Overview of Poverty Impact

Through the products and services of innovators, SWFF continues to progress in improving incomes and yields for farmers who are at or near their country’s poverty lines.

To determine the proportion of innovators’ end users who are at or below the poverty line, SWFF uses a combination of innovator provided information, household survey data, site visits, and the extrapolations of country-level data. Using these sources, SWFF estimates that 63% of innovation end users are at or near the poverty line. In the portfolio of 40 innovators, 21% of end users were the extreme poor, 42% were of the low-income poor, 26% were middle income, and 11% were upper income.

Featured Innovator

PRACTICAL ACTION

Practical Action teaches landless families in Bangladesh to grow pumpkins and other crops on barren sandbars, and connects them to local markets for sale of their produce. Their farmers, who are all below the poverty line, diversify their incomes (increasing on average by 504 USD per household per year), and increase their food security with pumpkins that can be stored for up to a year. Practical Action has helped end users like 54-year-old Abdur Razzak to build entirely new livelihoods, as shown below in the income trajectory. Having lost his home and farmland to river erosion at a young age, he struggled to escape poverty due to poor health and other setbacks. Since he learned Practical Action’s sandbar harvesting techniques, he has sold over 4,900 pumpkins and earned over 2,000 USD of additional income, allowing him to buy solar panels for a mobile charging business, pay his daughter’s wedding expenses, and purchase a cow.
As an accelerator, the SWFF Technical Assistance Facility provides tailored technical support to individual innovators. SWFF has specifically helped innovators increase their sales at the bottom-of-the-pyramid (BoP) in the following ways:

• A marketing study and pilot for an innovator seeking to convert farmers using flood irrigation to drip irrigation
• Assistance negotiating government subsidies for 200 new pumps for BoP customers
• Assistance creating a “Buy 1 Get 1” model that puts high quality seeds into the hands of impoverished school populations
• Training in sales techniques for BoP customers for sales staff in two innovator enterprises

LAL TEER SEED
Lal Teer Seed has helped 18,807 rural households generate more than $700,000 in product sales on more than 4,500 hectares of farmland. In 2019, the second year of its SWFF award, Lal Teer Seed increased its saline tolerant seed production from under one metric ton to 12 metric tons. Their benefits go beyond crop production as well. This investment addresses the salinity problems faced by farmers through assisting with improving irrigation techniques, infrastructure, and logistics development, providing training to correct knowledge gaps, and creating an opportunity for vegetable production where it did not previously exist due to adverse weather conditions, salinity, and migration of farmers to urban areas for employment opportunities. Aside from this, Lal Teer Seed assists farmers with micro-finance institutions as well as providing extension advisory services.

WATER GOVERNANCE INSTITUTE (WGI)
The aquaponics system as part of WGI is an integrated technology that involves growing crops such as sweet peppers and tomatoes in a permeable tray. The tray is filled with a growth medium such as husks or loamy soil and underneath is a water tank for rearing fish. Wastewater from the fish is routinely introduced through the growth medium via the tray through an irrigation process. Organics in the water decompose, releasing nutrients that are taken in by the crop, making it a closed loop system. The water in the tanks is recycled several times, so less water is needed to rear the fish and to grow crops. The project has grown exponentially, from eight growers in the first year to 32 in its second, to 64 in the third, and 148 at the close of 2018. The tanks range from $4,500 for the largest, to $1,500 for the popular mid size prototype, to $850 for a small installation. The system is low-cost, gender and disability friendly, and yields high value, premium price produce.