

DISPLACED BY CLIMATE: THE HUMAN COST

CLIMATE
ISSUE 01

"**B**ut we are human too. What we need most is a decent place to live, a home that provides safety and dignity"



Supported by



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To know more about INFLUENCERS:



Preface



The climate crisis is no longer a distant threat; it's a harsh reality that is reshaping lives and communities across the globe. In Bangladesh, the effects are felt deeply, with rising sea levels, extreme weather, and unpredictable climate patterns becoming the new normal. Yet, in the face of these overwhelming challenges, there are stories of innovation, necessity of resilience and hope stories that deserve to be heard.

This magazine is born out of a desire to amplify those stories along with a tribute to those voices. Our focus is not just on documenting the diverse condition of the victims, but also on exploring the potential for change through collaboration. We've brought together climate victims, experts, and activists to share their experiences, insights, and solutions. Through their voices, we aim to shed light on the realities of climate change and the urgent need for collective action.



Our mission extends beyond raising awareness. We seek to influence policy, educate the next generation, and empower vulnerable communities with the knowledge they need to adapt and mitigate the impacts of climate change. This magazine, alongside our documentary and other outreach efforts, is a step toward bridging the knowledge gap that exists in our society, especially among the youth and policymakers.

"We believe that by understanding the challenges we face, and by listening to those on the front lines, we can inspire a movement that drives real change."

Objective

This initiative aims to address the pressing climate crisis in Bangladesh by fostering awareness, empowering vulnerable communities, and engaging policymakers. The project underscores the significance of knowledge dissemination and advocacy in mitigating the impacts of climate change while promoting sustainable development.

Key Goals



AWARENESS CREATION- Educating a broad audience, with particular emphasis on youth and vulnerable groups, about the intricacies of climate change, as well as adaptation and mitigation strategies.
-Engaging policymakers through compelling narratives and practical solutions to inspire meaningful policy enhancements.



YOUTH ENGAGEMENT- Bridging the knowledge gap among young professionals and students to empower them in advocating for sustainable environmental policies.



COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT-

-Targeted support for women, children, and individuals with disabilities, who are disproportionately affected by the ramifications of climate change.
-Fostering equity and resilience within impacted communities.



POLICY ADVOCACY - Influencing policymakers by illustrating the realities faced by climate-impacted individuals, while proposing actionable and effective solutions.

Approach

|CONTENT CREATION

Development of a documentary and magazine that highlight the stories of climate victims, detailing their challenges and innovative responses. Utilizing social media platforms, including reels and short videos, to broaden the outreach and impact of these narratives.

|COLLABORATION

Forming partnerships with esteemed organizations such as ICCCAD and YouthNet, as well as educational institutions, to enhance the overall effectiveness of the project.

Distribution

Employing both online platforms and offline networks to disseminate project outputs, thereby galvanizing a social movement for climate justice.

Expected Outcomes

Increased climate literacy within youth and vulnerable communities.

Empowered communities equipped with the knowledge to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Progress in policy changes that favor sustainable practices and disaster risk reduction.

Cultivation of a generation of informed advocates committed to promoting sustainability and resilience.

