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National Alliance of Humanitarian Actors, Bangladesh

State of
Humanitarian Actions
in Bangladesh 2023

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Ground-level Solution

Localization

Coordination

Participation

Partnership

Funding

Nexus

Capacity

Community Resilience
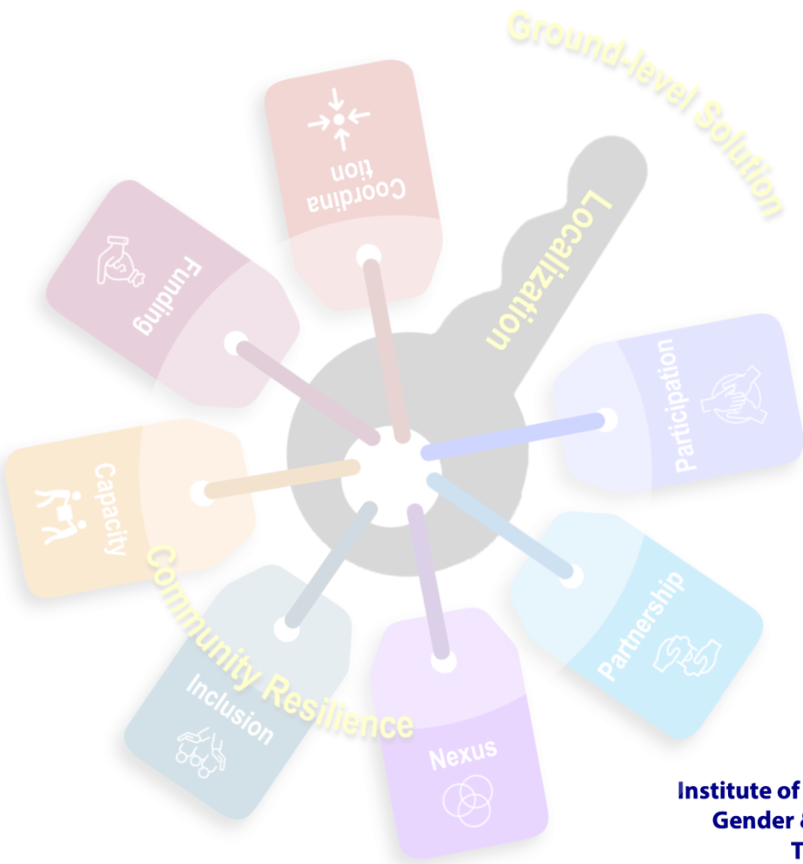
Inclusion

# State of
# Humanitarian Actions
# in Bangladesh 2023

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Technical Support:

Institute of Innovations for
Gender & Humanitarian
Transformations

inSights

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# Editorial Introduction

The NAHAB State of Humanitarian Actions 2023 Report is a collection of examples showcasing efforts towards the localization of humanitarian responses in Bangladesh at the grassroot level. The key focus remains on seven thematic areas: Partnership, Funding, Capacity, Participation, Coordination, Inclusion, and Nexus. The changes over the last four years (2019-23) are expected to be depicted (as much as possible) to show the extent of localization efforts in Bangladesh.

This report is the second edition of the State of Humanitarian Actions in Bangladesh 2019[1]. NAHAB planned to publish the report biannually, however, because of COVID pandemic situation, it could not be published as it was planned.

To account for the developments in the humanitarian support system to date, the Localization Performance Measurement Framework (LPMF)[2] indicators of assessment in the relevant focus areas are used with required adaptations to contextualize for Bangladesh. The nine domains of Humanitarian Core Standards (CHS)[3] have also been used to analyze the relevance of the cited examples. To narrate the macro and micro-level solutions, the initiatives by various actors and the knowledge gathered by NAHAB in the focused areas are used to sense the related changes in the humanitarian sector.

It is expected that this reporting would pave the path for advocacy, programme planning, promoting coordination, and partnership with government, development partners, the private sector, and media, contributing to localization as well as community resilience. The report State of Humanitarian Actions in Bangladesh 2023 contains nine chapters of which seven are theme-based chapters. Besides, there is an introductory chapter and a way forward chapter. Towards the end of the report, brief of NAHAB growth and members is given in the Appendix-01.
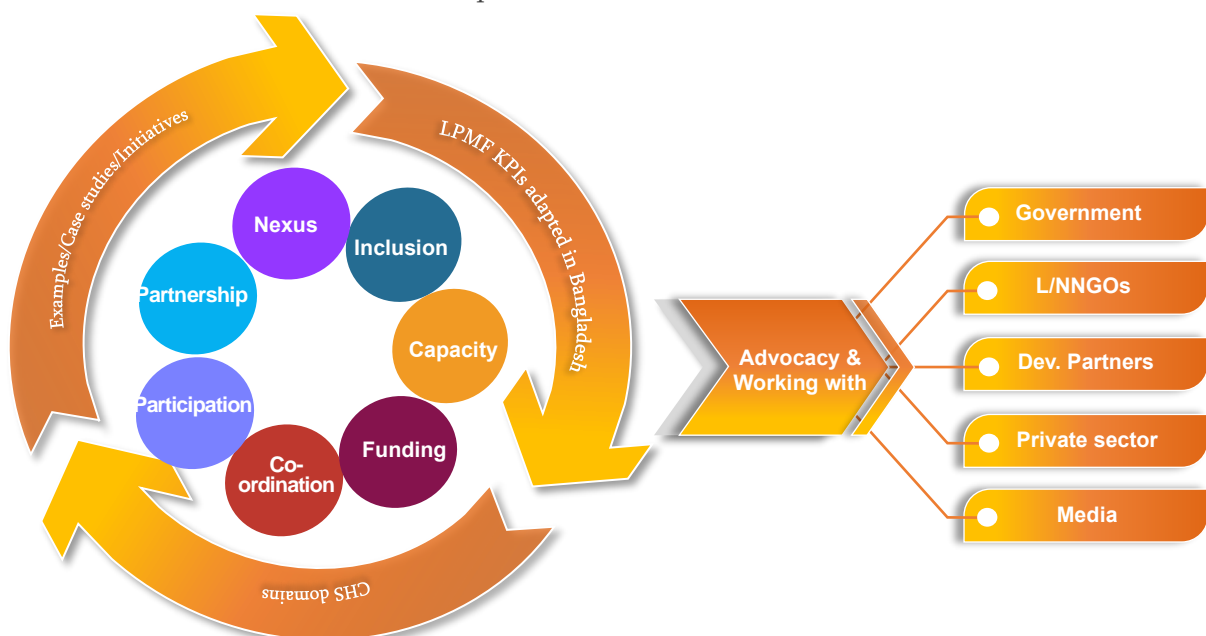


**Chatr #1:** *The conceptual framework of the 2023 report*

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[1] http://www.nahab.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Nahab-Report_2019_b_low1.pdf

[2] https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5fc4fd249698b02c7f3acfe9/t/6011621dba655709b8342a4c/1611751983166/LMPF+Final_2019.pdf

[3] https://www.corehumanitarianstandard.org

# Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| ADPC | Asian Disaster Preparedness Center |
| AHP | Australian Humanitarian Partnership |
| BDRCS | Bangladesh Red Cross & Red Crescent Society |
| BFSCD | Bangladesh Fire Service & Civil Defense |
| BPP | Bangladesh Preparedness Partnership |
| C4C | Charter for Change |
| CBDRR | Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction |
| CCNF | Cox's Bazar CSO-NGO Forum |
| CLP | Char Livelihood Programme |
| CPP | Cyclone Preparedness Programme |
| CRA | Community Risk Assessment |
| CSO | Civil Society Organization |
| DFAT | Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia |
| DM | Disaster Management |
| DMA | Disaster Management Act |
| EOC | Emergency Operations Centre |
| GBV | Gender Based Violence |
| HCTT | Humanitarian Coordination Task Team |
| HRP | Humanitarian Response Plan |
| ICT | Information Communication Technology |
| IMDMC | Inter-Ministerial Disaster Management Committee |
| INGO | International Non-governmental Organization |
| ISCG | Inter-Sector Coordination Group |
| JRP | Joint Response Plan |
| KPI | Key Performance Indicator |
| LPMF | Localization Performance Measurement Framework |
| LNNGO | Local and National Non-governmental Organization |
| LNHA | Local & National Humanitarian Actors |
| LTWG | Localization Technical Working Group |
| MODMR | Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief |
| NAHAB | National Alliance of Humanitarian Actors Bangladesh |
| NAWG | Need Assessment Working Group |
| NDMC | National Disaster Management Committee |
| NDRCC | National Disaster Response Coordination Committee |
| NEOC | National Emergency Operation Centre |
| RGA | Rapid Gender Analysis |
| RRRC | Refugee Relief & Raptriation Commissioner |
| SDG | Sustainable Development Goal |
| SFDRR | Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction |
| SOD | Standing Orders on Disaster |
| UNRC | United Nations Resident Coordinator |
| WHS | World Humanitarian Summit |

# Partnership



Ground-level Solution

Localization

Coordination

Participation

Funding

Partnership

Capacity

Community Resilience

Inclusion

Nexus
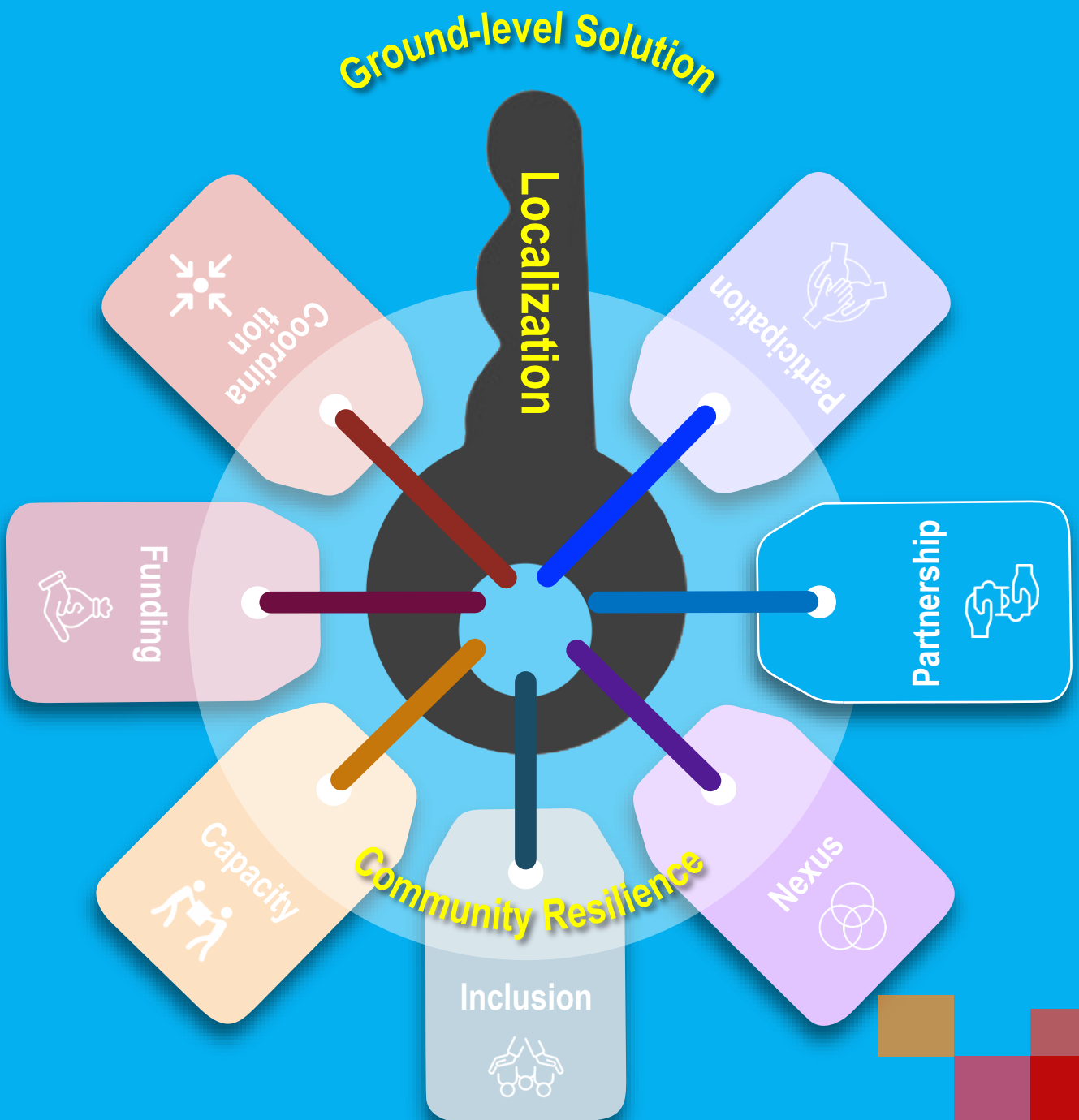
# Chapter 2: Partnership

This chapter of the report illustrates examples of quality in relationships, the shift from project-based to strategic partnerships, and the engagement of partners during the project cycle. It also addresses harmonizing due diligence and reporting requirements, among other aspects. Examples include:

- Showcasing partnerships of INGOs and L/NNGOs in the DFAT-AHP III project, Cox's Bazar.
- C4C Country Level Dialogue in Bangladesh: A common platform of signatories and Endorsers.
- Bangladesh Preparedness Partnership (BPP) - A tested model of multi-sectoral collaboration and coordination.

An effective and equitable partnership contributes to attaining several Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS), ensuring that communities and people affected by crises receive assistance appropriate and relevant to their needs (CHS 1) and at the right time (CHS 2). It also ensures that communities and people are not negatively affected and are more prepared, resilient, and less at risk (CHS 3), and that organizations learn from experience and reflection through the delivery of improved assistance (CHS 7).

The Localization Performance Measurement Framework (LPMF) KPIs stress: i) quality in relationships, ii) a shift from project-based to strategic partnerships, and iii) engagement of partners throughout the project cycle.

In this chapter, there are demonstrated examples of partnerships among INGOs, and L/NNGOs, private sector engagements, and the engagement of academia and media in BPP. There are also country-level dialogues between INGOs and L/NNGOs who are signatories and Endorsers of C4C. These cases of partnership can be read with reference to the NAHAB 2019 Humanitarian Actions Report chapter on Partnership (Chapter 9), which focuses on partnerships of public and private sector stakeholders. An analysis can also be made by referring to the partnership principles, advocacy efforts for promoting partnership, and the NAHAB position paper on partnership (referred to in Chapter 10 of the 2019 Report) towards exploring diversified partnerships and consortia.
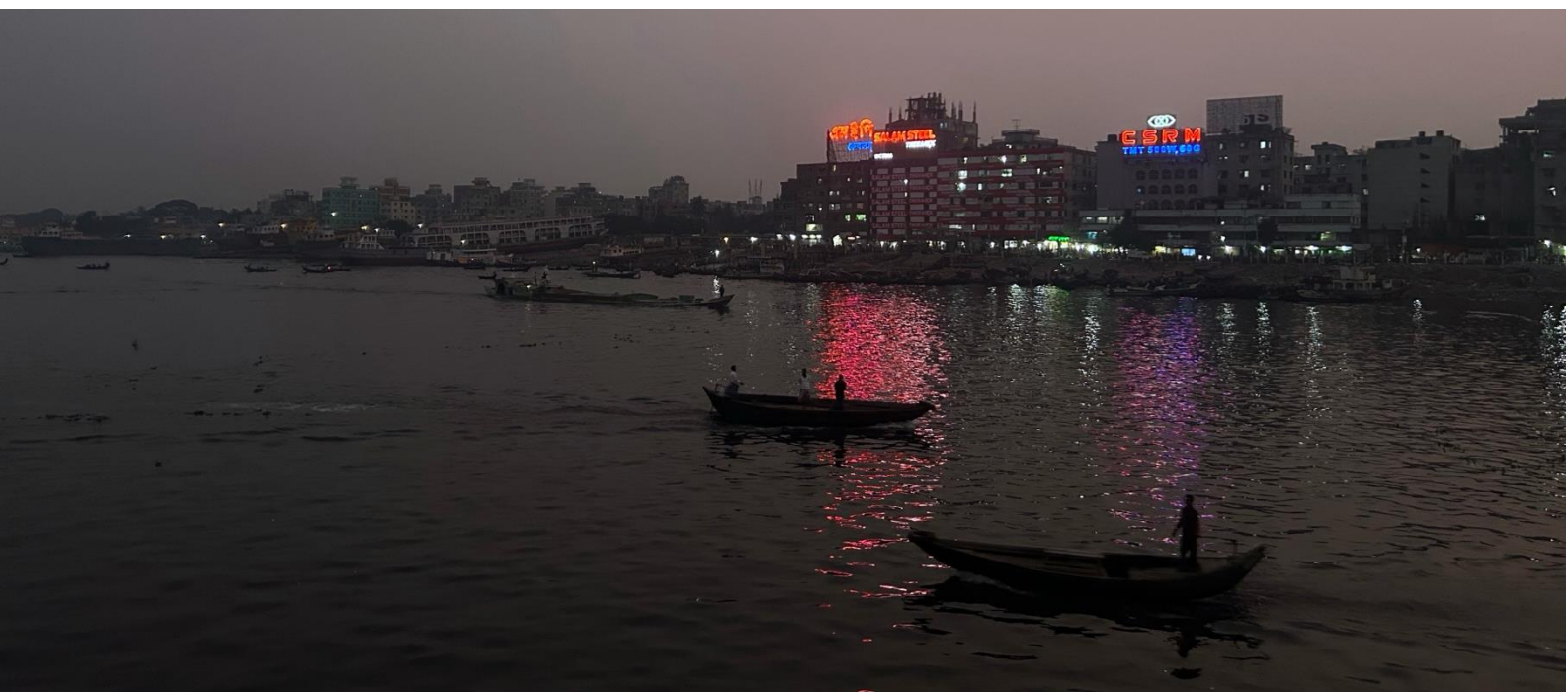
# SHOWCASING PARTNERSHIP OF INGOS AND L/NNGOS IN THE DFAT-AHP III PROJECT, COX'S BAZAR

■ Md. Roushon Ali, NAHAB Secretariat

**Introduction:** DFAT-AHP III is a consortium-based project led by CARE Bangladesh, featuring a partnership of six INGOs and twelve national and local organizations and networks in Cox's Bazar. This project demonstrated good examples of partnerships among INGOs, and L/NNGOs addressing global commitments in the Grand Bargain4 and Charter for Change (C4C)5. The partnership of four C4C signatories (Christian Aid, CARE, Oxfam, and CBM) out of thirty-nine global signatories and five national L/NNGOs (CDD, Mukti Cox's Bazar, DAM, YPSA, and Caritas Bangladesh) out of twenty-four C4C Endorsers present in Bangladesh made the project unique. With technical support from NAHAB, these organizations collectively worked to promote localization in Cox's Bazar district, making this project especially valuable.

The following table shows the partner organizations involved in this project:

| Consortium Members | Implementing & Local Partners |
|---|---|
| CAN DO | ■ EKOTA Consortium: <br> ✦ Christian Aid <br> ✦ RDRS Bangladesh <br> ✦ Caritas Bangladesh |
| CARE BD | ■ Mukti Cox's Bazar <br> ■ Organization for the Poor Community Advancement (OPCA) |
| Oxfam in BD | ■ NGO Forum for Public Health (NGOF) <br> ■ Mukti Cox's Bazar <br> ■ Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM)/NAHAB <br> ■ Dustha Shasthya Kendra (DSK) |
| Plan Int. BD | ■ Friends in Village Development Bangladesh (FIVDB) |
| Save the Children | ■ Young Power in Social Action (YPSA) <br> ■ Partners in Health and Development (PHD) |
| World Vision | ■ Bangla German Sampreeti (BGS) <br> ■ Christian Blind Mission (CBM) <br> ■ Centre for Disability in Development (CDD) <br> ■ Young Power in Social Action (YPSA) |

**Table #1:** *International & L/NNGOs involved in DFAT-AHP-III Project in Cox's Bazar*

**1. Partnership:** By the end of 2022, consortium members had formed partnerships with 12 local implementing partners in the AHP Program, demonstrating an equitable and transparent partnership. A complementary response plan was developed based on the partners' capacity for the best response to the Rohingya and host communities. The project involved consortium partners, implementing partners, and the affected population in program design through co-creation

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4 https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain

5 https://charter4change.org/

workshops needs assessments, and shared budgeting and risk management during implementation.

**2. Capacity Strengthening:** The project emphasized capacity strengthening of local organizations for better humanitarian response. The AHP III project provided institutional and staff capacity-building training on various topics,



**Chatr #2:** *Funding Flow of AHP-III Project*
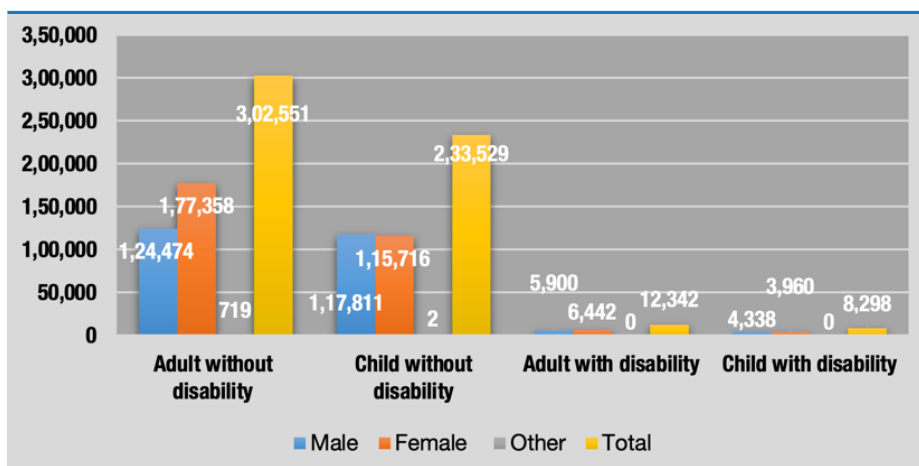


**Chatr #3:** *Project Direct Beneficiary Coverage*

including disability identification and inclusion, gender equality, PSEA, localization and reform, program quality, safeguarding, Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS), fraud and corruption mitigation, partnership frameworks and principles, project management, and reporting. Oxfam, in collaboration with NAHAB, provided a series of training sessions to enhance the capacity of AHP partners and other local organizations. CARE supported local partners

with the Community Feedback and Response Mechanism (CFRM). Save the Children's impact assessment found that 89% of their partners' staff knowledge of safe programming had increased, and they could identify safeguarding risks. EKOTA and Plan International Bangladesh provided training to 81 and 251 staff and volunteers, respectively, from their local partners. Oxfam, together with the CMU, conducted an independent review of the localization initiative, showing the impact of this capacity-strengthening training at both the field and organization levels.

**3. Greater Leadership and Decision-Making:** Oxfam Bangladesh's outcome survey revealed a 7% increase in community members' engagement in the aid deployment process. This enabled local partners to play a leadership role in working groups and platforms under the AHP Program. For example, NGO Forum led the construction of the 3rd large-scale Fecal Sludge Treatment plant in the Rohingya camp

with technical support from Oxfam. FIVDB, a local partner of PLAN, successfully enrolled itself in the Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS+).

4. Improved Resourcing: Consortium partners worked flexibly with local partners, allocating more funds to their implementing partners. The December 2022 report showed that PLAN, EKOTA, CARE, Save the Children, OXFAM, and World Vision Bangladesh (WVB) shared funds directly with their local partners by 55%, 85%, 22%, 36%, 56%, and more than 25%, respectively. The end-line evaluation of the AHP program noted progress in the localization journey during the implementation phase. This project demonstrated how a local organization could lead humanitarian responses locally. However, during an open discussion, it was felt that long-term partnerships are required for the sustainability of local organizations, allocation of funds, risk sharing, and co-creation, including proposal development, budget preparation, and joint funding applications.

## C4C COUNTRY LEVEL DIALOGUE IN BANGLADESH: A COMMON PLATFORM OF SIGNATORIES AND ENDORSERS

■ Md. Jahangir Alam, Joint Director, CC & DRR Sector, Dhaka Ahsania Mission

Introduction: The Charter for Change (C4C) has established its reputation in the post-WHS humanitarian ecosystem as a commitment by its signatories to change their practices. Initially presented at the World Humanitarian Summit's (WHS) Global Consultation in Geneva in October 2015, and officially launched at the WHS in Istanbul in May 2016, the C4C was signed by 28 international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), committing them to change the way they work with and relate to national actors. At the initial stage, C4C was endorsed by over 130 local and national non-governmental organizations (L/NNGOs). There are 8 commitments in C4C, focusing on equality, effectiveness, transparency, representation, funding and resource recognition, and support for local capacity.

C4C signatories and endorsers report annually on their progress towards meeting the eight commitments, sharing good practices, challenges, and areas for further work. Reporting began in 2017 at the global level following the launch of the Charter in 2016. In 2021, signatories and endorsers jointly organized country-level dialogues to capture progress and report to the secretariat. In Bangladesh, these dialogues were organized by Oxfam in Bangladesh as the host and Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM), Jago Nari, and Programme for Helpless and Lagged Societies (PHALS) as co-hosts, with technical support from the National Alliance of Humanitarian Actors, Bangladesh (NAHAB). The dialogues were held in three steps: Endorsers dialogue on 23 September 2021, Signatories dialogue on 09 November 2021, and joint dialogues of signatories and endorsers on 18 November 2021.
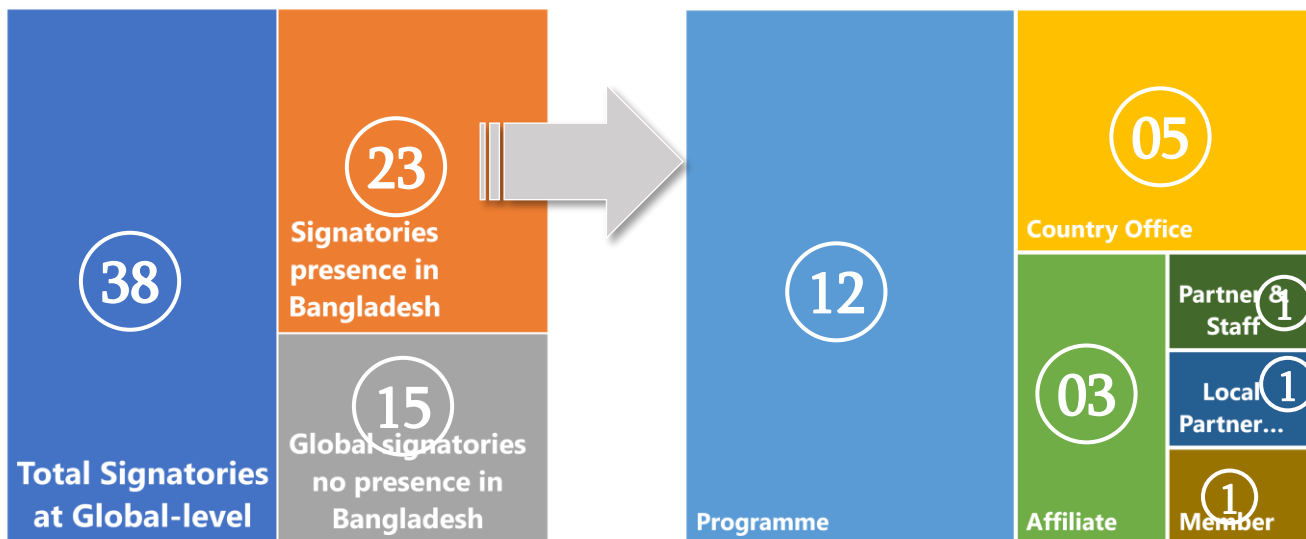
**Presence of Signatories and Endorsers in Bangladesh:** There are 38 signatories globally, with 23 presents in Bangladesh in various working modalities and involvements as mentioned in C4C Mapping. Out of 38, 23 are affiliated with the NGO Affairs Bureau[6] of the Bangladesh government.

