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OF DENMARK**
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**Strengthening Inclusive Development in Chattogram Hill Tracks,
(SID-CHT), Ministry of Chattogram Hill Tracts Affairs
AND
United Nations Development Programme**

Final Report

**Mid-Term Evaluation of the sub-project “Support to
Host Communities Affected by the Rohingya Influx
(SHARIP)”**

PMID
Participatory
Management
Initiative for
Development

**Participatory Management
Initiative for Development**

Project/outcome Information

Project/outcome title	Support to host communities affected by Rohingya Influx Project Bangladesh (SHARIP)	
Project No.	000111449	
Project outcomes	Outcome 1: Agricultural production increased and diversified in targeted communities Outcome 2: Agroforestry production increased sustainably Outcome 3: Social cohesion increased	
Country	Bangladesh	
Region	Ramu, Ukhia and Teknaf Upazilas in Cox's Bazar and Naikhyangchari, Lama and Alikadam in Bandarban- 6 upazilas and 35 Unions. Extended phase -10 Upazila, 55 Unions (4 additional upazilas of Bandarban in extended phase)	
Date project document signed		
Project dates	Start	Planned end
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Total committed budget	USD 8.91 million	
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Implementing Partners	UNDP	

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Mid-Term Evaluation Team
PMID

Prepared for: United Nations Development Programme**Primary Authors:**

Dr. Nizamuddin Al-Hussainy, Team Leader cum Agriculture Expert
Mr. A.K.M Waliul Islam, Deputy Team Leader cum Cohesion Expert
Md. Fakhrul Islam, Data Scientist

Other Contributors:

Shafiqul Islam, PMID
Md Rahadujjaman, PMID
Md Tanvirul Islam, PMID

Layout and Design Adopted by: Shanjidul Hassan Shakif, PMID

Published by:

Participatory Management Initiative for Development (PMID)
1/11 Iqbal Road (2nd Building, Ground Floor),
Block A, Mohammadpur, Dhaka 1207.
Tel: 880 2 58153795, 01711 731216
Email: info@pmidbd.com, pmidbd@yahoo.com
Website: www.pmidbd.com

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List of Acronyms

ABN	Agri-Business Network
ACLAB	Alliance for Cooperation and Legal Aid Bangladesh
ADP	Agroforestry Development Plan
AFSP	Agriculture and Food Security Project
BDT	Bangladesh Taka
BHDC	Bandarban Hill District Council
CPD	Country Programme Document
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CHT	Chittagong Hill Tracts
CLW	Community Livestock Worker
CNRS	Center for Natural Resource
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DAE	Department of Agricultural Extension
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DLS	Department of Livestock Services
DoF	Department of Fisheries
DSK	Dushtha Shasthya Kendra
DTW	Deep Tube Wells
DWA	Department of Women Affairs
EPG	Eminent Persons Group
ET	Evaluation Team
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FF	Farmer Facilitators
FFS	Farmer Field School
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
GDP	Gross domestic product
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
GRAUS	Gram Unnayan Sangathon
HHs	Households
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
HSC	Higher Secondary School Certificate
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
IDI	In-Depth Interview
IFM	Integrated Firm Management
JRP	Joint Response Plan
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LGI	Local Government Institution
LLP	Low-Lift Pumps
LNOB	Leaving no One Behind
LVMF	Local Volunteer Mediator Forum
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MFI	Micro Finance Institutions
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MoCHTA	Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs
MT	Master Trainers
MTE	Mid Term Evaluation
NEX	National Execution
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NPD	National Project Director
NPM	National Project Manager
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAB	Practical Action Bangladesh
PDF	Portable Document Format
PMID	Participatory Management Initiative for Development
PPEs	Personal Protective Equipment's

PPP	Public Private Partnership
PwD	Persons with Disabilities
RFP	Request for Proposal
RR	Rural Route
SC	Steering Committee
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEG	Strategic Executive Group
SHARIP	Support to Host Communities Affected by Rohingya Influx Project
SID	Strengthening Inclusive Development
SMS	Short Message Service
SO	Strategic Objectives
SSC	Secondary School Certificate
STW	Shallow Tube Wells
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
TPP	Technical Project Proforma
UFFSC	Upazila Farmers’ Field School Co-ordinator
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNO	Upazila Nirbahi Officer
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UP	Upazila Parishad
USD	United States Dollar

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Executive Summary

SHARIP plays a significant role in contributing to government development priorities and SDGs by improving the socio-economic conditions of 54,000 poor and vulnerable farmers through 1,800 Integrated Farm Management – Farmer Field School (IFM-FFS) and by enhancing the knowledge and skills of host community residents to strengthen social cohesion in seven Upazilas of Bandarban Hill District and three Upazilas in Cox's Bazar District. The objective of the project is to strengthen the socio-economic conditions of the poor households of the host communities affected by the recent Rohingya influx in ten Upazilas of Bandarban and Cox's Bazar districts. SHARIP is being managed by the SID-CHT project of UNDP with the Ministry of CHT Affairs through the National Execution (NEX) Modalities, where the GOB takes the lead role in implementation and monitoring. The project has 3 components- i) IFM-FFS, ii) agroforestry, and iii) social cohesion. UNDP is managing the implementation of this project in partnership with Bandarban Hill District Council (BHDC), the key implementing partner for this project in Bandarban. An NGO named “*Practical Action*” is the implementing partner for the IFM-FFS and agroforestry components in Cox's Bazar. *GRAUS (Gram Unnayan Sangathan)* in Bandarban and *ACLAB (Alliance for Cooperation and Legal Aid Bangladesh)* in Cox's Bazar are the implementing partners for the social cohesion component.

UNDP engaged PMID to conduct the midterm evaluation of the project. The scope of mid-term evaluation covers the project implementation from July 2018 to June 2021. The evaluation was done during the period November 2021- to March 2022.

A mixed-method of the qualitative and quantitative method was followed for this midterm evaluation. While the quantitative survey at the household level was conducted with a structured questionnaire using the digital platform (Kobo toolbox), the qualitative assessment was done in a consultative way in which the project stakeholders, i.e. target beneficiaries, input service providers, staff of the project implementation agencies, local government institutes (BHDC, UP), government officials of the line departments and concerned UNDP project personnel were interviewed. The population under 6 Upazilas for the quantitative survey is 27,360. This comprises the treatment population for this proposed randomized control trial (RCT) study design. Both treatment and control groups were selected for the survey, and the evaluation compared the findings resulting from both groups. A sample size of **1885** from the treatment group and **770** from the control group was randomly selected through the standard statistical procedure from 12 out of 35 unions for the execution of the survey.

Key findings

- The project is relevant to the sectoral government policies and strategic goals and visions and the UNDP strategic framework, and the SDGs. Its design is overall appropriate. Whilst there are clear, logical linkages from activities to outputs, through outcome to impact, the outcome rationale and clear indicators are present (Section 4.6.1, General findings No. 1)
- Achievement of the 3 outcomes is satisfactory. To address gender equality, the project design has a strong emphasis on women's inclusion. The project has emphasized practical training and capacity development of the target beneficiaries, i.e. FFS farmers and farmer's facilitators, and accordingly, the project has an extensive capacity-building component. Most of the capacity-building efforts seemed to be effective and driven toward making the intended results (Section 4.6.1, General findings No. 4).
- The project has achieved clear results under outcome 1. Agricultural production was increased and diversified in targeted communities through the Establishment of Integrated Farm Management – Farmer Field Schools (IFM-FFS) (372 IFM-FFS in Cox's Bazar and 540 IFM-FFS

in Bandarban) with the participation of poor and marginalized farmers, of which 77% were women. It was found that the production of vegetables, fruits, eggs, chicken meat and fish, the major 5 items of the result framework, has significantly increased respectively by 67.2%, 39.3%, 56.9%, 67.7% and 66.8% for FFS farmers and 31.5%, 38.2%, 26.8%, 21.9% and 66.5% for non-FFS farmers. The difference between FFS and non-FFS is statistically significant at $\alpha=1\%$ (Section 4.6.2, Agricultural production, Good practice and impact No.1)

- 97.4% of FFS respondents in Cox’sBazar and 92.4% in Bandarban increased additional farming components after getting training from the project field school. Overall, 93.7% of FFS farmers increased additional farming components. In contrast, only 6.4% of non-FFS respondents in Cox’s Bazar and 13.5% in Bandarban increased additional farming components after getting training from different GoB line departments. Overall, 10.0% of non-FFS farmers increased additional farming components. The difference between FFS and Non-FFS farmers is statistically significant at $\alpha=1\%$ (Section 4.6.2, Agricultural production, Good practice and impact No.2)
- As the field survey demonstrates, the FFS farmers are getting increased production in different items by adopting the improved farming technologies as learned from IFM-FFS. So it can be attributed that improved farming technologies learned from IFM-FFS school have been applied successfully to farmers' production fields (Section 4.6.2, Agricultural production, Good practice and impact No.3).
- The continuation of input supply to the farmers based on linkage with the input suppliers/traders is a great challenge in this project, which seems not to function properly. This may be a constraining factor towards the promotion of integrated farming and further increase of production at the farmers' level (Section 4.6.2, Agricultural production, critical observation No.4).
- The project is enhancing access of IFM-FFS farmers to agricultural services through the engagement of Government Line Departments (DAE, DLS, DoF) and local Government Institutions as resource persons and monitors and through training of Community Livestock Workers. The project is well known to the Upazila Agriculture office and Upazilla livestock office (Section 4.6.2, Agricultural production, critical observation No.5)
- The project is enhancing the access of IFM-FFS farmers to marketing through the establishment of collection points. The collection point is a good approach and marketing mechanism to facilitate the marketing of the farmers' produce from one point, which is very close to the farmers. These collection points link the farmers and the market traders. However, the management committee of these collection points seems very weak and doesn’t have enough capacity to bargain with the traders in favour of the farmers to assess the competitive pricing of the items produced by the farmers (Section 4.6.2, Agricultural production, critical observation No.6)
- Livelihood diversification, market access development, collection points, broadening income opportunities, creation of individual or group enterprise, development of market infrastructure is still at an early stage of development and needs sufficient time and specific effort to grow to a self-sustaining stage (Section 4.6.2, Agricultural production, critical observation No.7).
- The survey data reveals that the growth of seedlings in the nursery, vegetation, and bamboo bushes were increased respectively by 77.0%, 47.7% and 63.6% for FFS farmers. For non-FFS farmers, the growth of seedlings and vegetation were decreased respectively by 49.7% and 56.5%, and bamboo bushes increased by 43.9%. For all items, the difference between FFS and non-FFS farmers is statistically insignificant at $\alpha=5\%$ (Section 4.6.3, Agroforestry, Good practice and impact No.1)

- 84.6% of FFS farmers in Cox’s Bazar and 92.3% of FFS farmers in Bandarban have their own individual agroforestry development plan, But 60.3% of FFS farmers have a plan in Cox’s Bazar, and 62.8% of FFS farmers having a plan in Bandarban are implementing agroforestry as per their plan. But the benefits of homestead agroforestry are not still visible and perceptible to the FFS farmers as it takes a longer time to benefit the farmers (Section 4.6.3, Agroforestry, critical observation No.1).
- While farmers have only started agroforestry in their homestead as per their ADPs, agroforestry at the community level has not progressed at the expected level. The community-level agroforestry is linked with land ownership, and occupancy and social incentive are shared by the community peoples/ farmers. The forest department is the relevant government agency to promote this agro-forestry, but no visible linkage of this agro-forestry component is found with this government agency (Section 4.6.3, Agroforestry, critical observation No.3).
- According to survey findings and field observation, the Rohingya influx has made a negative social, economic and environmental impact. Except in a few cases in the camp area of Ukhya and Teknaf in Cox’s Bazar, direct conflict between and host community and Rohingyas is not reported. The high number of conflicts mediated by the LVMF, however, testifies to the fact that social cohesion is impacted by hosting a large FDMN population (Section 4.6.4, Social Cohesion, Good practice and impact No.1).
- A significant contribution has been made by the project to reduce social conflicts and increase social cohesion through the intervention of LVMF, which in fact, work as an informal body to mediate/ resolve internal conflicts of the FFS members and, to some extent, conflicts with the Rohingya community. The survey data shows that 37.8% of FFS farmers who know about LVMF in Cox’s Bazar and 63.9% of FFS farmers who know about LVMF in Bandarban approached LVMF to resolve local disputes. Similarly, 26.1% of non-FFS farmers who know about LVMF in Cox’s Bazar and 78.7% of non-FFS farmers who know about LVMF in Bandarban approached LVMF to resolve local disputes. The difference between FFS and non-FFS is not statistically significant, and it testifies that LVMF has gained the trust of non-FFS farmers as well (Section 4.6.4, Social Cohesion, Good practice and impact No.5, Section 4.4.3: Conflicts mediation by LVMF).
- The social cohesion component is event-based targeted activities and not always focused on the outcome. Monitoring mechanism to measure the impact of this program is yet to be developed. The institutional arrangement to carry on these activities in the future is yet to be established (Section 4.6.4, Social Cohesion, critical observation No.1).

Key lessons learned

- IFM-FFS has been proven as a good model for benefitting marginal farmers who have limited land but can produce multiple crops, particularly vegetables and fruits, by using their homestead. They can also rear poultry and livestock on their homestead. The model has been successfully replicated by many non-FFS farmers in the project area. This could be the replicable model to support marginal farmers elsewhere in the country through mainstreaming.
- Although technical, farmers can better understand and learn from project field school and can adopt those improved practices at their homestead. Group learning through study plot demonstration is a good technique for learning and adapting, and the same technique can be adopted elsewhere for agricultural extension work.

- The FFS sessions were more relevant to the local contexts, which increased the interest of the farmers, and learnings were easily adopted by the farmers. This was proved as a good technique to transfer technology from school to field in the remote and backward areas
- Accessing quality farming inputs continues to be a challenge in the project area. Despite training provided by the project to the farmers and input sellers on quality farming inputs, many farmers are not eventually linked with the sellers, mainly due to the distance between farmers’ homes and the sellers’ shops. But organizing input related coordination meetings at the Union level between farmers and input sellers worked well, which have the potential to be replicated in the collection points to make the collection points hub for interaction between farmers and the input sellers.
- The involvement of local political leaders in LVMF has worked positively to influence the disputant parties and gain their trust to approach LVMF for the solution. This also mitigated political conflicts threatening the safety and security of the local people
- In some events and groups in the social cohesion component, it was a challenge to ensure female participation, particularly in culturally and religiously conservative areas of Cox’s Bazar, where female participation in public events is generally not encouraged. The strategy of planning female-only events (e.g. martial art training and football tournaments) and making alliances with gender-equality sensitive teachers has proved successful.

Key Recommendations

- The follow-up and backstopping support at the farmers' level need to be increased to ensure appropriate adoption of the knowledge and improved technologies learned in the FFS. This follow-up should continue at least for a cropping season, i.e. from seed to seed, to ensure that farmers can harvest the increased production in a cropping season (Section 7.2.1.ii).
- The FFs being the resource developed by the project, can play a proactive role in transferring technology from FFS to farmers' fields, and hence they can be engaged in regular follow-up at individual farmers' levels. Their remuneration package may be revised to include follow-up responsibilities at the farmers' level. They need advanced training to increase their facilitation and communication skills to perform extension work efficiently at the farmers' level (Section 7.2.1.iii).
- To engage FFS farmers in improved farming practices and agroforestry and to promote sustainable production practices, the farmers need to be supported with additional seed capital. In case of the constraint of project funds, the farmers need to be linked with MFI or bank for micro-financing (Section 7.2.1.iv).
- There is a strong need to have ‘technological exchange’ with the non-FFS farmers through government line departments, and exchange of updated government promoted new farming technologies to the FFS farmers. The project may make that collaborative arrangement with the line departments so that more functional linkage is established and FFS farmers can access more technical support services of the line departments (Section 7.2.1.vi).
- The collection point is a good approach. It is necessary to establish more collection points in Bandarban District to reduce hard work to reach the marketplace. In Cox's Bazar, a collaborative arrangement may be made with other implementing agencies to establish collection points in the remote rural area where access to the local market is restricted or difficult (Section 7.2.1.vii).

- The project is using already existing and organically formed youth forums for organizing different events to increase social cohesion, which could be a potential body to carry on these activities in future. However, the youth forums need to be restructured, strengthened and their activities need to be reorganized to ensure continued engagement in awareness building on issues such as GBV, early marriage, drugs, human trafficking, etc. and the promotion of more social cohesion and harmony between the host community and the Rohingyas (Section 7.2.1.x).
- The martial art and self-defence skills training should be extended to adolescent girls and young women against gender-based violence and is likely to have a wider impact in terms of confidence-building to protest against GVP if high school girls and interested working women can be included under this program (Section 7.2.1.xi).
- LVMF is working on the spirit of volunteerism for conflict mitigation and peace building and is mitigating social conflicts with a friendly and informal approach. This should continue to build relations with the community and gain their trust. However, to deal with sensitive conflicting issues between the host and Rohingya community, the LVMF needs to be further developed as a social institution to establish more functional links with local administration and law enforcement agencies (Section 7.2.1.xii).
- In the remaining period of the project, the project team should try to strengthen the existing FFS groups and systems, improve the intervention process and discuss strategies for moving forward sustainably (Section 7.2.1.xiii). The specific actions may include the followings:
 - Do a review with the existing FFS groups along with FFs to identify where the groups stand towards implementing their individual and group agricultural and agroforestry development plan
 - Identify the challenges and new opportunities for diversification of agricultural production that could support their livelihood are
 - Find what needs to be done to improve the existing system/ practices in relation to IFM/ FFS and social cohesion program and improve the implementation process towards sustainable achievement of the result/ outcome
 - Prepare an exit plan based on the above-identified needs, gaps, challenges, and opportunities specifying time-bound actions to reach the targeted result/ outcome.

Chapter 1: Introduction of SHARIP project

1.1 Project Background

More than 877,000 Rohingya refugees from Myanmar have settled across the border in what is commonly known as ‘*the world’s largest refugee camp*’ in Cox’s Bazar district in Bangladesh. They live in densely populated camps, currently facing the triple threat of fires, monsoons, and COVID-19 – with little prospect of returning home. This is what we need to know about the Rohingya refugee crisis, and Bangladesh continues to face a complex humanitarian emergency with them¹. On the other hand, Rohingya refugees put an immense strain on the surrounding host communities. Therefore, one of the four strategic objectives in the Joint Response Plan (JRP) for the Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis aims to support sustainable livelihoods for host communities and mitigate potential tensions.

The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of the UN aim to end poverty and protect the planet from environmental degradation, and food security is a central concern. Moreover, SDGs also align with GOB’s goal to increase agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, particularly women. The Support to Host Communities Affected by Rohingya Influx Project (SHARIP) plays a significant role in contributing to government development priorities and SDGs by improving the socio-economic conditions of 54,000 poor and vulnerable farmers through 1,800 Integrated Farm Management – Farmer Field School (IFM-FFS) and by enhancing knowledge and skills of host community residents to strengthen social cohesion in seven Upazilas of Bandarban Hill District and three Upazilas in Cox’s Bazar District.

Bandarban (total population 388,335/ area 4,479.01 km²) is a district in South-Eastern Bangladesh and a part of the Chittagong Division,² heavily dependent on **Jumm**³ farming. Bandarban produces little that is of economic value outside the self-consumption of the hill people, also known as Jumia⁴. Fruits (banana, pineapple, jackfruit, papaya), masala (ginger, turmeric), and tribal textile are the major exports of the district, with tourism growing fast as a source of revenue. Much of the trade-in fruit, like most other commerce in the district, has been taken over by Bengali settlers⁵. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated Bangladesh’s highest road, Thanchi-Alikadam, in Bandarban in 2015, which is 2,500 feet above sea level and has been finished at the cost of Tk 1.17 billion. It helps to speed up all aspects of people’s development in the hill tracts, including education and health. On the other hand, **Cox’s Bazar** is a district located 150 km south of Chittagong. It is one of the fishing ports of Bangladesh. Cox’s Bazar is one of the world’s longest natural sea beaches. The distance between Bandarban and Cox’s Bazar by road is 111 Km. Bandarban and Cox’s Bazar districts are characterized by a narrow land strip covered with hill forests along the middle ridge with slopes that merges with the Naf River bordering Myanmar on the east and with the Bay of Bengal on the west. Major livelihoods of the poor are fishing in rivers, canals, and hill streams, while many are involved in both on-farm and off-farm wage labouring. Collecting forest products (mainly wood fuel) from adjacent hill forests is also a major livelihood of many local poor. Besides, people of this area are also engaged in production activities, viz. agriculture and aquaculture (shrimp farming in *ghers* along the Naf River

¹UN OCHA, Till March 2021

² Rahman, Atikur (2012). "Bandarban District". Banglapedia: National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh . Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.

³ which is a slash and burn agricultural technique

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bandarban_District

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bandarban_District

basin and pond aquaculture) and salt farming (Teknaf and some part of Ukhiya) (Choudhury et al, 2011:90⁶; CNRS, 2019⁷).

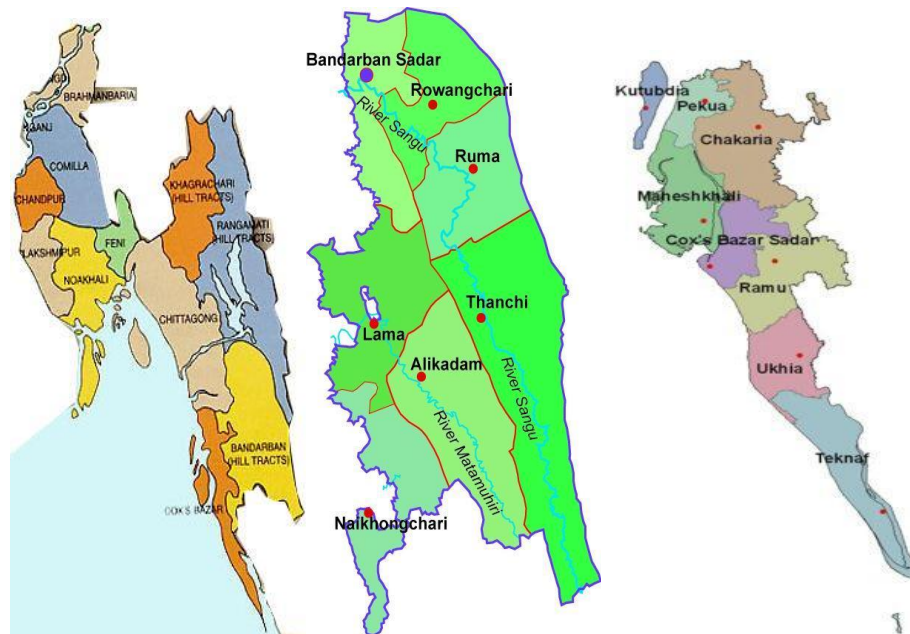


Figure 1: Map of Bandarban, Cox Bazar, and Chittagong Division. (Source: Google maps).

To accommodate over a million displaced Rohingya nationals from Myanmar in this narrow land strip and to meet the fuel demand for both Rohingya and host communities, a substantial area of hill forests had to be cleared (UNDP, 2018⁸). Besides, the Rohingya influx has negative impacts on forests, biodiversity, hill streams, and local livelihoods (UNDP, 2018). It causes flooding in monsoon, landslides (FAO, 2018⁹; SEG, 2018:42¹⁰), soil erosion, water scarcity, human health problems (SEG, 2018:48), reduced agricultural and aquaculture production, food insecurity (FAO, 2019¹¹), loss of income of host communities, and most importantly lowering aquifer layer due to forest denudation and narrowing of streams that reduced percolation (UNDP, 2018). Consequently, tension and conflicts within and between host communities and Rohingya refugees are intensifying. This situation has been aggravated by the COVID 19 outbreak in 2020, which has increased social frustration due to disruptions in essential services such as education and health and raised the possibility of a breakdown in social cohesion. According to a recent report by Oxfam, the COVID-19 pandemic has deepened poverty and catastrophic food insecurity to the extent that deaths from hunger are now outpacing the virus. The importance of the SHARIP project is thus further accentuated by addressing key impacts of the devastating COVID-19 pandemic, i.e., food insecurity, reduced income, and social tension.

⁶ Choudhury, M.S.N., M.S. Hossain, M.S., Mitra, A and Barua, P. 2011. Environmental functions of the Teknaf Peninsula mangroves of Bangladesh to communicate the values of goods and services. *Mesopot. J. Mar. Sci.*, 2011, 26 (1): 79 – 97. <https://www.iasj.net/iasj?func=fulltext&aid=33295>

⁷ CNRS. 2019. Progress Report. Stream Restoration project. CNRS. UNHCR

⁸ UNDP Bangladesh and UN WOMEN Bangladesh. 2018. Report on Environmental Impact of Rohingya Influx. Dhaka, Bangladesh, p 106 (including cover).

⁹ FAO.2018. Briefing Note on Rohingya Crisis in Bangladesh. <http://www.fao.org/3/i8776en/i8776EN.pdf>

¹⁰ SEG. 2018. JRP for Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis. Strategic Executive Group Report.

¹¹ FAO.2019. Joint Response Plan for Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis 2019. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ca3252en.pdf>

1.2 Objectives and Outcomes of the Project

The objective of the project is to strengthen the socio-economic conditions of the poor households of the host communities affected by the recent Rohingya influx in ten Upazilas of Bandarban and Cox’s Bazar districts.

In the early 1990s, FAO’s rice IPM programme, funded by UNDP, introduced **Farmer Field Schools** (FFS) in Bangladesh. DANIDA has, since 1997, supported the up-scaling and further development of the Farmer Field School approach. The Regional Fisheries and Livestock Development Components organize FFSs on aquaculture and livestock in Barisal and Noakhali. Not only the technical content but also the implementation process and FFS approach are quite different in different Districts. As a very much effective process for farmers, this IFM-FFS approach has been incorporated in the SHARIP project’s outcome -1, which spells:

Outcome 1: Agricultural production increased and diversified in targeted communities through:

- Establishment of 1,800 Integrated Farm Management – Farmer Field Schools (IFM-FFS) (813 IFM-FFS in Cox’s Bazar and 987 IFM-FFS in Bandarban) with the participation of 54,000 poor and marginalized farmers, of which at least 50% are women.
- Building the capacity of 563 Farmer Facilitators who will act as model farmers and facilitate learning in the IFM-FFS.
- Facilitating group learning for IFM-FFS farmers on new farming components and improved techniques focusing on homestead production.
- Enhancing access of IFM-FFS farmers to agricultural services through the engagement of Government Line Departments (DAE, DLS, DoF) and local Government Institutions as resource persons and monitors, and through training of Community Livestock Workers.
- Enhancing access of IFM-FFS farmers to marketing through the establishment of 56 collection points.

Outcome 2: Agroforestry production increased sustainably through:

- Developing and implementing 1,800 IFM-FFS community Agroforestry Development Plans and 54,000 individual household Agroforestry Development Plans.
- Enhancing access to quality input, amongst others, through training nursery growers, establishing 65 community nurseries, and distributing 133,200 samplings.

Outcome 3: Social cohesion increased through:

- Forming/reactivating and providing support to 10 Local Volunteer Mediators Forums (LVMFs) that offer mediation services in the project areas.
- Courtyard sessions for IFM-FFS farmers on leadership, conflict management, gender equality, etc.
- Events that raise the awareness and boost the confidence of youths include 1-month long martial art training, youth camps, debating competitions, etc.
- Sensitizing events on social cohesion topics for the population in the project areas, including religious dialogues, street drama, and international world day celebrations.

1.3 Project Management and Partnerships

SHARIP is being managed by the SID-CHT project of UNDP with the Ministry of CHT Affairs through the National Execution (NEX) Modalities, where the GOB takes the lead role in implementation and monitoring. From MOCHTA, a National Project Director (NPD) directly oversees the project activities along with a National Project Manager (NPM) engaged in implementing the project from UNDP’s side.

Bandarban Hill District Council (BHDC) is the key implementing partner for this project in Bandarban. In Cox’s Bazar, an NGO named “**Practical Action**” is the implementing partner for the IFM-FFS and agroforestry components.

For the social cohesion component, the implementing partners are *GRAUS (Gram Unnayan Sangathan)* in Bandarban and *ACLAB (Alliance for Cooperation and Legal Aid Bangladesh)* in Cox’s Bazar.

A team of SID-CHT, UNDP led by the Chief Livelihoods and NRM, as well as the Chief-Gender and Community Cohesion, are fully involved in supporting implementation, monitoring, and guiding the field activities. Other team members based in Rangamati also provide support to SHARIP, including a Programme Officer-Livelihoods, a Programme Officer-Monitoring and Evaluation, and a Technical Coordinator-FFS training and quality.

In Bandarban, the District Manager and District FFS Expert of SIDCHT, and in Cox’s Bazar, a District FFS Officer, a Livelihoods and IFM Expert (until June 2021), and an Upazila Facilitator work under the overall guidance of the Advisor on Women and Youth Resilience in CHT to carry out technical backstopping support to implementing partners as well as the day-to-day supervision and monitoring of field activities in the districts.

The district project team in BHDC consists of 18 full-time staff, and Practical Action has 20 full-time staff (*Master Trainers, Market Development Officers, and Upazila FFS Coordinators/Mobilizers, M&E Officers, and social cohesion coordinator.*) are working on the agriculture/agroforestry component.

GRAUS and ACLAB (partner NGOs) also have teams of 18 and 15 staff members in the extended phase, respectively (*Project Coordinators, Community Mobilizers, M&E Officers, and others.*), implementing the social cohesion component and assisting in monitoring learning support to the IFM-FFS (the latter is applicable for ACLAB in the first phase only).

1.4 Past and Present of IFM-FFSs¹²

Since the early 1990s, FFSs in Bangladesh has gone through a long process of development. The first FFS were in crops (rice, vegetables) and have developed from a focus on IPM to a much broader

¹² Sustainability and Impact of IPM Training in Bangladesh - One year after the Farmer Field School. April 2001.

-. SPSS Report 55 - Impact FFS Winter 2000/2001. June 2001.

- SPSS Report 56 - Report of the Evaluation Mission of IFM Projects in Bangladesh. FAO, BGD/95/003. November 2000.

Integrated Crop Management curriculum¹³. Apart from a 62 comprehensive crops module, the IFM FFS also includes modules on homestead activities, health and nutrition, and club formation. Most of these crop-based FFSs have been organized through the DAE, but also some NGOs (e.g., CARE and Aid Comilla) have organized this type of FFS. More recently, FFS was developed in the aquaculture and livestock sectors. These FFS include several modules such as poultry rearing, small ruminants, beef fattening, homestead vegetable gardens, fishponds, etc., in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Further development of these modules is ongoing to introduce more experiential learning in the training process. Most of the aquaculture and livestock FFS have been organized with the assistance of Community Based organizations. Bangladesh has very few specialized farmers. Most farmers grow not only rice but also grow other crops. At their homestead, they grow vegetables, keep chickens or ducks, often, they have one or more cows, goats, or sheep (or pigs by indigenous people), and in many cases, they have access to fishponds. Even farmers who are categorized as “landless” in Bandarban are often engaged in a variety of farming activities. From a farmers’ point of view, it, therefore, makes sense to have FFSs that can deal with a wide variety of topics. (*Ref: consultants’ observation and FGD organized by PMID in Bandarban*).

UNDP pioneered the IFM-FFS in 2009 in Bangladesh. Over the years, it has developed a proven model for improving livelihoods and empowering women through IFM-FFS activities. Based on lessons learned from UNDP’s model, the DAE developed the IFMC project. UNDP has implemented the DANIDA-funded Agriculture and Food Security Project (AFSP) in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, which also worked towards an FFS curriculum that integrates the crops, aquaculture, livestock, poultry sector, and fisheries. SHARIP is built on the lessons learnt from this project and adopted IFM-FFS.