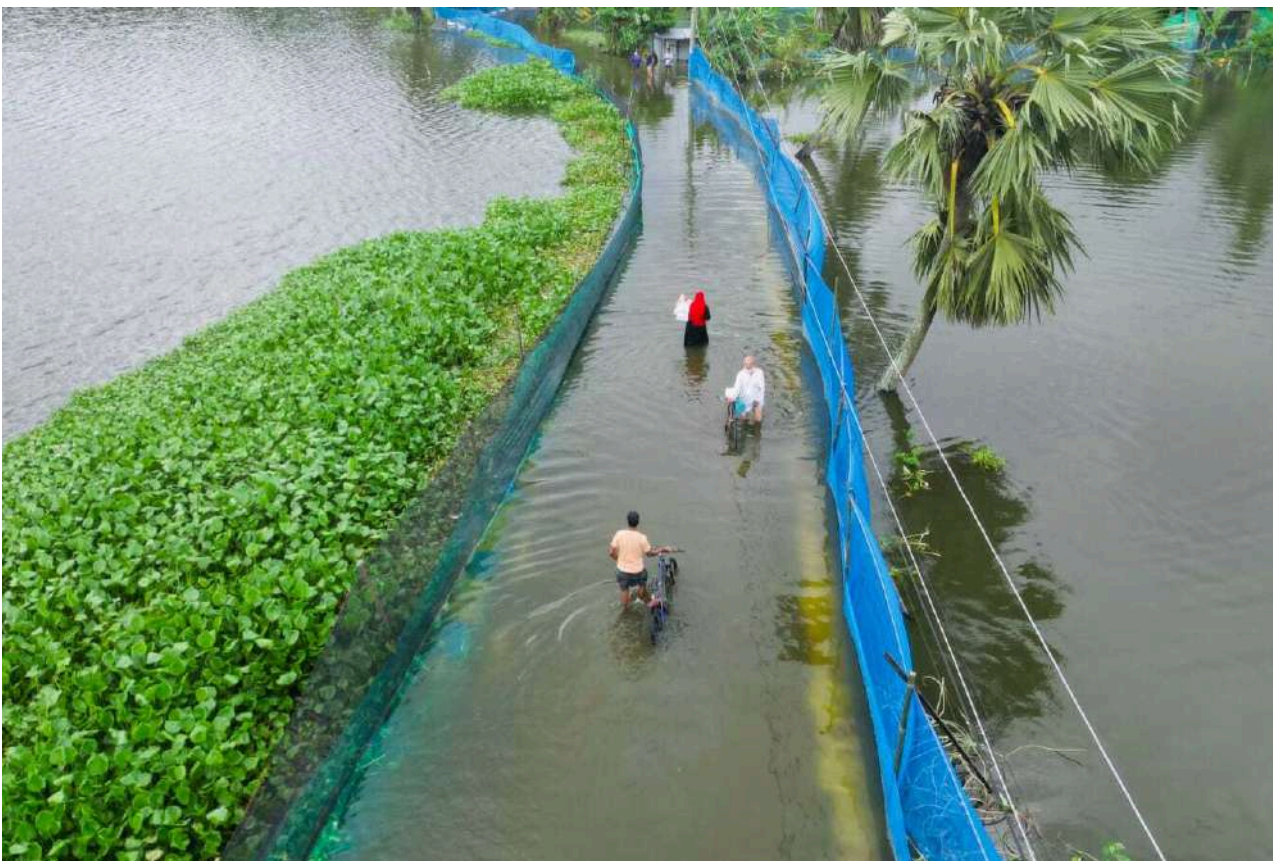


Photo courtesy- YouthNet Global

Climate Crisis in Bangladesh

The climate crisis in Bangladesh transcends environmental concerns, unfolding as a profound human narrative of resilience and struggle. Millions confront the tangible consequences of a rapidly changing planet, with their daily lives, health, and futures at stake.

Rising Sea Levels

Coastal regions such as Khulna and Barisal are experiencing significant land loss to the encroaching sea. Families are compelled to abandon their ancestral homes as saltwater intrusion devastates farmlands and contaminates drinking water sources. The ocean's relentless advance erodes both land and livelihoods, presenting communities with untenable choices. Projections indicate that with a 50 cm rise in sea level, Bangladesh could lose approximately 11% of its land by 2050, potentially displacing up to 18 million people.

