



Route to RESILIENCE



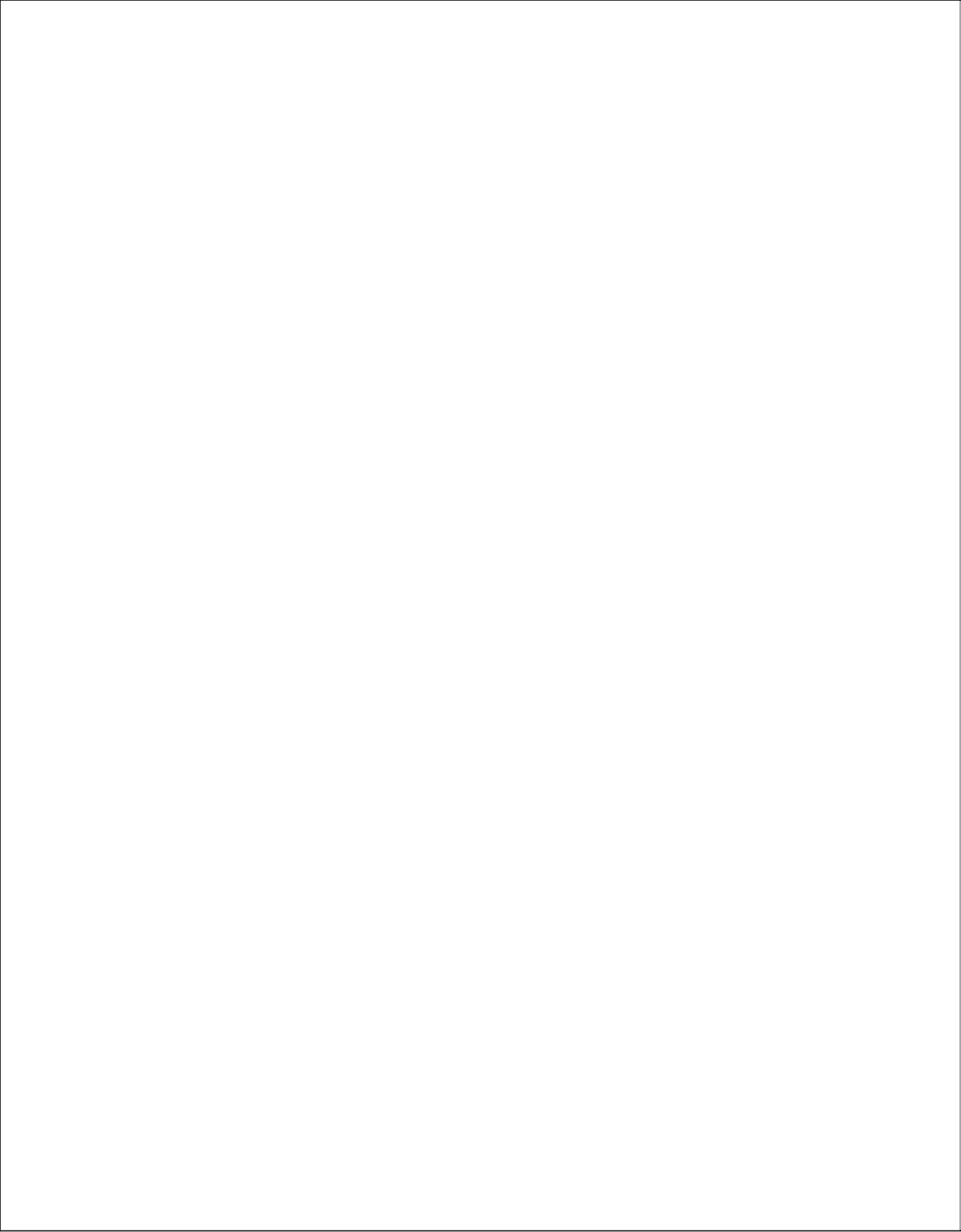
Disaster Risk Management Programme

Bandhu Tori (Boats of Friendship) are multipurpose community boats designed to serve both emergency and everyday needs. During floods, they play a vital role in evacuating stranded people and delivering life-saving relief. In normal times, they function as community lifelines – transporting students to school, carrying critically ill patients to healthcare facilities, and enabling access to microfinance services.

Route to RESILIENCE

DRMP's Journey through
2021–2025 in Disaster
Hotspots of Bangladesh

Disaster Risk Management Programme (DRMP)





**WE MUST STRIVE
TO CONTINUOUSLY
FIND SOLUTIONS
TO NEW SOCIAL
CHALLENGES. WE
MUST REACH OUT
TO THOSE IN NEED**

Sir Fazle Hasan Abed
Founder, BRAC



Preface

Bangladesh stands at the forefront of disaster risks induced either naturally or triggered by human interventions, where recurring floods, cyclones, salinity intrusion, and emerging climatic hazards continue to challenge lives, livelihoods, and development. In this complex and evolving risk landscape, disaster management must go beyond response—it must anticipate, prepare, protect, and build resilience in ways that are locally grounded, inclusive, and forward-looking.

This report documents the journey, achievements, innovations, and lessons learned of BRAC's Disaster Risk Management Programme (DRMP) over the five-year strategic period from 2021 to 2025. It reflects a critical phase in which DRMP strengthened its transition from predominantly reactive humanitarian response towards a more proactive, risk-informed, and resilience-focused approach—anchored in disaster risk reduction, anticipatory action, and community leadership.

The report captures DRMP's integrated interventions across

disaster preparedness, early warning dissemination, resilient infrastructure, water and sanitation, shelter, livestock protection, institutional strengthening, and community engagement in some of the most disaster-prone and hard-to-reach areas of Bangladesh. It highlights how locally led solutions—supported by evidence, partnerships, and innovation—can significantly reduce disaster impacts and safeguard dignity, particularly for women, children, persons with disabilities, and other marginalised groups.

Beyond documenting outputs and reach, this report also reflects on key learning and adaptations shaped by intensifying climate risks, evolving humanitarian needs, and resource constraints. It underscores the importance of collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh, local government institutions, community-based organisations, volunteers, and development partners in advancing scalable and sustainable disaster risk management models.

This publication is intended for policymakers, practitioners, donors, researchers, and humanitarian actors seeking practical insights into effective disaster risk reduction and resilience-building through preparedness in a highly disaster-vulnerable context. More importantly, it stands as a testament to the resilience, agency, and collective action of communities who continue to confront disasters with courage and determination.

As DRMP looks ahead, the experiences and lessons captured in this report will inform future strategies through strengthening preparedness, expanding anticipatory action, and deepening the integration of disaster risk reduction into development pathways—so that communities are not only able to withstand shocks, but are empowered to thrive despite them.

Contents

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

1. CONTEXT AND PROGRAMME OVERVIEW **16**

1.1 DISASTER RISK CONTEXT IN BANGLADESH	17
1.2 ABOUT THE DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME (DRMP)	18
1.3 GOAL	19
1.4 GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS	20
1.5 PROGRAMMATIC PRIORITIES	22

2. BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE THROUGH DISASTER RISK REDUCTION INTERVENTIONS **24**

2.1 COMMUNITY RISK ASSESSMENT	25
2.2 COMMUNITY-BASED FLOOD WARNING SYSTEMS	26
2.3 BOAT-BASED RESPONSE IN HAOR AREAS	28
2.4 PROTECTION OF HAATIS	30
2.5 CYCLONE-RESILIENT HOUSING	32
2.6 RECONSTRUCTION OF RING EMBANKMENTS IN COASTAL AREAS	34
2.7 COMMUNITY-BASED FLOOD-RESILIENT CATTLE SHEDS	36
2.8 HOUSEHOLD-LEVEL FLOOD-RESILIENT COWSHEDS	38
2.9 LIGHTNING SAFETY SHEDS	40
2.10 WOODEN BRIDGE AND SAFE PATHWAYS	42

3. COMBATING WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION CRISIS IN DISASTER PRONE AREAS 44

3.1 INTEGRATED RAINWATER SYSTEM	45
3.2 REVERSE OSMOSIS WATER TREATMENT PLANTS	46
3.3 POND SAND FILTERS IN SALINITY-AFFECTED AREAS	48
3.4 FLOOD-RESILIENT TUBE WELLS	50
3.5 FLOOD- AND CYCLONE-RESILIENT HOUSEHOLD LATRINES	52
3.6 FLOOD-RESILIENT COMMUNITY WASH BLOCKS	54

4. ENHANCING ACCESSIBILITY AND SAFETY IN EMERGENCY SHELTERS 56

4.1 REPAIRING AND RENOVATION OF CYCLONE SHELTERS	57
4.2 INSTALLATION OF SAFETY LIGHTS IN FLOOD SHELTERS	58
4.3 REPAIRING AND RECONSTRUCTION OF SHELTER APPROACH ROADS	60

5. BOLSTERING COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS THROUGH AWARENESS RAISING 62

5.1 AWARENESS RAISING TO ENHANCE DISASTER PREPAREDNESS	63
5.1.1 AWARENESS RAISING THROUGH COMMUNITY RADIO	64
5.1.2 AWARENESS RAISING THROUGH POPULAR THEATRE	66
5.1.3 AWARENESS RAISING THROUGH POT SONGS	68
5.2 HAZARD-SPECIFIC SIMULATION EXERCISES	70
5.3 SCHOOL-BASED DISASTER PREPAREDNESS	72

6. REINFORCING CAPACITY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS AND COMMUNITIES	74
6.1 CAPACITY BUILDING OF DISASTER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES	75
6.2 CAPACITY BUILDING OF COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS (CBOS)	76
6.3 FORMATION OF AND UNION EMERGENCY RESPONSE GROUPS (UERGS)	78
7. ADDRESSING THE EMERGENCY NEEDS AND BUILDING BACK BETTER	80
7.1 OVERVIEW OF MAJOR DISASTERS FROM 2021 TO 2025	81
7.2 RESPONSE AND REHABILITATION SUPPORT TO EASTERN FLASH FLOOD 2024	82
7.3 RESPONSE AND REHABILITATION SUPPORT TO CYCLONE REMAL 2024	86
7.4 RESPONSE AND REHABILITATION SUPPORT TO FIRE INCIDENT IN NAOGAON 2024	90
7.5 RESPONSE AND REHABILITATION SUPPORT TO CHATTOGRAM FLASH FLOOD 2023	92
7.6 RESPONSE AND REHABILITATION SUPPORT TO NORTHEASTERN FLASH FLOOD 2022	94
8. KEY LESSONS LEARNED	98
9. CONCLUSION	102
10. REFERENCES	104
11. PARTNERS	105

Acronyms and Abbreviations

BDT

Bangladeshi Taka

CBDP

Community-Based Disaster Preparedness

CBO

Community-Based Organisation

CPP

Cyclone Preparedness Programme

CRA

Community Risk Assessment

DECC

Disaster, Environment and Climate Change

DMC

Disaster Management Committee

DPHE

Department of Public Health Engineering

DRMP

Disaster Risk Management Programme

DRR

Disaster Risk Reduction

EWS

Early Warning System

FbEA

Forecast-based Early Action

FFWC

Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre

GDP

Gross Domestic Product

GBV

Gender-Based Violence

ORS

Oral Rehydration Solution

PSF

Pond Sand Filter

RO

Reverse Osmosis

RRAP

Risk Reduction Action Plan

SELP

Social Empowerment and Legal Protection

SMC

School Management Committee

SOD

Standing Orders on Disaster

UERG

Union Emergency Response Group

USD

United States Dollar

VDO

Village Development Organisation

VO

Village Organisation

WASH

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Executive Director's Message

The report you are reading right now isn't just about numbers, though those matter. It's about what we learned when disaster response systems failed, what communities taught us about what actually works, and how we're shifting from treating disasters as isolated events to addressing them as the interconnected challenges they really are.

What sets our approach apart isn't scale alone. Between 2021 and 2025, BRAC's Disaster Response Management programme reached 4.45 million households across Bangladesh, but the number only tells part of the story. The more important choice was to go deeper rather than wider: concentrating efforts in the three disaster hotspots to develop and test resilience models that actually work, before replicating them elsewhere. During this period, we worked on disaster preparedness, emergency response, and recovery across three disaster hotspots of Bangladesh: Shalla - in northeastern Bangladesh prone to flash floods, Shyamnagar in southwestern Bangladesh prone to cyclones and salinity, and Sariakandi in north-western

Bangladesh known for seasonal flooding.

