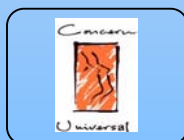


# STUDENT BRIGADES

## Concept Paper & Implementation Guidelines



Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction (CBDRR) Project



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## Table of Contents

<b>Sl.</b>	<b>Name of Content</b>	<b>Page</b>
01.	Abbreviations & Acronyms.....	04
02.	Introduction.....	05
03.	Student Brigades.....	06
04.	Inputs of the project: building the capacity of student brigades.....	07
05.	Expected results: the overall role of student brigades under CBDRR	07
06.	Procedures of Student Brigade formation.....	08
07.	Executive committee of Student Brigades.....	08
09.	Recognition and leadership of Student Brigades.....	09
10.	Election procedures.....	09
11.	Detailed roles and responsibilities of Student Brigades.....	10
12.	Operating principles of the student brigades.....	11
13.	Sustainability of student brigades and exit strategy.....	12
14.	Annex: 01, Model of badge for Student Brigade Leader.....	13
15.	Annex: 02, Model of ballot Paper.....	14
16.	Annex: 03 Vote Counting Template.....	15
17.	Annex: 04, A draft oath for Student Brigades.....	16
18.	Annex: 05, Photographs of student brigade's initiatives.....	17

## Abbreviations & Acronyms

CBDRR	Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction
CBL	Class Brigade Leader
Cordaid	Catholic Organization for Relief and Development Aid
CRA	Community Risk Assessment
CU	Concern Universal
DAM	Dhaka Ahsania Mission
DIPECHO	Disaster Preparedness of European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office
DG-ECHO	Director General of European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EC	European Commission
SB	Student Brigade
SBL	Student Brigade Leader
SMC	School Management Committee
SSC	Secondary School Certificate
UDMC	Union Disaster Management Committee
UP	Union Parishad

# STUDENT BRIGADES

**An ideal change agent for building disaster resilient communities**

As a result of its geography, Bangladesh frequently suffers from devastating floods, cyclones and storm surges, tornadoes, riverbank erosion, and drought as well as constituting a very high-risk location for devastating seismic activity. Impacts of global warming, which are recognized as being amongst the most severe in Bangladesh, are directly related not only to the frequency but also to the intensity of natural disasters. Over the past few years, the major part of Bangladesh's coastal belt was repeatedly hit by devastating cyclones which have significantly altered the lifestyle and the nature of livelihoods in the affected areas.

To respond to this vulnerability, and in order to promote and allow for the replication of community participation in Disaster Risk Reduction, Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) and Concern Universal (CU) have been working with support from DG-ECHO and Cordaid to pilot innovative approaches to DRR in rural communities of Bangladesh over the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> DIPECHO Action Plans for South Asia. School teachers, students and school management committee members are some of the major stakeholders of the consecutive projects that have been implemented and the creation of Student Brigades is the key intervention that supports all of our school-based DRR initiatives.

Communities are permanently evolving, and the change process is either constructive or deconstructive. Historically students have played a crucial role as one of the major change agents for their communities and one that is generally associated with positive change. In Bangladesh like elsewhere, a common practice is for students to elect or select their representatives to negotiate with the authorities in order to ensure that an enabling educational environment is in place within their respective institutions. Student representatives are known as student parliaments in College & University and class & school captainship at School level. In order to face the increasing challenge of disaster and climate change in rural communities of Bangladesh, Dhaka Ahsania Mission and Concern Universal have introduced and implemented the idea of "student Brigades".

Under DIPECHO 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Action Plan for South Asia, DAM and CU have been emphasizing school-based DRR as one of the main instrument to build disaster resilient communities. The Student brigade model was introduced under the 4<sup>th</sup> Plan of Action as **"organized groups of students trained and capacitated to lead preparedness campaigns and influence behaviors and practices towards disaster resilient communities"**. The case study below illustrates the success story of an initiative taken forward by a member of a student brigade.