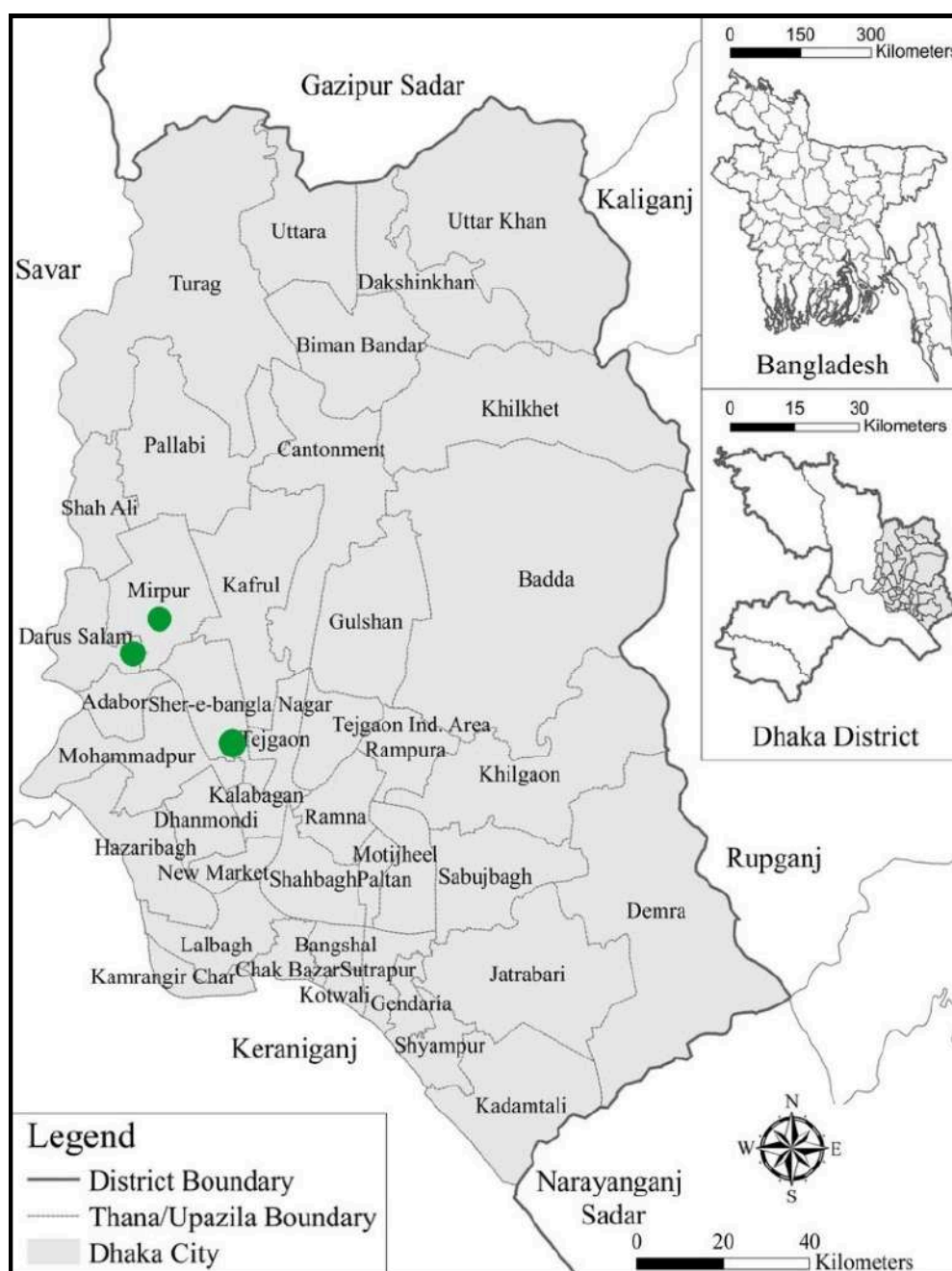
Extreme Weather

The frequency and intensity of cyclones and floods have escalated, becoming annual calamities. Cyclone Amphan in 2020, for instance, caused widespread devastation. Farmers in the northern regions endure prolonged droughts, while urban populations in Dhaka grapple with severe heat waves and inundated streets. Each climatic event introduces new uncertainties to already precarious lives. In 2024, extreme heat waves across Asia, including Bangladesh, were made 45 times more likely due to climate change, underscoring the direct impact on human health and livelihoods.

Everyday Struggles

Agricultural communities face crop failures due to erratic rainfall patterns, jeopardizing food security. Urban residents contend with oppressive heat and waterlogged infrastructure, disrupting daily routines and economic activities. The climate crisis is reshaping daily life, threatening health, employment, and future prospects. In 2024, floods destroyed approximately 1.1 million metric tons of rice in Bangladesh, exacerbating food shortages and economic strain.

This crisis transcends mere statistics; it embodies the lived experiences of real people striving to survive as their environment undergoes relentless transformation.



In Dhaka, lesser-known settlements like Dhalibari Farmgate, Mirpur Duaripara, Mirpur Jhilpara, and Kallyanpur Pora Colony face severe climate-driven challenges yet remain largely overlooked in research and development efforts. While Korail, the city's largest informal settlement, receives significant attention and support, these communities struggle with overcrowding, poor sanitation, inadequate access to clean water and healthcare, and little to no visibility. Many residents are climate migrants seeking better lives, but due to their hidden or less-publicized locations, they are often excluded from aid and intervention. Highlighting their realities is essential to ensuring they receive the recognition and support they urgently need.