The other difference is how we think about disasters. A flood isn't just a flood. It destroys homes, contaminates water, kills livestock, keeps children out of school, and reverses years of progress in days. Our responses try to reflect that reality. The Bandhu Tori boats rescue families during emergencies and ferry children to school the rest of the year. The lightning safety sheds protect farmers from storms, provide shade during heatwaves, and shelter livestock. The haati retaining walls in the haors, built with community labour, protect on average about 367 families while eliminating the recurring repair costs they'd been absorbing for years.

This is the thread running through everything we do: solutions that solve multiple problems at once, designed with communities rather than for them, and built to be owned and maintained long after we leave.

Our approach also differs from conventional disaster preparedness programmes. We base our work on two mutually reinforcing pillars: strengthening

disaster governance systems and mobilising communities at scale. We don't see these as separate tracks. Real resilience happens when communities have the knowledge and agency to act, and when local institutions have the capacity to support them. Since 2019, we've worked with the Department of Disaster Management to strengthen Disaster Management Committees (DMC) from district to ward levels. We've trained 6,838 DMC members, established 39 Union Emergency Response Groups in flood-prone areas, and activated six student brigades who are now disaster preparedness leaders. We've supported community simulation exercises with the Cyclone Preparedness Programme, helping volunteers and residents rehearse evacuation while building trust in formal systems.

We were never interested in building parallel structures. Instead, what we tried to do was build systems that will outlast any project or donor cycle. The flood-resilient cattle shed in Sariakandi works because the local administration provided land and the local government leads maintenance. The lightning

sheds endure because they're institutionally owned from the start.

The 2024 flooding was a pivotal learning moment. Post-flood analysis showed exactly where our preparedness work held and where it didn't. Early warning reached communities—that worked. But households still lacked adequate ways to protect their assets. Local institutions weren't sufficiently engaged to maintain infrastructure. Livestock loss emerged as a major factor delaying recovery, despite everything else we'd done right. These failures mattered because they showed us that early warning is insufficient when people can't act on it. They also revealed that risks compound in ways we weren't fully accounting for. The 2024 floods combined inundation with heat stress and lightning exposure, a multi-hazard reality that accelerated our shift toward integrated programming. What did work was digitally delivered cash assistance through bKash, Bangladesh's largest mobile money platform. It was fast, transparent, and preserved dignity, particularly for women who didn't have to navigate crowded distribution points.

As we move into BRAC's 2026-2030 strategy period, we know that disaster risk management can't be isolated programming. Climate impacts are intensifying with over 90 million people living in high-risk areas, and projections suggest 13.3 million may be displaced by 2050. These communities are already dealing with poverty, inequality, and weak services. Disasters don't just interrupt their lives; they reverse development gains that took years to build.

Our role is to demonstrate that resilience is built through integration. Our collaborations work because they solve multiple problems at once, they're designed with communities, not for them, and they're built to be owned and maintained locally. We're piloting what's possible,

generating evidence, de-risking innovation for government adoption, and then working ourselves out of being needed. Over the past 27 years, Bangladesh has lost an estimated USD 15 billion to disasters. That's the cumulative erosion of what poor families have worked desperately hard to build. Our job is to help break that cycle, one community at a time, by treating disaster resilience not as a sector but as an approach that connects everything we do.

This report covers five years of trying, failing, learning, and improving. The work continues.

Asif Saleh

Executive Director
BRAC



Director's Message

Since its inception in 1972, BRAC has been working as a humanitarian and development organisation, serving the most vulnerable and marginalised populations across Bangladesh. From the very beginning, BRAC has played a critical role in responding to emergencies by providing timely humanitarian assistance to communities affected by disasters.

To institutionalise its disaster preparedness and risk reduction efforts, BRAC established the Disaster, Environment and Climate Change (DECC) programme in 2008, which was later renamed the Disaster Risk Management Programme (DRMP) in 2022. Our journey began with a predominantly reactive approach, focused on delivering life-saving support to disaster-affected populations. Over time, this has

evolved into a more proactive and forward-looking approach that prioritises preparedness, risk reduction, and the strengthening of community resilience.

Between 2021 and 2025, DRMP supported the preparedness and risk reduction of 4.45 million households across the country. Notably, in 2024 and 2025 alone, more than 1.14 million households in the most vulnerable areas were reached with early warning messages, enabling communities to take anticipatory actions and significantly reduce disaster-related losses.

This report presents the reach, impact, and key learning of DRMP during BRAC's strategic period of 2021–2025, with a primary focus on disaster risk reduction (DRR) and preparedness. It highlights both our regular interventions and

key innovations that have shaped our efforts to build resilient communities. During this period, DRMP directly supported 14,312 households through targeted DRR interventions, while approximately 4.43 million households were reached through preparedness initiatives.

Over the past five years, DRMP has introduced several innovative initiatives to enhance disaster preparedness and resilience in Bangladesh's most vulnerable areas. These include the community-based flood early warning system, retaining walls, Bandhu Tori (emergency response boats), flood-resilient cattle sheds, and lightning safety sheds. Alongside these efforts, DRMP has continued to support disaster-affected communities

through humanitarian assistance, capacity building, and institutional strengthening. In the last five years, a total of 15,593 BRAC staff members have been trained on disaster management, contributing significantly to organisational and institutional capacity. Through these efforts, BRAC continues to work closely with the Government of Bangladesh to support faster recovery and promote building back better in disaster-affected communities. Despite numerous challenges, DRMP has continued to evolve, gradually shifting from relief-centric responses to a stronger emphasis on preparedness,

resilience building, and anticipatory action. At the same time, we remain firmly committed to strengthening existing collaborations and fostering new partnerships to better serve communities at risk.

On behalf of the Disaster Risk Management Programme, I extend my sincere gratitude to our dedicated programmes, departments, colleagues, volunteers, partners, and frontline workers. Your tireless efforts and unwavering commitment continue to reach even the most remote and hard-to-reach communities.

You are the driving force behind every life protected and every sense of hope restored among disaster-affected communities across Bangladesh.

Md Liakath Ali, PhD
Director, Disaster Risk
Management Programme





1 Context and programme overview

1.1 Disaster Risk Context in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is one of the most disaster-prone and climate-vulnerable countries in the world due to its geographic location, high population density, and low socioeconomic profiles. It is located in the delta of Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna river basin. Approximately **80% of the country** lies on floodplains making it exposed to flooding, riverbank erosion, cyclones and storm surges. **20-25%** of the country gets affected by **seasonal floods annually** while **60%** of land area gets inundated by severe events causing **widespread displacement and economic losses**.

Climate change is escalating the frequency and severity of extreme weather events, including floods, cyclones, droughts, heatwaves, and erratic rainfall. Bangladesh constantly ranks among the most climate vulnerable countries

globally. **1-2% of GDP is estimated to be lost** each year relating to different disasters. Over **30% of coastal agricultural land gets affected by sea-level rise and salinity intrusion**, while drought-prone regions in the north face declining crop productivity.

Around **40%** of the **workforce is employed in agriculture** which is particularly vulnerable to climate shocks, undermining food security, livelihoods, and rural incomes. Rapid and largely unplanned urbanisation has further increased disaster risks in cities such as Dhaka, Chattogram, and Sylhet, where flooding, earthquakes,

and infrastructure failures are exacerbated by inadequate planning and unregulated construction.

Addressing these challenges require risk-informed and inclusive disaster risk management approaches, including strengthened early warning systems, resilient infrastructure, sustainable land use, community-based disaster risk reduction, and climate adaptation measures aligned with national and global frameworks.

1.2 About the Disaster Risk Management Programme (DRMP)

Guided by the motto “Standing beside the people who need support the most during crises”, BRAC’s Disaster Risk Management Programme (DRMP) has been steadfastly serving vulnerable communities before, during, and after disasters. BRAC’s humanitarian engagement began shortly after its establishment in 1972, and the official launch as an individual programme took place in 2008.

Since its inception, DRMP has consistently stood alongside people living in high-risk and vulnerable contexts, providing timely emergency response, recovery, rehabilitation, and resilience-building support, following all major disasters in Bangladesh. The programme

continuously adapts to address emerging and evolving risks, striving to deliver assistance that is efficient, effective, and responsive across all phases of the disaster management cycle.

With a strong emphasis on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and community resilience strengthening, DRMP works in close collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh and other stakeholders to enhance disaster preparedness and reduce risk at community, local, and national levels. Through its integrated approach, the programme delivers holistic humanitarian and resilience support to disaster- and crisis-affected populations across the country.

DRMP implements a diverse portfolio of disaster response, recovery, and resilience-building interventions using locally led and evidence-based approaches, including community-based risk assessments, community mobilisation, institutional and community capacity building, promotion of DRR-integrated development models, youth volunteer engagement, and advocacy at multiple levels. The programme ensures inclusive emergency support, particularly in hard-to-reach areas, with special attention to building disaster-resilient and disability-inclusive infrastructure and services.

1.3 Goal

To strengthen resilient communities and systems that proactively reduce disaster risks, safeguard lives and livelihoods, and enable timely recovery and sustainable development amid disasters and climate-related challenges.



1.4 Geographic Focus

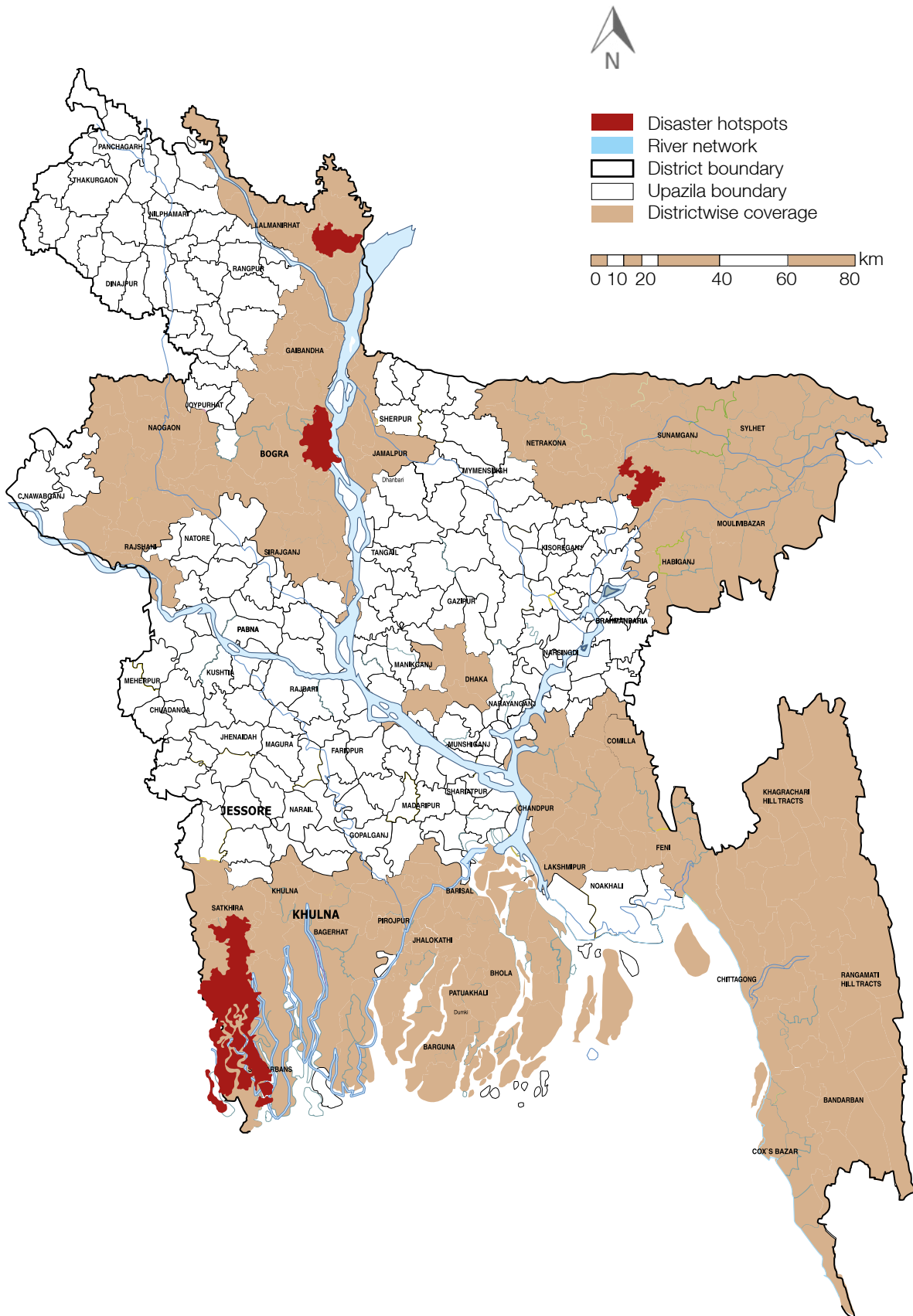
DRMP works across Bangladesh to strengthen emergency response and preparedness, supporting vulnerable communities before, during, and after disasters through anticipatory action, humanitarian assistance, and disaster preparedness initiatives.

