

## Introduction

Bangladesh has faced growing economic and social pressure in recent years. Slower economic growth and repeated shocks have pushed around 2.75 million people back into poverty since 2022 (IFPRI, 2023). GDP growth dropped sharply from 8.2% in FY2019 to 3.4% in FY2020, affecting jobs and incomes, especially in the informal sector (World Bank, 2024).



Youth unemployment reached 16% in 2023, the highest in 30 years, while many workers remain under-employed (PPRC, 2025). Nearly 70% of youth, particularly in rural areas, still lack access to technical and vocational training.

Poverty remains concentrated in climate- and geography-vulnerable areas, including flood-prone northern districts, cyclone-affected coastal regions, drought-hit Barind areas, and the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Many of Bangladesh's historically poorest districts such as Kurigram, Sunamganj, Bandarban, and Barguna still experience persistently higher poverty rates, lower literacy, and weaker infrastructure than national averages.

As an integral part of BRAC Poverty Alleviation Cluster, Integrated Development Programme (IDP) aims at building resilience of the communities constrained by geographical, social, and climate-induced barriers by deepening the delivery of essential services, promoting livelihood opportunities, and enhancing their risk management capacities. Multidimensional services are delivered through the formation of women-led community-based platform called Village Development Organisation (VDO). IDP connects the low-income and isolated communities with critical services via four channels: direct service delivery, synergies with various BRAC programmes, linkages with government schemes/services, and partnerships with the private sector and NGOs.

IDP's operational architecture is structured around three pillars: Survive, Grow, and Sustain, supporting the poor and marginalised households to graduate out of poverty with resilience. **Survive** expands the access to essential services and building agency among the target groups with particular focus on women. **Grow** will enhance sustainable income through climate-adaptive livelihoods, skills, entrepreneurship, financial access and stronger market connections. And **sustain** will enable households to withstand shocks, protect development gains, and strengthen community resilience through climate information services.

## Human Resource



**527**  
Staffs



**386**  
Shastho  
Kormi (SK)



**244**  
Community-  
based Teachers

## Programme Highlights (July-December 2025)



**3,123** women enrolled as members of **199** new Village Development Organisations (VDOs)



**1,44,195** people from communities have access to health services, including telemedicine



**6,008** students enrolled in **244** pre-primary and bridge schools



**1,997** people from communities have adopted safely managed sanitation practices



**5,660** UPG participants enrolled in cohort 2025



**3,117** people from communities benefit from social safety nets schemes



**2,592** farmers are secured through crop and livestock insurance coverage in collaboration with BRAC Microfinance



**45,720** households are practicing climate resilient homestead gardening



**224** child marriages prevented by VDO members



**1,487** VAWG survivors accessed counseling support including alternative dispute resolution



**700** skills learners enrolled and preparing to join informal job market

## Highlights of Programme Activities 2025

### Consultation to Action: **Analysing VDO Insights for Strategic Planning**



Throughout April, May and June 2025, IDP conducted extensive consultations with 231 Village Development Organisations (VDOs) across five zones. The primary purpose of this exercise was to deeply analyse VDO functionality, identify emerging community challenges, assess critical service gaps, and gather local priorities directly from VDO members. The valuable insights generated from these consultations will be used to strengthen annual planning and ensure that community-led decision-making remains central to all IDP operations. Following the consultations, the collected data was analysed in a subsequent workshop held in Pabna in July 2025.

### Cultivating Resilience: **Revamp Agriculture and Food Security**



IDP has revamped its Agriculture and Food Security component to improve capacity development. This involves enhancing technical content for both homestead and commercial agriculture, facilitating access to financial services, and providing available input support. At the household level, this incorporates establishing nutrition sensitive home-based food production, comprising horticulture, small livestock, pond aquaculture (where applicable), and nutritional awareness. For income generation, the program supports the establishment of agriculture enterprises (including horticulture, cereal, aquaculture, poultry, and livestock) for selected participants.

## Climate Action Takes Root: **ICCP Sector Groups Mobilise in Coastal and Barind**



The roll-out of Integrated Climate Change Programme (ICCP) has accelerated following surveys conducted in VDOs (in selected Upazilas) across the Coastal and Barind regions to identify potential members for Sector Groups. This effort led to the formation and profiling of dedicated Crops and Fisheries sector groups in both regions. Crucially, profiling each Sector Group ensures that IDP can contextualize participants' current crop practices and tailor assistance to help them transition to high-yield, climate-adaptive practices. 37 sector group is formed, and 740 participants were successfully linked with microfinance services as VO member for either savings or loans. With these foundations in place, the groups begin their journey toward adopting climate-adaptive agricultural livelihoods and building climate resilience.

