



Case Study Series 3:

Addressing Citizens' Concerns: Inspiration from Proactive Civil Servants

Case 6 - How Collaboration Improved the Distribution of Agricultural Essentials

Sakir Mohammad & Hasan Muhammad Baniamin

February 2024

Series Editor: Dr. Hasan Muhammad Baniamin

Policy and Innovation Lab (PLab) of South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG)
North South University, Bangladesh

SIPG-Y23-S3-006

The case studies for this series are collected from real-life cases of civil servants working in different South Asian countries. This collection initiative is an attempt to document different proactive approaches taken by civil servants and, in the process, encourage other civil servants to become more proactive in their workplaces. If you know of other such proactive acts, please email us (parvez.yousuf@northsouth.edu), and we will get back to you to collect more information.

CASE 6

How Collaboration Improved the Distribution of Agricultural Essentials

Sakir Mohammad & Hasan Muhammad Baniamin

February 2024

How Collaboration Improved the Distribution of Agricultural Essentials

To facilitate agricultural activities in Bangladesh, the government has set up *Upazila* (Sub-district) Agriculture Offices in its 495 *Upazilas* (GoB, n.d.). *Upazila* Agriculture offices are tasked with providing various services to local farmers, including integrated pest management, assistance with agricultural loans, operation of mini soil labs and diagnostic centers, support for quality seed production, appointment of fertilizer dealers and retailers, counseling for disaster management, and licensing for pesticide retailers (Service Portal, n.d.). Additionally, they offer free agricultural essentials such as seeds, saplings (young plants), and pesticides to farmers. However, to distribute these essentials *Upazila* Agriculture Offices face a lot of challenges.

Challenges in Distributing Free Farming Essentials in Bangladesh

According to Mr. X, an Agricultural Extension Officer in the southern part of Bangladesh, his office has received numerous concerns regarding the distribution of agricultural essentials. Mr. X stated that their *Upazila* has approximately 155,256 people, most of whom are directly or indirectly involved in agriculture. Consequently, it is challenging for his small team to identify and assist the genuine farmers in need. Furthermore, the total number of saplings available for distribution is insufficient to meet the demand of all farmers. Many farmers have raised concerns about their lack of awareness regarding distribution events, often leading to them missing out on the opportunity to participate. Additionally, when they do become aware of distribution events, it is too late for them to take part. Smallholder and marginalized farmers have consistently reported being excluded, despite being the ones who need assistance the most.

Problem

An *Upazila* Agriculture Office faces challenges in identifying and informing farmers in need about the distribution of agricultural essentials

Solution

Engagement of the people's representative to identify the people in need.

Outcome

Improvement in the distribution of agricultural essentials has ensured that resources effectively reach local farmers genuinely in need.

Engagement of Local Representatives for more Effective Distribution

To address these issues, Mr. X and his colleagues initiated a collaboration effort with the local *Union Parishad Chairmen*, elected officials who lead the lowest tier of local government in Bangladesh, to distribute these farming essentials. At the initial stage, the *Upazila Agriculture Office* contacted all the *Union Parishad Chairmen* to make a list of actual farmers and made a need assessment. Afterward, whenever there is an opportunity to supply seeds or saplings, the *Upazila Agriculture Office* reviews the list and takes necessary actions. As a result, the process of distribution has become easier and more effective. Since *Union Parishad Chairmen* work closely with the people of the Union, they are more aware of the actual needs and demands of the farmers.

References

GoB) Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (n.d.). উপজেলাসমূহ [List of Upazilas]. Retrieved from <https://shorturl.at/xFTU7>

Service Portal. (n.d.). উপজেলা কৃষি অফিস [Upazila Agricultural Office]. Retrieved from <https://shorturl.at/kDNT9>