Also, to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of resilience-building efforts and to prioritise communities that are most vulnerable and furthest behind, DRMP adopted a clustered and concentrated geographic approach. During the period 2021–2025, DRMP implemented integrated resilience-building interventions in four highly vulnerable and hard-to-reach disaster hotspots, representing diverse hazard contexts:

- Shalla and Derai Upazila, Sunamganj District – flash flood-prone haor area
- Shyamnagar and Assasuni Upazila, Satkhira District – cyclone- and salinity-prone coastal area
- Sariakandi Upazila, Bogura District – monsoon flood-prone riverine area
- Kurigram Sadar Upazila, Kurigram District – monsoon flood-prone riverine area

The primary objective of this clustered and concentrated approach was to prioritise depth over geographic spread, enabling the development and testing of comprehensive, context-specific resilience-building models that can be replicated and scaled up in other disaster-prone and vulnerable communities across Bangladesh.

DRMP's Geographic Coverage



1.5 Programmatic Priorities

DRMP implements a comprehensive range of resilience-building, humanitarian

response, and recovery interventions guided by the

following six key programmatic priorities:

<p>1 Strengthening disaster resilience in hazard vulnerable hotspots</p>		<p>2 Mainstreaming DRR into development initiatives</p>	
	<p>3 Reinforcing capacity of local government institutions and communities</p>		<p>4 Fostering/ adapting forecast based early action to reduce the impacts</p>
<p>5 Enhancing organisational readiness for effective emergency response</p>		<p>6 Addressing the emergency and recovery needs of the affected populations</p>	

2021-2025: DRMP's Achievements at a Glance

15,593

people from different stakeholders and BRAC staffs reached through capacity building training

21,700

people living in the coastal regions are sensitised on the cyclone awareness messages through Cyclone Simulation

1,362

people gained access to safe drinking water

1,140,178

vulnerable households received weather forecast and early warning messages

1,800

people living in flood and flash flood prone areas received messages on flood via popular theatre shows

8,135

people gained access to safely-managed sanitation facilities

1,412

females trained on disaster response, recovery process, disaster risk reduction who are playing leadership role

981,521

affected households received emergency response support

1,867

shelters have been repaired/reconstructed

7,084,236

people reached with the lifesaving messages via community radio including the hard to reach areas

14,433

vulnerable households reached through DRR interventions



2 Building community resilience through disaster risk reduction interventions

2.1 Community Risk Assessment



Community Risk Assessment (CRA) is widely recognized as a cornerstone of effective DRR. It is a participatory, community-led process through which communities identify, analyse, and prioritise the hazards, vulnerabilities, capacities, and risks they face. By centering local knowledge and lived experience, CRA ensures that DRR strategies are grounded in practical realities and responsive to the social, environmental, and geographic context.

The inclusive engagement of women, older persons, youth, persons with disabilities, and other marginalised groups enables a deeper understanding of differential vulnerabilities, strengthens social cohesion, and promotes equitable risk-informed planning. As community members actively participate in

decision-making, they develop a stronger sense of ownership and accountability, which significantly enhances the effectiveness, sustainability, and long-term impact of DRR interventions. When embedded within structured planning frameworks such as the Risk Reduction Action Plan (RRAP), CRA translates risk awareness into concrete, prioritised, and time-bound actions.

To systematically analyse risks and guide the prioritisation and implementation of DRR interventions, DRMP conducted a total of **10 union-level CRAs** across Satkhira, Bogura, Sunamganj, and Kurigram districts. The findings were validated through dedicated

workshops with the respective Union Disaster Management Committees (UDMCs). These workshops provided a collaborative platform for community members, local authorities, and facilitators to review risk analyses, validate priorities, and finalise actionable plans. Through this approach, DRMP ensured meaningful community participation across planning, decision-making, and implementation, reinforcing a bottom-up and locally driven pathway to resilience building.

2.2 Community-Based Flood Early Warning Systems



Bangladesh has a well-established flood early warning system (EWS) that produces scientifically sound forecasts based on numerical hydrological models. The Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) regularly generates and disseminates river-specific water level forecasts, indicating rising or falling trends at key monitoring points along major rivers. However, despite the technical reliability of these forecasts, their practical usefulness at the community level remains limited.

A significant gap exists in the communication and dissemination of early warning information.

Forecasts are typically shared through the FFWC website, email, and mainstream media using technical language that is often difficult for local communities to understand and act upon. Moreover, the current system lacks spatial resolution—it does not track vertical or lateral inundation in smaller geographic areas, particularly in flash flood-prone regions. Below the district level, structured communication channels and operational mechanisms for community engagement are largely absent.

To bridge this critical gap, DRMP has introduced a community-based flood early warning system in Shalla Upazila of Sunamganj, a region highly vulnerable to flash floods.



This localised system integrates practical tools and participatory mechanisms, including color-coded flood gauge markings linked to FFWC’s river gauges to indicate safe, alert, and danger water levels; information boards displaying localised flood forecasts and preparedness messages in accessible language; trained volunteer groups responsible for monitoring the gauges, disseminating early warnings, and assisting the most vulnerable residents—

such as the elderly, person with disabilities, and women-headed households—with evacuation to flood shelters.

Since 2023, DRMP has established a total of **19 community based flood gauge** and information boards in 17 high-risk communities specially in Shalla, reaching a total **1,229 families** with a population of

approximately 5,635. This initiative demonstrates the importance of translating technical forecasts into community-responsive warnings, ensuring that life-saving information reaches those most at risk in a timely and actionable manner.

2.3 Boat-Based Response in Haor Areas



Shalla Upazila, located in the northeastern haor region of Sunamganj District, is highly susceptible to flash floods. For more than half of the year, vast areas remain submerged, disrupting daily life and isolating communities. The lack of a functional road transport network further compounds the vulnerability – during major floods, many families in remote areas become completely trapped. Rescue operations and emergency relief distribution are severely hindered by the absence of large-capacity boats,

a challenge that became starkly evident during the record-breaking flash flood of June 2022, which affected 7.2 million people across the haor region.

To address this critical gap, DRMP introduced **four large-capacity engine-powered boats**, known as “Bandhu Tori” or “Boats of Friendship.” These boats serve multiple lifesaving and community-support functions.

During floods, their primary role is to rescue stranded individuals, transport them to safe shelters, and deliver emergency relief to isolated areas.

In non-emergency periods, the boats continue to benefit the community in meaningful ways.



Three boats are used to ferry students from waterlogged villages to schools, managed under the supervision of designated local schools. One boat is designated for BRAC's Microfinance Programme operations, supporting financial inclusion in hard-to-reach areas;

all boats are available to transport critically ill individuals from poor families to nearby medical facilities during health emergencies.

This flexible, community-centered solution demonstrates how localised innovations can enhance flood resilience and ensure

continuity of essential services in highly vulnerable regions like Shalla.

2.4 Protection of *Haatis*



The haor (wetland) region of Bangladesh is characterised by seasonal inundation and scattered elevated settlements known as *haatis*, typically spanning 1 to 10 hectares. These small upland areas are densely populated due to the scarcity of raised land. One of the most significant threats to these settlements is the powerful wave action locally referred to as *afal*, which often accompanies flash floods.

Each year, *afal* causes severe erosion to many *haatis*, gradually reducing the size of habitable land, damaging homes and essential infrastructure, and disrupting livelihoods. In response, communities have long

attempted to combat erosion using makeshift barriers made from bamboo, tree branches, and straw. While these structures offer temporary relief, they are typically ineffective against strong waves and are easily washed away.

To provide lasting protection, DRMP supported the construction of permanent retaining walls around **7 haatis** in Derai and Shalla sub-districts of Sunamganj measuring **1.59 kilometers**, where the threat of *afal* is particularly acute. Community members actively participated in the effort by contributing in-kind support for earth-cutting and

filling, curing the walls, and in some cases, providing cash to build staircases for easier access.

This initiative not only **safeguarded 367 vulnerable families** from the destructive impacts of *afal* and erosion but also significantly reduced the recurring costs of repairing temporary defenses. Most importantly, it strengthened community resilience by ensuring long-term protection of homes and livelihoods in the haor region.



Retaining wall towards Sufola's Financial Stability

The flood took away our home, but the guide wall helped us stop losing everything every year—and start saving for the future.

Living in Derai has always been a challenge due to the flash flood that hits almost every year. Even if it is not flooded, our area remains under water for more than half of the year. During the monsoon, the strong wind creates a fal, that erodes our haati. The inhabitants of our haati need to spend at least BDT 10 to 15 thousand every year to repair the erosion. People are already in hardship in this area, this erosion makes the people feel more pressure on life.

I can still remember the day in 2022, when the flash flood washed away my home and everything I had. The worst monsoon I ever had in my life. Starting again was painful. With irregular work, caring for my children and a physically challenged brother-in-law felt overwhelming. But we refused

Sufola

Kochua Haati, Derai, Sunamganj

to give up. Amid our hardship, BRAC came up with an idea to save our haati from a fal building a retaining wall. The wall not only saved us from being eroded, but also saved our yearly over expenditure.

I can now use that money on my family. With some loan and our savings, my husband and I bought a small piece of land. We began cultivating paddy, repaid our loan, and slowly rebuilt. Step by step, hope returned.

What once broke me has made me stronger. The retaining wall did more than protect our land—it restored my confidence, my stability, and my belief that a secure future is possible, even in the face of climate change.

2.5 Cyclone-Resilient Housing



Cyclones and storm surges regularly batter the coastal belt of Bangladesh, destroying homes, livelihoods, and critical community infrastructure. Among the most pressing challenges faced by vulnerable households is the fragility of their shelters. Most coastal families live in traditional houses made from mud, bamboo, straw, or wood—materials that are affordable yet highly vulnerable to wind and water damage. These houses, often constructed by local artisans or family members without formal training, lack the structural strength to withstand intense cyclonic winds or tidal flooding. As a result, each cyclone or storm surge leaves behind widespread devastation, driving families into repeated cycles of loss, displacement, and heightened vulnerability.

Satkhira, a coastal district in southwestern Bangladesh, remains one of the country's most cyclone-prone areas. Historical data illustrates the scale of destruction: Cyclone Aila (2009) caused massive structural collapse in parts of Khulna and Satkhira, with an estimated 243,000 houses completely destroyed and over 373,000 partially damaged. Most recently, Cyclone Remal (2024) inflicted further damage, destroying at least 1,468 houses in Satkhira district, particularly in Shyamnagar and Assasuni upazilas.

To promote safe, durable, and dignified housing for families with limited financial means, DRMP supported the **reconstruction of 1,867 cyclone-resilient houses** for the most vulnerable households in Satkhira

district. Each newly built home incorporates elevated plinths, reinforced concrete pillars, and durable wall and roofing materials, designed to withstand future cyclones and storm surges.

By strengthening housing resilience, this initiative not only enhances community preparedness but also reduces disaster-induced displacement and ensures long-term safety, stability, and dignity for vulnerable coastal families.



Rebuilding Hope: Shahanara's Journey After Cyclone Remal

Rebuilding my home gave me more than shelter — it gave my son safety and gave me the strength to believe in a new beginning.

Life has not been easy since my husband passed away. Every day is a struggle to earn enough to survive. After marrying off my daughter, I now live with my four year-old son — he is my only companion and the reason I keep moving forward.

When Cyclone Remal struck, I gathered what little belongings I could carry and fled with my son to the embankment near the river. There is no cyclone shelter nearby. For days, we survived on dry food, staying in the corridor of a small shop near the ghat. It was exhausting and frightening, especially with a young child depending entirely on me. After six long days, we finally received cooked meals.

Two weeks later, when the floodwater receded, I returned home with my son. My heart sank when I saw my damaged house. Our house was barely standing. I felt completely helpless. Then, I heard that BRAC was providing shelter repair support. I reached out to the local Ward Member, and soon my situation was

Shahanara Khatun

Deluti union, Paikgacha, Khulna

assessed and I was included as a project participant.

Through BRAC's support, I received tin sheets, wire, pillars, and BDT 15,000 for labor costs. With this assistance, I was able to rebuild my home. Watching the house take shape again filled me with relief and gratitude.

