



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

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U.S. Farmers and Technical Experts Support the Next Generation of Agricultural Leaders



CMES

Farmer-to-Farmer volunteer Dan Miller works with an NGO in Bangladesh.

Since 1985, the United States has provided voluntary technical assistance to farmers, farm groups and agribusinesses in developing countries as part of the [Farmer-to-Farmer program](#), which promotes sustainable improvements in food security and agricultural processing, production and marketing. More than 16,000 volunteer assignments – completed by U.S. farmers and other technical experts from all 50 states – have benefited approximately one million farming families in over 110 countries, representing over \$31 million worth of volunteer time contributions to development in the last five-year program alone.

Today, as part of the Feed the Future initiative, the Farmer-to-Farmer program is continuing to leverage the expertise of volunteers from U.S. farms, land grant universities, cooperatives, private agribusiness firms and nonprofit farm organizations to respond to the local needs of host country farmers and organizations. Part of this effort includes supporting youth and university students, building their capacity to advance agriculture and food security in their home countries.

In Bangladesh, experienced U.S. volunteers have worked with a Bangladeshi NGO, the Center for Mass Education in Science (CMES), to build the skills of 137 youth trainers and students, introducing technical information and improved management practices to enhance poultry and dairy production, small ruminant animal husbandry, mushroom production and integrated pest management for horticulture production. By implementing Farmer-to-Farmer volunteer recommendations, CMES has been able to expand its operations and training capacity, increasing the number of demonstration farms it uses to teach young people about poultry production and attracting greater numbers of students. CMES has also adapted its integrated pest management curriculum to include environmentally friendly practices such as compost and eco-friendly pesticides.

“Farmer-to-Farmer’s volunteer technical assistance created wider opportunities and livelihood options for our students and farmers,” says Dr. Muhammad Ibrahim, CMES executive director.

Volunteers also have the flexibility to link up with existing agriculture and food security programs, which is why Farmer-to-Farmer in Guinea is working with another U.S. Agency for International Development program on agricultural education and market improvement.

At Guinea’s only dedicated agriculture university, Institut Supérieur Agronomique Valéry Giscard d’Estaing de Faranah (ISAVF), the two programs are supporting students through a range of curriculum improvements, experiential learning

opportunities and public-private partnerships. Farmer-to-Farmer volunteers have used their expertise to train ISAVF faculty and to support university students in leveraging their education to pursue technology development and further agricultural learning and certification opportunities. In addition, an institutional assessment supported by volunteers resulted in the improvement of an experimental plot at the university, which has since supported 33 agronomic field trials on crops including corn, rice, cowpea and soybeans.

Maggie Morse is a Farmer-to-Farmer volunteer who traveled to Boyacá, Colombia during the summer of 2014 to support a young entrepreneur program run by the Government of Colombia's National Learning Service. The program partners with local universities to increase food security and mitigate migration from rural communities to urban centers by stimulating job growth through grants for small agricultural enterprises. Young entrepreneurs are matched with advisors who assist them in creating a business plan, implementing basic accounting and record-keeping, and developing other critical business skills.

But advisors in the young entrepreneur program often lack technical knowledge to help improve the quantity and quality of agricultural production. That's why Maggie's expertise in value addition, improved nutrition, livestock management and agritourism were such an asset to the program.

Maggie's main assignment was to assist señora Baez in Piapa, Colombia in the production of the southern highbush Biloxi blueberry, a high-quality variety perfect for Colombia's tropical climate, but which had never been locally produced. Señora Baez's experimental blueberry farm is currently in its second year of production. Maggie conducted trainings on partial shade requirements for growing Biloxi blueberries, as well as proper fertilization, pruning, pest management and disease control techniques to improve production. Over 30 local instructors, advisors and farmers interested in learning more about the crop and disseminating the information to young entrepreneurs in the community attended her training sessions.

"The classes were filled with instructors with marvelous ideas about agri-tourism and value-added products for potential enterprises. Their questions aimed to turn information into material relevant to their students," Maggie says. "As a result of this assignment, a new generation of farmers will hopefully be able to develop businesses within their rural communities instead of fleeing to the big cities in pursuit of better jobs and income."

[*Learn more*](#) about how to volunteer with the Farmer-to-Farmer program.