## Global Stage, Local Solutions: **Showcasing Ground-Up Climate Action at FIF**



The Frugal Innovation Forum (FIF) 2025, themed “Climate Adaptation in Agriculture, Food Security and Livelihoods,” brought together over 200 participants, including practitioners, policymakers, innovators, and NGOs from across the Global South. The Poverty Alleviation Cluster, with strong participation from IDP, showcased the practices on climate-adaptive agriculture, and “Krishi bon”, an income generating forest at CHT, effectively reaffirming the critical importance of community-led innovation in responding to increasing climate vulnerabilities.

## Developing Leaders: **Progga Leadership Training**



In collaboration with BRAC's Learning & Leadership Development (LLD) Unit, IDP introduced Progga, a new leadership training designed to prepare Upazila Managers to grow into future leaders. Three phases of the Progga Leadership Training for Area Managers have been completed so far, with the final phase scheduled for the next quarter. This initiative strengthens IDP's leadership pipeline by nurturing talent directly from field operations. Through this investment in capacity development, IDP is supporting its teams to grow, lead, and reach their full potential.

## From Plot to Plate: **Training on Home based Nutrition-Sensitive Food Production**



In September 2025, IDP conducted 13 batches of training, equipping 388 Field Operations Team members (including POs, AMs, RMs, and PMs) with skills in "Home-based Nutrition-sensitive Climate-adaptive Food Production. The goal was to build capacity among the field staff to train over 80,000 VDO women members. This initiative focuses on context-specific techniques (horticulture, poultry, aquaculture, and nutrition awareness) to enhance food and nutrition security for remote, vulnerable households. Following this, Programme Organisers (POs) will facilitate households to plant three fruit and three vegetable plants, and promote fish cultivation in small household ponds.

## Regional Reflections: **Creative Reflections on Community Transformation of 2024**



This year in July 2025, at IDP convention meeting, all five zones came together to reflect on the past fiscal year, but not through data, only with the lens of community. Each zone showcased the changes working with community, from crafts to model to community products, artwork and cultural performance. Every display told a story of transformation. Teams across all regions conducted reflective sessions on their 2024 work in July 2025, revisiting how they engaged with communities, the strategies that worked, challenges faced, and innovations introduced. They presented it creatively in region wise to demonstrate their works in their regions.

## Fostering Inclusion: **Disability Inclusion Training Expansion**



In line with IDP's mandate to ensure inclusive access to essential services, disability inclusion training was significantly expanded to all regions, except for the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), during this period. These sessions were vital in strengthening the frontline staff's understanding of disability rights, improving communication techniques, and instilling inclusive operational practices, ensuring that all field interventions are more accessible and responsive to the needs of persons with disabilities.

## Knowledge sharing with IRRI: **Improving Water Resource Management**



IDP organised joint learning session with the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in October 2025. During the session, IRRI presented key research findings on water resource management across two major climate hotspots. The discussion highlighted the potential of the Alternative Wetting and Drying (AWD) technique to increase crop production in the Barind Region, while also underscoring the benefits of improved drainage systems in the Coastal Region to reduce salinity and waterlogging. Representatives from various BRAC programmes (Seed & Agro Enterprise, Microfinance, Climate Change, WASH, UPG, ICCP, and IDP) enriched the discussion. BRAC and IRRI are exploring collaborative opportunities to introduce improved irrigation and climate-smart farming practices to vulnerable communities.

## New partnership: **MoU signing between BASE and IDP**



On 1st December 2025, BRAC Seed & Agro Enterprise (BSAE) and Integrated Development Programme (IDP) signed an MoU to support smallholder farmers. The partnership aims to help farmers cultivate BRAC Dhaan 2, strengthen market linkages with BSAE, and ensure fair pricing through joint price committees. This collaboration aims to create shared benefits for IDP farming communities and expand further working opportunities with BSAE and Aarong origin.

## Securing Harvest: **BRAC Dhan-2 Training in Ajmiriganj, Habiganj**



In partnership with BRAC Seed and Agro, IDP supported the rollout of BRAC Dhan-2 training in Ajmiriganj, Habiganj. The initiative aims to introduce improved rice varieties suitable for haor zones, enhancing productivity for smallholder farmers in the haor region.