Under the 5<sup>th</sup> Plan of Action, DAM and CU will be implementing a "Community-based DRR project" where the scale-up and strengthening of the student brigade model will come as a priority. Twenty five to thirty students in each of the 30 targeted schools under this project will be organized in Student Brigades. If the term Student Brigade is an innovation from the project, the practice is not new. Traditionally students are involved with various interventions within their respective institutions. The novelty with Student brigades lies in the fact that the skills and knowledge they will acquire through the project will not be limited to school-based activities but focus on broader community outreach. It is hoped that the "Student Brigade" model will be replicated and followed by other educational institutions.

Building on DAM and CU's experiences and lessons learnt the following guidelines provide key steps for the creation of an effective student brigade and should be coupled with the training package for student brigades developed by CU and DAM.

### DIPECHO 4<sup>th</sup> PLAN OF ACTION FOR SOUTH ASIA: HOW RUPA CHANGED THE VILLAGE

Rupali Khatun from the District of Mymensingh was a student in grade ten. She was elected as a Student Brigade Leader by her peers at school and received different training on Disaster Risk Reduction through the project implemented by Dhaka Ahsania Mission and Concern Universal. One day Rupa's grandfather asked her what she was learning in those training sessions. Rupa shared with him her learning about the advantages of disaster preparedness. This prompted her grandfather to tell her the story of how the 2004 floods had dramatically affected their family.



For almost 2 days the entire family had had to rely on inadequate dry food as their house was submerged and they could not find higher grounds for the family to cook. This impacted negatively in particular on the younger members of the family. ***"We didn't know about the portable ovens that you are talking about"***, acknowledged her grandfather.

After hearing the story, Rupa called her mother and demonstrated how to build portable ovens and how to keep them safe. Every afternoon when she came back from school, Rupa would sit with 5 women of the village, explain the advantages of portable ovens and teach them how to build them. She also shared other preparedness messages that she had gathered from her training. Her idea was that if all the women could learn the techniques of building portable stove/oven, none would have to pass a single day without food when floods hit and inundate the village.

Rupa devoted herself to social work alongside her studies. One day she called onto her grandfather and informed him that she had fulfilled her mission, adding that he was welcome to check.

Accordingly, her grandfather visited the village and found that every family had prepared portable ovens and stored them safely with a view to use in case of emergency. Proud of his granddaughter, Rupa's grandfather shared with us that: ***"Rupa has changed the village."***

### Student Brigades

The word "brigade" is derived from Military terminology; where it is used to describe unity, spirit of power, dedication, discipline, punctuality, willfulness, etc.

Students are powerful change agents of the community which is why the CBDRR project is underpinned by the idea that students, through organized brigades, will be able to lead the campaign of community based disaster preparedness, mitigation, rescue, recovery and adaptation.

Secondary schools and their adolescent populations will be targeted. This age group not only corresponds to young and dynamic individuals but also to a key period where values, ideals and personalities are being shaped. Innovation, creation, curiosity, and challenge are in the nature of adolescents who are looking for active participation and a role to play in positive social change.

The CBDRR project intends to capitalize on and channel the main spirit of student groups to reduce the risk of natural hazard and disaster.

## **Inputs of the project: building the capacity of student brigades**

The inputs of the project with regards to student brigades will mainly focus on capacity-building through a comprehensive training package on DRR and related issues (details below) but also through ensuring the active and meaningful participation of student brigades in all decision-making processes relating to DRR such as UDMCs through establishing coordination and ensuring representation.

