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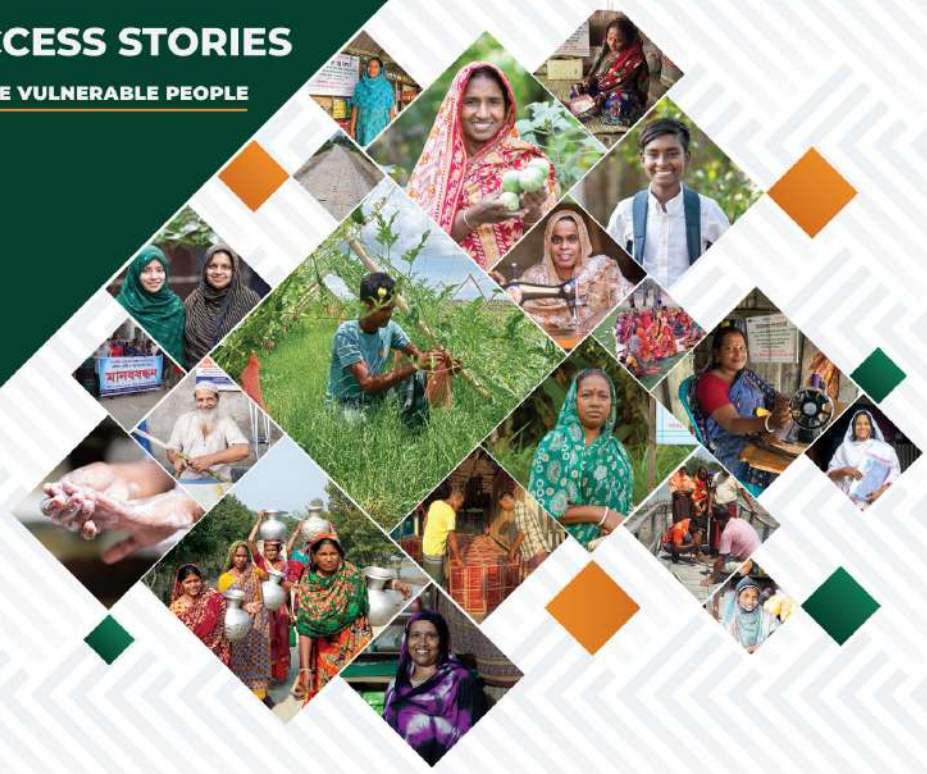
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SUCCESS STORIES
OF THE
CLIMATE VULNERABLE PEOPLE



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PROJECT OVERVIEW

Over the last decade, rising sea levels, tropical cyclones, flash floods, soil salinity, and river erosion have emerged as the environmental or climatic pushing factors in the coastal region of Bangladesh. This situation has forced highly exposed and vulnerable coastal communities to migrate because of poverty and loss of livelihoods. Amid rising global temperatures and increasingly challenging physical environments, climate change is driving a growing number of people displaced by the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation. In response to the escalating climate challenges faced by Bangladesh's coastal area, the project focuses on strengthening the capacity of climate-displaced individuals of the southwest coastal region. The two-years project has commenced its journey in July 2022 and is funded by the European Union-UNOPS "Lives in Dignity (LiD) Grant Facility" and implemented by Uttaran and Educo Bangladesh. The project is being implemented in 05 targeted slums (Bakal Islampur-01, Bakal Islampur-2, Puraton Ghosh Para Colony, Sardar Para Colony, and Dokkhin Kamalnagar Colony) within Satkhira Municipality and 03 vulnerable unions (Gabura, Paddapukur, and Burigoalini) in Shyamnagar.

The project's objectives include providing skills, technical assistance, and financial support to enable slum dwellers in Satkhira Municipality to strengthen their income-generating opportunities.

It also addresses the limited access to basic services in the targeted slums, with a focus on enhancing education, water, and sanitation services while mitigating water-borne diseases.

Furthermore, the project seeks to address the root causes of displacement, enhancing measures aimed at prevention, protection, and providing solutions for those communities at risk of being displaced through mitigating their risks of being impacted by future climate shocks with raising awareness on disaster preparedness, safe migration, and actionable solutions on climate-smart agriculture for alternative livelihood options.

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"From Climate Challenge to Agricultural Innovation: Rakib Hasan's Inspiring Journey to Resilient Farming"



Climate vulnerability exacerbates the agricultural challenges in the southwest coastal regions which are prone to natural disasters, causing widespread damage to crops, infrastructure, and livelihoods. These climatic events disrupt the agricultural cycle, leading to crop loss and increased vulnerability among farming communities. Efforts to address these challenges involve promoting resilient farming practices, developing salt-tolerant crop varieties, improving water management systems, and implementing disaster risk reduction measures to enhance the resilience of the agricultural sector in the face of climate change and salinity issues.

Rakib Hasan, a determined 21-year-old resident of Paddapukur Village, Paddapukur Union, Shyamnagar, faced climate-related challenges in his life. Motivated by a vision for change, he leased someone's land to cultivate paddy and combat saltwater intrusion. His initiative inspired other farmers to follow.



Rakib was chosen as a participant in the agricultural trials of the BD3121 project. He is taking on the challenges of salinity and other climate-related issues by embracing innovative and sustainable technologies in agriculture. With support from the project implemented by Educo Bangladesh and funded by the EU-UNOPS LiD grant, he has been introduced and oriented on off-season watermelon varieties using mulching technology.

With support from the project implemented by Educo Bangladesh and funded by the EU-UNOPS LiD grant, he has been introduced and oriented on off-season watermelon varieties using mulching technology.



He has received the necessary training from the Upazila Agriculture Department, and a monetary grant to cultivate watermelons using innovative techniques like mulching.

He has prepared the field for plantation with mulching technology, a new climate-resilient technology in agriculture. He also grew small plants by planting 20,000 seedlings on plastic trays for 24 days. The small plants are then planted on the field finally. His efforts have yielded 20,000 watermelon plants on 50 cents land within 60 days, and he profited a tenfold increase compared to traditional paddy farming methods. He dreams of financially contributing to his family and being more self-dependent and confident. The land spans an area of 50 cents, with Educo's contribution amounting to Tk 25,000 and the farmer's input totaling Tk 62,900, resulting in a combined expenditure of Tk 87,900. The watermelon harvest yielded a total of 5,300 kg, sold at a price of Tk 50 per kg, bringing the overall sales to Tk 265,000. This successful venture led to a net profit of Tk 177,100. Notably, the watermelons found buyers in Khulna on two occasions, with 1,400 kg and 1,100 kg sold respectively, totaling 2,500 kg. The remaining produce was distributed in local markets such as Gorkumarpur, Noabeki, and Shyamnagar, making it a fruitful endeavor for the farmer.

Kazi Rahidul Bari, the community mobilizer from Paddapukur union, who is a member of the project team, expressed, "Rakib displayed remarkable enthusiasm and a keen inclination towards embracing new agricultural technologies as a young individual. His diligence and proactive attitude are quite evident. With just a bit of guidance, he has truly made us proud with his successful watermelon field."

"I could not carry on my education due to poverty, yet my passion for farming persisted. Today, with guidance from Educo and the support of the Upazila Agriculture Officer, I am pioneering agricultural change in our saline-prone region," says Rakib Hasan.

His future aspiration is to become an exemplary farmer by embracing innovative technologies, off-season and long-term crop varieties, and promoting sustainable practices in agriculture.

Mahfuza Begum Transforms Family's



Fortunes Through Climate-Smart ***Vegetable Farming Project***

In the heart of Bakal Islampur No. 01 Colony, Mahfuza Begum's life unfolded against the backdrop of struggle and resilience. A family of six, including her ailing husband Shamser Ali Moral, two daughters, a son, and a horse of a mother-in-law, had found refuge in this colony 15 years ago after the devastating Cyclone Aila had forced them to abandon their home in Gabura union.

