



## BEST PRACTICE : THE COMMUNITY EFFORTS OF BANGLADESH



 কারিতাস চট্টগ্রাম অঞ্চল  
পরিবার ও গ্রাম পর্যায়ে দুর্যোগের ঝুঁকি হ্রাস প্রকল্প (কর্ড এইড) এর অধীনে  
জলবায়ু পরিবর্তনের সাথে খাপ খাওয়ানো বিষয়ক প্রশিক্ষণ  
Climate Change on Adaptation training  
Under Family and Village Level Disaster Risk Reduction (FVDRR) Project  
সময়কাল : ২০১৩/২০১৪ খ্রী:  
আয়োজনে : গ্রাম এবং ওয়ার্ড দুর্যোগ ব্যবস্থাপনা কমিটি ইউনিয়ন: মগনামা উপজেলা: লক্ষ্মীয়া, জেলা: কক্সবাজার।



**Manage Best Practices**

**for Disaster Risk Reduction in Bangladesh**

# Best Practice of communities affected by disasters in Bangladesh

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## Preamble

On 2010, CMDRR Forum Bangladesh started its journey along with 13 Member organizations consisting National and International NGOs to introduce a new approach named Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction (CMDRR). The approach focused to the different disaster prone area of Bangladesh. Main highlight of CMDRR is to reduce disaster risk through community innovation considering climate change adaptation. The forum has already passed its four years of implementation while there are lots of outstanding achievements & best practices in the operation level of the member organizations, which have been internalized and the process emerged at the grassroots level communities in Bangladesh. It also gives us lots of learning. The participants have been responding tremendously toward implementing CMDRR process for bringing new dimension in DRR procedures.

It can be said undoubtedly that Bangladesh is one of the sufferer countries of climate change impacts. Every year Bangladesh has to face different types of hazard which is causing

massive destruction. If do analysis of the trends of hazard in last 30 to 50 years it is found that nature and time of hazard has been changed. These changes are already having major impacts on the economy and lives and livelihoods of millions of poor people. Climate change is affecting the country in many ways, reduced fresh water availability, surface drainage congestion, sea level rise, increased drought, floods and coastal storms. Bangladesh itself situating in a hazard prone area as its delta pattern. As the major economy of Bangladesh is depending on agriculture and natural resources, it is happened a lot of losses due to the impact of climate change.

CMDRR forum still working towards becoming stronger institutionalized and addressing the policy issues through a number of initiatives within the civil society, NGO community and government. This forum is a unique protocol in implementing DRR management through community participation, leadership and the demand oriented. Forum is still for raising level of understanding on this approach within

GO, NGO and policy makers making all efforts reluctant and far reaching. Since last four year CMDRR forum has been trying to organize the member organization in line with the concept, philosophy and practice at their working areas and got some very specific but positive result.

It has already been developed a very good understanding, coordination and communication mechanism with different ministry of Bangladesh government, such as Department of Disaster Management (DDM), Ministry of Food and Disaster Management, Ministry of Environment & Forest for sharing the best practices and learning through field based demonstration.

CMDRR forum also is emphasizing on popularization of the concept and concept to the vulnerable community from the hazard prone zone. Forum also emphasis on policy dialogue and addressing the emerging risk and hazard such as earth quake, fire, water logging and so on.

## What is CMDRR ?

CMDRR is a process, which follows a number of participatory approaches for community hazard analysis and risk assessment leading to undertake joint action plan (prevention, mitigation, increase survivability, community readiness) to reduce vulnerability and risk.

CMDRR emphasizes community engagement in all aspects of assessment → Plan → implementation → monitoring through community organization.

Community Managed (CM) means that the local population itself leads the process. The organizations that support them merely play the role of guidance advisors. This allows people to make an analysis themselves of their own context, and to take any relevant measures that lead to improve their own living conditions and make them safer.

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) means limiting the risks of disasters possibly occurring, and also reducing their impact because people are able to take adequate measures.

## Why a CMDRR Forum ?

All the 13 Member-organizations supported by CORDAID and working in the areas of Disaster Risk Reduction in Bangladesh gathered in Mymensingh on 1st Learning Cycle Meeting during March 29 to April 02, 2009. The member organizations felt the urgency and thereby decided to form a Hazard? specific and Risk Reduction-focus Forum towards collaboration, cooperation and coordination in the area of Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction, to maintain a regular operational link among the actors with a view to better risk management, capacity building and livelihood protection & promoting performance.

