



Swedish Civil
Contingencies
Agency

Bangladesh

Driving change in Disaster Risk Management

Dear Change Agents,

The MSB Resilience Building Section wants to extend a big thank you to all of you who have been part of the ITP journey and to your organisations for acknowledging the ITP potentials both for you and for your Change Initiatives.

Driving change is anything but easy. But we hope that the ITP generic tools have supported your way forward in your specific DRM context, from starting the process towards change to sustaining change.

We also want to thank you for generously sharing your expertise, contexts and missions with us – in training sessions in real life and online, in your reports and as alumni. Thank you also for welcoming us to your country. We have learned so much from you. This knowledge is invaluable to us as we are looking into the possibility of a second-generation ITP DRM.

We also hope that the ITP DRM alumni network will continue to develop and give back to our organisations to the benefit of DRM and the people and livelihoods that it serves.

On the following pages you find an overview of the participants and Change Initiatives per cycle of Bangladesh. The three stories display ITP cases of making change happen.

It has for sure been a true pleasure.

Please, stay in touch with each other and with us.

Congratulations to all of you for being great Change Agents.

Team of the MSB ITP DRM

Change story #1

Increasing women's and girls' access to vital early warning and lifesaving services in Coastal Bangladesh

In coastal Bangladesh, the high fatality rate in cyclones of women and girls is a major concern. Access to cyclone early warning systems is crucial to mitigate these fatalities; however, due to restrictive socio-cultural norms where information is often channeled through male family members, many women face barriers to life saving information.

Not only does it hamper the effectiveness of early warning systems (EWS) but also increases the vulnerability of women and girls to gender-based violence (GBV) in disasters. The joint initiative between the CPP and UNFPA aims to enhance the accessibility and responsiveness of early warning systems, ensuring that vital information reaches women and girls directly and addresses their specific needs in the disaster context.

Change Initiative title

Increase access to information on early warning and lifesaving services for women and girls to reduce the disaster risk in Bangladesh

Change agent

Cyclone Preparedness Program,
Ministry of Disaster management and Relief

Objectives

Review existing early warning systems and recommend improvements tailored for vulnerable women and girls.

Capacitate CPP volunteers and women-led organizations on gender-sensitive early warning messaging, including GBV-related information.

Advocate for tailored information dissemination methods to ensure effective communication with the most vulnerable women and girls.

Key Milestones

The project team realized that achieving the goals would demand both long-term and short-term actions:

Comprehensive guidelines were developed and finalized for the project's implementation. Consultations with end users were made to gather feedback and to refine approaches.

The Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP), responsible for EWS dissemination in Bangladesh, built capacity initiating training for its 56,000 volunteers, focusing on gender-sensitive approaches and GBV awareness.

The government approved the CPP volunteer structure, resulting in a balanced male-female ratio and doubling the number of female volunteers. CPP is committed to increase the number of female volunteers along the coastal belt, ensuring they take on leadership roles.

Successful advocacy workshops were held, leading to actionable recommendations for project implementation. Several future initiatives were planned aiming at modifying EWS in Bangladesh to ensure messages are accessible regardless of gender, age, education level, or societal status.

Outcomes

Improving the Access to Early Warning Information for Women and girls in disaster-prone districts enhance access to early warning messages and life-saving services.

Reducing GBV risks by increasing gender-sensitive communication and support mechanisms in disaster situations.

Conclusion

The change initiative has made significant strides in enhancing the accessibility of essential EWS for women and girls through engagement of the 56,000 volunteers. By fostering a gender-sensitive approach, building local capacities, and advocating for systemic changes in volunteer structures, the project is contributing to a safer environment for women and girls in disaster-prone, coastal Bangladesh.

Continued efforts in training, advocacy, and policy modifications will ensure the sustainability of these results and further empower vulnerable populations in the face of increasing climatic and other hazards.

A number of organisational contributions are key in moving the initiative forward.

Government-Ministry of Disaster Management & Relief: Policy decisions to double the number of female volunteers that recognizes female volunteers in national volunteer award systems have been enacted.

Cyclone Preparedness Programme: The CPP recruits additionally five female volunteers per unit, increasing female participation in field demonstrations, and enhancing female leadership.

UNFPA: The organization plays a supportive role in developing DRR projects that integrate early warning dissemination for women and girls while advocating for the inclusion of female health service providers in the volunteer pool.

CPP Volunteers: Training sessions focusing on GBV and gender-sensitive early warning measures are now part of the volunteer curriculum. It strengthens the involvement of female volunteers in mock drills and in the overall disaster response.

Change story #2

Enhanced Disaster Resilience of Boat-Dwelling Communities in Southern Bangladesh

This initiative addresses the pressing challenges that boat-dwelling communities face in the southern district of Chandpur, Bangladesh. Exacerbated by climate change, rapidly increasing occurrences of floods, river erosion, and other natural hazards make many individuals and families residing on boats, resulting in a lack of established land rights and limited access to essential services, including education. Alarming, 98 percent of community members live below the poverty line. Fishing or related occupations engage 90 percent of the women but their contributions are largely unrecognized.

