

Climate Bridge Fund: Tackling Climate Migration in Bangladesh by Bridging Stakeholder Gaps

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Abstract

Climate change is already happening. In the Fifth Assessment Report (AR5), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) indicates that about 72 million people will be displaced with 0.5-metre sea level rise if there is no investment in adaptation. In the case of a 2.0-metre rise, that number of people will be pushed to 187 million. IPCC also provides evidence on increased displacement and migration due to floods and droughts in many countries including Bangladesh. It has been reported “22% of households affected by tidal-surge floods and 16% of households that were affected by riverbank erosion moved to urban areas in Bangladesh”.

Introduction

Climate change is already happening. In the Fifth Assessment Report (AR5), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) indicates that about 72 million people will be displaced with 0.5-metre sea level rise if there is no investment in adaptation. In the case of a 2.0-metre rise, that number of people will be pushed to 187 million. IPCC also provides evidence on increased displacement and migration due to floods and droughts in many countries including Bangladesh. It has been reported “22% of households affected by tidal-surge floods and 16% of households that were affected by riverbank erosion moved to urban areas in Bangladesh”. Climate catastrophes have displaced roughly 700,000 people in Bangladesh annually over the previous decade, according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. Every day, between 1,000-2,000 people move to Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh. A 2012 study conducted among 1,500 families migrating to cities (mainly Dhaka) showed that almost all of them cited the changing environment as the substantial reason for their decision. Most families arriving in urban areas, including city corporations and municipality areas of Rajshahi, Khulna, Barishal, Sirajganj and Satkhira, end up living in urban slums around the periphery of the cities. They are often faced with rudimentary housing conditions, extreme population density along with inadequate access to water supply, sanitation, health, education, energy, drainage and other basic services. Approximately 60,000 people were relocated in early 2011 to Bangladesh's Khulna District, the remote south-west region, by what had become a permanent coastal flooding because of sea-level rise. 25,000 people were forced to live on a 25-kilometre-long, 2-metre-high, 3-4-metre-wide embankment, being unable to return to their homes and lands with limited access to fresh territory. In the Khulna City Corporation region, there are roughly 202 informal settlements.

Role of CBF

In order to tackle the issues created by the influx of people into cities and municipalities of Bangladesh as a result of the increasing impacts of climate change, stakeholders and concerned parties came together to set goals. The Climate Bridge Fund (CBF) is a trust fund established by the BRAC in November 2019, with support from the Government of Germany through KfW. CBF is a direct climate finance mechanism that supports registered non-governmental organizations based in Bangladesh. The proceeds from the trust's investment are used to fund urban adaptation and resilience projects in the context of climate-induced migration. This funding method examines the projects' sustainability. The Fund Advisory Committee (ACCF) provides strategic and technical guidance on maximizing impacts. The trustee board finally approves the projects based on recommendations from ACCF and no objection from KfW. The beneficiaries of this fund are primarily those living in the city corporations and/or municipalities of Barisal, Khulna, Rajshahi, and Satkhira and Sirajganj, areas primarily affected by the impacts of climate change and are at risk of climate change-induced migration. The 'climate change window' under the CBF begins through requesting concept notes each year.

The CBF requires direct communication between the applicant organizations and the proposed beneficiaries in order to accurately reflect the needs of people who have been displaced or at the risk of being displaced by the impacts of climate change. Project Idea also need to be shared with the city authorities, to keep the proposed projects consistent with urban development plans and policies. These compliance requirements are set to fill existing gaps with relevant stakeholders and are confirmed during the project live-action process using direct communication with the stakeholders. Four projects are being implemented in Khulna and Rajshahi City Corporations in response to the first CBF request in 2020. As mentioned above, implementing partners are BRAC's Health, Nutrition, Population Programme (HNPP), Ultra-Poor Graduation Programme (UPGP), Humanitarian Programme (BHP), as well as WaterAid Bangladesh and Caritas Bangladesh. The four projects support approximately 70,000 people who have been displaced due to climate change and living in vulnerability. The ways these projects are tackling the challenges include climate-resilient water and sanitation (WATSAN) services, improved drainage systems, resilient livelihood options, health services, improved housing, solid waste management and various awareness-raising sessions, and training on hygiene, income-generating activities, and disaster prevention, among others. A second call has already started in 2021 and is currently being evaluated. CBF plans to cover five priority areas as mentioned above in the upcoming new projects [1-4].



Addressing Problems and Current Resilience Gap in Some Climate Vulnerable Destinations

Some of the common problems are specific, for example, addressing the basic needs of the people displaced by the effects of climate change, such as lacking sustainable and safe water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities, as well as access to health, education, housing, energy and financial services. The underlying problems identified are being addressed by a set of three-pronged, interrelated initiatives aimed at driving long-term changes to support people displaced by the effects of climate change. WaterAid Bangladesh has taken an initiative to validate a replicable model of inclusive, community-managed climate-resilient WATSAN services, including operation & maintenance systems, by empowering people (men and women) who have been displaced by the effects of climate change. The project will also link the communities to appropriate microfinance services to support them strengthen their livelihood scopes and capacities. The focus of the project is to create greater economic prospects along with social awareness and ensuring access to public utility services for people from low-income communities. This concept not only brings long-term changes to the current migrants' lives, but also helps to improve the cities' overall living conditions, including those of future migrants. Caritas Bangladesh also plans to support the target communities with climate-resilient WATSAN services. At the same time, they will focus on diversified livelihoods which are climate-resilient, construction and reconstruction of drainages, walkways and roads, rehabilitation, along with low-cost repair of infrastructure in slums (eg, eco-friendly cooking stoves, improved housing with transparent sheets for more light etc). These solutions are expected to address the main impacts of climate change in the target communities. Many government and non-governmental health projects are also active in the urban slums. Their programmes are focused majorly towards providing maternal healthcare, hygiene conditions, and more recently, non-infectious diseases.

However, elements revolving around the effects of climate change on diseases are not yet sufficiently available. As a result, there is a lack of knowledge about how to prevent climate-sensitive diseases. Therefore, BRAC Health, Nutrition and Population Programme (HNPP) takes certain precautions to prevent the spread of climate-sensitive diseases as well as ensure the health of life. The programme emphasizes on widening access to preventive products such as mosquito nets, soaps and water purifiers and umbrellas. Additionally, it connects patients to appropriate non-profit health centres and public hospitals in terms of access to physician services, diagnosis and medication.

The all-women community health workers target families and focus on educating female members of households (approximately 60% of the target population). However, they try to include male members as well to ensure that the parents can together educate other family members specially the next generation. Poverty is a root cause for several other challenges for people in low-income communities. BRAC Humanitarian Programme (BHP) and Ultra-Poor Graduation Programme (UPGP) and aim to address the issue of unstable livelihoods. BRAC is a pioneer of the proven, global Graduation model that assists people living in extreme poverty in achieving a sustainable livelihood. Along with economic empowerment, the model also includes raising awareness on hygiene practices, healthy lifestyle climate change, along with other issues. The project intends to focus on women in particular as the 24-month long Graduation process will enable a participant to assess her present condition and then decide a path for her and the family's overall development through the support of the project [5].

References

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