



THE CHANGE MAKERS

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STORIES OF THE CHANGE MAKERS

This booklet presents a collection of case stories highlighting the experiences of individuals and communities impacted by the flash flood of 2022, and the role played by BRAC in facilitating recovery and building resilience. The stories demonstrate the importance of preparedness and response activities, including awareness-raising, capacity-building, and coordination among different stakeholders, including local governments, NGOs, and community members. Through these stories, we learn about the challenges faced by flood-affected communities, and the various interventions that can be undertaken to support recovery and ensure sustainable development. The case stories also underscore the need for ongoing efforts to build resilience, through providing livelihood opportunities, strengthening infrastructure and services, and promoting community-based approaches. Overall, these stories offer insights into the complex realities of flood recovery and resilience-building, and provide valuable lessons for practitioners, policymakers, and communities seeking to build a more resilient future.

A portrait of a young woman with a warm smile, wearing a vibrant red headscarf and a red top. She is standing in a lush green field with small pink flowers. In the background, there are trees and a clear sky. The text 'CASH FOR LIVELIHOOD' is overlaid on the left side of the image.

CASH FOR LIVELIHOOD

Shamima's Story of Determination and Resilience

Shamima Akter is a 23-year-old woman residing in the village of Sreedharpur Natun Hati in Badaghat Dakkhin Union of Bishwamvarpur Upzaila in Sunamganj, Bangladesh. She is a mother of two young children, and her husband works as a day laborer. In 2022, a devastating flood swept through Sunamganj. Shamima, who was ten months pregnant then, had to evacuate with her husband and daughter to her parent's home, which was eventually submerged. The family was forced to seek refuge on a boat for 21 days until the floodwaters receded when Shamima gave birth to a baby boy. Upon returning to their home, they discovered that everything they had was lost to the flood, and they were left homeless. Shamima's family depended on the 15 chickens they had lost, a significant part of their income. They had to rely on dry food that was distributed as relief aid to survive. Despite the immense hardship that Shamima and her family endured, she remained determined to provide a better life for her loved ones. She was selected by BRAC for their "Cash for Livelihood Program" under the RESPECT Project, which would provide her with the necessary funds to start a small business. Initially,

she planned to purchase a goat with the BDT 10,000 she would receive from the program. However, after giving it some thought, she decided there were more efficient ways to utilize the money.

Shamima realized that she needed to find additional sources of income as her husband's earnings were insufficient to support the family. She discussed the matter with her husband, and they decided to purchase two types of livestock to ensure a steady source of income. With the first installment of the cash, she purchased a goat and a two-month-old goat kid, spending BDT 7000. With the remaining BDT 3000, she bought three hens with 15 chicks. Shamima plans to sell the mature goat to earn money, while chickens will provide her with a constant supply of eggs and the potential for breeding more chickens. By starting a livestock business, she hopes to contribute to her family's income and assist her husband while securing her children's future. With this newfound source of income, she holds a positive outlook on improving the quality of life for her family.



“

I will never forget the hardship of those days. With cash support, my family and I are now building a better future for our kids.

- Shamima Akter

”

CASH FOR LIVELIHOOD



Overcoming Adversity with the Cash for Livelihood Support

Hasina Begum (43) is a widow with two sons and a daughter, residing in Sreedharpur Gucchogram of Dakhsin Badhaghat union of Bishwamvarpur Upazila Sunamganj district. Her elder son and younger daughter are still studying, while her other son drives an auto-rickshaw in the village and works in a shop to support the family's livelihood. However, more than his income is needed to sustain their daily needs. The 2022 flood left their village submerged, forcing the family to evacuate to a nearby High School used as a shelter for 12 days. Unfortunately, they were unable to take anything with them. Upon their return, Hasina Begum discovered that her livestock had been washed away, and their home was partially damaged. Her son could not drive the auto-rickshaw, as the roads were submerged in flood water for an extended period.

