



Flood
Resilience
Alliance

IMPACT BRIEF BANGLADESH

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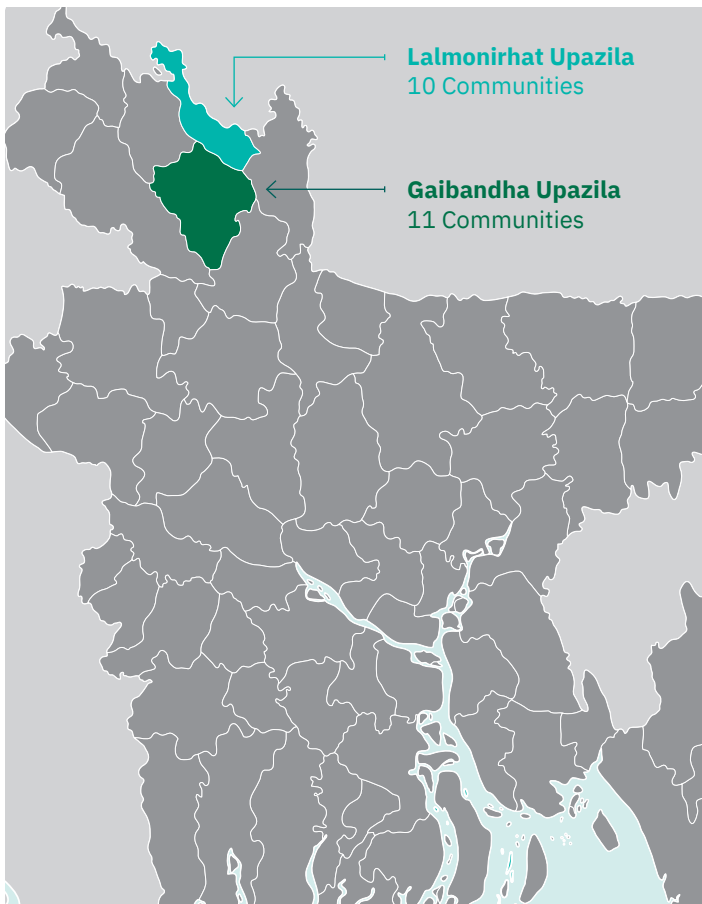
Improving Community Flood Resilience

The Bangladesh Flood Resilience Project aimed to strengthen the resilience of 21 communities across the Char areas located in the northern part of Bangladesh. The project harnessed advocacy efforts to improve the implementation of policies and increase budget allocation to enhance resilience preparedness, early warning systems and action, collectively strengthening the resilience of communities to the impacts of floods. The project is being implemented in two districts Lalmonirhat and Gaibandha of Rangpur Division.

The project forms one part of a range of projects globally that span across multiple actors, forming the **Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance**. The Alliance use a range of tools, including the Flood Resilience Measurement for Communities, (FRMC) to assess resilience of a community and support risk informed decision making for flood resilience.



Malika Begum is a programme participant of the Zurich programme. She benefitted hugely from the CSA aspect and learned to grow vegetables, even when there is flooding. She grows them on raised platforms. Photo: Gavin Douglas/ Concern Worldwide



Activity Examples

Formation and Capacity building of community based groups for community resilience

Demonstration of flood resilience technology at household and community level

Demonstration of Climate Adaptive Livelihoods

Demonstration of Nature based Solutions for flood management

Strengthening Flood early warning system and alert dissemination

Joint Planning with relevant government institutions to ensure services for the flood vulnerable char communities

School based flood education/training

Capacity building of UDMC/UP and increase local level flood preparedness budget (Community resilience building)

Government officials/policy makers' visit to project area

Media Dialogue

Key Programme Achievements

The Concern Worldwide Bangladesh team and partners Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK) worked across the project period to engage directly with 21 communities. Community Resilience Action Groups (CRAG) were formed in each community to work with communities and advocate on their behalf for innovative solutions to tackle ongoing challenges related to flood preparedness, response and recovery, and build the overall climate resilience of the communities.