## Beyond Tobacco: **Introducing Alternative Crops for Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Farmers**



IDP has started an initiative to influence farmers to shift from tobacco cultivation by promoting viable alternative crops by piloting alternative crops for tobacco farmers in Chittagong hill tracts. Tobacco cultivation is known to cause significant environmental damage in the hills, primarily through the excessive cutting down of trees. To mitigate this destructive practice and introduce a sustainable livelihood, the program is influencing tobacco farmers to pilot the production of potato as an alternative crop. Under this initiative, BRAC Seed will provide the necessary seed and technical capacity, ensuring farmers have the support needed to successfully transition to this more sustainable option.

## Bridging Research to Reality: **Collaborating Learning with LILA**



The Learning and Innovation Laboratory (LILa) is a collaborative pilot initiative between BRAC's Poverty Alleviation Cluster and the BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD). The initiative is designed as a space for research experimentation, iterative learning, and real-time evidence generation, with the goal of informing and improving programming. LILa will be piloted in six branches of the Satkhira district, selected to reflect diverse community contexts for research and experimentation. These branches have been strategically selected to test innovative approaches in diverse contexts to strengthen community resilience.

## Roadmap and Strategy: **Annual planning meeting**



The annual IDP planning meeting took place in November for strategy review and the future work plan. Key discussions were held to chalk out detailed plans for Agriculture and Food Security, advance the program's digitisation strategy, deliberate on a few new strategic initiatives, and review ongoing livelihood and communication efforts. The Programme will move forward with concentrated digitisation for data-informed decision-making. The meeting provided major decisions for IDP's operations in the coming year.

## BIG BET: A Multi-Country Initiative for Climate-Resilient Smallholder Farmers



The BIG BET initiative is a multi-country effort focused on building climate resilience among smallholder farmers in Uganda, Tanzania, Liberia and Bangladesh. The initiative aims to support 2 million smallholder farmers globally to become climate-resilient, with a target of reaching 1.2 million farmers in Bangladesh. As part of designing the BIG BET programme for Bangladesh, two design workshops were held in July and November, with active participation from the ICCP team to co-create the approach and plan for rollout in climate-vulnerable areas. The initiative brings together a comprehensive smallholder farmer development package led by ICCP, CCP, Microfinance (MF), Gender Justice & Diversity (GJD), and BRAC Seed.

## Innovation Exhibition: The Power of Contextual Nudge



This year in December, with collaboration of Social Innovation Lab (SIL), IDP under poverty alleviation cluster, has participated with process innovation at stall and a firechat event "The power of contextual nudge" where frontliners have shared the challenges, solution through nudges, their experience and stories from the ground. They disclosed how did local "nudges" work to tackle low health seeking behaviour in the last mile, how contextual challenges responded with seasonal loans or how they work against water scarcity in CHT.

## A Story about Resilience from Coastal belt: Promila Mistri Stands with Dignity and Inclusion



***I am proud that I could make my husband enabled. Making assets for his income, watching him go to work every day and he has a lot of people to talk now and no longer isolated - this makes him part of society again.***



I studied only till class three. After that, I had to help my mother with household chores. At 13, I was married. Life changed after marriage, but poverty never left. Before turning 18, I gave birth to my first and only child - a daughter. In poor households like ours, where even getting a three-time meal is hard, girls are called a burden. But I decided my daughter would study. She would stand on her own feet. She would never have to hear such things. Today, my daughter Papia is studying English honours at Boyra Mohila College in Khulna.

Then, I came to know about some women in my village who gathered to discuss problems with BRAC bhai. I joined the Village Development Organisation. Community members identified my family as one of the most vulnerable. Under the ultra-poor programme, I received cows, chickens, and ducks. That was the first time I felt a little light of hope. I reared them carefully. I sold milk, eggs, and calves, and I saved whatever I could. Then I reinvested in more livestock.

But while I was working outside, my husband was always alone at home. He felt useless, cut off from everyone. That hurt me the most. I decided to make him feel included again. With my savings, I bought him an electric van. Now, he goes out, earns some money, meets people, and has his own social circle. I feel proud that he is no longer isolated.



Our income has diversified, and with that, I can support my daughter's studies. Many times, I have fallen back into poverty maybe due to health shock, but each time, I have managed to stand up again. Today, I feel resilient. Whatever crisis comes, I know I can face it.

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