### **1. Capacity-building of student brigades:**

- Training on Leadership development and brigade Management
- Training on Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction
- Training on Early warning, documentation and dissemination
- Training on Search and Rescue and First Aid
- Training on Shelter Management
- Training on management of persons with disability during disaster

### **2. Empowering student brigades' voices, strengthening coordination and establishing referral mechanisms:**

- Active participation of student brigades in CRA process and development of Risk Reduction Action Plans
- Active participation of student brigade in training and awareness-campaigns
- Active participation of student brigades in UDMCs
- Active participation of student brigades in coordination mechanisms at UP level

## **Expected results: the overall role of Student Brigades under CBDRR**

If the mobilization and skill and capacity-building processes are successful, it is expected that student brigades will become a key actor in their communities to promote a disaster resilient model of life and development. This will be achieved through the following broad areas of action (specific roles and responsibilities of each member of the brigade are detailed further in the document):

### **1. Preparation of yearly action plan**

### **2. Implementation of school-based awareness raising activities:**

- Provide support to Union Supervisors of CBDRR for conduction of one-hour session on DRR once in a week
- Organize competitions of Puzzle game and Ludu once in a week
- Organize class, school and inter school essay competition on DRR issues, three times in a year
- Organize class, school and inter-school debate competition on DRR issues, three times in a year
- Organize class, school and inter school art competition on DRR issues, two times in a year

### **3. Implementation of community-based awareness-raising activities:**

- Disseminate basic information on DRR in five neighboring villages
- Monitor progress and effectiveness of message dissemination

### **4. Implementation of community mobilization activities:**

- Organize rally and day observation twice in a year
- Organize mock-drills on DRR twice in a year
- Organize cultural program and play drama once in a year

## 5. Identification of school based small-scale mitigation activities and implementation

## 6. Organization of monthly coordination meetings and documentation

### 7. Playing a key role during disasters:

- Help disseminate early warning messages throughout the community
- Whenever relevant, help prepare the school building to use as a shelter
- Help evacuate the vulnerable members of the community
- Provide first aid and search and rescue support when needed
- Ensure proper manage the shelter and provide needs based security & support to the sheltered people

## Procedures of Student Brigade formation

### Class brigades:

- There are five classes from grade VI to grade X in secondary Schools and 5 to 6 students elected in each class will form a Class Brigade. The members of the class brigades will be selected by the general class student following a direct vote using confidential ballot papers (example in annex 2).
- The Class Brigade Leader will be the student who has scored the highest number of votes from the 5/6 elected members of each class.

### Student brigades:

- The 5 Class Brigades together will form the school's Student Brigade
- The Student Brigade Leader and Co-leader will be selected from within the 25/30 elected members following confidential voting system by all the Student Brigade members.
- Any member can be elected as a Student Brigade Leader but if a class brigade leader is elected as the Student Brigade leader then he/she will have to resign from the class brigade leadership. The Student Brigade leader will act on behalf of all the brigade members and coordinate closely with the Class Brigade leaders.
- The school authority will organize a formal oath ceremony for newly elected members of the student brigade.

It is to be mentioned that a 50/50 gender ratio will be applied to student brigades, if the school is mixed. There are two significant changes every year in all secondary schools. The students of class X leave after completion of the SSC exam and the students of class VI are newly admitted, which means that a new election of student brigade will have to be held every year.

## Executive committee of Student Brigades

1.	Brigade Leader	:	01 (Elected by 25/30 members of SB)
2.	Brigade Co-Leader	:	01 (Elected by 25/30 members of SB)
3.	Executive Brigade Member	:	05 (Class Brigade Leaders)
4.	General Members	:	17/22 (Elected by general students of respective Classes)
5.	Secretary	:	01 (Selected by SB Leader & SB Co-Leader)



## Recognition and leadership of Student Brigades

Student Brigade Leaders and Class Brigade Leaders should have individual leadership identification badges as a motivational tool and an acknowledgment of their responsibilities. It also allows for general students to identify their leaders and build the necessary cooperation with them. Only six badges - one for the Student Brigade Leader (SBL) and five for the Class Brigade Leaders (CBL) - will be needed for a school. The badge has to be preserved safely in an office room by a teacher who has been assigned to support the Brigade. The leaders of the student brigades should wear their badges in any special program, occasion, function or ceremony in and out of school. A model of badge can be found in annex-1.