Change Initiative
Introducing Contextual and Inclusive DRM Approaches for a Resilient Boat-Dwelling Community

Change agent
Center for Natural Resource Studies

Furthermore, the community's limited awareness of disaster preparedness increases their vulnerability to hazards. In 2021, the Center for Natural Resource Studies (CNRS) designed innovative Floating Wash Centers (FWCs) to mitigate the threat of waterborne diseases.

The primary objective of this initiative is to introduce a contextual and inclusive Disaster Risk Management (DRM) approach tailored for the boat-dwelling community to strengthen the community resilience. The initiative also seeks to

To provide the community also with enhanced DRM capacities and increase women's participation in disaster risk management (DRM) planning.

Key Milestones

Developed a DRM training module specifically designed for participants with varying backgrounds, including children, persons with disabilities, elderly, and individuals with limited education.

Organized comprehensive training sessions for 120 women and 60 men. The sessions increased community awareness and knowledge regarding preparedness, early action, and recovery phases, thereby enhancing their resilience capacity.

Collaborated with community and others to design disaster-resilient WASH facilities that are environmentally friendly and gender inclusive, including floating dry toilets, elevated wet toilets, and a piped drinking water supply system.

Monitoring of construction and installation activities ensured compliance with design codes and the maintenance of quality standards.

Facilitated a memorandum of understanding with the Institution of Architects Bangladesh to gather innovative ideas for inclusive design of health, education, and other facilities catering to the needs of boat-dwelling residents.

Worked to strengthen the network between local administration, civil society organizations, aid agencies, and the inland community, aimed at improving disaster coordination and recovery efforts.

Outcomes

The contextualized DRM learning empowered communities to better prepare for, respond to, and recover from natural hazards. Training encompassed emergency response procedures, communication protocols, hazard identification and assessment processes.



Communities have adopted a multi-hazard approach towards disaster risk management, enabling them to navigate the complexities of climate-related threats effectively.

The project strengthened awareness of women's vulnerability in disasters. Evidence shows that women now feel an increased sense of responsibility and have better knowledge about roles, available resources, and opportunities related to DRM.

Preliminary estimates indicate that disaster-induced loss and damage to lives, livelihoods, and infrastructure have decreased by 40 percent. The combination of risk assessment training, early warning systems, and comprehensive disaster recovery planning contributed to this development.

The previously isolated community has begun to garner attention and acceptance from the broader society, attributed to the successful introduction of WASH and DRM initiatives. The shift in perception fosters inclusivity and recognition of the community's resilience efforts.

Conclusion

The change initiative has successfully implemented a comprehensive approach to disaster risk management, enhancing the resilience and preparedness of a vulnerable and underprivileged community. The focus on inclusive training, community engagement, and collaborative efforts with various stakeholders has fostered significant progress toward disaster resilience. Continued support and further integration of these initiatives will ensure sustained development and adaptation to the ongoing challenges that climate change causes.

Change story #3

Integrating internal displacement into Disaster Damage Assessments and Humanitarian Response Activities in Bangladesh

Riverbank erosion, salinity intrusion, floods, and cyclones have compelled individuals to abandon their homes, causing significant internal displacement. The need is pressing for effective disaster management strategies. Official damage assessments and reporting mechanisms have inadequately addressed the complexities of internal displacement. This is a gap that has severely affected humanitarian response and recovery efforts, leaving many displaced individuals without sufficient support.

Change Initiative title
Internal Displacement Management in Disaster Damage Assessment and Humanitarian Response Activities in Bangladesh

Change agent
Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief

The Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR), serves as the principal authority responsible for overseeing disaster risk management. It is mandated to prepare comprehensive damage reports in the aftermath of disasters and coordinating humanitarian response activities to aid affected populations. The main objectives of this project is for the Ministry to raise awareness among policymakers about the importance of comprehensive data collection on displacement. It is also to improve the accuracy of data in support of effective humanitarian response planning.

Key Milestones

Making authorities recognize the urgent need to quantify displaced individuals and engage with stakeholders, such as the Asian Development Bank, that expressed interest in assisting with data collection and displacement management.

Facilitating coordination with the Secretary of MoDMR to create a review working group dedicated to addressing internal displacement issues.

Overcoming challenges associated with aligning diverse organizational interests through dialogue among stakeholders.

Outcomes

Enhanced coordination and collaboration among stakeholders, resulting in more unified approaches to disaster response and internal displacement management.

Development of data collection frameworks and accuracy that account for internal displacement, allowing for better informed decision-making, targeted humanitarian assistance and facilitation of planning and implementation of resettlement.

Acknowledgment of the human rights challenges faced by displaced individuals, leading to initiatives that safeguard their rights and entitlements.

Conclusion

The project has proven the necessity of integrating internal displacement data into disaster damage assessments and humanitarian response activities in Bangladesh.

By fostering greater awareness among decision-makers and enhancing data collection methodologies, the initiative has laid the groundwork for more effective disaster management practices that address the needs of vulnerable populations facing forced migration due to in particular climate crisis.

