

## FEED THE FUTURE IN ASIA: 2016 PROGRESS

Feed the Future, America's global hunger and food security initiative, is contributing to significant progress against hunger and poverty in Asia.

Feed the Future prioritizes agricultural development as the key to reducing hunger, poverty and malnutrition. The initiative creates opportunities for smallholder farmers and others engaged in the agricultural value chain to improve yields and access markets.

Feed the Future concentrates efforts in 19 focus countries, four of which are in Asia, while also supporting a number of aligned programs in countries throughout Africa, Asia and Latin America. These efforts include support for innovative approaches to confront ongoing and future challenges, and help communities become more resilient and better able to respond to emergencies.



*Photo credit: Tyler Jones/Fintrac Inc.*

### Approach

Asia and the Pacific are home to more than 60 percent of the world's nearly 800 million hungry. Asia's population is expected to exceed five billion by 2050, requiring a significant increase in food production to meet increasing demand. Feed the Future is playing a key role in helping sustainably meet that rising demand for food in Asia through strategic, sustainable agriculture and nutrition interventions that align with host countries' own investment plans.

Feed the Future has helped catalyze dramatic improvements in agricultural production and child nutrition and health in areas within Bangladesh, Cambodia, Nepal and Tajikistan. These changes are positioning countries to better meet the challenges of hunger and poverty and effectively manage adversity and change. As weather patterns become increasingly volatile, Feed the Future and its partners are introducing improved technologies and modern agricultural practices that help small-scale farmers increase production while simultaneously building resilience.

Feed the Future's efforts in Asia are also promoting sound agriculture and aquaculture production systems and strengthening policy environments so farmers, fishers and other food producers can grow more, sell more and participate in the global economy.

### Contributing to Impact

The Feed the Future model is proving itself in country after country, increasing incomes for smallholder farmers and contributing to notable drops in poverty and childhood stunting in many of the places where it works. In FY2015 alone, Feed the Future investments in Asia:

- Helped more than **3.3 million rural households** benefit directly from Feed the Future support;
- Spurred more than **\$250 million (USD)** in new sales on the continent;
- Brought small-scale entrepreneurs increased income opportunities through more than **\$9 million (USD)** in new agricultural and rural loans;
- Helped leverage more than **\$7.5 million (USD)** in new private sector investment in the agriculture sector;
- Reached more than **3.7 million children** with nutrition interventions.

New data suggest that Feed the Future, combined with host-country and other global efforts, is contributing to reductions in both poverty and childhood stunting, which can rob children of their ability to lead healthy and productive lives. In the areas where Feed the Future works:

**The prevalence of **child stunting** is falling, and **poverty** is on the decline.**



In Asian countries supported by Feed the Future, local capacity for lasting food security, economic growth and good nutrition continues to grow stronger.

## Empowering Women in Bangladesh

Empowering women through agriculture and access to other business opportunities is a driving force behind Feed the Future. When women's social and economic status improves, productivity increases and poverty is reduced.

To measure progress in women's empowerment, Feed the Future and its partners developed the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI), a first-of-its-kind tool that directly measures women's empowerment and inclusion levels in the agriculture sector.

Since its creation, WEAI analysis has been used to target activities that can empower women. In Bangladesh, a 2011 WEAI survey showed that 75 percent of rural women were disempowered. Bangladesh's policy makers took action, working with Feed the Future to create more opportunities for women to exercise control over productive assets and become leaders in their communities. Results from a 2015 WEAI survey within Bangladesh demonstrated solid improvement: The headcount of empowered women increased from 27.4 percent to 41.2 percent. The percentage of women who held gender parity with the primary male in their household also increased, and the empowerment gap between women and the primary male in their household dropped.

Feed the Future is committed to working with countries to prioritize women's empowerment and enable women farmers and entrepreneurs to realize their potential.

## Looking Forward

Feed the Future efforts in Asia will continue to ensure that food security and nutrition programs reflect a strategic understanding of beneficiary communities and the challenges they face. Feed the Future will continue to focus on connecting smallholders to markets, improving the nutritional status of women and children, and continuing to build resilience.

By making it possible for farmers and food producers to have more choices on how and what to farm as well as access to more markets and business opportunities, Feed the Future will ensure that families not only have enough food to feed themselves, but can capitalize on the economic engine of agriculture to improve nutrition, increase livelihoods and secure a better future.