*NB: Total 180 Rank needed for 30 selected schools. The logos of DAM, CUB, EC & Cordaid should be printed or embroidered in all badges for a more durable visibility.*

## Election procedures

Election is an ideal process for social mobilization. The importance and acceptance of an election will increase if the representatives are selected through a formal and open election process. Student brigades being a key change agent for the community, a formal and open election process to select the student leaders will not only allow for legitimate representatives to be selected but also to set a good example for other institutions. The steps of the election process are as follows:

**Step-01:** A notice will be circulated to the students of all classes announcing the selection of student brigades by formal election. Concept, objectives and necessity of student brigades, along with date and time of the election will be mentioned in the notice to develop a common understanding amongst the students.

**Step-02:** two different election commissions will be formed for the election of class brigade members and leader on the one hand and the election of student brigade leaders on the other hand. A class teacher, a representative of students and respective Union supervisors of the CBDRR project will form the election commission for class brigade selection and the head teacher, chairman/secretary of SMC and Union Supervisor of the CBDRR project will form the election commission for Brigade Leader and Co-leader selection.

**Step-03:** Elections of class brigade members will be held in one day. Students will use a ballot white paper to write 5 names. A model of ballot paper can be found in annex 02

**Step-04:** Votes will be counted in the presence of all students. A vote counting table will be drawn on the black board and individual paper sheets open by the election commission. The highest number of vote gainer will be the class brigade leader and the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> will constitute the rest of the class brigade members. If any selected member disagrees to take responsibility of the brigade then the next nearest vote gainer like 6<sup>th</sup>..... will take over the responsibility. A model of vote counting table can be found in annex 03

**Step-05:** Brigade leaders and co-leaders will be elected by 25/30 brigade members following the same confidential voting system. The student with the highest number of votes will be elected as the brigade leader and the student with the second highest number of votes will be the co-leader.

**Step-06:** The elected brigade leader and co-leader will select a potential secretary from the 25/30 brigade members with a common consensus.

**Step-07:** The authority of the school will introduce the newly elected brigade members and leaders to the general students through a formal introduction ceremony. Chairman of the local government, Chairman of the SMC and Head teacher will have the elected students to formally recite an oath and decorate the leaders with the brigade's badge on their right arms. A model of oath can be found in annex 04

## Detailed roles and responsibilities of Student Brigades

Specific roles and responsibilities fall onto individual brigade members as well as leaders for the effective management of the team. Ensuring that members of the brigades understand their roles and responsibilities are a pre-requisite to effective functioning of the brigade and potential replication. Some of the individual and specific roles and responsibilities are detailed below:

### Responsibilities of Brigade Leader:

The Student Brigade Leader is guiding all the students, brigade members and at the forefront of initiating and organizing disaster risk reduction activities at school or in the community. Some specific roles and responsibilities will follow which are mentioned below:

1. He/she will make himself/herself well-known and approachable by all students, teachers and members of school governing body and seek assistance from other students and/or school personnel when required to carry out his/her duty.
2. He/she will be responsible for preparing a yearly action plan with all brigade members and share it with all the students and school personnel. The action plan will be displayed on school's walls for all students to see.
3. He/she will develop communication with various organizations with support from the responsible teachers in order to further build the capacity of the brigade team.
4. He/she will ensure that student brigades are involved in local coordination mechanisms on issues relating to DRR and in particular have regular dialogue with UP and UDMCs.
5. He/she will identify awareness raising activities and ensure joint implementation by the brigade members.
6. He/she will identify the social mobilization activities and take initiative for collective implementation.
7. He/she will identify school based small-scale mitigation activities and take initiative for implementation.
8. He/she will organize monthly progress sharing meeting and ensure proper documentation.
9. He/she will be responsible for presenting the progress of activities every month in teachers and SMC's meetings.
10. He/she will wear his/her badge for any significant event at school or in the community relating to DRR.

### Responsibilities of Brigade Co-leader:

The brigade co-leader supports the brigade leader for selection of secretary, preparation of yearly action plan, implementation of activities, monitoring and evaluation. Moreover the Brigade Co-leader will take over all responsibilities of the leader in absence of the latter.

