

# Together We March

Leveraging local funds through strategic alliances for disaster risk reduction



## 6th DIPECHO Action Plan



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## Background

Bangladesh has a long history of natural hazards and is rated as the nation most at risk from extreme weather and geophysical events - study ranking 229 countries on their vulnerability to natural hazards (NDRI 2010-2011). In different disasters over the past 20 years, a total of 135 million people have been affected, out of which 16,513 were life casualties. The total amount of resulting damage in terms of economy was 11.7 million USD (EM-DAT). Poverty reduction strategies and initiatives in Bangladesh are hampered every time with these disasters, and government and the development agencies are always forced to alter allocation of development funding to respond to the natural hazards. While we cannot cut off natural hazards, we can minimize risk factors by integrating risk reduction strategies into all future endeavours. Importance of mainstreaming is also recognized by the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA 2005-2015) adopted at the WCDR, where integration of disaster risk reduction in the development programmes is a priority.

Islamic Relief Worldwide (under NARRI consortium) with support of European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO) is currently implementing the project titled 'A Disaster Resilient Future: Mobilising Communities and Institutions for Effective Risk Reduction' in Bangladesh under 6th DIPECHO Action Plan for South Asia. The principle objective of the project is to support and complement strategies that enable local communities to better prepare for, mitigate and respond adequately to natural hazards by enhancing their capacities to cope and respond, thereby increasing their resilience and reducing vulnerability. The rural component of the project is implemented in 25 villages of Gaibanda district with SKS being the local implementing partner. The ultimate aim of this project is to ensure a culture of safety and resilience leading to sustainable development in Bangladesh.

Disaster risk reduction is a cross sectorial issue, and is an everyday concern for everybody. While the government is mandated with the task, it cannot do such a massive task unaided. This requires concerted effort of integrating it into development activities. It requires consensus, active participation and investment from policy makers, duty bearers, donors, private sector and general public across all levels. The project is effectively designed to promote collective approach to disaster risk reduction and adaptation by adopting community risk assessment process which feeds into the annual development plans of the targeted unions in Gaibanda. The project promotes optimal use of local physical, social and financial resources to implement part of the risk reduction plans. Efforts are also made to actively engage with mandated organisations and other partners to leverage resources to implement and sustain disaster risk reduction and adaptation interventions around the year.



This document is an attempt to describe the processes and learning in mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction and adaptation adopted by the three Union Disaster Management Committees supported under the programme. It also provides information on the amount of financial resources being leveraged to implement the risk reduction action plans developed under the project.

## Vulnerability context of Gaibandha

Gaibandha is located in northern part of Bangladesh. Disasters and the impacts of climatic shocks expose underlying vulnerability and lack of capacity in this district. Gaibandha has a total land area of 2179.27 square kilometres. Brahmaputra, Teesta, and Jamuna rivers confluence at this point, make the location prone to floods and river erosion. About 30% land area of this district is the Char (riverine islands) land that formed in these three rivers due to sediment accretions due to eddy currents. The residents of chars cannot afford food three times a day, and access to basic health care, employment and education facilities are major challenges for them.



## Shifting the power of ownership

Union Disaster Management Committees (UDMC) are mandated by the current Standing Orders on Disasters issued by the Government of Bangladesh, are the key strategic institutions to deliver risk reduction and adaptation programmes at the local level. It is the lowest tier with direct fund allocation from Annual Development Plan (ADP). The UDMCs are playing fundamental role in planning, implementation, supervision and monitoring of the project interventions and helping to increase community involvement and ownership.



The Community Risk Assessment (CRA) process endorsed by the Disaster Management and Relief Division (DMRD) of Bangladesh was the backbone of the project design. The whole process was facilitated and led by UDMCs of all the targeted unions of Gaibandha District. The emphasis was on building in-house and local capacities of the Union Disaster Management Committees and selected community agents from the village development committees. All the major local stakeholders were involved which also proved to be a strategic move towards

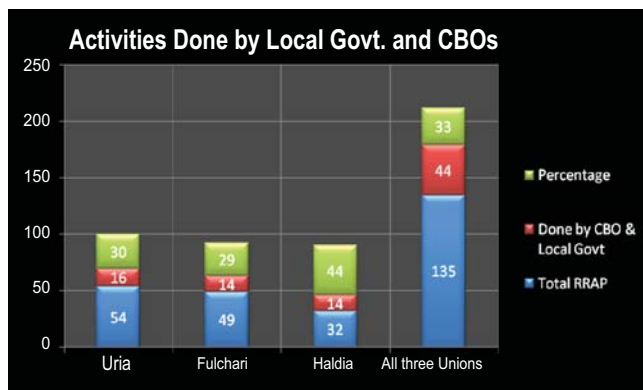


increasing ownership, willingness for volunteerism – leading to resilience. They were also able to realize the risk factors which contribute negatively to all the development efforts.

