



**Documenting change in the WASPA project: Involving Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in WASPA Bangladesh**

The relations between the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) and the WASPA team have been established through various activities of the WASPA project. These include several bilateral meetings with the Deputy Director and District Training Officer of DAE in preparation of the development of the Participatory Action Plans (PAPs). The Department was also involved in the Learning Alliance workshop held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2007 in Rajshahi.

When the WASPA project started in 2005, the DAE officials had little awareness of the links between wastewater flows and agriculture. They are mainly concerned with promoting sustainable agricultural and socio-economic development, but did not undertake activities regarding wastewater agriculture. The mandated activities of DAE are helping farmers in adopting improved production technologies (e.g. setting up demonstrations of new technologies; seed multiplication programs to produce quality seeds, organizing agricultural fairs; producing information materials, integrated pest management and organic recycling; and preparing Seasonal Crop Production Programs) to increase their productivity.

DAE officials acknowledged that farmers are compelled to use wastewater for irrigation because of prevailing water shortage in the region throughout the year. But, even DAE did not have any information about the current use of wastewater for agriculture in the Terokhadia area. Through its assessments, interviews and frequent

The Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) is the key government institution in promoting agricultural activities in the city of Rajshahi. Provision of efficient and effective needs-based extension services to all categories of farmers are the main activities of DAE. However, DAE does not have any specific programme for the farmers using wastewater.

interactions with the farmers, the WASPA project was able to provide this information.



When it was identified that wastewater farmers have limited hygiene and health awareness, training for the wastewater farmers was planned. DAE does not have any experience in training on hygiene and health awareness for wastewater farmers, so NGO Forum adapted their hygiene training materials for this purpose and designed and provided the training together with DAE.



DAE have welcomed WASPA as a new multidimensional project that has the potential to help the farmers that use wastewater. In addition DAE actively contributed to the project, by helping to collect climatic data, irrigation data, crop data and providing detailed information at the block level. The metropolitan agriculture officer also shared the dissemination mechanisms that they use for technology dissemination with WASPA

DAE indicated that it is the role of the Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) to take proper steps to stop the flow of solid wastes in the RCC drains.



DAE consider WASPA an important platform for information sharing and have expressed an interest to acquire advanced knowledge from WASPA regarding wastewater practices in agriculture in other countries and access to external information sources like a newsletter, website or journal.

DAE have suggested contributing to the project by testing soil at the local government laboratory. This will help gain information about improving fertilizer use by waste water farmers.



Through their involvement in WASPA and increased awareness of the situation of wastewater farmers, they agreed to provide need-based agriculture supports like agricultural training for wastewater farmers on more efficient wastewater irrigation use to improve their income . The training would specifically include issues that were identified in WASPA assessments such as fertiliser application, use of pesticides and soil quality.



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After attending the knowledge sharing workshop, several meetings and discussions with the WASPA project team, the DAE representative indicates that it is their responsibility to provide instructions on hygiene and sanitation to the wastewater farmers in order to bring changes in their perception on the use of wastewater.



In the Core Group meeting held on 23 June, the DAE presented their experience on the agricultural training that they had facilitated to the wastewater farmers, and indicated that they plan to do soil testing.



The DAE also suggested that they would provide extension services to the farmers using wastewater. These would focus on issues such as crop diversification, measurement of pests and guidance on crops that use less water. This indicates clearly the increased awareness and active involvement of DAE as well as their commitment to take part in WASPA interventions.

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