Today, my son and I live under a roof that feels safe and strong. Now, when I step out to work, I do not carry the same fear in my heart. I know my child is secure inside our home. This new shelter has given us more than protection — it has given us dignity, confidence, and a chance to start again.

2.6 Reconstruction of Ring Embankments in Coastal Areas



The coastal areas of Satkhira district are highly vulnerable to cyclones and tidal surges, which repeatedly disrupt the lives and livelihoods of local communities. In Shyamnagar Upazila, the residents of Ghola Ashroyon Prokolpo (180 households) and Pacchim Biralakki Ashroyon Prokolpo (120 households) faced heightened risks of cyclone and storm surges due to damaged and deteriorated ring embankments. These embankments not only served as protective barriers against storm surges but also functioned as emergency approach roads to cyclone shelters. When

the cyclone struck, their poor condition made evacuation extremely difficult – especially for the elderly, person with disabilities, and children – increasing both delays and dangers during emergencies.

To address these challenges and strengthen community resilience, DRMP undertook targeted infrastructure improvements. In Ghola Ashroyon Prokolpo, an **850-meter uniblock road** was reconstructed, while in Paschim Biralakki Ashroyon Prokolpo, a **334-meter ring embankment** reinforced with geo-bags was built. Additionally, tree plantations

along the embankments were introduced to enhance sustainability and long-term protection.

These interventions have directly **safeguarded a total of 300 households from the impacts of cyclones**, storm surges, and tidal flooding. Furthermore, the improved embankments have enhanced everyday resilience – enabling 50–60 children to commute to school safely, even during the monsoon season.



The ring embankment gives us safety during cyclone

For all 730 of us here, the embankment is our shield — without it, every cyclone would threaten everything we have.

The embankment means safety to us. For people like me who live in this cyclone-prone area, its strength decides how much we suffer when a storm hits. If the embankment is weak, even a single cyclone can devastate everything — our homes, our roads, and crops — affecting all 730 people who live here in this Gholashroyon prokolpo.

That is why the embankment BRAC built is so important to us. During the cyclone season, because of it, water cannot easily enter our settlement. Our houses stay dry, our roads remain usable, and our agricultural land is protected. In 2023, many trees were planted around the embankment to make it even stronger and the slopes of the embankment are now more protected.

Md. Rajjak
Shyamnagar, Satkhira

In 2024, when Cyclone Remal struck, we truly understood the value of this structure. While the winds were fierce and the water rose, we felt safer than before. We did not panic the way we used to during past cyclones. Some of us did not even need to rush to cyclone shelters. And for those who chose to evacuate, the embankment served as an approach road to reach safely. A few families even created temporary shelter on the embankment itself during the emergency. For us, this embankment is not just soil and trees. It is a life-saving intervention. It protects our families, our homes, and our future.

2.7 Community-Based Flood-Resilient Cattle Sheds



Floods and riverbank erosion have a devastating impact on the livestock sector in Bangladesh, particularly in vulnerable northern districts. Evidence from the 2020 monsoon flood shows that the livestock sector alone suffered losses amounting to approximately USD 74.5 million — a significant blow to rural livelihoods. One of the key reasons for such losses is the lack of safe shelter facilities for livestock during emergencies.

Many areas in the northern part of Bangladesh are prone to recurring floods and river erosion. The local economy of those areas is highly reliant on agriculture, with livestock serving as a critical component of household income and food security, especially for poor and marginal families.

During floods, damage to or loss of livestock not only leads to immediate financial hardship but also severely hampers the long-term recovery process for affected families. The fear of losing their animals often prevents people from evacuating to safety, putting both human and animal lives at risk. This highlights the urgent need for sustainable, flood-resilient solutions to protect livestock and the livelihoods they support.

In response to this pressing issue, DRMP has constructed **two flood-resilient livestock shelters in Sariakandi upazila of Bogura district and one in Kurigram sadar upazila of Kurigram district.**

Built on elevated land to withstand high flood levels, each shelter can **accommodate up to 180 animals**, offering a safe haven for the livestock of flood-prone families. This initiative is a strong example of collaborative action, with the District Administration allocating Khas (public) land for the construction of the sheds, and BRAC leading the implementation.

By protecting livestock, these shelters not only reduce economic losses during floods but also contribute to the resilience and recovery of affected communities. This approach underscores the critical importance of integrating livestock protection into broader disaster preparedness and climate adaptation strategies.



A safe place for our cattle- who matters the most to us

‘ If this cowshed had come earlier, I would not have lost my cattle.

Floods are not new to us. Every year, when the water rises, our fear rises with it. Not just for our lives, also for our cattle. They are our livelihood, our savings, and part of our family.

Previously, we had no safe place to keep them during floods. When the floodwater entered our yard, our cows and goats had nowhere to stand except in the rising water. We tried our best to tie them to higher ground, but it was not enough. Watching them shiver and struggle was heartbreaking. We felt helpless.

The flood in 2022 was the worst I remember. The water stayed for days. My cattle stood in water for so long that they became sick. In that flood, I lost five goats

Shundori

Sariakandi, Bogura

and three cows. It was not just a financial loss, rather it felt like losing members of my family.

We now have a raised cowshed in our community, a safe shelter where our cattle can stay dry during floods. When the water rises, I no longer panic the way I used to. I guide them into the shed and know they are protected.

2.8 Household-Level Flood-Resilient Cowsheds



The haor region, with its distinctive wetland ecosystem, faces annual inundation from upstream water and heavy rainfall. In Shalla Union of Sunamganj District, cattle rearing is a vital source of livelihood, with nearly every household owning cows. However, seasonal floods pose

a serious threat to livestock, as most cowsheds are either too small or insufficiently elevated to protect animals from rising waters.

A community risk assessment conducted by DRMP in Shalla

Union identified the loss of cattle during floods as a major concern, directly undermining families' economic security. In response, DRMP introduced household-level, flood-resilient cowsheds to safeguard livestock.



Each shed, built from durable concrete and measuring **8 by 7 feet**, is designed to accommodate 2–3 cows and withstand flood conditions.

To date, **10 flood-resilient cowsheds** have been constructed, prioritised for the

most vulnerable households in the union. These shelters now provide safe spaces for livestock during emergencies, greatly reducing the risk of loss. Beneficiary families report greater peace of mind and stronger economic stability, as one of their most valuable assets

is now better protected against seasonal flooding.

2.9 Lightning Safety Sheds



Bangladesh is among the most lightning-prone countries in the world, with an estimated 300–350 fatalities reported each year. Farmers and fishermen – who spend long hours in open fields and water bodies during the pre-monsoon and monsoon seasons – make up the majority of victims. It is reported that between 2010 and 2021, lightning strikes claimed at least 3,273 lives, including 363 deaths in 2021 alone in the country. The absence of protective infrastructure across extensive agricultural landscapes and wetlands, coupled with limited access to effective early warning systems and awareness programmes, leaves rural

communities highly vulnerable to lightning. In addition to loss of life, recurrent lightning strikes kill cattle and other livestock, further deepening the socioeconomic hardships faced by already marginalised communities.

To address this critical risk, DRMP has constructed a total of **5 lightning safety sheds**- one in Sariakandi upazila of Bogura district and four in Shalla and Derai upazila of Sunamganj district- areas highly prone to flooding and lightning. These double-storied brick-and-concrete structures, equipped with lightning arresters and tube

wells, can **safely accommodate 25–30 people** at a time. The sheds serve as dedicated protection points where farmers, fishermen, and pedestrians can take shelter during lightning storms, heatwaves, and other weather-related emergencies – safeguarding themselves, their livestock, and essential tools. This innovative intervention strengthens community resilience by providing a multifunctional safe space that reduces the risks associated with lightning and extreme weather events in vulnerable rural areas.



Abdur Rahman
Sariakandi, Bogura

Safety in the Fields

Now we can work in our fields without fear—there is a safe place to rest, take shelter, and drink water when we need it most.

These fields are our livelihood, but for a long time, they were also a place of fear. During the rainy season, lightning and sudden storms are a constant threat. People in nearby fields had even lost their lives. When heavy rain or thunderstorms started, there was nowhere safe to go.

Working long hours under the sun was also difficult. We had to carry water from home, far away from the fields. Because of the distance, we often drank less water, even during extreme heat, just to avoid running out.

Now, BRAC has built a lightning safety shed beside our field, and it has changed how we work. When storms, heavy rain, or intense heat begin, my coworkers and I can take shelter without fear. The shed also has a water source, so we can drink whenever we are thirsty. For me and other farmers, this shed means safety, access to water, and peace of mind. We can work in our fields knowing that our lives are protected.

2.10 Wooden Bridge and Safe Pathways



The residents of Paschim Biralakkhi village in Shyamnagar Upazila of Satkhira district long faced a persistent mobility crisis – not only during cyclones but throughout the year – due to the absence of a proper bridge over the canal running through the village. During emergencies, particularly cyclones, families struggled to reach the nearest

cyclone shelter and were often forced to walk through knee-deep water or take lengthy alternative routes. These delays significantly increased evacuation risks for the entire community, especially for children, elderly people, persons with disabilities, and pregnant women. Even in normal times, school-going children and other community members had to rely

on unsafe makeshift crossings to access schools, markets, mosques, and health services. Seasonal flooding frequently rendered the route impassable, causing social and economic isolation for more than 80 households.



To address these challenges, DRMP constructed **a wooden bridge** over the canal in Paschim Biralakkhi village. The bridge provides a stable and secure connection between two parts of the community and ensures faster, safer access to the nearest cyclone shelter. Its strategic location supports both everyday mobility and emergency

evacuation, particularly for the most vulnerable residents. By creating a safe passage across the canal, the bridge significantly reduces disaster risk while improving year-round connectivity.

The impact of the bridge on community life has been substantial. Schoolchildren can now travel safely, families

can access essential services without fear, and emergency movement during disasters is quicker and more secure. More than just a physical structure, the bridge restores dignity, reduces vulnerability, and strengthens overall community resilience in one of the most climate-exposed villages of Satkhira.



3 Combating water supply and sanitation crisis in disaster prone areas

3.1 Integrated Rainwater System



Residents of urban informal settlements in Bangladesh often live without secure tenure, adequate infrastructure, or reliable access to basic services. Rapid urbanisation, compounded by climate-induced migration, has placed significant additional pressure on already overstretched urban infrastructure and service delivery systems. As a result, many informal settlements experience acute shortages of safe drinking water.

These challenges are driven by multiple, interlinked factors, including rising salinity, declining groundwater levels, inadequate waste management, and increased urban flooding caused by erratic and intense rainfall patterns. In the absence of reliable water supply systems, residents are frequently forced

to depend on unsafe, distant, or informal water sources. This increases exposure to waterborne diseases, heightens financial burdens, and disproportionately affects women and children through the time and effort required to collect potable water. To address the acute shortage of safe drinking water in urban low-income settlements, DRMP has introduced an innovative, climate-resilient water supply solution in **four low-income settlements** in Khulna and Rajshahi cities. The system integrates solar-powered submersible water pumps with rainwater harvesting facilities, each designed with a combined storage and supply capacity of 6,000 liters.

By harnessing renewable solar energy and seasonal rainfall, the

system ensures a reliable and safe supply of drinking water while significantly reducing operational costs and environmental footprint. A community-led operation and maintenance model has been established, fostering strong local ownership, accountability, and sustainability of the system. Each installation is designed to directly benefit approximately **200 families**, effectively meeting their daily water needs while strengthening community resilience, self-reliance, and adaptive capacity in the face of climate-induced water stress.

3.2 Reverse Osmosis Water Treatment Plants



The coastal regions of Bangladesh are experiencing an acute shortage of safe drinking water due to increasing salinity intrusion driven by climate change. Frequent cyclones and tidal surges further exacerbate this situation by causing severe saline contamination of both surface and groundwater sources.

Satkhira, a coastal district in southwestern Bangladesh, is increasingly facing a critical drinking water crisis driven by salinity intrusion into both surface and groundwater sources. Climate change impacts, including sea-level rise and frequent cyclones, have intensified the situation, particularly in vulnerable

areas like Shyamnagar and Assasuni. As access to safe freshwater becomes limited, communities are forced to rely on distant or seasonal sources, creating significant hardships in daily life. This growing water insecurity not only affects livelihoods but also poses serious risks to public health and overall well-being.