The resilience plans prepared as outputs of the process are completely designed and owned by the UDMCs, and are recognised for integration into next year’s development plan. Linkages were developed with various stakeholders to establish multiple sources of funding for implementation of risk reduction activities. As a result, local authorities and communities were able to execute some exemplary measures in a very short time through mobilising available physical, social and financial resources.

### Key milestones achieved in Gaibandha

Three Risk Reduction Action Plans (RRAPs) each in the working unions of Gaibandha have identified a total of 135 priority actions for immediate implementation. These identified activities are ideally to be carried out by the local government and community members. The process would be facilitated and documented by IRW and SKS for later extrapolation and to use them as examples for further implementation and inspiration for the communities in other areas-at-risk and also for the government to build them into their own action plans and budgets.



Under the current time frame of the project, it has been planned that 25% of the identified activities in the RRAPs will be implemented by the local government bodies and the CBOs. The progress so far shows that among the 135 identified activities, 44 have already been executed by the local government bodies and CBOs. It means that these two agents of development have been able to accomplish 33 per cent of the activities.

If we take a look at the detailed union-wise scenario, we can see that in the Fulchari Union, among the 54 identified activities 16 have been done by the local government bodies and the CBOs, which means that they have been able to achieve 30 per cent of their identified activities in their RRAP. In the same way, we can see that in the Uria Union and Haldia Union 29 per cent and 44 per cent activities respectively have been implemented so far from the identified activities in their two RRAPs by the CBOs and local government bodies. Detail can be seen in the chart below:

### Contribution of CBOs and Local Government in rrap Implementation

Union	Name of Activity	Total Expenditure	Govt./community Contribution	Status
Uria	Road (18 KM) (5 roads)	64,08,000	100% by Govt.	Ongoing
	Road construction (0.75 KM)	7,20,000	100% by Govt.	Done
	Tube well (17)	85,000	100% by Govt.	Done
	40 days action plan	8,00,000	100% by Govt.	Done
	Seed distribution	20,400	100% by Govt.	Done
	Bamboo piling for river bank protection (0.5 KM)	3,00,000	100% by CBO	Done
	Saline and medicine distribution	1,00,000	100% by Govt.	Done
	Latrine (10)	7,000	100% by Govt.	Done
	Allowance to the pregnant women	8,750	100% by Govt.	Ongoing
	Arsenic test (32)	3200	100% by Govt.	Done
	Blanket distribution (320)	64,000	100% by Govt.	Done
	HH repairing (110)	1,65,000	100% by CBO	Done
	Plinth raising (20)	2,00,000	100% by CBO	Done
	Tree plantation (300)	1500	100% by CBO	Done
<b>Sub Total:</b>		<b>88,82,850</b>		
Haldia	Flood shelter (03)	70,48,000	100% by Govt.	90% Done
	Road (2 KM)	8,64,000	100% by Govt.	Done
	Tube well (18)	90,000	100% by Govt.	Done
	40 days work (237)	41,475	100% by Govt.	Done
	Boat support (1)	2,88,000	100% by Govt.	Done
	Blanket distribution (200)	40,000	100% by Govt.	Done
	Health camp (1)	800	100% by CBO	Done
	Vaccination camp (1)	600	100% by CBO	Done

	Plinth raising (14)	1,68,000	100% by CBO	Done
	HH repairing (22)	2300	100% by CBO	Done
	Tree plantation (160)	800	100% by CBO	Done
	<b>Sub Total:</b>	<b>85,39,975</b>		
	Road repairing (5 KM)	7,20,000	100% by Govt.	Done
	40 days action plan (108)	7,56,000	100% by Govt.	Done
	Pregnancy allowance (28)	29,400	100% by Govt.	Ongoing
	Plinth raising (5)	60,000	100% by CBO	Done
	Tube well (18)	90,000	100% by Govt.	Done
	HH repairing (48)	96,000	100% by CBO	Done
Fulchari	Seed distribution and training with fertilizer (90)	21,600	100% by Govt.	Done
	Training on agriculture sweet potato and taro (80 person)	32,000	100% by Govt.	Done
	Vaccination camp covered 2000 cows	1,000	100% by CBO	Done
	<b>Sub Total:</b>	<b>18,06,000</b>		
	<b>Grand Total:</b>		<b>1,92,28,825</b>	