Fortunately, Hasina Begum was selected by BRAC for the "Cash for Livelihood Program"

under the RESPECT Project. The program chose her as a beneficiary due to her low family income and loss of livestock during the flood. She decided to purchase a pregnant sheep with a lamb for BDT 10,500, as sheep are more resistant to floods than goats, cows, hens, ducks, etc. She repaid the remaining amount after receiving a second installment of BDT 3,000 and selling some wood. With three sheep now, Hasina Begum is exploring other livelihood options to ensure an easier life.

As the monsoon season approaches, Hasina Begum plans to sell one of her sheep and buy a boat for her sons to operate during the floods. This decision will ensure that her family can earn a living during the monsoon season, even when the roads are submerged. Hasina Begum has effectively utilized the funds from the program and is actively managing multiple livelihood options to improve her family's financial stability.



“

I preferred to buy sheep instead of goats as they are more water-resistant. I see the sheep herd is growing. I feel more confident in myself. Thanks, BRAC, for where I'm now.

- Hasina Begum

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REBUILD HOUSES



Sujna Akter's Journey to Safe and Secure Shelter with Ensured Dignity

Sujna Akter (28), a mother of two sons has been living in Noarai union of Chhatak upazila in Sunamganj district. During the devastating flood of 2022, water rose to 8 feet and Sujna with her family evacuated to their neighbor's house. After 9 days when they returned home, they found their house damaged and other belongings to be washed away by the flood water. Her family had to depend on their neighbors for food.

However, they faced many hardships, as the damaged roof allowed rainwater to enter the house, and they struggled to keep warm during winter. Thankfully, Sujna received assistance from BRAC

under the RESPECT Project. The program gave her 22 prices of tin, six pillars, 1kg wire, some nut bolts, and BDT 6000 in cash to repair her house. With this shelter assistance, Sujna rebuilt her home and raised the plinth to prevent future floods.

Sujna is grateful for the project's support and believes her children will have a healthier living environment in their new home. Despite facing adversity, Sujna's resilience and determination allowed her to rebuild her life and provide her family with a safe and secure home.



“

.....I embraced my fate and was not seen overcoming the challenge of living in a shattered house. The project brought me scope, and here I'm now, sleeping without fear of getting wet by rainwater.

- Sujna Akter

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**REBUILD
HOUSES**



A Community Comes Together to Help a Widow in Sunamganj

Modhumala (23) was struggling to make ends meet after the death of her husband, living in a dilapidated house with her mother and daughter in Kumardani village of Islampur Union in Chhatak Upazila, Sunamganj district. When heavy rainfall-induced landslides damaged her house during the 2022 flood, she had no support and no male members in her family to provide security. They were forced to seek shelter in their neighbor's house, unable to feel safe in their home.

Fortunately, BRAC initiated a recovery project in the flood-affected region with support from UK-Aid, specifically targeting the extremely poor, widows, and people with disabilities. Modhumala was selected as a beneficiary to receive shelter repair support.

After verification of her situation, BRAC provided her with 22 tins, six pillars, and other necessary construction materials. With the support of her neighbors, she was able to repair her house using the materials she received from BRAC as well as her own.

Thanks to the community's effort and support, Modhumala now has a safe and secure roof over their heads, providing peace of mind and security for her and her family. She says, "We can now live here without fear and focus on building a better future." This project not only restored Modhumala's home but also helped strengthen the sense of community and resilience in the region.



“

Thanks to BRAC and my community for supporting me to re-construct my hut. Now the house is stronger and safe to live in.

- Modhumala

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REPAIR WATER SOURCES



Afia Begum and BRAC Work Together to Secure Safe Drinking Water for the Kumardani Village

When the destructive flood struck Sunamganj in 2022, Afia Begum and her family were forced to evacuate from their residence in Kumardani village of Islampur Union in Chhatak upazila. Like many other families, they took shelter in their neighbor's home until the floodwaters receded.