This IFM-FFS approach has some significance in relation to its implication with climate change effect on CHT. To meet the increased demand of the population, the forest resources is decreasing day by day. Deforestation particularly in CHT areas makes a negative impact on environmental conservation and climate change effect like low rainfall, increased temperature, draught, soil erosion, depletion of the ground water layer, increased salinity and increased natural disaster. The recent Rohingya influx further worsened the situation and ruined the forest resources. IFM-FFS approach considered this increased climate change effect due to deforestation and included agro-forestry component in designing the SHARIP. It is expected that this component will contribute to environmental improvement, restoration of the eco-system, recovery of the forest resources and reduce the negative effect of climate change.

SHARIP’s IFM-FFS will be needed to learn how different ministries, departments, and community-based organizations can work together on Integrated Farm Management. Depending on the outcome of these IFM- FFSs, decisions can be made on how to continue with the development and implementation of FFSs in Bandarban and Cox’s Bazar under the SHARIP project.

¹³ Syed Nurul Alam et al, (2004). Impact Assessment of Training in vegetable IPM of DAE DANIDA SPPS Project Phase II.

Chapter 2: Description of the interventions

The field implementation of SHARIP was started in July 2018 by providing training to the “Master Trainers” (MT) on project activities, implementation modalities, guidelines, and IFM-FFS, including agroforestry. In Bandarban, the implementing partners are Bandarban Hill District Council (outcome 1 and 2) and GRAUS (outcome 3), and in Cox’s Bazar, the implementing partners are Practical Action (outcome 1 and 2) and ACLAB (outcome 3). Despite restrictions on mobility and physical gatherings imposed by the Government due to the widespread covid-19 Pandemic, which resulted in the halting of almost all the planned field-level activities from March until December 2021, interventions continued as planned, and some results were observed in FY 2020-2021 as reflected in annual reports.

2.1 Livelihood improvement through IFM-FFS

The project is mainly depending upon the motivation of grass-root level farmers to replicate Farmer Field School Knowledge by recruiting Farmer Facilitators (FF), who receive backstopping support from technically sound Master Trainer (MT).



At the beginning of the project, the village and para were selected by the respective para/ village selection committee headed by Upazilla Nirbahi Officer by following some criteria as indicated in the guideline, and an overall orientation on the project was given to para community people. Simultaneously Farmers Field Schools (FFS) were established in the selected para consisting of 30 farmers (50% female) who were selected as per guided criteria. Only the real farmers who are disadvantaged, such as landless, widows, vulnerable women, women-headed families, and from ethnic communities, get priority for the school. The Farmer Facilitator (FF), who is a model progressive farmer in the community, is employed to carry out grass-root level training in the field school on homestead agricultural production (Agri/livestock/fisheries/forestry/poultry), including basic nutritional concept, agroforestry, and social cohesion. The FFs receive ToT by Master Trainers (MTs) on the FFS curriculum for a duration of a total of 30 days, splitting into 3 spells, each spell consisting of 10 days. A curriculum consisting of 12 modules and 43 sessions has been developed for the FFS, of which 5 sessions are compulsory, and 38 sessions are optional. The sessions for a particular school are selected based on the needs of the area in consultation with the farmers in the school. The FF runs the school for 7 months in which s/he completes at least 28 sessions (4 sessions in a month) and follows up for another 2 months in which the farmers' groups are visited, and technical support is provided for the application of the learning in the field. In the course of these FFS activities, the FFs are provided regular backstopping support by the MTs and UFFSC to discharge his/her duties and transfer knowledge and technology from school to field. The school and farmers' fields are often visited by the field officials of the line departments (DAE, DLS, and DoF), who provide technical advice to the farmers. The FFs provide his/her services mainly voluntarily but receives remuneration only for conducting the FFS sessions. A small amount of funds (BDT 22,000) is budgeted for each Farmer Field School only to meet costing of training materials and study plot preparation.

The FFS plays a vital role in educating the farmers about improved agricultural practices, transferring knowledge into practice in the farmer’s field, and promoting increased agricultural production, which

supports the improved livelihood of the marginal farmers. This FFS intervention has long been functioning as a successful strategy for agricultural extension through different UNDP and Danida supported projects. Based on past experience and learning, SHARIP has adopted the same strategy, which is working well to support the marginal farmers to practice integrated farming based on their available homestead land and increase agricultural production.

2.2 Application of new knowledge and skills through FFS

Farmer Field Schools (FFS) consisted of groups of farmers-male and female with a common interest, who get together on a regular basis to study the “how and why” of a particular topic. The topics covered considerably – from IPM, organic agriculture, animal husbandry, and soil husbandry to income-generating activities. The FFS is particularly adapted to field study, where specific hands-on management skills and conceptual understanding are required. Field School adopted Group Extension Method based on adult education methods. It is a “school without walls” that teaches basic agro-ecology and management skills that make farmers experts in their own farms. In an FFS, the participants get together on a weekly basis. The FFS approach relies on participatory training methods to convey knowledge to field school participants to make them into confident pest experts, self-teaching experimenters, and effective trainers of other farmers. FFS were developed as a “bottom-up” approach to extension with a focus on participatory, experiential, and reflective learning to improve the problem-solving capacity of farmers through highly trained facilitators working with farmer groups particularly involved with the production of vermicomposting and farmyard manure, *hazol* (chicken hatching pan using Naphthalin) to increase hatchability of eggs and hand pollination to increase fertilization of flowers.

2.3 Involvement of government line agencies

The project involved government line agencies as technical experts in monitoring the IFM-FFS work, in the identification of quality local resources persons (Farmers Facilitators, Community Livestock Workers, and nursery growers), in linking up farmers with government support services, and in linking farmers with local input service providers and buyers. However, it remains a challenge to secure relevant and timely support for small-scale farmers. Department of Agriculture Extension and other government line departments focus mainly on large farmers who cultivate vast land and produce in larger volumes. The SHARIP project focuses on marginalized small farmers where farming options are relatively limited. For these farmers, the learnings on improved/new small-scale farming techniques through IFM-FFS make a big difference in the absence of other support initiatives. The relevant government officials are invited to the IFM-FFS sessions, where they disseminate information about new technologies and government programs and how they can get support from the government program. They sometimes make monitoring visits to farmers’ fields with a monitoring format and give their observation of how farmers are adopting learning in practice and how they are making progress in their farming practices.

These line departments often include these IFM-FFS farmers in their training program, where they can learn about new agricultural technologies. Particularly, farmers are more dependent on the agricultural extension department for receiving linked services of quality seeds and fertilizer and on the livestock department for vaccination services. The project trained Community Livestock Workers (CLWs), who are linked with the district livestock departments and play an important role in fulfilling

the increasing demand for vaccinations, thereby increasing production and decreasing the animal mortality rate. These CLWs trained by the project are treated as the supporting hand of GOB officials to provide vaccines in rural areas.

2.4 Market linkage and access to quality farming

The project provides market linkage services to the FFS farmers by establishing collection points near the Farming Producers community. These collection points are run by a 7-member committee, which



is responsible for facilitating establishing linkage between the farmers and the traders and fixing the reasonable price of agricultural products through the bargaining process. In the Bandarban area, Agri-Business Network (ABN) committees have also been formed, comprising representatives of farmers and agricultural input dealers. The collection points are considered key locations for IFM-FFS farmers and buyers/traders, benefitting both actors with storage facilities and bulking agricultural produces, thereby ensuring a demand-supply chain. The project is attempting to improve

the facilities of the collection points by adding more services and making these points better functional to attract more traders/buyers. The improved market linkages ultimately benefit farmers to get a better price for their produces and increase their income.

2.5 Promotion of Agroforestry

Agroforestry is being considered one of the key components of the project, along with IFM-FFS. The project provides training on agroforestry to the FFs, and FFs provide training to the target farmers through IFM-FFS sessions. The trained participants became aware and knowledgeable about agroforestry concepts, importance, models, planning, and management of agroforestry.



The agroforestry component involves two things: each FFS develops an ADP for social agroforestry (community-level), and each FFS farmer develops an individual ADP for their own farm. The project is making efforts to engage IFM FFS farmers in developing their site-specific Agroforestry Development Plans (ADPs) in a participatory way, prioritizing actions, and implementing their preferred agroforestry systems at the community level. Hence, more results are expected as IFM-FFS farmers gradually utilize their knowledge of agroforestry and start implementing their ADPs.

2.6 Promotion of Social Cohesion

The social cohesion component aims to reduce social conflicts that emerged mainly due to the Rohingya influx and increase cohesion through community sensitization, awareness building, and

conflict mediation. The project undertakes a three-dimensional strategy to work with three target groups in promoting social cohesion: youth, IFM-FFS farmers, and Local Volunteer Mediators’ Forums (LVMFs) comprising locally elected leaders and influential members of the community in the project areas. The project attempts to mitigate conflicts, which in fact creates an enabling environment for the farmers to increase production through agriculture/ agroforestry, which leads to increased income and supports the livelihood of the affected host community, and this again strengthens social cohesion between local and Rohingya communities.

A multi-stakeholder (Upazila Administration, Union Parishad, educational institutions, and members of Local Volunteer Mediator’s Forums and youth forums) approach has been adopted to create a wider scope to promote social cohesion interventions in the project working areas. The implementing partners organize events involving students to focus on different conflicting issues. The youths are sensitized on issues such as natural resource conservation, early child marriage, gender-based violence, drug abuse, and human trafficking through organizing events like youth camps, youth campaigns, debating competitions, and sports events. The school girls are trained in Martial Arts by engaging professional Martial Art instructors, and this enables the girls to have self-defence against any eve-teasing and gender-based violence

The significant contribution is that the project makes to reduce social conflicts and increase social cohesion is the intervention of LVMF, which in fact, works as an informal body between the community and the Union Parishad to mediate/ resolve internal conflicts of the host community members and to some extent conflicts with Rohingya community. The project provided training to the LVMF members on the social conflict mediation process, which developed sufficient skills to play an active role in the conflict mediation process. As found in the annual progress report, a good number of social conflicts in the project area have been mediated through LVMF.

2.7. Gender equality & women empowerment



The project promotes gender equality and women empowerment by ensuring women's participation in the IFM-FFS and providing backstopping support to them in their farming practices. Similarly, women’s participation is encouraged in FF selection and in the formation of LVMF. The project organizes training on gender and leadership for the FFS farmers.

As a women-friendly approach, the IFM-FFS focuses on homestead production, meaning that women have been very keen to join (77% of the IFM-FFS members are women). The project provides backstopping support to the female FFS farmers so that they can successfully apply new knowledge and techniques, which leads to visible results in terms of increased and improved production. The project also facilitates female farmers to establish linkage with the government line department officials to receive technical support for their improved farming practices, which creates scope to increase women’s status in the households and sometimes also in the community. The women's

participation is also remarkable in LVMF and the youth forums and they are in many cases playing the role of a conflict mediator and social mobilizer.

2.8 Facilitating recovery from the effect of COVID-19

In order to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on the livelihood of FFS farmers, the project distributed a solidarity package comprising agricultural input (summer and vegetable seeds and equipment) and food and hygiene items and cash (only in Cox’s Bazar). Numerous COVID-19 awareness-raising activities were carried out. The project covered very remote communities which were not covered by the government safety net program.



Chapter 3: Evaluation Scope, Approach & Methodology

3.1 Evaluation Scope and objectives

The specific objectives of the study are:

- To assess the performance of SHARIP since its commencement in 2018 to date¹⁴ against the outcome and outputs indicators as set out in the Results Framework.
- To assess how far SHARIP has come in achieving the development engagement objective measured through the impact indicators identified in the Results Framework.
- To draw the positive and negative, and foreseen and unforeseen changes and effects driven by project-supported interventions.
- To examine the assumptions embedded in the Theory of Change of SHARIP and assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, and sustainability of the project drawn from its design and implementation.
- To assess the extent to which the rights-based approach and gender-mainstreaming are applied; and
- To draw lessons learned and good practices for the GoB and UNDP replication and/or up-scaling and provide forward-looking recommendations for the next programming phase.

The scope of mid-term evaluation covers the project implementation from July 2018 to June 2021. The evaluation was done during the period December 2021- March 2022.

The SHARIP project has been implemented in 6 Upazilas and 35 Unions under Bandarban and Cox’s Bazar districts in the first phase (Lama, Alikadam, and Naikhyongchari of Bandarban Hill District and Ramu, Ukhiya, and Teknaf of Cox’s Bazar District). However, the program has been extended to another 4 Upazilas covering 20 more unions of Bandarban (Bandarban Sadar, Ruma, Thanchi, and Rowangchari) in the extended phase (started in May 2021). The intervention in the 4 new Upazilas is only for a few months, and a few training sessions have been conducted. So, the progress is not still visible, and hence the evaluation is considered premature; these 4 new Upazilas were excluded from the scope of the evaluation.

3.2 Approach and Methodology

A mixed-method of the qualitative and quantitative method was followed for this midterm evaluation. While the quantitative survey at the household level was conducted with a structured questionnaire using the digital platform (Kobo toolbox), the qualitative assessment was done in a consultative way in which the project stakeholders, i.e. target beneficiaries, input service providers, staff of the project implementation agencies, local government institutes (BHDC, UP), government officials of the line departments and concerned UNDP project personnel participated in the evaluation process; The study was participatory in nature with a focus on learning and appreciative inquiry. The evaluation used the different tools, techniques, and analytical approaches that were deployed to collect data and capture facts about SHARIP’s progress in different interventions, including IFM-FFS, promotion of agricultural production and agro-forestry, and promotion of social cohesion. The data collection methods were followed to ensure maximum representation and validity of the data sources.

¹⁴ For the IFM-FFS component, the focus will be on the first phase as the new FFS are still in the initial stages.

3.3 Data Collection Method

Pursuant to the objectives of the assessment, the data collection followed both: i) Quantitative methods and ii) Qualitative methods. The quantitative data were collected using structured questionnaires and checklists, while qualitative data was collected through Focus Group Discussion (FGD), Key Informant Interview (KII), and case studies. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were applied for data that complemented each other to reflect the facts. The triangulation of different techniques maximized the required information, improved the quality of the data, and reduced the chance of biased findings. These methods and tools of data collection were designed in consistency with the study objectives, the preset objectives of the SHARIP, and internal assessment tools evaluation and sampling number.

Secondary data for the study was collected through the review of the SHARIP Project Document (Pro-Doc), Technical Project Proforma (TPP), annual work plans and budgets, quarterly and annual progress reports, training modules, and relevant study reports, and publications of the SHARIP project. The list of the documents reviewed is given in **Annex-4**.

Primary data for the study was collected through household surveys, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), individual interviews during field visits, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), and Case studies. Moreover, for the understanding of the intervention process and identification of major achievements and challenges, a reconnaissance field visit was made, which mainly helped in designing the evaluation tools. The evaluation tools are given in **Annex-2**.

3.4. Evaluation and sampling method

The evaluation adheres to the UNEG Norms and Standards & follows the “*UNDP EVALUATION GUIDELINES*”- Revised edition: June 2021. Throughout the evaluation process, the Evaluation Team has adopted a consultative and transparent approach and built upon the perspectives of the different stakeholders, namely the leaders and members of Village Based Organizations, agricultural producers, particularly the women farmers, representatives from the partner organizations in particular from the BDHC, Practical Action, GRAUS, ACLAB, government official from the concerned line Departments and UNDP field staff. A list of persons interviewed/meetings held are given in **Annex-3**.

The number of beneficiaries covered under 6 Upazilas for the quantitative survey is 27,360. This comprises the treatment population for this proposed quasi-experimental study design. Both treatment and control groups were selected for the survey, and the evaluation compared the findings resulting from both groups. The Control group was selected from the same Upazilas and unions but from para different from those which included the direct beneficiaries of the project (members of IFM-FFS). Finally, the result of the mid-term evaluation was compared with available baseline data. A sample size of **1885** from the treatment group and **770** from the control group was randomly selected through the standard statistical procedure from 12 out of 39 unions for the execution of the survey.

The sampling technique, sample size calculation for treatment and control group and union wise sample distribution are given below:

3.4.1 Sampling technique:

A two-stage sampling technique will be followed for farmer household selection. At first, unions from each Upazila will be selected using the PPS (Probability Proportional to size) method based on the no. of FFS farmers in each union and in the next stage, the farmer HHs will be selected randomly from selected unions. For wide coverage of unions, approximate 30 % of unions will be selected from each Upazila. Based on the highest number of FFS farmers as given in annex-1, the unions in Table-1 are selected as sample unions.

Table 1: Name of selected sample Unions by Upazila

District	Upazila	No of Total Unions	No. of Sample Unions	Name of Sample Unions
Bandarban	Alikadam	4	1	Chaykhong
	Lama	8	2	Gojalia, Rupashipara
	Naikhyongchari	5	2	Baishari, N.Sadar
Sub-Total		17	5	
Cox's Bazar	Ramu	11	3	Eidghar, Fotekharkul, Kauwarkhop
	Teknaf	6	2	Teknaf Sadar, Whykong
	Ukhiya	5	2	Holdiapalong, Rajapalong
Sub-Total		22	7	
Grand-Total		39	12	

3.4.2 Sample size calculation for Treatment Groups

For determining the sample size for the household survey under this study, the following formula is used to determine the sample size for each Upazila :

$$n = \text{Design Effect} \times \frac{z^2 pqN}{e^2(N-1) + z^2 pq}$$

Where,

p = Female proportion of each upazila

q = 1- p

z = Standard Normal value associated with confidence level (at 95%=1.96).

e = desired precision i.e. maximum permissible difference between the sample statistics and population parameter which is considered 5% (0.05)

n = size of sample

N = size of population

In this study, p is the proportion of males and female in each upazila and design effect is used 1.5 for two stage sampling.

3.4.3 Sample Size calculation for Control Groups

For the control group, sample size is determined against districts. The population size in control areas is unknown, and the formula for sample size determination is as follows:

$$n = \frac{z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

Where,

p is unknown and considered .5 to ensure the maximum no of samples.

q = 1- P

z = Standard Normal value associated with confidence level (at 95%=1.96),

e = desired precision i.e. maximum permissible difference between the sample statistics and population parameter, which is considered 5% (0.05).

n = desired sample size

Using the above formula sample size of the control group of each district is found to be 384, and these 384 samples are distributed equally among the selected unions of respective districts, i.e. 77 HHs in each selected union of the Bandarban district and 55 HHs in each selected unions of Cox's Bazar district.

Therefore, Upazila wise sample distribution is given in Table 2:

Table 2: Sample size for Farmers (Both Treatment and Control Groups)

District	Upazila	No of Unions	Farmer				No. Sample Unions	Sample Size : Treatment Groups	Sample Size : Control Groups
			Female	Male	Total	Female (%)			
Bandarban	Alikadam	4	2,547	2,327	4,874	52	1	533	77
	Lama	8	4,071	1,393	5,464	75	2	411	154
	Naikhyo ngchari	5	3,742	1,497	5,239	71	2	448	154
Sub-Total		17	10,360	5,217	15,577	198	5	1,392	385
Cox's Bazar	Ramu	11	3,542	223	3,765	94	3	127	165
	Teknaf	6	3,115	540	3,655	85	2	279	110
	Ukhiya	5	3,557	149	3,706	96	2	87	110
Sub-Total		22	10,214	912	11,126	275	7	493	385
Grand-Total		39	20,574	6,129	26,703	77	13	1,885	770

For treatment group sample distribution in each union will be proportional to No. of FFS Farmers and for control group sample distribution in each union will be equal.

Table 3: Union wise sample distribution

District	Upazila	Union	Sample Size Treatment Group	Sample Size: Control Group
Bandarban	Alikadam	Chaykhong	533	77
		Gojalia	187	77
	Lama	Rupashipara	224	77
		Baishari	242	77
	Naikhyongchari	N.Sadar	206	77
Cox's Bazar	Ramu	Eidghar	39	55
		Fotekharkul	51	55
		Kauwarkhop	37	55
	Teknaf	Teknaf Sadar	145	55
		Whykong	134	55
	Ukhiya	Holdiapalong	45	55
		Rajapalong	42	55
Total			1885	770

From the above calculation, the sample size for the treatment group of Cox's Bazar and Bandarban District were 493 and 1392, respectively. Total sample size of treatment groups (Bandarban 1392+Cox's bazar 493) = 1885. The sample size for the control group of both districts is 385. Therefore, the total sample size of the control group is 770.

A 12 member experienced and trained enumerators team under the supervision of 2 Survey Coordinators was engaged for the execution of the survey. The data quality was ensured by using KoBo Toolbox, efficient field management, supervision, and monitoring. The necessary precaution was also taken in the data management process.

3.5 Primary data analysis method

The primary data collected through the household survey were analyzed by comparing mainly between FFS farmers (treatment group) and non-FFS farmers (control group) to measure their contribution toward achieving project objectives and outcomes. The significance of the difference between the two groups was tested by standard statistical methods. To compare the mean “Independent-Samples T-test” and to compare proportion “Chi-Square test” was done. The test was done by using SPSS.

The data were also compared between two main geographic areas- Cox’s Bazar and Bandarban to find geographic factors responsible for comparative advantages and disadvantages. The status of target beneficiaries i.e. treatment group before and after the project was also compared in selective indicators to measure the direct impact of the project on the target beneficiaries.

3.6 Limitations of the evaluation process

The Evaluation Team experienced certain limitations in relation to conducting the evaluation, mainly because of:

- The limited-time available (30-day work) in comparison to the project size and the two different districts: Bandarban and Cox’s Bazar, which are located a long distance from one another. Besides, the visits coincided with the harvesting of the second rice crop, and the community members' beneficiaries were very busy;
- It was not possible to interact with non-members of the FFS in order to gain a better understanding of their perspectives and their farming practices;
- No written records/accounts were kept by the FFSs or any of the families of the financial benefits accrued through the livelihoods activities taken up through project support. This was a constraint in drawing conclusions about on-farm economics; and
- The language was sometimes a barrier to the conversation, as Bangla or English was the second or third language for all concerned Respondents of the questionnaire survey.

Chapter 4: Data analysis and findings

As mentioned in the evaluation methodology, evaluation is conducted through a primary survey of FFS¹⁵ and non-FFS farmers¹⁶ and a qualitative assessment of project outcome and output through FGD, KIIs, and case studies. The survey data were collected and analyzed using KoBo Apps and analytical tools. The data output tables of both treatment and control groups are given in **Annex-6**. The findings of primary data analysis are substantiated with findings of FGD, KII, and field observations as described below:

4.1 Socio-demographic characteristics of the FFS and Non-FFS Farmers

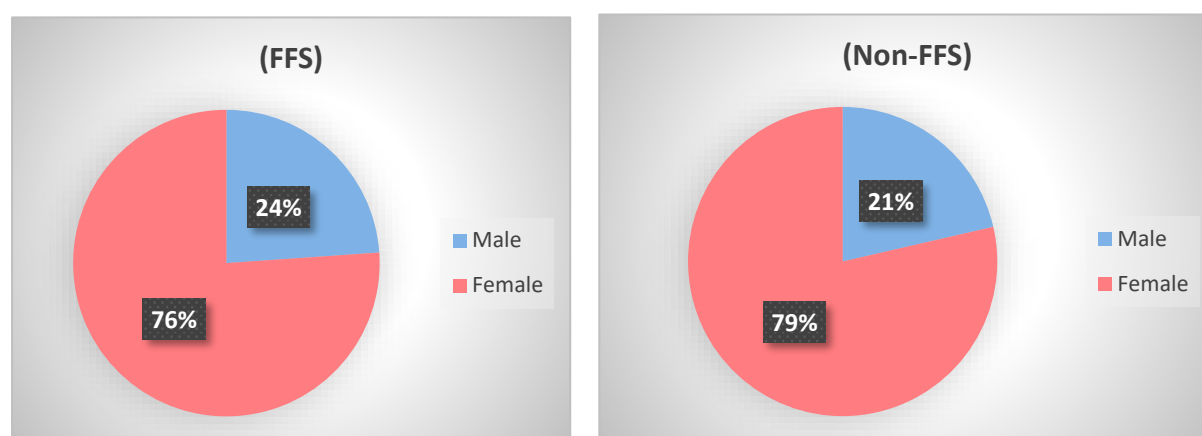


Figure 2: Sex of Respondents

As indicated by survey data, 76.1% of respondents of FFS farmers are female, while that of non-FFS farmers is 78.6%. The number of female respondents in Cox’sBazar is higher (92.8% for the FFS group and 90.7% for the non-FFSI group). Almost similar gender composition has been maintained in conducting the survey in FFS and non-FFS groups.

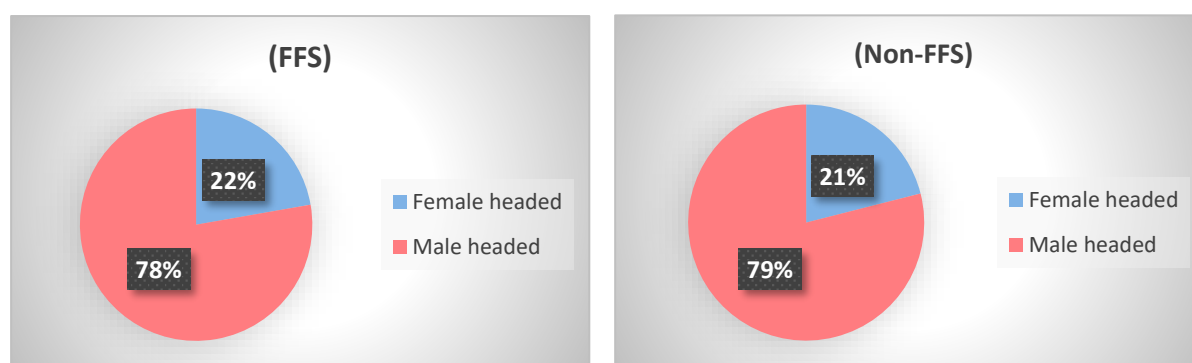


Figure 3: Type of Households

¹⁵ FFS farmers are project beneficiaries and hence are regarded as the treatment group for the survey.

¹⁶ Non- FFS farmers are not the project beneficiaries, but live in the project area and hence are regarded as control group.

The female-headed¹⁷ households were found only 22.2% (Cox’sBazar 18.2%, Bandarban 23.7%) and 21.0% (Cox’sBazar 15.5%, Bandarban 26.4%)¹⁸, respectively, with FFS and non-FFS farmers indicating that number of female-headed households are almost the same in both groups which indicates that as per farmers selection criteria, female-headed households may not have received priority for inclusion in FFS group due to consideration of other criteria.

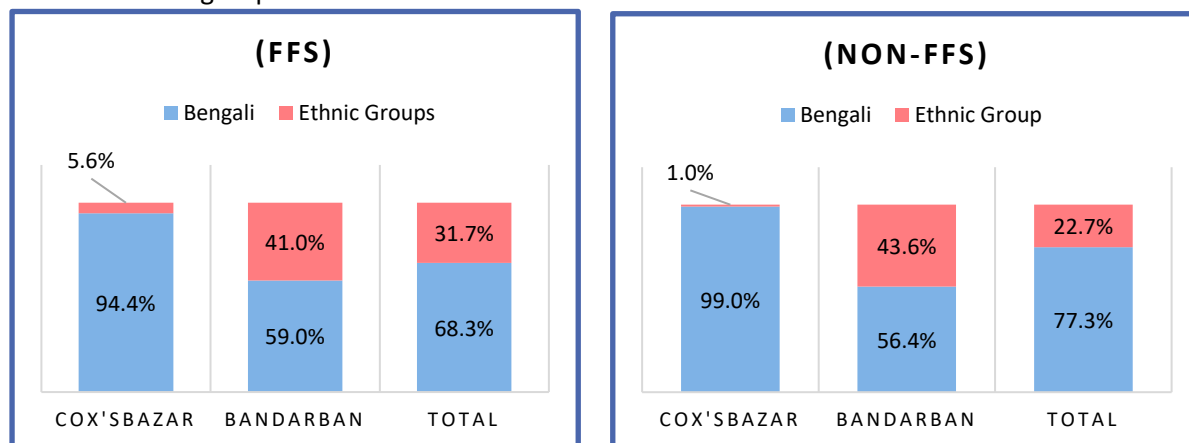


Figure 4: Ethnicity

Regarding the inclusion of ethnicity, data shows that 31.7% (Cox’sBazar 5.6%, Bandarban 41%) of the FFS farmers belong to ethnic groups, while 22.7% (Cox’sBazar 1%, Bandarban 43.6%) of non-FFS farmers belongs to ethnic groups. Ethnicity is more addressed in selecting FFS farmers and geographically more addressed in Bandarban, which is consistent with selection criteria and the actual percentage of Bengali and ethnic communities in Bandarban.

About the main occupation, 60.7% of respondents belonging to the treatment group are farmers, 35.6% are a housewife and belonging to the control group is 41.7% are farmers, and 51.8% are housewives. Respondents are more involved with farming in the treatment group.

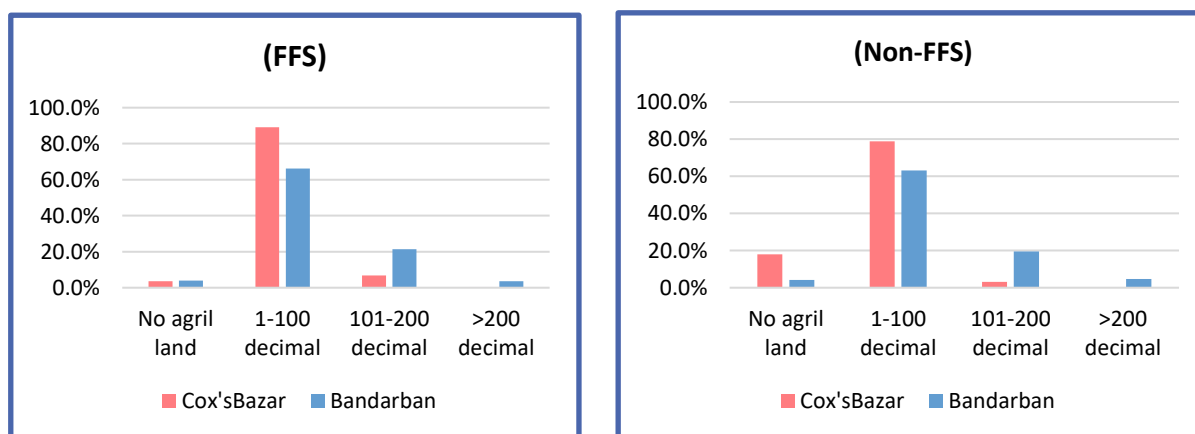


Figure 5: Agricultural Landholding

¹⁷ Female is widow or the main earning and decision making person in a household or the household which have no male earning person.

¹⁸ WB 2018 estimates 15.8% female headed households in Bangladesh. However, SHARIP selected beneficiaries mainly from disadvantaged poor communities in Bandarban and Cox’s Bazar where the percentage of women headed household is higher than national average.

Regarding agricultural land holding, 3.6% of FFS farmers are landless, 89.2% have land less than 100 decimal, 6.8% have land between 101-200 decimal, and 0.4% have lands more than 200 decimal in Cox’sBazar, which are respectively 4.0%, 66.2%, 21.4% and 3.6% in Bandarban. Among the non-FFS farmers, 18.0% are landless, 78.9% have land less than 100 decimal, 3.1% have land between 101-200 decimal, and no farmer has land above more than 200 decimal in Cox’sBazar, which are respectively 4.2%, 63.1%, 19.5% and 4.7% in Bandarban. The average agricultural landholding of FFS farmers is 43 decimal in Cox’sBazar and 102 decimal in Bandarban, which for non-FFS farmers is 23.4 decimal in Cox’sBazar and 117.5 decimal in Bandarban. Data of land holding pattern shows that landholding of FFS farmers is slightly less (below 200 decimal) than that of non-FFS farmers, although landless is higher among non-FFS farmers. The average land holding of FFS farmers is slightly higher. The difference in average land holding by FFS and non-FFS farmers is statistically significant in Cox’s Bazar at $\alpha=1\%$ and insignificant in Bandarban at $\alpha=5\%$ (t-test) .