Globally, 499 endorsers have endorsed the eight points of the Charter for Change, with only 23 organizations from Bangladesh endorsing the charter.

**Grouping of C4C Commitments:** The Charter for Change (C4C) links closely to other post-WHS processes, strengthening engagement and implementation of C4C. NAHAB analyzed the C4C commitments and grouped them into four key areas:

| Group | C4C Commitments |
|---|---|
| 01. Funding (1 & 3) | [1] Increase direct funding to national and local NGOs for humanitarian action. <br> [3] Increase transparency around resource transfers to national and local NGOs. |
| 02. Partnership Values (2 & 6) | [2] Reaffirm the Principles of Partnership. <br> [6] Address subcontracting. |
| 03. Organizational Support & Capacity Strengthening (4 & 7) | [4] Stop undermining local capacity. <br> [7] Robust organizational support and capacity strengthening. |
| 04. Promoting Roles of National Humanitarian actors (5 & 8) | [5] Emphasize the importance of national actors. <br> [8] Communication to the media and the public about partners. |

**Table #2:** *C4C grouping framework*

**Outcomes of Country-Level Dialogues:** The dialogues brought together signatories, endorsers, and allies of localization to promote local humanitarian leadership.

## Achievements and Good Practices:

- The practice of consortium-led projects, where signatories become members of consortia-led projects and partners lead the consortium, involves co-creation and joint proposal development leading to successful implementation.

- Some signatories share their Indirect Cost Recovery (ICR) with local partners, with the sharing ratio varying. Positive evidence of ICR cost sharing has increased, with some sharing equally (50-50) or more (up to 80%).

- Signatories support their partners in organizational capacity building to promote localization with shared responsibilities.

- The Localization Technical Working Group (LTWG) works under the Humanitarian Coordination Task Team (HCTT) at the country level, involving all stakeholders, including government, UN agencies, INGOs, L/NNGOs, and networks, to promote the localization process. This platform conducts localization studies and lessons learned from recent disasters.

- Start Fund Bangladesh (SFB) promotes locally led response and direct funding with the pooled fund mechanism, practicing faster humanitarian response at the community level.

## Challenges:

- Information and communication gaps exist between Signatories' headquarters and country-level offices regarding localization and C4C.

- The due diligence process varies from donor (UN & INGOs) to donor, complicating the funding process for L/NNGOs.

- Lack of well-documented ICR sharing policies by donors, INGOs, UN agencies, and their respective HQs and Country Offices.

- Most endorsers are not informed about the budget allocation and expenditure accounts of their international partners for emergency response projects.

- Only one-fourth of the endorsers regularly have the opportunity to voice their opinions and decisions during the planning and execution phases of a project.

- One-fifth of the endorsers feel that humanitarian projects help their organization in future development.

- Low budgetary allocation for local actors' staff while demanding high-quality reporting, with no budgetary allocation for organizational capacity strengthening.

- Partnership is not equally maintained, with a lack of Principles of Partnership (PoP), indicating a top-down approach still prevails in relationships between INGOs and L/NNGOs.

## Recommendations and Way Forward:

- The C4C secretariat needs to prepare a clear indicative pathway on localization for its Signatories and Endorsers.

- Signatories need to direct funding to L/NNGOs.

- Establish country-level initiatives for joint advocacy to donors, INGOs, and UN agencies to clarify their ICR policies. Joint advocacy linking country to global, recognized as a key priority in the Grand Bargain 2.0 'Caucus' on localization and the New Way of Working by UN General Assembly resolution 71/243 in August 2016, is important.

- Ensure equal sharing of Indirect Cost Recovery (ICR) for L/NNGOs to enable future organizational development. High-level consultations with heads of INGOs and UN agencies at the country level and their respective HQ counterparts are crucial to

identify barriers and ways forward for equal ICR sharing.

- Harmonize the due diligence process across INGOs and donors to make local organizations comfortable handling this issue.

- Establish a country-level Localization Information Hub and a progress-tracking mechanism involving Signatories, Endorsers, UN agencies, and networks (i.e., NAHAB, Localization Technical Working Group, CCNF).

- Engage more L/NNGOs, networks, CBOs, and others in the C4C process to enable them to practice localization at the country level.

- Conduct robust advocacy with government decision-makers on the C4C commitments and localization, involving Signatories and Endorsers.

# BANGLADESH PREPAREDNESS PARTNERSHIP (BPP): A TESTED MODEL OF MULTI-SECTORAL COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION

■ **Mohammed Ahsan Ullah,** PhD, Senior Project Manager, Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre)

Bangladesh has made significant progress in disaster preparedness over the past five decades of its independence. However, due to its deltaic geographical characteristics, the country remains at high risk of disasters. Various natural and human-induced hazards pose risks, including floods, flash floods, waterlogging, cyclones, drought, earthquakes, landslides, tidal waves, tornadoes, thunderstorms, riverbank erosion, fires, building collapse, chemical accidents, arsenic contamination of groundwater, salinity intrusion, cold waves, and biological hazards like the COVID-19 pandemic. Bangladesh formulated the first Standing Orders on Disaster (SOD) in 1997 and updated it twice, in 2010 and recently in 2019. The SOD 2019 aims to guide all stakeholders about their roles and responsibilities at every stage of disaster management from the national to the community level, following the "Whole of Society Approach" to 'leave no one behind.'

## Bangladesh Preparedness Partnership

Multi-sectoral engagement for disaster management is a core theme of SOD for an inclusive approach to reduce disaster risk and impacts in the country. The SOD 2019 and the National Plan for Disaster Management (2021-2025) recognize the need for all actors to collaborate and unite, emphasizing *it is not only the business of the government, but involves every part of society because DM for resilience contributes to sustainable development.*

To realize this vision, BPP began in 2018 with consultations with the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR) to create a sustainable partnership for advancing preparedness actions and managing disaster events. After strategic discussions involving the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, MoDMR, local actors, and ADPC, it was envisioned to create a multi-stakeholder partnership model adopting a whole-of-society approach to disaster response and preparedness. BPP was thus conceptualized to assist the MoDMR and the government of Bangladesh in operationalizing the SOD 2019 through an inclusive, flexible, and government-led partnership mechanism.

## SOD Implementation and Monitoring

Phase 1 of BPP was implemented from 2018 to 2023. The partnership mechanism worked as a conduit to unite fifteen diverse national partners under the leadership of MoDMR, allowing them to co-create and collaborate to enhance preparedness for effective response. Various non-traditional humanitarian actors, such as academia, the private sector, and the media, joined a common platform to build consensus and collectively work to improve disaster preparedness and humanitarian coordination challenges under the leadership of MoDMR. Priority interventions from the SOD 2019 were identified and jointly implemented, creating synergies, pooling expertise, and sustainably using resources from diverse sectors.

**BPP**

*An innovative partnership to support the Government of Bangladesh in leading and operationalizing its flagship policy of SOD 2019 through a multi-stakeholder partnership model.*

Private Sector

Local NGOs/Civil Society

Academia

Government

Technical Assistance & Collaboration

Effective SOD Implementation & Operationalization

*Following the* **Whole of Society** *Approach*

## Aligning with National and Global Priorities

The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) advocate for the interconnectedness of prosperous business, a thriving society, and a healthy environment. *Target 17-H of the SGDs encourages and promotes effective public, public-private, and civil society partnerships and calls for unprecedented cooperation and collaboration among all actors for its achievement.*



**Overview Of Partners Mobilized In Key Sectors**

**GOVERNMENT**
Ministry of Disaster Management & Relief (MODMR)
Department of Disaster Management (DDM)
Cyclone Preparedness Program (CPP)
Fire Service and Civil Defense (FSCD)

**LOCAL HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATION**
National Alliance of Humanitarian Actors in Bangladesh (NAHAB)
Center for Disability in Disasters (CDD)
Foundation for Disaster Forum (FD)
Bangladesh Scouts
Disaster Network (Dnet)
Network of Information Response & Preparedness Activities in Disasters (NIRAPAD)

**BANGLADESH PREPREDNESS PARTNERSHIP**

**PRIVATE SECTOR**
Federation of Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FBCCI)
Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA)

**ACADEMIA**
Dhaka University (Institute of Disaster Management & Vulnerability Studies)
BRAC University (Department of Architecture and Post Graduate Program on Disaster Management)



The 2030 Agenda is based on an interconnected economy, society and environment

PROSPEROUS ECONOMY

THRIVING SOCIETY

HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

The 2030 agenda states that short-term top-down approaches involving individual actors will not deliver long-lasting impacts for sustainable development. As businesses, society, and the environment are deeply interconnected in a complex system, *all actors must play their unique roles and utilize their unique resources, with partnerships as an essential means to maximize the collective impact of available resources. Only partnerships at the national, sub-national, and city levels can best harness and optimize the resources available – that will drive forward the fundamental change required to deliver the SDGs and impact people's lives for the better*[7].

Bangladesh is on track to graduate from the United Nations 'Least Developed Countries (LDC)' list to a 'Developing Country' in 2026[8], aiming to transition to a self-reliant nation. This presents a unique opportunity for the BPP to promote and strengthen locally-led preparedness and response actions in line with the SOD 2019.

### Shaping the Whole-of-Society Approach

BPP Phase 2, beginning in September 2023, will continue to operationalize priority interventions of the SOD 2019 through the multi-sectoral partnership model at national and sub-national levels in Bangladesh. BPP employs a three-pronged strategy to support SOD 2019 implementation for promoting and advocating locally-led actions: strengthening the partnership platform, strengthening capacities, and applying knowledge and research to build evidence. The partnership currently comprises 15 partners representing the government, private sector, local NGO network, and academia sectors.

BPP is supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) and led by the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR) with technical support from the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC).



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[7] https://sdgs.un.org/publications/sdg-partnership-guidebook-24566
[8] https://sdg.iisd.org/news/bangladesh-un-consider-expected-ldc-graduation-in-2024/
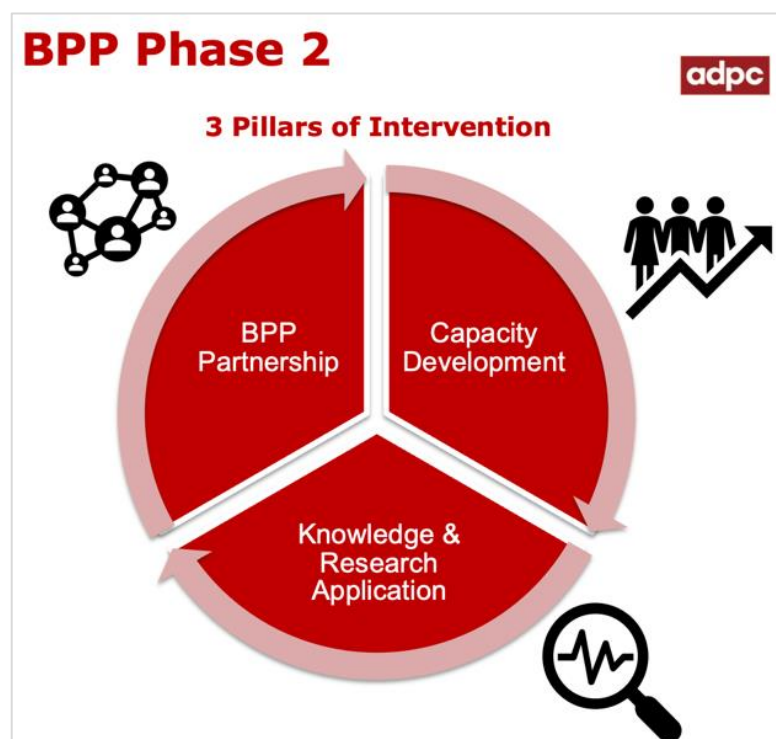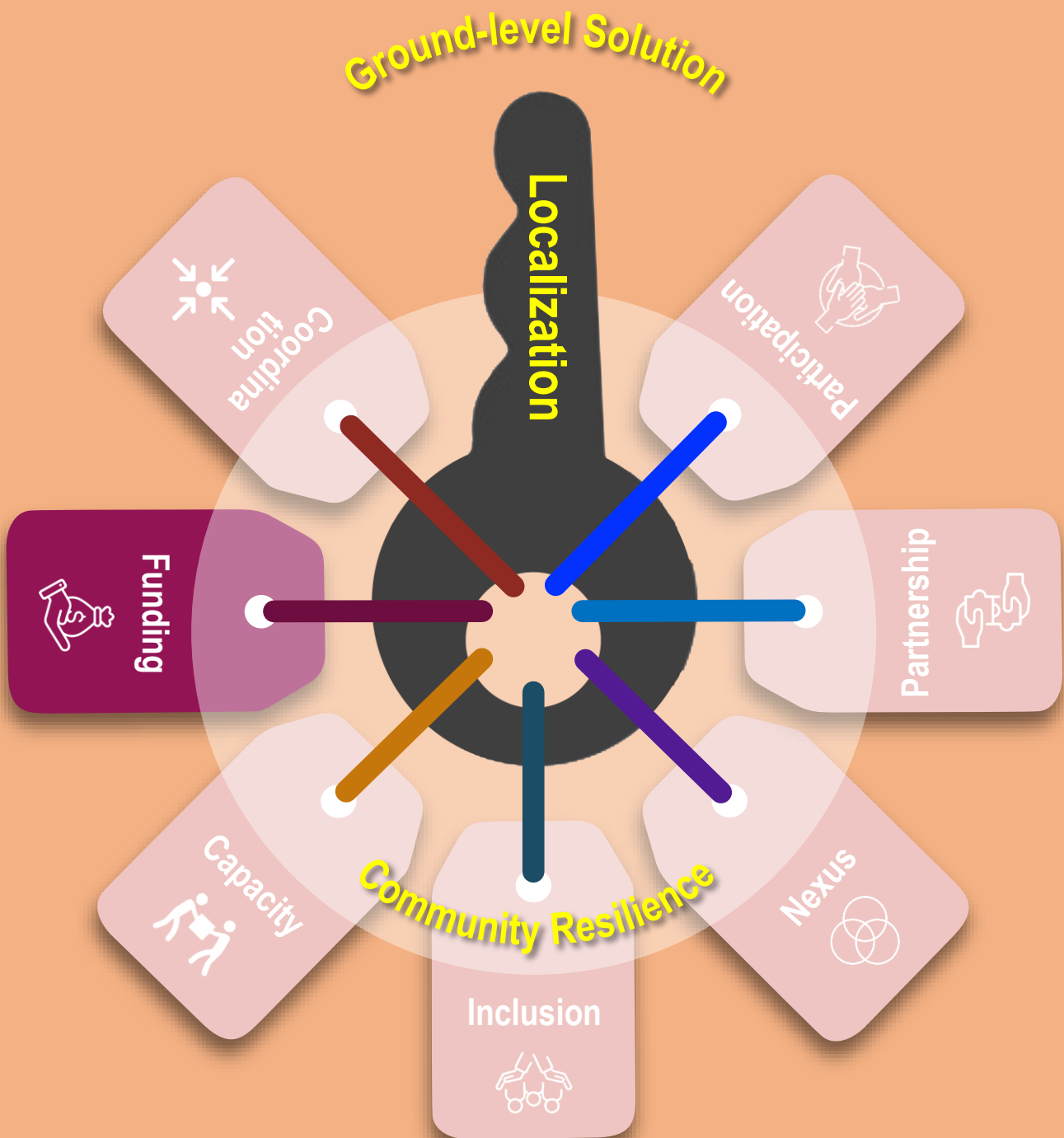
# Funding

# Chapter 3: Funding

This chapter illustrates examples of 'direct funding' scenarios both quantitatively and qualitatively, highlighting the increase and mechanisms of funding, the extent of access to 'direct funding' by local and national NGOs, flexibility in the usage of funds for mitigating real-time needs, support to meet indirect/management costs of local actors, and the potential for multi-year funding. Examples include:

3.1.   Country-based Pool Fund project examples in Cox's Bazar
3.2.   NAHAB pool fund study findings
3.3.   NAHAB Study on private sector engagement in disaster response
3.4.   Initiatives for district-level pool fund development – Guidelines and Tools developed in Sirajganj district

In the context of global and national discussions on quality and flexible funding options, including exploring mechanisms of decentralized pool funds towards effective humanitarian actions, these examples offer insights and value additions.

The Localization Performance Measurement Framework (LPMF) KPIs related to funding emphasize:
a)   Quality in relationships among the actors,
b)   Shift from project-based to strategic partnerships, and
c)   Engagement of partners throughout the project cycle.

Several Core Humanitarian Standards relate to quality funding. These include CHS 1 and 2, ensuring that communities and people affected by crises receive appropriate and timely assistance, and CHS 9, demanding that organizations assist them manage resources effectively, efficiently, and ethically.

The examples cited in this chapter serve as follow-up and reference to the scenario depicted in the NAHAB 2019 Report on resource mobilization (Chapter 6), START Fund Bangladesh, and Oxfam's HRGF as cases of L/NNGOs accessing direct funding, advocacy initiatives for decentralized pool funds, and examples of faster responses by LNGO-led consortia in Bangladesh.

# 3.1. COUNTRY-BASED POOL FUND EXAMPLES IN COX'S BAZAR BANGLADESH

■ **Sebastian Rozario,** Executive Director
Caritas Bangladesh

Pooled funds are becoming increasingly popular and well-exercised funding mechanisms in the humanitarian sector across the globe. There are several valid reasons for their broad acceptance by humanitarian actors and donors. These include filling gaps for underfunded small to medium disasters, easy and rapid access to funds for lifesaving support, scope for localized and coordinated fund allocation and implementation, flexible and direct funding scope, reduced administrative burdens and risks, and allowing innovations and capacity-building of local actors and communities.

According to a study report by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) published in September 2022, donors are increasingly willing to contribute to different pooled funds, resulting in a growing amount of money. For instance, 22 donors contributed USD 413 million to 11 country-based pooled funds (CBPFs) in 2011. Ten years later, in 2021, 39 donors contributed USD 1.13 billion to 21 CBPFs.

The Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has been active since 1985; the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) was established by the United Nations General Assembly on December 15, 2005; the Start Fund of the Start Network has been operational since 2014, and Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs) of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) have been in place since 2014. These are among the most appreciated and popular pooled fund mechanisms globally.

In Bangladesh, hundreds of local, national, and international NGOs access funds from DREF, CERF, and Start Fund Bangladesh for natural and human-induced disasters across the country. Almost all funds are used for people in need (PIN) in emergency situations across all disaster hotspots. Examining the emergency response scenario for Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMNs) in Cox's Bazar, two major pooled funds, CERF and the Local Fund for Programming for Refugees of BRAC, are notable.

**CERF:** UN agencies access significant funds from CERF for FDMNs, filling gaps in funding for food, WASH, livelihood, women and child protection, and other NFIs support. In November 2022, CERF allocated USD 9 million to six UN agencies, including the UN Migration Agency (IOM), the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Women, and the World Food Program (WFP), to provide life-saving services to over 943,000 Rohingya refugees in camps in Cox's Bazar district and on the island of Bhasan Char, and over 17,800 members of the host community in Ukhiya and Teknaf.

**Global Affairs Canada (GAC)'s Fund to the Local Fund for Programming for Refugees:** GAC initially allocated CAD 10.5 million to BRAC as a pooled fund to benefit Rohingya refugees by building local capacity and delivering interventions through Bangladeshi non-governmental organizations. The fund is for a five-year programming period. The project includes funding and capacity development support for a minimum of 23 Bangladeshi organizations in areas such as organizational governance, gender equality, environmental integration, results-based management, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse,

inclusion, humanitarian principles, transparency, and financial and fiduciary management. It also supports delivering key services such as education, skills, livelihoods, and the promotion of gender equality by national and local responders.

**Caritas Bangladesh** has been one of the strongest and most active actors in emergency response to Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMNs) in Cox's Bazar since August 2017. In the initial stage, Caritas utilized its own four pooled funds, i.e., Teg O Sheba Abhijan (TOSA), Caritas Employee's Solidarity Fund, Discretionary Fund, and Delegated Fund, to cover lifesaving food, water, and other NFIs. It is noteworthy that Caritas Bangladesh allocates USD 130,000 annually under the above-mentioned pooled funds to cover an average of 180,000 individuals who are poor, vulnerable, and disaster-affected.

As a member of the 165-member Caritas Internationalis (CI) confederation, Caritas Bangladesh has a robust fund mobilization mechanism. CI has a well-developed Protocol and Toolkit Manual for Emergency Response for all Caritas Internationalis Member Organizations (CIMOs). According to the protocol, any national Caritas can generate Situation Reports (SitReps), Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA) reports, Needs Assessment (NA) reports, and finally Emergency Appeal (EA) to CI. The CI Secretariat, based in Rome, Italy, facilitates circulation through Baobab, an online platform for sharing and exchanging all sorts of information, knowledge documents, fund appeals, and fund pledges among the 165 CIMOs.

Through the above-mentioned mechanism, Caritas Bangladesh has responded to 15 types of 114 disaster events, including 11 types of 98 natural disaster events and four types of 16 human-induced disaster events. Through emergency response, recovery, and rehabilitation, Caritas Bangladesh has reached 46.47 million people from 10.33 million households across the country through 135 emergency relief, recovery, and rehabilitation projects in 54 districts.

| Natural disasters: 98 | Human induced: 16 |
|---|---|
| 1. **Cyclone:** Cyclone in Bhola 1970, 1985, 1988, Urirchar 1991, 1993, 1997, 1998, 2005, Sidr 2007, Aila 2009, Mahasen 2013, Roanu 2016, Mora 2017, Bulbul 2019, Amphan 2020, Yaas 2021, Mocha 2023 **= 17** | 1. **Refugee influx (Rohingya)**– 1978, 1992, 2017 = 3 |
| 2. **Tornado:** 1977, 1978, 1983, 1989, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1999, 2001, 2004, 2014, 2015, 2022 **=16** | Refugee (Bihari in Bangladesh)- 1977 =1 |
| 3. **Floods:** 1974, 1977, 1978, 1980, 1983, 1984, 1987, 1988, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 **= 30** | 2. **Building collapse** – Tazreen Fashion 2012, Rana plaza Collapse 2013 =2 |
| 4. **Flash flood:** 1991, 2012, 2017, 2018, 2021, 2023 **=6** | 3. **Fire incidents in slums** – 1987, 1989, 1995, 1996, 2004, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 = 9 |
| 5. **Riverbank erosion:** 1991, 1992, 1994, 2004 **=4** | 4. **War**- 1971 =1 |
| 6. **Drought:** 1983, 1989, 1997 **=4** | |
| 7. **Arsenic:** 2004- 2015 **=1** | |
| 8. **Malaria:** 1995-1997 **=1** | |
| 9. **Landslides:** 2007, 2012, 2017 **= 3** | |
| 10. **Cold wave:** 1989, 1992, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2017 **=10** | |
| 12. **Wild elephant:** 1989, 1997, 2001, 2004 **=4** | |
| 13. **Rat flood:** 2007-2008 **=1** | |
| 11. **COVID-19:** 2020 **=1** | |

Through the same mechanism, Caritas Bangladesh mobilized a total of USD 29.82 million between FY 2017-2018 and FY 2022-2023 for FDMNs and host communities. WASH, shelter, protection, DRR, NFIs, and site management sectors were covered in 12 camps (Camp-1E, Camp-1W, Camp-3, Camp-4, Camp-4 Ext, Camp-5, Camp-8W, Camp-13, Camp-19, Camp-17, Camp-20, and Camp-20 Ext) and three upazilas for host communities. A total of 470,000 individuals from FDMNs and host communities were covered by Caritas Bangladesh. During the first influx of Rohingya in 1978, Caritas Bangladesh also responded alongside UNHCR with emergency lifesaving assistance amid significant security concerns.

However, declining funds for the FDMNs are a serious concern for quality implementation of this protracted crisis in Bangladesh. In a press release by United Nations Bangladesh, it was stated that in the last three months between January and June 2023, the Rohingya refugees faced a cut in

food aid for the second time as funds dwindled. At the beginning of this year, the per head support was USD 12, which has been reduced to USD 8 (BDT 840)[9]. This 10% reduction creates a food crisis and risk of malnutrition among the FDMN families.

Funding is declining in general for all UN Agencies, NGOs, and INGOs. UNHCR revealed locally that they faced a 60% reduction in funding for shelter and settlement programs and a 40% reduction in funding for WASH programs.

Like other humanitarian actors, Caritas Bangladesh also faced funding gaps. The total fund requested from Caritas Internationalis for the Emergency Appeal for 2023 is EUR 8.5 million, of which only 60% has been met, leaving a significant shortage of 40% of total funds. This limited funding has created tremendous pressure to respond and hence warrants a budget revision.