The burden of providing for the family fell heavily on Mahfuza's shoulders as Shamser Ali was physically unwell and unable to contribute to their income.

Working as a female laborer, Mahfuza battled the throes of poverty that clung to her family. The only ray of hope was the small patch of land in front of their house, a space that held the promise of growing vegetables.



However, the challenges were manifold. The rainy season brought not just drops of water but the threat of waterlogging, making cultivation a precarious endeavor. The struggle persisted until the intervention of The European Union, a prominent private development program, and the United Nation Office for Project Services (UNOPS) Gi Lives in Dignity Grant Facility. This initiative aimed to empower those displaced by disasters and climate-related causes, offering them the means to cope with adverse situations and increase their income.

Working as a female laborer, Mahfuza battled the throes of poverty that clung to her family. The only ray of hope was the small patch of land in front of their house, a space that held the promise of growing vegetables.



Mahfuza Begum found herself included in this transformative project as a climate-displaced beneficiary. Equipped with newfound knowledge and skills, Mahfuza received training on smart climate-tolerant vegetable cultivation. The focus was on the sack system, enabling year-round cultivation in her home garden. The project provided her with seeds, sacks, nets, fertilizers, and various materials essential for cultivating vegetables.

With unwavering determination, Mahfuza began cultivating sweet pumpkin, bitter gourd, shrimp, and kushi using the climate-smart bag method. The once barren yard of her residence transformed into a thriving garden, meeting the nutritional needs of her family and opening doors for additional income by selling the surplus to the local community.

As Mahfuza's vegetables found their way into the market, the financial narrative of her family underwent a profound change. The earnings from selling the produce not only covered daily expenses but also financed her children's education and her husband's medical treatments. When asked about her feelings, Mahfuza revealed, ***"I actually did not know before that vegetables can be cultivated all year round using the sack method. As I live in a low-lying area in the colony, my yard gets waterlogged during monsoons. That's why I could not grow any vegetables in the courtyard of my house."***

Gratitude filled Mahfuza's words as she expressed thanks to the project for not only meeting the nutritional needs of her family but also for providing an avenue for additional income

Reviving hope: A community-led Success in Tackling water scarcity



The Burigoalini Union's Community Development Group, supported by the EU-UNOPS LiD grant climate displacement intervention, has showcased a triumph in community-led development. They achieved this by effectively restoring an inactive Pond Sand Filter. The initiative led to the establishment of the CDG within the Burigoalini union, aiming to encourage community-driven approach. Subsequently, the CDG has remained engaged and proactive in advancing their community's progress. Recognizing their community's vulnerabilities, the CDGs crafted a comprehensive Risk Reduction Action Plan (RRAP).

The village of Burigoalini in Ward No. 4 of Burigoalini Union No. 9, Shyamnagar, Satkhira, is facing a significant shortage of fresh water—a common challenge in coastal areas. Despite being surrounded by saline water, there's a lack of safe drinking water. Women in the village have to travel quite far to fetch water, resulting in both wasted time and physical strain. Traditional tube wells don't work well here, so the community relies on pond water as a safer alternative.



During a routine monthly gathering of the Burigoalini Community Development Groups (CDGs), they pinpointed the shortage of clean drinking water in the area. Consequently, they made the decision to undertake the repair of the Pond Sand Filter (PSF) in Burigoalini Village to ensure easy access to safe drinking water.

Women in the village have to travel quite far to fetch water, resulting in both wasted time and physical strain. Traditional tube wells don't work well here, so the community relies on pond water as a safer alternative.



The community has been trying to establish a functioning PSF for a while but didn't get the proper opportunity. In a recent meeting, the community discussed the water crisis and decided to repair the PSF in their Zilla Parishad pond, anticipating a worsening water crisis in the upcoming summer. They sought support from the local Union Parishad (UP) member, who welcomed and supported their proposal.

The repair work on the PSF began, with community members pooling their efforts and resources. CDG initiated their planned efforts, gathering 20 taka from each family to procure goods from local vendors. The local Union Parishad (UP) member contributed Tk 2000 in cash for purchasing these goods. They acquired essential materials for repairing the PSF, including sand, nets, pipes, taps, and paint, and dedicated their own labor to carry out the necessary repairs for non-functional PSF. Their dedication and efforts paid off, and they were able to see the results of their hard work in the end, marking a successful endeavor. The successful repair of the PSF has significantly eased the burden on women, saving them from arduous journeys for water and long waits. A Management Committee has been set up to oversee the PSF, and a caretaker has been appointed. Funds collected from beneficiary families are deposited in a joint bank account for future maintenance.

To ensure the sustainability of the PSF, the community has decided to collect a small amount of money (Rs. 20 per month) from each family benefiting from the facility. This fund will be saved for future maintenance. Additionally, provisions have been made to compensate the caretaker for their services.

Arpana Mallick said, CDG President of Burigoalini Union expressed, ***"We have been drinking water from the pond for so long, but it was not purified. Today we have repaired it; now everyone can drink safe water. Our concern about PSF is far-reaching, to make it sustainable, we have decided to deposit 20 takas per month per family for future maintenance ".***

Physical disability is not a barrier to *self-sufficiency*



Maryam Begum, a resident of Gabura Union in the Shyamnagar upazila of Satkhira district, found herself thrust into the responsibilities of marriage at the tender age of 14. This early marriage curtailed Maryam's educational opportunities, setting the stage for a life marked by hardship and resilience.

Gabura Union, a coastal area, bore the brunt of nature's fury, experiencing annual onslaughts of storms, floods, and cyclones. Man-made disasters such as dam breaks and excess salinity compounded the challenges faced by its inhabitants.

Omar Ali's carpentry work provided an unstable income, plunging the family into scarcity. Daily meals became a luxury, and Maryam often resorted to using old, worn-out clothes during menstruation due to financial constraints.



The repercussions of this dire situation manifested in various physical ailments for Maryam—pain in the lower abdomen, itching, rashes, and burning sensations. Unfortunately, the lack of financial resources hindered her access to proper medical treatment. The struggle intensified in 2007 when Cyclone Sidr flooded their home, forcing the family to relocate to a low-cost rented house in South Kamalnagar slum.

Life in the slum brought only marginal improvement. Mariyam's Husband Omar's sporadic work meant the family lived hand-to-mouth.

Maryam's daughter and son grew up amid financial constraints, mirroring their mother's arduous journey. When Maryam's daughter reached puberty, she, too, had to endure the discomfort of wearing old clothes during menstruation.



Maryam's daughter and son grew up amid financial constraints, mirroring their mother's arduous journey. When Maryam's daughter reached puberty, she, too, had to endure the discomfort of wearing old clothes during menstruation.

Initiation of the project titled "Strengthening the Capacity of Displaced People Affected by Disasters and Climate Change to Cope with Adverse Situations,", Maryam and other displaced individuals received various training sessions.

Participating in weekly yard meetings as a member of the primary team, Maryam and others discussed issues such as safe water, hygienic latrines, and menstrual health management. The project workers emphasized the importance of using sanitary napkins, the need to change them every three hours, and the significance of proper hygiene. They also provided guidance for those unable to afford sanitary napkins, suggesting the use of clean clothes with proper cleaning and disinfection.

Maryam stated, ***'From my tailoring business, I have saved money to ensure that my daughter and I can afford sanitary napkins every month. It brings relief from the health issues that we previously faced.'***

This change in practice brought relief from the health issues they had previously faced. Moreover, Maryam took the initiative to educate her daughter and fellow women in the colony about proper menstrual hygiene, fostering positive change in the community.

A step to empower women in challenging climatic situation



Sobita Rani Sardar, a 30-year-old woman, exemplifies resilience in the face of life's challenges, showcasing a triumphant story of establishing a thriving shopping bag production business despite harsh climatic conditions.