## At a glance Best Practice

### A SAKO BUILT WITH THE JOINT UTMOST OF VDRR COMMITTEE:

They build a 510 feet length and 9 feet height Sako over the canal through their self labor. Now the villagers are moving on the Sako to different places. As a result, students' attendance to the school

is increased. It is possible to take sick people to the treatment center. In this way, the long lasting communication problem of the inhabitants of Durgapur village is resolved.

### VDMC Role:

The road re-construction is managed successfully without external support. The villagers/community people and the students are very happy for having the nice road as trafficable and they are able to use the

road in all season. The VDMC is committed to further maintenance and care of the road.

### Promised Can Minimize Loss of Lives and Properties from Disaster:

In the time of cyclone in 29 April 1991 Hasna Banu and her neighbor also faced a hazardous circumstance like others. After long fighting with wave and weather she and her neighbors saved their life from disaster.

They lost their house hold & livestock. Their crops also destroyed by overflow. The salt water ruins the soils. In that time they don't know the process how to stay safe from disaster.

### Haor Life of Match and Mismatch with Nature:

Every year in recent days for last 20 years unusually severe, prolonged and repeated floods come and hit haor areas, destroy crops, bring

miseries, washed villages with trees, settled structure to make hundreds of people homeless and absolute landless.

### A Friendship Initiative:

Group Dynamics of Char Kuchkhali: By adopting and practicing various assessments, tools and techniques of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)

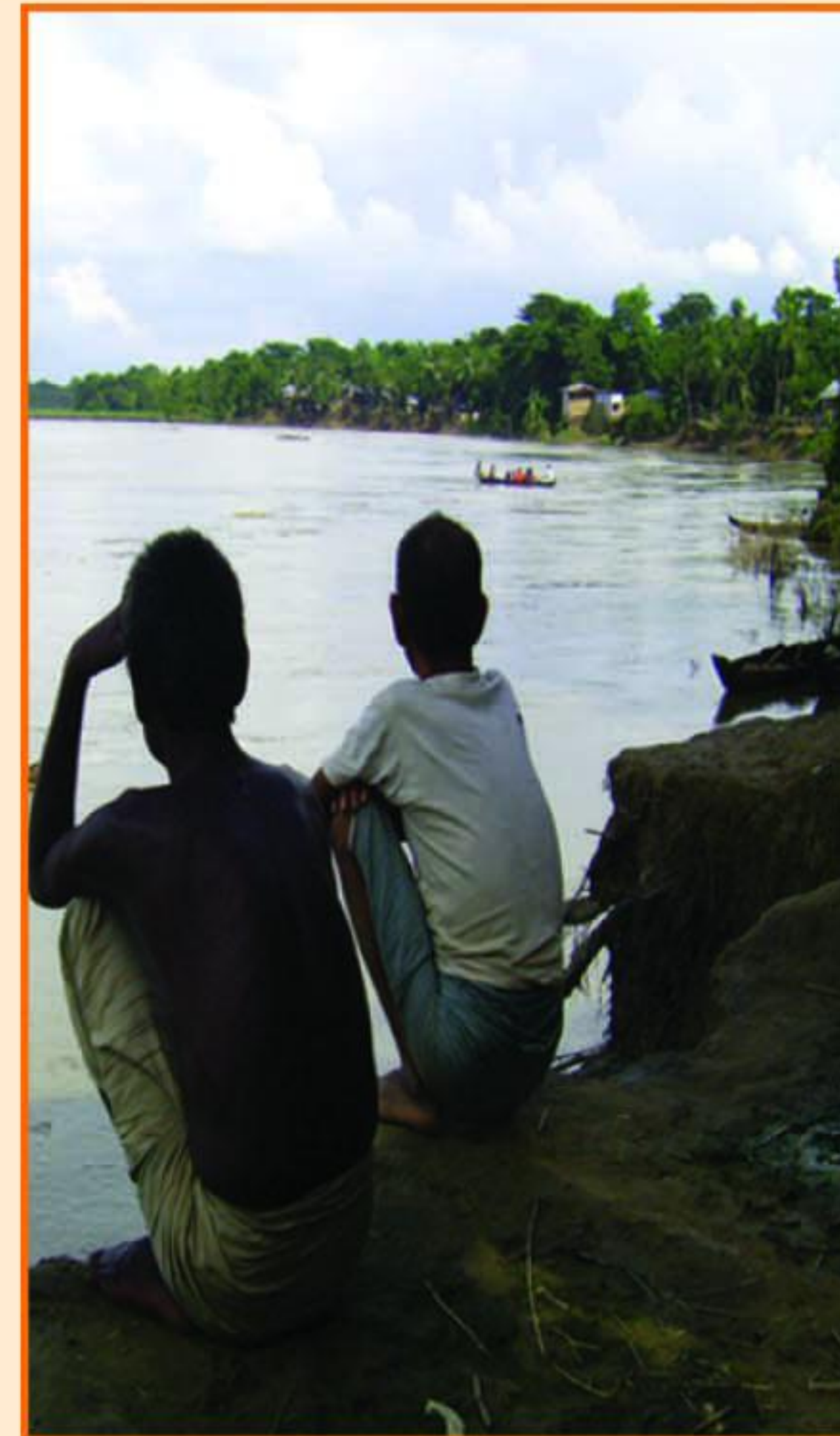
now they understand how to keep their char resilient. Community managed approach is practiced in this DRR activity.