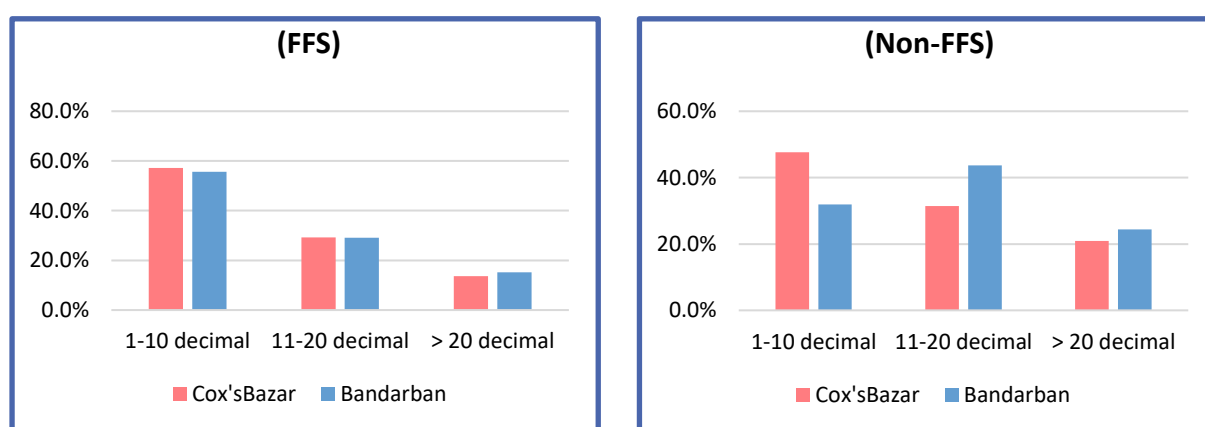


Figure 6: Homestead Landholding

Regarding homestead land holding, 57.2% of FFS Farmers have land within 10 decimals, 29.2% have 11-20 decimal, and the remaining 13.6% have more than 20 decimal land in Cox’sBazar, which are respectively 55.7%, 29.2%, and 15.1% in Bandarban. For non-FFS Farmers, 47.7% have land within 10 decimals, 31.4% have 11-20 decimal, and the remaining 20.9% have more than 20 decimal land in Cox’sBazar, which are respectively 31.9%, 43.6%, and 24.4% in Bandarban. The average homestead land holding of FFS farmers is 17 decimals in both Cox’sBazar and Bandarban, and that of non-FFS farmers is 14.4 decimals. The difference in average land holding by FFS and non-FFS farmers is statistically significant in Cox’s Bazar at $\alpha=5\%$ and insignificant in Bandarban at $\alpha=1\%$ (t-test). According to the land holding pattern, the homestead land holding of FFS farmers is much less than that of non-FFS farmers, although the average landholding size of FFS farmers is slightly higher than non-FFS farmers, which indicates that FFS farmers comprise poorer homestead landholders than non-FFS farmers.

Regarding household income, the average annual income of FFS farmers is BDT 120,198 in Cox’sBazar and BDT 131,168 in Bandarban, and that of non-FFS farmers is BDT 113,154 in Cox’sBazar and BDT 145,343 in Bandarban indicating slightly higher income in Bandarban with both FFS and non-FFS farmers. The FFS farmers in Bandarban belong to the marginalized group, and that is why the annual household income of non-FFS group is slightly higher than FFS group. On average, the annual income

of FFS and non-FFS farmers is very close, having no statistically significant difference at $\alpha=5\%$ (t-test). The income level is much below the national average¹⁹ and the international poverty line (USD 1.9 per capita per day), indicating that poor and marginalized farmers have been targeted for the project intervention.

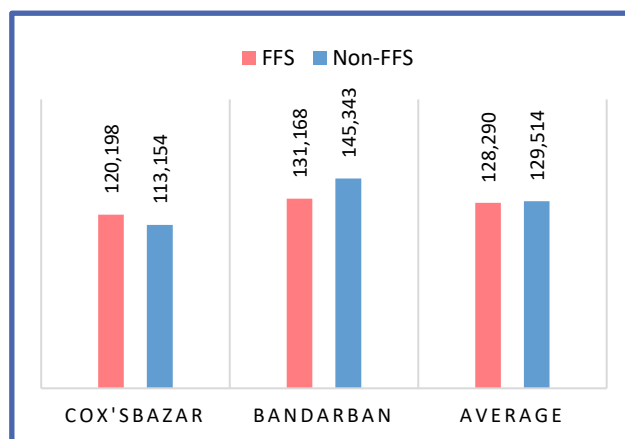


Figure 7: Annual Household Income

Regarding educational level, 62.6% of the FFS farmers have no formal education, and 32.6% have education below SSC in Cox's Bazar while 49% FFS farmers have no education, and 47%

have education below SSC in Bandarban. For Non-FFS farmers, 59.3% have no education and 36.4% have education below SSC in Cox's Bazar, 45.6% have no education, and 46.9% have education below SSC in Bandarban. Educational level is almost the same with FFS and non-FFS farmers but is slightly lower in Cox's Bazar than in Bandarban among both FFS and non-FFS farmers.

4.2 Outcome-1: Agricultural production increased and diversified in targeted communities

Under this Outcome, a number of interventions, as listed in Chapter-3, have been implemented. These interventions include the establishment of IFM-FFS to educate the selected farmers' group, training and capacity building of FFs to run the FFS, group learning and application of knowledge for improved farming and homestead production of new components, establishing linkage with the local government and GoB line departments to access input services, establishing linkage with the market through collection points. The data analysis and findings are as below:

4.2.1 Farmers' education in IFM-FFS

As per progress data available from the project, 912 FFSs have so far been established against a total target of 1,800 FFSs (50.7%) by June 2021. 11,132 farmers have already completed all the sessions, and they are now applying their knowledge in their field. The remaining farmers are still continuing sessions and practising at the same time in their production field. The primary survey data (Fig-8) shows that 99.7% of the respondents in the FFS area mainly received training on integrated farming from project IFM-FSS and 8.5% of respondents in non-

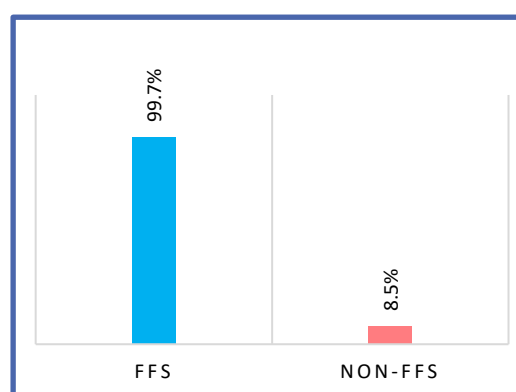


Figure 8: Attended IFM-FFS training sessions

FFS area also attended training sessions in IFM-FFS. This makes a big difference in terms of the impact of IFM-FFS on agricultural production in the FFS area.

¹⁹ Per capita GNI for 2020 as estimated by World Bank Atlas method is USD 2010)

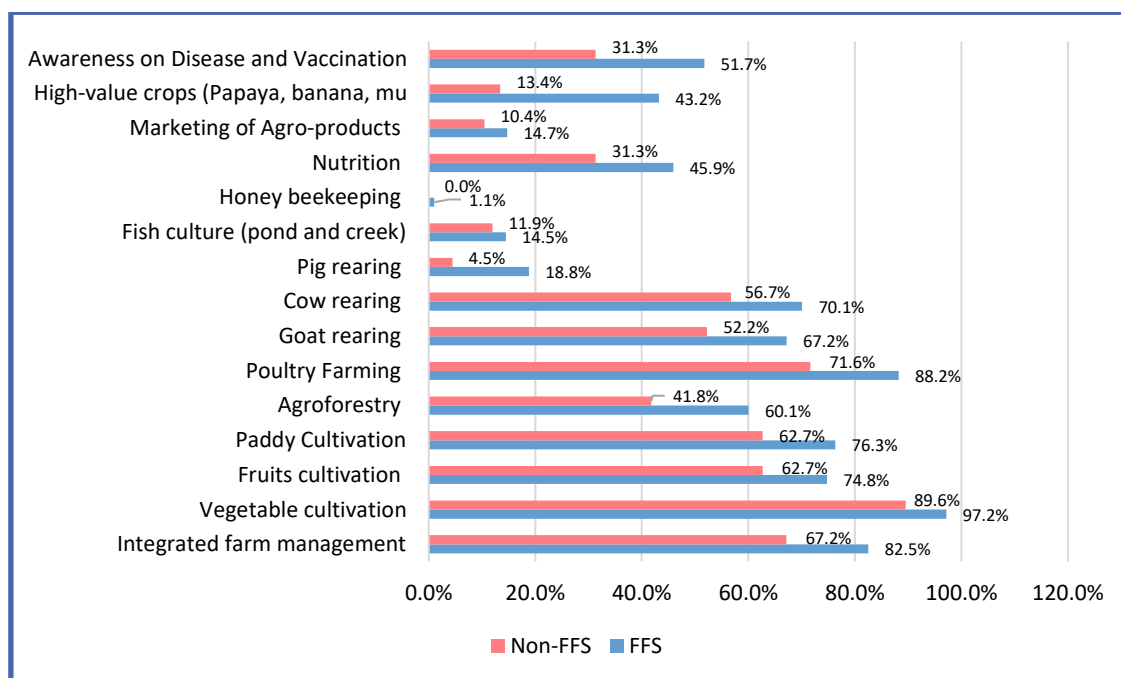


Figure 9: Contents of training received

Fig 9 shows that the major contents of the training received from IFM-FFS include Integrated farm management (82.5%) , vegetable cultivation (97.2%), fruits cultivation (74.8%), paddy cultivation (76.3%), agroforestry(60.1%), poultry farming (88.2%), goat rearing (67.2%), cow rearing (70.1%), pig rearing (18.8%), fish culture (14.5%), honey bee keeping (1.1%), nutrition (45.9%), marketing of agro products (14.7%), high value crops (43.2%), awareness on disease and vaccine (51.7%). However, in the non-FSS area, the respondents received some need-based training, mainly from the GoB line departments, but it was not confirmed whether they received training on similar contents.

The ET²⁰ found that the community leaders and the project staff have ranked IFM-FFS as the most popular and useful activity implemented by the project. The evaluators met some of the beneficiaries; they shared their newly acquired learnings with details and were keen on showing how they have applied these on their farms and improved production. Though no records are kept/studies done on the difference between the IFM-FFS graduates and the others, the evaluators feel confident in noting that IFM-FFS has been effective, popular, and transformative. The FFS graduates have not only improved farming practices but also their confidence levels and communication. There is a need for troubleshooting, clearing doubts as well as encouragement from fellow farmers. To multiply the adoption of technology, the UNDP team working on the project came up with the practical solution of conducting Community Field Schools, which are nothing but rapid, interactive sessions with farmers to cover small topics of farmer’s interests. Here is an opportunity for SHARIP to revisit its training design and include what it found effective in IFM-FFS, both content-wise and pedagogically. The ‘learning while doing’ approach is most appropriate for farmers and not classroom teaching.

4.2.2 Additional farming components

The IFM-FFS plays a good role in educating the marginal farmers and motivating them to undertake new farming components, and this has a great impact on FFS farmers in the project area. Fig-10 shows

²⁰ ET=Evaluation Team

that 97.4% of FFS respondents in Cox’sBazar and 92.4% in Bandarban increased additional farming components after getting training from the project field school. Overall, 93.7% of FFS farmers increased additional farming components. In contrast, only 6.4% of non-FFS respondents in Cox’s Bazar and 13.5% in Bandarban increased additional farming components after getting training from different GoB line departments. Overall, 10.0% of non-FFS farmers increased additional farming components. The difference between FFS and Non-FFS farmers is statistically significant at $\alpha=1\%$.

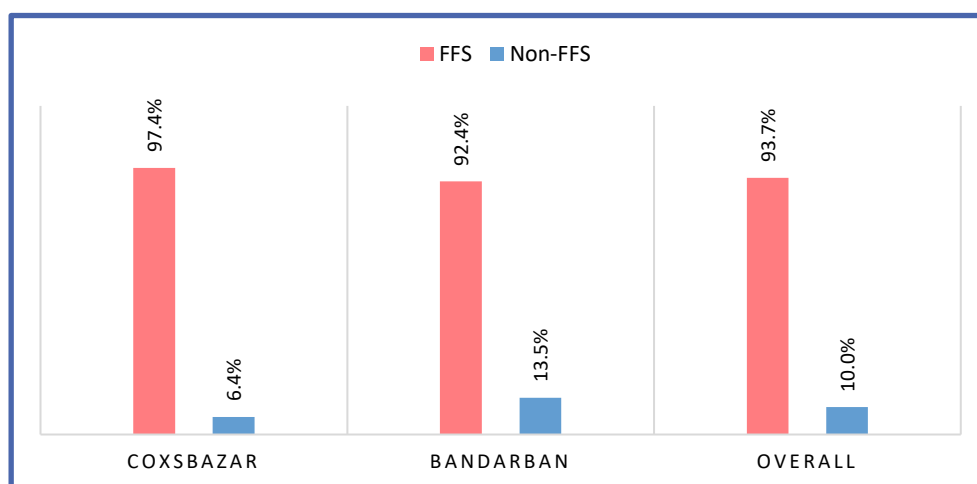
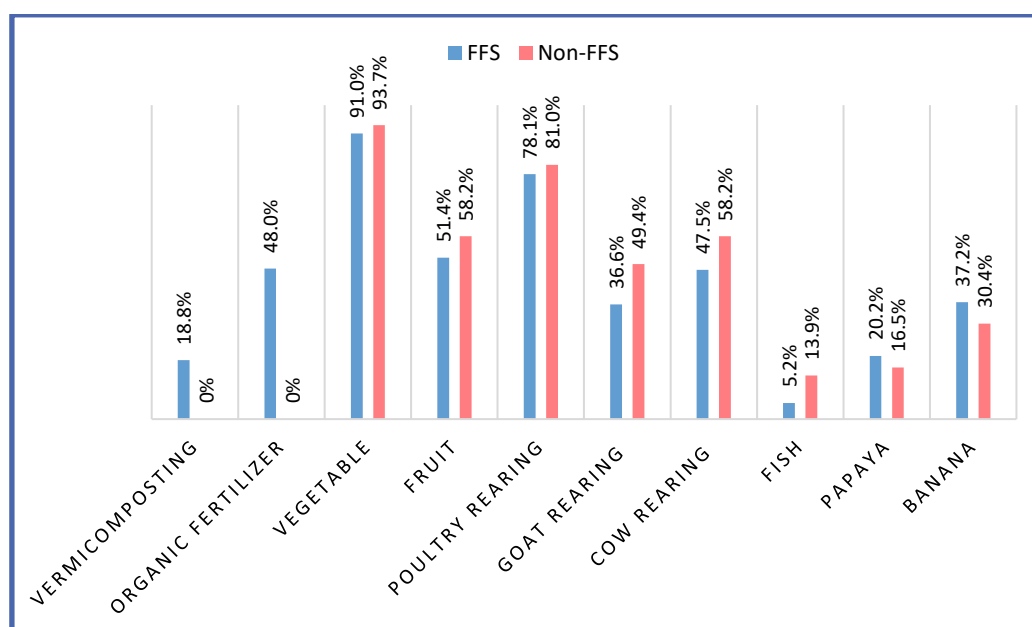


Figure 10: Additional Farming Components

The additional components, which became popular among the FFS farmers are vermicomposting (18.8%), organic fertilizer (48.0%), vegetable (91.0%), fruits (51.4%), poultry rearing (78.1%), goat rearing (36.6%), cow rearing (47.5%), fish culture (5.2%), papaya (20.2%) and banana (37.2%).



During the same time, the non-FFS farmers undertook new components like vegetable (93.7%), fruits

Figure 11: New additional components

(58.2%), poultry rearing (81.0%), goat rearing (49.4%), cow rearing (58.2%), fish culture (13.9%)

papaya (16.5%) and banana (30.4%). This simultaneous progress in the non-FFS area proves that these farmers have been encouraged by the demonstration effect of additional components undertaken by the FFS farmers and replicated the new components. However, vermicomposting and organic fertilizer were not replicated in the non-FFS area, and only a few non-FFS farmers made such progress. Figure 11 shows a higher percentage of non-FFS farmers than FFS farmers in some items, but in fact, it is the breakdown of 10% non-FFS farmers who increased additional farming components (Figure-10). The difference between FFS and non-FFS in the individual component is not statistically significant except for vermicomposting and organic fertilizer, where the difference is significant at $\alpha=1\%$.

4.2.3 Application of improved farming techniques/ technologies

As observed during the field visit and also reflected in progress reports, IFM-FFS introduced low-cost demand-driven agricultural technologies to marginalized farmers, especially women. The farmers can practically learn from the school session and practical work in the study plot and can easily apply these technologies in their production field. The technologies which are mostly applied by the farmers are composting, vermicomposting, chicken egg hatching (Hazol), hand pollination, homestead agroforestry, mulching, and vegetable cultivation with bedmada, etc. The application of these improved technologies results in improved production in terms of quantity and quality and reduced cost. Particularly, the use of vermicompost and organic fertilizer worked as a good soil conditioner and increased the fertility of the land by reducing the use of chemical fertilizer. These technologies are very simple and environment-friendly, and also women-friendly. Most of the women farmers were found to have familiarized themselves with these technologies, and they are highly motivated as they are getting increased production and are being economically benefitted. The neighbouring farmers are also observing, learning, and adopting these technologies, and they are also benefitted. This observation is also confirmed by the household survey data.

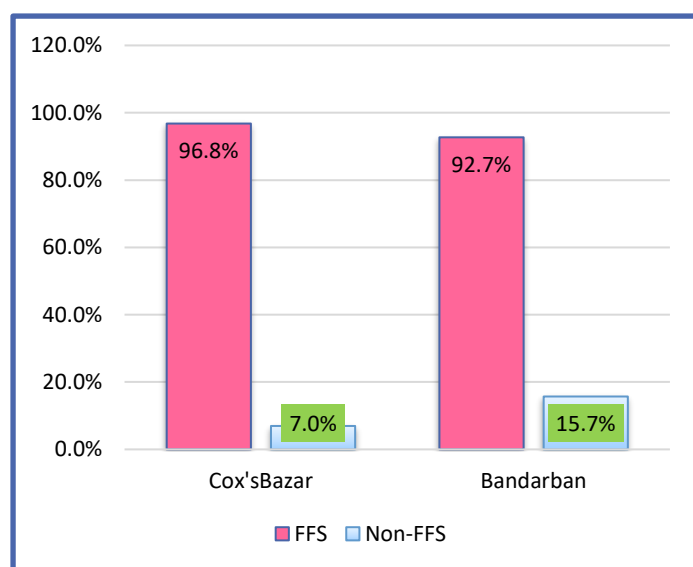


Figure 12: Farmers who could apply improved technologies (N= 500 FFS, 388 Non-FFS)

Fig 12 shows that 96.8% of FFS farmers in Cox's Bazar and 92.7% in Bandarban could apply these improved farming technologies, while only 7.0% of non-FFS farmers in Cox's Bazar and 15.7% in Bandarban could apply these technologies which were in touch with the FFS farmers. As a result, 73.6% of FFS farmers in Cox's Bazar and 98.2% in Bandarban experienced increased production, while that is experienced by 85.2% of non-FFS farmers in Cox's Bazar (Fig 13) and 98.4% in Bandarban (Fig 14). Although the percent of non-FFS farmers having experienced increased production looks higher than FFS farmers in Cox's Bazar, the sample size of non-FFS (N=27) is much less than that of FFS (N=484).

Similarly, the percent of non-FFS farmers having experienced increased production looks very close to that of FFS farmers in Bandarban, but the sample size of non-FFS (N=63) is much less than that of FFS (N=1304). This indicates a significant difference between FFS and non-FFS farmers in experiencing increased production. Both FFS and Non-FFS farmers also experienced low production time, labour

and cost to apply these technologies, although these are not visible but experientially accepted. Those FFS farmers who could not apply are mainly due to lack of means/ resources to apply the technologies.

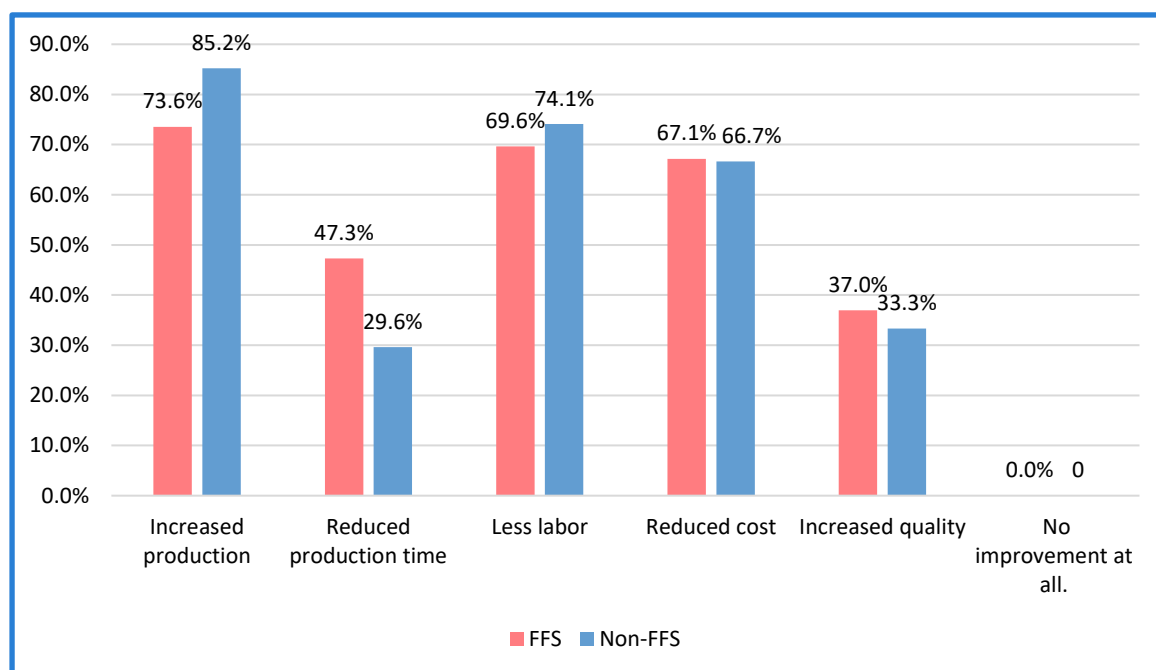


Figure 13: Result of application of improved technologies (Cox's Bazar, N= 484 FFS, 27 Non-FFS)

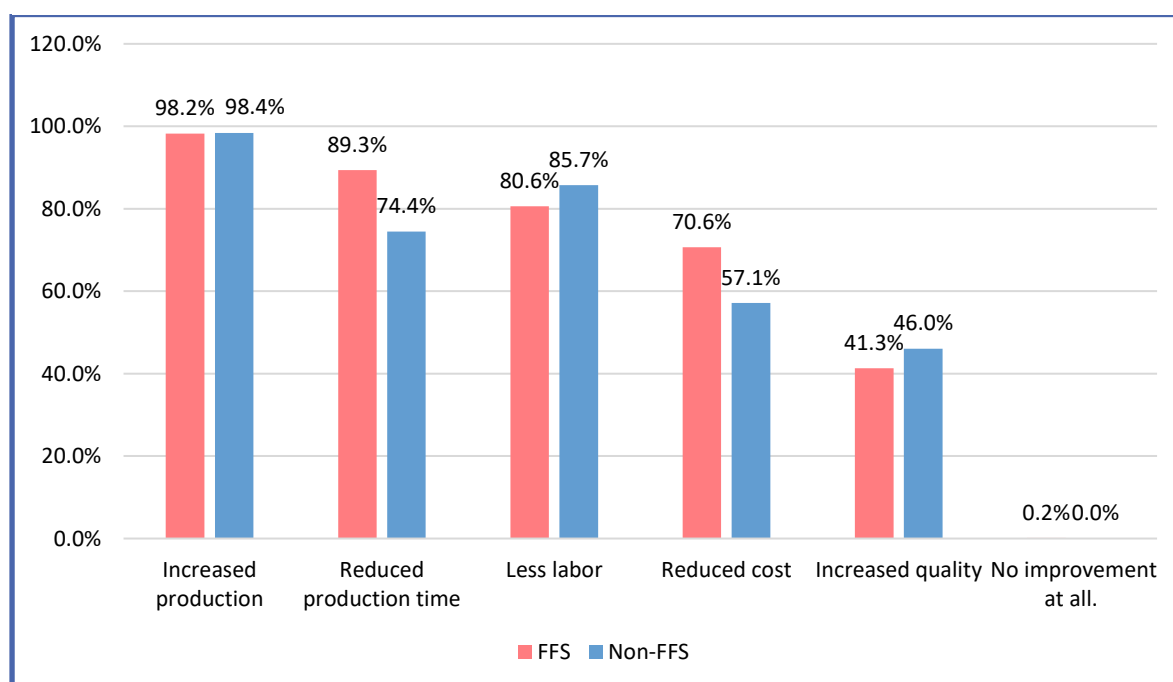


Figure 14: Result of application of improved technology (Bandarban, N= 1304 FFS, 63 Non-FFS)

4.2.4 Agricultural production before and after the project

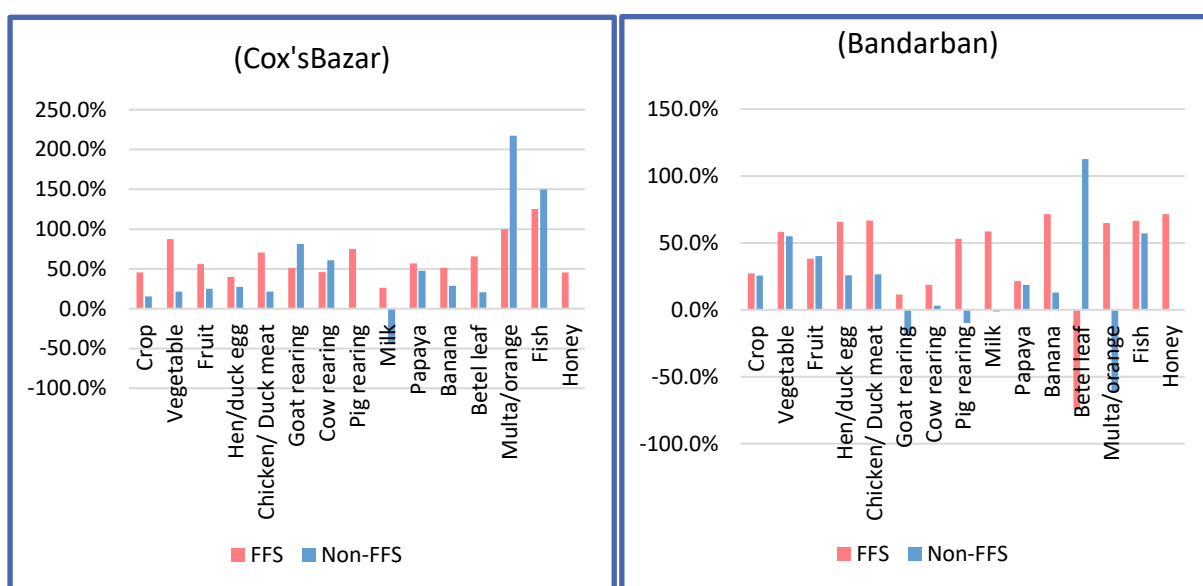
The IFM-FFS project model has successfully worked in educating the farmers and transfer of improved technologies from FFS to farmer’s fields. The farmer’s survey data shows that as a result of the successful application of the technologies and its subsequent replication by the neighbouring non-FFS farmers, the agricultural production of both FFS and non-FFS farmers has been markedly increased.

Table 4 shows that the production of crops, vegetables, fruits, chicken eggs, chicken/ duck meat, milk, papaya, and banana from FFS farmers’ fields has been more increased than non-FFS farmers’ fields in both Cox’s Bazar and Bandarban during the evaluation period. With standard statistical test (Chi-Square), it was found that the difference between FFS and non-FFS farmers is significant ($\alpha=1-10\%$) for all items in Table 4 except Malta/ orange and honey. Only production of betel leaf in the Bandarban FFS field has been reduced after the implementation of the project, which might be due to the shift of production to other items. The production of a few items like dairy milk, goat and pig rearing, multa/ orange production in non-FFS farmer’s fields has been reduced than before.

According to the target set in outcome indicator 1.1 in the resulting framework, hen egg production of FFS farmers was increased by 39.8% in Cox’s Bazar and 65.9% in Bandarban against the target of 20% increase. Similarly, chicken meat production was increased by 70.4% in Cox’s Bazar and 66.8% in Bandarban against the target of 30% increase. Vegetable production was increased by 87.3% in Cox’s Bazar and 58.1% in Bandarban against the target of 25%. Fruit production was increased by 56.0% in Cox’s Bazar and 38.4% in Bandarban against the target of 20%. Fish production was increased by 125.3% in Cox’s Bazar and 66.4% in Bandarban against the target of 30%. So as compared to target, production of the selected items has much increased, and the achievement is almost double of the target set in the resulting framework. The non-FFS farmers also experienced increased production in the selected items due to learning from FFS farmers and replication of the process, but the rate of increase is less than that experienced by the FFS farmers.

Table 4: Comparative Increase in production of different agricultural items of FFS and Non-FFS farmers during the evaluation period

Agricultural items	Target (%)	Cox'sBazar (2021)		Bandarban (2021)		Total Average	
		FFS (N=500) (%)	Non-FFS (N=388) (%)	FFS (N=1406) (%)	Non-FFS (N=401) (%)	FFS (N=1906) (%)	Non-FFS (N=789) (%)
Crop		45.6	15.5	27.1	25.5	29.6	23.2
Vegetable	25	87.3	21.6	58.1	55.1	67.2	31.5
Fruit	20	56.0	25.0	38.4	40.1	39.3	38.2
Hen/duck egg	20	39.8	27.3	65.9	25.9	56.9	26.8
Chicken/ Duck meat	30	70.4	21.4	66.8	26.4	67.7	21.9
Goat rearing		51.3	81.3	11.5	-17.9	16.4	-4.2
Cow rearing		45.8	60.8	18.6	3.2	21.8	13.0
Pig rearing		75.0	0.0	53.2	-9.7	55.0	-9.7
Milk		26.4	-43.2	58.6	-1.2	50.9	-5.1
Papaya		56.9	47.5	21.5	18.6	21.7	19.0
Banana		51.1	28.8	71.5	12.9	70.4	13.8
Betel leaf		65.9	20.8	-74.3	113	-100	83
Multa/orange		100.0	217.5	64.7	-61.4	-59.9	-53.6
Fish	30	125.3	149.7	66.4	57.1	64.7	66.5
Honey		45.5	0.0	71.4	0	66.8	0.0

**Figure 15: Item wise increase in production**

Despite the increase/ decrease in the production of items in quantity, as shown above, some farmers experienced a decrease in production, and some experienced no change in production during the evaluation period. It was found that all the farmers do not cultivate or produce all items above. The items for production were selected by the farmers as per available agricultural or homestead land, resources, and technological knowledge, which they learned from FFS and can confidently apply. Again, some farmers, after getting training from FFS, started cultivation/ production of a new item,

and some discontinued an old item that experienced low market demand or low profit. Table-5 and Table-6 reveal an item-wise percentage of FFS farmers who experienced an increase/ decrease in production, which started production newly, who discontinued production, and who experienced unchanged production quantity in Cox’s Bazar and Bandarban, respectively. Both the tables show that majority of the FFS farmers in Cox’s Bazar are involved in crop, vegetable, hen egg and chicken meat production, and the majority of them are not involved in the production of other items. The production of crops (3.8%), vegetables (5%), egg (7.2%), chicken meat (7.0%), papaya (4.4%) and banana (4.4%) production and goat (10.4%) and cow rearing (10.6%) as new items are significant in Cox’s Bazar. The same scenario is found in Bandarban, but the production of egg (11.9%), chicken meat (8.4%), milk (3.8%), Papaya (3.6%), banana (5.2%) and goat (11.0%), cow (13.4%), and pig rearing (4.8%) as new items are significant in Bandarban.

