

Project Factsheet

Project Name	Nutrition in City Ecosystems (NICE)
Duration	August 2021 - June 2025
Donor/s	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
Location	Dinajpur, Rangpur
Outreach	40,000 Households
Partners	Dinajpur Municipality, Rangpur City Corporation, Eco-Social Development Organization, Bangladesh National Nutrition Council (BNNC), Bangladesh Food Safety Authority (BFSA), Bangladesh Institute of Research and Training on Applied Nutrition (BIRTAN), Bangladesh Institute of ICT in Development (BIID), UNDP, Mitra and Associates, Parlance Consulting Services Ltd, LightCastle Partners, HK Consulting

Context:

Food systems are essential to feed the world. However, current food systems also largely contribute to pollution and soil devastation while hunger and malnutrition persist. Also, people who earn their livelihoods in food systems are amongst the most exploited and vulnerable (ILO & OECD, 2019). Furthermore, most food systems lack the ability to adapt to shocks and stresses, become sustainable and reinforce longstanding power imbalances and inequities, including – but not limited to those of – gender, ethnicity, wealth, and land ownership. Sustainable, inclusive food system transformation is key to achieve the 2030 agenda and particularly to reduce hunger and poverty and to remain within “planetary boundaries” (Springman et al 2018).

The NICE (Nutrition in City Ecosystems) project is a public-private Swiss consortium committed to creating scalable impact and global reach in improving nutrition and health in secondary cities of Bangladesh, including Dinajpur and Rangpur. Our mission is to tackle key challenges in urban nutrition by connecting the supply and demand sides of the food system, engaging youth and women, and building local capacity through multi-stakeholder, multisectoral collaboration.

Bangladesh, like many developing nations, faces significant challenges in addressing nutrition, health, and poverty, particularly in secondary cities such as Rangpur and Dinajpur. Malnutrition, inadequate access to nutritious food, and limited awareness of agroecological practices contribute to these challenges, especially among vulnerable populations such as women, youth, and marginalized communities.

Through initiatives that promote a more nutrition-focused value chain, NICE is working to create a dynamic network of "nutrition vital cities," which will lead to healthier urban populations and more sustainable food systems. Our approach leverages the potential of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), social business models, and demand generation techniques to shorten supply chains, ensuring that consumer preferences drive producer practices.

The project's strategy involves engaging key stakeholders, including community, schools, and health sector actors, to create a holistic approach to nutrition improvement and demand generation. Through targeted interventions, NICE aims to drive a positive change in dietary habits, promote agroecological practices, and reduce poverty by creating a more resilient and self-sufficient food ecosystem.

Objectives:

- Engage women and youth in urban governance structures to incentivize and strengthen food systems for improved nutrition.
- Enhance the availability and production of affordable, healthy, diverse, and local foods through the promotion and adoption of agroecological practices.
- To create demand for safe and nutritious foods produced through agroecological practices, fostering sustainable consumption patterns and improving community health and well-being.
- Establish national and global policy and city knowledge exchange hubs to shape sustainable and inclusive urban-rural food environments.

Key Activities:

- Formation of the platforms with diverse stakeholders at city level for conducting regular meetings to plan, implement, and monitor nutrition-focused initiatives.
- Strengthening collaboration among sectors for resource mobilization and action planning through evaluating the impact of implemented actions to ensure the effectiveness of nutrition improvement strategies.
- Collaborate with key government entities, including the Ministry of Food, Bangladesh Food Safety Authority, Ministry of Planning, and the Food Planning and Monitoring Unit, to promote public procurement of safe and nutritious food with a focus on agroecological practices.
- Establishment of Farmers' Hubs for producing safe and nutritious food following agroecological practices while engaging farmers in capacity building and linking between supply and demand of those produces.
- Engagement of Urban and Peri-Urban Women and Youth in Production and Post-Harvest Value addition. These include sorting, processing, packaging, grading, and selling of agricultural produce, contributing to the value chain while creating economic opportunities and enhancing food system efficiency. Additionally, the activity aims to enhance access to output markets.

