, etc.. Depending on the degree of damage, FHAME provided three types of support.

Support to restore FH nursery and business immediately: help FH owners reestablish their nurseries and restart seedling production.	100 FHs
Support FH owners growing vegetable seedling: provide partial support with raw material (seeds, growing media, trays, etc.) to produce seedlings and supply these to community farmers to avoid unnecessary fallow land without a crop.	10,000,000 seedlings
Support Farmers in purchasing seedling at discounted rate: create access to have quality seedling for farmers at discount rate through FHs for quick return on investment in vegetable production	8,000,000 seedlings

The aim of this support is to create business worth \$11m for farmers via at least 65,000 mt of vegetables. These also ensure nutrition and food security for large numbers of rural people, matching the government’s intention to produce more vegetables and nutritious food for the nation. We allocated \$ 23,100 to this program.

Acknowledgment

We gratefully acknowledge the support of donors, partners and stakeholders (govt. and non-govt) through funds, strategy and implementation. We also acknowledge all our colleagues. With great dedication, they worked throughout the whole period to distribute support, thinking only of their responsibility to others. Our partners' organizations and staff also provided greatly appreciated assistance. Without mentioning individual names, we salute the local government authority, DAE officials and other local people who ensured the job got done, and done correctly. The logos below show the leading organizations involved.



About Us: Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture (SFSA) is an independent non-profit organization established by Syngenta AG, based in Basel, Switzerland. The SFSA Bangladesh country office has been in operation since 2011, focusing on the country’s smallholder and agricultural development. For details, please visit us at www.syngentafoundation.org