Upon their return, Afia realized that the community's tube well, which provided safe drinking water to at least 15 households, had been completely inundated during the flood. Fortunately, Afia was selected as a beneficiary for the "Repairing/rehabilitation tube wells with raised platform"-an intervention under BRAC's RESPECT Project.

The project aimed to repair or rebuild damaged tube wells and provide a source of safe drinking water for the community during floods. Afia's community

relies heavily on its tube well for safe drinking water, as there is no nearby pond. However, the tube well was vulnerable to severe flooding.

With the help of BRAC, the platform of the community's tube well was raised to prevent it from being inundated during future floods. This intervention provided access to safe drinking water for the community and also ensured the privacy of Afia's family.

Afia is grateful for the project's intervention and believes it has restored her dignity in the community. She can now provide safe water services to her community even during floods. The project's success demonstrates the power of community unity in securing basic needs such as access to safe drinking water.



“

More than 15 families use the TW; all had to struggle for safe drinking water during the flood. After the rehabilitation work from the project, the TW is now high enough and will be able to feed the whole village even during the flood.

- Afia Begum

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A close-up photograph of a woman with a joyful expression, showing her teeth. She is wearing a vibrant green long-sleeved shirt and a blue headscarf with a red and yellow floral pattern. She is positioned in a field of green plants, with some reddish-brown foliage in the foreground. The text 'AGRICULTURE INPUTS' is overlaid on the left side of the image.

AGRICULTURE INPUTS

Asiya Begum Finds a Way of Earning and Food Security Through RESPECT Project

Asiya Begum, a 55-year-old woman from a flood-prone region in Bangladesh, had been struggling to make ends meet for years, even with the help of her five sons and four daughters. Her only breadwinner, her husband, could not work due to age. Asiya Begum and her family were financially devastated when the severe flood hit the region. They lost 8 mounds of paddy and 22 hens and had to rely on government food aid to survive.

However, things started to turn around when Asiya Begum was selected as a beneficiary of the RESPECT Project, a BRAC initiative aimed at providing agricultural inputs for improving livelihoods and increasing food intake and nutritional needs. Asiya Begum received different vegetable seeds, fertilizers, a spraying machine, and other tools used for agriculture.

With the support of her husband, she began growing vegetables on her land and selling them in the market. She earned BDT 150 by selling red spinach and is now empowered and has gained a small-scale financial freedom. Her family also gets nutrition from the vegetables grown in their own field.

Asiya Begum has also learned about the sack method of growing vegetables, which will save her during flood events. She believes that her condition will continue to improve, and she can lead her life with financial freedom. With the support of her community and BRAC, Asiya Begum is overcoming the challenges she faced and finding a path to a better life.



“

It was very eye-soothing to see the vegetables grow which I sowed. I sold some of it and earned 150 take as well. Though this is a small amount, I see this as my contribution to my family now.

- Asiya Begum

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AGRICULTURE INPUTS

Amirun Begum's Journey to Self-Reliance

Amirun Begum (55) was the 5th of her parents' 14 children and grew up in a family that lived hand-to-mouth. She had hoped for a better life after marriage but found herself struggling to make ends meet with her husband and four children in Betura village of Noarai Union, Chhatak Upazila, Sunamganj district for the last 44 years. They relied on working in other people's fields and growing limited vegetables on their small premises, which provided them with an uncertain and meager income. Despite their hard work, they had no savings and were financially destroyed devastated during the flood in 2022, as they couldn't harvest the crops they had sowed.

Fortunately, Amirun was selected by BRAC to receive agricultural inputs under the RESPECT Project after a proper selection process of beneficiaries. She received a package of five types of vegetable seeds and other tools, along with counseling on various flood-resistant agricultural

methods. As a result, she has become a homestead gardener and cultivates different types of vegetables in her small yard. While she had grown some vegetables before, she needed more knowledge to grow as much as she does now. With the benefits from the BRAC RESPECT Project, Amirun grows enough to meet her family's needs and sells vegetables in the local market. She has already earned BDT 200 by selling leafy vegetables and is planning to grow hanging vegetables like bamboo cane and gourds, which can resist floods during disasters.