- Conduct multi-layer awareness campaigns, training sessions, and workshops to promote and create demand for nutritious and agroecologically produced foods among city dwellers and supply chain actors, utilizing SBCC techniques to influence consumer and producer behavior.
- Mapping of educational institutions and health facilities to identify ongoing nutrition activities, programs, or campaigns within schools and health centers as potential entry points for campaign or message integration.
- Conducting an awareness program on nutrition aimed at community-level engagement, utilizing local radio broadcasts as a medium. Took the initiative to serve as a platform for sharing knowledge and experiences from national and global policy and city knowledge exchange hubs.
- The NICE project focuses on translating learnings from city-level experiences, including public-private partnerships (PPPs), into actionable policies. This involves showcasing project activities, achievements, and impacts through case studies one per city—demonstrating the effectiveness of various interventions.

Achievements (so far):

Outcome 1: Women and youth are involved in urban governance structures that incentivize food systems for improved nutrition.

- 02 city-level multisectoral platforms, each comprising 30-35 members, have been established. These platforms encompass representatives from diverse sectors, including local government departments, community representatives, and development partners.
- 22 city food systems women and youth groups have been established having 527 members and institutionalized as part of the project. These groups engage in various activities aimed at promoting nutrition within the city areas.
- The project has collaborated with key government entities, including the Ministry of Food, Bangladesh Food Safety Authority, Ministry of Planning, and the Food Planning and Monitoring Unit. These collaborations aim to promote public procurement of safe and nutritious food, with a particular emphasis on agroecological practices.

Outcome 2: The availability and production of affordable, healthy, diverse, and locally sourced foods are enhanced through agroecological practices.

- 100 Farmers' Hubs (FHs) have been established, comprising 44 male-headed households, 50 female-headed households, with 6 being joint households. In total, these FHs have served 16,296 farmers, with 12,851 being male farmers and 3,416 being female farmers.
- 1783 farmers in Rangpur City Corporation and Dinajpur Municipality are actively involved in producing safe and nutritious food using agroecological practices, covering an area of 531.58 acres.

- A network of 22 covered vegetable vans and 51 mobile vegetable vans now operates across Dinajpur and Rangpur, ensuring a steady flow of safe, fresh produce from farmers' hubs to city markets.
- 5,404 farmers (1,853 being male, 980 females, and 2,571 youth) from both cities were engaged in production. A total of 1,367,507 kgs of safe and nutritious food were transported, achieving a net worth of BDT 34,140,447 in both cities.

Outcome 3: City population's knowledge increases, and demand is created, for the consumption of nutritious and agroecologically produced foods.

- Implemented comprehensive agroecology campaign reaching 11,865 individuals with overwhelming support (97.1%) and recommendation (89%) for agroecologically produced foods.
- 40 schools were engaged in establishing nutrition gardens and clubs to promote healthy eating habits.
- 10 health institutions and 150 community health care workers were collaborated to advocate for safe, nutritious, and agroecologically produced foods.
- 85 cooking demonstrations and 526 smart food tips session were conducted to showcase the benefits of nutritious and agroecologically produced foods.
- 02 breastfeeding corners were established in Rangpur and Dinajpur city corporations for convenient breastfeeding support.
- Hosted capacity-building sessions for 3,438 target beneficiaries on safe food production, agroecology, nutrition, and hygiene for diverse groups including city corporations, schools, health institutions, women, youth groups, and farmers.

Outcome 4: National and global policy and city knowledge exchange hubs shape urban-rural food environments.

- Conducted quarterly virtual peer learning event among NICE countries on different topics covering agroecology, food loss and waste, outcome linking call among those NICE countries.
- 02 learning sharing exchange were organized between city coordinators through organizing peer learning.
- 02 round table discussions were organized separately in Dinajpur and Rangpur through participation of development partners, city authorities, policy makers for their concern about nutrition of city dwellers.
- Video documentation of the NICE project while showcasing project activities through interviewing different stakeholders, farmers, students, and project beneficiaries.
- Developed methodologies, approaches and lessons learnt, in providing leaflets illustrating good practices based on farmers' hub owners, mobile vegetables van, school nutrition garden, and school canteen.

- Updated different events/news regularly on national and international day observance in NICE web page.

Photos



From Field to Future: The strength and dedication of women farmers growing hope and harvest.
Empowering women, nurturing communities – one harvest at a time.



Driving Change: A mobile vegetable van funded by the NICE project not only fuels livelihoods but also delivers safe and nutritious vegetables to city consumers—empowering communities with every fresh bounty.

Last Updated: June 30, 2025