To address this critical challenge, DRMP has installed **three surface water-based Reverse Osmosis (RO)** water treatment plants in Assasuni. These facilities are designed to supply safe drinking water year-round to over **750 households**. The RO

systems use advanced filtration technology to remove harmful contaminants from freshwater ponds, producing clean, safe water suitable for drinking and household use.

In addition to ensuring water security, this initiative also promotes community awareness on hygiene and safe water practices. Together, these efforts aim to significantly reduce the prevalence of waterborne diseases that are often aggravated by the consumption of saline water.



Safe Water, Close to Home: Moriom's Story from Coastal Satkhira

Before, we used to drink pond water, and we often fell sick. I became worried about my daughter when she delivered her baby here. In this condition she requires safe food and water. Having safe water close to our home gives me peace of mind

For a long time, getting safe drinking water was one of the hardest parts of our daily life. This area is close to the coast, and every cyclone, storm surge, and rise in salinity made our situation worse. Slowly, the groundwater turned salty, and we had no option but to drink water from nearby ponds.

That pond water was never safe. Many of us suffered from gastric pain, high blood pressure, skin problems, and other illnesses. In my own family, these problems were common. Fetching water was also a heavy burden on women. My sister-in-law Ayesha and I had to walk long distances every day, carrying heavy pitchers. After sunset, it became even more difficult and unsafe, but still we had no choice.

Moriom

Cheutia village, Khajra union, Assasuni upazila

Things began to change when BRAC established the Reverse Osmosis (RO) plants in our area. Now, clean and safe drinking water is available close to our home. For me, this has been a huge relief. I have a pregnant daughter and a seven-year-old grandchild at home, and knowing they can drink safe water without risk brings me peace of mind. Today, Ayesha and I no longer worry about walking far or going out at night to collect water. The RO plant has given us more than safe drinking water—it has given us dignity, safety, and hope. What was once a daily struggle is now a simple part of our lives, and that change means everything to us.

3.3 Pond Sand Filters in Salinity-Affected Areas



Satkhira, a coastal district in southwestern Bangladesh, is grappling with a severe drinking water crisis caused by increasing salinity intrusion into both surface and groundwater sources. The problem is particularly acute in sub-districts like Shyamnagar and Assasuni, where communities face chronic water insecurity. Residents – especially women

and children – are often forced to walk long distances to collect potable water from scarce freshwater sources or depend on seasonal rainwater harvesting. This prolonged hardship has led to a surge in waterborne diseases and related health concerns.

To address this challenge, DRMP has implemented a community-based, sustainable water solution by installing **4 Pond Sand Filters (PSFs) in Shyamnagar**. These low-cost systems purify pond water through successive layers



of sand and gravel, providing safe drinking water without the need for complex infrastructure. To ensure long-term functionality and community ownership, DRMP has also formed and trained local water management committees. These committees are equipped with the skills and knowledge

needed for the proper operation and maintenance of the PSFs beyond the project lifecycle, promoting sustainability and resilience.

This initiative has significantly improved access to safe drinking water for approximately **427**

households, reducing the health burden associated with unsafe water and strengthening local capacity to cope with the growing impacts of climate change.

3.4 Flood-Resilient Tube Wells



Flooding in both the riverine flood-prone northern regions and flash flood-prone haor areas of Bangladesh causes widespread inundation and substantial damage to the sources of drinking water. This not only worsens the crisis of safe drinking water but also heightens the risk of waterborne disease outbreaks during and after floods. According to the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE), the record-breaking flash flood in the northeastern haor region in 2022 inundated and damaged 106,727 tube wells. Similarly, the 2024 flash flood in the southeastern districts affected 321,888 tube wells, significantly increasing the risk of water source contamination and adverse health impacts. To address this critical issue and

ensure access to safe drinking water during future floods, DRMP supported the repair and rehabilitation of a total of **227 vulnerable tube wells** in Sunamganj and Bogura districts. This initiative improved flood-time access to **safe drinking water for at least 1362 vulnerable households**.

The repaired tube wells were upgraded with elevated platforms constructed above the highest recorded flood levels, based on hydrological forecasts and local community experience from past major floods. Inclusive features, such as ramps, were incorporated into the platform design to ensure

accessibility for persons with disabilities and the elderly.

Throughout the rehabilitation process, DRMP worked in close coordination with local Union Councils and the DPHE to ensure proper implementation and a smooth handover of the tube wells for future operation and maintenance.



Afia Begum and BRAC Work Together to Secure Safe Drinking Water

More than 15 families use the tubewell; all had to struggle for safe drinking water during the flood. Only women feel the burden of fetching water for household work daily. After the rehabilitation work from the project, the tubewell is now

high enough and will be able to feed the whole village even during the flood.

In 2022, when the destructive flood hit our area, my family and I had no choice but to leave our home. Like many others, we took shelter in a neighbor's house and waited for the floodwaters to go down.

When we finally returned, I saw that our tube well had gone completely under water. That tube well was not only for my family but also it supplied safe drinking water to at least 15 neighboring families. In our area, there is no nearby pond, so the tube well is

Afia Begum

Kumardani village, Chhatak, Sunamganj

the main source of safe water for all of us. After the flood, we were worried about how we would manage, especially during future floods.

Later, with the help of BRAC, I could repair the tube-well with raised platform. The platform of our tube well was elevated so that it would not be submerged again during floods. This small but important change has made a big difference in our lives.

Now, even when floods come, we can access safe drinking water. I feel assured that I can continue to provide safe water to my neighbors without interruption. The raised platform has also ensured privacy and safety for my family.

3.5 Flood- and Cyclone-Resilient Household Latrines



Floods and cyclones frequently damage household latrines in Bangladesh – either washing them away or inundating their pits – resulting in the contamination of nearby surface and groundwater sources. For instance, after Cyclone Amphan in 2020, a total of 40,894 latrines in affected coastal districts were damaged, forcing many families to open defecation. Similarly, DPHE report informs that the record-breaking flash flood in the northeastern haor region in 2022 inundated and damaged 19885 latrines, significantly increasing the risk of water source contamination and adverse health impacts. The lack of safe and functional latrines

also disproportionately affected women and girls, undermining their safety, dignity and menstrual hygiene management.

To address this critical issue and ensure access to safe sanitation facilities during floods and cyclones, DRMP has reconstructed **1628 household latrines in Bogura and Satkhira district**. These improved latrines are designed with raised platforms, durable materials, and sealed containment systems to prevent contamination and withstand future disasters. The latrines also align the facilities

with DPHE's WASH standards for climate-resilient sanitation. This initiative improved flood-time access to **safe sanitation for at least 8135 vulnerable households**.

Through this effort, DRMP seeks to ensure safe sanitation facilities during climatic disasters, reduce health risks associated with poor sanitation, and enhance the dignity and security of affected households especially women and children.



Putul's Story of Resilience and Support

I was so worried about how my daughter would manage during this time. This support has given us not just a latrine but peace of mind

I have spent 32 years in this village and have seen many cyclones destroy lives and homes. I still remember Cyclone Sidr in 2007, when our house was completely washed away. With great effort and hardship, my husband and I later rebuilt a stronger home, hoping it would protect us in future disasters.

When Cyclone Remal was approaching, I followed the early warning and went to the cyclone shelter with my daughter. My husband stayed behind to look after our cattle. By Allah's mercy, our house survived the storm, but this time our latrine was completely destroyed.

Putul Rani

Chholabunia village,
Shoronkhola, Bagerhat

Losing the latrine created serious problems for us, especially for my daughter. As a mother, I worried constantly about her privacy, dignity, and menstrual hygiene. We had to depend on neighbors, which was uncomfortable and often embarrassing for her and for us.

Amid this situation, feeling my dire need, BRAC reconstructed my latrine. This support brought us great relief. Today, my daughter can live with dignity and comfort again, and our household feels complete. After surviving so many cyclones, this small but vital support has made a big difference in our lives.

3.6 Flood-Resilient Community WASH Blocks



During flood events in the haor region, when water engulfs entire haatis (clusters of households), accessing basic Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) facilities becomes extremely difficult. Toilets and bathing spaces are often submerged or inaccessible, creating serious challenges for

the community. The impact is particularly severe for women and girls, who struggle to maintain hygiene and privacy. Many are forced to wait until nightfall to relieve themselves, exposing them to health risks, infections, and safety concerns.

To address this critical need, DRMP constructed **a flood-resilient Community WASH Block** on elevated ground in Madhupur Hati of Shalla Upazila, Sunamganj. Designed to serve **51 households**, the facility includes

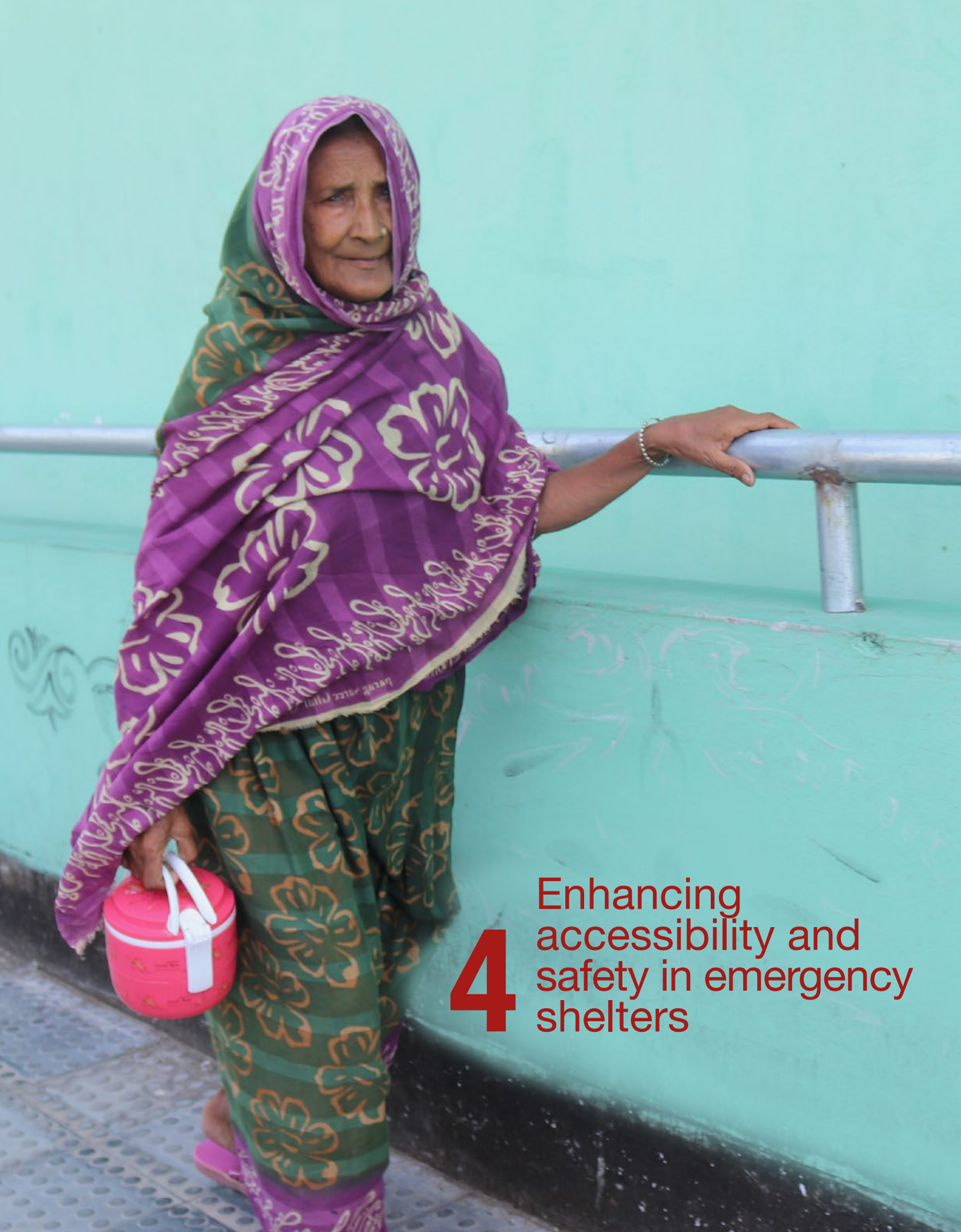


gender-segregated toilets, bathing cubicles, and a dedicated space for ozu (ablution) for mosque attendees.

The Community WASH Block has become a lifeline for the

community, ensuring safe and reliable access to sanitation and hygiene during floods. By providing women and children with greater privacy, safety, and dignity, the intervention has reduced health risks and

strengthened the community's overall resilience to recurring flood emergencies.