She faced early marriage due to poverty, thrust into the harsh realities of life. Her husband, from a well-off family, brought some stability with a good income. They found happiness when their first son was born, enjoying a peaceful family life for years.

However, financial struggles arose when her husband invested in a local shop that faced losses. Despite the challenges, they welcomed a second child, further stretching their finances. The burden of poverty and debt began to take a toll. To make ends meet, her husband worked as a day laborer in another shop.



Sobita managed to save some money and bought a sewing machine to start a small business, making shopping bags from used cement bags, a highly demanded product in their area. Lacking sufficient funds, she struggled to kickstart this venture. Fortunately, through the EU-UNOPS LiD grant facility and Educo Bangladesh's intervention in her community, Sobita's idea caught the attention of the community development group (CDG) in Burigoalini.

Recognizing Sobita's sewing skills during a CDG meeting discussing income-generating activities, they approached her and she pitched her shopping bag production idea.

As a devoted mother of two boys, Sobita's husband works hard as a day laborer to provide for the family. But now, with her own income, Sobita plays a crucial role in ensuring the family's well-being, including food, nutrition, and her children's education.



With support from Educo Bangladesh, Sobita received training and financial assistance to purchase essential materials. Thus began her journey, overcoming shortages and increasing debts, with her husband's help in sourcing cement bags for making and selling shopping bags in the market.Life in coastal regions presents unique challenges for women, but Sobita's determination shines through. Despite the tough circumstances, she's driven to earn a respectable living on her terms. Sobtia could produce approximately 50-60 shopping bags from morning to evening while managing all the household chores. The cost to make these 50 shopping bags amounted to 145 taka (25 sacks at 125 taka, yarn at 20 taka), and the sales yielded 300 taka, resulting in a net profit of 155 taka and a monthly income of approx. 4650 taka.

As a devoted mother of two boys, Sobita's husband works hard as a day laborer to provide for the family. But now, with her own income, Sobita plays a crucial role in ensuring the family's well-being, including food, nutrition, and her children's education. In her free time, she doesn't just sit idle – she's turned it into an opportunity to earn from home. She joyfully shares, ***"I'm thrilled to be on this new journey where I can manage both my household responsibilities and my dream of earning independently."*** Her family supports her with unwavering enthusiasm.

Sobtia envisioned a future where she could eradicate poverty from her family's life and bring happiness back to her world through the profits from this enterprise. Sobita's ambitions don't stop here. She envisions expanding her bag production and sales, aspiring to inspire fellow housewives and provide them with the necessary training to empower themselves in a similar way.

Presently, two women are undergoing training and receiving support from Sobtia to join this profession. In her determination to improve the lives of these women and others, Sobtia expressed, ***"I will work alongside all the women, supplying and buying their bags at fair prices to sell them in distant markets. The profit I make will bring happiness back to my once sorrowful world. I will organize everything to ensure no woman, including my children, undergoes the hardships I faced in my life."***

Physical disability is not a barrier to *self-sufficiency*



Md. Abdul Jabbar, hailing from Isharipur Union in Shyamnagar Upazila, faced numerous hardships after losing his land to the climate change disaster, Aila, in 2009. At that time, he was 60 years old and had a family of five, which included one son and two daughters. The loss of their land made it extremely challenging to support the family, leading to disappointment and struggles for all its members.

As he relocated and couldn't find work, the family faced financial difficulties, struggling to provide even basic sustenance. Amidst these hardships, Jabbar encountered several unfortunate events.

In 2012, one of his legs became gangrenous and required amputation after various unsuccessful attempts at medical treatment. To support his family's medical expenses, he went door-to-door collecting money, displaying remarkable determination.



After facing additional setbacks, including the sudden death of his younger son-in-law in 2016, Jabbar found himself responsible for his widowed daughter and her two children. With a physical disability and limited resources, he had no means of earning a livelihood.

After facing additional setbacks, including the sudden death of his younger son-in-law in 2016, Jabbar found himself responsible for his widowed daughter and her two children.



In an attempt to make ends meet, Jabbar ventured into a small seasonal fruit business, but the income was insufficient, and he often suffered losses. In July 2022, he received a glimmer of hope with the financial support of Uttaran, The European Union, and UNOPS through the Lives in Dignity Grant Facility fund management. This initiative aimed to improve the income and access to education and public services for those displaced by disasters and climate change, particularly in the Satkhira municipality and surrounding coastal areas.

Jabbar was selected as a beneficiary for this project and received comprehensive guidance, training, and business management tools based on his needs. Currently, he operates a business dealing in sugarcane and sugarcane juice. Abdul Jabbar stated that, "Now I am able to meet the basic needs of my family.My income has significantly increased compared to before." His relationship with his family has improved, and he now envisions expanding his small business in the future.The transition project has brought positive changes to Jabbar's life, and he expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the donor organizations: The European Union, UNOPS, and Uttaran, for the transformative impact of the project on his life.



From Day Labourer to Entrepreneur: An Inspirational Journey of Mofidul



The story of Md. Mofidul Islam is laid as an example of alternative livelihood options in the climate-vulnerable context for others. He is a resilient 36-year-old day labourer who confronted odds and embarked on an inspirational journey towards entrepreneurship. He is from Dokkhin Pakhimara Village, a climate-vulnerable region of Satkhira where people confront with the nature in every second. Md. Mofidul, driven by the desire to break free from the uncertainties of daily labour, joined the Community Development Group (CDG) under a visionary project of Educo Bangladesh, aimed to empower climate-displaced individuals and vulnerable communities by exploring examples of alternative livelihood options.

Shyamnagar, the largest upazila in Bangladesh, is situated in the southwestern region at the base of the Sundarbans. In this area, where job opportunities are scarce due to its susceptibility to disasters and the high salinity that hampers crop cultivation, we find Md. Mofidul Islam residing with his family of four in the village of Pakhi Mara, within the Padmapukur union.

Md. Mofidul Islam, a day laborer by profession, manages to find work for only 15 to 17 days per month, leaving him unemployed for the remainder. Despite the challenges, he is the primary breadwinner for his family, earning an income of three to four thousand taka each month.

On October 2022, a Community Development Group (CDG) was established in the Padmapukur Union through an intervention implemented by Educo Bangladesh. In a noteworthy development, Mohammad Mofidul Islam was elected as a general member of the CDG.

In addition to his atal-making venture, he has ventured into a second profession by managing a 2 Bigha fishing enclosure, generating a monthly income of 4,000 tk.



Recognizing the financial struggles faced by Md. Mofidul Islam, the CDG submitted a formal request to Educo Bangladesh, urging them to include him in Educo Bangladesh's Offirm program. Subsequently, Educo Bangladesh provided him with training in map-making for the Offirm program and extended financial assistance of Tk 10,000. With this support, Mofidul Islam embarked on a new chapter of resilience and chose rattan craft-making as his primary occupation. Since then, he has not looked back.

He sells between 180 and 200 pitch atols every month, fetching a price ranging from 250 to 350 taka per piece. With each atal he sells, he earns 50 to 70 tk. This adds up to a minimum monthly income of 10,000 taka. In addition to his atal-making venture, he has ventured into a second profession by managing a 2 Bigha fishing enclosure, generating a monthly income of 4,000 tk.

Md. Mofidul Islam expressed his gratitude, saying, "I extend my heartfelt thanks to Educo Bangladesh for opening up new employment opportunities for me. Today, thanks to Educo Bangladesh, my family enjoys prosperity, with blessings from the Almighty. If any unemployed young individuals wish to learn the art of making atals, I am ready to teach them willingly. My hope is to see a future where there are no unemployed youths in my village."

Md. Ashraf Hossain, the President of the Community Development Group (CDG) in Padmapukur Union, expressed, "We are delighted to provide our support to Mofidul Islam through Educo Bangladesh for off-farm activities. We hope Educo Bangladesh continues to extend their support to more families in the future."