From the Ground Up: Stories of Resilience and Hope Amidst Climate Change

In the bustling streets of Dhaka or the remote corners of Bangladesh, the impacts of climate change are undeniable. Through the lens of the Influencers project, we explore a few of the countless stories of those who bear its weight most heavily climate migrants. These stories are not the whole picture but serve as poignant examples of resilience, innovation, and the undying spirit of communities adapting to their new realities. They highlight the human cost of climate change while showcasing efforts to create safer, sustainable futures for those displaced.

Ojufa's Story

Ojufa, a woman from Bhola, has faced floods throughout her life. River erosion was nothing new to her; it was a constant threat. But one year, the floods were worse than usual. The excessive water caused the riverbank to erode, and her home was swept away, leaving her and her family with nothing. ***“My father and grandfather lived stable lives working in the fields.”*** Ojufa recalls. ***“If not for the river erosion, we would still have our lands.”***

When it rains heavily, her current home becomes submerged in water, sometimes reaching up to her waist. During these times, she and the other residents have no choice but to stand on the higher road, waiting for the water to drain away.

Work is scarce, and most days, Ojufa has no income, making it difficult to survive. ***“I have no work most days,”*** she says, ***“so there’s no money.”*** For the future, Ojufa’s

wishes are simple. She dreams of having a piece of land where she can build a home and work in the fields. ***“All I want is a land where I can live and work,”*** she shares. Ojufa hopes the government can help her achieve this, providing the stability she has long sought.

Now, Ojufa lives in a slum in Duaripara, Rupnagar. Unfortunately, life here isn’t much different.



Photo- Duaripara Colony

Parveen's life in Dhaka

Parveen lives in the heart of Dhaka, in a crowded and struggling slum known as Jhilpara Slum on Hajiroad. Her life is a testament to resilience amidst adversity. Parveen is a mother of three, and her husband makes a modest living as a rickshaw puller. Despite their hard work, their lives are a constant battle against poverty and hardship.

Parveen's story began in Bhola, her ancestral home. There, her family once had a stable life. But when the river eroded their home and their future alongside, the cruelty of nature changed everything. Parveen's mother had abandoned their homeland and sought refuge from the devastation in this chaotic slum in Dhaka.



Photo- Duaripara Colony

Her remarks reveal the heart of a mother who longs for a secure future for everyone who faces challenges, not just her family. She makes a straightforward appeal for the right to a decent and safe place to live.

Now, in her tiny, fragile home, Parveen faces relentless challenges. When it rains, the streets become a muddy, filthy body of water that floods her house creating dangerous conditions. The slum is full of dangers and threats, and Parveen often has to fight for both survival and basic needs. Clean drinking water is a scarce resource, and proper sanitation is a distant dream.

They are susceptible to accidents and other tragedies because of the risky location of their house. With a voice full of steely determination, Parveen speaks the truth :

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"Above all else, a person needs a place to call home. As slum dwellers, we are often undervalued. But we are human too. What we need most is a decent place to live a home that provides safety and dignity."

”

Firoza Begum

Firoza Begum's life was a tapestry woven with threads of hardship and resilience. Kishoreganj, her birthplace, was a place she called home until the relentless flood swept away everything.

With four children to care for and a husband who toiled as a rickshaw puller, Firoza's world was turned upside down. The decision to move to Dhaka was a desperate gamble, a search for a new beginning amidst the chaos of the city.

Firoza's daughter, once a beacon of hope, had been forced to abandon her studies to shoulder the weight of their family's financial burden. Her young shoulders carried the weight of a world that seemed determined to crush them. With unwavering determination,

Firoza rented a small shop, a glimmer of hope in the midst of despair. But fate had other plans. The shop, a symbol of their fragile independence, was stolen, leaving them reeling from yet another blow.

The news of a 50,000 taka fine sent shockwaves through their already fragile existence. Firoza's voice, once filled with the laughter of a mother, was now laced with the weariness of despair. **"How can I possibly provide for my family with such little income?"** she questioned, her eyes filled with a mix of fear and determination. Firoza has no experience of household chores before and her life had always focused on small businesses. **"Now I'm so helpless that I can't even manage 5000/10000 taka to start a business"**, she shares.

