



Bangladesh joins International Landcare movement

Landcare Bangladesh was launched at the Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University in Dhaka, Bangladesh on Thursday 11th July 2013.

This exciting development means that Bangladesh joins a number of countries around the world adopting Landcare to address pressing issues of livelihood, environmental management and agricultural production.

The launch of Landcare Bangladesh follows eighteen months of intense work with farming communities in the Sylhet region in north-east Bangladesh by Friends in Village Development Bangladesh (FIVDB). The drivers behind this pilot work are Dr Shaikh Tanveer Hossain, Sustainable Agriculture Advisor & Chief Agricultural Coordinator and Mr Zahid Hossain, Director of the Livelihood Enhancement Program of FIVDB.

Since March 2012 they have worked intensely with village farmers and communities with the support of FIVDB field facilitators to establish five model house projects in each of 22 areas across the Sylhet region.

Australian Directors of the Secretariat for International Landcare (SILC), Sue Marriott and Victoria Mack, were invited to participate in the official launch Landcare Bangladesh (LCB) on behalf of the Landcare Bangladesh interim committee.

In November 2011 Dr Tanveer and Mr Zahid organised a study tour to Sri Lanka with four colleagues to learn from *Landcare Lanka* demonstration projects and field sites. Following this visit in early 2012 they invited Sri Lanka's Kamy Melvani to run facilitator training workshops in Bangladesh on Landcare processes.

This has resulted in over 100 small scale demonstration sites which today provide the educational building blocks for advanced land use planning and improved livelihood decisions by participating farmers and increasingly their wider community networks.

Landcare is a development 'process' or 'method' that places farmers and rural, but also urban, communities at the centre of decision making about their futures, with the assistance of land use facilitators, technical specialists, or other agencies as applicable. Landcare is a highly collaborative process that builds on local skills and capacities with the overall objective to sustain and improve livelihoods, protect the environment and natural resources and enhance community resilience to climate change.

The demonstration sites show how farmers can optimise land use efficiency, increase crop diversity and productivity, diversify enterprises, improve livestock genetics and value add to production.

The Landcare movement was first established in Australia 1986, and is now active in over 15 countries. Landcare is a dynamic process which enables individuals and whole communities to approach land stewardship in a mature and nurturing way.

Landcare works best in collaboration with multiple partners including government, business, research and extension (training) and in field facilitators and technical agencies.

Landcare Bangladesh is supported by a wide cross section of Bangladesh stakeholders, such as university staff, Prof. Dr. Parimal Kanti Biswas, Dept. of Agronomy, Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University; Mr. Md. Jashim Uddin, Associate Professor, Dept. Soil, Water and Environment, University of Dhaka; researchers, such as Dr. Md. Abdul Jajil Mridha, Head of Agronomy Division, Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI); and many others.

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