Complete list of all cycles

Cycle 1

2019

Change Agents	Change initiative
Shahida Akter Ministry of Health & Family Welfare	SRH and GBV - Humanitarian Preparedness and Response Strengthening Project in Bangladesh
Abul Kamal Azad Ministry of Disaster management and Relief, Department of Disaster Management	Mainstreaming Gender and age in disaster damage assessment and humanitarian response activities in Bangladesh
Muhammad Ferdaus BRAC University	Reducing Risk for Enhancing a Safe Society (RRESS)" - Training citizens in search and rescue
Ahmadul Haque Cyclone Preparedness Program	Increase access to information on early warning and lifesaving services for women and girls to reduce the disaster risk in Bangladesh
Abu Sadat Md Marjan Nur Gana Unnayan Kendra	Reduce vulnerability and increase resilience through adopting a financial instrument
Sabina Parvin United Nations Population Fund	Increase access to information on early warning and lifesaving services for women and girls to reduce the disaster risk in Bangladesh
Avijit Paul Center for Natural Resource Studies	Reduce climate change induced disaster vulnerability of most vulnerable communities in Tahirpur Upazila"

Cycle 2

2020

Change Agents	Change Initiative
Nasir Uddin ActionAid Bangladesh	Increase household level disaster resilience in urban Bangladesh using a multi hazard preparedness tool
Shahinur Rahman Maliha Ferdous Tauhidul Islam Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement	Promote awareness and integration of gender and disability in DRR
Safwat Hossain BRAC Humanitarian Programme	Developing an approach to reach the most vulnerable and marginalized during disaster response
Shafiqul Bari Hajee Mohammad Danesh Science & Technology University, Department of Agroforestry & Environment, Faculty of Agriculture	Development of new DRM courses in the Agroforestry and Environment Department of HSTU

Cycle 3

2021

Change Agents	Change Initiative
Aminul Haque Khalid Bin Masud Sabina Yasmin Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement	Community driven localized early warning system for better preparedness and response to floods
Doyananda Debnath Farjana Alam Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority	Piloting of Business Continuity Plan (BCP) and disaster mitigation plan in industrial units of BEZA for promoting resilience in business
Hasnat Ashraful Islam Dhaka North City Cooperation	Debris management alternatives for Dhaka and handing of debris (recovery and disposal)
Lutfun Nahar Ministry of Disaster Management & Relief	Inclusion of people with disabilities in DRR and DM processes and structures

Cycle 4

2022

Change Agents	Change Initiative
Md Tahsin Samit Tasnima Mukit Center for Natural Resource Studies	Increasing resilience of boat dwelling communities
Jalal Ahmed Dilip Sen Department of Disaster Management	Flood risk mapping and addressing the implementability of micro insurance

Cycle 5

2023

Change Agents	Change Initiative
Md Sazzad Ansari Farhan Karim Farhana Sadiqah Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement	Mainstreaming multi-hazard preparedness and response efforts within the wider Disaster Risk Management portfolio ensuring inclusion of community groups, participation of Change Agents, and efficient coordination with key stakeholders including government and humanitarian partners in the Refugee Camps of Cox's Bazaar.
Md Ariful Hasan Md Rezaul Karim Department of Disaster Management	Division of Bangladesh in different zones according to geographical location and the types of disasters
Sanzida Yesmin Nagib Mahfuz Ministry of Disaster Management & Relief	Internal Displacement Management in Disaster Damage Assessment and Humanitarian Response Activities in Bangladesh

Cycle 6

2023-2024

Change Agents	Change Initiative
Harun Ur Rashid Md Monirul Islam Farzana Akther Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement	Engage women who are living in at risk coastal communities of Bangladesh as change agent to disseminate knowledge and skill to improve homebased livelihood activities by linking them with local government line departments and thus enhancing capacity of women in household and community level disaster risk reduction in the face of changing climate
Md Mostafa Kamal Bangladesh Climate Change Trust, Ministry of Environment	Youth Capacity Building in DRR and Climate Change Adaption in Dhaka South City Corporation
Ashitava Halder Rezwana Rahman Center for Natural Resource Studies (CNRS)	Harvesting Rainwater for Drinking (HaRD)
Tunazzina Rahimu Community Development for Peace	Youth Capacity Building in DRR and Climate Change Adaption in Dhaka South City Corporation
Syed Ahsanul Haque Environment & Infrastructure Management Solution Ltd.	Sustainable Early Warning System for Salinity Intrusion in Coastal Districts of Bangladesh

Cycle 7

2024

Change Agents	Change Initiative
Tanvir Al Nasif Shamim Rahman Shaddam Hossain Ministry of Disaster Management & Relief	To develop a unique comprehensive post-disaster report format for National Disaster Response Coordination Centre
Shajib Kamal Munshi Mumu Barua Muhammed Azharul Islam Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement	To reduce associated loss and damages triggered by disaster related incidents through streamlining youth in DRIM/Climate action in Ukhya sub-district of Bangladesh

*The organisation stated for each change initiative was the workplace of the participants at the time of the cycle. Change of workplace is not included in this document.