Mst. Akrama Khatun, who serves as UP Member No. 123 in Ward Padmapukur Union Parishad, Shyamnagar, Satkhira, remarked, ***"Educo Bangladesh is diligently working to create alternative employment opportunities on Padmapukur Island. I have high hopes that Educo Bangladesh will contribute to the creation of new job opportunities within our union. I extend my gratitude to Educo Bangladesh for their efforts in our community."***

Md. Mofidul Islam has a vision to establish a manufacturing factory and a shop within the upazila, with the aim of creating employment opportunities for others.

Positive change in personal hygiene in Kohinoor family



Kohinoor Begum, the daughter of Md. Erfan Ali, is a displaced person who moved from Asashuni Upazila to Sultanpur Sardar Para slum in Satkhira Municipality about 15 years ago due to the frequent natural calamities and climate change in Asashuni. She initially lived in the slum with her husband and children, but her husband left her, leaving her struggling to support her 3 daughters and 1 son.



Bangladesh, particularly the Satkhira and Khulna districts in the southwestern region, faces severe repercussions of climate change. Areas like Shyamnagar, Asashuni, Kaliganj, Koyra, and Paikgacha are grappling with joblessness and homelessness due to recurring natural disasters such as cyclones, floods, river floods, and salinity. These calamities have destroyed crops, houses, cattle, and livelihoods, compelling people to migrate from the coastal regions to cities like Satkhira in search of a better life.

Many of these climate-displaced individuals find shelter in the rundown colonies of Satkhira municipality, which lack basic amenities like clean water, drainage systems, and proper roads. Despite the hardships, they are forced to live in these conditions, resulting in a population constantly battling various diseases.

Now, my child is living a healthier life, and we don't get sick very often. It has also ultimately reduced our medicine costs:



Lack of knowledge about personal hygiene led to health issues for Kohinoor and her children.Neither she nor her children knew what personal hygiene and household cleanliness was before. Earlier, after coming from the toilet, she used to wash her hands with clay and wood shavings. She didn't know about hand washing with soap or daily use especially before eating or serving food after coming from the toilet. In this situation, in July 2022, with the support from Uttaran, funded by European Union, UNOPS and Lives in Dignity Grant Facility initiated project called " Strengthening the capacity of those displaced by disasters and climate-related causes to cope with the adverse situations". Kohinoor Begum was ultimate beneficiaries as per the project's terms. This project seems to be focused on improving the living conditions and opportunities for those who have been displaced due to disasters and climate-related factors in the region.



Kohinoor Begum and her family have access to meetings, workshops, and training sessions. They have learned the importance of personal hygiene, which has significantly improved their healthThe project provides them with essentials such as soap, hand wash, bleaching powder, a sewing machine, and cloth for their livelihood. Now, she is leading a healthier life. Kohinoor Begum stated, ***'Now, my child is living a healthier life, and we don't get sick very often. It has also ultimately reduced our medicine costs.'*** The regular use of these items has resulted in a significant reduction in diseases within the family. Kohinoor is grateful to Uttaran and UNOPS for the positive changes in their lives.

A successful community-led approach by the Gabura Community Development Group



The Community Development Group of Gabura Union, under the EU-UNOPS LiD-funded climate displacement intervention, has created a successful example of the community-led development approach by repairing a 60-foot wooden bridge. The intervention has developed a community development group (CDG) in the Gabura union in order to promote community-led initiatives; since then, the CDG has been working actively for the development of their own community. The CDGs identified their community's risk and developed a risk reduction action plan (RRAP).

With the help of the project, the Community Development Groups (CDGs) identified and initiated the construction of a wooden bridge for improving communication and providing easy access to two villages as well as bazar, mosque, and school. Previously, the Gabura and Jeliakhali village were separated by a challenging canal, hindering people's movement between the areas. Recognizing this issue, they initiated a fundraising campaign within the community to purchase the necessary materials—planks, bamboo, nails, and poles—to restore the deteriorating wooden bridge. Their efforts materialized into a visible and functional bridge, as evident in their dedication and hard work.



The absence of a functional crossing system left many, especially the elderly and disabled residents, unable to traverse from one side to the other.



Repairing the 60-foot bridge has not only restored a crucial link but has also fostered a sense of unity between the inhabitants of the two villages. The absence of a functional crossing system left many, especially the elderly and disabled residents, unable to traverse from one side to the other. Students could not attend school, prayers at the mosque and temple were disrupted, and social interactions between the residents of the two areas diminished.

CDG members mobilized and carried out the repairs themselves, purchasing materials worth 9,500 taka using community funds managed by the CDG. Anwar Sadat, one of the CDG members, emphasized, "We are working collectively for the development of the area. Community people are appreciating us, and these voluntary works inspire the community people."

Sick individuals had to endure a 7-8 kilometer journey to reach the community clinic, as a long canal divided the two villages. In response to this pressing issue, members of the Gabura Union's Community Development Group (CDG) stepped forward.



Construct Roads in Satkhira Municipality in the Context of the Application of Climate Migrants Rights Group (CMRG)



In the heart of the vulnerable Satkhira district in southwestern Bangladesh, echoing the struggles of climate migrants seeking refuge from the harsh impacts of environmental change. Bakal Islampur-02, a colony within Satkhira Municipality, became a haven for 150 households, forced to abandon their homes due to the relentless onslaught of natural disasters in the coastal regions.

Amidst the challenges faced by these climate migrants, the absence of suitable roads emerged as a formidable concern. The lone public road, left unpaved, inflicted immense hardships on the residents, particularly during the relentless rain of the monsoon season. This dusty, rain-soaked path served as a lifeline for around 750 people, including 100 students, connecting them to markets, town centers, medical facilities, and schools.

Recognizing the urgent need for change, the members of the Climate Migrants Rights Group (CMRG) gathered for their monthly meeting. United by a common cause, they decided to take action. They decided to talk with the local councilor and the acting Mayor of Satkhira Municipality. On April 18, 2023, CMRG submitted an application, supported by 117 displaced families, urging the authorities to address the road issue.



Empowerment and acknowledgment followed in the wake of this achievement. The members of CMRG realized that, by being aware of their rights and working collectively, they could prompt action from both public and private institutions.



The Mayor (Acting) acknowledged the importance of their plea, expressing a commitment to prompt action. Progress commenced on May 20, 2023, with the presence of the Mayor (Acting), councilors, and stakeholders. A 1000-foot road emerged, a symbol of transformation that effectively resolved the long-standing travel challenges faced by the climate migrant residents. Markets, town centers, hospitals, and educational institutions were now easily accessible, liberating the community from the shackles of their previous hardships.

The school-going students, once hindered by the lack of a proper road, now found their journey to school convenient and without impediments. The success of this initiative became a testament to the power of collective action and the ability of communities to bring about positive change.

Empowerment and acknowledgment followed in the wake of this achievement. The members of CMRG realized that, by being aware of their rights and working collectively, they could prompt action from both public and private institutions. This newfound empowerment not only transformed the community but also fortified their belief in the potency of collective efforts to enhance their circumstances.

One of the CMRG member expressed that ***"We are grateful to 'Uttaran' for providing comprehensive guidance throughout the process and to Satkhira Municipality for undertaking the road construction initiative, the road, once a mere idea, now stood as a tangible symbol of progress."***

In conclusion, the construction of the road in Bakal Islampur-02 is a beacon of hope and a testament to the positive outcomes achievable when communities, local government representatives, and rights groups collaborate to address pressing issues. By resolving the travel problems faced by the displaced residents, this initiative significantly improved their quality of life. It serves as an inspiring example for other vulnerable communities, emphasizing the importance of collective action in safeguarding the rights of climate migrants.