4

Enhancing
accessibility and
safety in emergency
shelters

4.1 Repairing and Renovation of Cyclone Shelters



Today, Bangladesh has more than 14,000 cyclone shelters spread across its coastal districts, playing a vital role in saving lives during extreme weather events. Despite this impressive coverage, many shelters remain underutilised due to various functional limitations. Absence of access roads, inadequate maintenance, weakened structural integrity, lack of gender-segregated washrooms, insufficient lighting, and overall safety concerns discourage vulnerable residents from seeking refuge during emergencies. Consequently, many people – particularly women, children, and persons with disabilities – opt to stay in their homes during cyclones, exposing themselves to life-threatening risks.

To address these critical challenges, DRMP undertook an initiative to repair and renovate **15 cyclone shelters** in the highly cyclone-prone Assasuni Upazila of Satkhira District. The renovation work focused on enhancing accessibility, safety, functionality, and livability. The upgraded shelters are now equipped with reinforced concrete access roads, waterproof floors, walls, and roofs, as well as improved sanitation facilities and solar-powered lighting systems – ensuring dignity, safety, and comfort for all users. Special design considerations were made for elderly individuals, women, and persons with disabilities, promoting inclusivity and

equitable access during disaster situations.

With these improvements, the renovated shelters are now capable of safely accommodating around 1,500 households during cyclonic events – significantly reducing disaster risks and strengthening community resilience across the region.

4.2 Installation of Safety Lights in Flood Shelters



Disasters such as floods and cyclones regularly displace thousands of people across Bangladesh, compelling vulnerable populations—to seek refuge in emergency shelters. While these shelters serve their primary purpose, they often fall short in providing inclusive, safe, and dignified environments for all, especially women, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities – those with heightened needs.

One critical yet often overlooked issue is the lack of adequate lighting in emergency shelters. A 2019 report by the Humanitarian Policy Group underscores that poorly lit shelters can significantly increase the risks of gender-based violence (GBV), theft, and health hazards. Women and girls face increased threats of harassment when accessing latrines or wash areas at night. Similarly, elderly individuals and person with disabilities struggle

to move safely in dark, crowded shelters – raising the risk of falls and injury. BRAC's own field assessments confirm that these unsafe conditions discourage many from seeking shelter during emergencies, thereby weakening the overall impact of humanitarian response efforts.



To address this urgent gap, DRMP, in collaboration with the Signify Foundation, launched a transformative initiative to improve lighting in emergency shelters.

Solar-powered lighting systems were installed in **175 flood shelters across Sunamganj, Sylhet, and Netrokona** – districts highly vulnerable to flooding and prolonged power outages.

These sustainable lighting solutions provide reliable, uninterrupted illumination, ensuring that shelters remain safe and navigable even during extended periods of darkness. The result is a more secure, accessible, and dignified environment that encourages vulnerable groups to seek timely

shelter – ultimately strengthening community resilience and the effectiveness of emergency response systems.

4.3 Repairing and Reconstruction of Shelter Approach Roads



Access roads to many cyclone shelters are either absent or poorly constructed, often consisting of narrow earthen pathways that become impassable during heavy rains or storm surges. These conditions significantly increase travel time and pose serious risks during emergencies. During cyclones, access roads are frequently flooded, submerged, or damaged,

making it extremely difficult for residents to reach shelters safely. Elderly persons, person with disabilities, pregnant women, and others with limited mobility face the greatest challenges. In past severe cyclones such as Amphan (2020) and Sidr (2007), these barriers delayed evacuation efforts and forced many vulnerable

individuals to remain in unsafe locations. Poor accessibility not only restricts the use of cyclone shelters but also weakens overall disaster preparedness across coastal areas – where quick and safe movement can mean the difference between life and death.



To address this challenge, DRMP has strengthened **4 access roads** leading to cyclone shelters, covering approximately 1 kilometer in Shyamnagar and Assasuni Upazilas of Satkhira District. The upgraded roads feature raised embankments, improved drainage systems, and durable surfacing materials designed to withstand waterlogging and heavy

rainfall. The initiative ensures safe, all-weather connectivity to shelters for approximately **160 households**, with particular attention to the needs of the most vulnerable groups.

By improving access roads, this intervention enables faster and safer evacuation during cyclones, especially for those with mobility

constraints. It also ensures that cyclone shelters remain accessible year-round, supporting community preparedness and strengthening local resilience to future disasters.



5 Bolstering community preparedness through awareness raising

5.1 Awareness Raising to Enhance Disaster Preparedness



Communities living in disaster-prone areas are often the first to face the impacts of natural hazard, and yet, they are frequently the last to receive timely and accurate early warning information. As the most vulnerable groups in society, they have the right to access early warning and preparedness messages that enable them to safeguard their lives, assets, and livelihoods. Unfortunately, people residing in remote or hard-to-reach locations often remain excluded from conventional

communication channels such as television, newspapers, and mobile alerts. This communication gap increases their vulnerability and limits their ability to take preventive measures before a disaster strikes.

Recognising this challenge, DRMP has adopted innovative and community-centered approaches to ensure that early warning and awareness messages reach everyone, especially those who are often

unheard and underserved. To bridge the communication gap, DRMP utilises participatory and culturally engaging methods that combine both education and entertainment. These include Popular Theatre, Pot Songs, Community Radio, and Simulation Exercises, all designed to deliver life-saving information in interactive, inclusive, and easily understandable ways.

5.1.1 Awareness Raising through Community Radio



Community Radio Stations, often called the “voice of the voiceless”, serve as an essential platform for disseminating early warning messages and building awareness on disaster preparedness among grassroots communities.

Managed with active community participation, these radio stations provide education, information, and entertainment in local dialects that resonate with listeners. Currently, a network of **18 community radio**

stations across Bangladesh is actively contributing to positive social change through diverse programmes designed to inform and empower communities.



Since 2019, DRMP, in collaboration with BRAC's Social Empowerment and Legal Services Programme (SELP), has been implementing and continuing this initiative to disseminate emergency early warning messages and enhance community preparedness.

Through partnerships with radio stations located in disaster-prone areas, DRMP regularly broadcasts awareness content in different

formats such as public service announcements, phone-in live shows, magazine programmes, and dramas. These participatory and culturally relevant approaches ensure that key messages are easily understood, accepted, and internalised by local audiences.

Over the last five years, this ongoing initiative has reached nearly **7.1 million community members** across flood

and cyclone-prone regions, significantly enhancing their capacity to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to emergencies. By continuing these community radio activities, DRMP remains committed to fostering a culture of preparedness and strengthening community resilience across the country.

5.1.2 Awareness Raising through Popular Theatre



Popular Theatre is a powerful communication tool that both entertains and educates, using storytelling and performance to deliver vital messages on disaster preparedness, gender-based violence, education, and other pressing social issues. As part of

its multi-channel communication strategy, the DRMP leverages Popular Theatre as an effective platform to raise awareness about early warning signals, preparedness, and risk reduction. This initiative seeks to strengthen

community resilience and early warning system management by deepening understanding of disaster impacts, preparedness actions, and post-disaster recovery practices.



In collaboration with BRAC's SELP, DRMP organizes Popular Theatre shows in disaster-prone communities to engage people in an interactive and relatable way. Performed in local dialects and typically lasting around 45 minutes, these dramatised performances portray real-life disaster scenarios and their effects on lives and livelihoods, while demonstrating how preparedness can minimize risks and protect families, assets, and communities.

Since 2019, DRMP has implemented Popular Theatre activities in Bogura, Satkhira, and Sunamganj districts – areas highly vulnerable to recurring natural hazards. During the reporting period, a total of **147 theatre performances were staged**, drawing enthusiastic participation from local audiences. Through these shows, DRMP successfully reached approximately **54,000**

(53,965) community members with crucial awareness messages on disaster early warning, preparedness, and risk reduction – empowering them to take proactive measures to safeguard their lives and livelihoods.

5.1.3 Awareness Raising through Pot Songs



Alongside community radio and popular theatre, DRMP also employs Pot Songs – a traditional yet powerful medium to disseminate disaster preparedness messages among

grassroots communities in three disaster-prone districts: Bogura, Satkhira, and Sunamganj. Pot Songs are an age-old form of Bengali folk storytelling that blend

music, art, rhythm, and narrative to deliver social and educational messages in a way that deeply connects with rural audiences.



By weaving disaster preparedness themes into these culturally rich performances, DRMP effectively transforms local art into a vehicle for awareness and collective action. This creative and participatory approach not only entertains but also helps communities internalise vital lessons on disaster risks, preparedness, and resilience. Since its inception in 2024, DRMP has organized **60 Pot Song**

performances across remote and vulnerable communities in Satkhira, Bogura, and Sunamganj. Each event features local artists who bring these messages to life through engaging performances that inspire reflection, dialogue, and behavioral change toward safer, more resilient communities.

Through these shows, DRMP successfully reached

approximately **15,939 community members with crucial awareness messages on disaster early warning, preparedness, and risk reduction** – empowering them to take proactive measures to safeguard their lives and livelihoods.

5.2 Hazard-Specific Simulation Exercises



DRMP places strong emphasis on practical, community-based learning to strengthen disaster preparedness and enhance the effectiveness of early warning systems. A key component of this approach is the organisation of hazard-specific simulation exercises, designed to help communities experience and practice real-life emergency situations in a safe, controlled environment. Through these

exercises, participants gain hands-on understanding of early warning interpretation, evacuation procedures, resource mobilisation, and coordination among local stakeholders – critical elements for effective disaster response.

Since 2019, DRMP, in collaboration with the Cyclone Preparedness Programme

(CPP), has organized **21 cyclone simulation exercises** across the cyclone-vulnerable unions of Satkhira district. A total of **21,700 community members** actively participated in and observed these exercises, showing remarkable enthusiasm, engagement, and understanding of their roles during emergencies.



Building on the encouraging outcomes of these cyclone simulations, DRMP expanded the initiative in 2024 to address flood risks in Bogura and Sunamganj districts, organizing **02 flood simulation exercises** for the first time. A total of **1800 community members participated** in and observed these events, which provided valuable opportunities to practice flood-specific

preparedness and response actions.

These simulations were strategically conducted ahead of the cyclone season to ensure that preparedness measures, response roles, and coordination mechanisms remained fresh in the minds of community members,

volunteers, and local institutions. Organisation of these events demonstrates DRMP's ongoing commitment to fostering a culture of preparedness – ensuring that at-risk communities are not only informed, but also empowered to take proactive measures before disaster strikes.

5.3 School-Based Disaster Preparedness



Children are among the most vulnerable groups during disasters, particularly in hazard-prone regions where floods, cyclones, storm surges, and waterlogging repeatedly disrupt education and threaten their safety. Schools often face structural weaknesses, limited preparedness systems, and inadequate facilities to cope with emergencies. When disasters strike, children are exposed to injury, psychosocial stress, interrupted learning, and unsafe environments. Beyond the infrastructure gaps, a critical challenge lies in the absence of structured disaster awareness

among students and school committees. Without proper knowledge, preparedness actions, evacuation planning, and continuity mechanisms, schools struggle to maintain safety and resume academic activities after crises.

To address these vulnerabilities, DRMP has implemented a comprehensive school-based disaster preparedness initiative **in six schools in the most disaster-prone unions of Satkhira, Bogura, and Sunamganj.**

Students from classes 8 and 9 were organised into brigades and received structured training on disaster awareness, early warning dissemination, and coordinated emergency response actions. The brigades conduct regular coordination meetings and maintain formal linkages with local government authorities to strengthen collaboration during preparedness and response efforts.



Alongside capacity building, DRMP improved the physical resilience and safety of school environments. Interventions included disaster-resilient renovations of school structures, installation of solar lights to ensure safety and security and education continuity during electricity outages, plantation of fruit and medicinal trees to enhance environmental resilience, upgraded WASH facilities to

maintain hygiene during crises, and elevation of playgrounds to reduce flood exposure. Each participating school also developed an emergency safety and education continuity plan outlining procedures to sustain learning during disasters and ensure rapid recovery afterward. Through participatory

training involving School Management Committee (SMC) members, teachers, parents, and students, hazard-specific preparedness strategies were created, supported by practical assessments and realistic budgeting.

6.1 Capacity Building of Disaster Management Committees



The Standing Order on Disasters (SOD) is one of the Government of Bangladesh's most important policy instruments, providing a comprehensive framework for disaster management that extends from the national level down to local communities. It establishes clear institutional arrangements to ensure effective, coordinated, and systematic action before, during, and after disasters.