Table 5: Item wise percent FFS farmers who experienced increase, decrease, new start, discontinued and unchanged production (Cox’s Bazar)

Agricultural items	Increased (%)	Decreased (%)	Started newly (%)	Not cultivated (%)	Discontinued (%)	Unchanged (%)
Crop	61.4	0.4	3.8	32.8	0.6	1.0
Vegetable	89.8	0.4	5.0	4.0	0.2	0.6
Fruit	41.4	0.4	1.4	56.2	0.4	0.2
Hen/duck egg	73.4	4.6	7.2	11.4	3.0	0.4
Chicken/ Duck meat	77.8	5.2	7.0	7.6	1.8	0.6
Goat rearing	10.2	1.8	10.4	67.8	2.8	7.0
Cow rearing	10.8	2.8	10.6	61.6	1.6	12.6
Pig rearing	0.0	0.0	2.6	97.0	0.0	0.4
Milk	2.8	0.0	0.6	95.6	0.4	0.6
Papaya	12.4	0.0	4.4	82.2	0.8	0.2
Banana	27.8	0.8	4.4	64.0	1.4	1.6
Betel leaf	4.8	0.2	2.4	91.4	0.4	0.8
Multa/orange	0.2	0.0	0.0	99.8	0.0	0.0
Fish	1.0	0.0	0.4	98.6	0.0	0.0
Honey	0.0	0.0	0.2	99.4	0.2	0.2

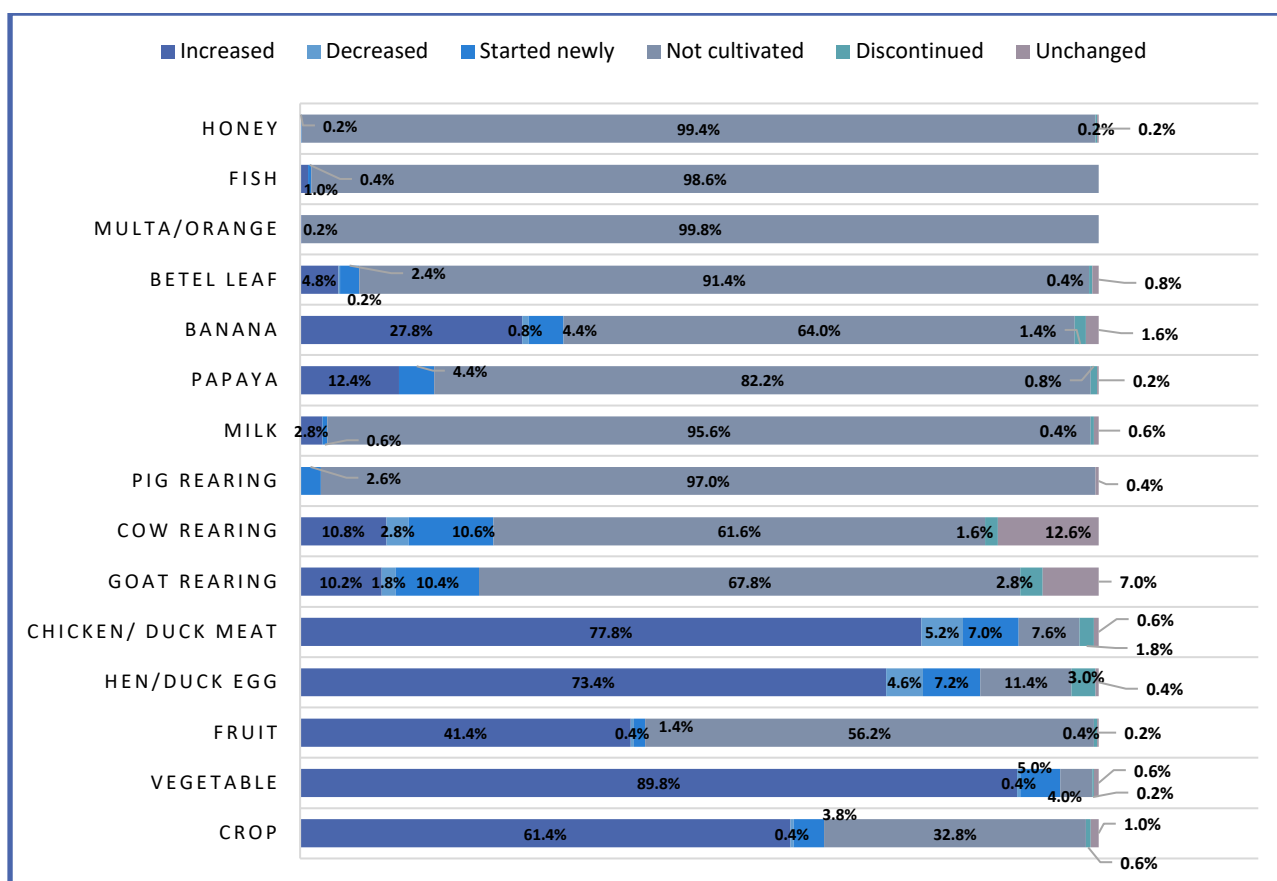


Figure 16: Itemwise farmers production position (Cox'sBazar)

Table 6: Item wise percent FFS farmers who experienced increase, decrease, new start, discontinued and unchanged production (Bandarban)

Bandarban	Increased (%)	Decreased (%)	Started newly (%)	Not cultivated (%)	Discontinued (%)	Unchanged (%)
Crop	72.2	3.2	1.2	12.9	1.9	8.5
Vegetable	83.4	2.5	2.1	4.9	1.0	6.1
Fruit	61.2	2.3	2.8	25.8	0.1	7.7
Hen/duck egg	61.6	8.0	11.9	14.2	1.3	3.0
Chicken/ Duck meat	64.3	11.7	8.4	7.3	0.8	7.6
Goat rearing	19.3	5.6	11.0	51.7	5.3	7.0
Cow rearing	25.0	8.1	13.4	32.1	5.3	16.2
Pig rearing	11.6	1.4	4.8	74.6	0.7	6.8
Milk	13.2	1.1	3.8	77.3	3.7	0.9
Papaya	17.4	3.0	3.6	72.5	1.4	2.1
Banana	47.8	7.7	5.2	36.0	0.5	2.8
Betel leaf	1.7	0.9	0.9	93.8	1.4	1.4
Multa/orange	1.3	0.1	1.0	96.8	0.4	0.4
Fish	6.9	0.4	1.6	90.4	0.1	0.6
Honey	0.0	0.0	0.2	99.6	0.2	0.0

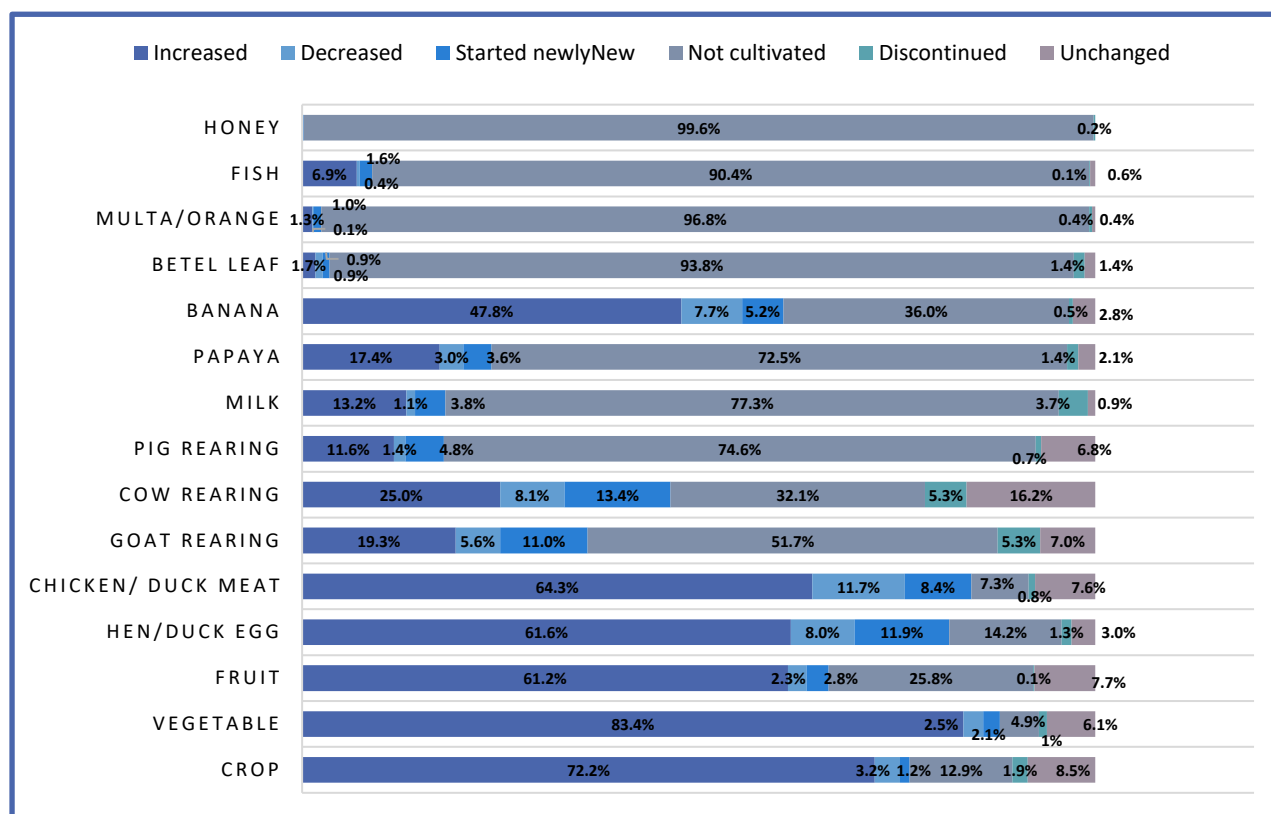


Figure 17: Itemwise farmers production position (Bandarban)

Table 5 and Table 6 show a mixed experience of the FSS farmers in the production/ cultivation of the above agricultural items. The majority of the FSS farmers in Cox’s Bazar experienced an increase in production in the crop, vegetables, chicken eggs, and chicken/duck meat, while the majority of the farmers in Bandarban experienced an increase in the crop, vegetables, fruits, chicken eggs, and chicken/ duck meat. Only a few farmers in both Cox’s Bazar and Bandarban experienced a decrease in production in poultry items, goat, and cow rearing. However, the majority of farmers have not still started livestock rearing, dairy milk production, fish cultivation, betel leaf cultivation, honeybee keeping, and high-value fruits like papaya, banana, multa/ orange. Some farmers in both areas discontinued livestock rearing, perhaps due to lack of grazing land and lack of space in their homestead for rearing. Some farmers, especially in Bandarban, also experienced no improvement in the production of the crop, vegetables, fruits, poultry, and livestock rearing after the inception of the project.

4.2.5 Availability of FF support and services of Local input service provider

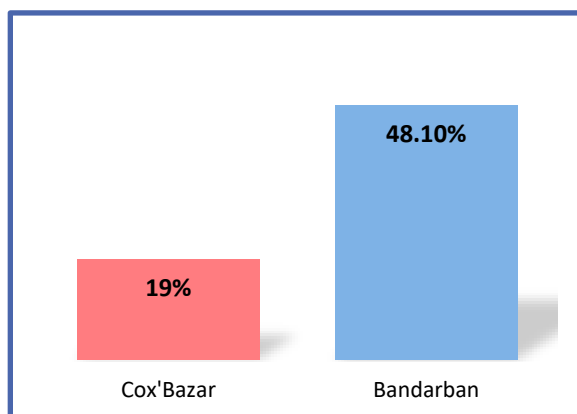


Figure 18: Farmers contact with the FFs

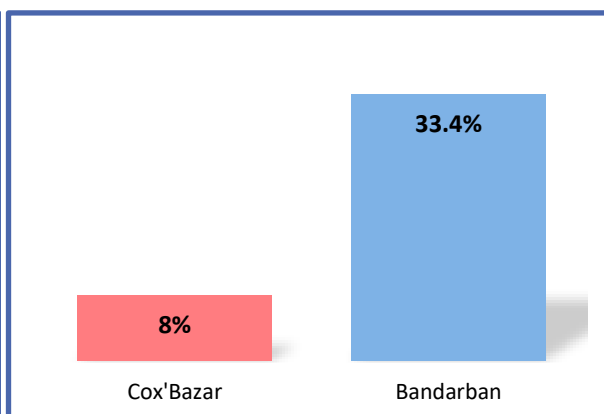


Figure 19: Availability of services of local service providers

According to the course design of FFS, the FFs provide follow-up support for two months in each para to help the farmers properly adopt the improved technologies, after which they are assigned running of FFS in other para, and these 2 months seem too inadequate to visit farmer's field and provide on-job support. However, there is a group learning system based on different study plots, and the farmers mostly learn from those study plots. It was expected that since the FFs stay within the community, the farmers would be in contact with them, but in practice, very few farmers are in contact with them. Fig-18 demonstrates that only in 19% of cases in Cox's Bazar and 48% of cases in Bandarban, the FFS farmers contact the FFs for any technical assistance. This finding of the primary survey has been confirmed when discussed with the FFs, but UNDP local expert explained that the survey areas were phased out a long time ago, and hence it is not necessarily expected that the farmers and FFs will be in regular contact. The big increase in production in Cox's Bazar, as demonstrated in Table-4, further indicates that the farmers rather feel fully confident to apply the learnings, which decreases the need for FF support after phase-out.

Regarding the availability of the services of the local service providers, only 8% of FFS farmers in Cox's Bazar and 33.4% in Bandarban indicated that services are available from community livestock workers and nursery growers. The vermicompost producers are also in contact with the farmers. However, it was learned from the project field staff that they had trained a good number of community livestock workers (CLW) who are well connected with the government livestock departments and provide technical advice/ services to the farmers, including deworming and vaccination services, which have high demand among the FFS farmers. The project also provided training to the input traders for providing good quality agricultural inputs, including seeds, fertilizers, and insecticides to the farmers. But it was learned during the discussion with project staff and input sellers that dealers and sub-dealers of agricultural inputs are available at the Upazila and union level, and farmers have a link with them, although service is not available at the doorstep of the farmers.

4.2.6 Availability of the support services from GoB line departments

The annual progress reports elaborate in detail on the monitoring visits and support services provided by the GoB line departments to the IFM-FFS members. According to the reports, the government officials, particularly the Sub-Assistant Agriculture Officers, Upazila Agriculture Officers, Upazilla livestock officers, and Forest Range Officers, often makes monitoring visits to the FFS sessions as a

resource person, which improves the Farmer Facilitators’ performance and they provide technical advice to the IFM-FFS members. Through these visits, the farmers also learn about the available services from the government line departments, and the farmers, particularly in the remote, get access to agricultural support services. During the discussion with the Upazilla Agricultural Officers and Upazilla Livestock Officers, they also appreciated the IFM-FFS program of the project, claimed to have good relations with the FFs and CLWs of the project, and expressed their interest in collaborating with the program.

However, the primary survey reveals that 20.8% of FFS farmers in Cox’s Bazar and 37.8% of FFS farmers in Bandarban received some support services from the GoB line departments. In contrast, 6.2% of non-FFS farmers in Cox’s Bazar and 26.4% of non-FFS farmers in Bandarban received support services from the GoB line departments. Although FFS farmers are in a better position than non-FFS farmers to receive government services, the percentage of recipient FFS farmers is still very low. The UNDP local project expert further explained that services available with the government line departments sometimes go beyond what the project is addressing. In terms of getting necessary advice, training, and visits (which is what the project addresses), FFS farmers are in a much better position than non-FFS farmers.

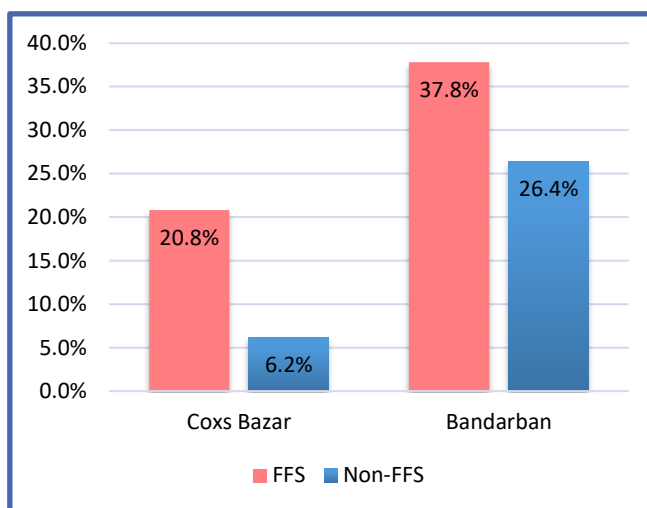


Figure 20: Farmers who received services from GoB line departments

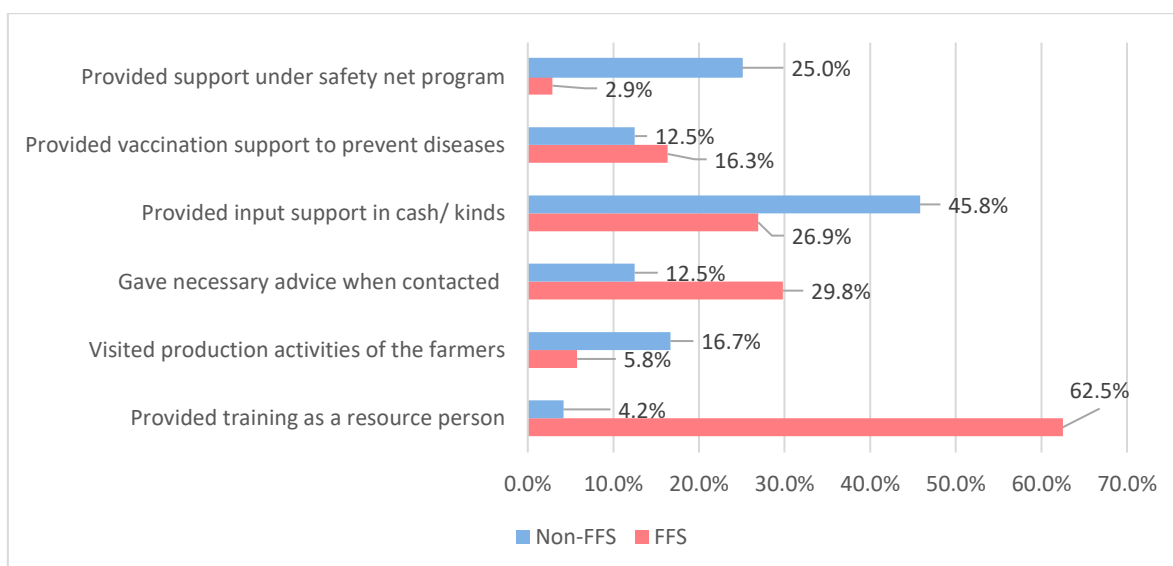


Figure 21: Support services received from GoB line departments (Cox's Bazar)

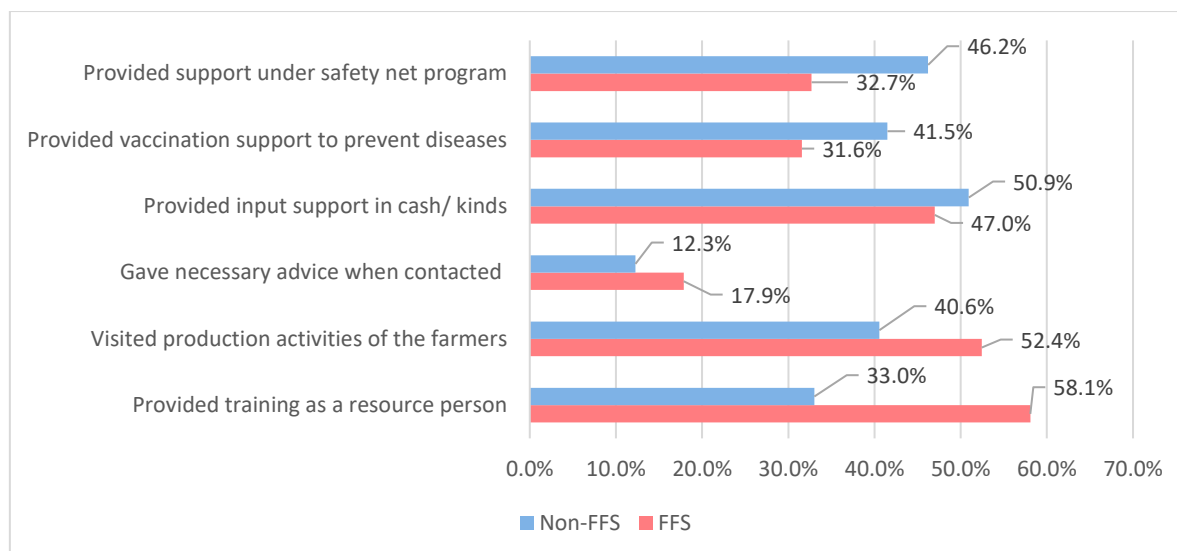


Figure 22: Support services received from GoB line departments (Bandarban)

The service category available from the GoB line departments included i) providing training as a resource person, ii) visiting production activities of the farmers, iii) giving necessary advice when contacted; iv) input support in cash/kind; v) vaccination services; vi) safety net services. Fig-21 and Fig 22 show that the FFS farmers mostly received training services, but a visit to farmer’s field was poor in Cox’sBazar. The input, vaccination, and safety net services were improved in Bandarban, which is due to the active partnership role played by BHDC. The non-FFS farmers both in Cox’sBazar and Bandarban received the services from the GoB line departments almost at the same level or, in some cases, better than FFS farmers (e.g. safety net services). It was learned from discussion with Upazilla Agricultural officers and Upazilla Livestock Officers that they usually deal with big farmers and technical support mostly goes to them. However, they can also provide technical services to the FFS farmers if they are contacted or linked by the project, which seems weak. There is much scope to strengthen linkage with the GoB line departments and access available services under different similar types of projects in implementation by the line departments.

According to the project design, it is expected to have linkages with other public and private organizations working on food security and poverty alleviation: the department of agriculture, fisheries, livestock, cottage industries, water, health, youth development, Department of Women Affairs, cooperatives, and NGOs which are operational in the project areas, Bandarban and Cox’s Bazar which is crucial for project sustainability. However, few evidence of such collaborative efforts with local NGOs was found by the ET. It would have been useful to exchange experiences and efforts across staff and community leaders from similar projects for continually evolving strategies for self-sustaining development models. ET came to know from UNDP project expert in Cox’s Bazar that In Cox’s Bazar, there is close involvement in the Food Security Sector working group under ISCG, which comprises most development actors in CXB. Cooperation is, e.g. scaled up in relation to collection points and marketing through this working group.

4.2.7 Impact of the COVID-19 response program

As reported by the project, the beneficiary FFS farmers were much affected by the COVID-19 pandemic due to the discontinuation of agricultural farming practices along with the marketing of products following the government declared lockdown situation. To reduce the negative effects of COVID-19,

the project provided emergency response services and distributed solidarity packages to the disadvantaged farmers in Cox’s Bazar and Bandarban. A total of 3,300 small-scale disadvantaged farmers in Cox’s Bazar and 49,300 farmers in Bandarban received this solidarity package. This solidarity package consisted of farming inputs like good quality summer and winter vegetable seeds and equipment, hygiene kits, essential food items, and some cash support. As part of COVID-19 awareness-raising activities, important messages were disseminated through community radio, public service announcement miking, local dish TV channels, social media, etc.

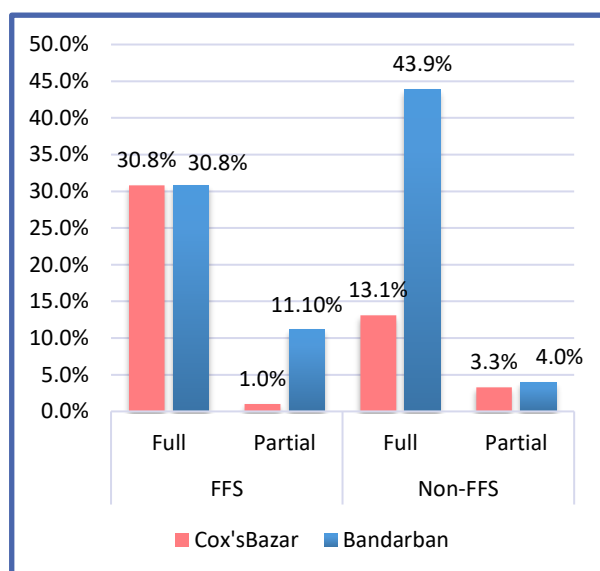


Figure 23: Disruption of agricultural production due to COVID-19 (N= 1906 FFS, 789 Non-FFS)

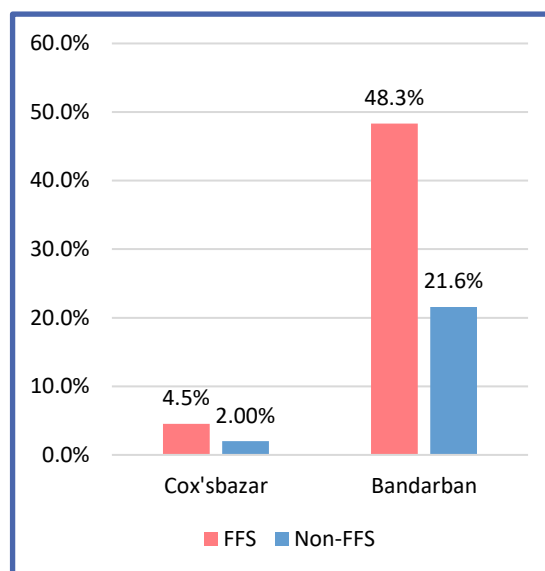


Figure 24: Percent farmers who received COVID-19 input package (N=587 FFS, 227 Non-FFS)

The primary survey data reveals that in 30.8% of cases both in Cox’s Bazar and Bandarban, the agricultural production of the FFS farmers was disrupted completely, and partial disruption is higher in Bandarban (11.1%) as compared to only 1.0% in Cox’s Bazar. But only 4.5% of affected FFS farmers in Cox’s Bazar²¹ and 48.3% of affected farmers in Bandarban received agricultural input packages mainly from the project partners (BHDC, PAB, GRAUS, and ACLAB), UP, and other NGOs (DSK, CARITAS). In the case of non-FFS farmers, agricultural production of 13.1% of farmers in Cox’s Bazar and 43.9% of farmers in Bandarban were disrupted, and only 2% of affected farmers in Cox’s Bazar and 21.6% of affected farmers in Bandarban received agricultural inputs mainly from NGOs in Cox’s Bazar and from UPs in Bandarban. These input packages included seeds, equipment, cash support, food, and COVID PPEs.

²¹ For Cox’s Bazar, the UNDP expert reaffirmed that only the farmers enrolled in the FFS at the time of planning the COVID-19 response who did not receive support from other organizations were covered. The limited number of FFS farmers at the time of planning the response explains the low percentage of farmers receiving the input package in the survey.

According to outcome indicator 1.3, it could not be verified during the survey who resumed agricultural production after receiving the solidarity package, but this was indirectly answered by the respondents by expressing their satisfaction level. FFS farmers who received Solidarity Package from the project partners expressed their satisfaction (69.2%) and moderate satisfaction (30.8%), which is consistent with the progress report and physical verification in the field while discussing with the farmers. This satisfaction level also indicates that they resumed the agricultural production with input support from the solidarity package, and this met the target of 80% of farmers, as reflected in outcome indicator 1.3. This COVID-19 response of the project was very effective in the sense that it provided mainly farming inputs which contributed to increased production of vegetables during the COVID-19 pandemic and supported the livelihood of the disadvantaged farmers. But only a small percentage of the affected farmers, particularly in Cox’s Bazar (4.5%), received agricultural input support package. The project staff informed that only the disadvantaged FFS farmers, who could not be reached by the GoB support program, were covered under this COVID-19 response program. According to progress report 2021, the solidarity package was distributed to 60, 771 households, which is 125.8% of the cumulative target (the target was 48,300 according to outcome indicator 3.4)

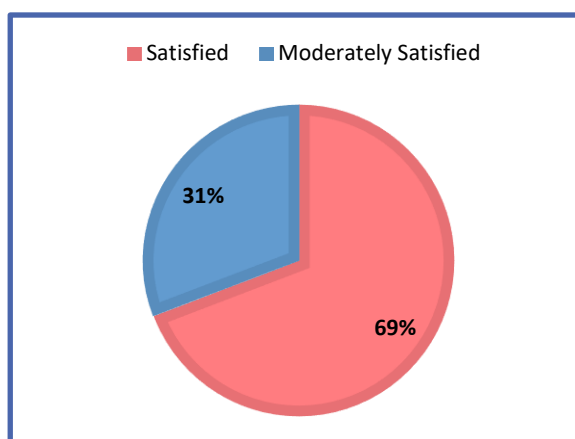


Figure 25: Farmers' satisfaction level for solidarity package

Regarding COVID-19 information dissemination, 94.8% of FFS farmers in Cox’s Bazar and 98.4% in Bandarban received information mainly from IFM- FFS (80.2%), UP (40%), Volunteer (43.5%), radio (22.8%), television (48.3%), and mobile SMS (71.3%), which built awareness among the survey respondents about the negative impact of COVID-19 pandemic. It appears that the project could successfully manage the COVID-19 response program and could reach the farmers severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The outcome indicators 3.4 and 3.5 have been satisfactorily achieved through this COVID-19 response program.

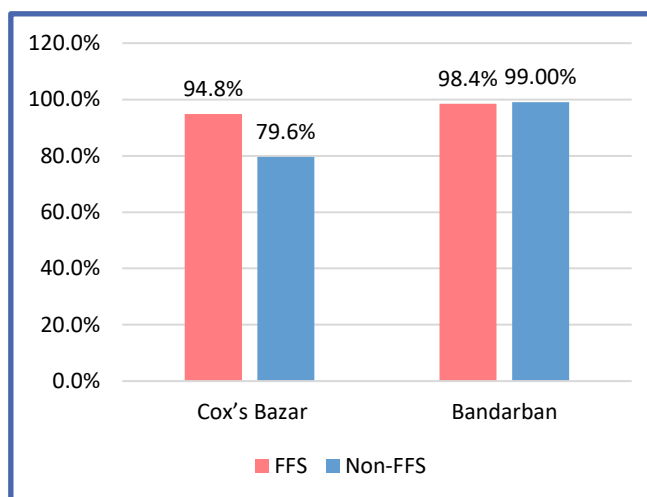


Figure 26: Percent farmers who received information on negative impact of COVID-19

4.2.8 Access to high-quality farming units

As learned from project staff, FFs, and farmers, the availability of high-quality inputs, particularly seeds, fertilizer, insecticide, pesticide is a great challenge because the input sellers and the farmers are not knowledgeable about the quality inputs and traders often supply low-quality inputs at a

cheaper rate to increase sales and make a profit. Due to poor quality inputs, the farmers often experience crop failure or low yield. To ensure the accessibility of the farmers to high-quality farming inputs, the project organized training for the input sellers and nursery growers in both Cox’sbazar and Bandarban. The participants were trained on several topics, i.e. how to identify high-quality farming inputs like quality seeds, quality fertilizers, bio-pesticides, pheromone traps, day-old chicks, quality feeds, etc. The participants also received training on nursery management, grafting, quality saplings, etc. The farmers also learned about high-quality inputs from IFM-FFS and from GoB officials, which developed a cooperative relationship between the farmers and input sellers. The FFS farmers, with the help of FFs, collect quality inputs from the trained sellers, which contributed significantly to the increased yield rate.

The primary survey data reveals that 68.8% of FFS farmers in Cox’s Bazar and 56.7% in Bandarban have access to high-quality farming inputs as compared to 31.4% of non-FFS farmers in Cox’sbazar and 59.4% in Bandarban. The difference between FFS and non-FFS farmers is statistically significant at $\alpha=1\%$ in Cox’s Bazar and insignificant at $\alpha=5\%$ in Bandarban. Regarding the source of high-quality farming inputs, 89.2% of FFS farmers and 90.2% of non-FFS farmers in Cox’sBazar and 70.8% of FFS farmers and 55.9% of non-FFS farmers in Bandarban have access to collection points for purchasing quality inputs. But 55.2% of FFS farmers and 41.8% of non-FFS farmers in Cox’s Bazar and 94.0% of FFS farmers, and 91.2% of non-FFS farmers in Bandarban purchase quality inputs directly from the traders in the local market. Only 4.1% of FFS farmers and 9.0% of non-FFS farmers in Cox’s Bazar and 16.3% of FFS farmers, and 13.4% of non-FFS farmers in Bandarban have contact with small entrepreneurs/ traders to collect quality farming inputs. The data clearly shows that linkage has been better established between FFS farmers and trained quality input sellers in Cox’s Bazar and in Bandarban, Non-FFS farmers are better linked with quality input sellers, perhaps due to locational advantages.