## A glow of inspiration for all

In these three unions, Islamic Relief Worldwide, in collaboration with SKS Foundation, is implementing some small scale mitigation activities among which plinth raising is the main intervention. It has been observed that, seeing the plinth heights being raised for some people under the programme, some other people have got inspired and they themselves have started doing so with their own fund. Till now, 39 plinth raising Initiates have been completed by the people themselves in the three working unions. Though these initiatives have not been formally documented yet, it can surely be said that



these have a tremendous impact of the lives of the people and they are proactively taking many measures to reduce disaster risks but these are still undocumented.

Bamboo railing is one of the noticeable works done by the community people at Gaibandha. They have already finished half a kilometre and they have planned to extend it up to 2 kilometres before monsoon comes. So, according to the current cost, the projected cost will be 1.2 million taka. This work can be seen as an example of initiative taken by the community people.

Like these, there are a number of activities taken forward by the community especially for the household level preparedness. At the same time, local government bodies have also been interested and prompt in doing more and more work in the project area of IRW, which in a broader scale, have brought some opportunities for the common people in this area.

### **Reaching out the socially excluded**

Under DIPECHO VI, IRW have identified the aged people, vulnerable women, people with physical disabilities and children as socially excluded people as they do not hold strong position in the society and cannot avail the opportunities that the other people get in the society. The project gives special priority to these people as the mandate of it is to assist the most vulnerable in the society. Even in the mitigation activities, the project has tried to address the needs of these people to reduce their vulnerability to disasters.

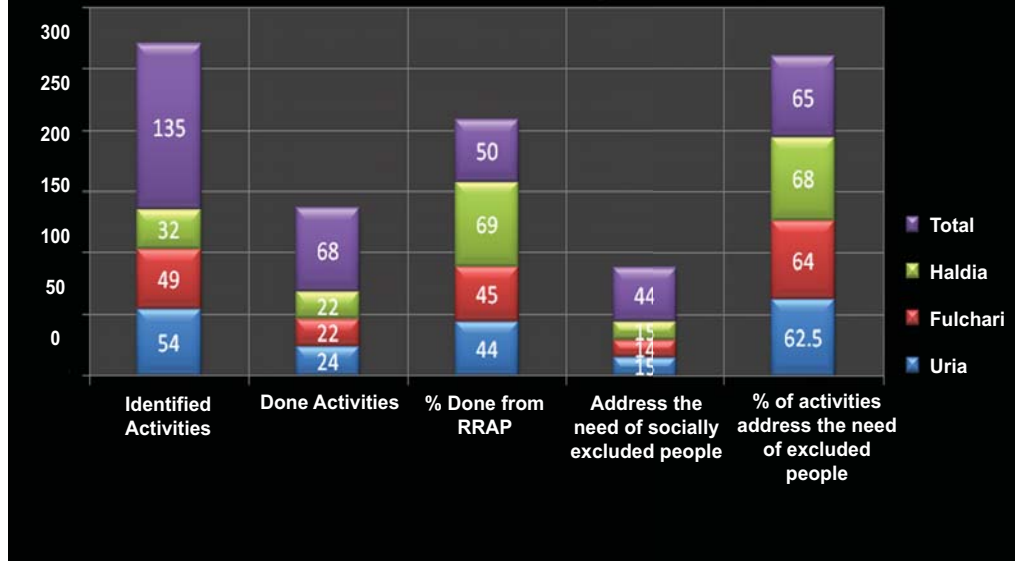


Among the identified 135 activities in the 3 RRAPs, 68 have been accomplished so far i.e. almost 50% of the activities have been implemented till now. Among these accomplished 68 tasks, 44 addressed the needs of the socially excluded people, which means, 65% of the executed activities in the RRAP addressed the specific needs of socially excluded people.