## Disaster v/s Bangladesh:

Bangladesh is a small country of an area of 144 thousands square kilometer in South Asia. It is exposed to almost hazards due to its geographical setting, topography and above all poverty. There are very few countries and peoples in the world who know about disaster and hazard better than the people of Bangladesh. Peoples of this country are always fighting against different types and colors of disaster and hazard.

Bangladesh is one of the most disaster affected country in the world. From decade to decade Bangladesh has been facing different types of disaster causing huge damages both human and wealth. Disaster is also a barrier for this country to development. In eighteenth century earth-quake make the shape of the land of north-eastern region. In the last century some major cyclone had been occurring and causes a lot of destruction. Frequency of cyclone is increasing day by day due to climate change impact. Millions of people had died and billions of people became shelter less in last couple of cyclone and tidal surge, such as, cyclone and tidal surge in 1970, cyclone in 1988, 1991, cyclone Sidre in 2007, cyclone and tidal surge Aila in 2009 etc.

Major hazards in this delta are cyclone, tidal surge, flood, flash flood, land slide, heavy rainfall, draught, thunder storm, hail storm, tornado cold wave, huge density of fogging, water logging, earth quake, fire etc. Entire hazards are causing damages of crops, homestead, trees, roads and communication etc. Some manmade hazard also happened which reflecting a bad impact in our nature and environment like blocked of rivers come from India, dewatering of wetland etc. Flood and draught causes the damages the crops every year while cold wave causes different diseases in our community. Draught causing the ground water level down than the normal existing level year to year. Heavy rainfall and land slide causes deaths.





## Best Practice 1:

### A Sako Build with the joint utmost of VDRR Committee

Sunamgonj district, surrounded with haor, rivers, canals and marshland, is situated north-eastern part of Bangladesh. Bishwamvorpur is one Upazila of Sunamgonj district. The rows of the high rocks of Indian Meghalays State covered Bishwamvorpur with the shadow of motherly affection. Durgapur is one of the under privileged villages of the Badaghat South Union under this Upazila. There are 112 families are living in this village and the total population of this village is about 589.

Most of the villagers' are mainly involve in occupation as day labor as well as marginal farmer. As a canal separates this village from the main road, the villagers has to suffer a lot during movement from the village. In spite of communicating with the different service providers about this matter, they do not have any solution. With the onset of statehood, VDRR (Village Disaster Risk Reduction) Committee organized a mass meeting in the consultation of VARD-CMDRR Project Staff. The villagers are now able to understand very well through the meeting that it is very important to build a Sako (a mate-shift Narrow pathway over a canal made of bamboo) over the canal to remove the suffering during movement from the main road to the village and they have to solve this problem themselves. Hence, in order to build a Sako over the canal, the villagers form a committee and make plan. They collect money from the solvent families of the village. They build a 510 feet length and 9 feet



height Sako over the canal through their self labor. Now the villagers are moving on the Sako to different places during monsoon. As a result, students' attendance to the school is increased. It is possible to take sick people to the treatment center. In this way, the long lasting communication problem of the inhabitants of Durgapur village is resolved.

During dry season they use to remove the sako and sell the bamboo in a reduction price. They invest the amount they got from selling bamboo to some inhabitation of the village for next monsoon sako building. They manage this cycle since last 4 years.