However, the use of collection points for selling and purchasing farming units, as reflected in the above primary survey, could not be verified during the visit to collection points. In fact, the project encouraged input sellers to use collection points established by the project to sell their farming inputs to the farmers living around the collection points, but the input sellers are more interested in selling their inputs from their own storage, as expressed by one input seller during discussion and the project attempt to link farmers with input sellers through collection points was not still successful.

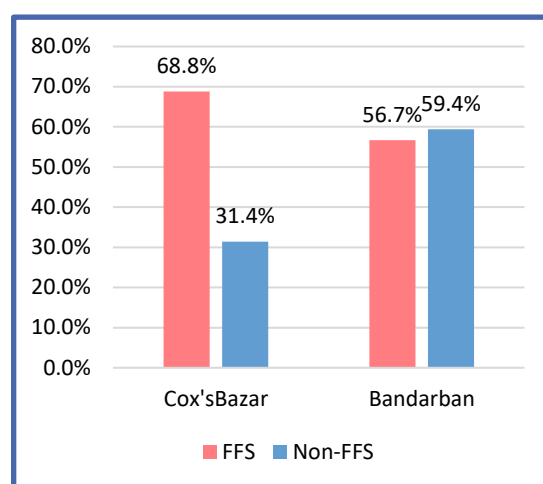


Figure 27: Access to high quality farming inputs

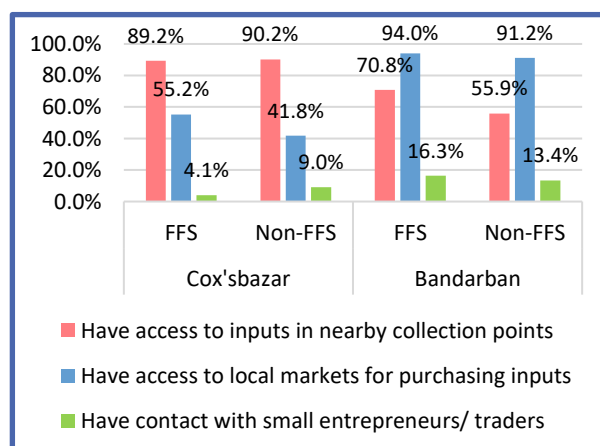


Figure 28: Access to different sources for high quality farming inputs

4.2.9 Market linkage with buyer/traders to sell agricultural produces

The project has established market linkage between the FFS farmers and the traders through collection points. This is a good market strategy to build a storage structure nearby FFS farmers where farmers can easily bring their agricultural produces (e.g. fruits like banana, papaya, grapefruit, jackfruit, lemon, tamarind, etc., and vegetables (e.g. sweet gourd, brinjal, tomato, cucumber) and spices (e.g. ginger) with or without incurring any cost to transport those to the local market. The traders also can collect a bulk quantity of produces from a single point with minimum collection/ transportation cost. Thus the mechanism works in a win-win situation. The collection point has an institutional set-up run by a 7-member management committee which facilitates the fixing of reasonable prices for the goods through a bargaining process. The connection points are well connected with all IFM-FFS and the market traders. The non-FFS farmers can also use the collection point to sell their produces. According to the progress report (annex-6), 17 collection points have been constructed in Bandarban, and 11 collection points in Cox’s Bazar.

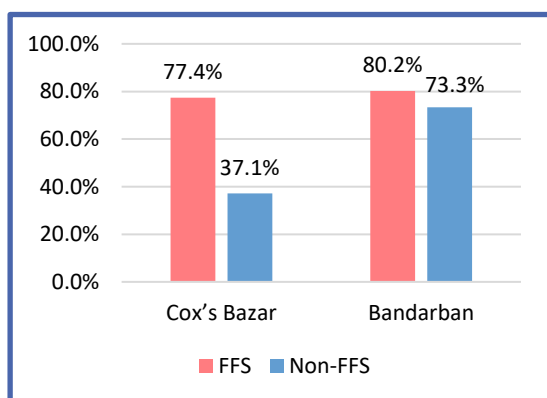


Figure 29: Linkage with Buyers

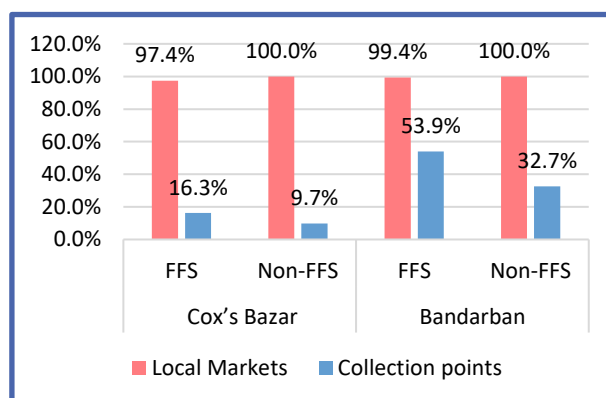


Figure 30: Marketing arrangement for agricultural produces

The primary survey data shows that 77.4% of FFS farmers and 37.1% of non-FFS farmers in Cox’s Bazar and 80.2% of FFS farmers and 73.3% of non-FFS farmers in Bandarban are linked with buyer/traders and sell their agricultural products to them. However, 97.4% of FFS farmers and 100% of non-FFS farmers in Cox’s Bazar and 99.4% of FFS farmers and 100% of non-FFS farmers in Bandarban mainly sell their products directly in the local market. Only 16.3% of FFS farmers and 9.7% of non-FFS farmers in Cox’s Bazar and 53.9% of FFS farmers and 32.7% of non-FFS farmers in Bandarban use collection points to sell their produce. The data indicate that farmers still like to sell their products directly in the local market, particularly in Cox’s Bazar, and the use of collection points is far behind the local market.

The discussion with the project field staff and the FFs further reveals that due to transportation problems, collection points are becoming gradually popular in Bandarban, but only one collection point in a union doesn’t give many benefits to the farmers who are a little bit away from the collection points. Moreover, farmers like to go to the local market because they can sell their products and purchase farming inputs and their daily consumables from the same local market, which they cannot by using the collection points. In Cox’s Bazar, due to easy transportation and accessibility, many farmers prefer to go to the local market instead of collection points. According to them, input sellers

need to be connected with the collection points, and more facilities, including transportation of goods, need to be developed in the collection points.

4.3 Outcome-2: Agroforestry products increased sustainably

Agroforestry is being considered as one of the key elements of the project, along with IFM-FFS. It is an integration of crops and vegetation, both fruits and firewood, to make effective use of farmers' land, which largely contributes to rural agricultural production and economic activities in the rural areas keeping ecological balance. But it is a new component, and visible progress has not been noticed yet. Under this component, the project promotes the planned growing of fruits trees, nurseries, bamboo bushes, and beekeeping in the homestead and community. The major interventions include conducting training sessions on agroforestry for the farmers in FFS, developing agroforestry plans for the group and individual farmers, and establishing linkage with nursery growers and the government department of forest.

4.3.1 Increase in area of land (in hector) under firewood, bamboo, vegetation coverage

The target coverage of land for agroforestry until June 2021 was 600 hector. However, the increase of land coverage for agroforestry could not be assessed under this primary survey because farmers assess the increase in agroforestry growing in their homestead based on the number of trees grown. Table-7 shows that the growth of seedlings in the nursery, vegetation, and bamboo bushes by FFS farmers have been much increased in Cox's Bazar and Bandarban during the evaluation period of the project. In contrast, the seedling and vegetation growing by non-FFS farmers increased less than that of FFS farmers in Cox's Bazar but decreased in Bandarban. Again growing of bamboo bushes by non-FFS farmers has been decreased in Cox's Bazar and increased in Bandarban. Beekeeping by non-FFS farmers has been decreased in both areas indicating that beekeeping is not being promoted by the project until in the extension phase. With standard statistical test (Chi-Square), it was found that the difference between FFS and non-FFS farmers is insignificant ($\alpha=5\%$) for seedling, vegetation and beekeeping but significant for bamboo bushes in Cox's Bazar. Similarly, the difference between FFS and non-FFS farmers is insignificant ($\alpha=5\%$) for all items in Bandarban. On average, the difference between FFS and non-FFS is statistically insignificant ($\alpha=5\%$)

Table 7: Increase in growing of agroforestry

Agroforestry Items	Cox's Bazar		Bandarban		Total average	
	FFS (%)	Non-FFS (%)	FFS (%)	Non-FFS (%)	FFS (%)	Non-FFS (%)
Seedling	101.0	51.2	75.4	-49.9	77.0	-49.7
Vegetation	23.0	17.1	48.1	-56.6	47.7	-56.5
Bamboo bushes	54.4	-13.5	64.3	44.8	63.6	43.9
Beekeeping	-100.0	-38.5	-86.2	-75.0	-91.4	-47.1

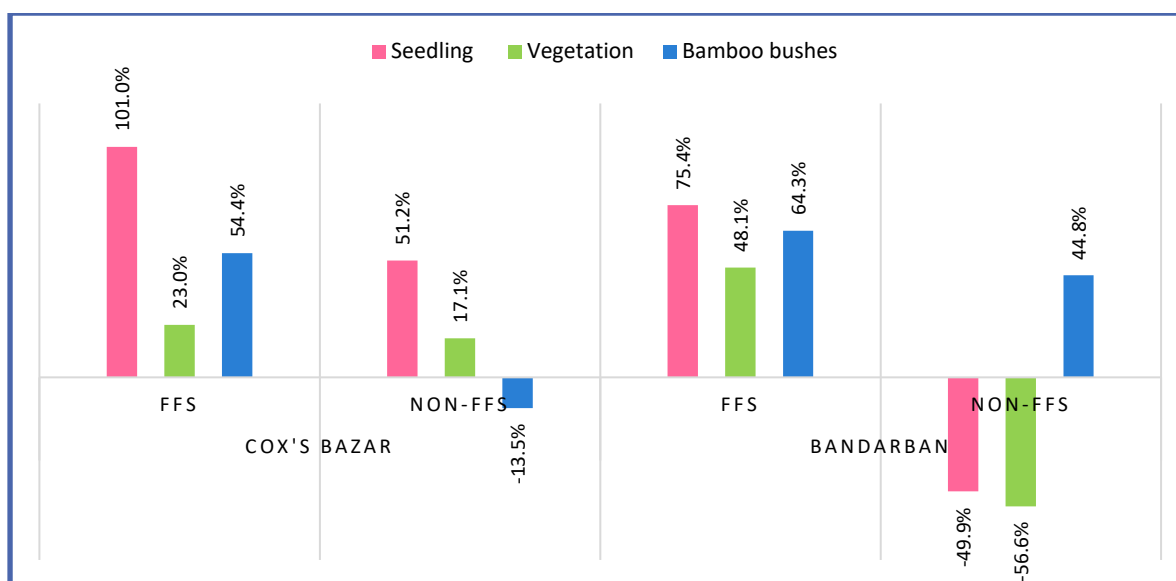


Figure 31: Increased growing of agroforestry

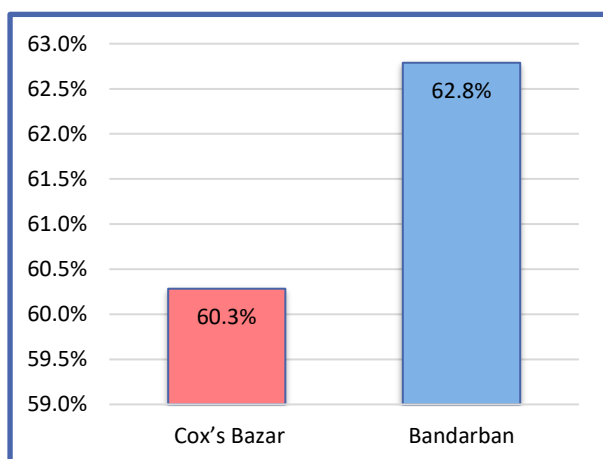


Figure 32: Extent of Agroforestry Plan Implementation

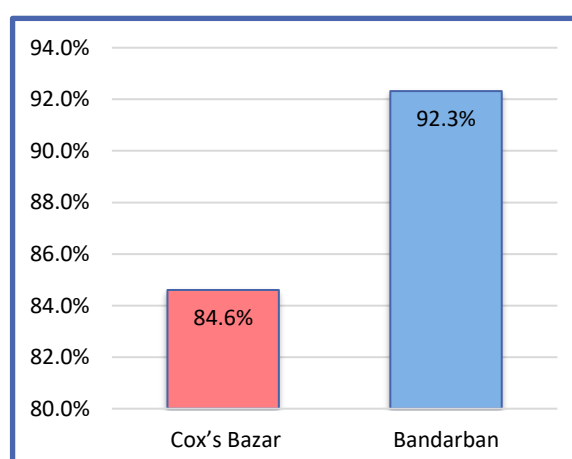


Figure 33: Percent farmers having own agroforestry plan

During the field visit, it was observed that some FFS farmers are growing seedlings in nurseries and growing fruits tree on their homestead, but the growing of firewood and bamboo bushes was rarely observed. According to the progress report (annex-6), the project completed training for the targeted 50 nursery growers to grow seedlings of high-value crops by June 2021 and has planned to develop agroforestry based on other small entrepreneurship (high-value crop producers, beekeepers and vermicompost producers) in the extended phase after June 2021.

4.3.2 Agroforestry plan

Agroforestry plan has been developed at the community and individual farmer's level. This plan was developed for all IFM FFS members through FFS training sessions. The farmers gained knowledge from the IFM-FFS session on improved agroforestry system, developed a plan, and implemented the plan with support from the FFS. In fact, FFs are helping the individual farmers to

develop homestead-based agroforestry plans as to how they can effectively use the homestead areas as well as common community areas for agroforestry.

The primary survey data (Fig 33) shows that 84.6% of FFS farmers in Cox’s Bazar and 92.3% of FFS farmers in Bandarban have their own agroforestry development plan, But 60.3% of FFS farmers have a plan in Cox’s Bazar, and 62.8% of FFS farmers having a plan in Bandarban are implementing agroforestry as per their plan.

However, while validating, the UNDP project staff expressed their doubt about this finding of the primary survey. According to the progress report (Annex-6), 11,124 individual ADPs were developed against a target of 11,160 (99.7% achievement) in Cox’s Bazar and 13,980 individual ADPs were developed against a target of 16200 (86.3% achievement) in Bandarban. The progress is quite satisfactory, but the big difference between the survey findings and the actual progress reported by the project brings the conclusion that the survey respondents may not have understood the meaning of the agroforestry plan properly, and they might have responded according to their agroforestry practice in their homestead. During the interview, the survey team didn’t check their individual plan in the paper but checked their actual practice, and accordingly, data was collected.

Regarding the Community level agroforestry plan, no data was collected during the survey, but according to the progress report, 372 Community ADPs were developed against the same target in Cox’s Bazar (100% achievement), and 487 Community ADPs were developed against the target of 540 in Bandarban (90.18% achievement). However, during the field visit, the Evaluation Team did not find any such initiative of community-level agroforestry implementation.

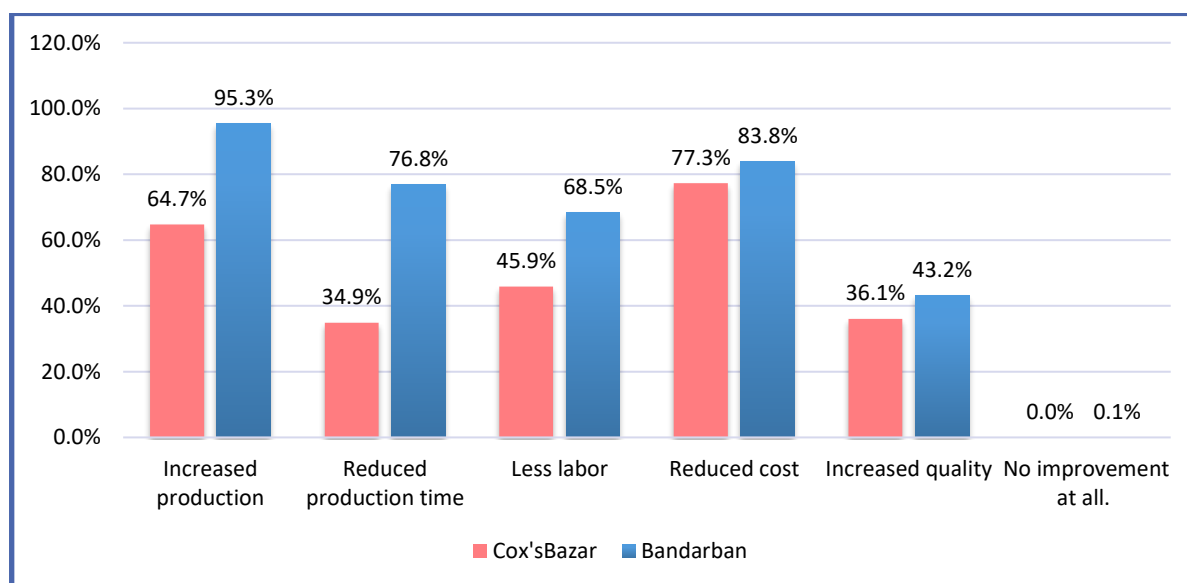


Figure 34: Type of improvement experienced in implementing individual ADPs

Regarding the type of improvements experienced in implementing the agroforestry plan, FFS farmers both in Cox’s Bazar and Bandarban have mainly experienced increased production and reduced cost. But Bandarban looks in a better position to experience improvement in implementing individual ADPs. Those who couldn’t adopt an improved agroforestry system mainly indicated a lack of means/ additional resources for investment and lack of access to agroforestry inputs (seedling/ sapling).

During the field visit, it was observed that the farmers are more interested in homestead-based agroforestry, and accordingly, they have started growing agroforestry, particularly the fruits tree in their homestead. Regarding the growing of firewood and bamboo bushes, no initiative was found in the community, and no effective linkage has yet been developed with the Department of Forest for the implementation of community-based agroforestry.

4.3.3 High-value crops

High-value crops are those cash crops that have high demand, high nutritive value, and high market value. The project promotes the growth of high-value crops like Papaya, banana, multa, betel leaf, mushroom, beekeeping, flower, etc., as CHT is highly potential for growing these crops. IFM FFS conducts a session on high-value crops and encourages the farmers to grow these crops.

Table 8: Types of high-value crops grown

High-value crops	Cox's Bazar		Bandarban	
	FFS (%)	Non-FFS (%)	FFS (%)	Non-FFS (%)
Papaya	82.6	79.2	69.0	42.0
Betel Leaf	25.2	25.0	7.9	32.0
Mushrooms	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
Beekeeping	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0
Flower	0.0	0.0	0.2	1.0
Others (Multa, Banana)	5.2	4.2	30.1	42.0

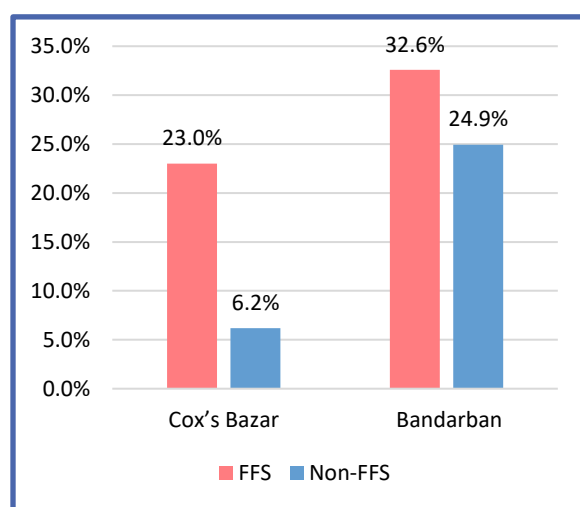


Figure 35: Percent farmers growing high value crops

The primary survey data shows that 23.0% of FFS farmers in Cox's Bazar and 32.6% FFS Farmers in Bandarban grow high-value crops which for non-FFS farmers is 6.2% in Cox's Bazar and 24.9% in Bandarban. So, the FFS farmers are in a better position than non-FFS farmers to grow high-value crops. The FFS farmers mostly grow Papaya, betel leaf, multa, and banana. The non-FFS farmers also grow the same but at less than FFS farmers.

4.3.4 Annual Income from Agricultural production

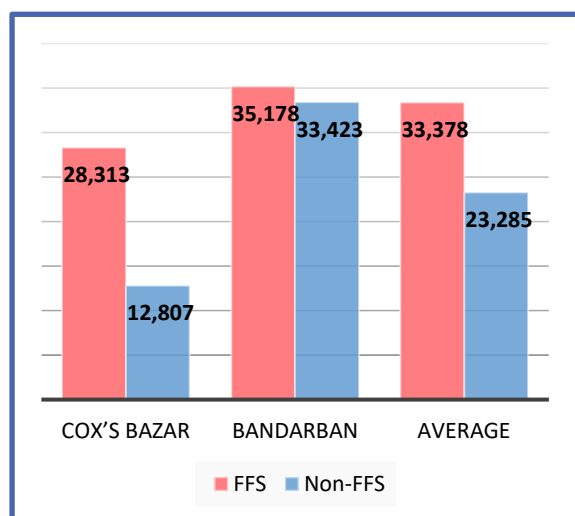


Figure 36: Annual net agricultural income, 2021

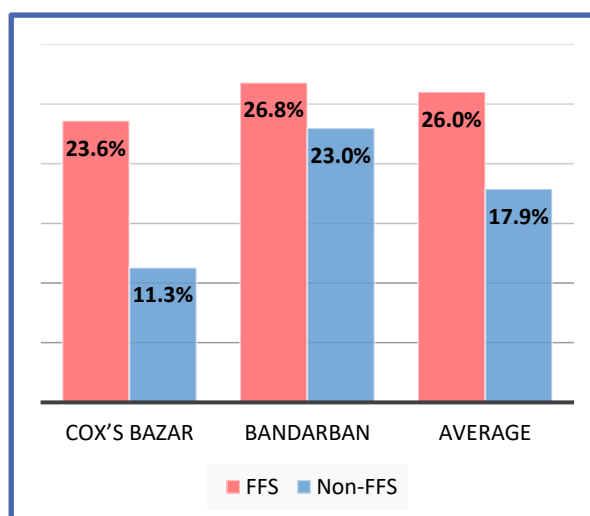


Figure 37: Contribution to annual household income, 2021

Fig-36 shows a primary survey estimate of the average net annual income in 2021 from agricultural production of FFS and non-FFS farmers in the project area. According to the estimate, the FFS farmers in Cox's Bazar earned higher than non-FFS farmers but comparatively less than Bandarban. The FFS farmers in Bandarban made a slightly higher income than non-FFS farmers. The average net income from agricultural production is BDT 33,378 for FFS farmers and BDT 23,285 for non-FFS farmers. So, a statistically significant difference at $\alpha = 1\%$ in average net income is found between FFS and non-FFS farmers. The income level of both FFS and non-FFS farmers has much increased than baseline (BDT 14,000).

This average annual agricultural income contributed to 23.6% of the total annual household income of FFS farmers in Cox's Bazar and 26.8% in Bandarban (Figure 37). For non-FFS farmers, the contribution is only 11.3% in Cox's Bazar and 23.0% in Bandarban. On average, the contribution of net income from agricultural production is 26.0% for FFS and 17.9% for non-FFS farmers. The data clearly indicates that FFS farmers are in a better position than non-FFS farmers to make increased agricultural income.

4.4 Outcome 3: Social cohesion increased

4.4.1 Perception of Rohingya problem

Due to the Rohingya influx in the project area and their continuous presence, the host community was much affected and faced many social and economic problems. The project attempted to reduce the tension and conflicts between the Rohingya and the host community and increase social cohesion through awareness building and conflict mediating process. The perception of the host community about the presence of the Rohingya community has been largely shifted from negative to positive through organizing community mobilization and awareness-building events and involving youths in the mobilization process. Moreover, the involvement of local stakeholders, including LGIs and

community leaders, in the mediating process reduced not only the conflicts between Rohingya and the host community but also reduced internal social conflicts with the neighbours.

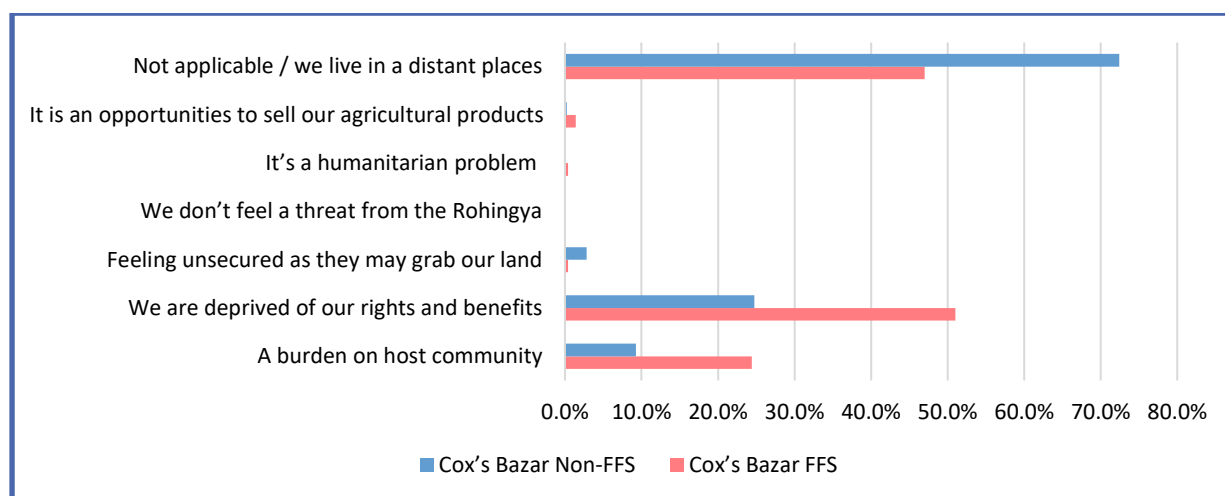


Figure 38: Farmers perception about Rohingya crisis (Cox's Bazar)

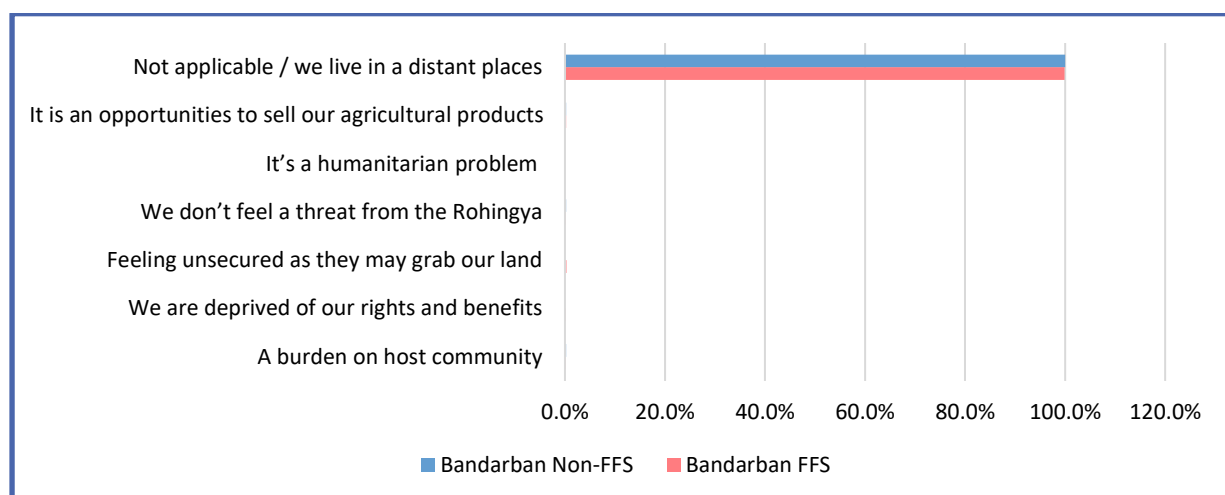


Figure 39: Farmers perception of Rohingya crisis (Bandarban)

The primary survey data (Fig 38 and Fig 39) shows that 47.0% of FFS farmers in Cox's Bazar and 99.9% of FFS farmers in Bandarban have not been directly affected by the Rohingya crisis as they live in a distant place from the Rohingya. In case of non-FFS farmers, 71.6% in Cox's Bazar and 99.3% in Bandarban are not directly affected. However, 51.0% of FFS farmers in Cox's Bazar think that they are being deprived of their rights and social benefits due to the presence of Rohingya, and 24.4% think that Rohingyas are a burden on the host community sharing their foods and wealth. Only a small percentage of FFS farmers (0.4%) in Cox's Bazar positively think Rohingya crisis as a humanitarian problem, and it is the responsibility of the host community to support them with food and shelter. Some FFS farmers (1.4%) look at this Rohingya crisis as an opportunity to sell local agricultural products. In the case of non-FFS farmers in Cox's Bazar, 9.3% think that they are being deprived of their rights and benefits, and 24.7% look at Rohingyas as a burden on the host community. According to data, FFS farmers are more affected by the Rohingya crisis than non-FFS farmers in Cox's Bazar, and that is why FFS farmers have more negative perceptions than non-FFS farmers.

The above finding was substantiated by the finding of FGD discussion with LVMF in Teknaf, Cox’s Bazar, where the LVMF members informed that the host community in Ukhya and Teknaf are much affected by the Rohingya influx as there is a direct interface between the Rohingya community in Camps and the surrounding host community and many conflicting situations as listed in Fig-42 was raised locally in this two Upazila between the two communities.

In Bandarban, no opinion was obtained either from FFS or non-FFS farmers about the Rohingya crisis, as they are not affected.

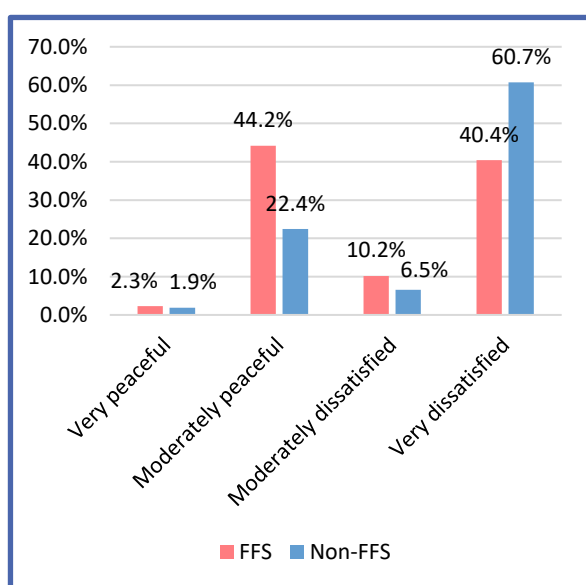


Figure 40: Relation of host community with Rohingyas (Cox's Bazar)

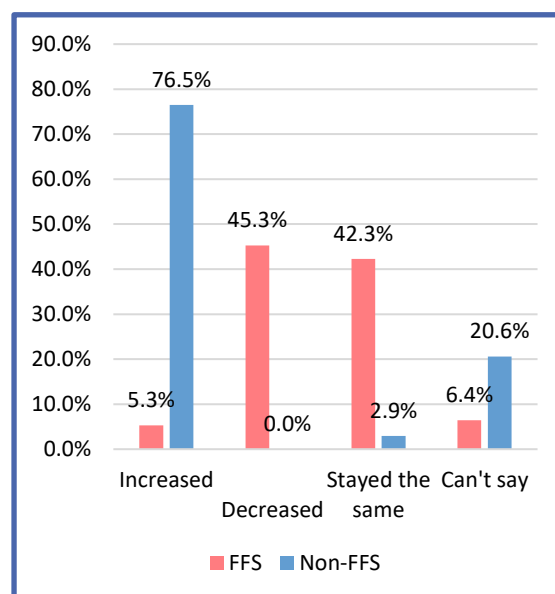


Figure 41: Level of dissatisfaction over last 3 years (Cox's Bazar)

Those FFS farmers who are affected in Cox’s Bazar termed their relationship with the Rohingya community as ‘peaceful’ (2.3%), ‘moderately peaceful’ (44.2%), ‘moderately dissatisfied’ (10.2%) and ‘very dissatisfied’ (40.4%). In contrast, the non-FFS farmers in Cox’s Bazar termed their relation with the Rohingya community as ‘peaceful’ (1.9%), ‘moderately peaceful’ (22.4%), ‘moderately dissatisfied’ (6.5%), and ‘very dissatisfied’ (60.7%).