Concern Bangladesh, Community Resilience Action Groups and Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK) successfully **influenced local government the (Upazila Parishad - UP) to shift their focus from flood response and recovery to pre-event risk reduction.** As a result of this 9 out of 10 UP allocated funding for community disaster prepared related activities which was previously missing in the UP budget.

“Earlier we never thought of demanding anything from Union Parishad. Because of this committee we now jointly we approach the UP to raise our needs. The Union Parishad constructed three wooden bridges in our village, benefiting 2,500 people.”

**Ms. Mallika Khanam,
Secretary of the Charkhorda CRAG Committee**



This committee group was established in 2019. The group is made up with only local members. These 17 members represent 1,700 households. They meet once a month. This community deals with 4-6 months of flooding per year. Committee President, Ashmaf tells us that ‘the ultimate goal is to reduce the loss and damage from flooding.’ Photo: Gavin Douglas/ Concern Worldwide

Bangladesh Impact Numbers 86,929

The Union Disaster Management Committee (UDMC) is considered one of the important local level institutions in Bangladesh, as per the Government Standing Order on Disaster (SOD). The UDMC are expected to work to assess risk and vulnerability to hazards and disasters within their jurisdictions. Concern and GUK worked to provide ongoing capacity building support to the UDMC’s including clarity on their roles and responsibility, functionalising regular meetings, conducting Community Risk Assessment (CRA), and supporting the development and implementation of Risk Reduction Action Plan (RRAP). All **8 UDMC’s in the project working areas, are now functional and well resourced.**

“My union is located south of the Teesta Barrage, and about 35,000 people live here. Every year, most of our union gets submerged during floods, causing severe damage to roads, crops, and livestock, and sometimes even resulting in loss of life. However, since the inception of the flood resilience project, there have been drastic improvements.”

Md. Manowar Hossain Dulu, Chairman of No. 6 Singimari Union Parishad and President of the UDMC

The UDMC’s successfully mobilized local resources as a contingency fund amounting to a total of BDT-128322 (Sundarganj-BDT-94822 and Hatibandha-BDT-33500). These funds were then utilized for early warning message dissemination, rescue activities conducted during expansive flooding, and minor repairs and renovation of embankments and roads prior to the floods. For example, Singimari UDMC provide support to renovate 130 ft. embankment/road, which benefited approximately 2500 people. The following flood season, this community were not inundated, and the rice paddy was not impacted by the floods, despite similar levels of flooding.



Ashraf is the president of the committee alert group. The group alert people to bring livestock in when the cyclone comes. Once they get the word it is coming, committee members go out with loudspeakers and life jackets to alert everyone of the dangers on their way. This equipment was given to them by Concern. They use 'local tech' to stop erosion. They make bamboo bridges so that people can move around. Photo: Gavin Douglas/Concern Worldwide

“Before the floods arrive, we now receive flood warnings, we then use loudspeakers on behalf of the Union Parishad to promote flood preparedness, using the mikes of local mosques and temples. We prepare flood shelters and keep volunteers ready. Our UDMC are now also very much active. Thanks to the Flood Resilience Project, we are now better equipped to handle flood damage.”

Md. Manowar Hossain Dulu, Chairman of No. 6 Singimari Union Parishad and President of the UDMC

Concern Bangladesh, Community Resilience Action Groups alongside our implementing partners Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK) have worked alongside local government bodies, both directly and indirectly engaged with climate resilience building and disaster risk reduction to support many early action and adaptation initiatives. The local government bodies the Union Parishad, the Union Disaster Management Committees, and local Government institutions including the Department of Public Health and Engineering (DPHE), the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), and the Department of Livestock Services (DoLS).