This decline in humanitarian assistance from the global level is attributed to the shifting attention towards the evolving crisis of the Ukraine War, the situation in Afghanistan, the COVID-19 pandemic, and significant disasters like the earthquake in Turkey. This shift in funding and strategic changes among the governments of donor partners is another reason observed by Caritas Bangladesh.

Under these circumstances, there is a need for strategic direction for the emergency response for FDMNs, including fund mobilization and other strategic aspects, such as creating a pool fund within the country until their repatriation commences. The funding crisis and repatriation strategy need to be reflected in the JRP 2024 to provide clear direction for the coming years.

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[9] UN in Bangladesh appeals for immediate funding as Rohingya refugees face new cuts in food aid, https://bangladesh.un.org/en/234253-un-bangladesh-appeals-immediate-funding-rohingya-refugees-face-new-cuts-food-aid

## 3.2. STUDY ON BANGLADESHI POOL FUND: A CASE OF POOL FUND FOR HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

Francis Atul Sarker & Abdul Latif Khan

This NAHAB study focuses on the concept of establishing a Bangladeshi Pool Fund for effective humanitarian response within the context of Bangladesh. It takes into account the historical perspective of humanitarian responses in the Indian subcontinent, including contemporary challenges posed by the influx of forcibly displaced individuals from Myanmar and the compounded impacts of natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic on the country's humanitarian landscape.

The National Alliance of Humanitarian Actors Bangladesh (NAHAB) launched this study to understand how localization and pool fund mechanisms can ensure effective and real-time services to affected communities. Historical data reveals that recurring natural disasters alone cost Bangladesh more than $10 billion in economic losses from 2000 to 2013. Compounded with the required aid for Rohingya refugees at $1 billion per year (Ovi 2017), it is estimated that Bangladesh is likely to incur a financial impact of about $3.2 billion annually, or about 2.2% of GDP[10]. To mitigate the funding needs for humanitarian response, pooled funds are an important addition to the humanitarian financing landscape at both global and country levels, providing the opportunity to meet humanitarian needs in a timely and efficient manner.

To capture the pool funding scenario in Bangladesh and explore emerging trends associated with pool funding, with particular reference to Start Fund Bangladesh and the PKSF-led *Shahosh* Fund, data from Start Fund Bangladesh has been particularly referenced and consulted. Experiences of one Start Fund receiver and one PKSF fund receiver have been collected over the phone and used in this report. Insights from the Start Fund Bangladesh Country Manager and the Deputy Director of PKSF have been particularly significant.

### A. Pool Fund: Global Perspective

In general, pooled funds are multi-donor humanitarian financing mechanisms aiming to provide a flexible and responsive source of financing for emergencies. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) manages humanitarian pooled funds, whether at the country level through Country-Based Pool Funds (CBPF) or at the global level through the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).

**Country Based Pool Funds (CBPFs)** are dominant funding pots that ensure funding is available and prioritized at the local level by those closest to people in need, empowering humanitarian leadership and fostering collaboration and collective ownership of the emergency response[11]. Critics argue that despite its inherent inclusiveness, flexibility, timeliness, and efficiency, the short-term funding nature of CBPFs is a mismatch in the Bangladesh context. They are seen as unsustainable for protracted crises, with funding conditions unfavorable for humanitarian responders in Bangladesh, characterized by cumbersome application processes and oversight arrangements.

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[10] Mayumi Ozaki. Disaster Risk Financing in Bangladesh, ADB South Asia Working Paper 46, September 2016.
[11] http://bit.ly/OCHA_CBPFs

**Joint Response Plan funding** is another model that emerged in the wake of the refugee influx from Myanmar in 2017. In parallel to CBPFs, "non-traditional," "non-Development Assistance Committee (DAC)," or "emerging" humanitarian donors are also emerging, represented by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Private and family foundations are increasingly visible in the funding scenario.

## B. Pool Fund: Bangladesh Perspective

Pooling resources for humanitarian emergency response has been practiced in the Indian subcontinent, particularly in Bengal, for centuries. The practice of donating part of one's personal wealth can be found in many socio-religious practices and cultures in South Asia, such as the Islamic traditions of *waqf* and *zakat*, and the *dharmic* giving or *dana* known to Hindus, Jains, and Buddhists[12]. Moving from the medieval era of philanthropy for humanitarian response to present-day Bangladesh, the study noted that budgetary allocations for humanitarian response are made mainly through the Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation and the Ministry of Social Welfare, channeled through local government bodies such as District Disaster Management Committees, Upazila Disaster Management Committees, and Union Parishads. The Zakat Fund is also an outstanding example of a pool fund in Bangladesh.

**Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds** are also emerging in the humanitarian landscape in Bangladesh.

## C. Pool Fund: Bangladesh NGO Perspective

The Start Fund is a major breakthrough in the humanitarian funding landscape initiated by National and International NGOs. Start Fund Bangladesh is a concrete example of the localization of the Start Network. Since 2014, the global Start Fund has provided fast, flexible funding to support people affected by small-to-medium-scale crises, underfunded emergencies, and spikes in chronic humanitarian crises. OXFAM is another INGO promoting the cause of localization vis-à-vis pool funds globally. The ELNHA project funded by Oxfam strengthens local organizations and channels funds directly to local and national NGOs. As opposed to foreign funding pots for humanitarian response, the Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation's (PKSF) *'Shahosh'* fund is a glaring example of a home-grown pool fund aimed at providing quick financial assistance to poor families affected by natural calamities. The *'Shahosh'* Fund of PKSF is an extraordinarily innovative response mechanism created by the government of Bangladesh to respond to the post-disaster needs of the affected community.

## D. Observations and Analysis

Funding for humanitarian response across the world is declining sharply, and it is likely that this trend will continue due to the adverse impacts of climate change, human-induced geopolitical crises, and earthquakes. Therefore, the study team critically analyzes these phenomena to find home-grown models of pool funding for humanitarian response in Bangladesh.

**- L/NNGO-led Pool Fund is essential:** The financial downturn triggered by COVID-19 and other natural calamities will further strain the funding pot of foreign donor agencies and countries. Given such a grim

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[12] Understanding humanitarian action in South Asia, response to famine and displacement in nineteenth and twentieth century India, Joanna Simonow, April 2015.

scenario, there is no option but to build a mechanism where national NGO-led pool funding from locally generated resources is spearheaded by the local humanitarian community and tuned to local needs and relevance. There are ample examples and opportunities for developing home-grown pool funding.

- **Start Fund Bangladesh &** *'Shahosh'* **Fund as clear path makers:** The PKSF-led Shahosh Fund offers textbook evidence for having a Bangladeshi Pool Fund generated, operated, and managed by Bangladeshi National and Local NGOs. SFB and PKSF stand as clear path makers and can be seen as stepping stones in developing a Bangladeshi Pool Fund for humanitarian actors in Bangladesh.

- **Innovation for sustainability:** Over the last five decades, Bangladesh has demonstrated excellence and proven capacity in disaster risk management. The country is widely recognized as a champion in the innovation and replication of NGO-led humanitarian crisis management. However, the NGO sector as a whole is largely dependent on foreign funds to address humanitarian emergencies. To address this inadequacy and achieve sustainability of excellence, NAHAB holds a unique position in filling the gap. NAHAB is also well-placed to initiate innovation and replication of a nationally grown Pool Fund that sustains without external support. NAHAB may take up grassroots level lessons to showcase, advocate, and influence policymakers and duty bearers towards formulating a framework for a nationally grown pool fund.

- **Complementarity and coherence as key building blocks:** A pool fund by Bangladeshi NGOs, for Bangladeshi NGOs, and of Bangladeshi NGOs requires complementarity and coherence with government strategic priorities and policies without compromising the basic principles of a civil society-led platform such as NAHAB. NAHAB may capture knowledge and lessons learned at the periphery and converge them. Harmonization between various humanitarian funds and other financing mechanisms serves as building blocks across humanitarian and development funding.

> Local Pool Fund: Innovation at the Periphery
> The study team identified at least two instances where NAHAB partners have successfully pooled funds for humanitarian actions at the grassroots level. In Sirajgonj district, a local NGO collaborated with a local businessman and private philanthropies to establish a fund for flood response. This shows the private sector's willingness to cooperate in humanitarian efforts. A similar experience was reported in Jhalokathi district. These examples of innovation at the periphery could be scaled up nationally to create

- **Trust & confidence as key for Pool Funding:** Trust and confidence are key to rolling out a home-grown Pool Funding in Bangladesh. Winning the trust of the government that Bangladeshi NGOs are capable of operating and delivering such funding mechanisms, and mutual confidence between and among fund actors, adds to the confidence that resources will be spent on the highest and most urgent priorities, delivered by well-positioned actors. Trust and confidence between and among the participating NGOs in initiating Bangladesh Pool Funding mechanisms are equally important. A note of caution must be considered while rolling out a home-grown Pool Funding, i.e., external influence. Any high-handedness from an individual, regulatory body, or foreign entity must be carefully assessed or handled.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Strategic Issues:

1. Establishing clear governance and accountability mechanisms is of paramount importance for the startup of a pool fund in the context of Bangladesh. There is a need to support and engage national and local NGOs in the co-creation of the pool fund. Start Fund Bangladesh offers a good reference for devising strategies for a Bangladeshi Pool Fund.
2. Ensure transparent and accessible information and tools to generate trust, collaboration, and inclusivity in decision-making, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and learning from the past and each other.

## Management Issues for Bangladeshi Pool Fund:

1. Set priorities for the use of funds, as prioritizing resources is a complex management task. The fund managing entity/body should not influence fund managers in setting priorities for emergencies.
2. Oversight of implementing partners towards risk management is an integral part of fund management. Many local partners may not qualify to receive or access the pool funding. Hence, introduce Partner Capacity Assessments (PCAs) and financial Due Diligence before rolling out the fund.
3. Monitoring, reporting, and continuous learning processes are part and parcel of evidence-based management. Therefore, user-friendly monitoring and reporting tools should be developed and introduced within the management function of the pool fund for transparency and accountability.

## Operational Issues for Bangladeshi Pool Fund:

1. Ensure flexibility in the operation of the pool fund, especially in staff costs, and introduce the possibility of creating new budget lines to remain grounded and context-specific.
2. Introduce Policy Instructions and Operational Handbooks for better clarity and to enhance the understanding of the national and local NGOs engaged in the implementation or operation of the pool fund.
3. Make the process as light and user-friendly as possible, as exemplified by the Start Fund's quick decision-making and disbursal process.

## Conclusion:

The study team recognizes the timely initiative undertaken by NAHAB in building a common understanding of the Pool Fund for Humanitarian actors in Bangladesh. Accordingly, the study team has endeavored to determine whether Bangladeshi National and Local NGOs feel a home-grown pool fund is fit for purpose, particularly in terms of localization commitments to reduce the earmarking of donor contributions, increase multi-year disbursements, and improve local and national humanitarians' access to funding.

## 3.3. NAHAB Study on Private Sector Engagement in Disaster Response

Dr. Md. Muzaffar Ahmed and Dr. Md. Shahajat Ali

[This section provides a concise version of the Executive Summary of the report titled "A Study on Private Sector Engagement in Humanitarian Response in Bangladesh," published in March 2021. The study was sponsored by NAHAB under the project "Empowering Local and National Humanitarian Actors (ELNHA)-II," implemented by DAM with support from Oxfam.]

The private sector in Bangladesh plays an important role by providing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds to meet the emergency demands of people during crises. NGOs working in the humanitarian sector have come together to establish the National Alliance of Humanitarian Actors in Bangladesh (NAHAB) to uphold their voice, representation, and commitment to invest in faster, more effective humanitarian actions. NAHAB promotes localization by building partnerships and networking among humanitarian actors.

The objectives of this study are to explore the possibilities of engaging the private sector and their CSR in building the capacity of humanitarian actors and enhancing emergency response. Data and information were collected through face-to-face conversations with CSR centers, ACI staff, NAHAB staff, ELNHA, and in-depth interviews with private sector representatives. Annual reports of various NGOs and private sectors, as well as the websites of different organizations, were reviewed and consulted.

Companies engage in CSR activities for reasons such as moral obligation, sustainability, reputation, increased sales and market share, improved brand positioning, increased ability to attract, motivate, and retain employees, decreased operational costs, and increased interest from investors and financial analysts. The discussion of CSR practices in Bangladesh, in its modern global terms, is relatively new, but the concept itself is not. Being part of the global market, it is difficult to ignore CSR standards, especially in the export sector. Bangladesh Bank issued a guideline on CSR for banks and Non-Banking Finance Institutes (NBFIs) in 2008, which most state-owned and private banks follow. The Ministry of Finance (MoF) in Bangladesh is preparing a CSR guideline for industries and service sectors, currently in its final stage.

Different companies and service organizations participate in CSR implementation with their own initiatives. The number of participating companies and the volume of CSR funds are increasing.

From current research findings, it is evident that there are strong possibilities for private sector engagement in building the capacity of humanitarian actors:

- There still exists uncertainty in the implementation of CSR by NBFIs, as few reports are available for public information. Although annual reports are produced, they often provide scant information. However, the number of NBFIs contributing to CSR and the amount of CSR funds is increasing, which is a positive step for the business sector. Some banks and NBFIs have improved their CSR strategies, leading to increased profits and better sustainability of products and services.

- The Ministry of Finance, Bangladesh, is preparing a CSR guideline for industries and service sectors, which is in its final stage. The absence of a government guideline has hindered proper CSR contributions and implementation. In the absence of such a document, many companies have prepared their own guidelines and implementation strategies. Some companies follow criteria like need assessment, selection of beneficiaries, and collection of stakeholder lists, and provide for monitoring and impact evaluation of CSR. Some companies implement these activities through their HRD, Marketing Departments, or through local or regional NGOs. It is evident that all companies and service organizations engage in some form of humanitarian activity with varying levels of service to the community.

Different companies and service organizations have been actively participating in CSR initiatives with their own strategies, driven by the desire not to fall behind as leading companies advance their market presence with pride in their products and services. This participation helps strengthen their market position and enhances product branding. Branding has become a vital business concept embraced globally.

However, it is noteworthy that several companies did not disclose their CSR funding publicly and even refused to provide this information during interviews. Some companies cited a lack of support services for CSR implementation, highlighting the need for immediate attention to ensure sustainable development and effective CSR practices within the community.

Given these circumstances, it is crucial to engage the private sector in investing in the capacity development of local or regional humanitarian actors. Enhancing the capacity of these actors is expected to contribute to the creation of a common fund for humanitarian response.

The following sections highlight the opportunities, challenges, and mitigation measures in capacity building for humanitarian actions and emergency responses.

## Opportunities:
- The Government of Bangladesh plays a significant role in materializing CSR. Corporates are willing to complement government initiatives on social responsibility and sustainable development for the betterment of the environment, economy, and society at large.
- There is scope for Public-Private Partnership (PPP) investment projects where private companies invest through their CSR funds to meet emergency needs. The procurement of rice harvesters through a joint effort by GoB and ACI is an example.
- Corporate representatives suggest creating a central CSR fund where the government could be part of the committee.
- The experience of business leaders in CSR requires special attention when drafting CSR guidelines.
- The humanitarian sector has vast deserving fields. The private sector's interest in contributing is encouraging and expected to be sustainable. This is an opportunity to build a developed Bangladesh by 2041. SDG 3 (peace and prosperity) and SDG 17 (partnership for sustainable development) are supported through CSR.

## Challenges:

- Lack of a proper and complete CSR guideline from the Government of Bangladesh.
- Lack of awareness, understanding, and professionals on CSR. CSR is still perceived as a marketing gimmick rather than a long-term approach.
- Traditional management mindsets and inadequate knowledge of CSR.
- No enforcement from the government on CSR.
- Management's lack of awareness of CSR's positive impacts.
- Lack of capacity to develop strategic planning.
- No competition or awards for CSR best practices.
- Lack of transparency towards stakeholders.
- No baseline and impact assessments of CSR activities.
- Administrative and bureaucratic management hurdles.
- Lack of expertise and poor accountability of corporate houses.
- Inadequate promotional activity on CSR.

## Mitigation Measures:

- Government-issued CSR guidelines for companies and organizations would mitigate major issues related to CSR.
- Each corporate body should develop its own CSR guidelines to improve conditions in philanthropic, ethical, legal, and economic responsibilities, ensuring greater acceptance in the community.
- Short, medium, and long-term strategic plans for each corporate body regarding their CSR responsibilities.
- Baseline and impact assessments, including M&E activities, should be conducted for each corporate body under their strategic plans.

## Key Observations:

- CSR activities are being implemented without government guidelines, leading to underutilization as expected by stakeholders.
- Corporates are reluctant to allocate additional manpower and funds for CSR activities. Humanitarian actors could be utilized for groundwork like data collection, sharing local experiences for sustainable development, and distributing funds and materials to stakeholders.
- Companies engage in CSR activities to meet export criteria imposed by overseas buyers.
- There is no linkage between private sectors and humanitarian actors in delivering services to the common people.

## Recommendations:

- NAHAB should increase and strengthen efforts to establish linkages between the private sector and government to promote private sector engagement in national disaster management frameworks and humanitarian responses.
- NAHAB has a bright future in making private sector engagement with humanitarian response and can capitalize on available sources through the CSR Centre, trust bodies, and other related organizations, including business organizations.
- NAHAB should extend efforts to establish linkages with Social Responsibility Asia (SR Asia) Bangladesh to develop effective mechanisms for gaining the benefits of available CSR opportunities in Bangladesh and globally.

- Platforms at local, national, regional, and global levels should engage in private sector engagement in humanitarian responses through mapping appropriate stakeholders with diverse membership, including different types of private sector actors.
- A CSR guideline is essential to harness benefits for climatically vulnerable and disaster-affected populations.
- Active collaboration with key private sector players is required to address humanitarian issues.
- Frequent consultations with experts, business hubs, business community associations, GoB representatives, humanitarian actors, and allied personnel associated with CSR through workshops, conferences, seminars, meetings, etc., to finalize the CSR guideline.
- The government can initiate private sector engagement projects in the PPP model to systematically use corporate CSR funds.
- A central CSR fund could be created with corporate business organizations and government participation.
- Further research is suggested to gather more information on creating a CSR guideline, which NAHAB and ELNHA can lead.

## 3.4. Initiatives for District-Level Pool Fund Development – Guidelines and Tools Developed in Sirajganj District

**Allauddin Khan,** Executive Director, NDP

### Introduction:

Sirajganj, located in the northern region of Bangladesh, faces recurring challenges from seasonal flooding and riverbank erosion, particularly during the monsoon season from June to September. The region's vulnerability is exacerbated by the unpredictable and increasingly severe effects of climate change. Although the government has taken measures to enhance the district's resilience, the severity of some floods surpasses local capacity, leading to loss of lives, devastation of livelihoods, and displacement of communities. To address these ongoing humanitarian and developmental needs, an innovative initiative to establish a district pool fund has been launched.

Monsoon floods cause significant damage in Sirajganj District almost every year. From 2014 to 2020, these floods profoundly impacted numerous households, affecting thousands of lives and properties. Many homes were either destroyed or severely damaged, and widespread inundation was common. Riverbank erosion further increased the risk to communities and agricultural resources.

Local organizations are focusing on establishing an emergency response pool fund for Sirajganj District. The National Alliance of Humanitarian Actors Bangladesh (NAHAB) is providing technical expertise for this initiative. Member organizations of NAHAB, including NDP, MMS, and SUK, in collaboration with other humanitarian aid groups, have started efforts to create this emergency response pool fund. Local governmental and private institutions are also offering guidance and support.

Establishment of the District Pool Fund:
In response to the complex challenges posed by floods and other climate-related disasters, a coalition of 18 member organizations forming the Civil Society Organization (CSO) in Sirajganj District has taken the lead in creating a district pool fund. Recognizing the fund's vital importance, numerous meetings were coordinated between the CSO coalition and NAHAB member agencies.



### Objectives of the District Pool Fund:

The primary objective of the district pool fund is to manage financial resources proactively for emergency response and swift action during disasters. NAHAB members and the CSO coalition have collaborated to devise a comprehensive strategy for the fund's operation and management. The strategic paper outlines policies governing the fund, the composition and roles of the management and operation committee, and principles and funding sources. The fund will serve as a supplementary resource for emergency response efforts in the following areas:
- Swift provision of relief aid to remote areas affected by disasters.
- Addressing challenges posed by small and medium-scale disasters.

- Contributing to disaster prevention and mitigation efforts.
- Offering support for preparedness measures in anticipation of impending disasters.
- Assisting in the rehabilitation process following a disaster.
- Facilitating coordination among diverse humanitarian individuals, institutions, and organizations.

## Significance of the District Pool Fund:

The creation of the District Pool Fund in Sirajganj is crucial in bolstering the community's capacity to effectively tackle recurring and severe disasters, with a focus on floods and riverbank erosion. This initiative, marked by strong cooperation among government entities, non-governmental organizations, and diverse stakeholders, ensures the timely availability of financial resources for swift disaster response. It addresses immediate humanitarian needs and plays a pivotal role in promoting long-term development and adapting to the evolving challenges posed by climate change in Sirajganj.

## Sources of Funding:

The Emergency Response Pool Fund for Sirajganj District can be financed through various channels:
-   Contributions from Microfinance Institutions: Allocating a portion of their annual net dividends to the fund.
-   Contributions from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs): Fixed contributions from NGOs within the district based on mutual agreement.
-   Personal and Zakat Donations: Financial assistance and Zakat contributions from wealthy individuals within the community.
-   Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): Support from privately-owned institutions operating in Sirajganj District as part of their CSR efforts.
-   Donor Agencies: Funding from donor agencies interested in supporting emergency response efforts.
-   Public Donations: Voluntary contributions from the general public.
-   Support from Migrant/Expatriate Bangladeshis: Contributions from Bangladeshi nationals living abroad.
-   Contingency Funds of NGOs and Various Institutions: Channeling emergency response funds allocated by NGOs and other institutions into the pool fund.
-   Banks and Autonomous Institutions: Financial support from financial institutions and autonomous organizations.
-   Fundraising Initiatives: Activities by local civic and professional organizations to generate resources for the Emergency Response Pool Fund.

## Pool Fund Management System:

The management of the Emergency Response Pool Fund will be overseen by a consortium of public-private, civic, and professional organizations and their designated representatives. The governance of this fund emphasizes transparency, accountability, and impartiality in decision-making. The management structure includes three key committees:

**Managing Committee:** Consisting of 11 members, including a chairperson, vice-chairpersons, member secretary, and general members. This committee will have strategic and policy-making responsibilities and manage the fund's bank account.

<u>Fund Allocation Committee:</u> A committee of 5 members responsible for allocating funds in line with the fund's objectives. Affiliated organizations will take responsibility for fund allocation for a duration of 3 years.

<u>Advisory Committee:</u> Comprising a Chief Advisor and members, this committee will provide expert guidance on special emergency response activities and support nationwide fundraising campaigns during major disasters.

## Allocation Process of the Pool Fund:

- Fund allocation will be conducted by the Pool Fund Management Committee, requiring the majority consent of the committee members.
- No single committee member has the authority to unilaterally allocate funds.
- Disbursement of allocated funds will be expedited as scheduled.
- Regular follow-up will monitor the utilization of disbursed funds.
- Proper accounting and reporting procedures will be maintained.

## Institutions/Organizations to be Covered by the Pool Fund:

The pool fund covers individuals, public-private institutions, and organizations with a proven track record of humanitarian work and practical experience in disaster response or rehabilitation.

## Secretariat Responsibilities:

The Pool Fund Management Committee will designate an organization as the Secretariat to oversee the Pool Fund's management. Responsibilities and tenure of the Secretariat include:
- Liaising with all involved individuals, institutions, and organizations.
- Organizing meetings, managing proceedings, drafting resolutions, and preserving records.
- Handling correspondence, emails, and website updates related to the Pool Fund's operations.

## Transparency and Accountability:

The fund will be managed through a dedicated bank account known as the "Sirajganj District Emergency Response Pool Fund." A website will be established for information sharing, ensuring transparency and accountability. An annual external audit and comprehensive reporting during the Annual General Meeting will uphold accountability.