However, compared to the situation before joining IFM-FFS, the level of dissatisfaction as the FFS farmers described has ‘increased’ (5.3%), ‘decreased’ (45.3%) and ‘remained the same’ (42.3%). Compared to the last 3 years, the situation as described by the non-FFS farmers has ‘increased’ (36.4%), ‘decreased’ (20.6%), and ‘remained the same’ (36.4%). As indicated by Fig-40 and Fig-41, the relationship of the host community with Rohingyas in the project intervention area has been much improved than in the non-intervention area as the level of dissatisfaction is gradually reducing, and there is reason to believe that this improved relationship between the host community and the Rohingyas and the reduced dissatisfaction is the result of the contribution made by the project.

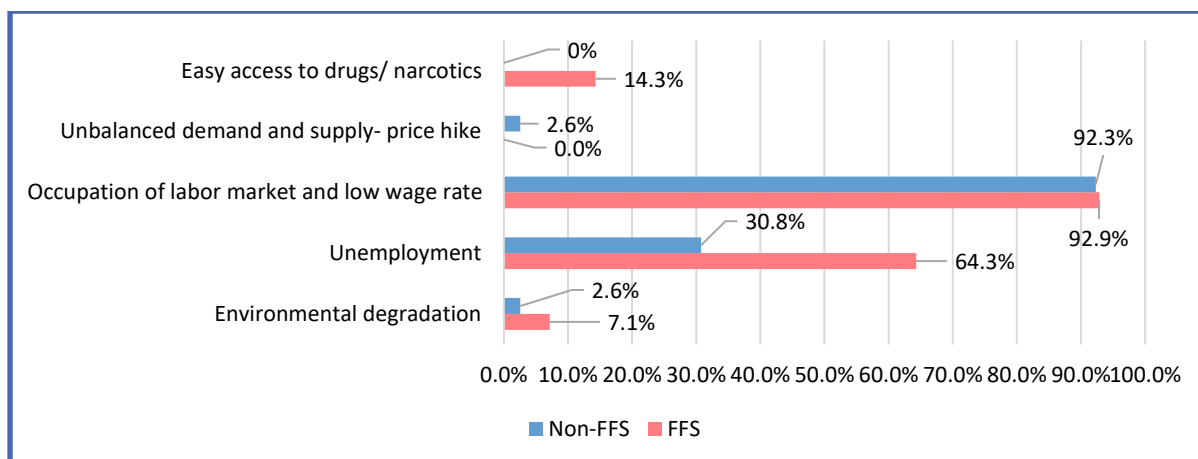


Figure 42: Identified causes of community conflict (Cox's Bazar)

The major causes of conflict between the two communities, as the FFS farmers identified, are ‘environmental degradation’ (7.1%), ‘unemployment’ (64.3%), ‘occupation of the labour market and low wage rate’ (92.9%), and ‘easy access to drugs/ narcotics’ (14.3%). The causes identified by non-FFS farmers are ‘environmental degradation’ (2.6%), ‘unemployment’ (30.8%), ‘occupation of the labor market and low wage rate’ (92.3%), and ‘price hike due to unbalanced demand and supply in the market’ (2.6%). As indicated by Fig-42, the causes of community conflict as identified by the FFS farmers are more acute in the project intervention area than in the non-intervention area in Cox’s Bazar. The FFS and non-FFS farmers in Bandarban didn’t identify any such conflicts with the Rohingya community.

As mentioned above, the ‘unemployment’ and ‘occupation of labour market and low wage rate’ are the main causes of conflict between host and Rohingya communities. The project adopted two approaches to address these causes of conflict and increase social cohesion. It undertook sensitization of the host community about the conflicts and their mediation process through organizing courtyard sessions. This perhaps changed their mindset, and they became more tolerant of the presence of Rohingya community on humanitarian grounds. This gradually reduced the dissatisfaction level among the host community, and they coped with the situation of the Rohingya influx. On the other hand, the engagement of the FFS farmers in more productive activities through IFM-FFS intervention increased their income, which provided more livelihood security to them against the negative impact of the Rohingya influx. This also contributed significantly to reduce the dissatisfaction level and improve the social cohesion.

4.4.2 Specific conflicts experienced by FFS and Non-FFS farmers

The primary survey data clearly indicates that there is hardly any conflict experienced by the host community with Rohingya living in the project area. Fig-43 shows that 99.4% of FFS farmers in Cox’s Bazar and 99.9% of FFS farmers in Bandarban experienced no direct conflict with the Rohingya community. Similarly, 99.5% of non-FFS farmers in Cox’s Bazar and 100% of non-FFS farmers in Bandarban experienced no direct conflict with Rohingya, which is likely due to the fact that the Rohingya are confined to the camps, and there is less scope to have a direct interaction between these two communities. Only in a few cases, particularly in Ukhyia and Teknaf, conflicts were experienced by FFS and non-FFS.

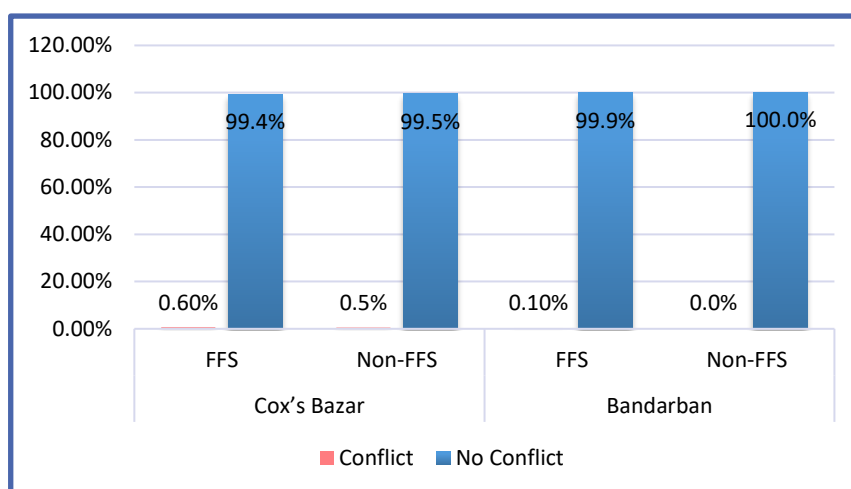


Figure 43: Percent FFS and Non-FFS farmers experienced conflicts with Rohingyas

The major conflicts experienced by FFS and non-FFS farmers in Cox's Bazar are occupied crop land (33.3%, 50%), evicted from settlement (33.3%, 50%), threatened life (0%, 50.0%) and damaged environment (33.3%, 0%) and that is experienced by FFS and non-FFS farmers in Bandarban are occupied crop land (50%, 0%), evicted from settlement (50%, 0%), threatened life (100%, 0%) and damaged environment (50%, 0%).

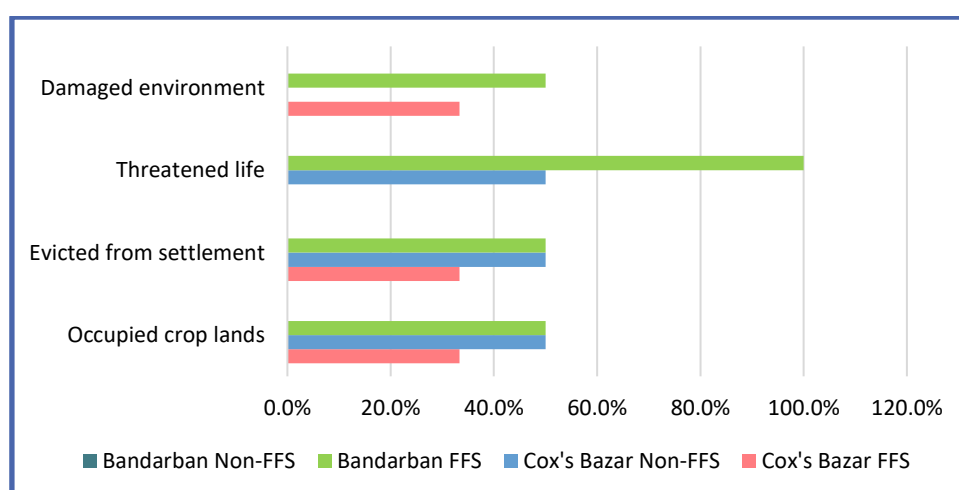


Figure 44: Specific conflicts experienced with Rohingyas

Fig 44 shows that the conflicts, if any, with the Rohingya community experienced in Cox's Bazar were not resolved, and conflicts experienced in Bandarban were partially resolved.

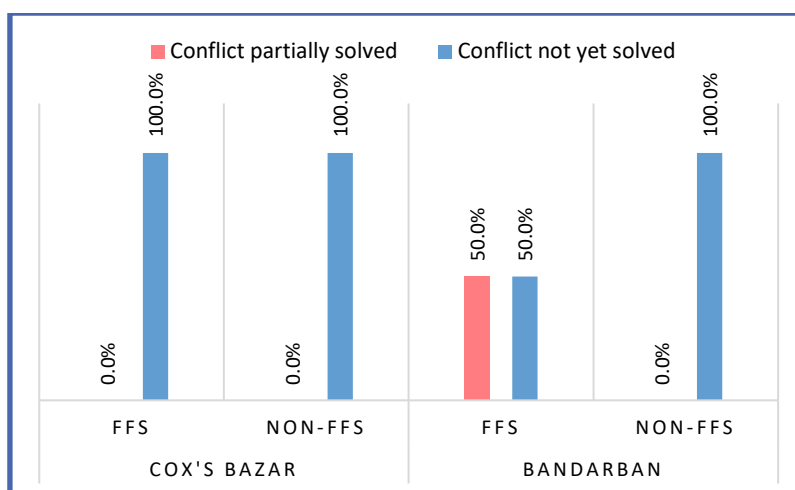


Figure 45: Percent Farmers experiencing conflict resolution

4.4.3 Conflicts mediation by LVMF

LVMFs formed/reactivated by the project play a vital role in the conflict mediation process in the project area, and they have already gained popularity among the local community to solve disputes locally in an informal way. The project progress reports highlighted several conflicts mediated by LVMF. Those conflicts are mostly related to internal conflicts in the host community.

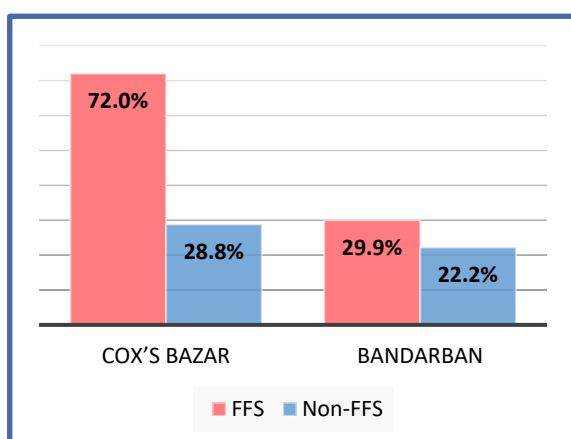


Figure 46: Percent Farmer know about LVMF (N=1906 FFS, 787 Non-FFS)

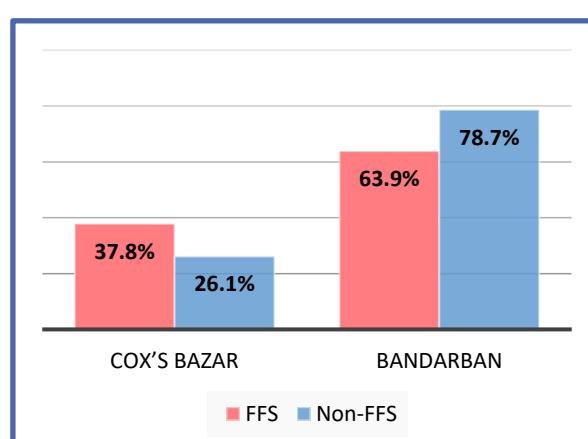


Figure 47: Percent farmers who know about LVMF approached to LVMF for solving dispute (N=781 FFS, 200 Non-FFS)

The primary survey data (Fig 46) shows that 72.0% of FFS farmers in Cox's Bazar and 29.9% in Bandarban know about LVMF. Similarly, 28.8% of non-FFS farmers in Cox's Bazar and 22.2% in Bandarban know about LVMF. So, LVMF is better known to FFS farmers, particularly in Cox's Bazar.

The data further shows that 37.8% of FFS farmers who know about LVMF in Cox's Bazar and 63.9% of FFS farmers who know about LVMF in Bandarban approached LVMF to resolve local disputes. Similarly, 26.1% of non-FFS farmers who know about LVMF in Cox's Bazar and 78.7% of non-FFS farmers who know about LVMF in Bandarban approached LVMF to resolve local disputes. So, LVMF has gained the trust of non-FFS farmers as well.

Regarding the satisfaction level of the farmers to get solutions to their disputes, 75.6% and 21.6% of FFS farmers in Cox’s Bazar and 72.4% and 25.4% of FFS farmers in Bandarban expressed respectively their ‘high satisfaction’ and ‘moderate satisfaction’ for the mediation done by LVMF while 41.4% and 51.7% non-FFS farmers in Cox’s Bazar and 21.4% and 74.3% non-FFS farmers in Bandarban expressed their ‘high satisfaction’ and ‘moderate satisfaction’ for the amicable settlement of the disputes through LVMF mediation process respectively (Fig 48). Thus, the high acceptance of LVMF in the host community indicates that these Forums may work sustainably as a functional social mechanism for conflict resolution through their impartial, friendly, and credible mediation process.

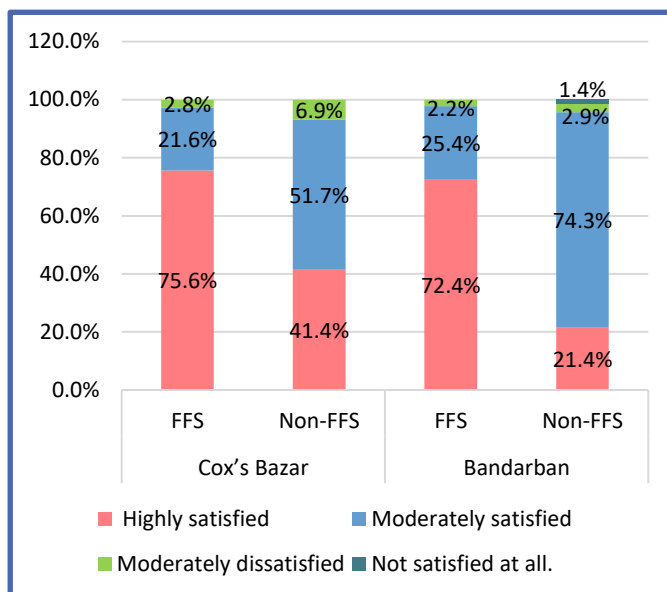


Figure 48: Level of satisfaction for resolving conflict by LVMF

Regarding achievement of outcome indicator 3.1, a total of 761 disputes were mediated through LVMF against a cumulative target of 1000 by June 2021²². Achievement is 76.1% as per report. However, no such data was collected through the survey because the survey was conducted among the FFS and non-FFS Farmers- not among the LVMF.

4.4.4 Impact of cohesion related courtyard sessions on conflict mediating process

The cohesion component conducted a number of courtyard sessions in each IMF-FFS community for awareness building and educating the farmers about social conflicts and their mediation process. A good number of FFS attended these sessions. The non-FFS farmers didn’t attend these sessions.

Table 9: Percent FFS farmers attended the courtyard sessions

Sessions	Cox’s Bazar (N=500)	Bandarban (N=1406)
	FFS (%)	FFS (%)
Conflict management	75.7	79.1
Communication	71.8	70.3
Leadership	26.5	65.4
Covid-19 awareness	51.4	83.1
Social capital	33.7	41.1

²² Progress Report, SHARP, Jan-June 2021.

As indicated in Table 9, a good number of FFS farmers both in Cox’s Bazar and Bandarban attended these sessions and learned about social cohesion and the conflict mediation process. Fig 49 discloses that 96.7% of FFS farmers in Cox’s Bazar, 63.5% of FFS farmers in Bandarban and overall 70.9% who attended the courtyard session changed their behavioural patterns and expressed their confidence in applying knowledge to address disputes at their community level, which proves that these sessions were effectively conducted at the community level and made an impact on

the participants who played later a positive mediating role in their respective communities to settle disputes. This finding also satisfied 70% target achievement of outcome indicator 3.2.

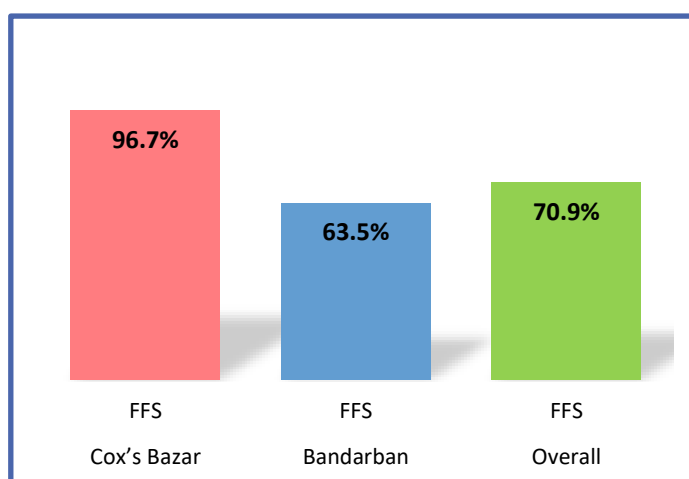


Figure 49: Percent farmer confident to apply knowledge and address disputes (N= Cox 181, BBN 627)

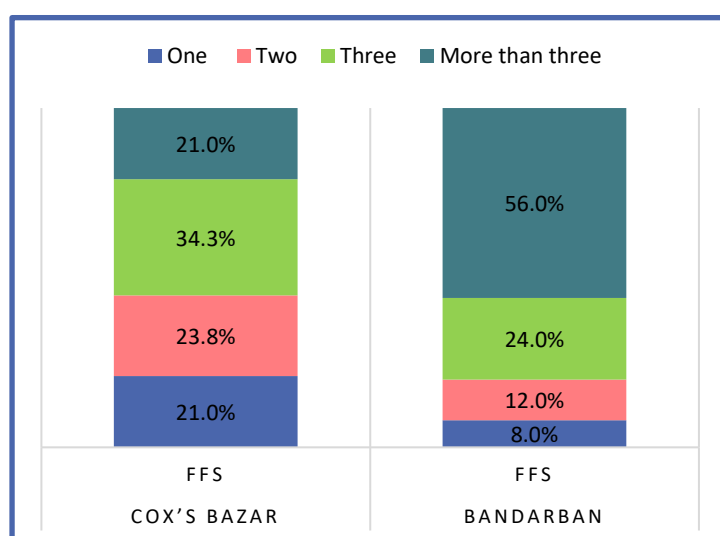


Figure 50: Percent farmers settling number of disputes

Fig 50 demonstrated the different percentages of FFS farmers in Cox’s Bazar and Bandarban who could apply knowledge of courtyard sessions and settle internal disputes in the community up to three and more than three cases. It further demonstrates that FFS farmers, particularly in Cox’s Bazar, progressed more in settling the disputes up to three cases, while FFS farmers in Bandarban progressed more in settling the disputes in more than 3 cases.

4.5 Theory of Change, Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, and Sustainability

4.5.1 Project Theory of Change

The ‘theory of change’ is explicit in three inter-linked project components, which are expected to achieve project outcomes and objectives. As per the change process is outlined in the ‘theory of change’, the following assumptions are made.

- Training of farmers, farmer facilitators, staff of implementation partners and government line agencies will develop skills in promoting improved farming practices, sustainable agroforestry practices, value addition, market access, women and youth engagement and group interaction/conflict mediation/counselling.
- The skills, if applied, will lead to behavioural changes among the host community, which will be facilitated further by FFs and staff of implementing agencies and government line agencies
- The behavioural change will lead to improved productivity, less degradation of eco-systems and more dialogue that will defuse tension and conflicts.
- The improved productivity will lead to improved livelihoods through income generation, greater food security and an improved eco-system; and finally
- Improved livelihoods and eco-system restoration, when coupled with increased host community confidence, tolerance and conflict prevention/resolution – lead to greater social cohesion and stability.

The above assumptions are logically set to achieve the project outcomes and objectives, and these are all valid assumptions. However, the following uncontrolled factors/ challenges need to be addressed to achieve results at an objective level:

- Proper application of knowledge and skill by the project beneficiaries in farming practices, agroforestry growing and social conflict mediation process. The long term project facilitation and follow-up through the engagement of FFs and frontline project staff are essential to ensure the proper application of knowledge and skill by farmers, Youth Forums and LVMF.
- Developing functional linkage and collaborative arrangement with the relevant GoB line departments and agencies to ensure support services accessible by the project beneficiaries for improved agricultural productivity and agroforestry growing for improved eco-system
- Developing functional linkage with the input sellers and market traders to ensure uninterrupted farming practices and marketing of agricultural produces.
- Ensuring food security during natural disasters and increasing resilience against the negative impact of COVID-19 pandemic.
- Reinforcing conflict mediation process through developing institutional linkage Youth Forum and LVMF with relevant government line agencies and non-government social service institutions.

The Evaluation Team (ET) observed that the project has already taken some initiatives to address the above challenges, and more attention is required to undertake appropriate actions in the remaining period of the project. However, the ET feels that the project field staff should be more oriented about the ToC and its associated challenges so that they can understand the logical process of ToC and link their activities with project outcome and objectives.

4.5.2 Relevance of the SHARIP Project

Relevance of the objectives of a project with national and international priorities is critical for its survival and sustenance. The SHARIP project aims to increase the capacity of the host population of Cox’s Bazar and Chattogram Hill Tracks (CHT) through the establishment of sustainable Cohesion between Rohingya refugees and the host population by creating more livelihoods opportunities and peace. More specifically, the project aimed to explore the innovative alternatives for workforce mobilization through IFM-FFS and their effective utilization of training outcomes through collaboration and capacity enhancement of the host communities of Cox’s Bazar and Bandarban.

Discussion with UNDP field staff and implementing partners shows that the SHARIP Project objectives and outputs have relevance to both national and international priorities. The Project outputs were found to have both direct and indirect relevance to the national priorities demonstrated in Vision 2021, the Perspective Plan (2010-21), and the 8th Five Year Plan (2021-25). Similarly, the project outputs/objectives were also found to have explicit/implicit relevance to the priorities of the SDGs and the UNDP. This provides a testimony to the fact that the Project has high relevance with the wider national and international development priorities, which will even surpass the present context and beyond. Primary data obtained from the questionnaire survey also endorsed this fact. Query about the relevance of the project outcomes in the current context and beyond was responded positively by all the respondents.

The project is most relevant for the current development priorities declared by the Government of Bangladesh, food Security, SDGs, and the Strategic Objectives for UNDP. The project is directly contributing to the SDG, which is the priority of the SHARIP-UNDP. The project directly addresses 3 priority sectors, namely (1) Agriculture and food security (2) Human development, with particular reference to agriculture production (3) land use and natural resource management. The project is also in line with GOB’s commitment to the cross-cutting issues of women’s empowerment and vulnerable groups.

The project is relevant to the Strategic Objectives (SOs) for UNDP, namely “Help eliminate hunger”, “Food insecurity and malnutrition”, “Make agriculture, forestry, and fisheries more productive and sustainable”, and “Reduce rural poverty”. For the fifth Strategic objective, “Enable inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems and increase the resilience of livelihoods to disasters”, there are no specific project interventions, but the project will indirectly create resilience in its area, which will minimize the impacts of disasters UNDP’s competitive advantage of being associated with GoB on similar projects and proven FFS approach is not only relevant but crucial for this project. However, the project works with a high number of women who are often not recognized as farmers and with a high number of ethnic communities, hence contributing to this strategic objective.

The project is most relevant for the current development priorities declared by the Government of Bangladesh, Food Security. The Government of Bangladesh is working in collaboration with UNDP to address it through several projects. The government (since 2009) has taken up a pro-agriculture stand and aims to achieve Food Security at the national, household, and individual levels. The Country Program Framework (CPF) and UN Development Assistance Funds (UNDAF) provide an opportunity to revitalize the agriculture sector development programs. While it is recognized that agriculture can play a significant role in the growth and stability of the economy in Bangladesh, for it to be remunerative, market linkages are critical and must be backed by diversification of income sources to cope with risks. This is exactly what the project aims to achieve.

The project focuses on the disadvantaged rural population, particularly small and marginal farmers and women – which is a priority of all the partners in the project. The project is given more importance as it is expected to come up with a model of self-sustaining people-led institutions that will take care of local development priorities, including food production and income generation, but not limited to these.

The project is relevant to the target communities as all the interventions fulfil their urgent needs (food and income). At the same time, all their needs cannot be fulfilled through one project. One major section of beneficiary communities is youth, who expressed that their priority is for ‘jobs’.

As experienced, the IFM-FFS is a reasonable strategy to adopt when: a) the goal was to increase production through the transfer of technology, and b) activities were being carried out in areas that were difficult to reach or where there was limited private sector activity. So this project rightly adopted IFM-FFS as the relevant key strategy to help the poor marginal and inaccessible farmers in hard to reach areas of Bandarban and Cox’s Bazar.

The detailed note on relevance with particular reference to Vision 2021, Perspective Plan (2010-41), 8th five-year plan (2021-26), SDGs and UNDP priorities as reflected in CPD 2017-20, UNDAF is given in **Annex-6**.

4.5.3 Efficiency

The study's KIIs and IDIs, which sought officials' thoughts on the SHARIP Project's institutional and implementation arrangements, received a favourable response from all. Furthermore, all of the respondents (100%) agreed that the project’s arrangement is appropriate, effective, and efficient for the successful achievement of the project’s objectives.

The output progress data (available from the project office) of this evaluation period, which mainly covers the first phase (Up to June 2021) is given in **Annex-7**.

As detailed throughout the progress data, almost all the targets for the first phase of SHARIP and important results have been achieved. Except in a few cases in Bandarban, the targets have even been exceeded. In a few cases, targets were not set in the first phase but later set in the extended phase. The project is very much on track, and results so far have been achieved as per result framework is satisfactory, although implementation was delayed due to the long prevalence of COVID-19 pandemic and extended lockdown periods, which necessitated adjustments and flexibility in implementation modality. The evaluation team is convinced that the implementation of the project has been efficiently managed.

Regarding cost, the Evaluation Team had less scope to go in-depth analysis of budget and expenditure. The 2.5 years progress report shows that the project has made an expenditure of USD 558,644 in 2019, USD 3,157,649 in 2020, and USD 1,413,043 in the first half of 2021. The expenditure was much less in 2019, jumped up in 2020, and smoothly progressed in the first half of 2021. As per the fund received and expenditure statement available from project offices (**Annex-8**), the total fund received by January 31, 2022 was USD 7,405,357 and actual plus committed expenditure was USD 7,224,972. The burn rate is 97.6% indicating high cost-efficient project financial management.

Regarding cost management at implementation level, the project has allocated BDT 22,000 for the operation of IFM-FFS, BDT 2,000 for each of its members after completion of the training, BDT 4500 for Farmer facilitators at Bandarban, BDT 6000 for Farmer Facilitators at Cox’s Bazar, and BDT 50,000 for the establishment of each collection point. However, as reported by the implementation partner,

the allocated budget was not disbursed on time, which hampered the activities of the project. Furthermore, all the beneficiaries and stakeholders showed their concern about the adequacy of the allocated money for the smooth implementation of the project activities. Particularly the incentive money given to FFS farmers after completion of their training was too inadequate to invest in improvement in existing farming practices or to start a new component.

The project partnership with BDHC and GRAUS in Bandarban and Practical Action and ACLAB in Cox’s Bazar was found to be smoothly functioning, and all the partners are actively moving for project implementation. The project is well-staffed, and the staffing positions at the partner’s level were found adequate for program implementation and management. The FFs are the frontline staff and play a vital role in educating the farmers and engaging them in integrated farming. However, their education level doesn’t seem enough to efficiently handle the learning and communication of the FFS session contents to the farmers. However, the direct supervision and backstopping support by Upazilla FFS Coordinator and Master Trainers and MT was found effective. The UNDP is efficiently managing the implementation of the project with good linkage with BDHC and relevant government line departments.

The project initiated a systematic monitoring and evaluation mechanism in all places, i.e. Para level committee at community, Upazila, District (at HDC) levels, and finally at SID-CHT District and regional levels. The project M&E system is good and effectively supports management to assess progress in terms of output and outcome assessment, which is well reflected in the project reporting system.

4.5.4 Effectiveness

The project achievements at the level of outputs are good; however, the project still must demonstrate effectiveness in achieving its planned outcomes.

Regarding achievement of outcome-1, the primary survey findings as mentioned in section 4.2 shows that after joining FFS farmers the production of crop increased by 29.6% (Cox’s Bazar- 45.6%, BBN- 27.1%), vegetable increased by 67.2% (Cox’s Bazar- 87.3%, BBN- 58.1%), fruits increased by 39.3% (Cox’s Bazar- 56%, BBN- 38.4%), Hen/duck egg increased by 56.9% (Cox’s Bazar- 39.8%, BBN- 65.9%), Chicken/ duck meat increased by 67.7% (Cox’s Bazar- 70.4%, BBN- 66.8%) and fish increased by 66.8% (Cox’s Bazar- 125.3%, BBN- 66.4%) (Table 4.1). Regarding additional component, 93.8% FFS farmers (Cox’s Bazar-96.8%, BBN- 92.7%) added additional components by adopting improved technology against a target of 75% and 91.6% FFS farmers who adopted improved technology and 91.6% FFS farmers (Cox’s Bazar-73.6%, BBN- 98.2%) experienced increased production (Cox’s Bazar- 73.6%, BBN- 98.2%). The primary survey data reveals that in 30.8% of cases both in Cox’s Bazar and Bandarban, the agricultural production of the FFS farmers was disrupted completely and in 2.7% of cases partially by COVID -19 pandemic. But only in 36.8% of cases (Cox’s Bazar- 4.5%, BBN-48.3%), the affected farmers receive the Solidarity package providing mainly the agricultural inputs, and they resumed their production.

Regarding achievement of increased agroforestry production under outcome-2, seedlings growing in the nursery was increased by 77% (Cox’s Bazar- 101%, BBN- 75.4%), vegetation increased by 47.7% (Cox’s Bazar- 23%, BBN- 48.1%.) and bamboo bushes increased by 63.6% (Cox’s Bazar- 23%, BBN- 48.1%.)

Regarding achievement of social cohesion under output 3, LVMF is sustainably working as a functional social mechanism for conflict resolution by following a friendly and credible mediation process. The primary survey data shows that 72.0% of FFS farmers in Cox’s Bazar and 29.9% in Bandarban know about LVMF (Fig 4.46). The data further shows that 37.8% of FFS farmers who know about LVMF in

Cox’s Bazar and 63.9% of FFS farmers who know about LVMF in Bandarban approached LVMF for resolving local disputes (Fig 4.47). 75.6% and 21.6% FFS farmers in Cox’s Bazar and 72.4% and 25.4% FFS farmers in Bandarban expressed respectively their ‘high satisfaction’ and ‘moderate satisfaction’ for the mediation done by LVMF for the amicable settlement of the disputes through LVMF mediation process respectively (Fig 4.48).