Breaking the Taboos: Nasrin's Journey to Redefine Menstrual Hygiene Practice in the climate vulnerable context of Bangladesh



In high saline-prone areas, limited access to clean water and healthcare exacerbates challenges in menstrual hygiene and sexual reproductive health services, due to geographical constraints and infrastructure limitations. Due to the scarcity and poor quality of water caused by salinity, women often faced difficulties in accessing clean water for personal hygiene during menstruation. In many cases, alternative materials such as rags, cloth, or unhygienic materials were used, which increased the risk of infections and other health issues. These practices were not only inconvenient but also posed significant health hazards. Driven by the need for improved access and awareness, the idea of initiating small-scale entrepreneurship for sanitary napkins emerged as a solution.

Nasrin Nahar, a 30-year-old housewife residing in one of the most climate-affected vulnerable regions, Noabeki village, Paddapukur Union, Shyamnagar, Satkhira, located in a coastal region. Nasrin, like many girls, adolescents, and women in the area, faces menstrual and reproductive health challenges due to salinity. However, her determination to address this issue has led her to embark on a transformative journey. With the support of the Project funded by the EU-UNOPS LiD grant facility and implemented by Educo Bangladesh, Nasrin has ventured into door-to-door sales of sanitary napkins. Nasrin's initiative not only promotes health and hygiene but also empowers her economically and contributes to the sexual and reproductive health of her community. Through the project supported by Educo Bangladesh, Nasrin received off-farm (non-agricultural) support and embarked on a business endeavor to sell sanitary napkins.

Nasrin's business has not only empowered her financially, but it has also had a profound impact on the community's sexual and reproductive health. She sells sanitary napkins and undergarments, catering to the needs of women and girls who feel uncomfortable discussing and purchasing such items. She said, "At first, the village girls and women were shy and hesitant to even talk about the menstrual issue,

Nasrin's initiative not only promotes health and hygiene but also empowers her economically and contributes to the sexual and reproductive health of her community.

with the help of CDGs and my family, I master up the courage again to stick to my decision, and now with my continuous awareness raising on menstrual hygiene, the community members have welcomed the initiative well". Through her efforts, Nasrin has raised awareness and shifted attitudes toward menstrual health. Since starting her business, Nasrin has sold approximately 70 packets of sanitary napkins within 20 days, generating a benefit of around 2100tk till now. Her success not only contributes to her family's well-being including the health, nutrition, and education of her children, but also serves as an inspiration for other women facing similar challenges. She said, "My husband was the only breadwinner of our family, but now I am more confident and feel proud as I can also share the financial burden."

Nasrin initiated her business with the monetary grants provided by the project and the encouragement of the Community Development Groups (CDGs). She sells sanitary napkins door-to-door, targeting women and girls in her community. Nasrin offers two packet sizes, priced at 30tk and 60tk respectively, catering to different needs and budgets. In addition to sanitary napkins, she also began selling undergarments to cater to the needs of women and girls who feel uncomfortable discussing and purchasing such items. In the mean time, while running her business, she faced some challenges at first, getting out of her house and comfort zone and communicating door-to-door breaking the taboo of being hesitant on this sensitive issue. But after her great approach and patience, everyone in the community has accepted her and this initiative well applauded her, and now helping her too.

She sells 120 to 150 sanitary napkins each month, pocketing Tk 12 to Tk 15 for every piece, resulting in a monthly income of Tk 1,800 to Tk 2,000, contributing this small amount in her children's education.. Her clientele primarily comprises the local community, and she serves the 200 students of Pakhimara Mahila Dakhil Madrasah, which conveniently stands adjacent to Nachreen Nahar's residence.
In addition to her sanitary napkin sales, Nashrin Nahar also specializes in selling seat covers and a variety of melamine bowls, glasses, and spoons, each priced at 20 tk. In total, her monthly earnings amount to 6000 tk.

Beyond the financial benefits, Nasrin's efforts have had a profound impact on the community. By promoting the use of sanitary napkins and educating others about the importance of menstrual hygiene, she contributes to the sexual and reproductive health of the community. Her active engagement and awareness-raising initiatives have garnered positive responses from the community, enabling a significant shift in attitudes toward menstrual health.

Before embarking on her entrepreneurial journey, Nasrin's husband was the sole breadwinner in the family. However, Nasrin's business has not only empowered her but has also allowed her to financially contribute to her family's well-being including food, nutrition, and education of her children. Through her hard work and determination, she has established herself as a valuable asset to the household's income. Nasrin's success serves as an inspiring example of how women can achieve economic independence while simultaneously addressing health and hygiene issues in their communities. "I faced numerous obstacles, but with the support of CDGs and my family, I found the courage to persist," Nasrin shared. Despite numerous obstacles, Nasrin's success not only improved her family's financial situation but also inspired other women facing similar challenges. Her resilience and determination have created a positive impact on menstrual hygiene and reproductive health in high saline-prone areas.

With her current achievements, Nasrin envisions expanding her business, thereby reaching a broader customer base and impacting more lives. Her long-term goal is to create a sustainable enterprise that not only serves her community but also provides opportunities for other women facing similar challenges. By extending her business, Nasrin aims to continue raising awareness and empowering women in her locality, creating a ripple effect that could inspire positive change in neighboring regions as well. Nasrin Nahar's journey from a housewife to a successful sanitary napkin entrepreneur exemplifies the transformative potential of empowering women's health and economic independence.

Monirul's Educational Revival:

Empowering Climate-Displaced Students



Two decades ago, Hasan Gazi the father of Monirul Islam faced the harsh reality of being uprooted from Nawabenki village due to natural disasters. They resettled in Sardarpara slum of Satkhira Municipality, where they encountered numerous challenges. Initially, they lived in a rented house. Gradually, they purchased a small piece of land and built a shelter for their family. Hasan embarked on a business venture, selling raw curry and vegetables in Satkhira city. However, limited capital made it challenging to manage his business effectively. Fourteen years ago, Hasan married Manzila Begum and their family grew with the arrival of their eldest son, Monirul Islam, now 13 years old, along with a daughter (9) and a son (6). As the family expanded, expenses mounted, and Hasan found it increasingly difficult to provide for his children's education.

The COVID-19 pandemic further darkened their lives, as lockdowns affected Hasan's livelihood. He had to deplete his business capital to support his family and incurred significant debt. School closures disrupted the education of Monirul and his siblings. When schools gradually reopened, Monirul's dreams of continuing his education seemed almost unattainable, as admission fees for secondary school were beyond their reach while they struggled to arrange three meals in a day.



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Monirul's dreams appeared to be slipping away until the arrival of the project of Uttaran supported by the European Union, UNOPS Lives in Dignity Grant Facility. Uttaran launched a project to empower displaced individuals affected by disasters and climate change, with a core focus on boosting income and ensuring access to education and basic rights. Meticulously selected, Monirul's mother, Manjila Begum became a project beneficiary. Community facilitators conducted regular meetings, emphasizing the importance of sending children to school and providing essential school bags and educational materials. This support regenerated Monirul's interest in education and ignited a spark of hope for his future.



Informed about the numerous benefits of education, Monirul's parents, Hasan Gazi and Manjila Begum, proudly enrolled him in the class 6 in the Prananath Secondary School. Monirul's father, Hasan Gazi, expressed, ***'Before this, I was not very concerned about Monirul's education. Living in poverty makes life very challenging, and we didn't focus on education. However, now I understand the importance of studying. I believe my son will shine in the future and make us proud.'Monirul*** expressed his heartfelt gratitude to "Uttaran" and his unwavering determination to alleviate his family's hardships through learning, rekindling the nearly extinguished dreams of an aspiring young student.