## Conclusion:

The establishment of the District Pool Fund in Sirajganj is a significant and commendable initiative, driven by a collaborative effort between civil society organizations and NAHAB member agencies. This fund represents a proactive approach to managing financial resources for emergency response and disaster management. Its objectives encompass vital aspects, from swift relief aid provision to long-term rehabilitation and community coordination. The significance of this District Pool Fund cannot be overstated, as it serves as a critical resource in addressing the recurrent and severe disasters affecting the region. The fund's diverse sources of funding ensure its sustainability and effectiveness in disaster response. The transparent and accountable management system, with distinct committees overseeing various aspects of the fund, strengthens its integrity. The allocation process ensures fair and equitable distribution, with regular follow-ups and proper reporting procedures. This initiative is inclusive, extending coverage to individuals and organizations with a proven humanitarian work track record. The dedicated Secretariat adds an additional layer of organization and efficiency to the fund's management.
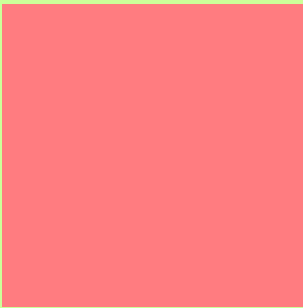
Capacity
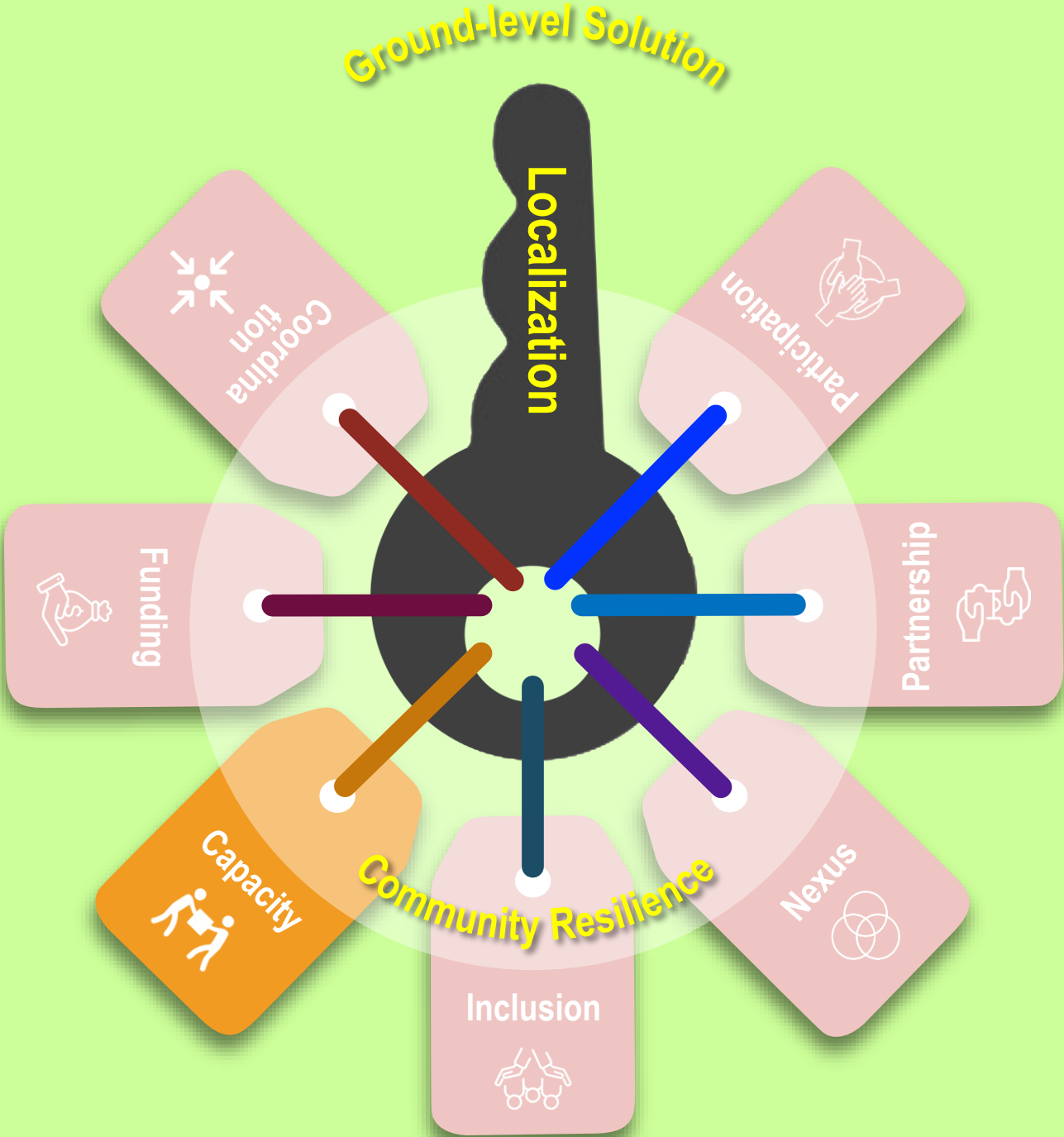
# Chapter 4: Capacity

Capacity has become a dominant agenda in the humanitarian world due to the growing complexities of crises, both natural and human-induced, further exacerbated by the effects and implications of climate change. Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS) emphasize the importance of ensuring that communities and people affected by crises receive the assistance they require from competent and well-managed staff and volunteers (CHS 8). Additionally, CHS highlights the necessity for crisis-affected communities to have access to safe and responsive mechanisms to handle complaints (CHS 5).

Complementing this focus, there are four Local Performance Monitoring Framework (LPMF) Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) relating to capacity domains. These are: a) Performance management, b) Organizational development, c) Quality standards, and d) Recruitment and surge.

All of these initiatives entail active engagement of all levels of humanitarian actors, exchanging their expertise through equitable partnerships and flexible funding mechanisms. With these agendas in place, communities and people affected by crises can expect improved assistance delivery as organizations learn from experience and manage resources effectively, efficiently, and ethically (as per CHS 7 and CHS 9 respectively).

In Bangladesh, continuous efforts are being made for capacity strengthening and the exchange of institutional experience among humanitarian actors. The NAHAB report of 2019 dedicated a chapter to capacity (Chapter 7), depicting a macro-level country capacity analysis and identifying domains for capacity strengthening. In this 2023 report, further information is provided on this topic. The following initiatives for capacity strengthening of Local/ National Non-Governmental Organizations (L/NNGOs) and examples of capacity exchange between L/NNGOs and International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in terms of community engagement, organizational development, program management, risk management, and quality humanitarian services are presented in this chapter:

4.1. NAHAB Survey findings of capacity needs assessment of L/NNGOs
4.2. NAHAB Mapping - Matrix of Humanitarian Actions Capacity domains
4.3. START Fund Bangladesh project for Organizational Development support to 10 Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) in Cox's Bazar

## 4.1. NAHAB SURVEY FINDINGS OF CAPACITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF L/NNGOs

■ **Rabeya Begum**, Executive Director, SDS
**Md. Jahangir Alam**, Joint Director, CC & DRR Sector, DAM

### 1. Introduction

The "National Alliance of Humanitarian Actors, Bangladesh (NAHAB)" is a national platform for humanitarian actors. Member NGOs formed NAHAB as an alliance to encourage and support local non-governmental, national humanitarian organizations, partners, and other relevant actors to uphold their voice, representation, and commitment to investing in faster, more needful, and effective humanitarian actions in Bangladesh since its inception in 2017 with the declaration of the Department of Disaster Management (DDM). NAHAB considers localization as the process of institutionalizing local-level management of humanitarian actions to ensure effective and real-time services to the affected communities. NAHAB promotes the localization process through building partnerships and networking among humanitarian actors. As part of this process, NAHAB implemented the "*Strengthening Humanitarian Actors Partnership through Networking & Actions (SHAPNA)*" project with support from Give2Asia. One of the major objectives of the project was to develop a partnership between NAHAB and the Community of Practice (COP) and enhance the capacity of network members to cope with future challenges posed by disasters and climate change. Network members have shown a strong commitment to work together and take individual leadership in implementing different activities.

Give2Asia is an international non-profit that serves as a strategic partner and ally working on the ground in more than 23 countries to strengthen the work of local organizations and mobilize support through philanthropic funding. NAHAB and Give2Asia jointly implemented the SHAPNA project for the capacity building of member organizations and COP members. An organizational capacity needs assessment was conducted to assess the capacity of the NAHAB and COP members under this project. The study assessed organizational capacity in six major domains: 1. Governance, 2. Systems and Processes, 3. Financial Management, 4. Human Resources, 5. Control Environment, and 6. Humanitarian Program Capacity. The Executive Committee of NAHAB decided to allocate different activities among interested organizations. NAHAB member SOLIDARITY completed the study with technical support from the NAHAB Secretariat and Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM).

### 2. Purpose of the Study

The study aimed to identify specific sectors that need focus for the capacity development of the respective organizations. The purpose of the task was to assess the capacity gap of NAHAB and COP network members, identify areas requiring capacity strengthening, and plan accordingly to enable them to respond effectively in emergencies, including natural disasters, pandemics, and climate-induced disasters, while engaging their communities in disaster risk reduction activities.

### 3. Methodology

The assignment was conducted through an in-depth assessment process online using Kobo tools to assess organizational performance/competency. The assessment aimed to evaluate the current organizational capacity for humanitarian response programs and gain better insight into key expected outputs and changes attributed to the organizational development process. Kobo Toolbox provided a platform to collect data using laptops and mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets. The Kobo Toolbox database, an

online platform with a built-in server, stored all Kobo Collect data. The steps to complete the assignment included creating a Kobo Toolbox account, installing the ODK Collect app, setting up the app, creating the first questionnaire, downloading and filling the questionnaire, checking the data in the server, sharing the questionnaire with other data collectors, and generating the report.

## 4. Findings of the Study

### 4.1 Governance

This section comprises five subsections: Legal Status and Compliance, Mission/Vision, Transparency and Accountability, Board Functionality, and International Compliance.

### 4.1.1 Legal Status and Compliance

Most organizations claimed they have necessary legal documents, including registration certificates from the respective authorities. However, around 14% of participant organizations reported not having an HR policy compliant with the Labor Law-2013.

### 4.1.2 Mission/Vision

In this sub-sector, 21% of organizations do not display their mission and vision in their office premises. Additionally, 12% of organizations do not have a system to educate staff on their mission and vision. Importantly, around 11% of organizations said they implement activities not aligned with their mission and vision.

### 4.1.3 Transparency and Accountability

In this sub-sector, 15% of organizations do not share their financial budget with their staff and relevant stakeholders. However, 26% stated that their board members and staff do not have proper orientation on conflict-of-interest issues, and 17% of organizations do not have a Code of Conduct.

### 4.1.4 Board Functionality

Under this sub-section, 5% of organizations do not have board members from diverse professions and backgrounds. Additionally, 19% do not have sub-committees overseeing organizational activities, budgets, and audits; 15% do not have members providing specific inputs in financial management, external relations, and program management; and 9% do not organize board meetings.

### 4.1.5 International Compliance

In this sub-sector, 19% of organizations lack an anti-fraud policy, 48% lack an anti-bribery policy, 40% lack a whistleblowing policy and procedures, and 48% lack an anti-terrorism policy.

# 5. Systems and Processes

This section comprises seven subsections: Organizational Structure, Travel Policies and Procedures, Procurement Policies, Procedures and Practices, Fixed Assets Control, Staff Remuneration and Payroll System, Risk Management, and Safeguard.

## 5.1 Organizational Structure

Only 2%, 7%, and 12% of organizations lack an updated organogram, key positions in the organogram, and clear lines of communication and reporting relationships, respectively. However, 50% of organizations reported vacancies in some key positions.

## 5.2 Travel Policies and Procedures

Around 88% of organizations have travel policies and procedures, 83% use standard travel rates in programs and projects, and 76% adopt travel policies and procedures as required by emergency programs.

## 5.3 Procurement Policies, Procedures, and Practices

Only 2% of organizations lack complete procurement policies and procedures. Additionally, 16% reported inconsistent adherence to procurement policies and procedures, and 14% indicated that emergency procurement procedures are not known to staff.

## 5.4 Fixed Assets Control

The assessment revealed that only 7% of organizations lack documentation on fixed asset management systems. Furthermore, 11%, 5%, and 7% of organizations reported deficiencies in inventory management systems, periodic updates on fixed asset registers, and balancing fixed asset registers with annual audit reports, respectively.

## 5.5 Staff Remuneration and Payroll System

The assessment showed that 5% of organizations lack clearly documented staff salaries, pay grades, and benefits in a policy manual. Additionally, 19% of organizations do not follow organizational pay increases as per the salary framework, and 9% and 11% reported inconsistencies in applying salary and benefit policies and maintaining staff salary records for previous and current positions, respectively.

## 5.6 Risk Management

The assessment revealed that 40% of organizations lack mechanisms for regularly conducting management risk analysis and risk mitigation training for staff. Additionally, 33%, 35%, and 31% of organizations lack clear risk management policies, specific risk analysis and mitigation programs, and financial risk analysis and mitigation strategies, respectively.

## 5.7 Safeguarding System

The assessment showed that 33% of organizations have not identified and documented main safeguarding risk areas. Additionally, 28% lack consideration of safeguarding issues for staff and beneficiaries during humanitarian response implementation, and 18% lack documented safeguarding policies or procedures.

# 6. Financial Management

This section comprises six subsectors: Banking Operations, Accounting and Bookkeeping System, Financial Management Personnel, Budget Systems, Financial Viability, and Cost Share.

## 6.1 Banking Operations

The assessment found that 4% of organizations lack division of responsibilities in bank operations and multiple signatories for bank accounts. Additionally, 5% of organizations lack board approval for bank accounts and complete all documentation and approval procedures before issuing a cheque.

## 6.2 Accounting and Bookkeeping System

The assessment found that 2% of organizations lack gaps in accounting and auditing of accounts and bookkeeping systems. Furthermore, 4% of organizations have gaps in timely vouchering, 11% lack a standard and approved chart of accounts, and 14% lack computerized systems providing real-time information and reports.

## 6.3 Financial Management Personnel

The assessment found that 9% of organizations lack adequate financial staff and the same percentage lack relevant experience and qualifications for financial staff. Additionally, 14% of organizations lack regular training for financial staff and adequate authority for financial staff to make decisions.

## 6.4 Budget Systems

The assessment found that 5% of organizations lack staff involvement in the budget preparation process. The highest gap, 26%, was found in the preparation of detailed budgets. Additionally, 7% lack regular comparison between actual expenditure and budget, and 18% lack prior approval for budget amendments.

## 6.5 Financial Viability

The assessment revealed that 37% of organizations have insufficient liquidity in banks, 40% cannot mobilize sufficient funds from own sources for emergency response needs, 35% lack documentation on fund-raising strategies, and 14% lack trained staff to prepare quality proposals.

## 6.6 Cost Share

The assessment found that 24% of organizations lack complete documentation on cost share procedures, 37% infrequently review and update organizational contributions and co-financing, and 16% lack a review process for correcting financial statements. Additionally, 30% lack a review process for monitoring revisions and staff comfort with changes.

# 7. Human Resources

## 7.1 Personnel Policies

The assessment found that 4% of organizations are rigid with their HR policy, making it inaccessible to all staff. Additionally, 4% lack clear processes to implement HR policies, and 12% lack necessary clauses to meet emergency response needs. Furthermore, 7% lack proper inclusion of gender and child protection issues in HR policy.

## 7.2 Senior Management Profile

The assessment found that 5% of organizations lack a functional organogram, 11% lack qualified and skilled staff, 4% lack adequate staff or volunteers for emergency response, and 12% lack an approach to rapidly filling new positions.

## 8. Control Environment

### 8.1 Internal Control

96% of organizations integrate board and senior management into control processes, 89% maintain internal checks and balances in payment systems, procurement, contracts, and recruitments, 86% have a system for background checks for employees and third-party suppliers, and 72% have a functional management system for preventing abuses and misappropriations.

### 8.2 Financial Control

91% of organizations have clearly defined authorization levels, 89% have clear segregation of duties, 91% ensure all transactions are supported by relevant documents, and 89% have a functional internal audit or financial monitoring system.

### 8.3 Audit and Financial Review

95% of organizations have a complete and appropriate documented audit system, 74% have a functional audit committee overseeing audit processes, 81% ensure financial observations are raised and shared with the board and senior management, and 72% prepare plans to address audit observations and monitor progress.

### 8.4 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Data Security

86% of organizations have a good M&E plan, 89% have trained staff for monitoring and evaluation, 89% regularly collect gender-disaggregated data on program activities, and 62% have a policy for adjusting data on program activities and ensuring data security.

### 8.5 Programme Delivery

93% of organizations follow object-oriented project planning practices, 93% prepare detailed program/project implementation plans, 84% perform internal reviews periodically and prepare action plans accordingly, and 76% have external evaluations for projects.

## 9. Humanitarian Programme Capacity

### 9.1 Programme Delivery

11% of organizations lack key staff with emergency response responsibilities in their job descriptions and adequate training, 7% lack staff with early emergency response experience, 9% lack a policy for rapid recruitment of emergency staff, 11% lack trained volunteers in the roster, and 16% lack a disaster contingency plan.

### 9.2 Early Response Capability

23% of organizations lack training and capacity-building programs for early responders, 9% lack organized community-level associations or clubs for early response, 31% lack a network of local CSOs for emergency response, and 28% lack routine activities with early responders.

### 9.3 Downward Accountability

7% of organizations lack processes to share organizational and program information with beneficiaries, 14% lack access for beneficiaries and other stakeholders to organizational leadership, and 14% lack a complaint response mechanism to address beneficiary grievances.

### 9.4 Government Collaboration and Relationship

16% of organizations do not regularly participate in district-level disaster committee meetings, 12% lack coordination with government administration in emergency programs, 14% lack involvement of government officials in emergency responses, and 11% lack involvement of local government officials in emergency responses.

### 9.5 Application of Humanitarian Principles

18% of organizations lack training for core staff on the Humanitarian Charter, 42% lack training for field staff and volunteers on the IFRC Code of Conduct, 21% lack staff knowledge of Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS), and 33% lack staff knowledge of SPHERE standards.

### 9.6 Humanitarian Needs Assessment

7% of organizations lack training for staff on needs assessment, 14% do not use standard tools and processes in joint needs assessments, 21% do not collect and analyze disaggregated data to target beneficiaries, and 26% lack staff who can prepare reports based on needs assessment findings.

### 9.7 Cash Distribution in Emergency

11% of organizations lack cash transfer experience within the last five years, 23% lack documented policy and procedures for cash transfers in emergencies, 28% lack detailed market assessments prior to cash transfers, and 21% lack involvement of government or local government in cash transfers.

10. Recommendations and Conclusion
- Humanitarian organizations need to be more open during capacity needs assessments to facilitate concrete future planning.
- L/NNGOs need to enhance their organizational capacity for using digital platforms to provide information and documentation.

### Conclusion

Organizational Capacity Needs Assessment plays a vital role in identifying major gaps within organizations and areas needing improvement. Various tools can be used to identify the needs of humanitarian organizations, but it is best to use contextualized tools based on country perspectives. Understanding the impetus for organizational effectiveness efforts is critical. The more that is known about an organization's needs, goals, and intentions for using the results, as well as logistical characteristics, the easier it will be to find appropriate tools. The capacity needs assessment tools are designed to identify organizational capacity gaps and challenges using a user-friendly approach. However, there cannot be one best tool for any situation. These tools provide a glimpse of organizational needs and gaps to develop future directions for supporting vulnerable communities during emergencies and meeting donors' due diligence procedures. This study also revealed the areas of capacity needs for organizational readiness to provide faster and more needful humanitarian responses.

## 4.2. Mapping of Humanitarian Standards and Aligning of Selected Due Diligence Frameworks

■ **Dr. M. Ehsanur Rahman**, Adviser, NAHAB and InSights

NAHAB conducted a mapping of humanitarian standards to showcase the alignment of most standards demanded by donors and INGOs as part of Due Diligence requirements. This mapping was an advocacy initiative demanding the harmonization of Due Diligence (DD) requirements. In all cases, every financing organization conducts DD assessments separately, asking the same or similar questions to local or national organizations (L/NGOs) and requesting the same or similar documents to support their systems. This creates a bulk burden of work and costs for the L/NGOs. Harmonization of DD requirements could create a conducive environment for increased access of L/NGOs to external funding, thus promoting localization.

In this mapping, a few selected Due Diligence frameworks or principles were taken as examples and attempted to align with the Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS) domains as parameters of standards. The following frameworks or principles were reviewed in this mapping exercise:
- UN Humanitarian Principles (OCHA)
- IFRC Code of Conduct/Principles
- ECHO Eligibility Criteria
- START Network Due Diligence Streams

CHS Framework Domains Used as Reference Parameters in this Mapping:

1. Appropriate & relevant response
2. Effective & timely response
3. Community preparedness (Resilient community)
4. Informed decision-making at the local level
5. Complaint mechanism in place
6. Coordinated & complementary response
7. Improved service by responding organization
8. Staff competencies (Accountable Management)
9. Efficient resource management

### Key Findings of Alignments:

**CHS Domains 1 and 2:** Demand that humanitarian response should be "appropriate and relevant" as well as "effective and timely."
The OCHA, IFRC, and ECHO requirements focus on human sufferings and the absolute impartiality of services to the affected communities.

### OCHA Principles:
- ***Humanity***: Address human suffering wherever it is found. The purpose of humanitarian action is to protect life and health and ensure respect for human beings.
- ***Impartiality***: Humanitarian action must be carried out based on need alone, giving priority to the most urgent cases of distress and making no distinctions based on nationality, race, gender, religious belief, class, or political opinions.

- *__Independence__*: Humanitarian action must be autonomous from the political, economic, military, or other objectives that any actor may hold concerning areas where humanitarian action is being conducted.
- *__Neutrality__*: Humanitarian actors must not take sides in hostilities or engage in controversies of a political, racial, religious, or ideological nature.

### IFRC Principles:

- The humanitarian imperative comes first to alleviate human suffering amongst those least able to withstand the stress caused by disaster.
- Aid is given regardless of the race, creed, or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind. Aid priorities are calculated based on need alone.
- Aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint.
- Not to act as instruments of government foreign policy.

### ECHO Criteria:

Respect fundamental humanitarian principles:

- *__Humanity__*: Focus on saving and preserving human lives and relieving suffering.
- *__Impartiality__*: Respond solely to the identified needs of affected populations without discrimination of any kind.
- *__Neutrality__*: Not to favor any side in an armed conflict or other disputes.
- *__Independence__*: Respect the autonomy of humanitarian objectives from political, economic, military, or other objectives and ensure the sole purpose of humanitarian aid remains to relieve and prevent the suffering of victims of humanitarian crises.

**CHS Domains 3 and 4:** Call to strengthen local capacities and avoid negative effects; humanitarian response should be based on communication, participation, and feedback.

- **ECHO:** Actions should be based on local capacities, respecting the culture, structure, and customs of the communities and countries where actions are carried out, without prejudice to the fundamental rights of the persons affected.

- **IFRC:** Build disaster response on local capacities; Relief aid must strive to reduce future vulnerabilities to disaster as well as meeting basic needs.

- **OCHA:** Respect culture and customs.

- **START Network:** Focuses on the ability of humanitarian actors to deliver and promote humanitarian best practices in:

  - Contingency Planning.
  - Disaster, Conflict, or Emergency Response.
  - Vulnerable Populations.
  - Impartiality.
  - Risk Management/Risk Assessment Capacity.

**CHS Domain 5:** Demands that complaints are welcomed and addressed.

- **IFRC Principles:** Emphasize involving program beneficiaries in the management of relief aid.

- **ECHO:** Ensure all humanitarian activities are results-oriented, delivered in the most effective, efficient, and rapid manner, and comply with the principles of prioritizing safety and dignity, do no harm, access,

accountability, and the empowerment and active participation of affected persons in the design, implementation, and evaluation of actions.
- **START Network:** Focuses on downstream partner management.

**CHS Domains 6 and 7:** Demand that humanitarian response should be coordinated and complementary; humanitarian actors should continuously learn and improve practices.
- **ECHO:** Take into account the situation of affected persons within the circumstances and context of the intervention, including assessments of different needs, capacities, and roles that might exist for men and women of different age groups within the given situation and cultural context.
- **START Network:** Focuses on safeguarding and risk management covering specific areas of systems development, including Whistleblower Reporting, Complaints/Wrongdoing Reporting, Diversity and Inclusion, Child Protection, and Anti-Discrimination.

**CHS Domain 8:** Calls for doing the job effectively and treating people fairly and equitably.
- **IFRC:** Stress accountability to both those we seek to assist and those from whom we accept resources. In information, publicity, and advertising activities, call upon recognizing disaster victims as dignified humans, not hopeless objects.
- **ECHO:** Urges deploying adequate means to address irregularities, fraud, corruption, and misconduct of any sort.

**CHS Domain 9:** Demands that resources are managed and used responsibly for the intended purpose.
- **ECHO:** Ensure transparency and accountability, compliance with applicable rules, policies, and procedures, and internal control. Emphasize procurement procedures that ensure the best value for money and the absence of conflicts of interest, besides ensuring compliance with high-level quality standards.

## Way Forward Conclusion:

The above analysis of expected standards and principles for humanitarian actions shows two major clusters of requirements: one relating to the needs of suffering people and the other relating to the institutional capacity of humanitarian strengths. In both cases, there are generic commonalities about the requirements, which can be a base to explore finding common grounds for organizational capacity assessment and vulnerability assessment of the crisis.

For example, from the point of addressing human sufferings, needs-based response and real-time services or supplies are crucial, which remain the agenda of all actors—responders as well as donors. These should be placed at the top, setting aside all political, business, and cultural interests to maintain impartiality in reaching the suffering community. In identifying needs, engagement of the community and feedback mechanisms come as a built-in requirement.

Similarly, from an institutional capacity perspective, the generic requirements are prevailing systems of the responding organization to deliver these services efficiently to the suffering community. The systems requirements entail procurement and supply systems, financial management systems, human resource management systems, documentation, and reporting systems.

Another key point from this analysis is that, besides response planning and budgeting, there should be provisions for investments in institutional capacity strengthening of humanitarian actors across all levels (local to global) so that both dimensions of due diligence are equally perceived.

## 4.3. START FUND BANGLADESH: ORGANIZATIONAL SYSTEM STRENGTHENING INITIATIVE

Fakhrul Islam, START Fund Bangladesh

Start Fund Bangladesh (SFB) is a member-led, rapid response funding mechanism that offers timely financing to people at risk of or affected by small to medium-scale crises. It is collectively owned and managed by its 47 member agencies, including 27 local NGOs who have equal participation in decision-making and access to funds. Over the last year, the fund has expanded its scope and now offers rapid financing immediately following a crisis, along with funding for crisis anticipation activities, and Organizational System Strengthening (OSS) support. Since 2017, with support from the UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), we have reached 913,137 crisis-affected people in over 39 districts. These people have been reached with cash, emergency food support, water, sanitation, and health (WASH), and other life-saving support. In 2022, 53% of funding went directly to local and national members, surpassing the Grand Bargain target of 25%. Channeling funds directly, alongside providing system strengthening support to local and national organizations (L/NNGOs), has positively impacted the speed and efficiency of humanitarian response in Bangladesh.

### Organizational Systems Strengthening (OSS) Initiative

The OSS Initiative is the process through which organizations strengthen their capabilities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time for improved response to crises and disasters. As part of this initiative, SFB supports its members in risk management, financial management, procurement processes, monitoring and evaluation, organizational policy formulation, and safeguarding. Beyond this, we also provide 1-2-1 mentoring and coaching, ensuring our approach is tailored to the needs of our members.

**Objective:** To support our members in becoming community-led, thematically effective, and appropriately resourced. This, in turn, will give them further agency and increase accountability and transparency.

Since 2017, we have worked with 44 organizations, involving more than 400 staff and 37 CEOs, to build their capacity. Additionally, 16 organizations have been supported to develop their organizational development roadmaps (i.e., strategy), helping them systematically invest in their development plans. In 2020, SFB also funded member organizations to provide effective IT software for finance and HR.

### Our Approach:
- **Operational or Compliance-Based Organizational Strengthening:** Focuses on organizational processes such as risk management, internal control mechanisms, policy advice, and system strengthening to apply best practices for the organization.

### How it Works:
- Conduct due diligence assessments (DDA) for each member organization.
- Provide a detailed report based on the assessment to each member.
- Provide guidance on how to address the outcomes/recommendations of the DDA.

- Provide capacity-building training in response to DDA findings on topics such as safeguarding, risk management, financial management, procurement processes, and MEAL (Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learnings).