At the local level, Disaster Management Committees (DMCs) at the Upazila, Union, and Ward levels are mandated to play critical roles in disaster preparedness, risk reduction, emergency response, and post-disaster recovery. They are also responsible for fostering coordination among relevant

stakeholders. However, in practice, many of these committees remain inactive or only partially functional. This is largely due to limited orientation on their roles and responsibilities, inadequate knowledge and awareness of disaster management and climate change adaptation, and a lack of technical expertise and financial resources.

To address these gaps, since 2019 DRMP, in close coordination with the Department of Disaster Management under the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, has been working to strengthen the capacity of local DMCs.

Through training and orientation, the initiative aims to make these committees fully functional and to enhance their ability to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

By 2025, the DRMP has successfully provided training and orientation to a total of **6838 local DMC members** – including 442 at the Upazila level, 3654 at the Union level, and 2742 at the Ward level – across some of the country's most disaster-prone districts, contributing to more resilient and better-prepared communities.

6.2 Capacity Building of Community-Based Organisations



Community-based organisations (CBOs) play a crucial role in disaster management by acting as a link between communities and external agencies, leading early warning dissemination, and coordinating immediate response efforts like search and rescue and evacuation, relief distribution, etc. However, CBOs often lack capacity, stemming primarily from limited financial resources,

inadequate technical capabilities, and poor coordination with formal government systems. These constraints hinder their ability to effectively prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters, despite their critical role in local resilience.

To address this gap DRMP has initiated Community-Based

Disaster Preparedness (CBDP) training for CBOs in most vulnerable cyclone and flood-prone districts to build local capacity, enhance community resilience, and ensure that communities are better equipped to respond effectively during emergencies.



The CBDP training provides comprehensive knowledge and practical skills on disaster preparedness, early warning dissemination, evacuation planning, first aid, search and rescue, and management of cyclone and flood shelters. Participants include members of BRAC's Village organisations (VOs), Village Development organisations (VDOs), Palli Shomaj and other community groups, with a special focus on involving women as volunteers and leaders. Through participatory sessions, in this training,

community members learn how to identify local hazards, prepare risk maps, maintain emergency communication systems, and develop action plans that resemble their local realities.

Through this initiative DRMP has so far trained **5614 CBO members** till 2025. Community people are now better informed, receive early warnings promptly, and move to shelters in time. It has enhanced local ownership and capacity, as communities

now manage their disaster preparedness activities, maintain shelters, and coordinate emergency response more efficiently. This training also promotes gender inclusion and social cohesion, encouraging women to take active roles in disaster management.

6.3 Formation of Union Emergency Response Groups



In the coastal regions of Bangladesh, the well-established Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP) plays a vital role in safeguarding communities from cyclones. However, flood-prone areas – particularly the haor (wetland) regions – face significant challenges due to the absence of trained local volunteers. The 2022 flash floods in the haor region had devastating impacts on districts such as Sylhet, Sunamganj, Netrokona, Habiganj, and Moulvibazar, destroying crops, livestock, and homes. The lack of organised community-

based volunteers hindered timely humanitarian support, leaving remote areas without adequate boats, dry food, and essential supplies.

To address these gaps, DRMP has introduced a new initiative to strengthen flood preparedness in the haor areas by forming Union Emergency Response Groups (UERGs). **Each UERG consists of 30 diverse community members** – including boatmen, farmers, traders, labourers,

homemakers, and social workers – who commit to working collectively to support their communities during floods. Each member brings unique skills and local knowledge: boatmen assist with rescue and transport, traders provide logistics and temporary shelter spaces, while farmers and homemakers support preparedness, awareness, and community mobilisation.



UERGs receive training on disaster preparedness, risk reduction, and early warning systems, enabling them to act as community agents who disseminate information and relay critical alerts in coordination with local government authorities. They are also equipped with personal protective gear, essential logistics,

and communication tools to enhance their readiness and response capacity.

Since 2023, DRMP has established **39 UERGs across 06 disaster-prone districts.** This initiative promotes localised, inclusive, and sustainable

emergency preparedness – empowering haor communities to respond swiftly and effectively to floods, protect lives, and minimise disaster impacts at the grassroots level.

7 Addressing the emergency needs and building back better



নান ফুড আইটেম		
ক্রম	বিবরণ	পরিমাণ
১	জিলাস চৌ	১
২	চুই	২
৩	ছাত	১
৪	পানি পোক	১
৫	কাই	১
৬	পানি চুই	১
৭	পানি চুই	১
৮	কাই	১
৯	কাই	১
১০	জিলাস চৌ	১
১১	জিলাস চৌ কাই	২

7.1 Overview of Major Disasters from 2021 to 2025



Over the last five years, Bangladesh has experienced an unprecedented succession of disasters – ranging from severe cyclones and recurrent floods to the far-reaching socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic – placing extraordinary strain on the resilience of communities nationwide. Between 2020 and 2025, the country was affected by multiple major natural disasters, including Cyclone Amphan (2020), the Monsoon Floods (2020), Cyclone Yaas (2021), the Northeastern Flash Floods (2022), Cyclone Sitrang (2022), Cyclone Mokha (2023), Cyclone Remal (2024), and the Eastern Flash Floods (2024). These events resulted in widespread loss of life, displacement, and extensive damage to homes, livelihoods, and critical infrastructure.

Throughout this period, BRAC emerged as one of the most active and trusted humanitarian responders in Bangladesh. Guided by its long-standing commitment to community-centred disaster management, DRMP – supported by an extensive network of frontline staff, volunteers, and local institutions – delivered timely, coordinated, and context-specific interventions across affected regions.

BRAC played a critical role in disseminating early warning messages, supporting evacuations, and prioritising the safety and dignity of vulnerable populations, including women, children,

older persons, and persons with disabilities. Its response extended beyond immediate emergency relief to include early recovery, rehabilitation, and sustained efforts to strengthen community preparedness and resilience against future hazards. BRAC's disaster response and rehabilitation efforts were characterised by speed, scale, and deep community engagement. Through integrated emergency response, recovery, and capacity-building initiatives, BRAC helped reduce human suffering, restore livelihoods, and support safer reconstruction at scale.

7.2 Response and Rehabilitation Support to Eastern Flash Flood 2024



In August 2024, Bangladesh experienced devastating flash floods in its eastern region following exceptionally heavy monsoon rainfall and upstream overflow between 19–21 August, inundating 11 districts including Noakhali, Feni, Cumilla, Lakshmipur and Chattogram. An estimated 5.8 million people were affected, with over 1 million stranded by floodwaters and more than 502,000 displaced

into 3,403 evacuation centres across the affected districts, while widespread damage to housing, education infrastructure and livelihoods created urgent humanitarian needs.

In response, BRAC mobilised over 5,000 staff to deliver emergency relief, shelter assistance, safe water and health services to the hardest-hit communities, and -

under government direction - led NGO coordination in the Cumilla region to ensure timely, equitable and well-aligned aid distribution. Following the emergency phase, BRAC expanded its efforts to include recovery and rehabilitation support, helping affected families rebuild their lives and strengthen resilience against future shocks.

Emergency response support



70,000+
packets dry food
distributed



30,000+
Packets cooked
food distributed



27,000
Food packages
distributed



164
metric ton cattle
feed distributed



39,000+
liters drinking water
distributed



14,599
water points
disinfected



41 medical
teams deployed



119,292
patients received
medical care



13,058
children (<5) received
health support



13,230
packets sanitary napkins
distributed

Recovery and rehabilitation support



10,997
families received
cash support



1,154
nos. latrine
reconstructed



10,800
families received
agriculture support



25
nos. school
repaired



1,001
nos. house
repaired



4,600
students' education
material



1,005
nos. tube well
repaired



Md. Foyez Ahmed

Niskunjora village
Chagalnaiya, Feni

Brewing Hope After the Flood

Restarting my tea stall gave me back my independence — what I lost in the flood, I regained with hope and support.

For the last 26 years, I have been living with a disability caused by an accident. Despite my limitations, I tried my best to support my family by running a small tea stall near our home. My wife stood beside me every day, helping manage the shop so we could earn enough to survive.

In August 2024, a flood hit our village unlike anything I had ever seen. The water rose quickly and swallowed everything in its path. My tea stall — our only source of income — was destroyed. The floodwater washed away all the items inside, leaving behind nothing but an empty shell. My refrigerator was damaged beyond repair, and I had no choice but to throw it away. There had been no early warning, so we had no time to prepare. To save our lives, my family and I took shelter at a relative's house, where we stayed for a week.

When the water receded, the reality was devastating. Our livelihood was gone. As a person with a disability, starting over felt overwhelming. Neighbors and relatives helped as much as they could, but it was not enough

to rebuild the shop. I worried constantly about how I would provide for my family. Just when hope seemed distant, BRAC stepped in with early recovery support. I was selected to receive BDT 5,000 in cash assistance. With that money, I bought raw materials and essential items to restart my tea stall. Slowly, the shop began to take shape again. Today, my tea stall is running once more. Serving tea to my neighbors feels like reclaiming a part of my life that I thought was lost forever. The support I received was more than financial assistance — it was a lifeline that helped me stand on my feet again and move forward with dignity.

7.3 Response and Rehabilitation Support to Cyclone Remal 2024



In May 2024, Cyclone Remal made landfall in Bangladesh on 26 May 2024, bringing intense winds, heavy rainfall and storm surges that caused widespread flooding and destruction across the country's coastal districts. The cyclone affected an estimated 4.6 million people across 19 districts. According to government and humanitarian assessments, 173,866 houses were damaged by the event, of which about 40,338 were completely destroyed, and many more were partially damaged, while embankments, water

points and latrines also suffered extensive harm. Early warning and evacuation efforts helped move around 800,000 people into 9,424 cyclone shelters, likely reducing casualties, though deaths were reported and critical needs persisted for safe water, shelter, health and livelihood support. The impact on agriculture, infrastructure and services underscored both the immediate humanitarian crisis and the need for recovery and resilience building support.

In response, over 14,000 BRAC field staff were mobilised alongside 8,450 Shastho Shebika (community health workers) and local volunteers to support evacuation, relief coordination, and essential services across coastal districts. Complementing government cyclone shelters, BRAC prepared several of its own field offices to host vulnerable people during the emergency. Later on, BRAC provided recovery and rehabilitation support to the most affected people.

Emergency response support



9,492

packets emergency food distributed from upazila contingency fund



1,100

families received temporary shelter materials from ready stock



13,035

families received cash support

Recovery and rehabilitation support



2,265

houses reconstructed



1,15

latrines reconstructed



1,000

families received multipurpose cash



Jyonti Rani
Shoronkhola, Bagerhat

Turning loss into opportunity

With a little support, I found a new way to stand again after losing everything

We have faced many cyclones before, but Cyclone Remal was unlike anything I had experienced. When the storm hit, my family and I took shelter in a neighbor's brick-built house. We stayed there for three days, praying that our home would survive.

When we finally returned, our house had suffered only minor damage — but our livelihood was devastated. The surge water had destroyed my seedbed and all the vegetable seedlings I had planted using borrowed money.



Months of effort disappeared overnight, leaving me with a loss of nearly BDT 7,000. To make matters worse, my tailoring work stopped because my neighbors were also struggling and could not afford to pay for stitching. I felt overwhelmed and worried about how we would recover.

That was when BRAC stepped in through the Bangladesh Cyclone Remal Emergency Response Project. After learning about my situation, they provided me with BDT 5,000 in cash support. While local relief helped cover our immediate food needs, I decided to use this money as an investment in our future.

With the support, I bought a pregnant goat. I saw it not just as livestock, but as an opportunity to rebuild. My plan is to raise goats and gradually grow a small herd. In the future, I hope to sell them to repair our house and support my daughter's education.

7.4 Response and Rehabilitation Support to Fire Incident in Naogaon 2024



On February 10, 2024, a fire instigated from an electrical short-circuit destroyed literally everything of 19 indigenous families in Rasulpur village under Adhaipur union of Badalgachi

upazila in Naogaon district. These included their houses, animals, belongings, and basic facilities like water and sanitation. An

assessment by BRAC estimated their losses at about Tk. 1,600,000 (USD 14,600) due to that fire incident.