If we take a look on the union-wise picture, we can see that in the Fulchari Union, among the 54 identified activities, 24 have been implemented so far when 15 of these address the need of socially excluded people. In the Uria Union, among the 49 identified activities, 22 have been implemented so far when 14 of these address the need of socially excluded people. And in the Haldia Union, among the 32 identified activities 22 have been implemented so far when 15 address the need of these specific people. (Please see the detail in the graph below)



## RRAP Activities address the Needs of Socially Excluded People



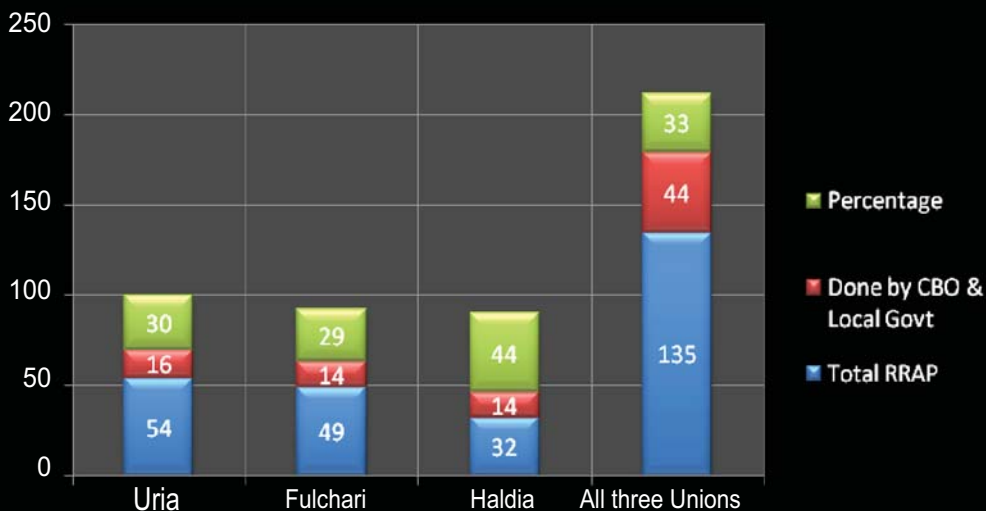
While undertaking any small scale mitigation works, it has been strictly maintained that the accessibility features are ensured in the construction works for proper access for persons with disability.

In the mitigation works carried out so far under the project, plinth height raising for 183 families, tubewell and latrine setting, road construction, boat transfer and bridge construction are important. Ensuring the accessibility features are of utmost importance in the case of plinth height raising, tubewell and latrine setting. So far, IRW has been able to raise all the households and now it is setting some tubewells where we can ensure the availability of accessibility features.

The bar-chart below shows the detail that among 183 plinth height raisings, all the 183 have been done with the accessibility features. In the Uria, Fulchari and Haldia Unions we had the target of 86, 40 and 57 households accordingly to raise the height and we have completed all with the proper accessibility features like ramp and railing facilities for the elderly and for the people with disabilities. So, in these three unions, 100% of the household raising have the accessibility features.

For setting the tubewell also, among the 50 tubewells, all are constructed with accessibility features so that these can be used by the elderly people, children and by the people with disability. Here also 100% of the tubewells are constructed with accessibility features. The detail union-wise information can be seen in the bar-chart below:

## Activities Done by Local Govt. and CBOs



### Beneficiary Covered under the Small Scale Mitigation Activities:

Activities	Number	Beneficiary covered
Plinth height raising	183	998
Tube well	50	1450
Latrine	183	998
Wooden bridge	2	12000
Flood shelter	1	1250
Boat transfer	3	25000

## Conclusion:

The RRAPs developed in these three unions are quite huge in terms of their budgets and scope of works i.e. maximum of the activities comprised road construction and repairing, plinth height raising, providing assistive and/or prosthetic device etc. This huge amount of resources cannot always be raised by the community alone. Being a poverty torn and disaster-prone area, there is an enormous demand of the people that cannot be easily addressed or substantially met by the DIPECHO programme itself.

But the initiatives that have been taken by the local government and the communities are really praiseworthy and these indicate that they are fast buying-in and are not beyond the idea of culture of safety. These people are making examples that can be replicated and up-scaled. The provision of including the RRAPs in the annual development plans of the Union Parishads signifies the sustainability of this initiative by the local government. The local authorities and the community want to revise the RRAPs every year and from those identified action plans, the local governments will implement the activities that the community believes and ones that have major local significance in mitigating the risks of impending disasters.



The participatory processes so far are also throwing up issues for advocacy. People are now trying to prioritise some of these advocacy issues that will help them accomplish wider agenda that have been identified in the RRAPs. Some selected people from the community who have been trained on how to facilitate advocacy issues to the concerned authorities are taking the lead in facilitating the entire process through which they are making their voices heard by the authorities concerned and getting their demands fulfilled. They will tell their story.



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