- **Transformational-Based Organizational Strengthening:** Focuses on organizational leadership-level transformation, management-level transformation and realization, shifting mindsets, behavior change, and reflective perspectives through the co-creation of an Organizational Development (OD) roadmap to achieve long-term change.

### How it Works:

- SFB assists LNGOs in co-creating their Organizational System Strengthening Plans (OSSP).
- The OD team approaches their development partner to generate funds and peer support for implementing the OSSP.
- SFB provides mentoring support to the organization's OD team for effective implementation of its OSSP.
- Organizations review their progress and update their plans yearly.

SFB was among the pioneering funds that enabled local NGOs to directly access international aid, thereby enhancing their organizational capacity. Our objective is to fund a diverse array of organizations based on their risk profile and programming capacity, allowing more local entities to secure funding from SFB for rapid and early responses to underfunded emergencies.

Organizations undergo a due diligence process, after which they receive capacity-building training and support tailored to the findings of the due diligence assessment. This is aimed at strengthening their infrastructure through an organizational system strengthening framework.

Most SFB members can directly access funds and receive real-time mentoring and coaching from the Secretariat in areas such as financial management, procurement, and internal control mechanisms. This support helps organizations reduce their dependency on INGOs and apply the knowledge gained from capacity-strengthening activities.

One significant way SFB is empowering local organizations is by providing greater access to funding for operational costs, also known as Indirect Cost Recovery (ICR). ICR comprises core costs that are essential for an organization's progress, internal investment, and flexibility. Sharing ICR is a crucial tool for the sustainability of local and national organizations. It grants them the agency and decision-making power to improve their systems, enhance their capacity, and be better prepared for future crisis responses.

## Case Study: SFB Supporting Local NGOs through the OSS Initiative

In 2020, SFB piloted an OSS Initiative to assist six local member NGOs in identifying gaps in their operating functions, providing capacity strengthening training, and helping to develop organizational roadmaps for growth and sustainability. Member agencies were encouraged to invest income from ICR in operationalizing their roadmaps and approach potential donors and partners for investment.

**Bolipara Nari Kalyan Somity (BNKS),** a women-led organization operating in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of southeastern Bangladesh since 1991, was part of the pilot initiative. They have been tackling the socio-economic challenges facing the indigenous communities that make up half of the population in this three-district region. Following a series of workshops under the OSS initiative, the BNKS core team developed an action plan with a roadmap to support their organizational progression, which includes improvements in monitoring and evaluation, streamlining policies, improving communication strategies, and recruiting the right people at the right time. They have successfully found six partners to invest in their organizational roadmap for growth and feel equipped to deliver high-quality interventions. The organization has expanded its intervention areas and uses financial management software to manage day-to-day financial activities, bringing more transparency and efficiency to the system. They continue to mobilize funds from different donors and negotiate with their partners to get equitable ICR.

> "Investing in organizational development benefits both the organization and its partners. When an organization's system weakens, meeting donor requirements becomes challenging. For instance, our current gap lies in having an adequate information management system to track progress and document learning. Additionally, our limited budget makes it difficult to hire and retain quality M&E staff."
>
> Hla Shing Nue, Executive Director of BNKS

## Future Direction, Scope for Collaboration & Future Funding

In 2022, SFB launched two projects: i) Capacitating Local NGOs at Cox's Bazar (funded by the Embassy of Switzerland in Bangladesh and The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs), and ii) Locally Led Disaster Risk Reduction in the Coastal Region of Bangladesh (funded by Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies). Both projects include conducting due diligence assessments of L/NNGOs, providing capacity-building training, and long-term mentoring assistance based on their needs.

SFB will continue providing thematic training, mentoring support, and ensuring donor compliance through standardization of policies and procedures for onboarded agencies. We onboarded 10 local NGOs, including five women-led NGOs, as partners in Cox's Bazar to provide support for organizational strengthening. Each organization will develop its own organizational development (OD) roadmap for the next two to three years as part of this program. SFB will offer individualized assistance in capacity building to the L/NNGOs in accordance with this plan.

In 2023, our ambition is to continue to onboard more L/NNGOs as members using our tiered diligence framework (contingent on fund availability). This will increase our scope of work with various expertise coming from a rich network of member organizations. Our vision is to offer OSS support to 48 L/NNGOs, including their leaders (CEO, program lead, MEAL lead, board members), to strengthen leadership skills, governance, financial management, safeguarding, and human resource management. We aim to raise a minimum of GBP 0.5 million for the disbursement pot from various donors, which is instrumental for LNGOs putting their learnings from capacity strengthening initiatives into practice.

# Participation



Ground-level Solution

Localization

Coordination

Participation

Funding

Partnership

Capacity

Community Resilience

Nexus

Inclusion
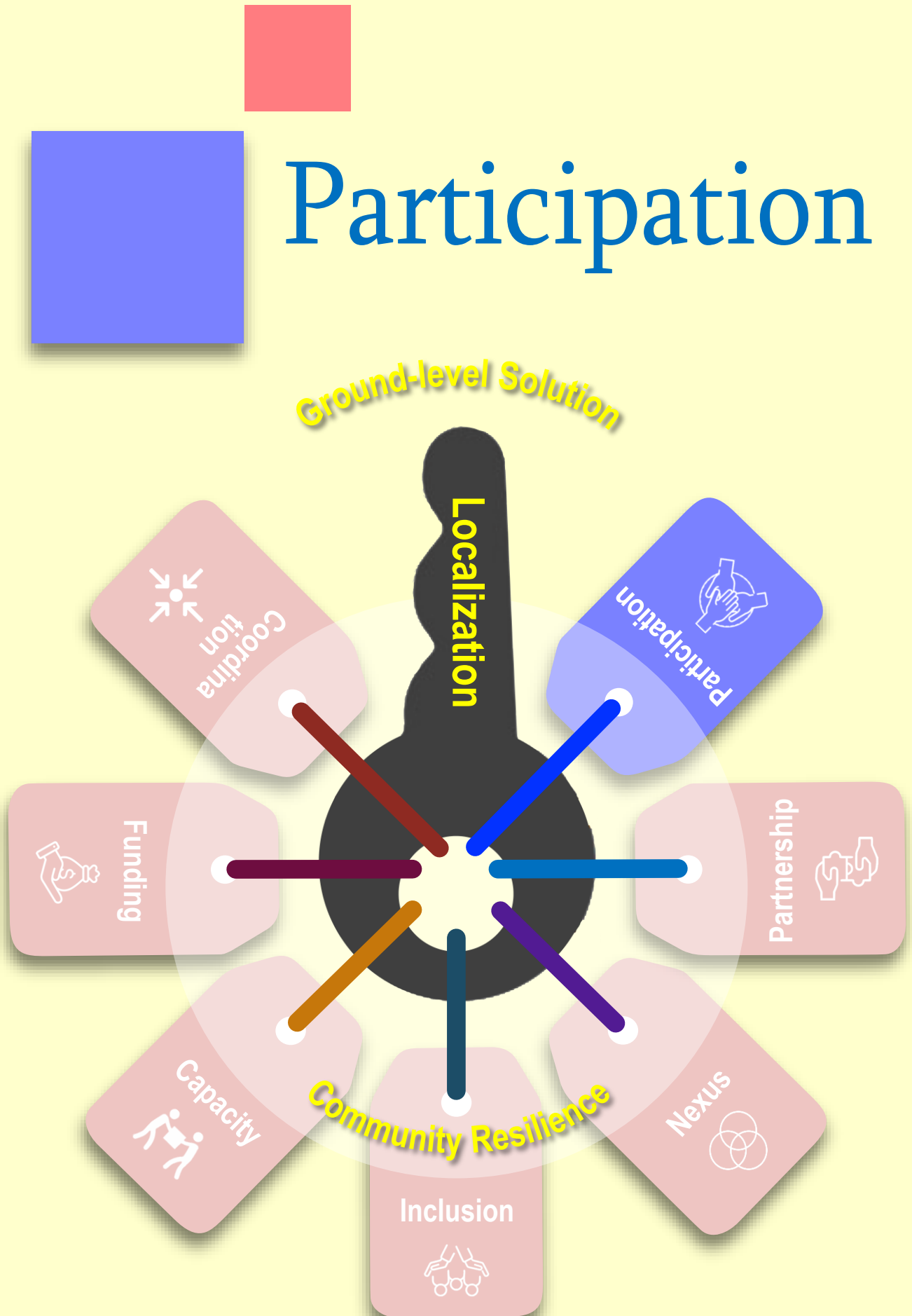
# Chapter 5: Participantion

This chapter focuses on the participation of local people, groups, and communities in humanitarian actions and community engagements at various stages. Bangladesh has a long tradition of voluntarism in social development, and current localization indicators emphasize the participation of affected communities in humanitarian response, policy development, and standard-setting. The principles outlined in the Accountability Framework of NAHAB have been used to document initiatives that support increased community participation, particularly of the affected, in planning and decision-making processes. Examples include:

- Voluntarism in disaster management, with specific reference to good practices in the Cyclone Preparedness Programme and the potential for scaling up or replicating these practices in other types of natural disasters.

Two LPMF KPIs specifically focus on the participation of communities in humanitarian response and the engagement of communities in humanitarian policy development and standard-setting.

Similarly, three Core Humanitarian Standards emphasize participation and engagement at all levels. These are:

- **CHS 1:** Communities and people affected by crises receive assistance appropriate and relevant to their needs.
- **CHS 2:** Communities and people affected by crises have access to the humanitarian assistance they need at the right time.
- **CHS 4:** Communities and people affected by crises know their rights and entitlements, have access to information, and participate in decisions that affect them.

These standards, besides participation, cover several strategic localization issues such as inclusion, partnership, and funding.

## 5.1. VOLUNTARISM IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT WITH REFERENCE TO GOOD PRACTICES IN THE CYCLONE PREPAREDNESS PROGRAMME AND SCOPE FOR SCALING UP OR REPLICATING THESE IN OTHER TYPES OF NATURAL DISASTERS

■ **Md. Rafiqul Alam,** Executive Director, DUS, Chairperson NAHAB

Volunteerism is an ancient community service with decades of experience in playing a crucial role in providing immediate support and assistance to affected local communities. This includes early warning dissemination, rescue services, sheltering vulnerable groups, first aid services, damage assessment, and other relief operations as per local needs.

Volunteerism during disasters or emergencies involves individuals providing their time, experience, skills, and available resources to assist vulnerable communities in disaster response and recovery efforts.

Many disasters have hit Bangladesh, causing significant loss of life and extensive property damage. The cyclone on November 12, 1970, with a speed of 225 km/h and tidal surges 20-30 feet high, struck a large area of coastal districts, resulting in more than a million deaths.

In response to the 1970 cyclone, the Government of Bangladesh and the Red Cross Society established the Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP) to minimize deaths and property losses in vulnerable communities with the support of local volunteers. This program is now recognized by the Ministry of Disaster Management under the banner of the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society.

The major activities of volunteers in CPP include:

1. Identifying vulnerable households in particular communities.
2. Disseminating appropriate warning messages as per SOD guidelines.
3. Reducing the loss and damage of household belongings.
4. Providing shelter for the affected community during disasters.
5. Providing first aid services before, during, and after emergencies.
6. Advocating and lobbying for climate change adaptation.
7. Analyzing the risk of DRR activities at the local level.
8. Providing emergency services, conducting needs assessments, and analyzing impacts.
9. Activating information management and communication systems.
10. Contributing to social forestry and promoting green belts in local areas.
11. Supporting livelihood restoration at the local level.

# Coordination
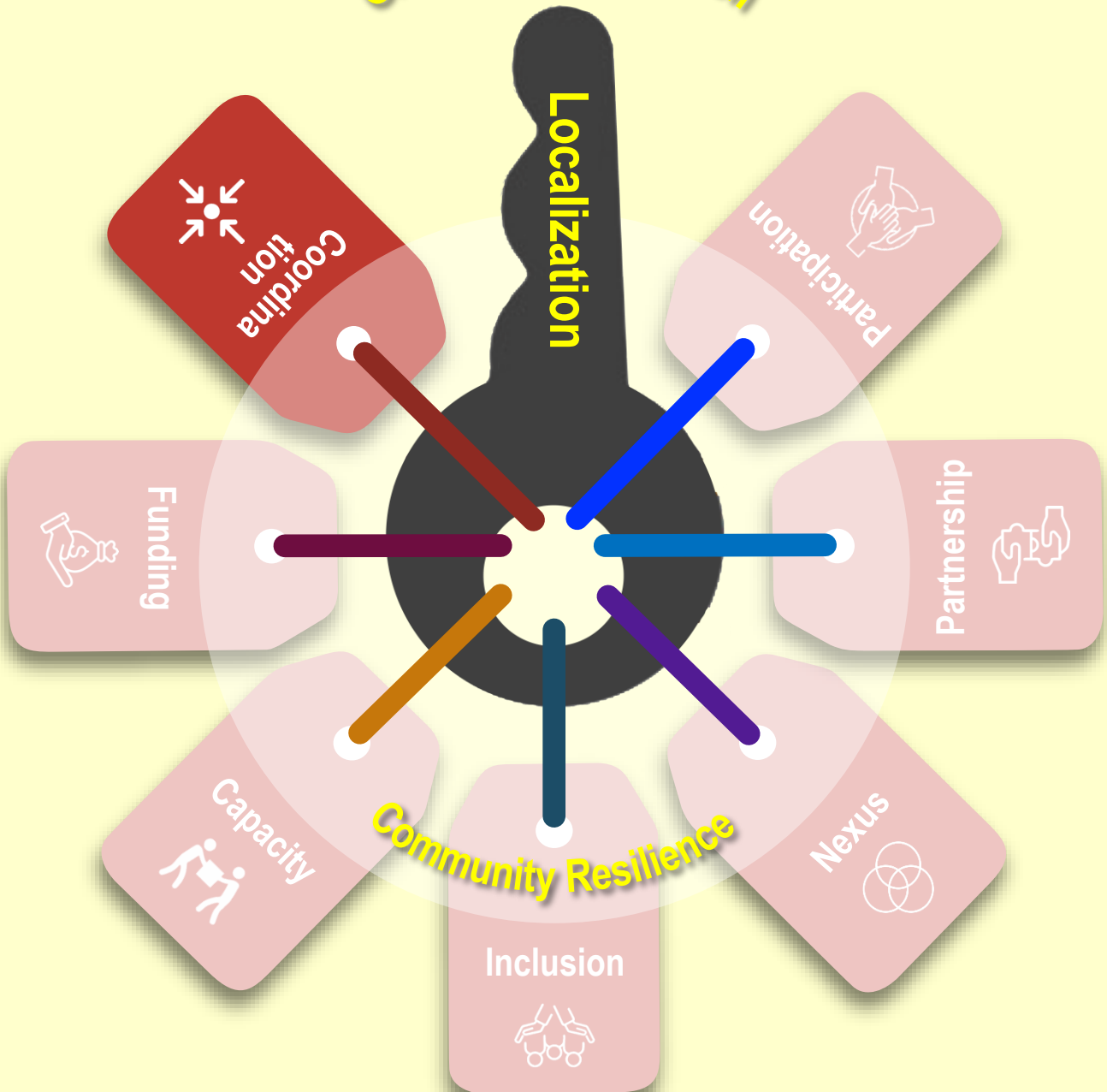
# Chapter 6: Coordination

The three KPIs of the Localization Performance Measurement Framework related to coordination emphasize humanitarian leadership, humanitarian coordination, and the collaborative and complementary response of humanitarian actions. This is similarly reflected in the Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS). For instance, CHS 6 calls for ensuring that communities and people affected by crises receive coordinated and complementary assistance. The other two standards (CHS 7 and 9) also emphasize coordination, as this enables communities to benefit from mutual learning and efficient management of limited resources.

Coordination is a key operational issue for effective and efficient humanitarian actions. NAHAB continuously undertakes advocacy to bring changes over time in the coordination mechanism. Systemic coordination efforts were discussed in Chapter 5 of the 2019 Report, where a macro-level coordination framework and practices through HCTT were illustrated.

This chapter of the 2023 Report cites examples of humanitarian coordination at national and sub-national (district) levels by the government, L/NNGOs, INGOs, and donors. Particular focus is given to mechanisms that contributed to increased collaborative and complementary responses and reaching the most vulnerable/affected communities. Examples include:

6.1. Developing a district-level database of humanitarian L/NNGOs in Barguna District.
6.2. Localization Technical Working Group/Local level coordination initiatives in selected disaster-prone districts and lessons from Cyclone 2020 and Flood 2021 responses.
6.3. Synopsis of findings from NAHAB Divisional Coordination Meetings.

## 6.1. DEVELOPING DISTRICT-LEVEL DATABASE OF HUMANITARIAN L/NNGOS – BARGUNA EXAMPLE

◼ Md. Yousuf, SANGRAM

Disasters are a common occurrence in the Barisal Division the southern coastal region of Bangladesh. Disaster management is a critical concern for the people of the districts within this division. Consequently, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) is one of the most important agendas of this division. To assist various stakeholders working at local, national, and international levels on DRR or disaster management, SANGRAM, a local NGO, with support from NAHAB, has planned to establish a Disaster Risk Management HUB named the "GIS-Based Disaster Risk Management Information System of Barguna District." The SANGRAM office is located in Barguna. This HUB contains the following information:

- Geographic presentation of Barguna District
- 6 Upazila HQs
- 42 Union Parishads
- Important growth centers
- Cyclone shelters in 6 Upazilas of Barguna District
- 7 Fire stations
- Location of different NGOs
- Cyclone and salinity-vulnerable locations of Barguna District
- 16 cyclone shelters with BFC

Using Geo Locator, users can access these locations via an Android cellphone. This project has been executed by SANGRAM (Sangathita Gramunnyan Karmasuchi) with technical and financial assistance from the National Alliance of Humanitarian Actors (NAHAB), Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM), and Oxfam Bangladesh. It has been completed with support from the local district authorities, especially the DC and DRRO of Barguna, District FSCD officials, and local NGOs such as CODEC, NSS, JNGO NARI, Sankalpa Trust, DOCAP, SAP-BD, ANNESA, and RDF.
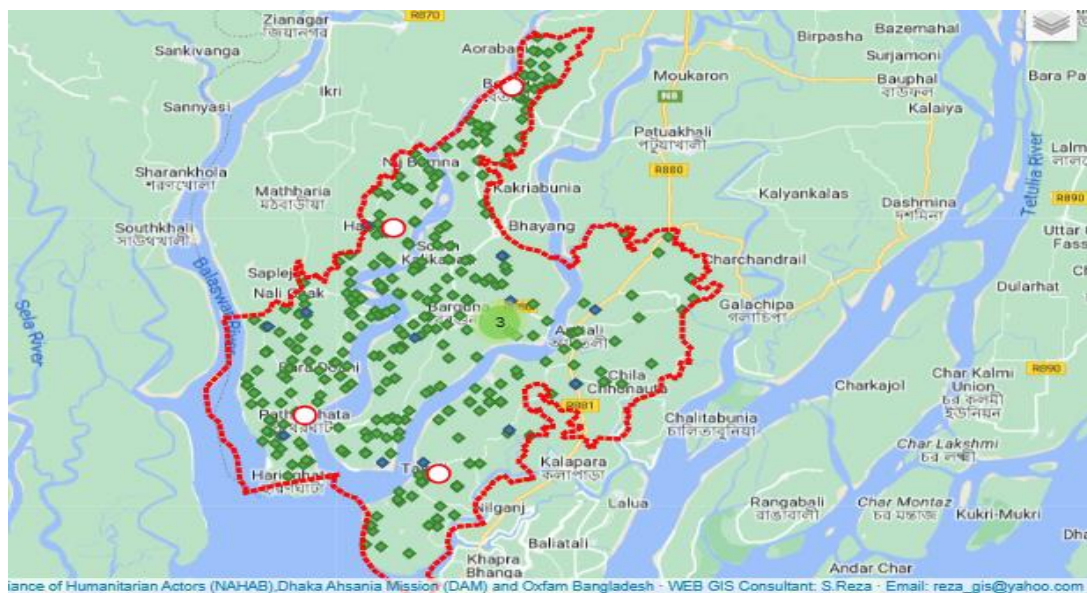


GIS Map of Barguna.

## 6.2. Localization Technical Working Group/Local Level Coordination Initiatives in Selected Disaster-Prone Districts and Lessons from Cyclone 2020 and Flood 2021 Responses

■ Hasina Akhter Mita, Director Programme, NIRAPAD

### 1. Introduction

**Background**

Localization of humanitarian action in Bangladesh has been an important focus in recent years. Several initiatives have sought to spotlight progress on localization, including Bangladesh being selected as the first "demonstrator country" for the Grand Bargain Localization Workstream Field Mission in September 2018. Various partnership and programme initiatives, as well as research, have focused on progressing commitments such as the Grand Bargain and Charter for Change.

NIRAPAD, in collaboration with the Humanitarian Advisory Group (HAG) and the UN Resident Coordinator's Office (UNRCO), has completed a baseline study of localization in Bangladesh covering the context of the 2019 flood response as part of the objectives outlined in the humanitarian response plan developed by the Humanitarian Coordination Task Team (HCTT). The report builds an evidence base and serves as a reference point for measuring progress on localization in future responses of the humanitarian community in support of the Government-led interventions coordinated by the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR).

Considering the recommendations of the localization baseline report to promote the localization agenda, the Localization Technical Working Group (LTWG) was successfully formulated in July 2020. NIRAPAD, in close collaboration with Start Fund Bangladesh and UNRCO, provided support in the formation of this working group. In line with the Grand Bargain, the LTWG is working closely with 106 humanitarian agencies (including 63 L/NNGOs, 20 INGOs, 2 RCRC movements, 15 HCTT, and 6 UN agencies involved in Cyclone Amphan and Flood 2020 response, along with 13 HCTT representatives). Caritas Bangladesh was selected as the first Chair of the LTWG by consensus of the member agencies. Technical lead agencies (NIRAPAD and Start Fund Bangladesh) are providing technical support in operationalizing the working group. NIRAPAD is also providing secretariat support.

**Objectives**

The LTWG's key strategic actions included the following broader activities to encourage localization practice in humanitarian response to climate-related disasters, to improve informed decision-making, and the humanitarian community's reactions in support of government-led interventions.

**Specific objectives of the LTWG are as follows:**
-   To gather data on evidence of progress on the localization of humanitarian aid and actions in coordinated humanitarian response.
-   To support local and national actors to maintain close collaboration with the wider humanitarian community in humanitarian response.
-   To advocate for strengthening localization actions of international actors and donors.

## Key Strategic Actions

Key strategic actions of the LTWG included the following broader activities to promote localization practice in humanitarian response to climate-related disasters for strengthening informed decision-making and improving responses of the humanitarian community in support of government-led interventions:

### SO1: Strengthen data-driven transparency
- Support the formation of a working group under the HCTT to discuss and contribute to promoting the localization agenda.
- Establish a digital platform with necessary technical tools & processes for tracking coordinated humanitarian response-related spending and activities in line with HRP.

### SO2: Enhance participation of local actors in humanitarian coordination
- Provide technical support to the local collaboration platform with tools, guidance, and processes in line with the HRP.
- Support local stakeholders for greater engagement in HCTT and cluster activities at both national and local levels.

### SO3: Promote Partnership practices for Localization
- Document good practices/case studies regarding partnership practices for climate-related disaster-coordinated response.
- Support establishing informal feedback mechanisms and accountability assessments of the local actors (using Start Fund AAP Framework).

## 1.2 LTWG's Initiatives in Promoting Localization Agenda in Bangladesh

Organize LTWG Monthly Meetings

The LTWG meets every month. Fifteen online meetings have been conducted since its inception in July 2020. The meetings allow members to stay updated on global and national localization concerns and work together to achieve their goals. Each meeting includes at least one technical topic to help members improve their disaster risk management knowledge and abilities. The meetings also enable members to share their concerns. These gatherings help local and national actors become more involved in HCTT and cluster activities at both national and local levels, as HCTT representatives, cluster coordinators, and working coordinators are present. From each partner organization, heads of organizations, one focal person, and one alternate focal person are assigned to participate in the events and implementations of the group. All meeting minutes are available at this link.

## Publicize Localization Agenda

The LTWG, with help from UNOCHA, maintains an online archive of the localization agenda at [ReliefWeb](https://response.reliefweb.int/bangladesh/localisation-technical-working-group-ltwg/maps). This webpage contains all documents produced by the LTWG. Additionally, technical lead agencies NIRAPAD and Start Fund Bangladesh, as well as the Chair, Caritas Bangladesh, have participated in

various coordination forum meetings, such as HCTT meetings and inter-cluster meetings, to publicize the localization agenda. They have also shared LTWG activities with some global stakeholders, such as ICVA, HAG, Somalia NGO Consortium, and UNOCHA.

## Preparing Financial Dashboard

To track humanitarian funding, three financial dashboards have been prepared: one on Cyclone Amphan response, one on flood 2020 response, and another on Sylhet flood response 2022. Financial data were collected from the respondent agencies using a pre-developed checklist. The findings of the dashboard report were presented at the LTWG meetings. Based on feedback from the meeting participants, the financial tracking dashboards were finalized. Along with the national dashboard, LTWG prepared dashboard reports representing the financial flow at the district level as well for the 2022 flood response.

The dashboard reports articulated the financial inflow and outflow during the mentioned humanitarian responses, depicting the funding scenario in the context of localization. The Financial Tracking Dashboards are available [here](https://response.reliefweb.int/bangladesh/localisation-technical-working-group-ltwg/maps).

## Conduct Study on Practice of the Feedback and Complaint Response Mechanism (FCRM) in Flood Response 2022

The LTWG conducted a study to assess the practice and effectiveness of the Feedback and Complaint Response Mechanism (FCRM) among agencies implementing response initiatives during the 2022 flood. Additionally, affected communities were consulted to gather qualitative insights on the practice and effectiveness of the existing FCRM system at the beneficiary level. The study methodology included an online survey among implementing agencies and consultations with affected communities and local UzDMCs. Among the implementing agencies, 18 responded to the online survey form. Three key informant interviews (KII) with the PIOs and six focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with community members in Sunamganj, Sylhet, and Moulvibazar.

