SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND PRODUCTION LINKED TO IMPROVED NUTRITION STATUS, RESILIENCE, AND GENDER EQUITY

COMMUNITY DISASTER RESPONSE TEAMS

First responders build resilience

In order for a community to adequately prepare for disasters, they need active participation from multiple stakeholders. These include NGOs, private sector providers, local leaders, and the youth. Each group must engage at all levels for preparedness, mitigation, and response to shocks and stressors so communities are adequately equipped before, during, and after disasters.

The USAID-funded Resilience Food Security Activity, Sustainable Agriculture and Production Linked to Improved Nutrition Status, Resilience and Gender Equity (SAPLING), collaborated with the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) to support these initiatives. The program formed Community Disaster Response Teams (CDRTs) in the 11 most vulnerable unions to disaster in five sub-districts (upazilas) of Bandarban District in the remote Chittagong Hill Tracts region of Bangladesh.

MOST VULNERABLE GROUPS

- Have limited access to services
- Live with existing risks and hazards
- Face shortages in food production and consumption
- Have had limited relief distribution from the government in the past 5 years

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ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER SAPLING

1,485
CDRT volunteers recruited

91
wards served in Bandarban

11
unions served in Bandarban

Each CDRT comprises approximately 15 members with a minimum of 3 women members

Established a database of volunteers for use by the GOB to facilitate rapid response mobilization when needed

Most CDRT volunteers are between the ages of 19–29 years. Most of these teams are under the responsibility of BDRCS Red Crescent Youth who ensure capacity building of youth and sustainability of community volunteerism. SAPLING facilitated training for all CDRT volunteers on:

- Induction to Red Crescent and Red Cross
- First aid
- Leadership
- Search and rescue
- Emergency response
- COVID prevention

The CDRT is chaired by a Union Parishad member, with traditional leaders (karbari and headmen) encouraged to join. The CDRTs work closely with GOB-mandated Union Disaster Management Committees (UDMCs). They extend their services to households and communities, and lead preparedness and mitigation measures to protect assets and lives.

SAPLING emphasized community capacity building and the importance of establishing linkages with community and government organizations at the union, sub-district, and district levels. This led to a more effective and coordinated response to disaster.

The CDRTs established by SAPLING and the BDRCS have been called into action on multiple occasions. They responded to areas hit by flooding, landslides, fire, and raised awareness on COVID-19 prevention and mitigation measures.

They are now essential in helping communities prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters.

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