

Strengthening the Capacity of Those Displaced by Disaster and Climate-Related Causes in Bangladesh

Bangladesh | Duration: July 2022 - September 2024 | Implementing partners: Educo International and Uttaran

The Challenge

In South West Bangladesh, communities face significant challenges related to climate change, including rising sea levels, flooding, increasing soil salinity, falling land productivity, and cyclones. These environmental pressures drive both temporary and permanent displacement, creating vulnerable populations in both rural coastal areas and urban settings. Residents of Shyamnagar (the origin area) face diminishing livelihood options, while slum settlements in Satkhira Municipality (the destination location) remain susceptible to seasonal waterlogging and inadequate drainage systems.

Although local authorities showed goodwill and understood their responsibilities to these communities, they lacked sensitization, adequate resources, and actionable data on displaced populations. This hindered their ability to address people's basic needs effectively. Meanwhile, displaced people lacked connections with authorities and service providers in Shyamnagar, while slum dwellers in Satkhira had limited understanding of their rights and entitlements, and lacked structures to collectively voice their needs.

The Solution

This project supported both climate-vulnerable populations at risk of displacement and those already displaced in urban settings. Using an integrated approach, it addressed climate-induced displacement at both origin (rural Satkhira) and destination (urban Shyamnagar) areas, providing knowledge, skills, financing, and support to access essential services and prepare communities to cope with climate change impacts.

The project partners acted as facilitators, bringing together key actors with limited resources to integrate displaced persons into new communities by holding authorities accountable and re-establishing the social contract. They successfully connected people with existing service systems (social security for the elderly, education, agriculture) while enhancing their climate adaptation strategies.

What Made This a Promising Practice?

The project's integrated approach to addressing climate-induced displacement at both origin and destination areas stands out as innovative. It supported those wishing to remain in their areas of origin, those who had moved and required assistance to reestablish themselves, and host communities. This simultaneous approach better addressed the root causes of displacement while supporting those who chose to move with adequate information and counseling.

The project demonstrated that NGOs can effectively function as catalytic agents in contexts where authorities show goodwill but lack resources. By connecting community groups with authorities and empowering them to interact directly, the project facilitated effective advocacy resulting in concrete mitigation actions. The established structures were formalized to ensure continuation beyond the project timeframe.

The creation of a comprehensive database on displaced households provided, for the first time, detailed information allowing for evidence-based, targeted support. This data resource will continue to inform interventions after the project's completion. Additionally, the project's fruitful collaboration with research partners enabled the immediate application of research findings to promote alternative livelihood options.

The Response

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Lessons Learned

The project demonstrated that the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) nexus approach is applicable in contexts with climate-related threats. The team approached disaster risk reduction and preparedness alongside cyclone emergency response as a humanitarian component, while social cohesion between hosts and climate migrants in urban communities contributed to a solid peace component.

Connecting community groups with various authorities and empowering them to interact directly to assert their rights proved successful. This approach led to effective advocacy efforts, resulting in several mitigation works carried out using supplies provided by authorities and labor from the community. The established structures have been formalized to ensure continuation beyond the project timeframe, enabling empowered community groups to continue engaging with authorities.

Key Results

Livelihoods and Skills Development:

- Equipped over 7,000 people with income-generating skills
- Provided training in climate-adaptive agricultural techniques
- Supported community members with small-scale business development
- Connected displaced individuals with employment opportunities

Data Collection and Analysis:

- Created a comprehensive database in collaboration with Satkhira municipality
- Identified 10,133 displaced households, including 8,501 displaced due to climate-related reasons
- Provided the first detailed information on the displaced population for evidence-based interventions

Community Resilience Building:

- Improved access to basic services in both origin and destination areas
- Reduced water-borne diseases through water and sanitation interventions
- Connected community groups with local authorities to facilitate direct advocacy
- Empowered communities to implement mitigation works using supplies from authorities



LiD Lives in Dignity

GRANT FACILITY

The Lives in Dignity (LiD) Grant Facility was an EU-funded initiative managed by UNOPS that promoted development-oriented approaches in forced displacement settings. With €24 million allocated between 2021–2025, the Facility supported 14 innovative, multi-stakeholder projects across Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Its flexible funding model empowered local actors, strengthened partnerships, and fostered integrated programming across five key areas: livelihoods, service delivery, housing and spatial planning, protection, and disaster- and climate-related mobility. The Facility prioritized community-led solutions, localization, and social cohesion, advancing sustainable development for both displaced populations and host communities. **Find out more at** https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/programming/programmes/lives-dignity-grant-facility_en