A Grandmother's Struggle for Medical Care:



A Tale of Advocacy and Unity in Satkhira

Manjuara Begum and her husband, Md. Bappi Sardar, reside in Colony No. 01, Bakal Islampur. On September 10, 2023, their one-month-old granddaughter fell seriously ill. In the afternoon, Manjuara rushed her to Satkhira Pediatrician. After a thorough examination, the doctor informed them that their granddaughter was suffering from pneumonia and required immediate admission to Satkhira Medical College Hospital.

They arrived at Satkhira Medical College Hospital at 7:00 PM and proceeded to the 6th-floor infant ward for admission. To their dismay, they found the gate to the children's ward locked. Manjuara's daughter and she began calling out for the nurses and ward boys. After about 15 minutes, a nurse finally arrived and inquired about the commotion. She instructed them to wait, assuring them that the gate would be opened in due time. They implored her to see the child's critical condition, but she, along with a ward boy and an Ansar member, treated them rudely.

When they protested this maltreatment, they eventually opened the gate, but not without using force. One of the nurses grabbed the maid who accompanied Manjuara by the throat, and she was also pushed away. Manjuara's younger daughter was knocked down and injured when she collided with the gate.

In response to this unfortunate incident, Manjuara contacted the Colony Rights Group (CMRG) and requested their presence at Satkhira Medical College Hospital. The committee members promptly arrived at the hospital and attempted to address the issue with the in-charge nurses, ward boys, and Ansar members. However, they too faced disrespectful behavior from the hospital staff.

When they protested this maltreatment, they eventually opened the gate, but not without using force. One of the nurses grabbed the maid who accompanied Manjuara by the throat, and she was also pushed away.



To shed light on the situation, the committee members involved local journalists to gather facts from both sides. In the end, Manjuara's granddaughter was turned away without admission, and she had to take her to Satkhira Sadar Hospital for treatment, where she was admitted to the children's ward.

As a result of these events, the CMRG committee held an emergency meeting on September 11, 2023, and the residents of their colony organized a human chain protest in front of Satkhira Medical College Hospital. They also presented a memorandum to the Satkhira District Commissioner, expressing their discontent with the inadequate healthcare services provided.

The Deputy Commissioner contacted Manjuara on September 18, 2023, to hear the full account of the incidents. He advised her to meet with the hospital director, and she complied. The director attentively listened to their grievances and took institutional actions. One ward boy was immediately transferred, and a show-cause letter was issued to the charge nurse. The director personally apologized for the unfortunate incident and encouraged the nurse, ward boy, and Ansar member to do the same. He thanked their committee for advocating for the rights of the underprivileged and assured them of his ongoing support.

The committee chairman emphasized the strength of unity within the CMRG committee and their commitment to fighting for the rights of the community. He also expressed gratitude to the transition and UAOPS project for their active cooperation in securing their rights.

"Aklima's Inspiring Journey:

A Step Towards Resilience Instead of Displacement"



Aklima Khatun, daughter of Mr. Lutfor Gazi, lives in Nebubunia village, Gabura Union, Shyamnagar, Satkhira, Bangladesh. She belongs to a low-income family with four sisters and two brothers, among which she is the 3rd one. She has studied up to the sixth standard. Due to poverty, she was married off at the age of thirteen to Mr. Idris Ali. After having a boy, her husband left them and married someone new. Now, Aklima Khatun is nineteen years old and living in her father's house. Her father is very old and can not earn. They are leading their life with much difficulty.



Meanwhile, cyclones including Aila, Amphan, and Bulbul have affected their lives and livelihoods destructively. Somehow, they are managing their lives in a small house at the dam.

The project has established a Community Development Group (CDG) through the active participation and involvement of all members of the Gabura union. The CDG members are the driving force behind this community-led development approach of the project, with its members working together to identify and mitigate the risks and vulnerabilities faced by their community, using the Risk Reduction Action Plan (RRAP) they have already developed. When Aklima Khatun was facing the challenges of her difficult life, the CDG members of this project played a crucial role in providing her with support and making her journey somewhat easier.

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Reflecting on her journey, Akalima Khatun said, ***"When I lost all hope in life and wanted to run away, I was thinking of working in garments, then on the advice of CDG members here, I built this small shop, now I am dreaming of a better future for myself and my child. If someone lends a helping hand to me, I can manage the shop well and live on a couple of handfuls a day/ sustain myself on a modest income".*** She expressed her gratitude to the CDG members for their kind advice, which has given her hope for a better tomorrow.

Lutfar Gazi, Aklima Khatun's father, shared, ***"My daughter was in a state of depression and contemplating leaving our area in search of work. However, with the help of CDGs, she was able to build her shop and is now living with a new hope to have a better life for her son."*** Lutfar added that if he had the ability, he would have supported Aklima in setting up her tea stall, as she has a child who needs to be educated for a better future ahead.



Aklima Khatun is filled with new hope as she has transformed her tea stall into a thriving grocery shop, paving the way for a more prosperous life for herself and her child. Her dreams now extend beyond mere stability, as she envisions a future where she can provide greater comfort and security for her only child. Moreover, she aspires to reach a stage where she can assist other vulnerable women in achieving a better life, sharing the blessings that she has received.

A Climate Migrants Tashlima Khatun's Journey to Financial Independence



Tashlima Khatun, a 34-year-old widow residing in the Sultanpur Sardar Para slum of Satkhira Municipality, found herself in a difficult situation due to climate change disasters. She had been displaced from her home and was living in government-provided housing that was far from permanent. Financial hardships led her to marry a small tea trader and they struggled to make ends meet with their tea shop located alongside a government road. Tashlima became a mother of three daughters but financial constraints forced her eldest daughter into an early marriage, despite her desire to pursue an education. She was determined to ensure that her middle daughter reached class 8 and her younger daughter attended class 3.

However, a cruel twist of fate struck in 2022 when Tashlima's husband was accidentally killed, leaving her mentally distressed and her family in extreme despair. With no other source of income to support her family, they were barely able to afford two handfuls of food each day. Despite the challenges, Tashlima took over her husband's tea business; although her lack of capital and experience in the tea trade meant that she struggled to generate any income from it. Nonetheless, she persevered, attempting to achieve financial independence through her own efforts.



With no other source of income to support her family, they were barely able to afford two handfuls of food each day.



In mid-2022, a project was initiated by Uttaran in Satkhira Municipality, aimed at improving the livelihoods, education, health awareness, and overall well-being of displaced people living in five slums affected by climate change and disasters in coastal areas. Tashlima became a beneficiary of this project, initially listed and later shortlisted as per the project criteria. She initially struggled to change her circumstances due to a lack of capital and support. Then project provided her with comprehensive guidance, skill development training and business management tools tailored to her needs.

Now, Tashlima earns around 300 to 350 BDT per day from her business, marking a significant increase in her gross income compared to before. With this newfound financial stability, she can meet her family's basic needs and support her daughters' education. She has even managed to save some of her income for the future. Tashlima's family life has greatly improved and she now has aspirations to further expand her small tea business and invest her savings for alternative income.



Strengthening Community-driven Disaster Preparedness



People often believe that only strong organizations can help local communities develop. However, our society has yet to fully accept that women-led organizations can also drive progress. Unfortunately, few people recognize that women are capable of effectively leading and managing organizations.

The Community Development Group of Burigoalini Union is challenging these traditional beliefs. They are actively undertaking development initiatives to improve the quality of life for people in their community.

In 2022, Educo Bangladesh initiated the climate displacement intervention in the Burigoalini union, where the establishment of a Community Development Group (CDG) took place. This CDG is composed of a diverse group of professionals hailing from the union. Within the 17-member CDG, 11 are women, and 6 are men. Following the establishment of CDGs, a range of activities were initiated, including leadership development training and organizational skill enhancement. These efforts aim to inspire individuals to engage in various developmental endeavors. Consequently, they have become actively involved in various social development initiatives.