To ensure the FCRM is effective enough to guarantee collective accountability to the affected community, the study team has generated the following recommendations:
- Strengthen information and communication flow to communities so they are aware of their rights to aid and can issue complaints about the aid.
- Enhance the capacity of frontline staff to outline objectives and activities linked to accountability to affected populations.
- Employ a dedicated staff member responsible for supporting the implementation of the humanitarian accountability system and mechanism at the community level, collecting complaints face-to-face from the affected community, and taking initiatives to resolve them.
- Inform and train frontline staff on the concepts, tools, and processes of humanitarian accountability and safeguarding.
- Establish a system for regular evaluation of the FCRM for all humanitarian agencies. Humanitarian practitioners should commit to analyzing FCRM data to generate insights to improve response strategies. These data should be available for wider analysis to generate insights for collective AAP at the national level.

- Follow minimum standards to establish collective AAP mechanisms in humanitarian response.
- Share learnings among staff members and other stakeholders to improve the effectiveness of the FCRM.
- Training Workshop on Localization Agenda and Collaboration Processes and Tools in Humanitarian Actions

To promote the localization agenda and collaboration processes in humanitarian actions, the LTWG organized a two-day residential training workshop on "Localization Agenda and Collaboration Processes & Tools in Humanitarian Actions." The workshop was held on February 16-17, 2021, at CCDB Hope Foundation in Savar, Dhaka. The objective was to increase participants' understanding of the localization agenda and humanitarian collaboration tools and processes, equipping them with tools for incorporating these issues in their organizations so they can utilize their knowledge in field-level activities as needed. A total of 24 frontline staff of L/NNGOs involved in the Flood Response 2020 participated in the workshop, with only three female participants. A training report has been shared with the LTWG members.

The training workshop was supported by the Early Recovery Assistance to Monsoon Flood-Affected Population in Northern Areas of Bangladesh project, implemented in Jamalpur and Sirajganj districts by a consortium of Caritas Bangladesh, Christian Aid, and World Vision Bangladesh, with downstream partner Dhaka Ahsania Mission and Unnayan Sangha. NIRAPAD worked as a technical partner to support learning documentation, accountability rollout, and promotion of localization activities.

## Lessons Learned Exercise in the Response to Cyclone Amphan

In November 2020, the UN Resident Coordinator Office (RCO), in collaboration with the LTWG and with financial support from UK Aid, organized a Lessons Learned workshop in Khulna district. Prior to the workshop, cluster and working group coordinators visited Satkhira and Khulna districts. The visits and consultations were facilitated by local NGOs Shushilan and Uttaran, with logistics support from the LTWG and local staff of various international, national, and local organizations. The workshop took place at the City Inn Hotel in Khulna on November 10, 2020. The LTWG jointly facilitated the workshop, and the lessons learned workshop report was presented at the fifth LTWG meeting held on November 30.

Workshop participants highlighted the primary strengths and limitations of the Amphan response based on the speed components to increase the speed, quality, and volume of humanitarian interventions to complement the GoB response. They also made recommendations for effective humanitarian response at both the agency and interagency levels. The top ten recommendations are as follows:

## Impact Analysis
- Devise risk communication strategies that clearly highlight the risks of infrastructure failure due to climate-related disasters and their consequences on mobility, access to essential goods and services, etc.
- Ensure local-level information management protocols and vulnerability analysis are available before the next disaster season in all unions and Upazilas most at risk of cyclones and floods.

## Priority Actions

- Advocate to the GoB for early actions, including the delivery of cash assistance in anticipation of disasters to reduce vulnerabilities and facilitate early recovery of targeted beneficiaries.
- Promote innovative emergency sheltering modalities to complement multi-purpose cyclone shelter evacuations and limit prolonged displacement situations on embankments.
- Ensure infrastructure-related initiatives aimed at reducing disaster risks are respectful and protective of the fragile ecosystem.

## Institutional Capacity

- Support local stakeholders in developing multi-sectoral Joint Emergency Response Teams based on expertise and comparative advantages, assigned to concerned geographical areas.
- Support local authorities on Emergency Response Preparedness, considering local realities, existing development, and climate change interventions, and capitalize on indigenous knowledge and comparative advantages of local communities.

## Action Plan

- Reduce transaction costs through common logistics arrangements and the delivery of aid using technology.
- Develop area-based Humanitarian Response Plans with sectoral inputs from local stakeholders, benefiting from clusters' technical assistance.
- Encourage local and national NGOs to build their own pool funding mechanisms based on profits generated from micro-credit activities to strengthen local humanitarian leadership.

## Conclusion

The LTWG provides an opportunity for the humanitarian community to collaboratively work on the localization agenda. Due to the mixed representation of L/NNGOs, INGOs, RCRC Movement, and UN agencies, LTWG members have opportunities for learning through various knowledge and learning initiatives such as monthly meetings, orientations, trainings, and learning exercises. This enhances collaboration and coordination mechanisms by developing common tools and processes and increasing the participation of L/NNGOs. Additionally, it promotes accountability to the affected population through local partners who are closer to those in need. However, the LTWG journey has just begun, and they have planned a long way ahead. In line with the Grand Bargain, they will continue their efforts to promote the localization agenda in humanitarian aid and actions through promoting partnership practices for localization, enhancing the participation of local actors in humanitarian coordination, and strengthening data-driven transparency.

# 6.3. SYNOPSIS OF FINDINGS FROM NAHAB DIVISIONAL COORDINATION MEETINGS

■ Rahima Sultana Kazal, Director Programme, AVAS

## Introduction:

NAHAB implemented a project titled "Strengthening Humanitarian Actors Partnership through Networking & Actions" (SHAPNA) with financial support from Give2Asia. The project includes various capacity-building initiatives and aims to strengthen coordination and localization among network members. One of the main activities is holding divisional level meetings with network members. These meetings aim to reinforce coordination among members and stakeholders, assess current vulnerabilities and capacities, and improve understanding of the risks that need to be addressed. A total of 32 divisional level meetings were organized by lead/focal member organizations at the divisional level, namely DAM, Sushilon, ERA, YPSA, GUK, NDP, AVAS, and US, with participation from network members and government officials.

## Specific Objectives:

The objectives of the divisional meetings are to sensitize network members and to share the benefits, opportunities, and scope of response initiatives in a coordinated manner.

### Name of the Divisional Focal Organizations:

| SL | Division | Name of the Divisional Focal Member |
|----|----------|-------------------------------------|
| 01 | Dhaka | Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) |
| 02 | Khulna | Sushilan |
| 03 | Sylhet | Efforts for Rural Advancement (ERA) |
| 04 | Chattagram | Young Power in Social Action (YPSA) |
| 05 | Rangpur | Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK) |
| 06 | Rajshahi | National Development Programme (NDP) |
| 07 | Barishal | Association of Voluntary Actions for Society (AVAS) |
| 08 | Mymensingh | Unnayan Sangstha |

## Participants:

Respective divisional network members of NAHAB and government officials.

## Action Modality:

The divisional meetings were conducted based on the local context and the COVID-19 pandemic situation, either virtually or in-person with social distancing and other preventive measures. All meetings were conducted virtually due to the pandemic. These virtual meetings were facilitated through Zoom/Skype and lasted half a day. The responsible organizations arranged the meetings, invited potential participants, and prepared position papers on the fixed agenda.

## Agenda for the Virtual Meetings:

**a) Local Level Coordination in the Context of COVID-19, Amphan, and Flood Response:** Coordination mechanisms for local responses to COVID-19, Cyclone Amphan, and the 2020 floods were major agenda items. Effective GO-NGO and NGO-NGO coordination is crucial to avoid duplication and ensure smooth implementation of humanitarian actions.

**b) Localization:** Localization involves empowering local humanitarian actors by sharing information, knowledge, money, skills, and technology. It emphasizes listening to and responding to the needs of local victims through local skilled workers while respecting their culture. Local NGOs' capacity is a key indicator of resilience. Initiatives from local NGOs in response to COVID-19, Amphan, and recent floods were showcased to inspire and replicate successful practices.

**c) Social Capital:** Stories of individual heroes, organizations, and best practices in response to COVID-19, Amphan, and recent floods were reported. These stories can inspire humanitarian actors and community dwellers, offering new insights. Such instances of social capital were discussed, identified, and shared during the meetings.

**d) Local Level Mechanisms for Pool Funding and CSR Mobilization:** Pool funds are multi-donor humanitarian financing mechanisms providing flexible sources for emergency responses. These, along with Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) funds, were discussed in terms of existing and potential mechanisms for managing pool funds.

## Main Findings:

The findings from the NAHAB divisional coordination meetings reveal several critical insights into the challenges and opportunities in the humanitarian sector in Bangladesh. The key issues identified are **the limited and sometimes contradictory understanding of localization** and its end goals among local and national actors. While progress is being made in amplifying their voice and influence in coordination mechanisms and decision-making bodies, there is still considerable work to be done. The need to increase social capital and local-level funding was emphasized, alongside the establishment of an information hub for better coordination among local humanitarian actors.

There is a **pressing need to increase corporate funding** and create clear guidelines for its use. The financial crisis has led to inactivity among many local NGOs and CSOs, underscoring the importance of sustainable funding sources. Given that over 40% of the population is youth, **empowering and engaging young people** in community development, especially during humanitarian crises, is crucial. Capacity strengthening should be a two-way process, leveraging local actors' knowledge and contextual understanding.

The findings also highlight that many local actors' capacities are focused on disaster risk management (DRM), but there is a need to address crises from a protection perspective, requiring technical and programming support in areas such as standards, confidentiality, and gender-based violence (GBV). The scale and complexity of the humanitarian crisis necessitate timely and extensive intervention from all actors, with a strong need for international actors' presence. However, transitioning responsibilities to local actors should begin.

A comprehensive understanding of **existing capacities and a national surge plan** would have been beneficial at the crisis's onset. There is also a need for a better understanding of and agreement on the roles of local and national actors, focusing on collaboration, respect, and building on each other's strengths. Good practices and learnings from pilot humanitarian funding mechanisms for local and national actors can inform future efforts towards meeting localization funding commitments.

Despite progress, the majority of local and national humanitarian actors and local governments/disaster management councils remain heavily dependent on short-term, project-based funding from international agencies. **Direct funding to local and national NGOs** is believed to enable quicker response and greater beneficiary reach. NAHAB advocates for the establishment of a national pooled fund accessible directly by local and national NGOs for emergency response operations and capacity strengthening. **Overhead costs passed on to local partners** are often inadequate and do not reflect the true implementation costs.

There has been **limited support for gender-responsive and women-led organizations** in localization discussions. The idea and standards of localization need to be contextualized, considering local organization capacity and resources. Many established women-led and women organizations in the country are primarily engaged in development programs, highlighting the need for their involvement in humanitarian efforts as well.

## Recommendations from the Participants:

Participants at the NAHAB Divisional Coordination Meetings provided a comprehensive set of recommendations aim to foster a more coordinated, efficient, and locally empowered humanitarian response, ultimately improving resilience and support for communities in need. Key recommendations include:

⇨ **Strengthening Collaboration and Definitions:**
  - Utilize existing networks such as NAHAB and the NGO Platform to develop a common definition of local and national actors.
  - Agree on collaboration strategies that respect and build on each other's strengths.

⇨ **Health and Safety Measures:**
  - Implement stricter government rules to ensure mask usage and social distancing.
  - Increase awareness and campaign activities related to health and safety.
  - Enhance access to health services and motivate the community to adhere to preventive measures.
  - Advocate for prioritizing vaccine distribution to non-government sector workers.

⇨ **Information Dissemination and Education:**
  - Distribute printed materials such as posters and leaflets from NAHAB to member organizations.
  - Counteract misinformation on social media and increase discussions on the COVID-19 vaccine.
  - Promote vaccine uptake, especially among women.

⇨ **Capacity Building and Funding:**
- Encourage consortium approaches among local NGOs to facilitate easier access to funding.
- Build the capacity of local NGOs to apply for and manage direct funding.
- Provide capacity-building training for local NGOs.
- Advocate with government departments to emphasize the importance of localization.
- Create a data bank with information on NGOs working at the district level.

⇨ **Operational Efficiency:**
- Ensure local NGOs do not engage in humanitarian responses without overhead cost coverage.
- Provide immediate relief, such as food items, to affected people rather than focusing on IEC materials.
- Leverage NGOs as a pressure group to urge the government to take a more active role in response efforts.

## Conclusion:

Despite some challenges, the meetings were successful, achieving their objectives. They significantly contributed to developing cooperation and rapport among NAHAB members and potential NGOs in the divisions. Such meetings are beneficial for local NGOs in terms of capacity building, experience sharing, and exchanging good practices, and should be continued.
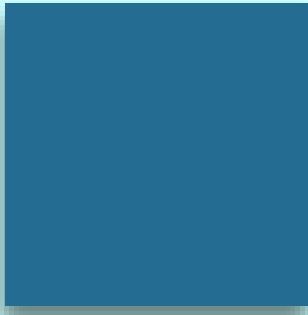
# Inclusion and Anticipatory Humanitarian

Ground-level Solution

Localization

Coordination

Participation

Funding

Partnership

Capacity

Nexus

Community Resilience
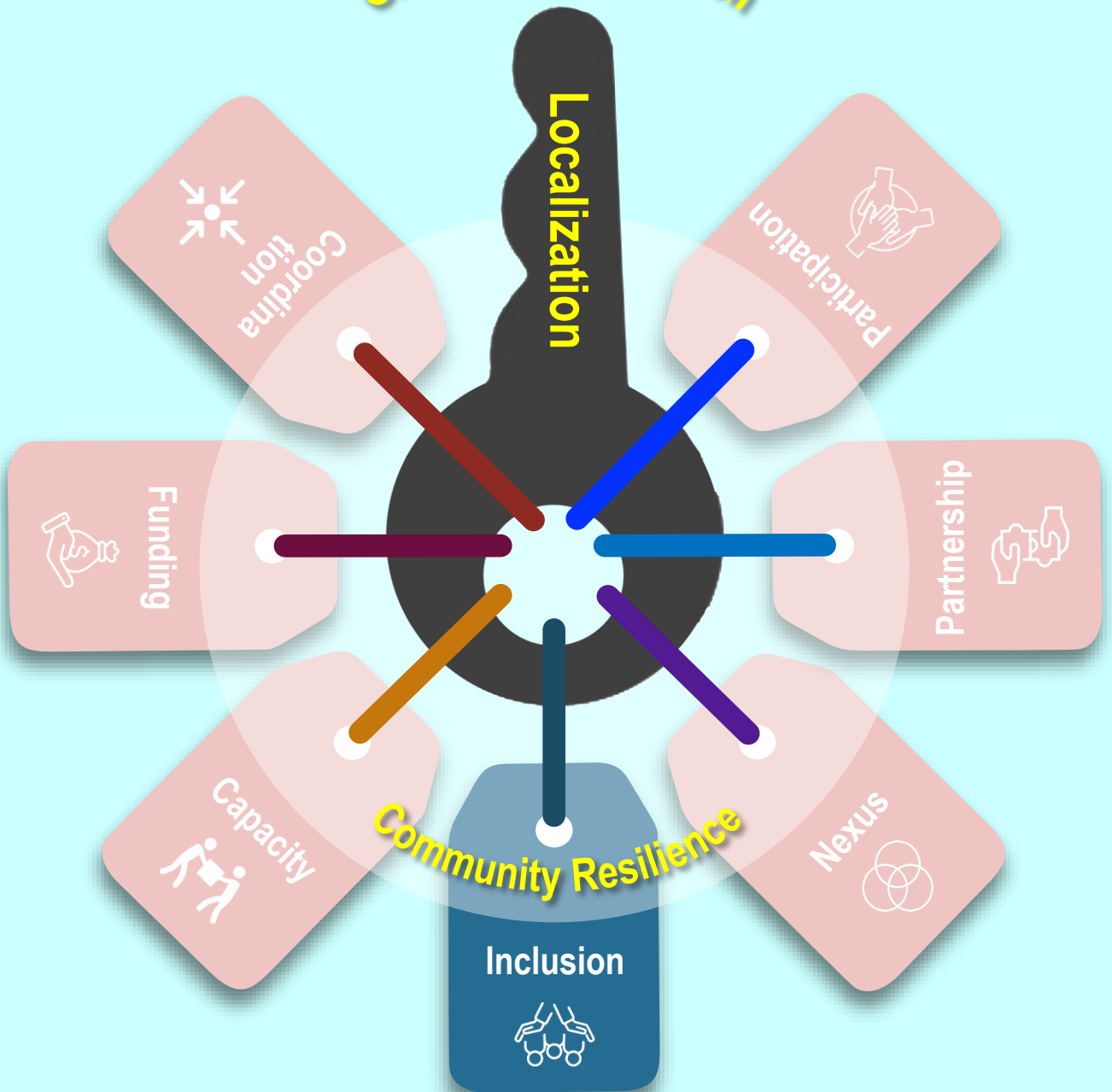
Inclusion

# Chapter 7: Inclusion and Anticipatory Humanitarian

This chapter provides an account of inclusive humanitarian response based on three case studies of Bangladeshi NGOs: GUK, CDD, and YPSA.

In NAHAB's "State of Human Actions in Bangladesh 2019" report, the focus of inclusive disaster management was on gender and aging aspects. As a follow-up and to complement these with broader dimensions of inclusion, this section presents cases from local contexts covering both anticipatory and inclusion dimensions. It includes one case on anticipatory action and two cases focused on disability.

7.1  Anticipatory inclusive humanitarian action for flood-vulnerable communities in Kurigram: A case of Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK).

7.2. CDD Case study.

7.3. YPSA Case study.

These examples of inclusive action also contain elements of participation, partnership, and funding as called for in CHS 1 (communities and people affected by crisis receive assistance appropriate and relevant to their needs) and CHS 4 (communities and people affected by crisis know their rights and entitlements, have access to information, and participate in decisions that affect them).

# 7.1. ANTICIPATORY INCLUSIVE HUMANITARIAN ACTION FOR FLOOD VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES IN KURIGRAM:
# A CASE OF GANA UNNAYAN KENDRA (GUK)

■ M Abdus Salam, Chief Executive, GUK

### Introduction:

Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK) is a comprehensive development organization that has been working since 1985 to create positive change and establish a respectful society with dignity and empowerment for the most at-risk communities in Bangladesh, particularly in North Bengal. Throughout its 39-year journey, GUK has been recognized primarily as a humanitarian organization. GUK envisions a poverty-free, equitable society where justice, equality, human rights, and dignity for all people are ensured.

In recent years, GUK has emphasized reducing or even preventing the damage and losses caused by disasters through community-led anticipatory actions and forecast-based financing, in partnership with the community, community-based organizations, and donor agencies.

This article narrates an example of humanitarian response in the selected areas of the Kurigram district. Supported by Christian Aid, this intervention aims to build a replicable mechanism for anticipatory action based on experiences and evidence collected and tested on the ground by different actors to implement forecast-based action and shock-responsive social protection for floods in Kurigram.

The outcome targeted vulnerable communities and households, particularly those living in low-lying areas, people with disabilities, female-headed households, and those with adolescent girls, to take pre-emptive actions before floods. The outputs included:

1. Households and the community taking preparedness actions at least one week before the floods.
2. Vulnerable households receiving support once the trigger action is activated (within 10 days before floods).
3. Minimizing the impact of gender-based violence and challenges in menstrual health for adolescent girls and women of reproductive age.

The program focused on disaster risk reduction (DRR), climate change adaptation, and supporting vulnerable households within 10 days before floods. Rowmari and Rajibpur upazilas of Kurigram district, due to their geographical situation and lower basins of the rivers Brahmaputra, Zinjiram, and Halhalia entering from Meghalaya of Assam, India, are disaster-prone. These upazilas are totally isolated from the rest of the country and surrounded by rivers, making them highly vulnerable to flooding during the monsoon season (March to September). Climate change has altered the predictability and severity of these events, with severe floods occurring every four to five years.

Disasters such as floods, flash floods, drought, food scarcity, cold waves, and nor'westers are common. Continuous river erosion makes thousands landless, vulnerable, and poorer every year. Over 80% of the population are day laborers and marginal farmers, with poverty being a major barrier to development. The region lacks mills or factories due to problematic communication and rough river conditions, limiting income-generating opportunities to agriculture, which is viable only for 6-7 months. During the lean

period, male earners often migrate for temporary employment, leaving their families behind in isolated char lands.

Supporting vulnerable women, men, and children of 2,075 households living in the most isolated chars in the Brahmaputra basin, where natural disasters frequently impact lives and livelihoods, was a key focus from May 2022 to November 2022. The anticipatory action program aimed to increase community awareness of climate change impacts, strengthen community-led early warning systems, and enhance disaster resilience, secured livelihoods, menstrual health, and efforts to end violence against women.

This pilot program addressed the vulnerabilities of 8,300 individual char dwellers through community-based group formation, enhanced disaster preparedness practices, climate adaptation, and disaster-related skill development. Key activities included:

- Conducting 2 consultation/advocacy meetings with the Local Disaster Management Committee.
- Organizing a workshop with the Directorate of Consumer Rights Protection and local vendors to raise awareness about price hikes during floods.
- Conducting 100 early warning dissemination sessions in remote villages.
- Establishing 10 gender-friendly temporary flood shelters.
- Providing assistive devices to persons with disabilities.
- Repairing 2 connecting roads for flood shelter access.
- Installing 10 elevated tube wells with high raised platforms.
- Distributing anti-parasite medicines and organizing vaccination camps for livestock.
- Distributing 100 menstrual hygiene management kits.
- Providing anticipatory cash grants to 650 selected families through electronic money transfer via bKash.

This support significantly reduced the suffering of the targeted community and prevented losses during the 2022 flood. All actions were taken in consultation with the community and local government representatives. Post-distribution monitoring (PDM) was conducted in collaboration with the community, local government, and donor agency representatives, resulting in a very effective response and increased GUK's capacity in anticipatory action and forecast-based financing.

## Conclusion:
Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK) successfully completed this anticipatory action and forecast-based financing program in coordination with at-risk community members, Upazila administration, and local government representatives. The affected people were very appreciative of the support received during critical times. The Upazila and UP administration praised the distribution system and committed to supporting Christian Aid in future responses.

# 7.2. INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN HUMANITARIAN ACTIONS

■ Subir Kumar Saha, Coordinator, CDD

The successful implementation of the Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (DiDRR) inclusion model in Savar Municipality demonstrates the transformative potential of inclusive practices. By integrating persons with disabilities like Roman Hossain and Bipad Bhonjon into the Ward Disaster Management Committee (WDMC), the community benefitted from their leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic. This model, which includes institutional recognition, community engagement, support for mobility, awareness campaigns, humanitarian assistance, and continuous improvement, highlights the critical role persons with disabilities can play in disaster risk reduction.

The Ward Disaster Management Committee (WDMC) has been formally recognized as an institution by the Government through the Standing Order on Disaster 2019. This recognition has made representatives of persons with disabilities eligible to become members of the committee. Accordingly, Roman Hossain was included in the WDMC of Savar Municipality, Ward No-2. Roman Hossain, who has physical limitations affecting his mobility, is an active member of the WDMC. He is supported with a tricycle, enabling him to move independently.

"Bipad Bhonjon," an elderly person with a physical disability caused by an accident, was somewhat isolated from the community. As a WDMC member of Ward-2, Savar Municipality, he has found inspiration and enjoyment in the company of other members.

Both Roman Hossain and Bipad Bhonjon have emerged as community leaders, fighting against COVID-19 and inspiring others, including persons with disabilities, by demonstrating that "they can." The CDD, in partnership with CBM through the CDDIDRM & CCA Project, created awareness and provided various trainings for Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (DiDRR). These efforts, under the umbrella of WDMC and the Municipality Disaster Management Committee of Savar Municipality, ensured effective participation and meaningful engagement of persons with disabilities by providing assistive devices to promote their mobility.

To protect against the COVID-19 pandemic, the Empowering Local and National Humanitarian Actors (ELNHA) project of OXFAM, DAM, and CDD provided humanitarian support to 206 at-risk families, including families of persons with disabilities. Roman Hossain and Bipad Bhonjon played a crucial role in identifying households with persons with disabilities in their community.

This initiative stands as a unique example that persons with disabilities can excel in providing humanitarian support to their community. CDD and CBM have documented the practices of Roman Hossain and Bipad Bhonjon as evidence for replication in other communities. This documentation aims to inspire other persons with disabilities and at-risk community members to make a positive change.

Roman and Bipad visited houses in the community, distributed leaflets, and actively participated in disinfectant activities. They sprayed disinfectant chemicals in important places of Savar Municipality alongside other WDMC members. They proved that with a favorable environment and proper orientation, persons with disabilities can contribute equally to reducing disaster risk in their community.

"I always want to do something for the betterment of my community. I want to prove that if opportunities are available in society, persons with disabilities can also contribute effectively."
- Roman Hossain, Member, WDMC

The documented success in Savar serves as a compelling example for other communities, proving that with the right support and opportunities, persons with disabilities can lead and inspire positive change, ultimately strengthening community resilience and inclusivity. CDD has replicated the theme of "Disability Inclusive Humanitarian Action" and these practices in the southwest coastal region of Bangladesh, specifically in Southkhali Union of Sharankhola Upazila, Bagerhat District.

## 7.3. ENSURING A SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES THROUGH THE INCLUSIVE FINANCING PROGRAM: A ROADMAP OF DISABILITY INCLUSION

■ Newaz Mahmud/YPSA

YPSA has been working in Sitakund Upazilla under Chittagong District, located on the southeastern coastal part of Bangladesh, to ensure a barrier-free and rights-based society for Persons with Disabilities since 2001. Since then, YPSA has focused on supporting persons with disabilities in Chattogram. Building on previous experience, YPSA strives to ensure a sustainable livelihood for People with Disabilities in society. Since November 2015, YPSA has initiated the program "Ensuring a Sustainable Livelihood for People with Disabilities through Inclusive Development Program" in the Chattogram Division.

Article 26 of the UNCRPD emphasizes the right of persons with disabilities to attain and maintain maximum independence, full physical, mental, social, and vocational ability, and full inclusion and participation in all aspects of life. They are entitled to equal opportunities for comprehensive habilitation and rehabilitation services and programs, particularly in health, employment, education, and social services. Article 27 of the UNCRPD outlines the right of persons with disabilities to work on an equal basis with others, including the right to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labor market and work environment that is open, inclusive, and accessible. They should have opportunities for self-employment, entrepreneurship, the development of cooperatives, and starting their own businesses. Persons with disabilities should also have access to general education, vocational training, and lifelong learning without discrimination, in line with Article 24 of the UNCRPD. Additionally, Bangladesh's "Rights and Protection of the Person with Disability Act 2013" declares equal opportunities for self-employment, entrepreneurship, education, training, and accessibility, including the use of assistive devices for Persons with Disabilities in Articles 7, 9, and 10. Both the UNCRPD and the Rights and Protection of the Person with Disability Act 2013 emphasize employment opportunities and training for people with disabilities. However, it is realistic that people with disabilities cannot access all facilities in society as per their needs. In these circumstances, YPSA is taking appropriate initiatives to ensure a sustainable livelihood for People with Disabilities.

