

The LCA Sundarban Coalition Response to Cyclone Sitrang

On the evening of October 24, 2022, Cyclone "Sitrang" made landfall. Despite the fact that the cyclone was classified as a "cyclonic storm," poor forecasting and the unexpected formation of the cyclone and its trajectory had a devastating impact on Bangladesh's central coastal region. According to the Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD), the wind speed peaked at 74 kmph in Cox's Bazar and Chattogram at 9:30 p.m. on Monday, October 24, 2022. The cyclone brought rain and thundershowers, causing substantial damage to climate-vulnerable communities, destroying productive assets and agricultural land.

For the members of the Sundarban Coalition, this was the first organized effort to support vulnerable communities to assure their protection, recovery, and rehabilitation since the coalition's inception in late August. Despite the fact that the coalition had neither completed their full orientations, nor designed their first Joint Action Plan, they moved into action – and it was the first time, grassroots CBOs plans, and actions were identified, documented, and shared across coalition members, public sector partners, and L/NGOs.

Cyclone Sitrang's forecast escalated from level 3 to 7 in three hours, and people only had around 5 hours to evacuate before the cyclone made landfall. As a result, most national and humanitarian organizations were unable to aid in any life-saving actions. It was difficult for the Bangladesh government's Cyclone Preparedness Program (CPP) staff and volunteers to do this alone. Fortunately, the Sundarban Coalition members who are grounded with the local communities were able to dispatch large numbers of volunteers and were able to quickly respond to this situation. With the coalition's support and the Secretariat's facilitation, urgent meetings were held online, and strategies were formulated for assisting the local government and the Union Disaster Management Committees (UDMC) in disseminating cyclone warnings and motivating people to go to cyclone shelters. Furthermore, because the coalition CBO's share strong goodwill within local communities and all of their volunteers are members of that community, their strategy of effectively communicating with the local people to move to the cyclone shelter has proved to be incredibly successful. They could quickly identify which houses are more vulnerable, where an embankment breach is imminent, and which cyclone shelters lack proper food supplies or management.

The coalition Secretariat also aided the members by providing technical knowledge and coordination support. Constant monitoring was carried out, and the Secretariat provided members with forecasts on the cyclone's location. A control center was established by the Secretariat and the four Coordinating organizations of the coalition (Uttaran, AVAS, Jago Nari and CNRS) in each district to keep Coalition members informed of the situation. The control room gathered data from the members and spotted weaknesses in the management operation. It then delegated more responsibilities to the members to decrease risks and management gaps.

The Secretariat assisted the members in realizing their potential and their strengths through a coordinated effort, which was a first for them. The approaches they used to uncover risks and gaps proved to be immensely successful in helping them adopt a more specialized, targeted strategy for protecting the lives and assets of the communities. The secretariat learned that just by providing the right information at the right time, CBOs have the power to make communities more resilient to disasters, increasing the absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities. The learning also includes that along with the technical knowledge, CBOs must be equipped with the necessary tools to take more proactive actions and sustainably function, in order to build resilience to disasters.

Shyamnagor, Satkhira Lead by Uttaran with CBOs: CEDIO, SAMS, Prerona

- A control room opened for 4 working areas
- Distribution cluster wise responsibilities
- Motivate community people to take shelter in Cyclone Shelters.
- Uttaran distributed cooked and dry foods for 1500 people at Shyamnagor, Asashuni, Koyra subdistricts.
- Prepared volunteers to prevent Gender Based Violence.
- Announcement of warning signals through loudspeakers.
- Coordination and communication with Local government and Local administration.



Koyra, Khulna led by CNRS with CSOs: Orarian Development Foundation, Patherkhali Miloni Jubo Shangho, Mohila O Shishu Songhothon.

- Coordination and communication with local bodies and Coalition Secretariat.
- Prepared volunteers.
- Repaired broken dams
- Engaged volunteers for safety and security of the community people in shelters.

Taltoli, Barguna led by Jago Nari with CSOs: RSDO, CBDP, Ishana Nari Foundation

- Opened a Control room
- At Barguna Jago Nari, CBDP, Isana Nari Foundation, RSDO took initiative to distribute dry and cooked food for the community.
- Attend Emergency District Disaster Management Committee Meeting
- Rescue and taken to cyclone shelter
- Meeting with volunteer group
- The road is cleared removing the fallen trees.
- Volunteers have given mental support to those who are at the cyclone shelter.



Kolapara, Patuakhali, Led by AVAS with CSOs: Sheree, Golap and Dhulasher

- Attended District disaster Management Committee meeting.
- Make the shelter suitable for use.
- The Adabashi community took shelter.
- Distribution of food.
- Volunteer orientation.