Shyamnagar, the largest upazila in the coastal district of Satkhira, confronts frequent disasters. This recurrent cycle of disasters disrupts the area's development and inflicts repeated damage to the local infrastructure, burdening the residents of the union. Burigoalini, a coastal union within Shyamnagar, consistently grapples with river erosion, resulting in the loss of life, property, livestock, and biodiversity, affecting their everyday life and shattering the dreams of families.

Taking the area into consideration, the CDG, engaging the entire community, conducted risk assessments and developed a community-based action plan for disaster risk reduction. Their journey begins with a commitment to implementing this plan.

To raise awareness of disaster risk reduction (DRR), the CDGs organize monthly courtyard meetings with the community people. These meetings are a chance to discuss ways to reduce disaster risks and to involve the community in planning and discussions.

Taking the area into consideration, the CDG, engaging the entire community, conducted risk assessments and developed a community-based action plan for disaster risk reduction. Their journey begins with a commitment to implementing this plan.

Recognizing the critical issue of drinking water scarcity during disasters, CDG implemented a plan to protect drinking water sources by repairing the existing inactive Pond Sand Filter and kept the maintenance work. They also raised the low-lying pond banks with soil to prevent saltwater intrusion in case of disasters. They have also undertaken road repair to ensure accessibility and successfully repaired six roads so far.

Their efforts didn't stop there; they persisted with their monthly home inspection program to mitigate disaster risks for the local residents. Every month, each CDG member visits five households and inspires them to take household-level preparedness measures, including tying houses with ropes. Their dedication helped convince the community that self-awareness is key to reducing the impact of disasters.

In addition to this, the CDG established a youth group comprised of young individuals from the area. This youth group has been actively engaged in implementing various development initiatives aimed at raising awareness. They educate the community about disaster preparedness, drug awareness, and the ongoing epidemic of dengue fever. The CDG also maintains regular consultation activities to improve the housing conditions and necessary measures of household-level preparedness of community members.

The CDG has maintained consistent communication with the Union Parishad to secure social safety net assistance and has successfully enrolled 25 to 30 members in old-age, widow, and disability allowances.

Through collaboration with various government and private departments, the CDG has brought agricultural resources, training, and support to the area. Their disaster preparedness campaign, carried out in coordination with CPP and UDMC to address Cyclone Mocha, has been highly appreciable.

CDG members have effectively coordinated with other NGOs operating in the area to procure disaster relief supplies, which will play a crucial role during times of crisis. Recognizing that fishing enclosures are especially vulnerable to disasters, the CDG has advised fish farmers to fortify their enclosures with nets, a visible change in the area today.

Promoting reforestation, CDG members actively encourage local residents to plant trees in the area. They continue their tree-planting program as a preventive measure against disasters. Collaborating with various organizations, they have successfully launched afforestation initiatives along roadsides and within settlements.

As the disaster season approaches, the CDG Youth Group persists in campaigning for awareness about signals and flags within the community.

Dilip Majhi, the CDG Cashier, emphasized, "Our continuous efforts are aimed at minimizing the damage caused by disasters."

CDG President Arpana Mallick stated, "CDG is wholeheartedly dedicated to the noble cause of community development. Our primary goal is to reduce the impact of disasters and raise awareness within the community. Educo Bangladesh has consistently supported us. Today, we have initiated the Disaster Fund, which will be utilized for the welfare of the needy during times of disaster."

Haji Nazrul Islam, Chairman of Burigoalini UP, expressed his admiration, saying, "This local group sets a remarkable example of clean and effective awareness work. The members selflessly contribute their humanity to conduct awareness activities, which is truly inspiring. Their emergency fund serves as a model for our union. I am always ready to support and collaborate with them, wishing them continued success."

It is the hope that CDG will persist in its voluntary efforts and become a role model organization for disaster risk reduction in the area.

Lovely Khatun's Inspiring Journey of Resilience and Community Leadership



Lovely Khatun, a resilient climate victim turned community collaborator, is a 34-year-old resident of Bakal Islampur-02 colony under Satkhira municipality. Her life took an unexpected turn when, at the age of 13, she was married off as a common practice in her locality. Facing the challenges of early family life, Lovely became a mother at 14, only to see her family break apart the following year. The devastating cyclone Aila-2009 struck, wiping out everything they had, including her father's tea shop, which was their main source of income.

With the help of a relative, Lovely and her father relocated to Bakal Islampur-02 colony, along with her two brothers' families. Despite her hardships, she pursued various means to support her family, including working as a daily wage laborer and even resorting to child labor. Despite the difficulties, Lovely persevered, venturing into homestead-based activities such as goat rearing and chicken farming to sustain her family.



Lovely's journey took another challenging turn when her father became paralyzed, leading her to take over the operation of his tea shop. Despite facing a second failed marriage, she remained resilient, determined to provide for her parents and two children. Forced to close the tea shop due to financial crises, Lovely embraced other means of income generation, including running a cloth business.

Lovely's dedication and achievements have garnered recognition from government officials, who now respond promptly to her requests.



In a fortunate turn of events, the "Strengthening the capacity of those displaced by disaster and climate-related causes to cope with adverse situations" project, initiated by 'Uttaran,' in the Satkhira area brought a new opportunity for Lovely. Elected as the president of the Climate Migrants Rights Group (CMRG), formed as part of the project, Lovely underwent various training sessions on understanding rights and how to claim them. This role transformed her into a community leader, connecting with various stakeholders and assisting her fellow residents in accessing services. Lovely acknowledged, *"The government officials evaluate me differently when I go to their office. They respond instantly, and my work comes first. It is great when members of my colony can get privileges in the municipality or government office through my efforts. I feel proud to do something for my community."*

Lovely became a beneficiary, receiving training on small business management and a substantial cloth supply to expand her cloth business.Lovely khatun stated that *"Previously, my business yielded a maximum monthly profit of BDT 1,000 Taka. However, with the support from the project and by trading these cloth items, my current monthly profit has increased to about BDT 4,000 Taka."* With newfound knowledge and support, her monthly profits increased significantly, allowing her to cover her father's medical expenses, ensure her children's education, and meet other essential family needs.

Lovely's dedication and achievements have garnered recognition from government officials, who now respond promptly to her requests. She takes pride in being a catalyst for positive change in her community, facilitating privileges for her fellow residents in municipal and government offices. Grateful for the support from the project, Lovely acknowledges that she has come this far due to the assistance of project workers and hopes to continue benefiting and contributing to her community in the future.

Seeds of progress: Napier Growth in Coastal Region



Minoti Roy, a confident and enterprising woman aged 40 from Abad Chandipur village in coastal Shyamnagar upazila, is a shining example of this progress. She lives with her husband and two children in a small family.

To improve her family's circumstances, Minoti started raising cows. They already grew different crops throughout the year to meet their family's needs in their homestead, but they faced challenges with cow rearing. The cost of buying food and grass for the cows was a burden. This pushed her to find a solution—how to grow the necessary grass for the cows themselves.

In 2022, Educo Bangladesh initiated a climate displacement intervention funded by EU-UNOPS LiD in the three most vulnerable unions of Shyamnagar Upazila, Satkhira, including the Burigoalini Union where Minoti Roy resides. Within these unions, three Community Development Groups (CDGs) were established, each dedicated to community development, risk assessment, vulnerability evaluation, and collaborative climate risk mitigation efforts.

It is seen that the high salt content in the soil made it difficult to find suitable grass for the cattle To combat this problem, the CDG of Burigoalini Union, based on the recommendation from an action research by Khulna University, decided to showcase the cultivation of salt-tolerant grass. This endeavor is aimed at solv the cattle feed issue and contributing positively to the environment.



At that time, Minoti, eager to make a positive change, showed her keen interest in cultivating this special grass after learning about it from the CDG.