For these reasons, YPSA conducted an intensive survey in Sitakund, funded by YPSA's own resources. Through this survey, YPSA identified the major problems faced by People with Disabilities in their daily lives and started a pilot model inclusive financing program in Sitakund. Based on Sitakund's experience, YPSA began implementing the program in nine districts of the Chattogram division.

In these working areas, livelihood opportunities are insufficient for the poor and marginalized people, including People with Disabilities. They are deprived of all kinds of employment and income-generating activities and cannot become self-dependent due to a lack of skills and proper opportunities. They also cannot access government safety net services and employment opportunities. Sitakund is an industrial area, but these industries do not provide employment opportunities to people with disabilities. Some skilled and vocationally trained Persons with Disabilities cannot start any business due to a lack of finance. Additionally, some of them struggle to do business and sell their products due to issues with accessibility and marketing information, leading to a lack of profit. Due to a lack of assistive devices, some Persons with Disabilities cannot perform any work to achieve self-dependency in society. Moreover, People with

Disabilities have no business firms in their area to increase their self-financing, which hinders their institutional and organizational sustainability. As a result, they are neglected in their families and society and cannot achieve economic development in their daily lives.

People with disabilities have the right to participate in all kinds of district and sub-district level committees and be included in all kinds of governmental safety net programs, based on the "Rights and Protection of the Person with Disability Act 2013." According to Article 9 of the UNCRPD, persons with disabilities should have access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, transportation, information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and rural areas. However, people with disabilities do not receive these facilities in the community and face discrimination when claiming safety net services, such as community legal services, different grants, VGD, VGF, and KABIKHA programs, at local government offices. To address this situation, YPSA's initiatives support the poor and people with disabilities in ensuring sustainable livelihoods through the inclusive financing program, which includes:

- YPSA offers loans to Persons with Disabilities, enabling their economic development and increasing their family's self-dependency and mobility in society.
- Some Persons with Disabilities, who previously could not work due to a lack of assistive devices and cash grants, can now use assistive devices, increasing their mobility and supporting income-generating activities.
- YPSA aims to establish sales centers for People with Disabilities to sell their own-made products in the community, encouraging Persons with Disabilities to create new products and sell them at these centers. This initiative inspires other Persons with Disabilities to establish new business centers with their own products.

Community people, GO-NGO representatives, and Local Government representatives become aware of the work of Persons with Disabilities and support them in accessing all kinds of government safety-net support for various institutions. Additionally, YPSA provides physiotherapy services to Persons with Disabilities and poor people, along with health services (primary medicine, referrals to specialists in EYE and ENT), to Persons with Disabilities.

During this time, 2,586 persons with disabilities have directly benefited from this program, and more than 3,000 family members of Persons with Disabilities, UP Representatives, and community people have indirectly benefited.

This initiative aims to establish a barrier-free, rights-based, inclusive society for people with disabilities. Previously, there were no initiatives in this community to improve the financial development of Persons with Disabilities, and no inclusive financial plans from government and non-government institutions. To ensure a sustainable livelihood for People with Disabilities, this program provides skill development in entrepreneurship, market development strategy, and various vocational training such as mobile phone servicing, rickshaw or cycle servicing, paper bag making, poultry farming, vegetable farming, small business management, cow rearing, etc. After training, People with Disabilities receive micro-credit support without any interest, each person with a 5% service charge, and an additional 6% service charge is

provided as financial assistance. YPSA plans to create a barrier-free inclusive society where every Person with Disability will be self-dependent and become a successful entrepreneur through this program. This program aims to socially and economically empower Persons with Disabilities to claim their rights and services from government and non-government institutions through various skill training. Additionally, other Persons with Disabilities in the community are encouraged to engage in income-generating activities by being inspired by the self-dependent work of program participants. As a result, all Persons with Disabilities in the community will become self-dependent, successful entrepreneurs, and their mobility, empowerment, and dignity will increase in their daily lives. Based on its success, the model will be replicated in other parts of the country by YPSA through the Palli Karma-Sahayok Foundation (PKSF) and the government.



### Gias Uddin's Success through YPSA Inclusive Financing

People with disabilities can become self-reliant with the necessary support. This requires emotional and financial support. I received that support from YPSA, and I am now doing well. Md. Gias Uddin, a 45-year-old physically challenged person, expressed these words with great joy. He was born in the village of Natunpara in Barabkunda union of Sitakunda Upazila.

Md. Gias Uddin, son of late Saber Ahmed and Chakina Begum of Natunpara village, was very brave and intelligent from a young age. However, due to family crises and self-neglect, he could not study much after primary school. Gias Uddin said that although he did not study, he started working in a shipyard company in Chittagong to support his family and his own needs.

"When I became physically challenged, I couldn't go out with one leg, it was so embarrassing," Gias said. "I had lived a normal life until then. Now, I had a hard time going out, spending time with my neighbors and friends. People used terms like 'pangu,' 'langra,' 'lange,' and 'tanga,' which sounded very bad to me. I couldn't leave the house at first." After becoming physically challenged, Gias Uddin first set up a small shop. However, it became difficult to manage the family with the income from it.

At that moment, he met an employee of YPSA's Inclusive Finance program and became a member of the Inclusive Development Program. YPSA provided a loan of TK 20,000/- at a low service charge to increase the scope and goods of Gias Uddin's shop.

Gias Uddin said, "I repaid the loan and took another loan of Tk 50,000/- on easy terms. That's how I borrowed several times. With this loan money, I bought some bicycles and sports boards to rent out. I currently have 25 bicycles and two boards. I earn an average of Tk 6000-8000/- a month by renting the bicycles and boards to the people of the area. Now, I earn an average of Tk 15,000-16,000/- per month from my shop. To further my success, YPSA gave me a grant of Tk 6,000/- through PKSF."

"I bought a fridge with this grant. Now I can sell mango juice, Seven Up, ice cream, Speed, and Tiger, catering to the needs of all categories of customers, including children. Now, my family's income has increased. I pay installments every month from the profits of the business

We can also pay for our children's education and provide them with nutritious food.

"At present, I save an average of Tk 3000/- in the bank every month to meet my family's needs. I have received income-enhancing and technical training, quality of life skills development, and so on through YPSA's Inclusive Finance program. I have now become a member of the Sitakunda Disabled People's Organization (DPO), organized through YPSA. YPSA also provided me with a pair of crutches for walking.

"I hope to improve my own position by growing my business with the support of YPSA. I dream of expanding my business. My position in society is much better now. People respect me. People in the area visit my shop. I want everyone to extend a more supportive hand for the development of people with disabilities, like YPSA and PKSF. Then all disabled people in society will be able to become self-reliant like me."

### Shahanara's Dream of Developing Herself and Other Persons with Disabilities

"Today, I'm not just as disabled as others. Today, many people with disabilities are inspired by my success and are becoming interested in the work of handicraft on bamboo and cane." Shahanara Begum, a 46-year-old physically challenged woman, expressed these words beautifully.



Shahanara has a small family with two daughters and two grandchildren in Purba Lallanagar village of Baraiyadhala union of Sitakunda Upazila in Chittagong district. Physically challenged since birth (with problems in both legs and waist), she could not live with her husband for long after marriage.

After the birth of two daughters, her husband died of illness. Due to the problems with her legs and waist, she could not walk well and faced neglect from her in-laws. She moved back to her father's house with her daughters. Though she somehow managed to live with her poor brothers, Shahanara eventually started her own household on her ancestral property.

"I faced financial trouble supporting my family with two daughters, making it very difficult to sustain us. I wanted to start a business but lacked money. In 2007, I joined YPSA. With the help of YPSA, we formed the Lalanagar Disabled Self-Help Organization with 24 other disabled people from Lalanagar village. I currently serve as the president of that organization. With necessary training on bamboo and cane work from YPSA and financial assistance of Tk 3000, I started selling vegetables, weaving molasses, and making cane pots. Gradually, I achieved self-sufficiency by engaging in various income-enhancing activities with YPSA's support and training.

Since the formation of the organization, I have provided various skill development training to each member in collaboration with YPSA. I also began my livelihood by sewing clothes for young children and adults, following the necessary training on sewing.

To further expand my activities, I took a loan of Taka 20,000 from YPSA Inclusive Financing Program with a 5% service charge. After repaying the loan, I took three more loans of Tk 50,000/- each with a 5% service charge from YPSA. Seeing my progress, YPSA gave me another Tk 6000 and a toilet chair considering my physical condition. Additionally, I received financial assistance of Tk 4000 for eye treatment and other physical ailments. With YPSA's help, I overcame poverty and became self-reliant.
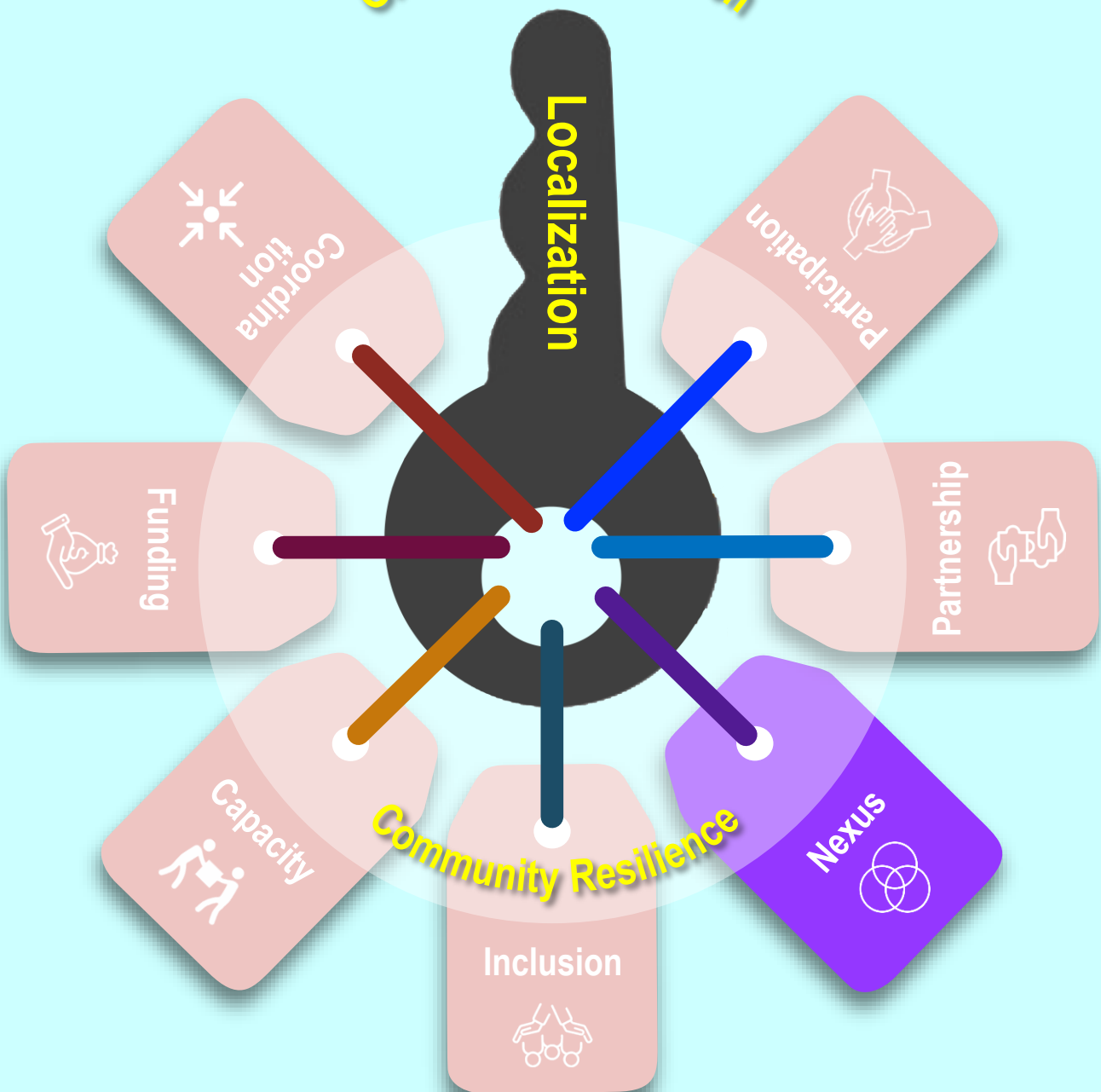
Furthermore, I was able to marry off one of my daughters with the profits from my business. Seeing my success, other disabled members of my organization became interested in taking initiatives to increase their family's income. I provided bamboo and cane training and entrepreneurship development training to the family members of persons with disabilities in collaboration with YPSA. Many of them received easy loans from YPSA Inclusive Development Program. Almost every member of Lalanagar Persons with Disabilities Self-Help Organization is currently earning a living through bamboo and cane work. We also assist persons with disabilities in accessing various financial assistance, grants, and support materials from YPSA as per their needs. Presently, every disabled person or their family members of Lalanagar Disability Development Organization engages in various income-generating activities.

I currently serve as vice-president of the Baraiyadhala Union Organization of Persons with Disabilities and as a member of the executive committee of Sitakunda Upazila Organization of Persons with Disabilities. I actively fulfill these responsibilities for the development of persons with disabilities in collaboration with YPSA.

Being associated with YPSA, I am now self-sufficient and happy with my family. People with disabilities in my Lalanagar organization are becoming self-reliant through income-generating activities. I am hopeful that YPSA will always support us for the development of every Person with Disability in Sitakund."

# Humanitarian Development Nexus– Bangladesh Experiences

Ground-level Solution

Localization

Coordination

Participation

Funding

Partnership

Capacity

Nexus

Community Resilience

Inclusion

# Chapter 8: Humanitarian Development Nexus – Bangladesh Experiences

This chapter focuses on the evolution of connecting humanitarian actions with development initiatives in Bangladesh to build community resilience in disaster management. In the 2019 State of Humanitarian Actions Report by NAHAB 2019 (Chapter 12), the major focus of the HDN was on macro-initiatives with few examples of micro-interventions. The 2023 report follows up on the current status of those initiatives and explores the future potential of HDN in both national and global contexts, with specific reference to (a) Grand Bargain 3.0, (b) HCTT Nexus Strategy (2021-25) in Bangladesh, and (c) HDN in the context of SDGs.

This Nexus-focused article highlights a strategic Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS 3), which calls for communities to be more prepared, resilient, and less at risk as a result of humanitarian action. This aligns perfectly with two KPIs of the LPMF: (a) Shift from project-based to strategic partnerships, and (b) Engagement of partners throughout the project cycle. This article is contributed by Suman Ahsanul Islam, Adviser, inSights - Institute of Innovations for Gender and Humanitarian Transformations.

## Prelude

Development investments, both grants and credits by bi/multilateral development agencies and the multilateral development banks (MDBs), are founded on the political and economic perspectives and strategies of the organizations. Humanitarian principles, however, are the basis for humanitarian aid decision-making. Most bi/multilateral development and humanitarian agencies have distinctly separate strategies and administrative structures for funding development and humanitarian projects. Though related, different forms of funding often include both humanitarian and development components. Development funding can exist without humanitarian aid, but it often supplements humanitarian aid during and after crises.

For example, in Bangladesh, communities affected by floods receive short-term life-saving support, including food, water, temporary shelter, and health services through emergency humanitarian aid funding. Subsequently, recovery and rehabilitation funds come from development agencies and MDBs. Additionally, the World Bank leveraged $590 million in grant financing to support Bangladesh in meeting the basic needs of 1.1 million displaced Rohingya people and 2.2 million host communities.

The humanitarian-development nexus (HDN) ensures that bi/multilateral development agencies and MDBs' systems, tools, and processes can provide both short- and long-term, needs-based humanitarian responses. At the same time, recipient governments must align their policies, procedures, humanitarian standards, and response capacities to ensure principled humanitarian actions.

Based on secondary document reviews and empirical experiences, this article elaborates on examples and analysis of how development funding assists disaster-affected people and addresses the socio-economic and structural vulnerabilities of at-risk communities in Bangladesh. By analyzing the coherent objectives of the responses, the flexible nature of humanitarian funding, and promoting HDN through partnerships, the article identifies good practices, learnings, and recommendations for how humanitarian responses can better contribute to disaster risk reduction (DRR) and development agendas that support the HDP nexus agenda in Bangladesh.

Led by the government, Bangladesh has increased resilience to climate-related shocks with support from international development and humanitarian actors. Empirically, Bangladesh has strong experiences in nationally led disaster management and humanitarian responses. National and local organizations' engagement in disaster management and response is profound and longstanding. These experiences and engagements are highly valuable in addressing the challenges and opportunities of stronger HDN and localization. All key national development plans and policies of the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) emphasize the importance of disaster management.

However, the Rohingya humanitarian crisis has little reference in these policy documents. Loans and assistance from bi/multilateral development agencies and MDBs are based on country plans and policies. Therefore, they pursue the GoB to include the Rohingya humanitarian crisis in the plan/policy documents, which could be instrumental in extending development funding in the context of the Rohingya humanitarian crisis as HDN. This highlights the importance of 'political perspectives' in practicing the HDN approach and the inclusion of the 'peace' component in the nexus discussion. The GoB has emphasized the humanitarian-peace nexus, envisaging not only funding and finance from international humanitarian actors but also an active role in negotiating repatriation and peace with Myanmar. Over the last six years, the repatriation and peace discussions have not progressed, which is perceived as a failure of the UN and other international humanitarian actors in the Rohingya humanitarian crisis context.

Sidestepping the triple-nexus complexities, especially the political leadership and perspectives of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, the UN-led Humanitarian Coordination Task Team (HCTT) facilitated the development of the Nexus Strategy for Climate-related Disasters (2021-2025) to collaborate with the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR). Instead of building on Bangladesh's empirical experiences and achievements in HDN, the strategy proposed hypothetical, technocratic approaches like the RAPID approach and Area-based coordination models. The HCTT nexus strategy, outlined fragmentarily, does not represent the entirety of the disaster risk reduction agenda or work in Bangladesh[13], while the whole idea of the nexus is coherent and comprehensive actions – both humanitarian and development.

## HDN in Bangladesh Context – How It Works on the Ground

Standing Orders on Disasters 2019 (SoD) is the key operational document for disaster emergency response as well as disaster resilience and risk reduction in Bangladesh. It is supported by the National Plan for Disaster Management (NPDM) 2021-25. As elaborated in the SoD, Disaster Management Committees

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[13] HCTT Nexus Strategy (2021-2025); Humanitarian-Development Collaboration for Climate-Related Disasters in Bangladesh, United Nations Bangladesh in Collaboration with the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR), 22 August 2021.

(DMCs) at different administrative and local-government tiers in Bangladesh are responsible for disaster emergency response as well as planning, proposing, and pursuing disaster preparedness, resilience, and risk reduction activities in their locations. Elected members of local government institutions actively participate in loss and damage assessment, beneficiary selection, and relief distribution processes of government-led emergency responses. They also coordinate, monitor, and hold NGOs accountable for their humanitarian actions while NGOs supplement/ complement the government-led response with support from international actors.

These elected members of local government play a pivotal role in creating coherence of objectives between humanitarian actions and development programs, including the Social Safety Net Program (SSNP) at their community level. For example, CARE Bangladesh's SHOUHARDO III program supported the UDMC's dissemination of information on climate-resilient seeds and seedlings, vaccinations for livestock and poultry, climate advisories, climate-resilient livestock and poultry rearing, WASH technology, water purification during floods, and health services during disaster periods.[14]

Similarly, Social Protection (SP) schemes financed under development programs have the potential to be used for early action and immediate response. The GoB's Employment Generation Program for the Poorest (EGPP) can be used for building temporary shelters, cleaning clogged channels and drains, and sheltering/proofing community assets. Additionally, repairing embankments, roads, and other flood protective infrastructure through Cash for Work (CfW) within the 5–15-day lead time provides double benefits – reduced risks from flood impacts and cash-in-hand for those engaged in the CfW. However, in terms of selecting or targeting beneficiaries, much depends on the political economy at the sub-district and ward levels.[15]

## Microfinance: Tools for HDN at the Grassroots

During the 1990s and 2000s, microcredits were experimented with as humanitarian assistance for disaster loss recovery in several large natural disasters in Bangladesh. With grant funding from donors, grants were provided for beneficiaries to purchase rickshaws, boats, and livestock. In some cases, interest-free loans were provided for agricultural production under 'soft terms' that included a long period for repayment of the principal.[16] Loans, grants, local disaster funds, and emergency replacement funds – agencies had different policies and approaches to the use of grants or loans in the rehabilitation phase. Some loan funds are being used to develop future disaster funds for communities, while others are used to provide emergency credit funds for partner agencies.[17]

For example, after the 1998 devastating flood in Bangladesh, CARE established a 'disaster loan fund' designed to recycle aid funds for eligible microfinance institutes (MFIs), initially managed internally with a plan to create a separate unit once the Fund became more permanent. Through the Post-flood Rehabilitation Loan Assistance (PERLA) Project, CARE partnered with 18 local NGOs eligible to access the fund to provide microfinance services. From the Fund, the partner NGOs received loans at a 2 percent

[14] Capturing the effectiveness of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) interventions of SHOUHARDO III, CARE Bangladesh 2022
[15] A feasibility study on the potential use of cash-based social protection systems for floods July 2022; Climate Centre, German Red Cross, Bangladesh Red Crescent Society
[16] DEC Bangladesh: 1998 Flood Appeal an Independent Evaluation; Roger Young and Associates, January 2000 Final Report (1).
[17] ibid

interest rate per year and were allowed to loan out funds to affected families at 4 percent. The NGOs were also allowed to charge a small processing fee to recover some of their monitoring and loan recovery costs. The risk with these for-profit incentives, however, is that it may induce some MFIs to overstate the number of affected clients and the severity of their losses to obtain more 'cheap' funds quickly.[18]

Similarly, after the 1995 and 1998 floods, Oxfam revolved aid funds with their partner NGOs to implement flood relief and rehabilitation programs. Livelihood recovery and rehabilitation support was extended to affected populations as 'soft loans' with subsidized principal and/or interest and grace periods, rather than following partner NGOs' regular microfinance practices. Partner NGOs recovered the loans, established, and managed revolving funds to support future disaster losses in their localities. Later, these funds were integrated with Oxfam's long-term Char Development Program.

After the 1998 flood, Bangladeshi MFIs like PKSF, BRAC, ASA, and BURO endeavored different modalities within their regular microcredit management systems to set up disaster management and emergency loan funds through financial grants from several donors. PKSF, as part of their disaster response, offered its partner organizations (POs) the option of applying for loan rescheduling if they were unable to meet the repayment of regular loan installments cascaded-up due to flood loss of the borrowers. Simultaneously, PKSF approached the government and donors to promote the involvement of its POs in the flood response and recovery process. BRAC extended loans to flood-affected families for housing to support reconstruction efforts and offered emergency loans and existing loan rescheduling facilities to its flood-affected borrowers.

However, the DEC Bangladesh: 1998 Flood Appeal an Independent Evaluation raised critical questions about loans for humanitarian responses. Such as, does the use of funds for loans, as opposed to grants, conform with the expectations of the donating public and the tenor of its fundraising for people in distress? Is there any concern that relief in the form of soft loans is undermining the integrity of their and others' microfinance portfolios? Is it appropriate (in terms of skills, resources, and relationships with their beneficiaries) for partners who are not normally in the microfinance business to operate a loan scheme on a short-term ad hoc basis?[19]

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it was observed that MFIs made further inroads by taking on the function of relief provision, digital financial service inclusion, and serving as intermediaries between the state and people. MFIs' networks[20] and capacities, including a large number of field staff, proved the potential to effectively involve, along with local government institutions (LGIs), in monitoring and providing assistance and implementing humanitarian actions at the grassroots. For example, BRAC worked with several big businesses to assist in relief and rehabilitation operations to combat the COVID-19 crisis and its fallout.[21] The pandemic provided NGOs with an opportunity to sink deeper roots in society. By

[18] Enrique Pantoja; Microfinance and Disaster Risk Management Experiences and Lessons Learned; Draft Final Report, ProVention Consortium, July 2002
[19] DEC Bangladesh: 1998 Flood Appeal an Independent Evaluation; Roger Young and Associates, January 2000 Final Report (1).
[20] Murshid, Nadine Shaanta and Murshid, Navine; "Innovations" During COVID- 19: Microfinance in Bangladesh; Affilia: Feminist Inquiry in Social Work 2022, Vol. 37(2) 232-249.
[21] Mujeri, Dr Mustafa K; Helping MFIs to serve pandemic-hit poor. The Financial Express, August 8, 2020.
https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/views/views/helping-mfis-to-serve-pandemic-hit-poor-1596819262

repurposing their existing programs to meet crisis-mitigation efforts, NGOs, instead of collapsing, are well set up to increase their hegemony over the provision of welfare services.[22]

All the piloting, models, and experiences prove that microcredit has high potential for humanitarian response, particularly during recovery and rehabilitation. Instrumentalizing MFIs for HDN requires a strong accountability framework to control the profit motive of the MFIs and to ensure adherence to humanitarian principles.

## Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF): A Success Example of HDN in Bangladesh

Around a half-century ago, in 1974, the Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) Program was started as a humanitarian aid for the famine-stricken population of Bangladesh. At that time, the Government of Bangladesh, in partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP), introduced the scheme, which provided a monthly transfer of 31.25 kg of wheat per household per month for two consecutive years. Since then, VGF continues to be a humanitarian program that provides food transfers to the poor during disasters and major religious festivals.[23] With the lessons learned, the Government instrumentalized VGF in several food crisis situations, such as in 1984 and 1998. In 1985, as part of the Government's response to the food crisis, in partnership with BRAC, a part of VGF took a new form and became the Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) program, which augmented the program from short-term relief to a ladder approach—including microcredit and economic empowerment.[24]

Since 1998, VGF has become an integral part of Bangladesh's government social safety program and a key instrument for humanitarian response. In the 2017 flood response, VGF provided 30 kg of rice to each affected household every month for about five months, proving the program's continued relevance. As of 2019, approximately 9.9 million VGF cards continue to transfer food, covering around one-fifth of the lower poverty line population.