Amirun believes that the quality of life of her family has improved, and she has become more self-reliant. The RESPECT Project has given her better knowledge and resources to grow more vegetables and with stand the hardships of natural disasters.



“

Now I know modern techniques for better yield, I know how to select the best seeds and improved cultivation techniques. Thanks to BRAC for their effort, I now know the government's office of agriculture to get more support.

- Amirun Begum

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AWARENESS SESSIONS



Babli's Community is now more Prepared Than Before

The RESPECT Project implemented by BRAC focuses on improving the livelihoods of the selected beneficiaries and aims to raise awareness among the communities on safeguarding, climate change, disaster preparedness, and environmental sustainability. In total, 240 community-based sessions were organized to increase community knowledge and promote better preparedness.

Babli Begum, a 24-year-old participant from Kumardani village in Chhatak Upazila of Sunamganj District, learned about the basics of environment, climate change, resilience, capacity building, and dealing with disasters through the BRAC awareness session. The session also emphasized the importance of preparedness activities prior to disasters.

Babli shared that BRAC taught them valuable lessons such as keeping important documents safely in plastic bags, having candles and

matches ready, repairing roads, and teaching swimming to children, which can all help in surviving during floods. Thanks to the awareness sessions, participants like Babli are now equipped with the necessary knowledge to be self-resilient and better prepared before any disaster. Babli believes these preparedness activities are crucial for dealing with disasters, and the participants know they cannot tackle difficulties alone. They must stick together and help each other to strengthen the capacity of their community.

The RESPECT Project's focus on awareness-raising and preparedness activities can go a long way in promoting a better-prepared community to face the challenges of climate change and disasters. Babli and other participants are grateful to be a part of the program and gain new knowledge that can help them be better prepared for any future disasters.



“

In the face of adversity, knowledge becomes our strongest shield. Thanks to the RESPECT Project, we have learned to safeguard our community, prepare for disasters, and stand united in the face of challenges.

- Babli Begum

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A man with dark hair, wearing a pink shirt with a repeating geometric pattern, is seated at a wooden desk. He is holding a yellow pen and writing in a white spiral-bound notebook. His eyes are closed, and he has a focused expression. Behind him is a wooden chair with a striped orange and yellow backrest, and a wooden door with vertical bars. The scene is indoors, likely an office or study.

