

FH Bangladesh



Disaster-Risk Reduction Program

International Day for Disaster Reduction, October 13<sup>th</sup> 2011

Across Bangladesh, poverty leaves millions living in danger from natural disasters. As sea-levels rise, coastal defences are overwhelmed by the sea. Massive overcrowding pushes the poorest to live on sandbanks, which will often disappear under a single year's flooding.

FH has been working in their communities to help people work together to reduce their vulnerability. On October 13<sup>th</sup> 2011, people in the most vulnerable areas of Bangladesh came together to mark the International Day for Disaster Reduction, with education and celebration of the ability of each community to reduce the risk they face from natural disasters.

FH goes to the poorest and most needy in Bangladesh. Even in vulnerable communities, some people are more vulnerable than others, and a vital aim of FH activities is to help communities to make plans which provide for the needs of everyone, no matter how vulnerable.



Each community in which FH does Disaster Risk Reduction has a community DRR committee. These committees come together in a participatory process which helps people to identify the most vulnerable in their community, and to make plans that provide for the needs of all.

The day itself helped these committees to raise awareness amongst their neighbours. Reducing the risk of disasters in communities is something that takes the whole community. Rallies were held, with crowds of people encouraging their friends and communities to understand how to prepare for and respond to disasters well.

**'We are not afraid of disaster. We will fight against it and we shall overcome it.'**  
- Dhunot procession slogan

In Borobogi, the Amtoli minority community were seriously damaged by Cyclone Sidr in 2007, and forgotten by much of the disaster-response. Since then, FH has worked with them to improve their capacity. This year, the sadness of that time was far behind them, as members of an adolescent group run by FH performed dramas to highlight the importance of ensuring that no-one is isolated when disaster comes, regardless of social or economic status.



Shariakandi is far from the coast in Bangladesh. But situated as it is on the banks of the enormous river Jamuna, it floods each year, and each year sees communities devastated by their vulnerability. Along with speeches and a rally, Shariakandi's community disaster-preparedness committee organised an art competition. Through celebrating people's gifts, the community was able to enjoy the message about good DRR activities.



IDDR 2011 was a powerful marker for members of FH communities across Bangladesh, consolidating the work they have done together so far, and ensuring that even more people in each community understand the importance of helping each other when disasters come.

**'We were disaster victims. We lost our homes. We didn't know about disaster preparedness. Now, with our committee, the plans we make together are reducing our risk.'**

**– Nasar, Community Leader, Dhunot**