



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

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U.S. Government Support Promotes Women's Leadership and Better Trade Standards in Bangladesh



Joel Floyd

Marina Jabunnaher, third from left in white, at the first annual Bangladesh Plant Health Laboratory Networking Conference. Marina Jabunnaher is a senior monitoring and evaluation officer with the Ministry of Agriculture's Department of Agricultural Extension in Bangladesh. A rising leader in her field, she is also the beneficiary of capacity building efforts under an agreement between the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the U.S. Agency for International Development in support of the Feed the Future initiative.

Through this agreement, the U.S. Government is strengthening Bangladesh's sanitary and phytosanitary capabilities, i.e. its ability to prevent and combat threats to the health of both humans and agricultural crops. Through a series of professional engagement opportunities, USDA has established strong working relations with key decision-makers in Bangladesh's agriculture sector, including members of the Ministry of Agriculture.

The program includes a gender component and aims to promote scientific and professional leadership among women like Marina, who has completed trainings and exchanges in order to develop the skills she needs to advance food security in Bangladesh. After working with U.S. subject-matter experts to build her technical expertise, she created an inspection manual with standard operating procedures that quarantine inspectors will be able to use as a reference tool at Bangladesh's major land borders and sea ports. The manual, which will be published in 2015, will help demonstrate how to identify and treat pests and plant diseases that pose a risk to agricultural products. This reference tool will help ensure that import and exports inspection practices are aligned with international standards, increasing Bangladesh's opportunities for agricultural trade.

Jabunnaher has recently been nominated as a committee member for the Bangladesh Plant Health Laboratory Networking committee, a body that is working together to develop a central web-based platform for scientists, government personnel, scholars, subject-matter experts and farmers to use for pest and plant disease identification. She continues to display strong leadership skills and hopes to inspire other women to follow in her footsteps.