`To solve the problem ourselves without waiting for others help is the best policy`. The inhabitants of Durgapur village have proved this saying again through this imitable/ideal example.

## Best Practice 2:

### VDMC Role:

Village Disaster Management Committee (VDMC) is an approach of Environment & Disaster programme activities of RDRS Bangladesh, where members play the key role in disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change mitigation management, development & extension at village level for their assets protection and livelihoods improvement. The VDMCs are 30-40 group members where one chairman has been selected among the group members. Most important support led and need-based program which are disseminated by RDRS through 60 VDMCs for DRR & mitigate climate change vulnerability issues as best practices those are as homestead plinth raising, link road reconstruction/maintenance to safe access in shelter, solar panel distribution, bio-gas plant construction, rice bank installation, technology transfer by implementing cropping pattern, vermi-compost, etc.

A Village Disaster Management Committee (VDMC) of Char Mornia is situated very nearby of Teesta river in Mornia union under Gongachara upazila of Rangpur district. The VDMC find a lower road which is connected some villages, haragach bazar to Rangpur town as well as outside local upazilas of Lalmonirhat district through Teesta river ferry ghat. The lower portion of the road is about 2 feet down than that of normal land and 200 feet long with 8 feet wide.





The lower part of the road is submerged in water every year and exists about 6 month's period. The surrounding people of the villagers face problem while crossing the lower portion of road during rainy season. The road is also created problem for those people who are get daily local

up-down movement, hat-bazaar as well as school/college going students. So, the problem is common phenomena in the area every day. As a result, most of the villagers are used extra cloths like; lungi or local gamcha while crossing the road in rainy season. The nearest or the outsiders could not use any vehicle due to the same problem.

However, the local VDMC and the community people of the area first think about to collect some fund from local government but failed. Then, they take decision to contribute their own support as they have huge man power. So, they decided to contribute day labor as volunteer service to re-construction of road. At the time of severe cold during December, they managed 72 people as volunteer service. They start earthworks of road and completed within two days as per proper design. A bamboo mat is also made on road for passing irrigated water. They could finish the earthworks of road with proper compaction and also completed turfing in both sides of road slope.

The road re-construction is managed successfully without external support. The villagers/community people and the students are very happy for having the nice road as trafficable and they are able to use the road in all season. The VDMC is committed to further maintenance and care of the road. Really, the work was as CMDRR approach without external support. RDRS is also expecting that some works should be further replication by the VDMCs.

## Best Practice 3:

### “ Promised Can Minimize Loss of Lives and Properties from Disaster”



Hasna personally discussed with her neighbor that “Disaster can be reduced through sensitizing, community mobilizing and capacity building”. She is a good volunteer out of nine volunteer of Barbakia Union, 04 no ward of FVDRR project. Hasna also said; “Our life was like a boat without a rudder in front of disaster but FVDRR project under Caritas helped us to survive our life. Now we know the defensive and mitigation measures taken before any disasters, can save many people’s lives. I also want to tell our people about DRR along with Caritas”. She always motivates the villagers about the goal of FVDRR (CORDAID) Project in WDMC and VDMC monthly meetings regularly and also ensured their presence in the meeting.

Bangladesh is prone to many kinds of natural disasters. Of these natural disasters, the most important ones to mention are tropical cyclones with associated storm-surges and floods. The occurrences of cyclones and floods at times make significant impact both on social life and topography of the country.

Pekua is one of the most vulnerable upazilla of Cox’sbazar district. Pekua upazila contains 7 (seven) unions. Every year all these unions affected

terrible flash flood, water logging and tropical cyclone due to heavy rains and high tidal water. This cost many damages and harmful effect in their life, livelihood and wealth as well. Barbakia union is one of the affected unions under Pekua Upazilla. Hasna Banu is a habitant of this union. Hasna (45) is a mother of three daughters and wife of Md. Abdul Mannan, who is running a grocery shop at Pekua Bazar. Hasna involved with Caritas since 2008 as a WASH taskforce member under SCDRM project.

In the time of cyclone in 29 April 1991 Hasna Banu and her neighbor also faced a hazardous circumstance like others. After long fighting with wave and weather she and her neighbors saved their life from disaster. They lost their household & livestock. Their crops also destroyed by overflow. The salt water ruins the soils. In that time they don’t know the process how to stay safe from disaster. Three cyclone Center was made by Red Crescent & Soudibangla organization as well in that area before the cyclone of 1991. But the villagers didn’t use it as it should be. As others Hasna Banu also received many damages and harmful effect in their life, livelihood and wealth as well.