Advocate Shafi Alam Sohel

Chairman, Islampur Union

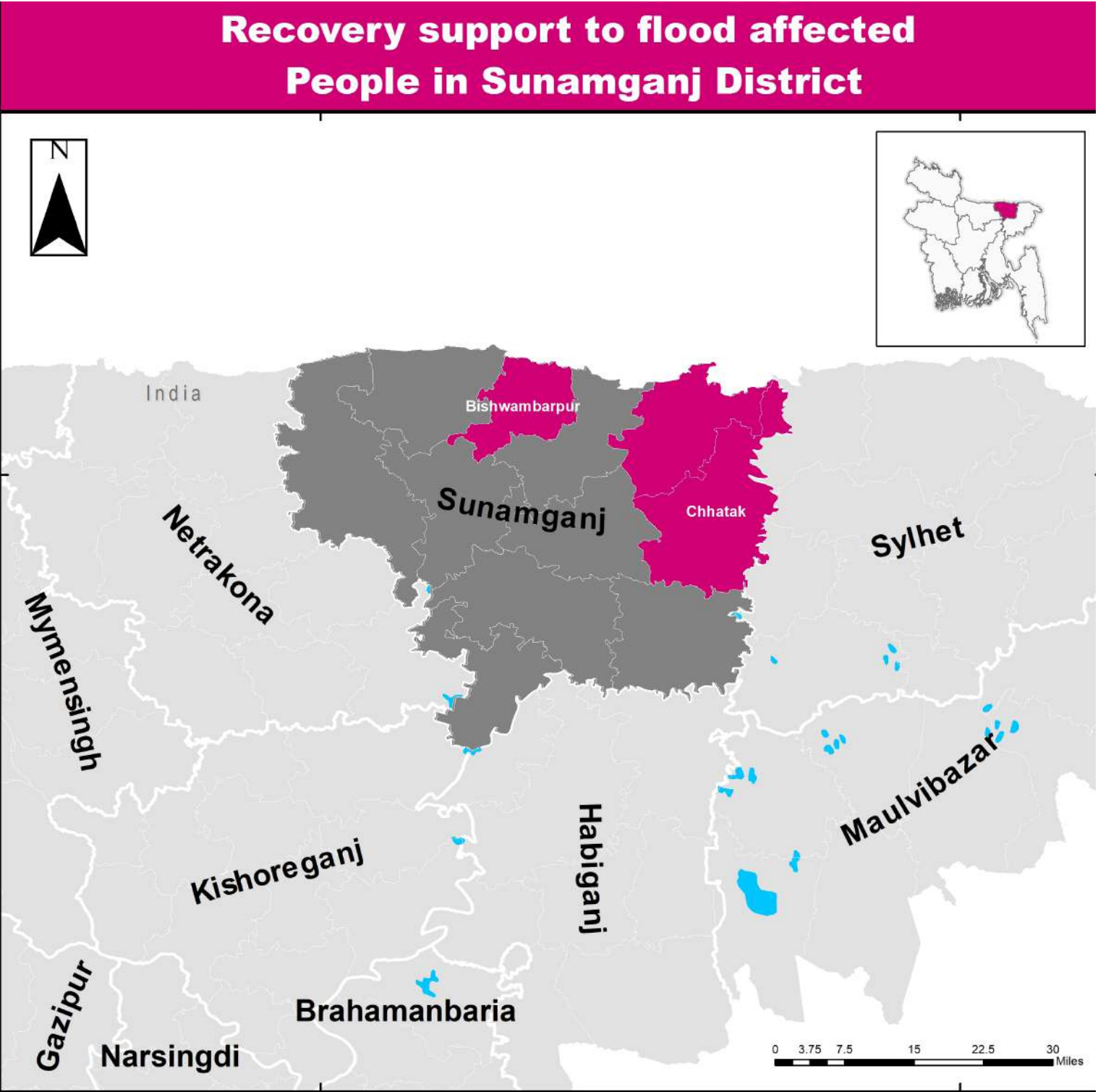
BRAC and Local Government’s Joint Effort to Support Flood-Affected Communities

Advocate Shafi Alam Sohel, the chairman of Islampur Union in Chhatak Upazila, Sunamganj District, described the devastating flood of 2022 as the worst in a century. He reported that almost 95% of houses were submerged during the flood, and out of 33 villages in Islampur Union, only two villages on the hills were safe from the flash flood. The flood destroyed around 5000 houses, and over 2000 houses were completely washed away in the low-lying haor area, causing the water and sanitation system to collapse throughout the region. The flood also affected the economic condition of the people as all goods in the marketplaces were destroyed and washed away.

During this crisis period, BRAC implemented the recovery project with support from UK Aid, rebuilding and repairing 35 houses, supporting 477 households through a cash-for-livelihood program,

providing 326 households with agricultural inputs, and raising the platforms of ten tube wells. He expressed gratitude on behalf of Islampur union inhabitants towards BRAC for implementing the recovery project in Islampur Union and helping to strengthen their capacity.

However, he requested for additional support in the shelter sector, agricultural sector, livelihood sector and WASH sector. He also suggested that training programs for affected women on handicrafts and providing them with sewing machines could make them self-employed. Lastly, he appealed to BRAC and other donor agencies to develop a rehabilitation program to strengthen the community’s capacity to deal with disasters, ensure sustainable development, and create self-employment opportunities.



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