BRAC mobilised its District and Upazila Disaster Management Teams immediately to swiftly

deliver emergency aid to the affected families. For recovery purpose, the DRMP provided

humanitarian support to the affected 19 families with mainly,



Rebuilding of houses



Repairing and rehabilitation of WASH facilities



Recovery of livelihoods

7.5 Response and Rehabilitation Support to Chattogram Flash Flood 2023



In August 2023, the Chattogram Division of Bangladesh experienced devastating flash floods and monsoon-rain-induced inundation, triggered by persistent heavy rainfall and upstream water flow. It overwhelmed rivers and low-lying terrain across the region. The disaster spread rapidly through Chattogram, Cox’s Bazar, Rangamati and Bandarban districts, submerging vast areas of land, isolating communities and leaving infrastructure severely damaged. According to the Humanitarian Country Team in Bangladesh, the floods affected an estimated 1.3 million people, including 630,000 women and 480,000 children, with 600,000 individuals in need of humanitarian assistance and 213,214 temporarily displaced.

Considering the severe impacts, relief gaps, and urgent recovery needs, BRAC prioritised Bandarban and Chattogram—the most affected districts—for targeted support. BRAC implemented a flash flood response project in

Satkania upazila of Chattogram and Bandarban Sadar and Lama upazila of Bandarban district to

help affected communities restore food security and shelter.

Emergency Response Support



2,520 households received food package



134 households received mosquito nets

Recovery and rehabilitation support



6,686 households received cash support



261 houses repaired/reconstructed



150 latrines reconstructed



Lee Euo Marma

Ujanipara, Bandarban
Sadar, Bandarban

Journey from Loss to Hope

Life forced me to start over many times, but rebuilding my home gave me the strength to keep going for my daughter.

For years, I lived in an abusive marriage, enduring pain and fear in silence. My life became even more difficult after my daughter was born with a physical disability. When my husband learned about her condition, he left us. To survive, I started making local rice cakes and noodles. It was the only way I could earn and care for my daughter.

Then in 2023, when the flash flood hit Bandarban, bringing rising water and the fear of landslides. With my daughter's fragile health, I first took shelter in a neighbor's house. As the water kept rising, I made the dangerous decision to move to higher ground. When the floodwaters finally went down, I returned home—but my house was gone. Everything I had built

was destroyed. Standing there, I felt broken, but I did not give up. Then BRAC's Chattogram Flash Flood Emergency Response Project reached me. I was selected as a project participant and received support to rebuild my home. For the first time in a long while, I felt safe again. I had a secure place where my daughter and I could live with dignity.

Today, I dream of opening a small shop where I can sell my handmade items and the food I prepare. My life has been shaped by abuse, abandonment, and disaster, but I am still standing. I am not just surviving anymore—I am moving forward, with hope for a better future for my daughter and me.

7.6 Response and Rehabilitation Support to Northeastern Flash Flood 2022



In late May 2022, Bangladesh was struck by one of the most severe flash flood events in recent history, as above-normal monsoon rains and overflowing rivers from India's northeast inundated vast areas of the northern and northeastern regions of the country. The flooding intensified from mid-June, submerging extensive low-lying terrain across districts such as Sylhet, Sunamganj, Moulvibazar, Habiganj, Kishoreganj, Netrakona, Brahmanbaria and Mymensingh and spreading into parts of the northern division as rivers continued to rise. The report

of the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief informed that about 7.2 million people in nine districts were affected by the flash flood. Almost 472,856 people were taken to around 1,605 flood shelters in a combined effort of the Army, Navy, Coast Guards, Fire Service, and local authorities, while many more were taken shelter in open areas on roadsides and embankments.

From the onset of this severe flood, BRAC along with the government and other national and international humanitarian actors, has made significant effort to provide immediate life-saving support to the flood affected population. And later on BRAC provided recovery and rehabilitation support in the most affected areas.



Asiya's story of harvesting hope after flood

The flood took away my harvest, but with new knowledge and support, I am growing hope again for my family.

My husband, who was once the only breadwinner of our family, is no longer able to work because of his age. To keep our household running, I work in the fields with the help of my sons.

Before the flood in 2022, I had sown paddy with great hope for a good harvest. But the severe flood changed everything. The water destroyed eight mounds of paddy and swept away my 22

hens — a huge loss for our family. When the situation worsened, we were taken to a shelter after someone kindly requested help for us. We did not even have money to pay for a boat to evacuate. Although our house survived with minor damage, financially we were devastated.

When we returned from the shelter, we had almost nothing to eat. We survived on food assistance provided by the government. I had seen floods before, but never destruction like this. It felt like all our hard work had vanished overnight.

Hope returned when I received agricultural support from BRAC. I received vegetable seeds, fertilizers, a spraying machine, and other farming tools. With these inputs, I started growing vegetables on my land. Slowly, I began to feel independent again.

Asiya Begum Sunamganj

I have already earned BDT 150 by selling red spinach, and more importantly, my family now eats fresh vegetables grown by our own hands.

Through the project, I also learned about the sack method of vegetable cultivation — a technique that can help us continue growing food even during floods. I am eager to apply this method soon because I know it will protect us in difficult times.

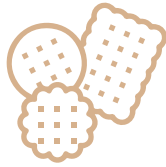
Today, I feel more confident about the future. Step by step, I am rebuilding our livelihood. I believe our situation will improve, and we will live with greater financial freedom and dignity.

Emergency response support



63,011

families reached with dry food, water and other essentials



34,000

families reached with high-energy biscuit



8,150

families reached with livestock feed



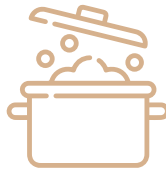
780,000

Water purification tablets distributed



50,000

families reached with cash support



1,900

families reached with cooked meals donated



700

families reached with shelter toolkits and non-food items



828

families reached with hygiene kits and essential commodities

Recovery and rehabilitation support



2,986

Agriculture



58

Tube Well repairing



1,999

Hygiene Kits



3,002

Cash For Livelihood



40

Latrine repairing



279

Shelter reconstruction



13,000

Multipurpose Cash



8 Key Lessons Learned

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- Community Risk Assessment is a foundation for effective DRR and resilience building

Experience from DRR and resilience-building interventions demonstrates that CRA is a critical foundation for designing effective, inclusive, and sustainable solutions. When communities actively participate in identifying hazards, vulnerabilities, capacities, and priorities, the resulting interventions are more accurately aligned with local realities and evolving risk patterns.

CRA enables practitioners to move beyond generic or top-down approaches by capturing localized knowledge, seasonal variations, and social dimensions of risk – particularly those affecting women, persons with disabilities, elderly people, and other marginalized groups. This process helps ensure that risk reduction measures are context-specific, socially acceptable, and technically appropriate.

DRR interventions informed by robust CRA processes have shown stronger community ownership, improved relevance of interventions, and greater sustainability over time. As a result, CRA emerges not only as a diagnostic tool but as a key determinant of effective disaster risk reduction and long-term resilience building.

- Collaboration with local administration enables sustainable, community-led risk reduction

The implementation of the community-based flood-resilient cattle shed highlighted the critical importance of strong collaboration with local administration. The proactive support of local government – particularly through the allocation of suitable land by the Deputy Commissioner’s office – was instrumental in enabling the timely establishment of the facility and ensuring its accessibility to vulnerable households.

This joint effort fostered trust, legitimacy, and shared accountability among community members, local authorities, and implementing partners. By working together from planning to implementation, the initiative strengthened community empowerment and encouraged active local participation in decision-making, management, and maintenance of the facility. The involvement of local administration also enhanced alignment with local development priorities and increased the likelihood of long-term institutional support. The experience demonstrates that when local governments and communities collaborate closely, infrastructure solutions are not only more contextually appropriate but also more sustainable.

- Community ownership and community-led operation & maintenance of DRR solutions are critical for sustainability

The installation of solar-powered submersible water pumps integrated with rainwater harvesting facilities in low-income settlements in Khulna and Rajshahi cities has demonstrated that technological innovation alone cannot guarantee sustainability; strong community ownership and active, community-led operation and maintenance are equally critical.

In Khulna, the system continues to function effectively because community members were meaningfully engaged from the planning stage through implementation and management. Residents formed management committees, defined user roles and responsibilities, and collectively managed routine operation, maintenance, and minor repairs. This participatory approach fostered a strong sense of ownership, accountability, and shared responsibility, which has contributed to the system’s proper upkeep and long-term functionality.

In contrast, the system in Rajshahi is not operating as intended due to limited community ownership and weak engagement in operation and maintenance processes. The availability of alternative free water sources nearby reduced the perceived necessity of the system, resulting in lower user commitment, absence of organized management, and inadequate maintenance.

This experience underscores that community demand, perceived relevance, and shared responsibility are decisive factors in sustaining community-based water solutions. Where communities clearly recognize the benefits and are empowered to manage systems themselves, infrastructure remains functional and resilient. Conversely, when ownership is weak and user commitment is low, sustainability is at risk regardless of the technical quality of the solution.

- Supporting in local government capacity strengthens coordination and sustainability

Experience shows that support in the capacity building of local government institutions, particularly Upazila, Union and Ward Disaster Management Committees, significantly enhances the effectiveness of disaster risk management interventions. Training and technical support enable local authorities to better coordinate preparedness, response, and recovery efforts while ensuring that interventions are aligned with national disaster management policies, frameworks, and standards.

Strengthened local government capacity improves multi-stakeholder coordination, reduces duplication of efforts, and facilitates faster, more organized responses during emergencies. It also promotes institutional ownership of risk reduction initiatives, enabling local administrations to integrate these measures into regular planning, budgeting, and service delivery mechanisms.

This lesson underscores that building the knowledge, skills, and systems of local government is not a parallel activity but a strategic investment that ensures continuity, scalability, and long-term resilience, even after external project support concludes.

- Linking emergency response with recovery and “Build Back Better” principles enhance long-term resilience

Experience demonstrates that emergency response is most effective when strategically connected to early recovery planning and the integration of “Build Back Better” principles. By incorporating resilience-focused measures – such as disaster-resilient infrastructure, safer and more inclusive WASH facilities, and livelihood protection – during the recovery phase, interventions move beyond restoring what was lost to addressing the underlying vulnerabilities that contributed to disaster impacts.

This integrated approach helps ensure that communities do not simply return to pre-disaster conditions but instead recover in ways that strengthen their capacity to withstand future shocks. It promotes safer construction practices, improved service delivery, and diversified livelihoods, while encouraging community participation and ownership of recovery processes.

The lesson underscores that aligning response, recovery, and resilience-building from the outset leads to more sustainable outcomes, reduces the risk of recurring losses, and maximizes the long-term impact of humanitarian investments.

9 Conclusion



From 2021-2025, BRAC DRMP has demonstrated that DRR, preparedness and emergency response are not just interventions, but the most essential pillars of sustainable development. Working in some of Bangladesh's most hazard-prone and hard-to-reach communities, DRMP has supported strengthening local systems, empowered community leadership, and transformed risk awareness into practical action. From resilient infrastructure and inclusive WASH solutions to early warning dissemination, school-based disaster preparedness, and institutional capacity building, the programme has helped communities move from vulnerability toward greater safety, dignity, and confidence in the face of future disasters.

This journey reflects a deliberate shift from reactive relief to proactive resilience-building approach. By centering community knowledge, fostering partnerships with local government institutions, and

prioritizing the needs of most vulnerable groups such as women, children, persons with disabilities, and other marginalised groups, DRMP has reinforced the principle that preparedness is most effective when it is locally owned and inclusive.

The lessons learned during this period underscore the importance of integrated, innovative and evidence-based approaches that connect humanitarian action with long-term development pathways. Yet the evolving climate and disaster landscape reminds us that resilience is not a fixed achievement, but a continuous process. Intensifying hazards, growing vulnerabilities, and resource constraints demand innovation, collaboration, and sustained commitment. Building on the foundations established during this strategic period of BRAC, DRMP will continue to strengthen anticipatory action,

deepen community engagement, and promote scalable resilience models that support safer recovery and adaptive capacity at all levels.

Ultimately, this report stands as a testament to inclusiveness and the collective action of communities who confront disasters with determination and hope. Together with partners, volunteers, and institutions, BRAC remains committed to standing beside those most at risk ensuring that preparedness today becomes protection tomorrow, and that communities are not only able to withstand crises, but are empowered to thrive despite them.

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11. Partners



Advisor

Md Liakath Ali, PhD
Director
Disaster Risk Management Programme
Climate Change Programme &
Urban Development Programme

Review and Edit

Khondoker Golam Tawhid
Programme Head
Disaster Risk Management Programme

Story and Content

Khondoker Golam Tawhid
Shanjida Afrin
Maria Abdullah Tarin

Photography

Disaster Risk Management Programme
BRAC

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BRAC Centre
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Dhaka 1212
Bangladesh

T: +88 02 2222 81265
F: +88 02 2222 63542
E: info@brac.net
W: www.brac.net

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