At the regular monthly meeting, the CDG members deliberated on screening and reached out to identify the ideal and qualified candidate who would receive the grant support for the demonstration plot. At that time, Minoti, eager to make a positive change, showed her keen interest in cultivating this special grass after learning about it from the CDG. Following collective approval from the CDGs, she received invaluable guidance from the local Agriculture Office on cultivating Napier grass, a type of salt-tolerant grass.

Now, Napier grass is thriving in the salty soil, and she is benefiting greatly. She can now take care of her cows comfortably, and milk production has also increased. In addition, she sells the extra grass, reducing her cow-rearing costs and increasing her income from selling milk.

Presently, Napier grass is flourishing in the saline soil, resulting in significant benefits for her. It allows her to look after her cows with ease, leading to an increase in milk production. Furthermore, she sells the remaining grass after feeding her cow, minimizing the expenses associated with cow rearing and increasing her earnings from milk sales.

Jamal Hussain, the Assistant Agriculture Officer, emphasized, "The rapid growth of this grass, with regrowth within a month after cutting, makes it highly profitable. Minoti Roy's work will be exemplary for the area."
Livestock Officer Subrata Mandal highlighted the previous challenge, stating, "Cattle rearing was exceedingly challenging due to the scarcity of suitable grass. With the successful growth of this grass in saline areas, more people will now be interested in cattle rearing."

Minoti envisions not only scaling up this cultivation for commercial purposes but also initiating her own cow farm, where she can generate employment opportunities for others. Just like Minti Roy, women in suburban areas are diligently pursuing their interests and initiatives, putting in hard work and determination to combat the impacts of climate change, aspiring to achieve their dreams through their resolute self-confidence.

Najma Khatun: Overcoming Physical Challenges to



Inspire Pride in Her Community

Najma Khatun, at the age of 30, is a dedicated climate refugee activist who has overcome significant challenges in her life. Born with a disability, she initially felt like a burden to her family and society. The effects of climate change forced her family to seek refuge in the Sultanpur Sardar Para slum of Satkhira Municipality, due to financial constraints.

Tragedy struck when Najma was just 10 years old, as her father passed away, leaving her family consisting of her mother and sister without a breadwinner. With only her mother's income from working in other people's homes, it became challenging for the family to make ends meet, and they often went without proper meals. Her elder sister was married off at an early age due to financial difficulties.



Later, her mother fell ill, making it impossible for her to continue working in other households. This loss of income led Najma and her mother to seek shelter at her elder sister's house. As a disabled individual, Najma faced uncertainties about her future, including the prospects of finding employment or getting married. Despite her physical challenges, she persevered, maintaining her education and earning a livelihood by working as a tutor and a tailor from home.

As a disabled individual, Najma faced uncertainties about her future, including the prospects of finding employment or getting married.



Najma eventually completed her honors degree, and she began striving for financial independence through her tailoring skills. In July 2022, Najma's life took a positive turn with the support of Uttaran,. Through their project aimed at increasing the income and ensuring access to essential services for the displaced people living in the colonies affected by climate change in Satkhira municipality, Najma was listed as a beneficiary.

She initially faced challenges in her pursuit of changing her destiny and becoming financially independent due to a lack of capital and support. However, she received invaluable guidance, skill development training, and business management tools to support her tailoring work, thanks to the project. She also gained awareness of her rights through various training sessions.

Today, Najma is an active member of the Satkhira Municipal Disability Welfare Committee, serving as a 5-member special committee. She earns around 200 to 300 taka per day through her tailoring work, a significant increase in her income compared to before. This income not only supports her family but also allows her to save for the future.

Najma Khatun's life has significantly improved, and she is now much more self-sufficient, aiming to become an entrepreneur in the future. Despite her physical challenges, she has become a source of pride for herself and her community. She attributes these positive changes in her life to the transition project and expresses deep gratitude to the donor organizations, including The European Union, UNOPS and Uttaran, for the transformation she has experienced through their project.

“Resilience Sweetened:

Monmohini’s success over adversity in challenging climate”



Monmohini Rani, a resilient 35-year-old woman, shows a successful example of overcoming the adversities of life in challenging climatic situations by starting a successful sweet packet production business.

She resides on a mere five percent of the land in Burigoalini village within the Burigoalini union, Shyamnagar, Satkhira. Her family comprises a disabled husband and an elderly mother-in-law, along with a disabled son. Despite enduring the constant challenge of family hardships, she works tirelessly to support her family, engaging in activities such as fishing and labor on other people's land due to her husband's physical limitations.Her life has been filled with adversity, yet she refuses to surrender to despair. Her husband, earning a daily wage of 50 taka by working at a local fishery, faces limited job opportunities due to his disability. During a time when her husband fell seriously ill, they had to sell their land to cover his medical expenses. The uncertainty of how to secure a future for her child and manage family expenses weighs heavily on her.



In 2022, the EU-UNOPS LiD-funded climate displacement intervention implemented by Educo Bangladesh initiated interventions in the Burigoalini Union. A Community Development Group (CDG) was formed to prevent, protect, and respond to climate-induced displacement at the community level as part of the project.

During a time when her husband fell seriously ill, they had to sell their land to cover his medical expenses. The uncertainty of how to secure a future for her child and manage family expenses weighs heavily on her.



The CDG discussed Monmohini Rani's family situation during their monthly meetings and explored options for alternative employment, taking into account her husband's physical condition. They decided to train her in making sweet packets. Following a five-day training period, Monmohini Rani was advised to purchase goods worth 5000 taka from the project, marking the start of her entrepreneurial journey.

Together, Monmohini Rani and her husband began making sweet packets, a profession well-suited for them. Their efforts have been largely successful, and the venture has significantly alleviated their financial struggles. Each packet yields a profit of 2 taka after deducting all costs, and they produce 200 to 250 packets daily, resulting in a daily profit of around 400-500 taka. Their monthly profit ranges between 8,000-10,000 taka. Although the project support was a little, it proved instrumental in transforming their fortunes. Today, they can afford to send their son to school and have even purchased a cow, a evidence of their improved circumstances.

Monmohini Rani, her voice filled with emotion, said, ***"I have suffered greatly in my life. No work was too low for me if it meant feeding my disabled husband, disabled children, and elderly mother-in-law. Today, I am successful and no longer in need. I have been able to create my own business at home without having to work for others."***

She aspires to grow her business and support underprivileged families, with a particular focus on individuals with disabilities. Her goal is to unite disadvantaged housewives and widows within her enterprise, aiming to empower everyone to live a life of dignity.

Educo

Education and Development Foundation – Educo is a global development and humanitarian action NGO with over 30 years' experience working in 14countries to defend children and their rights, and especially the right to an equitable and quality education. We work with children and their communities to promote just and equitable societies which guarantee their rights and wellbeing. We envision a world where all children fully enjoy their rights and lead a life of dignity. We are a member of ChildFund Alliance that acts on behalf of children to defend their rights, particularly their right to receive quality education. Since 1999, we have been implementing education and development projects in Bangladesh in the marginalized urban and rural areas and with time we expanded our works to broader geographical areas. We are now working in 13 districts of the country. works as a catalyst. We work with children and their communities to promote just and equitable societies that guarantee their rights and wellbeing.

Uttaran

"Uttaran," which means 'transition' in the Bangla language, has been living up to its name through myriad development interventions since 1985, starting from Jatpur village of Tala upazila under Satkhira district, aiming to uphold the rights of the poor and underprivileged. The organization was founded with the aim of building a society free from all inequalities, where everyone can access and is aware of their basic rights. As a people-centered organization, Uttaran has been using a rights-based approach to alleviate poverty, diversify livelihood opportunities, and empower poor communities throughout the southwest coastal region, gradually expanding to other parts of the country. Uttaran is highly revered and trustworthy, supporting 395,307 households alone in 2022-23, focusing on those affected by climate issues, landlessness, marginalized women, and socioeconomic divides.

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