

Evidences

Study #2661

Contributing Projects:

- P688 - 4.1.2 Improving Design and Delivery of Social protection for Nutrition and Other Outcomes
- P690 - 2.4.5 Support to Bangladesh Policies

Part I: Public communications

Type: OICR: Outcome Impact Case Report

Status: Ready to be reported on

Year: 2018

Title: Improved targeting for the largest safety net program for ultra-poor women in rural Bangladesh, reaching 750,000 women and their 3.5 million family members

Short outcome/impact statement:

PIM's assessment of the largest safety net for ultra-poor women in rural Bangladesh, the Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) program, identified key deficiencies in the program's targeting criteria and recommended new criteria grounded more firmly on available poverty data. These criteria were adopted by the VGD program and by the new World Bank-supported Income Support Program for the Poorest.

Outcome story for communications use:

Improving the performance of the largest safety net program for ultra-poor women in rural Bangladesh

Governments and development partners around the world make hard choices on how to invest their limited resources to help the needy. In a country like Bangladesh, where almost one fourth of the population lives below the poverty line, identifying who should receive assistance is especially challenging.

The Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) program, implemented by the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs with support from the World Food Programme, reaches up to 750,000 women and their 3.75 million family members each year. While VGD has improved the lives of many ultra-poor households, like many social protection programs it faces targeting issues.

To better understand and address these issues, the Ministry and the World Food Programme requested an evaluative study of the program, which was submitted in June 2018 by the IFPRI Bangladesh Policy Research and Strategy Support Program team [1]. The study identified key deficiencies in the program's targeting criteria, which resulted in some of the poorest failing to qualify for assistance they ought to be receiving. The team recommended a new set of criteria grounded more firmly on available poverty data.

Within one month of submission, the government accepted all of the PIM study's recommendations [2], and the new criteria will be used to select VGD beneficiaries as of 2019. In addition, the World Bank Mission in Bangladesh incorporated most of the criteria recommended by the PIM study into the new World Bank-supported Income Support Program for the Poorest [3].

This case of quick policy uptake by a government demonstrates the power of placing timely, implementable recommendations directly in the hands of policymakers.

Links to any communications materials relating to this outcome:

- <https://tinyurl.com/y6q95eaj>

Part II: CGIAR system level reporting

Link to Common Results Reporting Indicator of Policies : Yes

Policies contribution:

- 220 - World Bank's Income Support Program for the Poorest Project (improved targeting criteria)
- 93 - Bangladesh's Vulnerable Group Development program (improved targeting criteria)

Level of maturity of change reported: Level 2

Links to the Strategic Results Framework:

Sub-IDOs:

- Increased access to diverse nutrient-rich foods
- Increased household capacity to cope with shocks

Is this OICR linked to some SRF 2022/2030 target?: Yes

SRF 2022/2030 targets:

- # of more people, of which 50% are women, meeting minimum dietary energy requirements
- # of people, of which 50% are women, assisted to exit poverty

Comment: <Not Defined>

Geographic scope:

- National

Country(ies):

- Bangladesh

Comments: <Not Defined>

Key Contributors:

Contributing CRPs/Platforms: <Not Defined>

Contributing Flagships:

- F4: Social Protection for Agriculture and Resilience
- F2: Economywide Factors Affecting Agricultural Growth and Rural Transformation

Contributing Regional programs: <Not Defined>

Contributing external partners:

- WFP - World Food Programme
- Government of Bangladesh
- The World Bank

CGIAR innovation(s) or findings that have resulted in this outcome or impact:

N/A

Innovations: <Not Defined>

Elaboration of Outcome/Impact Statement:

The Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) program reaches up to 750,000 women and their 3.75 million family members each year. The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs of Bangladesh implements VGD with support from the World Food Programme. While VGD has improved the lives of many ultra poor households through transfers and training, like many social protection programs it faces targeting issues that reduce its effectiveness.

To better understand and address these issues, the Ministry and the World Food Programme requested an evaluative study of the program, which was submitted in June 2018 by the IFPRI Bangladesh Policy Research and Strategy Support Program team [1]. The study identified key deficiencies in the program's targeting criteria, which result in some of the poorest failing to qualify for assistance they ought to be receiving. More specifically, the study found that several criteria are ineffective in identifying the poorest because they are not observable, verifiable, or linked with poverty. For example, households are eligible if "functionally landless, with no owned land or with owned land less than 0.15 acres" - but no mechanism exists to verify this, and the term "landless" is not adequately defined. Another criterion relates to households with disabled family members; yet there is no established link between having a disabled family member in the household and being poor. Using data from IFPRI's nationally representative rural household surveys, the Bangladesh Integrated Household Survey, the team recommended a new set of criteria, which are observable, verifiable, and highly linked with poverty. As an example, one of the new criteria is "Households without any private latrine" (43 percent of the poorest households lack a private latrine).

The government accepted all of the recommendations in the study [2], which will be implemented to guide beneficiary selection in the next two-year (2019-2020) program cycle. In addition, the World Bank Mission in Bangladesh incorporated most of the criteria recommended by the PIM study into the new World Bank-supported Income Support Program for the Poorest [3].

References cited:

[1] Report "Assessing indicators for selection of participants for the Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) program in Bangladesh":

<http://ebrary.ifpri.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p15738coll2/id/132834/rec/5>

[2] Government notification (in Bangla) that the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs will revise its targeting criteria for the next program cycle (July 2018)

[3] E-mail from World Bank's Social Protection Economist Anneka Rahman confirming that the World Bank-financed Income Support Program for the Poorest will incorporate most of IFPRI's proposed targeting criteria

Quantification: <Not Defined>

Gender, Youth, Capacity Development and Climate Change:

Gender relevance: 1 - Significant

Main achievements with specific **Gender** relevance: The government launched VGD to help rural women climb out of poverty. Local selection committees identify poor women at the subdistrict-level following the prescribed targeting criteria. VGD reaches up to 750,000 women and their 3.75 million family members each year.

Youth relevance: 0 - Not Targeted

CapDev relevance: 0 - Not Targeted

Climate Change relevance: 0 - Not Targeted

Other cross-cutting dimensions: <Not Defined>

Other cross-cutting dimensions description: <Not Defined>

Outcome Impact Case Report link: [Study #2661](#)

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