The project has covered the intended population. The families who received FFS training were found to be genuinely needy; the project has successfully enrolled more women than men as members, trainees, and recipients of IFM-FFS benefits, many new IGAs have been started; the families interviewed by the evaluators reported an increase in income and reported satisfaction about the project introduced interventions. However, in the absence of any records of production/income earned before and after the project interventions, the effectiveness of the interventions cannot be reported with evidence.

The imparting of knowledge about improved agricultural technologies and transfer of knowledge into practice through well designed IFM-FFS system, the proactive role FFs in facilitating the knowledge transfer and adoption process, backstopping support of MTs and UFFSC at the farmers level, marketing linkage provided through the establishment of collection points and establishment of conflict mediation process through formation of LVMF are the major factors which contributed to the achievements of the above outcomes. All 3 (three) outcomes are effectively contributing to the project objectives of strengthening the socio-economic conditions of the poor households indicated by increased agricultural income, which contributed to household income by 23.6% in Cox’s Bazar and 26.8% in Bandarban.

The project's effectiveness is significantly hindered by several issues; delayed start, worldwide COVID 19 pandemic situation, scarcity of facilitators due to insufficient incentives, language barrier, and communication problems at Bandarban.

4.5.5 Sustainability

Sustainability of the project-supported agriculture and livestock production differs among communities and individual households. While some households and communities show more initiative and problem-solving ability, others seem to expect further assistance for the various inputs, e.g., fertilizers, seeds, medication, etc., needed.

The project must become member-centred, have good governance, and technology transfer must be adopted so widely that livelihoods improve, production increases, the market linkages must be self-financed from profits made by producers and traders, and the project support must be gradually withdrawn with the strengthened capacity of the farmers and other stakeholders.

It must be acknowledged that in the middle of the project, sustainability is not easy to measure at this stage. The project has completed all the formation of FFS. The evaluators looked at the extent to which the project objectives are understood, internalized, and owned by the group leaders and members, as they are the ones who will ultimately carry forward the work on the ground. The interviews and discussions made it clear that there is a lot of hope among the IFM-FFS members and leaders, but they still expect the SHARIP project, government, and UNDP to continue support.

The findings of the primary survey and discussion with the farmers reveal the capacity of the FFS farmers has much increased than what they had before joining FFS. Now the farmers are more knowledgeable, have adopted the improved integrated farming practices, and are producing more agricultural produce. Some farmers, particularly the FFS, have developed their entrepreneurial capacities who have established linkage with GoB line departments and market and supporting

agricultural extension work. However, these are only a few cases, and the farmers still need project support to continue to diversify their products, improve quality and sell their products at a reasonable price. Some of the FFS and LVMF members are demonstrating their capacity to deal with social conflicts and solve them through an efficient mediating process and have already gained the trust of the community. However, as a body, this LVMF needs further backup support for the project to establish its linkage with UPs, government, and social organizations for further mobilization of the community and awareness building about the conflicting social issues.

As of now, the project has made some good initiatives to mainstream the IFM-FFS process through building linkages with the concerned line departments of the Government, although services of these line departments have not still much accessible to the FFS farmers. There is a further need to establish a ‘**technological exchange**’ between FFS and non-FFS farmers through the joint intervention of the project and government line departments. The project established collection points to link with the input sellers and market traders, but still much remains to be done to increase the facilities of the collection points and strengthen the capacity of the management committees of these collection points to independently deal with the farmers and market traders and make these collection points as community based agricultural business entity or trading center to run sustainably in future. The project initiatives of using youth forums for organizing issue-based events and formation of LVMF to increase social cohesion is good, but the institutional arrangement has yet to be established with concerned government line departments and other stakeholders to make activities of LVMF and the youth forums sustainable over a longer-term. This is really a big challenge for the project to make such an institutional arrangement and to make that arrangement functional.

4.5.6 Impact

SHARIP has vast impact on agricultural production by marginal farmers in the project area of Bandarban and Cox’s Bazar. It has adopted IFM-FFS, a proven approach for integrated farming in homesteads and small pieces of land to increase agricultural production and income. Through experiential learning, the marginal farmers adopted this approach and got increased agricultural income. The project emphasized women participation in IFM-FFS, and this had an impact on women empowerment in terms of their increased knowledge and skill, control over household income, decision making and mobility. The project also impacted social cohesion through awareness building and conflict mediation process.

The impact of the project is measured by the following three indicators in the result framework:

- % of participating households have increased annual net agricultural income, with at least 50% of IFM-FFS members being women
- % of female farmers enrolled in the IFM-FFS report feeling more empowered
- % of participating households with improved capacities to cope with the situation of Rohingya influx

The evaluation survey data reveals the following findings:

- i) Before joining the project, the average income from the sale of agricultural produce was BDT 3,231 per farmer per month. It increased to BDT 5,565 until 2021 after joining IFM-FFS²³. The primary survey data show that gross agricultural income remains almost the same at BDT

²³ Progress Report of Support to Host Communities Affected by Rohingya Influx Progress Report (SHARIP), January to June 2021,

5,576 per month, although the gross agricultural income has now decreased to BDT 4,334 per month (annual BDT 52,003) in Cox’ Bazar and increased to BDT 6018 per month (annual BDT 72,220) in Bandarban. But average net agricultural income decreased to BDT 2,781 per month (annual BDT 33,378) with BDT 2,369 per month (annual BDT 28,313) in Cox’s Bazar and BDT 2,932 (annual BDT 35,178) in Bandarban. However, as compared to non-FFS farmers, the net agricultural income of FFS farmers is high, which is indicative of the positive impact of the project on the agricultural income level of the project beneficiaries.

- ii) It is observed from the “Assessment of the contribution of the support to Host Communities Affected by the Rohingya Influx Project (SHARIP) to Women empowerment in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh” report that before project interventions, women involvement in decision making, control over income, access to input and resources, and leadership was very low. The report shows that the overall level of women empowerment with respect to the components mentioned above has increased significantly. Household data collected for MTE also provide substantial evidence for the level of increase in women empowerment in both Cox’s Bazar and Bandarban districts. The data shows that at present, 98.4% (55.6%- large extent, 42.8%- some extent) of women in Cox’s Bazar have control over household income, whereas, in Bandarban, the value reaches 99.4% (41.1%- large extent, 58.3%- some extent). In Cox’ Bazar, 97.8% (58.2%- large extent, 39.6% some extent) women show increased participation in decision making, 82% (49%- large extent, 33%- some extent) have the mobility to access local input and sales market, and 72.8% (54.8%- large extent, 18% some extent) hold a leadership position in a community group and can influence decision making. In Bandarban, 98.1% (39.9%- large extent, 58.2% to some extent) women show increased participation in decision making, 86.8% (36.2%- large extent, 56.6%- some extent) have the mobility to access local input and sales market, and 89.9% (24.5%- large extent, 65.4% some extent) hold a leadership position in a community group and can influence decision making.
- iii) Though 51% of respondents in Cox’s Bazar think that they are deprived of their rights and benefits due to Rohingya influx, the capacities of the household to cope with the situation of Rohingya influx has increased significantly after the project interventions. The survey data shows that at present, nearly half of the respondents (46.5%) particularly in Cox’s Bazar think the relation of their community with the Rohingya community is “very peaceful” to “moderately peaceful” (Fig 4.41). Moreover, 87.6% of people responded that the level of dissatisfaction between the two-community people “decreased” (45.3%) or “stayed the same” (42.3%) compared to the situation before joining FFS (Fig. 4.42). The opposite scenario in the control area with non-FFS farmers (76.5% responded that the level of dissatisfaction increased) best describes the project's impact on the improved capacities to cope with the situation of Rohingya influx. In the control area, 60.7% of the respondents think the relation of their community with the Rohingya community is very dissatisfied. Further, 36.4% of people responded that the level of dissatisfaction between the two-community people has increased compared to the last three years.

The above results of the indicators suggest that there is a positive increase in agricultural income in the project intervention area as compared to the non-intervention area, positive impact on gender equality and women empowerment, and positive impact on the capacity of the FFS members to cope with the situation of Rohingya influx.

Most of the families with whom the evaluators interacted expressed satisfaction over increases in production or/and income from the project-supported interventions. The extent of increase in production could be verified from the survey data, but it is likely to be slower due to the covid-19

pandemic than required for the project to achieve surplus food in the next two years. In fact, the negative impact of the Rohingya influx on the livelihood of the host community was counterbalanced by the positive impact of increased agricultural income. Again, women empowerment through project interventions developed the knowledge and skill of the women, and improved their confidence level to protect themselves from any event of gender-based violence. So the project has already made a significant contribution to achieving its objectives towards strengthening the socio-economic conditions of the poor households of the host communities affected by the recent Rohingya influx.

Some cases are described below, which reflect project impacts at the beneficiary level. Some of these cases are mainly referred to by the project field staff and verified by the ET.

Case-1: Kohinoor Akter- a successful FFS entrepreneur²⁴



Kohinoor Akter (37 years) from Goalikhala village, Bandarban Sadar, Bandarban has a primary level of education up to class V from the Goalikhala village primary school, got married when she was 16 years, now proud mother of two daughters (21 years, 18 years and one son (18 years [twin with daughter])). Used to live hand to mouth, but two years back, when she was inspired and excited to undergo sessions of FFS (*Farmer's Field School*) through BHDC, the key partner of SHARIP. She underwent community-based courtyard sessions on vegetable cultivation throughout the year, poultry rearing, livestock, marketing, etc., and how to produce Vermicompost. BHDC helped to form a neighbourhood women's group through the FFS approach. The approach used participatory learning and action among often low-literacy and marginalized poor

women of Bandarban. Female Group members understood the reasons behind barriers to enhance agricultural products and developed local initiatives to overcome those barriers. Their group successfully organized themselves to produce vegetables, rear poultry, and livestock for milk and meat. They learned by doing, where success in small projects and management of local conflicts gives them experience and confidence to tackle larger issues.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, SHARIP provided passed out FFS graduate women with cash support agricultural inputs as solidarity package and Kohinoor Akter enthusiastically availed those opportunities to produce homestead vegetables, reared more poultry birds, and produced Vermicompost not only to utilize that compost at her homestead gardens but also sold them to other members of her group to earn money. She had a dream to establish her home-based vermicompost production center and supply vermicompost to other farmers. With the increased income, she likes to continue her children's education and contribute to household expenditure. She is successful in her business and established her an agricultural entrepreneur. All farmers in the village know her as a vermicompost producer and supplier. Her income has much increased, and she is planning to invest in poultry and livestock rearing. With her extra earnings, she could support her children's education and household expenditure; thus, her dreams were materialized. “..... *It is Bandarban Hill District*

²⁴ This case was taken from Bandarban Sadar when ET visited this field to learn about SHARIP interventions. ET considered this case as potential to be placed in MTE report, although this field is new and not considered under MTE.

Council which supported me and guided me to be a successful Vermicompost producer and contribute to local agricultural production.....”- she made remarks about her success.

Case-2: Jhorna Trpura- a self-motivated conflict mediator



Jhorna Tripura lives with her husband, Jerry Tripura, at Assathu Tripura Para, Alikadam Sadar, Bandarban, Bangladesh, who leads their life below poverty. She is a regular participant of the FFS, organized by GRAUS, technically supported by the UNDP, and funded by Danida under the SID-CHT SHARIP project. Jhorna got acquainted with social cohesion, communal peace, and conflict management through this program. Now she considers herself an efficient conflict mediator to settle the dispute and bring peace to the society.

She belongs to a backward Tripura community, and because of her impaired ability she was hesitant to talk to people. Even after her marriage, she could not speak freely with her husband's family members. Speaking publicly with people was really difficult for her; she felt nervous while talking to strangers. In the meantime, she came to know about SHARIP and joined the farmer's field school (FFS) took part in various activities, sessions, and training. Attending five sessions, she felt empowered and learned how to speak and play the role of a conflict mediator. Later, with her increased ability, she became the secretary in her FFS group, and she started to play a proactive role in conflict mediation in her community.

One FFS members' husband, Joseph Tripura, was an alcoholic and used to create trouble in the family. They had a four-year-old child, and once being intoxicated, he committed domestic violence in his family and got injured in his head. Jhorna sat with the couple and explained how alcoholism causes violence and why it is harmful, especially to the child. Joseph comprehended the mischiefs of consuming alcohol and decided to give up drinking. In another case, neighbour Vaishnabi Tangchangya from Jalantamani Para lost one of her chickens and came to know that Joynal Abedin, her neighbour, slaughtered the chicken and ate it. Jhorna sat with both the parties and solved the dispute.

She expressed that attending the FFS sessions helped her understand social cohesion, communal peace, and the conflict mediation process. Now she is honoured by her community people for her skill, friendly behaviour, and facilitative role in the conflict mediation process. She expressed her gratitude to Uthowaiprue Marma, Community Mobiliser of GRAUS, for supporting her in acquiring facilitating skills without which she could not become a successful conflict mediator. She thanked all the concerns of GRAUS, the UNDP, and Danida for taking such initiatives to establish social peace and implementing such programs and events.

Case-3: Afsana Jesmin Popy- A successful LVMF mediator

Afsana Jesmin Popy is the vice president of the LVMF forum of Ramu Upazila. She is the Vice-Chairman of Ramu Upazila. She is one of the successful public representatives in the whole of Upazila. She is well reputed among the females of the whole Upazila because of her active participation in promoting female rights and mediating female-related issues. She has engaged herself in public service for the last couple of years.

After the formation of Ramu LVMF, she joined the forum as the vice president in September 2020. She was involved in mitigating social conflicts after being elected as a public representative. But after getting the LVMF training, she became proficient in mediation and successfully mediated a number of social conflicts, especially cases related to GBV, early marriages, divorces, extramarital issues, etc. She has become a trustworthy face in her working area and is solving around 12 to 15 cases each month. She likes to prepare herself as a promoter of social cohesion because she believes that her main responsibility is to provide services to her society, and she wishes to engage the forum for the same purpose in the long run.

Despite having many social restrictions in her working area, she managed to break the age-old taboo and established herself as a successful mediator in her area. She was confronted with many threats and challenges while discharging her duties. But still, she is continuing her duties boldly and serving society.

Case-4: Abdus Salam, a disputant receiving mediation service

Mr. Abdus Salam (62 years) is a Businessman. He lives with his family at Amtoli, Whykong, Teknaf. He has a shop for fresh vegetables in the local market. He lives a very simple life with whatever he earns.

He had a land-related dispute with his brother. The issue was that their parents didn't distribute their ancestral lands to them before their death. So, his brother used to threaten him to give up his right to the land. As a result of this dispute, one day, his nephews came to his house with many people and beat all his family members and tortured the women, and threatened to kill him. When he called the police on 999 about the attack on his family, the police came to the scene but did nothing as they were very influential in that area. They beat him with sticks in front of the police, and the police left the scene as there were too many people on his brother's side.

After that, he went door to door in many places on this issue but did not get justice. One day he came to know about the Whykong LVMF Committee, and for justice, he went to Mr. Alamgir Chowdhury, General Secretary of the Whykong LVMF Committee, to talk about his problem.

Mr. Alamgir Chowdhury called both of them to remain present at his place to solve the problem. They went there at the scheduled time. He listened to the whole story in the presence of both of them. Then he talked individually. Mr. Abdus Salam really doesn't know what he told his brother, but it worked. His brother followed the way Mr. Alamgir advised them to divide the land between them and stopped harassing and torturing him and his family.

He is really grateful to Mr. Alamgir Chowdhury, and the best part is that the service is completely free. He thinks if the ongoing activities of Whykong LVMF continue like this, then the helpless common people of his Whykong Union will enjoy their rights and will live in peace.

Case-5: Md. Salman, a youth volunteer



Md. Salman (25 years) from Whykong, BGB check post, 2 No. Word is a student of Cox's Bazar govt. College and the president of Whykong Union Youth Forum. The Youth Forum was established in 2019. It has about 45 members. Salman learned a number of things by getting training from the ACLAB and UNDP. He participated in many youth-focused awareness programs of ACLAB. He has engaged himself in various social welfare activities through this forum. He performed various social duties as a volunteer. He is very well-known in his society. He has stopped a number of child marriages in collaboration with LVMF and Youth Forum. He has also contributed to the prohibition of drug trafficking, human trafficking, and violence against women. During the pandemic, he distributed masks, hand sanitisers, rice, pulses, and so on in his locality. Besides, he works for helpless

people.

On 24th October 2021 at 4:23 pm, an unexpected incident took place at the Buddhist temple in Katakhal Chakma Para of the Whykong union of Teknaf Upazila. Some miscreants put fire to the Buddhist temple to create chaos and religious riot in the society. Just at that time, two of Salman's friends were near the spot and called Salman to ask about what they should do in that situation. Hearing that, Salman instantly called Harunar Rashid Sikder, general secretary of Whykong LVMF, and the local police to report the incident. Immediately, a team of police, Harunar Rashid Sikder and Salman rushed to the spot. Then, some of the Chakma people told them a group of Muslims set fire to the Buddhist temple and hit them. Then, Police investigated the incident in collaboration with Salman, Harunar Rashid Sikder, and the other members of Whykong LVMF. Finally, Nur Ahmed Anowary (the Chairman and the President of LVMF of Whykong Union), Harunar Rashid Sikder (General Secretary of Whykong LVMF), other LVMF members, Youth Forum President, and members resolved the issue in collaboration with the law enforcement authorities.

4.6 Key findings

4.6.1 General

1. The project is relevant to the sectoral government policies and strategic goals and visions and to the UNDP strategic framework and international SDGs. Its design is overall appropriate. Whilst there are clear, logical linkages from activities to outputs, through outcome to impact, the outcome rationale and clear indicators are present. Benchmarks for outcome indicators have been established (Relevance).
2. The Evaluation Team found the management structure in the ProDoc clear. The project is headed by the Steering Committee (SC). This structure has proven to be smooth for implementation because it involves a multi-agency arrangement between Strengthening Inclusive Development in Chattogram Hill Tracts (SID-CHT), Ministry of Chattogram Hill Tracts Affairs, and United Nations Development Programme, leading to supporting each other in implementing responsibilities in project’s implementation and accountability (Document review).
3. The project management has a multi-party partnership arrangement for implementation, which is always more complex but supportive of each other than a single agency. The M&E system has remained planned, and the baseline study was adequately used. The institutional oversight of the project worked well. Reports are generated regularly and are descriptive-analytical. But the Project’s exit plan was not defined yet. The financial management of the Project’s funds was transparent and efficient (Overall assessment).
4. Achievement of 3 outcomes is satisfactory. To address gender equality, the project design has a strong emphasis on women’s inclusion. The project has emphasized practical training and capacity development of the target beneficiaries, i.e. FFS farmers and farmers’ facilitators, and accordingly, the project has an extensive capacity-building component. Most of the capacity-building efforts seemed to be effective and driven toward making the intended results (Overall assessment).

4.6.2 Agricultural production

Good practice and positive impact

1. The project has achieved clear results under outcome 1. Agricultural production was increased and diversified in targeted communities through the Establishment of Integrated Farm Management – Farmer Field Schools (IFM-FFS) (372 IFM-FFS in Cox’s Bazar and 540 IFM-FFS in Bandarban) with the participation of poor and marginalized farmers, of which 77% were women. It was found that the production of vegetables, fruits, eggs, chicken meat and fish, the major 5 items of result framework has significantly increased respectively by 67.2% , 39.3%, 56.9%, 67.7% and 66.8% for FFS farmers and 31.5%, 38.2%, 26.8%, 21.9% and 66.5% for non-FFS farmers. The difference between FFS and non-FFS is statistically significant at $\alpha=1\%$ (Agricultural production before and after project under section 4.2.4 and Table 4)
2. 97.4% of FFS respondents in Cox’sBazar and 92.4% in Bandarban increased additional farming components after getting training from the project field school. Overall, 93.7% of FFS farmers increased additional farming components. In contrast, only 6.4% of non-FFS respondents in Cox’s Bazar and 13.5% in Bandarban increased additional farming components after getting training from different GoB line departments. Overall, 10.0% of non-FFS farmers increased additional farming components. The difference between FFS and Non-FFS farmers is

statistically significant at $\alpha=1\%$ (Fig-10)

3. The Farmer Facilitators have been developed to act as model farmers, who are now facilitating learning in the IFM-FFS Facilitating group on new farming components and improved techniques focusing on homestead production (Qualitative assessment).
4. Based on the results of performance levels, the evaluators consider that the level of efficiency of output and outcome achievement was satisfactory (Efficiency and effectiveness in section 4.5.2 and 4.5.3). Most of the improved agricultural technologies as learned in IFM-FFS are already adopted by all FFS members and are seen as important not only for increasing production but also for income generation, saving money on chemical fertilizers input, and producing more safe food. The project extended benefits to farmers beyond the project beneficiaries. As reported by FFs, the IFM-FFS technologies such as Hazol, vermicomposting, organic fertilizing, homestead agroforestry, hand pollination, mulching are becoming popular in the community. Many neighbouring farmers have also started replicating these technologies, and they get requests for starting up new IFM-FFS²⁵ (Qualitative assessment).
5. As the field survey demonstrates, the FFS farmers are getting increased production in different items by adopting the improved farming technologies as learned from IFM-FFS. So it can be attributed that improved farming technologies have been successfully transferred from school to farmers' production fields (Qualitative assessment).
6. The distribution of solidarity packages providing high-quality seeds was proved as an effective COVID-19 response to support FFS farmers to recover after facing economic hardship because of the lockdown. Survey Data shows that 4.5% of affected FFS farmers in Cox's Bazar²⁶ and 48.3% of affected farmers in Bandar ban received agricultural input packages mainly from the project partners, and they resumed their agricultural production. Access to quality agricultural inputs like seeds, fertilizers, and insecticides is the most frequently highlighted challenge for the IFM-FFS farmers. The farmers were introduced to high-quality seeds, and they were much benefited by getting very good production in the field. Farmers are now searching for quality seeds when making their purchases. As per the project annual report, 93% of the beneficiaries interviewed for the annual assessment could mention relevant COVID-19 preventive measures, which is an indication that the project's awareness sessions and initiatives on COVID-19 were effective. The COVID-19 response strengthened institutional linkages and coordination with the Upazila Administration, Union Parishad, government line departments, and other stakeholders who have boosted the image of and trust in UNDP and its implementing partners (Fig 24, document review and qualitative assessment).

Critical observations

1. All farmers are not presently practising integrated farming and may not be able to add all new components learned from FFS. Given the time constraint and limited resources, including homestead land, combining crops, livestock, poultry, and aquaculture in one curriculum is not only a technical but seems, even more an organizational challenge for the SHARIP project. It is a complex farming system not always understandable and adoptable by the marginal and

²⁵ SHARIP Annual report 2020

²⁶ For Cox's Bazar, the UNDP expert reaffirmed that only the farmers enrolled in the FFS at the time of planning the COVID-19 response who did not receive support from other organizations were covered. The limited number of FFS farmers at the time of planning the response explains the low percentage of farmers receiving the input package in the survey.

less educated farmers (Qualitative assessment). Like agroforestry development plan, there is a strong need to develop an IFM plan at the farmer level based on available land and plan through guided supervision /follow-up by FF, because the farmers cannot decide (Qualitative assessment).

2. 7 months (plus 2 months follow up) FFS program seems to be insufficient to harvest results from farmer’s field. After 9 months, FF shifts to other para-based FFS. Apart from conducting sessions in FFS during these 9 months, the FF introduces group learning through developing study field and cannot visit every member's household to follow-up application of FFS learning and adoption of improved farming practices. In fact, all the new components, i.e. crops and vegetables and trees and raising of poultry and livestock, cannot be completed during these 9 months’ time, and hence after 9 months, there is no continuation of follow-up in para to ensure improved practices by the farmers. As per project design, FF has not been given this follow-up responsibility at the farmer’s level, although s/he has ample time to do that. S/he takes a weekly session in an FFS, and for the remaining 5 days, s/he can make a planned follow-up of 30 farmers (Qualitative assessment).
3. The project pays BDT 2,000 as incentive to each FFS farmers after the successful completion of all sessions. Some farmers invested this incentive money in their existing agricultural practices or in adding a new component. This incentive amount is too inadequate to start a business or to start a new component. It was learned during the discussion with the field staff that poor farmers sometimes use this money for consumption or other purposes. This finding is also supported by the survey data, where it is found that the farmers, in some cases, face challenges in adding components based on FFS learning due to resource constraints (Qualitative assessment).
4. The continuation of input supply to the farmers based on linkage with the input suppliers/traders is a great challenge in this project, which seems not properly functioning. This may be a constraining factor towards the promotion of integrated farming and increase of production at the farmers’ level (Qualitative assessment).
5. The project is enhancing access of IFM-FFS farmers to agricultural services through the engagement of Government Line Departments (DAE, DLS, DoF) and local Government Institutions as resource persons and monitors and through training of Community Livestock Workers (CLW). The project is well known to the Upazila Agriculture office and Upazilla livestock office. But as learned from these GoB offices at the Upazila level, they visit the FFS and disseminate their messages to the farmers, but they hardly visit farmer’s fields to provide technical support unless they are contacted by the project or farmers directly. In some cases, these linkages have also provided opportunities for the farmers and Farmer Facilitators to sell their products to new buyers and to become involved in government livelihood improvement initiatives. In fact, the linkages developed by the project are limited within the monitoring function, and farmers hardly receive technical support from the GoB line departments, although vaccination services are available on a limited scale. There is scope to strengthen the project link with different technical services provided by the government line departments under different projects (e.g. the homestead farming may be linked with the vegetable nutrition project of the DAE for technical services, and the FFS farmers may collect and preserve quality seeds under technical services provided by “production, preservation, and distribution of high-quality seeds of pulse, oil, and spices at farmers level project”. Similarly, the poultry and livestock rearing activities of the FFS farmers may be linked with livestock nutrition development and technology transfer project of the Livestock department) (Fig 21

and 22, Qualitative assessment).

6. The project is enhancing the access of IFM-FFS farmers to marketing through the establishment of collection points. The collection point is good approach, and marketing mechanism to facilitate marketing of the farmers produces from one point which is very close to the farmers. These collection points link the farmers and the market traders. However, the management committee of these collection points seems very weak and doesn't have enough capacity to bargain with the traders in favour of the farmers to assess the competitive pricing of the items produced by the farmers. But as per survey data and field observation, access to the collection point is more effective in Bandarban hilly areas than in Cox's Bazar District. The reason is that Cox's Bazar is a plain land area with easy access to marketplaces than in hilly Bandarban areas. Moreover, linkage could not be still established with the input seller through collection points as it is not still an attractive place to the input sellers (Fig 27, 28, Qualitative assessment).
7. Livelihood diversification, market access development, collection points, broadening income opportunities, creation of individual or group enterprise, development of market infrastructure is still at an early stage of development and needs sufficient time and specific effort to grow to a self-sustaining stage. Similarly, the entrepreneurship development based on agricultural input services, including vermicomposting, organic fertilizing, vaccinating and deworming, and nursery growing, are still at the early stage and need adequate attention to continuously support integrated farming and increased agricultural production of the FFS farmers (Qualitative assessment).

4.6.3 Agroforestry

Good practice and positive impact

1. The survey data reveals that the growth of seedlings in the nursery, vegetation, and bamboo bushes were increased respectively by 77.0%, 47.7% and 63.6% for FFS farmers. For non-FFS farmers, the growth of seedlings and vegetation were decreased respectively by 49.7% and 56.5%, and bamboo bushes increased by 43.9%. For all items, the difference between FFS and non-FFS farmers is statistically insignificant at $\alpha=5\%$ (Increase in area of land (in hector) under the firewood, bamboo, vegetation coverage section and Table 7 under Outcome-2).
2. The project organized different capacity-building training on agroforestry issues for key stakeholders, staff, Master Trainers, Farmer Facilitators, and IFM-FFS farmers, which makes them aware and knowledgeable about agroforestry concepts, their importance, models, planning, and management of agroforestry. The project is making efforts to engage IFM FFS farmers in developing their site-specific Agroforestry Development Plans (ADPs) in a participatory way, prioritizing actions, and implementing their preferred agroforestry systems at the community level (Qualitative assessment)

Critical observations

1. 84.6% of FFS farmers in Cox's Bazar and 92.3% of FFS farmers in Bandarban have their own individual agroforestry development plan, But 60.3% of FFS farmers have a plan in Cox's Bazar, and 62.8% of FFS farmers having a plan in Bandarban are implementing agroforestry as per their plan. But the benefits of homestead agroforestry are not still visible and perceptible to the FFS farmers as it takes a longer time to benefit the farmers.

2. As per the semi-annual progress report of the project²⁷, many farmers in the project areas are facing problems in terms of agroforestry planning and management practice. As reported by the field staff, due to water scarcity, agroforestry is not successful in some areas of Bandarban (Lama, Alikadam). Moreover, agroforestry takes a long time to produce results and give economic benefits and hence farmers feel discouraged in producing agroforestry (Qualitative assessment).
3. The agro-forestry at the community level has not progressed at the expected level. The community-level agroforestry is linked with land ownership and occupancy and social incentives which are shared by the community peoples/ farmers. The forest department is the relevant government agency to promote this agro-forestry, but no visible linkage of this agro-forestry component is found with this government agency, and a co-management system consisting of GoB, local community, and non-government or social organizations for this community-level agro-forestry has not been established yet (Qualitative assessment)

4.6.4 Social Cohesion

Good practice and positive impacts

1. According to survey findings and field observation, the Rohingya influx has made negative social, economic, and environmental impacts, except in a few cases in the camp area of Ukhya and Teknaf in Cox’s Bazar, the direct conflict between the host community and Rohingyas were not reported. The primary survey data shows that 47.0% of FFS farmers in Cox’s Bazar and 99.9% of FFS farmers in Bandarban have not been directly affected by the Rohingya crisis as they lived in a distant place from the Rohingya. In case of non-FFS farmers, 71.6% in Cox’s Bazar and 99.3% in Bandarban are not directly affected (Fig 38,39). The social cohesion program dealt more with social issues and internal disputes of the host community (e.g. land disputes, kidnapping, GBV, early marriage, drugs, human trafficking, etc.) (Qualitative assessment)
2. IFM-FFS members are providing a holistic approach to strengthening social cohesion between the host community and Rohingya communities²⁸. Many of the IFM-FFS members feel more confident and respected through contributing to their family’s food production and income, and this confidence is further boosted through the cohesion-related courtyard sessions on leadership, gender, and conflict mediating. Particularly the courtyard sessions on conflict and conflict management have proved effective, with the majority (more than 80 %) of the IFM-FFS members interviewed for the project outcome assessment reporting that they have been able to solve or mediate minor, and mainly, domestic and family/neighbour disputes in their community²⁹. The primary survey data of this evaluation has also confirmed this finding. The FFS farmers who attended the above courtyard sessions were confident in applying knowledge of courtyard sessions, and accordingly, they are playing a conflict mediating role in the community (Table-9,10).
3. A multi-stakeholder involvement (Upazila Administration, Union Parishad, educational institutions, and members of Local Volunteer Mediator’s Forums and youth forums) created

²⁷ SHARIP semi-annual report 2021

²⁸ Semi-annual progress report, SHARIP,2021

²⁹ the annual progress report, Jan-Nov 2020

a wider scope to promote social cohesion interventions in the project working areas. The project is using already existing and organically formed youth forums for organizing different events to increase social cohesion, which could be a potential body to carry on these activities in the future.

4. The young school girls are trained in Martial Arts by engaging professional Martial Art instructors, and this enables the girls to have self-defence against any eve-teasing, bullying and gender-based violence. The girls receiving Martial art training also expressed that this training increased their self-confidence to speak up against bullying and eve-teasing. They are not feeling afraid of any GBV and can protect themselves in case of any such occurrence. This confidence of Martial Art girls is much appreciated and is expected to reduce the occurrence of eve-teasing and GBV (Qualitative assessment).
5. A significant contribution has been made by the project to reduce social conflicts and increase social cohesion through the intervention of LVMF, which in fact, works as an informal body with the spirit of voluntarism to mediate/ resolve internal conflicts of the FFS members and to some extent conflicts with Rohingya community. The project provided training to the LVMF members on the social conflict mediation process, which developed sufficient skills to play an active role in the conflict mediation process. As found in the bi-annual progress report, a good number of social conflicts in the project area have been mediated through LVMF. LVMF is working well, and the community people, especially female members of the community, feel more comfortable approaching LVMF members. This has been confirmed while visiting Teknaf and talking to implementing partners, LVMF, and IFM-FFS members during this evaluation. LVMF is gradually becoming popular in the local communities for its informal and friendly approach to conflict mediation. This informal approach is effective in getting access to the communities and gaining their trust. (Qualitative assessment).