Hasna Banu participated in a “Mockdril” which was organized by Caritas FVRDD (CORDAID). The subject of the Mock drill on warning signals and response mechanism including search, rescue and first aid on dated 28 April. 3.00pm 2013 On the 16 March 2013, she took “Disaster risk management training for VDMC where she able to know Basic concept on climate change and adaptation”. After that she became a regular member of Ward Disaster Managements Committee. She also attends the weekly meeting regularly and doing needful for Caritas FVDRR project.

Hasna Banu promised that she will assist his family and neighbor/other villagers to minimize loss of lives and properties in the time of disaster. We can learn from Hasna “good promises win all”.

## Best Practice 4:

### Haor Life of Match and Mismatch with Nature:

Boatmen rowed our small boat through the Kalni River at early in the morning of late November- a shining Autumn day. The sun was pouring golden rays over water, misty river bank and on miles and miles stretched green golden haor land totally hollow as far as could be seen and feelings go. A tiny patch of raised mound Tajpur village inside deep Chetia haor was our destiny. We were going to see a rare piece of human endeavor to match with natural havoc amidst mismatch tyrant changes of flood waves- people called it "Afal".

The endeavor was a pure example and true efforts of Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction (CMDRR) and human stand to mend negative impact of climate change. Every year in recent days for last 20 years unusually severe, prolonged and repeated floods come and hit haor areas, destroy crops, bring miseries, washed villages with trees, settled structure to make hundreds of people homeless and absolute landless.

Abdul malek was met in the village, in his word lives in the haor, were passed years after years in struggles and fighting against "Afal" waves to protect lands from erosion in vain. Coconut and Betel-nut gardens at

north side on 10-12 acres disappeared, two third of village graveyard disappeared, half of mosque land disappeared, 28 households from out of 70 families of the village lost homestead lands into the river. Some 80 years ago his father came to settle in the village and it was named after his father's name Haji Tajmia. Now he is an old man of 60 years and witness of many changes. In local Bengali accent he said to us "Shara bosor ja kamai tar modada bari bandhoner kamay kharcha hoyo jai. Polapaner khaoner jogar kortay janda baer hoyo jai". His main point was that most of earning every year drained on refilling eroded land by earth in vain.





Villagers individually and collectively appealed to many places and leaders for years after years to do anything. Every promise evaporated into air after election.

The new endeavor had started last year after awareness and motivational training on CMDRR by local NGO, Supported by POPI.

Last year community people formed VDC and a steering committee to plan a village protection effort. It was decided to erect an earthen and bamboo made retaining wall at the north side of the village. Community people contributed money, materials and labour in the erection of the fence. It is a 500 meter long wall of mud and bamboo which cost BDT 40600. Cash, free labour and kind support and other work combinedly exceeded Tk. 100000. The impact fall immensely on the security and protection of the village from “Afal” erosion. Nobody can claim the credit of such CMDRR effort except men and women of the families of Tajpur village.

Our boat was anchored at the ghat of the village about 9:30 am. We enjoyed greetings sound from hundred of women, men and children and became speechless for few minutes looking with astonishment a job accomplished by own planning and resources of villagers. A 500 meter long and 8 meter high bamboo wall dazzling under soft light of morning sun.

We walked slowly with Fultula Bibi, Shamsun Begum, Abdul Malek and hundreds of villager toward the dias at the centre of village.

## Best Practice 5:

### “A Friendship Initiative: Group Dynamics of Char Kuchkhali”

Char Kuchkhali is situated in Fajlupur Union under Fhulchori Upazila of Gaibandha District. Kuchkhali char dwellers are surviving by regularly facing various disasters like; river erosion, flood, drought etc. These major disasters are mainly affecting on infrastructures, health, livelihood, education, water, sanitation, livestock, forestry and communications.

By continuous realization of this situation, community people formed a group consisting of 30 members for reducing their disaster risk. They are making their group very much dynamic through various group works. By adopting and practicing various assessments, tools and techniques of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) now they understand how to keep their char resilient. Community managed approach is practiced in this DRR activity. Here not only DRR activity but also various development activities are going on with success. Now the people of this char are developing their life in more resilient manner.