### **Responsibilities of Executive Brigade Members:**

The 5 class brigade leaders form the executive brigade members. Similarly to the student brigade leader, the class brigade leader will be guiding his/her class in all activities. The roles and responsibilities of executive brigade members are below:

1. He/she will prepare a class-based yearly action plan
2. He/she will always be prepared to support the initiatives of the Student Brigade leader
3. He/she will identify the class-based achievable activities and take initiative and mobilize other members for their implementation
4. He/she will ensure the participation of all students in awareness and mobilization activities at class, school and community level.
5. He/she will help the Student Brigade leader to identify school based small-scale mitigation activities and help mobilize his/her class for implementation.
6. He/she will ensure participation in the monthly progress sharing meeting and present monthly progress reports.
7. He/she will wear the badge in any event, festival or occasion related to DRR.

### **Responsibilities of General Brigade Member:**

The brigade members will be involved in the identification, planning, implementation and monitoring of all the brigade's initiatives and will provide support to the leaders as well as playing a key role in disseminating the information received and the activities of the brigade in their families/communities.

1. He/she will help the leaders identify potential initiatives and actions at school and in the community
2. He/she will help the leaders to draft the action plans
3. He/she will help mobilize students and other members for the implementation of activities
4. He/she will participate actively in all events related to DRR
5. He/she will disseminate DRR messages received through training and promote the initiatives of the brigade in the broader community.

### **Responsibilities of Brigade Secretary:**

The secretary has the overall responsibility for Information collection, official documentation and presentation of the major activities of the brigade. Specific responsibilities are:

1. He/she will ensure the documentation of basic information on brigade members.
2. He/she will ensure the documentation of the yearly action plan and implementation guidelines.
3. He/she will provide support to organize monthly progress sharing meetings and to document meeting minutes.
4. If necessary he/she will be responsible for financial transactions and documentation.
5. He/she will support the preparation of progress reports for submission in the monthly teachers/school management committee meetings.

### **Operating principles of the student brigades**

The student brigades will be governed by some key operating principles that will be developed jointly by the members of the brigades themselves and adopted as a founding document. However, the responsible teacher should ensure that the following principles are respected and reflected in the operating principles adopted by the brigade:

1. In each school where student brigade are established, one teacher will be selected to act as a focal point, reference point and support person for the student brigade. The teacher will follow-up all the initiatives of the brigades, provide ad hoc support and raise any concern regarding the functioning and/or the activities of the brigades to the relevant authorities.

2. The roles and responsibilities of the brigade members are exercised alongside the students' studies but should never hamper or undermine in any way the education of the members or any other students. Education remains the priority and all activities will have to consider school calendar and priorities and be accommodated accordingly.
3. The objectives and roles of the brigades should be presented and discussed with the parents and a student can only be enrolled in the brigade if there is no formal objection from the guardian(s).
4. The student brigades are participatory action groups where all the views are considered on an equal footing without considerations of gender, race, religion, etc. As a general rule, consensus building should be the operating principle of the brigades.
5. Student brigades will respect high levels of ethics and respect when conducting any activity and will promote participation of the most vulnerable groups, in particular girls and people with disability.
6. Conflict-solving mechanisms should be included in the operating principles of the brigade and should any conflict arise within the brigade that cannot be solved internally, support should be sought from the responsible teacher.

### **Sustainability of student brigades and exit strategy**

Class captains, school captains, student parliaments, boys scouts, girl guides are other models of student action groups that have been active and involved in ensuring positive change for their school and their community in Bangladesh. In the formal education system of Bangladesh, it is a common practice to develop various types of student groups for various purposes such as acting as a mediator between the students and the teachers, advocating for student's rights or serving as community volunteers. Even though this practice is found to be more successful in urban areas than in rural areas, CU and DAM's previous experiences with Student brigades in rural areas has shown considerable scope for student mobilization towards disaster resilient communities.