Critical observations

1. The social cohesion component is an event-based program designed based on targeted activities and not always focused on the outcome. A monitoring mechanism to measure the impact of this program is yet to be developed. The institutional arrangement to carry on these activities in the future is lacking when the project will be closed (Qualitative assessment).
2. The activities of the youth forums need to be strengthened by having its structure at Upazila and district level to organize awareness-building events like football matches, debating, cultural program, and youth campaigning. The discussion with the concerned implementing partners (ACLAB and GRAUS) and the youth forum members reveals that the youth forums mostly work around schools' students. It has no institutional structure like LVMF to coordinate and link with different stakeholders, including voluntary social organizations and youth clubs to organize different awareness-building events, including campaigns to sensitize on issues like natural resource conservation, early child marriage, gender-based violence, drug abuse, and human trafficking, etc. The project is now directly organizing these events in different schools with the help of some youth volunteers and may discontinue after the end of the project if not linked with the youth forums. According to the project progress report, a number of the youths participating in these events have become active in different Union-level youth forums and report to have carried out various awareness sessions at the local level, e.g. in the mosques for early marriage, dropping out of children from school and COVID-19 awareness-raising. It appears to the Evaluation Team that the activities of the youth forum in relation to social cohesion are disorganized and not properly guided to make any visible impact (Qualitative assessment).

3. As understood from discussion with field staff that in the present context of tension and unrest between the host community and Rohingya, the promotion of youth voluntarism which is central for organizing youth forums, is challenging, and it is difficult to ensure participation of youth in youth-based programs. The Evaluation Team didn't have the chance to see any project guidelines as to how to organize these youths and engage them in these programs. There is no visible linkage of these programs with any existing youth or sports clubs or local social institutions (Qualitative assessment).
4. In view of ET, the girls taking Martial Art training are mostly from junior schools and are less likely to have a wider impact if high school girls and young working women are not involved in this training.
5. The informal voluntary approach of LVMF is effective in getting access to the communities and gain their trust. However, dealing with major disputes like kidnapping, drug abuse, human trafficking, illegal occupation of land, etc. with the Rohingya community is sometimes risky for LVMF and needs the support of the local administration and law enforcing agencies for which LVMF needs to have the legal mandate to deal with these major conflicting issues. It is still a debated issue whether LVMF, as an informal voluntary organization, should be involved with these major disputes, social crimes, and sensitive issues with Rohingya or leave it to law enforcement agencies and remain confined to micro-level social conflicts among the host communities. However, the UNDP project staff strongly supported that LVMF is not a judicial body and should not be involved with the mediation of any social crimes. Rather, it can help law enforcing agencies to identify those evil elements in the host and Rohingya communities by providing information.

Chapter 5: Gender equality and women empowerment

Gender equality is central to UNDP’s mandate, and evaluations are expected to ensure that UNDP-supported projects are not only non-discriminatory but are proactively addressing underlying causes of inequality. The SHARIP project under evaluation has the right intent but has yet to find a way to work for the goal of equality. The project design emphasizes the inclusion of women in greater numbers than men, as members of IFM-FFS, as recipients of training inputs. It must be noted that the project staff has made attempts to achieve the quantitative targets, but the project design does not provide enough guidance on what qualitative changes could be achieved and how to achieve these.

From the SHARIP annual/progress reports, it is evident that the number of women out of total beneficiaries Percentage of women beneficiaries has increased substantially. Therefore, from the evaluators’ perspective, the project achievements in involving women in the intervention process are commendable, which is evident in the project reports and in the Evaluator’s field observation. As the sex-disaggregated data indicates, it has been easier to include women as members than in the decision-making (power) positions. When pointed out that some male beneficiaries are also illiterate and have not seen a World outside of their village, they admitted that ‘it will take more time for ‘society’ to accept women leaders’. This shows that stereotypes are not yet challenged. Based on the evaluators’ findings from the FGD meetings attended, women sit behind and rarely talk. The situation was relatively better in the tribal and minority (Hindu) communities, where women were more vocal. When asked simple questions about their families and farms, the women were first to respond.

In the report published by SHARIP in November 2021 on women’s empowerment, it was reported that “SHARIP project has contributed significantly to empowerment of the female IFM-FFS farmers on dimensions directly related to agriculture, including those dimensions found to contribute most to female farmers’ disempowerment, namely leadership in the community and control over the use of income, and women’s visibility outside the home and improve her status as a decision-maker because she demonstrates the capacity to her husband and other household members.”

As indicated by the field reports, the female Farmer Facilitators and female farmers are being respected persons in the community and neighbourhood (some of them report being encouraged to run in the next local elections), their confidence level has increased, and they have appeared as model farmers to make increased production of new items like vegetable, fruits, poultry and livestock rearing in their homestead and in some cases they have become input service providers like vermicompost producer and nursery growers. The women of many communities, after being a member of IFM-FFS are now empowered more than before as they are now directly engaging themselves in agricultural production and can earn some money and also contribute to the household income. They are now more interested in agricultural work through which they are empowering themselves.

It is important to create an empowering environment where they will be able to speak out, be heard, and influence the project’s agenda and outcomes. Although SHARIP is not a women empowerment project, an indicator at the outcome level focuses on women empowerment, and that is going to require gender sensitization of men and social institutions. But the project staff is talking about ‘CHANGING WOMEN’ and not men. The women members are treated as the ‘MOST VULNERABLE AND DISADVANTAGED’ group but are given the same inputs and interventions as men. The SHARIP staff agrees that it is more satisfying to work with Women. As even when similar inputs are given, women take more interest and are sincerer in applying IFM-FFS learnings, etc. The transformation is visible in the MINORITY COMMUNITIES, where many families are female-headed by default, as the men migrate

in search of jobs. The women in these families must take care of their children. But as they had no land or assets to use as collateral, these women did not have access to institutional finance. To them, the SHARIP project has made the biggest difference, as they received capacity-building inputs along with some inputs/financial support. Besides, the emphasis on women’s empowerment has led to project staff giving more attention to women heads of households, and this is reflected in pride and confidence among the women beneficiaries.

The evaluators found that there is no gender balance in the project staff. If 80 percent of women’s participation is expected in project activities, the same should have been provided in the staff, with at least 50 percent of positions reserved for women, especially those directly interacting with the community members. The gender norms in Bangladesh demand that the women are approached at a time, location, and manner that is acceptable to all. There was a visible difference in the participation of women members in Bandarban, where most of the training Facilitators are young women. In Cox’s Bazar, some SHARIP beneficiaries said that women do have distinctly different and more numerous issues bothering them like domestic violence, security of girls, reproductive health, mobility, etc. “Ice has just started melting, and there is a long way to go”. For all the training events, the training reports, and feedback, reflect a positive impact.

The ET agrees that there is scope for emphasizing a ‘rights-based approach’³⁰. The project staff needs training in participatory approaches and facilitation skills for helping the community members make their own decisions rather than ‘giving’ the solutions.

The survey, which was conducted by PMID, also aimed to ensure that gender perspectives are incorporated into SHARIP’s development initiatives and to monitor and evaluate gender equality results. The survey results presented below focus primarily on the priorities of the UNDP SHARIP’s program, which will assist specialists in identifying gender equality results and indicators.

5.1 Participation in Gender awareness training

The SHARIP beneficiaries not only underwent training on agriculture-related components but also underwent awareness training on gender issues in both Cox’s Bazar and Bandarban, but in Bandarban, 68.9% of FFS beneficiaries participated in gender awareness courtyard training in comparison to 22.4% in Cox’s Bazar (Table 10). In the non-FFS group, some respondents participated in the courtyard sessions on Gender awareness organized by NGOs other than FFS, and the participation was much lower than the participation of FFS farmers.

Table 10: Participation of FFS and non-FFS beneficiaries in courtyard sessions on Gender awareness

Responses	1. Cox's Bazar		2. Bandarban	
	FFS (%)	Non-FFS (%)	FFS (%)	Non-FFS (%)
Yes	22.4	3.4	68.9	39.4
No	76.8	96.1	30.5	59.9
Can’t remember	0.8	0.5	0.6	0.7
Grand Total	100	100	100	100

³⁰ *human beings’* inherent dignity entitles them to a core set of rights that cannot be given or taken away; it works to empower communities and individuals to know and claim their rights, it identifies those responsible – legally or morally – for respecting, protecting, and fulfilling people’s rights, and holds them accountable for their responsibilities; and it recognizes the multi-level nature of rights obligations and violations, and the need to address them systematically and strategically. Development project should promote empowerment; work with partners; ensure accountability and promote responsibility; address discrimination; promote the non-violent resolution of conflicts; and seek sustainable results.

5.2 Learning dissemination

Regarding knowledge/ learning dissemination on agriculture, agroforestry, and social cohesion to the non-FFS farmers, 88.4% of female FFS members in Cox’s Bazar and 83.4% in Bandarban were directly involved (Table-11).

Table 11: Involvement of female FFS farmers on knowledge dissemination on agriculture/ agroforestry and social cohesion to other non-FFS farmers

Responses	Cox's Bazar	Bandarban
	FFS (%)	FFS (%)
Yes	88.4	83.4
No	11.6	16.6
Grand Total	100	100

Learning dissemination took place in 3 ways. In 88.4% of cases in Cox’s Bazar and 83.4% of cases in Bandarban, female FFS members visited non-FFS farmers and gave them advice. Simultaneously in 44.6% of cases in Cox’s Bazar and 62.4% of cases in Bandarban, the non-FFS farmers, both male and female, visited the production field of the female FFS members and learned about improved practices by direct observation and on-spot discussion. In 33.3% of cases in Cox’s Bazar and 36.3% of cases in Bandarban, the female FFS members advised non-FFS members over mobile phone (Table 12). This learning dissemination process encouraged the female non-FFS farmers to adopt improved integrated farming practices, and the technology replication process was much expedited through increased participation of women in SHARIP’s intervention process.

Table 12: Gender-based learning dissemination process

Dissemination process	1. Cox's Bazar	2. Bandarban
	Treatment- FFS (%)	Treatment- FFS (%)
Visit occasionally non-FFS farmers and give them advice	84.8	99.1
Non-FFS farmers sometimes visit my production field to see and know about improved practices	44.6	62.4
Non-FFS farmers contact over the mobile phone and I gave them advice	33.3	36.3

5.3 Control over agricultural production-related income

According to primary survey data, 40-55% of Female HH members have to a large extent, control over household and particularly over agricultural production-related income (Table 13). This control means the female FFS members can decide independently or jointly with their male household members on how this income will be used for agricultural production and household expenditure purposes.

Table 13: Control over the household and on agricultural production-related income

Responses	Cox's Bazar		Bandarban	
	FFS (%)	Non-FFS (%)	FFS (%)	Non-FFS (%)
To large extent	55.6	39.9	41.1	39.4
To some extent	42.8	50.8	58.3	59.4
Not at all	1.6	9.3	0.6	1.2
Grand Total	100	100	100	100

5.4 Increased participation in decision making

From table 14, it is evident that Female FFS members both in Cox's Bazar and in Bandarban have increased their participation in the decision-making process regarding production and sales in the household or in the farmers' group.

Table 14: Female household increased participation in decision making process

Responses	Cox's Bazar		Bandarban	
	FFS (%)	Non-FFS (%)	FFS (%)	Non-FFS (%)
To large extent	58.2	45.6	39.9	36.9
To some extent	39.6	44.1	58.2	61.6
Not at all	2.2	10.3	1.9	1.5
Grand Total	100	100	100	100

Furthermore, they also share their acquired knowledge and agricultural related practices with their husbands and other family members and take decisions jointly about improved practices. (Table 15).

Table 15: Female household members share knowledge and practices with other family members

Responses	1. Cox's Bazar		2. Bandarban	
	FFS (%)	Non-FFS (%)	FFS (%)	Non-FFS (%)
To large extent	83.6	69.6	61.9	63.8
To some extent	15.4	27.1	37.3	35.2
Not at all	1.0	3.4	0.7	1.0
Grand Total	100	100	100	100

5.5 Mobility to access local input and sales market

The primary survey data indicates that the female FFS members or female household members, particularly in Cox's Bazar, have greater mobility than non-FFS female members in Cox's Bazar. In Bandarban, the mobility is slightly less, perhaps due to difficult movement and transportation problems (Table 16)

Table 16: Female household member has the mobility to access local input and sales market

Responses	Cox's Bazar		Bandarban	
	FFS (%)	Non-FFS (%)	FFS (%)	Non-FFS (%)
To large extent	49.0	34.0	30.2	26.9
To some extent	33.0	24.7	56.6	63.8
Not at all	18.0	41.2	13.2	9.2
Grand Total	100	100	100	100

5.6 Knowledge sharing on improved agricultural practices

The female FFS members, as the data show, play a good role more than non-FFS farmers in sharing knowledge on improved agricultural practice with their neighbouring farmers (Table 17). In this regard, the female farmers in Bandarban are more progressive and seem to play a more prominent role than female farmers in Cox’s Bazar in knowledge sharing.

Table 17: Impart knowledge on improved agricultural practice/ agroforestry techniques to non-FFS farmers

Responses	Cox's Bazar		Bandarban	
	FFS (%)	Non-FFS (%)	FFS (%)	Non-FFS (%)
To large extent	47.6	31.2	30.7	22.2
To some extent	35.0	36.1	65.4	73.1
Not at all	17.4	32.7	3.9	4.7
Grand Total	100	100	100	100

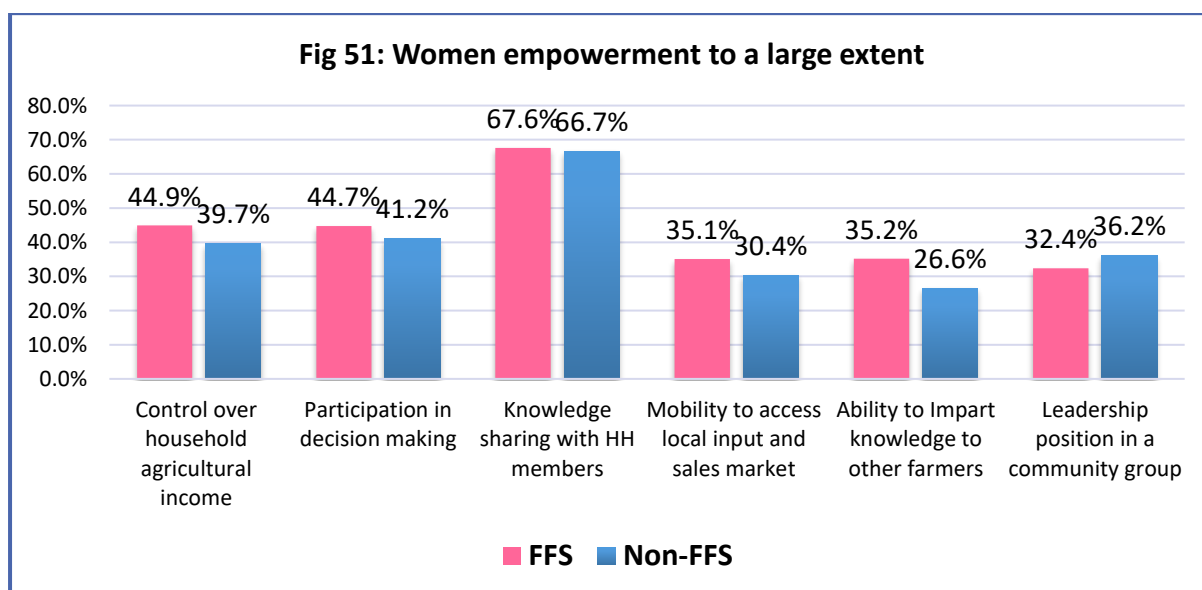
5.7 Females in a leadership position

As expressed by the respondents in the primary survey, the female FFS farmers play a leadership role in the producers group to a larger extent than non-FFS farmers in Cox’s Bazar, while non-FFS farmers in Bandarban play a slightly higher leadership role to some extent (table 18).

Table 18: Leadership position in a community group

Responses	1. Cox's Bazar		2. Bandarban	
	FFS (%)	Non-FFS (%)	FFS (%)	Non-FFS (%)
To large extent	54.8	46.9	24.5	25.9
To some extent	18.0	18.6	65.4	68.3
Not at all	27.2	34.5	10.1	5.7
Grand Total	100	100	100	100

Figure 51 highlights the result of women empowerment to a large extent achieved during the evaluation period against 6 major indicators as elaborated above.



5.8 Gender-based violence

Except in a few cases, the female members of the FFS and non-FFS households in Cox’s Bazar and Bandarban are living free of violence or threat of violence in their own families and in their community (table 5.10), which indicates that a women-friendly environment now prevails in the project area.

Table 19: Female household living free of violence or threat of violence in your own family

Responses	Cox’s Bazar		Bandarban	
	FFS (%)	Non-FFS (%)	FFS (%)	Non-FFS (%)
No Problem, living free of violence	94.8	88.7	88.9	93.5
Living with threats of violence in the community	2.2	11.1	10.6	6.5
Feeling risk of safety and security in mobility	3.0	0.3	0.5	0.0
Grand Total	100	100	100	100

However, there might be some issues of gender-based violence, particularly at the domestic level, which women feel shy to express openly. In some cases, the women feel threat or ashamed to make any particular GBV issues public, and all these cases remain hidden or suppressed and are under-reported.

The above findings are also consistent with the study³¹ conducted by the project in Cox’s Bazar where it is mentioned that “the overall empowerment level FFS farmers for agricultural decision making has been moderately improved likely to be linked to the fact that for most of the women, sole decision-making power is confined to homestead gardening, and their husbands are now seeking their wives’ advice related to non-homestead production, especially in indigenous communities where there is generally a tradition of husband and wife doing farming activities jointly. Women’s control over the use of income generated from both farming and non-farming activities increased by 86% after graduating from IFM-FFS”.

From the above analysis, it could be concluded that Gender, social, and poverty analysis is needed when developing gender equality outcomes, outputs, and indicators. The above Gender analysis will help identify:

- Major areas of gender-based discrimination and disadvantage in intervention areas of Cox’s Bazar and Bandarban;
- Inequalities that may prevent women and men from participating in or benefiting from the project or other types of initiative.
- Specific initiatives are needed to empower women and remove barriers to equality.

Worth mentioning that Gender equality and women’s empowerment need to be pursued for a just and equal society and have been acknowledged as important objectives for many decades, including in the UN Sustainable Development Goals³². Moreover, there is considerable evidence and broad international agreement that advancing gender equality helps reduce poverty, supports inclusive growth and other broad development outcomes, and enhances the effectiveness and sustainability of development initiatives.³³

³¹ Women and Decision-Making in Agriculture: Assessment of the contribution of the support to Host Communities Affected by the Rohingya Influx Project (SHARIP) to Women empowerment in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh, November 2021.

³² One of SDG Goals is to promote gender equality and empower women, and to improve maternal health. <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sdg.view.html>

³³ Sixth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (2019).

Chapter 6: Lessons learned and good practices

During the evaluation, the consultants reviewed the lessons learned reflected in the progress reports of the project, and those lessons were also verified during their field visit. The followings are a few lessons that need to be taken into consideration for designing/redesigning the project in the remaining period of the project or its extended phase.

- i) IFM has been proven as a good model for benefitting marginal farmers who have no particular land but can produce multiple crops, particularly vegetables and fruits, by using their homestead. They can also rear poultry and livestock on their homestead. The model has been successfully replicated by many non-FFS farmers in the project area. This could be a replicable model to support marginal farmers elsewhere in the country through mainstreaming.
- ii) Although technical, farmers can better understand and learn from project field school and can adopt those improved practices at their homestead. The flexible learning model where farmers identify their needs and make their own choice and the co-learning approach worked well to apply their learning in practice. Group learning through study plot demonstration is a good technique for learning and adapting, and the same technique can be adopted elsewhere for agricultural extension work.
- iii) The school sessions other than 5 compulsory sessions (preparatory, IFM, nutrition, agroforestry, and marketing) were selected in consultation with the farmers based on local demand. Therefore, the sessions were more relevant to the local contexts growing interest in the farmers, and the learnings were easily adopted by the farmers. This was proved as a good technique to transfer technology from school to field in remote and backward areas.
- iv) The organization of Farmer Field Days has proven to be an effective way to inspire neighbouring farmers (non-IFM-FFS members) to adopt improved agroforestry practices.
- v) Engagement of the female FFs from the local community has proven to be highly effective as the dropout rate was minimal. As most of the IFM-FFS members are women, having female FFs as role models helped build up the confidence of the female IFM-FFS members.
- vi) During COVID-19 locked down, the Master Trainers could not provide the planned level of backstopping support in the field. Instead, support was provided over the phone, through video calls and Union-wise online meetings organized in Messenger groups, which proved to be a workable substitute for field-level backstopping support. So online communication and meeting seems to be effective for extension work among new target groups in a natural disaster or pandemic situation.
- vii) Accessing quality farming inputs continues to be a challenge in the project area. In the current phase of the project, farmers take sessions on how to recognize good farming inputs, and training for input sellers was conducted. However, many farmers are not eventually linked with the sellers, with the distance between farmers’ homes and the sellers’ shops being a major factor (most of the sellers’ shops are either at Upazila or Union central markets). Hence, in the extension phase, it has been proposed to organize input-related coordination meetings at the Union level between farmers and input sellers. This would be helpful to strengthen linkages and raise further awareness among farmers and input sellers about how to identify quality input and what type of seeds are suitable for the different localities. The project can organize this input-related coordination meeting in the collection points to make the collection points hub for interaction between farmers and the input sellers.

- viii) In Bandarban, collection point management committees played a very supporting role by regularly contacting buyers and updating IFM-FFS farmers about the price over the phone. This may increase the trust of the farmers and input sellers on the collection points.
- ix) The involvement of local political leaders in LVMF has worked positively to influence the disputant parties and gain their trust to approach LVMF for the solution. This also mitigated political conflicts threatening the safety and security of the local people and reduced the threats or harassment of LVMF members.
- x) There is no in-built mechanism in the project to continuously engage the youth after their participation in various youth-targeted events. Ward-based committees and local CBOs can help to encourage more involvement of the youths in social cohesion-building activities. Encouraging youth to use social media to engage other youth and spread awareness messages has also turned out to be an effective way to reach youth in the project areas more broadly.
- xi) In some events and groups in the social cohesion component, it was a challenge to ensure female participation, particularly in culturally and religiously conservative areas of Cox’s Bazar, where female participation in public events is generally not encouraged. The strategy of planning female-only events (e.g. martial art training and football tournaments) and making alliances with gender-equality sensitive teachers has proved successful.
- xii) In Cox’s Bazar, it was challenging to carry out the street drama events. For these to be attractive, good local drama artists are key, but they were not readily available. Furthermore, the many kinds of youth events meant that it was at times difficult to focus on continuously improving the quality of the events based on learnings. It was therefore decided to focus on fewer types of activities in the extended phase.



Chapter 7: Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusions

SHARIP is a very relevant project in consideration of current development priorities declared by the Government of Bangladesh, food Security, SDGs, and the Strategic Objectives of UNDP.

The project is very much on track, and results so far have been achieved as per result framework is satisfactory, although implementation was delayed due to the long prevalence of COVID-19 pandemic and extended lockdown periods, which necessitated adjustments and flexibility in implementation modality. The implementation of the project has been efficiently managed.

The project has achieved clear results under outcome 1. Agricultural production was increased and diversified in targeted communities through the Establishment of IFM-FFS with the participation of poor and marginalized farmers majority of whom were women. The Farmer Facilitators have been developed to act as model farmers, who are now facilitating learning by IFM-FFS members on new farming components and improved techniques focusing on homestead production.

The results of the impact indicators suggest that there is a positive increase in agricultural income in the project intervention area as compared to the non-intervention area, positive impact on gender equality and women empowerment, and positive impact on the capacity of the FFS members to cope with the situation of Rohingya influx

The project concept and design are appropriate. The Project’s theory of change is explicit, but the project seems more output-focused rather than the outcome. Though the achievement of the outputs is satisfactory, it needs to be converted into overall satisfactory outcome achievements by giving more attention to outcome-focused activities. This is perhaps the gap area requiring more attention in the remaining period of the project for qualitative improvement of the project intervention and making the results more visible at the beneficiary level.

The mainstreaming of project results through functional and effective linkage building with the GoB line departments, LGIs, establishing backward and forward linkage of the FFS farmers with input suppliers and market traders, the institutionalization of the market mechanism through strengthening collection points and expansion and sustenance of social mediation and conflict resolution process through strengthening youth forums and LVMF are some of the issues requiring more attention in future.

The agroforestry component of the project has not progressed at the expected level. Farmers have only started agroforestry in their homestead as per their ADPs, but the benefits of agroforestry are not still visible as it requires a longer time to generate results. Community ADPs have been developed and implemented, but a management system for community-level agroforestry is yet to be established.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic interrupting implementation at the beneficiary level, the project achieved promising results, which include the formation of FFS, the introduction of integrated farming, adoption of improved technologies at the farmers’ level and value addition, the inclusion of poor, marginalized, and vulnerable groups, increased women participation and empowerment, linkage building with the government line departments, establishing a market mechanism through collection points and establishing a social conflict mediating process.

The exit strategy of the project is yet to be developed, and based on exit strategy, the activities need to be readjusted, reorganized, and mainstreamed in relevant areas. The Evaluation Team makes the following specific recommendation for the remaining period of the project.

7.2 Recommendations

7.2.1 Agricultural production

- i) Given the constraints of education level, time, and resources at the farmers level, the project may develop some integrated packages combining different items of crops, poultry, livestock, aquaculture, and agroforestry based on available resources of farmers, develop package based curriculum and deliver training in FFS in package based interested learning groups. This is to create more learning options for the FFS members, which may make farmers' life easier to concentrate on package-based learning only instead of a complex integration of all items and apply the same in individual farmers' cases by developing individual IFM plans (Finding section 4.6.2., critical observation No. 1)
- ii) The follow-up and backstopping support at the farmers' level need to be increased to ensure appropriate adoption of the knowledge and improved technologies learned in the FFS. This follow-up should continue at least for a cropping season, i.e. from seed to seed, to ensure that farmers can harvest the increased production in a cropping season (Finding section 4.6.2, critical observation No. 2).
- iii) The FFs being the resource developed by the project, can play a proactive role in transferring technology from FFS to farmers' fields, and hence they can be engaged in regular follow-up at individual farmers' levels. Their remuneration package may be revised to include follow-up responsibilities at the farmers' level. They need advanced training to perform extension work efficiently at the farmers' level (Finding section 4.6.2, critical observation No. 2).
- iv) To engage FFS farmers in improved farming practices and agroforestry and to promote sustainable production practices, the farmers need to be supported with additional seed capital. The project may consider paying a handsome amount to the beneficiary farmers after receiving FFS training (not simply as training incentive), which could be invested to improve existing agricultural production activities or to add new farming components. In case of the constraint of project funds, the farmers need to be linked with MFI or bank for micro-financing (Finding section 4.6.2 critical observation no. 3).
- v) Agriculture inputs feed for cattle, and water management is the necessary factors to diversify production and increase yield. These supports need to be continued and expanded. Thus, issues of availability of inputs at affordable prices after the project end must be considered, and, when suitable, the possibility of developing local alternatives to expensive or unavailable inputs, e.g., organic fertilizer production, integrated pest management, or unconventional livestock feed, need to be explored Finding section 4.6.2, critical observation No. 4 & 7).
- vi) There is scope to rebuild the project link with the government line departments (DAE, DLS, DoF) based on technical services to add more value to the current integrated farming practices of the FFS farmers and not only based on monitoring services. There is a strong need to have ‘**technological exchange**’ with the non-FFS farmers through government line departments, and exchange of updated government promoted new farming technologies to the FFS farmers. The project may make that collaborative arrangement with the line

departments so that more functional linkage is established and FFS farmers can access more technical support services of the line departments. FFS being members of the Farmers/ producer groups formed by DAE can play an active role in the technological exchange between FFS and non-FFS farmers groups under guided supervision from both project and DAE (Finding section 4.6.2., Critical observation No. 5 and sustainability section 4.5.5).

- vii) The collection point is a good approach. It is necessary to establish more collection points in Bandarban District to reduce hard work to reach the marketplace. In Cox’s Bazar, the collaborative arrangement may be made with other implementing agencies to establish collection points in the remote rural area, where access to the local market is restricted or difficult. The input sellers should also be linked with collection points, and storage, sorting, and packaging facilities need to be increased so that the farmers can get one-stop marketing services from the collection points (Finding section 4.6.2, critical observation No. 6).

7.2.2 Agroforestry

- viii) The project is required to consider water scarcity problems in CHT, particularly in Lama and Alikadam, to plan homestead based agroforestry development and find the solution of this problem in consultation with the Forest department, particularly in selecting species for water stress areas (Finding section 4.6.3, critical observation No. 1)
- ix) A **co-management system** consisting of GoB, local community, and non-government or social organizations needs to be established in collaboration with the forest department for growing community-level agro-forestry (Finding section 4.6.3, critical observation No. 2)

7.2.3 Social Cohesion

- x) The project is using already existing and organically formed youth forums for organizing different events to increase social cohesion, which could be a potential body to carry on these activities in the future. However, the Youth Forums need to have structure at the Upazila level, and their activities need to be organized to ensure continued engagement in issues such as GBV, early marriage, drugs, human trafficking, etc. and the promotion of more social cohesion and harmony between the host community and Rohingyas. To ensure the sustainability of the youth-related activities, the linkage should be developed between the youth and other social organizations and youth clubs. The youth/Youth Forums can assist LVMF in mitigating social conflicts through the guided awareness-raising program in the host community (Finding section 4.6.4 critical observation No.2 & 3).
- xi) The martial art and self-defence skills training should be extended to adolescent girls and young women against gender-based violence and is likely to have a wider impact in terms of confidence-building to protest against GBV if high school girls and interested working women can be included under this program. (Finding section 4.6.4, critical observation No. 4).
- xii) LVMF is working on the spirit of volunteerism for conflict mitigation and peace building and is mitigating social conflicts with a friendly and informal approach. This approach should be continued to build relations with the community and gain their trust. LVMF as an informal voluntary organization, should remain confined to the mediation of micro-level social conflicts among the host communities and should not be involved in dealing

with any sensitive criminal activities between host and Rohingya communities. However, in consideration of the sustainability of LVMF activities, the project may consider registration of LVMF with Social Service Department to have its legal mandate and link up its activities with LGIs and other social institutions. (Finding section 4.6.4, critical observation No. 5).

7.2.4 Sustainability

- xiii) The project team could do a final round of participatory reviews and plan with the communities, which is supposed to feed into the next planning cycle. It is important to ensure the awareness, readiness, and capacity of FFS members so that at least FFS introduced through the project will continue. At the programme level, for a “Sustainable” increase in food security, the project will have to work on issues like water management and developing common property resources. During the remaining period of the project, the team should try to strengthen the existing FFS groups and systems, improve the intervention process and discuss strategies for moving forward sustainably (Sustainability finding). The specific actions may include the followings:
- a. Make a review with the existing FFS groups along with FFs to identify where the groups stand towards implementing their individual and group agricultural and agroforestry development plan
 - b. Identify what are the challenges and new opportunities for diversification of agricultural production that could support their livelihood
 - c. Find what needs to be done to improve the existing system/ practices in relation to IFM/ FFS and social cohesion program and improve the implementation process towards sustainable achievement of the result/ outcome
 - d. Prepare an exit plan based on the above-identified needs, gaps, challenges, and opportunities specifying time-bound actions to reach the targeted result/ outcome.