After forming their group, first they conducted many group meetings to set the responsibilities. They have conducted Participatory Disaster Risk Assessment (PDRA) to find out their hazard, risk, vulnerability and

capacity. Then they developed a detailed Action Plan for six months. For the contingency period they made one effective Contingency Plan. According to the plan they raised contingency fund by their regular contribution and raised an amount of BDT 13,750/-.





In group meetings and discussions the decisions they have taken are listed below:

- Facing disaster by community management
- Increase group dynamics
- Develop action plan
- Develop contingency plan and fund
- Local resources mobilization plan
- Develop sustainable livelihood

The decisions helped them to find out their gap through various courtyard meetings and assessments. For filling up their gap they got some necessary training.

These are:

- Training on Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction (CMDRR) and Climate Change Adaptation
- Training on Leadership Development and Group Dynamics
- Training on Local Resources Mobilization
- Training on Livestock (Poultry and Cattle Rearing)
- Training on Tree Plantation, Crop and Vegetable Cultivation



As a follow up of the action plan, they repaired their shelters, roads, house plinths, latrine, tube-well and schools. Also they raised house plinth, installed new latrines and tube-wells. They constructed one boat to take people and assets from existing place to flood shelter or safe place.

For the sustainable livelihood they involved themselves in various activities like- vegetable gardening, crop cultivation, poultry, livestock, fishing etc. They took some amount from their contingency fund then they are

doing livestock business, like- selling goat, lamb etc. This is ultimately increasing their individual earnings and enhancing their contingency fund. They got vegetable seed and cultivated it in bed system. This technology learns and helps them to do cultivation in larger scale within a smaller space. They earned handsome amount from their cultivation. Since they are inspiring from group, now community is involving themselves in more and more livelihood opportunities. By this they are also fulfilling community nutrition demand at all level. They planted many tree around the char.

## Achievements of the Group at a Glance:

Sl.	Item	Details
1	Infrastructure Repair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 20 house repair</li> <li>● 15 house plinth repair</li> <li>● 5 latrine repair</li> </ul>
2	Infrastructure Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 5 house plinth raise</li> <li>● 15 latrine installation</li> <li>● 1 tube-well installation</li> <li>● 1 boat construction</li> </ul>
3	Contingency Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Till now they raised BDT 13,750/-</li> </ul>
4	Contingency Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Storing dry food, medicine, movable burner, cash support, boat support etc.</li> <li>● Linking govt. and NGOs' support with the community like-relief, health, rehabilitation etc.</li> </ul>
5	Livelihood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Crop cultivation</li> <li>● Vegetable gardening in all house</li> <li>● Poultry and Livestock in all house</li> <li>● Livestock business by group</li> </ul>
6	Local Resources Mobilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Collecting all the resources and mobilize all the resources based on need like - boat support, livelihood support</li> </ul>
7	Tree Plantation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Total 868 trees are planted around char</li> </ul>

This progress was made possible through a collective group effort. This group dynamic has been successfully replicated in 31 hard to reach areas made possible by following Friendship's CMDRR approach. Half of these remote areas are in the chars of the Northern Region and the rest are in the low lying coastal areas of the South. Due to the lack of proper infrastructure in these regions communication is difficult. However, through hard work, determination and support from Friendship the group effort prevailed.

# Photo Mound



They are mapping their hazards and social factors



Children are raising community's awareness



Women led disaster preparedness



Community mobilizing its own resources for risk reduction initiatives



Community member participation in risk mitigation activities





The community has its own early warning mechanism activated



Community is coming into the advocacy process



Wounded Rescue



Save lives through floating on water using plastic containers/bottles



Apply first aid to person after rescue like taking water out from abdomen/inside the body and artificial respiration



Mitigate River Erosion



Working in cohesion for CMDRR

# Members



**Caritas-Bangladesh (CB)**



**FIGHT FOR HUNGER (FFH)**



**FRIENDSHIP**



**Action on Disability and Development (ADD)**



**Palli Gono Unnayan Kendra (PGUK)**



**Young Power in Social Action (YPSA)**



**Voluntary Association for Rural Development (VARD)**



**Concern Universal Bangladesh (CUB)**



**Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM)**



**Integrated Development Association  
of Bangladesh (INDAB)**



**Pidim Foundation**



**RDRS Bangladesh**



**People's Oriented Program Implementation (POPI)**