Through joint planning exercises with the local government institutions, 1193 farmers received agriculture seeds and fertilizer, 828 farmers received training on agricultural technology, and there was a joint vaccination campaigns to

vaccinate 14,840 cows and 5,200 goats. This action reflected the willingness for these stakeholders to work together to develop effective strategies that were informed and developed on the communities needs, and which they collectively felt would strengthen the resilience of the communities. Providing seeds and fertilizers helped the flood-affected farmers quickly restore their agricultural activities, which was crucial for their economic stability, helping to secure food supplies and income for the community. The trainings empowered farmers with knowledge about modern agricultural practices, efficient water use, soil management, and climate-smart agriculture techniques. This knowledge is critical in adapting to changing climate conditions, such as altered rainfall patterns or increased flooding frequency.

“Through this project, we are learning about flood preparedness. Previously, we did not care much about cattle vaccination, leading to livestock deaths. Now, through yard meetings and various training sessions, the importance of vaccination. We used to leave the land around our houses unused, but now we plant vegetables for our consumption and to share with neighbours. We are also learning how to preserve fodder for livestock during floods.”

Mst. Jaigun Begum, Secretary of No. 2 CCG, Sundarganj, Gaibandha

1,193

farmers received agriculture seeds and fertilizer

828

farmers received training on agricultural technology

14,840

cows vaccinated

5,200

goats vaccinated

Construction of the Belka Nawabganj Wooden Bridge A Life Line of Connectivity

Belka Nawabganj village, Gaibandha District, faced severe connectivity issues due to a branch of the Teesta River flowing through the southeast side of the community. 5 Wards, located on the northwest side of the channel, were completely cut off, affecting roughly 10,000 people. Being disconnected severely impacted the daily lives of residents, including almost 320 students who needed to cross the Teesta River to reach their schools and colleges. Moreover, communities could not access the Union Parishad, Upazila Parishad, and district town.

During the dry season, the river is almost waist-deep, while in the monsoon season, it becomes challenging to cross due to high water levels. Although boats were available during the rainy season, the lack of water in the river during the dry season forced residents to wade through the water. This crossing point is locally known as the “Chowdhury Kheyaghat of Belka.”

In response to these challenges, the Belka Nawabganj community initially constructed a temporary mud pit at Chowdhury Kheyaghat for regular traffic after the flood. Some villagers then built a makeshift bridge using two bamboo poles across the Teesta River branch. However, this solution was not sustainable, especially for children, elderly people, people with disabilities, and sick patients, who faced significant difficulties crossing the river. Marketing agricultural products was also

problematic, and the bamboo bridge often became unusable due to lack of maintenance.

Realising the need for a permanent bridge, the community and the Kishamat Sadar Community Resilience Action Group held a lobby meeting with members of the Union Disaster Management Committee (UDMC) of Belka. Following a series of meetings the UDMC president and chairman committed to discussing the construction of a wooden bridge with the upazila disaster management committee. The UP Chairman pledged to provide financial assistance from emergency funds and general assistance for the bridge construction.

The total cost of the bridge was Tk 275,000, with Tk 250,000 funded by the Upazila Parishad’s disaster management sector and the remaining Tk 25,000 from the Union Disaster Management Committee’s contingency fund.

As a result, the 10,000 people who previously lacked access can now travel normally, enabling uninterrupted travel during current levels of flooding. School children can now attend school regardless of the season. The community health clinic now receives patients without disruption, and agricultural produce marketing has improved. The residents of Belka Nawabganj are relieved to have the long-desired wooden bridge.



At Nichgoddi Mari primary school, the local committee meets. Through the Zurich programme, the school has been raised in order to protect it from flood waters. The building was raised three feet in 2021. The school now becomes a shelter during cyclones and flash floods. Locals bring their families and also livestock. This school serves 200 households. An early warning message starts the process of bringing animals, small children, elderly and pregnant women to the school. Photo: Gavin Douglas/ Concern Worldwide

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Concern Worldwide has been working with local communities in Bangladesh since 1972. We are working hard to combat suffering and build resilience in Bangladesh. We are doing this by establishing programmes which will reduce poverty, respond to emergencies and improve health and nutrition.



গণ উন্নয়ন কেন্দ্র
Gana Unnayan Kendra

Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK), a national non-government organisation which has been working with the poor, extremely poor and disadvantaged communities to bring a sustainable improvement in their lives over the last 39 years.