The pivotal element of the VGF program is that decision-making and implementation management are local-based. The Department of Disaster Management (DDM) under the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR), in collaboration with the humanitarian Program Implementation Committees (PIC) at the Upazila, Union Parishad, and Ward levels, leads the communication of VGF's objectives, eligibility criteria, entitlement, and grievance process at the community level. On behalf of the DDM, the Project Implementation Officers (PIOs) at the UZ level and the Disaster Risk Reduction Officers (DRROs) at districts undertake the responsibilities of program administration.

Elected Members of the UPs provide the preliminary selection of the VGF beneficiaries from their constituencies (Wards) based on a comprehensive set of twelve criteria, of which at least four must be met to be eligible for the VGF program. The PIC approves the final beneficiary list of the UPs. Based on poverty rates and the disaster vulnerabilities of different districts, the DDM makes annual allotment plans and issues Allotment Orders, which translate into food grain delivery orders by Food Controllers of the Ministry of Food. Actual food deliveries are received by Union Chairmen from local food depots of the

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[22] Murshid, Nadine Shaanta and Murshid, Navine; "Innovations" During COVID- 19: Microfinance in Bangladesh; Affilia: Feminist Inquiry in Social Work 2022, Vol. 37(2) 232-249.

[23] Hulme, David and Thankom, Arun, 2009, Microfinance, a reader

[24] Anwar, Rubaba and Cho, Yoonyoung; Program Brief; Vulnerable Group Feeding, Bangladesh (2019), The World Bank Group, Report number 135379. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/461531552967731486/pdf/135379-BRI-PUBLIC-18-3-2019-10-13-54-ProgrambriefonVGFF.pdf>

Public Food Distribution System (PFDS). District Commissioners and UNOs monitor and oversee the entire process, including grievance redressal, following the DDM's allotment.[25]

Initially, the WFP and then, since 2009, the World Bank has partnered with the Bangladesh government, providing financial and technical support to the DDM. Along with four other large safety net programs, the Safety Net Systems for the Poorest (SNSP) Project, a partnership between the World Bank and the Bangladesh Government started in 2013, extended an IDA credit commitment of USD 745 million, with an additional grant of USD 100 million for the Rohingya crisis context, till 2023.[26]

## Fear of "Disaster-Capitalism Complex"

The HDN concept blurs the rights perspectives of humanitarian actions and the political or economic investments of development interventions. For humanitarian response, life-saving or recovery, offering loans to affected countries or communities is contradictory to humanitarian imperatives, which emphasize crisis-affected people's right to receive humanitarian assistance to protect their lives with dignity, without any discrimination other than humanity. Humanitarian actions are based on humanitarian principles, while development interventions and investments are based on political, economic, and financial perspectives. At the same time, phases of humanitarian response – life-saving relief, recovery, rehabilitation, etc. – also overlap.

Many scholars fear that the HDN concept might be exploited for political or economic gain, a phenomenon described as the "disaster-capitalism complex" – bringing the model of for-profit government to the ordinary and everyday functioning of the state—in effect, privatizing government[27]. For example, studies criticized MFIs' humanitarian responses, noting that by charging higher-than-market rates of interest to ensure profitability, MFIs undermined their economic efficiency while increasing what Zheng and Zhang (2021) termed social efficiency. This meant that MFIs lost clients as they became loan defaulters, but were able to expand their market to an increasing group of low-income individuals produced by the pandemic-induced economic downturn.[28]

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) expressed deep concern over the World Bank offering loans to Bangladesh to meet the challenges of the Rohingya crisis, arguing that grants should be provided instead. TIB contested the effort as unethical, unacceptable, and alarming, stating that Bangladesh should not bear this burden alone and lacks the capacity to do so. TIB urged the World Bank to leverage its position as one of Myanmar's largest donors to push for the repatriation of Rohingya nationals.[29]

HDN must not be seen as integrating humanitarian assistance into a broader political agenda at any level – from local government to international diplomacy and relations. Any effort and approach to HDN should not compromise humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence, nor should humanitarian assistance become a political tool.

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[25] Humanitarian Program Implementation Manual, 2016 of Department of Disaster Management (DDM)
[26] The World Bank project document; Safety Net Systems for the Poorest (AF) (IDA18 RSW) (P171086)
[27] Klein, Naomi; The Shock Doctrine (2007),
[28] Murshid, Nadine Shaanta and Murshid, Navine; "Innovations" During COVID-19: Microfinance in Bangladesh; Affilia: Feminist Inquiry in Social Work 2022, Vol. 37(2) 232-249.
[29] The Dhaka Tribune; Rohingya influx: TIB calls out World Bank for offering loan instead of grant; 27 Oct 2017,
<https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/129126/rohingya-influx-tib-calls-out-world-bank-for>

# Chapter 9: Way Forward

Given the efforts made for effective humanitarian actions to be delivered efficiently by all levels of actors and intensifying initiatives through micro and macro-level strategies, the examples demonstrated in Bangladesh, as recounted in this report, have added value to the journey. These examples could pave the way for further actions in all six areas of strategies, namely, partnership, funding, capacity, participation, coordination, and nexus, with an inclusive approach built in to reach the most vulnerable groups of people in crises.

Besides consolidating the already taken initiatives and based on the lessons from the process, strong emphasis should be laid on documenting and scaling up good practices supported by evidence-based advocacy, policy planning, and programme design. There should be a gradual shift from short-term project spans to programmatic interventions, expanding the domains of humanitarian response from preparedness through emergency response to immediate recovery to support the reduction of risks of loss of life and assets. This journey also demands connecting with development actors and actions at both micro and macro levels. In the following paragraphs, several emerging opportunities are mentioned.

The **NAHAB Localization Lab** in three selected districts (Kurigram, Sirajganj, Barguna) focuses on coordination, capacity, and funding domains under its LIFE "Local Initiatives For Emergencies" programme, emphasizing three domains of humanitarian actions: anticipatory, response, and immediate recovery. Based on the principles of being local actor-led, shared responsibility, and accountability to the affected community, the LIFE programme aims at building disaster-resilient communities with the particular target of reaching the most vulnerable households in the selected districts. Four localization markers are identified to measure changes to institutionalize local-level management of humanitarian actions: (a) district-level coordination, (b) LNGO-led humanitarian action programmes, (c) district pool fund mobilization & management system, and (d) increased access of L/NNGOs to direct funding. Further details of the LIFE programme and Lab features are available on the NAHAB website at www.nahab.net.

**District-level coordination** among humanitarian actors has become strategically important to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of humanitarian services. The national-level coordination facilitated under the HCTT structure through inter-cluster coordination is largely discussed in macro-level coordination meetings. The HCTT initiatives, in support of area-based coordination facilitated by the Localization Technical Working Group (LTWG) in most disaster-vulnerable districts, are another example that would require follow-up.

**Localization Pool Fund** has become a call of the day, where several humanitarian actors, including NAHAB, work to promote collective efforts of humanitarian actors at sub-national, national, and international levels for mobilizing and accessing cash and in-kind resources by local actors as an important aspect of effective humanitarian response. From a localization perspective, NAHAB precisely considers the Pool Fund a strategic choice to ensure faster real-time support and service to the disaster-affected community to meet emergency needs and facilitate the earliest possible recovery from suffering. To

facilitate timely funding to meet the life-saving and humanitarian needs of the affected communities, there would be a need to operate a local-level pool fund at the district level with backup support from a national-level fund service. The model of a two-tier pool fund would enable continuity and accessibility to flexible and real-time humanitarian funds by local NGOs.

**Local Contribution Accounting Model Development:** In humanitarian actions, the first responders are historically from the community—the neighbors of the affected people and local organizations. Gradually, external support comes from national and international actors. The present accounting system of humanitarian actions mostly counts external funding, which represents a fraction of the actual costs. Contributions from local actors and communities are seldom formally accounted for in the system.

There is a need to develop a systemic accounting process to recognize the financial value of local contributions. Studies show that there are systemic barriers and a lack of consciousness on these aspects. The Local Contribution Accounting Model will enable the systemic inclusion of local contributions in the financial information and accounting management system. A model development process is currently underway, with the key output being the development of an accounting model to count local and external contributions with equal importance. This will be used to advocate for changes in the financial reporting system of humanitarian actions globally.

Partnership promotion among humanitarian actors has become a priority agenda to institutionalize coordination. The ADPC-supported Bangladesh Partnership Preparedness (BPP) Second Phase initiative is expected to contribute to and demonstrate a multi-sectoral partnership model at the national and sub-national levels in Bangladesh. In support of the strategy for promoting and advocating for locally-led actions, the programme aims to strengthen the partnership platform, enhance partners' capacities, and support knowledge and research to build evidence. The BPP partnership model comprises 15 partners representing the government, private sector, local NGO networks, and academia. Lessons from a similar partnership experience of INGOs and L/NNGOs in Cox's Bazar in providing humanitarian services to both displaced communities from Myanmar and the host communities could be tapped for future designing of partnership strategies.
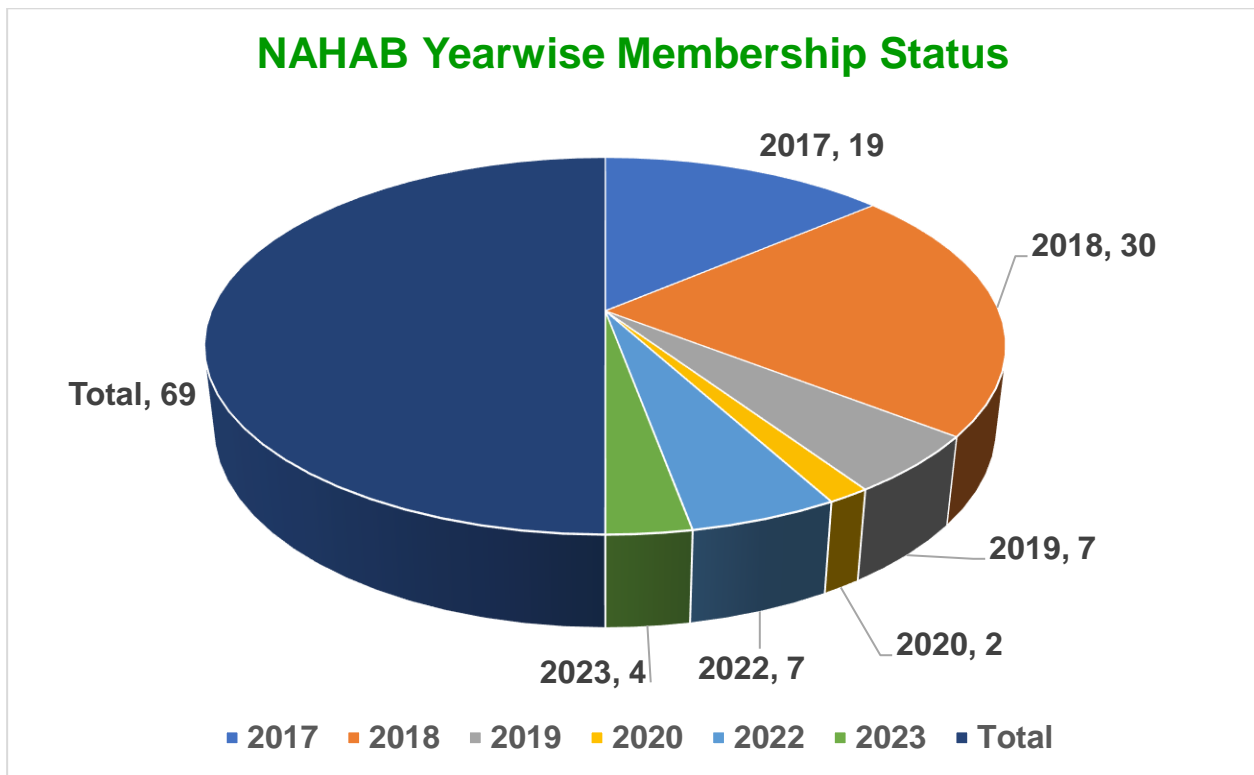
**Organizational Capacity Enhancement** support to humanitarian actors can strengthen their capabilities to set and achieve their development objectives over time for improved response to crises and disasters. A set of capacity gaps have been identified by the organizations themselves through a self-assessment process initiated by NAHAB, which includes, among others, systems improvement in human resource management, internal financial control systems, PSEA, strategic visioning, and sustainability of the organizations. START Fund Bangladesh (SFB) support to its members includes areas of risk management, financial management, procurement process, monitoring and evaluation, organizational policy formulation, and safeguarding. There needs to be more support to local humanitarian actors in strengthening their institutional systems improvement through follow-up mentoring and on-site solutions services.

**Volunteerism** during any disaster or emergency situation is an act where local humanitarian actors, neighboring communities, and philanthropists provide their time, experiences, skills, and available resources to assist vulnerable communities in disaster response and recovery efforts. The Bangladesh

experience, lessons, and good practices in the Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP) can be a good reference for scaling up or replicating other types of natural disasters, including floods, earthquakes, landslides, etc. NAHAB, in its strategy plan 2023-25, made it a point to try out the process and develop a scheme for it. This would be another milestone initiative in the field of humanitarian response, reviving the heritage of community philanthropy and contributing to building resilient communities.

# Appendix

## 1.1. NAHAB year-wise growth

**NAHAB Yearwise Membership Status**

- 2017, 19
- 2018, 30
- 2019, 7
- 2020, 2
- 2022, 7
- 2023, 4
- Total, 69

Legend: 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2022 | 2023 | Total

## 1.2 NAHAB Executive Committee Information

## Executive Committee (EC) Member's List

| Sl. No. | Name and Designation | Position in NAHAB | Office Address and Contract details |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Freedom Fighter Md. Rafiqul Alam Executive Director, Dwip Unnayan Songstha (DUS), Dhaka | Chairperson | 24/5 Mollika, Prominent Housing, 3 Pisciculture Road, Mohammadpur, Dhaka-1207. Email: dusdhaka@gmail.com, dus.eddus@gmail.com |
| 2 | Rabeya Begum Executive Director, Shariatpur Development Society (SDS), Shariatpur | Vice Chairperson | SDS Bhaban, Sadar Road, Shariatpur, # 8000, Web: www.sdsbd.org, Email: sds.shariatpur@gmail.com & rabeyabegum224@gmail.com |
| 3 | Murshed Alam Sarkar Executive Director, People's Oriented Program Implementation (POPI), Dhaka | Member Secretary | 5/11-A Block-E, lalmatia, dhaka -1207, Email: popibd_ed@yahoo.com, Web: https://popibd.org/ |
| 4 | Sebastian Rozario Executive Director, Caritas Bangladesh, Dhaka | Treasurer | Caritas Bangladesh, 2 Outer Circuler Road, Shantibagh, Dhaka-1217, Email: ed@caritasbd.org |
| 5 | Momotaz Khatun Executive Director, Ashroy Foundation, Khulna | Executive Member | Road: 9, House: 126, Nirala R/A, Khulna-9100, Bangladesh. Email- asroy.foundation@gmail.com, Skype: momtaz_khatun |
| 6 | Mohammed Arifur Rahman Chief Executive, YPSA (YOUNG POWER IN SOCIAL ACTION), Chittagong | Executive Member | House # 10 (F) P, Road # 13, Block-B, Chandgaon R/A, Chittagong- 4212, Bangladesh. Email: ypsa_arif@yahoo.com, website: www.ypsa.org |
| 7 | FM Akhter Uddin Chief Executive, Uttara Development Program Society (UDPS), Rajshahi | Executive Member | 5/10 Humayun Road (Ground Floor), Block-B, Mohammadpur, Dhaka-1207 udps_dhaka@yahoo.com, http://udps.org.bd/ |
| 8 | Md. Serajul Islam Executive Director, Efforts for Rural Advancement (ERA), Sunamgonj | Executive Member | 49 Mollika R/A, Mollikpur, Sunamganj-3000, era.haor.org@gmail.com, https://www.era-bd.org/organize.php |
| 9 | Begum Rokeya Director, Sabolamby Unnayan Samity (SUS), Netrokona | Executive Member | Shibgonj Road, Netrokona, Bangladesh. Email: begumrokeyasus@yahoo.com, https://sabalamby.wordpress.com/ |
| 10 | M. Abdus Salam Chief Executive, Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK), Gaibandha | Executive Member | Nashratpur, Post Box-14, Gaibandha-5700, Bangladesh salam.guk@gmail.com, info@gukbd.net, https://www.gukbd.net/ |
| 11 | M. Harun Or Rashid Lal Executive Director, SOLIDARITY, Kurigram | Executive Member | New Town, Kurigram, Email: akhan_ndp@yahoo.com, Solidarity_bd@ yahoo.com, sweety.solidarity.bd@gmail.com |
| 12 | Rokeya Begum Shafali Executive Director, AID Comilla | Executive Member | Village- Raghupur, PO-Rajapara, Union-Jagannathpur, Upz-Comilla Adorsho Sadar, District: Comilla. Email: aidshafali@yahoo.com |

| 13 | Md. Alauddin Khan <br> Executive Director, National Development Programme (NDP), Sirajganj | Executive Member | NDP Bhaban, Bagbari, Shahidnagor, Kamarkhanda, Sirajganj-6703. <br> Email: akhan_ndp@yahoo.com |
|---|---|---|---|
| 14 | Hosne Ara Hasi <br> Chief Executive, JAGO NARI, Barguna | Executive Member | JAGO NARI\| AshahiMension, 2nd Floor, College Road, Barguna. <br> Email: jago_nari@yahoo.com |
| 15 | Aftabur Rahman Jafree <br> Chief Executive Officer, GHASHFUL, Chattogram | Executive Member | 5/D, Badsha Miah Chowdhury Road, Amirbag, Mehedibag, Chattogram. <br> Email: ghashfulheadoffice@gmail.com, jayantabosu1967@gmail.com |

## 1.3  NAHAB Advisory Board Member's List

## Executive Committee (EC) Member's List

| Sl. No. | Name and Designation | Position in NAHAB | Office Address and Contract details |
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| 2 | Abdul Latif Khan | Adviser | Email: latifkhan0987@gmail.com |

## 1.4 NAHAB Member Organizations List

## 69 Members Information (8 Divisions & 25 Districts)

| 1. Barishal Division |
|:---:|

| 1. District: Barguna |
|:---:|

**1. SANGRAM (Sangathitha Gramunnyan Karmashuchi)**

*Contact Details:*
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Tel No: 02478886828

**2. Nazrul Smriti Sangsad-NSS**

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Sweden Palace (1st Floor) Pallabi Residential Area, Post- Amtali, Upazila- Amtali
Dist.- Barguna, Bangladesh, Post Code No. 8710.
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**3. JAGO NARI**

*Contact Details:*
**Ms. Hosne Ara Hasi, Chief Executive**
Ashahi Mension, 2nd Floor, College Road, Barguna. Email: jago_nari@yahoo.com
https://www.facebook.com/jagonari.org/

**4. Sangkalpa Trust**

*Contact Details:*
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Website: www.sangkalpa-bd.org

| 2. District: Barishal |
|:---:|

**5. Association of Voluntary Actions for Society-AVAS**

*Contact Details:*
**Ms. Rahima Sultana Kazal, Executive Director**
AVAS Bhaban, Amirkutirlane, Alekanda, Barisal-8200. Tel No. +88 02478866028
Email: avas.barishal@gmail.com / rskazal@gmail.com
https://www.facebook.com/avasbsl ; https://www.avas.org.bd/ind_desk.php

**6. Chandradip Development Society (CDS)**

*Contact Details:*
**Ms. Jahanara Begum Shapna, Executive Director**
Munir Bug, Nazir Mahallah, Hospital Road
Barisal-8200, Bangladesh.E-mail: cdsbsl@gmail.com, Skype ID: cdsngo1999,
Facebook: Chandradip, Barishal; Website: www.cdsbsl.org

**7. Love Thy Neighbour (LTN)**

*Contact Details:*
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Nazir Mohollah Road, Ward No:19, Barishal City Corporation, Barishal-8200.
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www.lovethyneighbourbd.org

### 8. Speed Trust

*Contact Details:*

**Mr. AHM Shamsul Islam-Dipu, Mission Head**

170 Sham Babu Lane, Gora Chad Das Road, Barisal-8200. Email: islam.dipu@gmail.com, speedtrust@gmail.com, Mobile: 01720-510405

https://www.facebook.com/speed.trust99

### 9. Saint Bangladesh

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Website: www.saint-bd.org

### 3. District: Patuakhali

### 10. Society Development Agency (SDA)

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### 4. District: Pirojpur

### 11. Pirojpur Gono Unnayan Samity (PGUS)

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Email: ziaulahsanzia@gmail.com & www.pgus.bd.org

## 2. Chattogram Division

### 5. District: Noakhali

### 12. Noakhali Rural Development Society (NRDS)

*Contact Details:*

**Mr. Abdul Awal, Chief Coordinator**

NRDS Canter, House# 1015/1, College Road, Master Para, Maijdee, P.O. Box # 28, Noakhali- 3800.

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### 6. District: Chattogram

### 13. YPSA (Young Power in Social Action)

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### 14. GHASHFUL

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### 15. GMONISHA (Social & Human Development Org.)

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## 7. District: Cumilla

### 16. AID Comilla, Association for Integrated Development- Comilla

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Sadar, District: Cumilla, Bangladesh. Facebook ID: Aid-Cumilla,
E-mail: aidshafali@yahoo.com; Website: www.aidcomilla.org

## 8. District: Rangamati

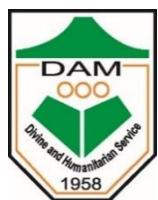### 17. Society for Advancement & Solidarity (SAS)

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# 3. Dhaka Division

## 9. District: Dhaka

### 18. Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM)

*Contact Details:*

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### 20. COAST Trust

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www.facebook.com/coastbd; www.coastbd.net I Twitter: @RezaKChyBD

### 21. Sajida Foundation

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https://www.youtube.com/@sajidafoundation1993

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

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**24. Uttara Development Program Society (UDPS)**

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**27. Social and Economic Enhancement Programme (SEEP)**

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**30. Centre for Disability in Development (CDD)**

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### 31. Dwip Unnayan Songstha (DUS)

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### 32. Light House

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### 10. District: Faridpur

### 35. Amra Kaj Kory (AKK)

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### 36. Shariatpur Development Society (SDS)

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Web: https://www.sdsbd.org/

| 4. Khulna Division |
|---|
| **11. District: Khulna** |

**37. Ashroy Foundation**

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**38. NABALOK Parishad**

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**39. Shushilan**

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https://www.facebook.com/shushilanofficial/ Web: https://shushilan.org/

| **12. District: Satkhira** |
|---|

**40. Crescent**

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| 5. Mymensingh Division |
|---|
| **13. District: Mymensingh** |

**42. Unnayan Sangha (US)**

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Web: www.us.bd.org

| **14. District: Kishoreganj** |
|---|

**43. Association for Rural Poor (ARP)**

*Contact Details:*

**Ms. Mahmuda Begum, Executive Director**
132, Helim Villa, Sobujbag, Chorsulakia, Kishoregonj. Email: arp.org.bd@gmail.com

| | 15. District: Kishoreganj |
|---|---|
|  | **44. Sabolamby Unnayan Samity (SUS)** |
| | *Contact Details:* |
| | **Ms. Begum Rokeya, Executive Director** |
| | 132, Helim Villa, Sobujbag, Chorsulakia, Kishoregonj. |
| | Email: begumrokeyasus@yahoo.com, www.sabalamby.org |

| | 16. District: Netrakona |
|---|---|
|  | **45. Socio-Economic and Rural Advancement Association (SERAA)** |
| | *Contact Details:* |
| | **Mr. S.M. Mazibur Rahman, Executive Director** |
| | Kailati Road, Kurper, Netrakona-2400. Email: seraa.mazibar@gmail.com |
| | Web: www.seraango.org, https://www.facebook.com/NGO.SERAA |

## 6. Rajshahi Division

| | 17. District: Rajshahi |
|---|---|
|  | **46. Rural and Urban Development Organization (RUDO)** |
| | *Contact Details:* |
| | **Mr. Md. Sohag Ali, Executive Director** |
| | Terokhadia (Uttorpara), PO: Senanibas-6202, PS: Rajpara, Dist- Rajshahi. |
| | Email: rudorajshahi@gmail.com |

| | 18. District: Sirajganj |
|---|---|
|  | **47. Manab Mukti Sangstha (MMS)** |
| | *Contact Details:* |
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|  | **48. National Development Programme (NDP)** |
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|  | **49. Somaj Unnoyan Karjocrom-SUK** |
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| | **Mr. Md. Jahangir Alam Ratan, Executive Director** |
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### 51. Program for women development (PWD)

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### 52. Polly Akota Unnayan Sangstha (RUDO)

*Contact Details:*

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## 7. Rangpur Division

### 19. District: Gaibandha

### 53. Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK)

*Contact Details:*

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### 54. Sinnomul Mahila Samity (SMS)

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**Mr. Md. Murshidur Rahman Khan Executive Director**

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### 55. SKS Foundation

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### 20. District: Kurigram

### 56. SOLIDARITY

*Contact Details:*

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### 57. Mahideb Jubo Somaj Kallayan Somity (MJSKS)

*Contact Details:*

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### 58. Village Initiatives for Empowerment of Women (VIEW)

*Contact Details:*

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### 59. HRDO

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### 60. Association For Alternative Development (AFAD)

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### 61. Rural Society Development Association (RSDA)

*Contact Details:*

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### 62. Garib Unnayan Sangstha (GUS)

*Contact Details:*

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E-mail: latifgus@gmail.com Website: www.gus.org.bd

### 63. Chilmari Distressed Development Foundation (CDDF)

*Contact Details:*

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| | |
|---|---|
| **8. Sylhet Division** | |
| **21. District: Moulavibazar** | |

**64. Prochesta**

*Contact Details:*
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**22. District: Sunamganj**

**65. Efforts for Rural Advancement (ERA)**

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**66. Rural Advancement Society (RAS)**

*Contact Details:*
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**23. District: Sylhet**

**67. Reliant Women Development Organization (RWDO)**

*Contact Details:*
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**68. Jaintia Shinnomul Songstha (JASHIS)**

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**69. Association of Workers for Alternative Rural Development- AWARD**

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