In order to ensure sustainability of the Student Brigade model, it is of utmost importance that it gets acceptance and recognition from students, teachers, school management committee, and the local community. This will be achieved through sensitization sessions, consultative meetings but also through highlighting good practices and demonstrating practical and positive change achieved through the brigade's actions. Another key area of work for sustainability of the model is to create strong linkages between student brigades and the existing institutions working on DRR, both governmental and non governmental, and to ensure space for active participation of student brigade and systematic involvement of the students in decision-making and local coordination mechanisms.

From the start, it will be emphasized that any support provided by the CBDRR project will stop at the end of the project, in September 2010 and that student brigades should strive to become self-sustainable within the school disaster management set-up. One of the instruments to achieve institutionalization of the student brigade is to ensure that they are a major component of the school's contingency plan and/or that they get recognition in the school statutes and official documents. Ultimately, the success and sustainability of the model depends on students and community members' perceptions on the usefulness of the initiative which is why strong participatory mechanisms will be established around this activity to ensure that the approach matches students and community members' expectations.

### Model of badge for Student Brigade Leader



### Model of badge for Class Brigade Leader



## Model of ballot Paper

<b>Class VI</b>	<b>Jarina Sikdar Multilateral Secondary School</b> Adarvita, Kakchira Union, Patharghata, Barguna	<b>School Shield</b>
<b>Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction (CBDRR) Project Ballot paper for the election of Class brigade members</b>		
Sl.	Name	Class Roll
01.		
02.		
03.		
04.		
05.		
<b>Signature of Election commission:.....</b>		<b>Date:.....</b>

**Note:**

- Preparation of list of voters based on class attendance book
- Print number of ballot papers according to the voters list.
- A member of the election commission will supply the ballot papers to the students individually.
- The voter will write only five names in the ballot paper excluding him/herself.
- The process should be completed in 30 minutes.

## Vote Counting Template

### *Jarina Sikder Multilateral Secondary School*

Sl.	Name of Candidate	Ballot Mark	Total Mark	Placement
01.	Mr. Shofiqul Islam	//// //	10	5 <sup>th</sup> (4 <sup>th</sup> Member)
02.	Miss. Asma Akter	//// //// ////	15	<b>1<sup>st</sup> (Class Brigade)</b>
03.	Mr. Abu Naser	//// //// //	12	3 <sup>rd</sup> ( 2 <sup>nd</sup> Member)
04.	Miss. Bizli Akter	////	05	Nearest : 03
05.	S.M Foyez	//// //// ////	14	2 <sup>nd</sup> (1 <sup>st</sup> Member)
06.	Mr. Rustum Ali	//// ////	09	Nearest :01
07.	Miss. Rezia Parvin	//// //// /	11	4 <sup>th</sup> ( 3 <sup>rd</sup> Member)
08.	Miss. Setara Parvin	//// //	08	Nearest : 02
09.			0	
<b>Total vote collection :</b>			<b>84</b>	

#### Signature of Election Commission:

1.....

2.....

3.....

Note: This format will be drawn on the black board. After the vote a member of the election commission will collect all the ballot papers from the students. The chair of the election commission will open the ballot papers one by one and call the name loudly. One election commission member will mark the results on the black board whilst another does the same in printed template. At end of the marking process both election commissions will declare the winners. This activity should be completed in 30 minutes.

### **A Draft oath for Student Brigades**

I (individual's name), a student of Jarina Sikder Multilateral Secondary School, have been elected as the (elected position) by the valuable support and formal vote of my fellow students. I thereby promise that I shall complete my duty to make my school and community disaster resilient to the best of my abilities.

***Note: the oath will be repeated three times by the all elected brigade members under the facilitation of the UP Chairman/ Chairman of SMC / Head Teacher.***



## Photographs of Student Brigade's initiatives



**Student Brigade in Mock drill**



**Mock drill on Primary Health Services**



**International Disaster Observance**



**School based mock drill on earthquake**



**Class based session conduction on disaster preparedness**



**Class based Session conduction**



**Speak out Oath by Student Brigade Members**



**Play drama on Disaster Preparedness**



**Evacuate an aged by Student Brigade member**



**Early warning disseminated by Student brigade**

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