Manora's story

In the heart of Dhaka, amidst the cacophony of urban life, Manora Begum's story unfolds a tale woven with threads of resilience, loss, and an unyielding desire for a better life. Originally from Patuakhali, Manora found herself navigating the harsh realities of life in a Dhalibari slum after being displaced by relentless floods that swept through her village. Manora's new home is a cramped room where she lives with her family, paying a steep rent of 6,000 Taka. The space is barely

enough for four or five people, forcing them to share every inch. The incessant rains and flooding have rendered her unable to step outside, trapping her family in a cycle of despair. The electricity problems compound their struggles; when the floodwaters rise, they are left without power or means to communicate with the outside world. Manora's husband, once healthy and industrious, has succumbed to asthma since moving to Dhaka leaving

Manora as the solbreadwinner. She works tirelessly in household jobs, but the income is barely sufficient to cover their basic needs. Tragedy struck when her son-in-law died from heatstroke during a brutal heatwave.

This loss deepened their suffering and highlighted the vulnerability of families like hers in the face of climate change and urban challenges. Manora reflects on her past with longing; life in Patuakhali was simpler and more fulfilling. She dreams of returning to her village, where she believes she could live peacefully with her family. Despite the hardships they face, Manora feels abandoned by the government.

Anowara Begum's life

In the midst of a large city, where towering buildings touch the sky, a forgotten world lies beneath a slum. This is where a woman named Anowara Begum lives, whose life exemplifies endurance, struggle, and hardship. Anowara was born into an impoverished family in Sirajganj, just like her parents before her. Anowara realized that childhood was an unaffordable privilege. By the age of seven, she was working at many places, earning a little to support her family. But life at roadside cottage was rough and merciless. The streets were usually filled with noise, children wailing

“***The assistance promised by the government never reaches us,***” she laments with frustration. ***“Corrupt individuals consume it all.”***”

Her firsthand observations reveal a troubling reality: aid is often mismanaged, leaving those who need it most without support. Amidst the chaos and suffering, Manora clings to hope. She dreams of a life where she can provide for her family without fear. Her aspirations are simple yet profound: to live in peace in their own home, away from the turmoil of city life.

sellers yelling and the occasional siren echoing into the night. But behind the continuous chaos, gnawing need that would never go away. Years passed and she got married. But unfortunately, her spouse was not that helpful as he was unemployed. That caused more difficulty in Anowara's life. She gave birth to three daughters. They were residing in a wayside home. However, the government broke that house. After losing their roadside house, they relocated to Dhaka. Their lives are filled with everyday The rent for their one bedroom shanty is exorbitant, water is limited, and power is a luxury they rarely have.

She currently pays 2000 TK per month in housing rent while living in a slum. She must endure excruciating agony in this situation. They never receive clean water or gas in this residence. They have to deal with waterlogging when there is heavy rainfall. Everything is flooded by rainwater. However, the administration does not look at their sufferings. They have no suitable sanitary system. They manage to eat every day, somehow. They frequently have to

forgo eating. As a result, they are malnourished. They were never given the opportunity to receive any form of immunization against any illness or disease. They are deprived of their basic human rights. Still, Anowara finds a way to keep going. They do not have a designated residential place in which they may live peacefully. All she wants is her own home in which she can live at peace.

Hashi's dream

Hashi, a 30-year-old woman from Sirajganj, currently resides in Dhaka. Her life changed drastically when river erosion swept away her house in Sirajganj, forcing her and her family to relocate to the capital. With three children to care for, Hashi and her husband, who works as a rickshaw puller, struggle to make ends meet. Their combined income is barely enough to cover daily necessities, and often, even affording food is a challenge. Hashi's dream of giving her children a better life, especially through education, has been difficult to achieve. When the time came for her eldest son to start school, they were in the midst of moving due to the destruction of their only home. The instability of their situation meant that he never had the chance to begin his education.

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“If we hadn't lost our home, things would have been different,”

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she says, reflecting on how their lives might have been if they had stayed in Sirajganj. In Dhaka, Hashi works as a helping hand in people's homes. The job is tough, and dealing with the occasional rudeness of those she works for makes it even harder. ***“You have to endure it because you need the money,”*** she explains simply. It's a reality she has accepted, even though the work is exhausting and the pay is barely enough to get by. Living in the slum adds another layer of difficulty to her life. The conditions

are poor, and Hashi's family faces the harsh extremes of weather. "In the summer, it gets so hot it's unbearable. When it rains, water comes into our home," she shares. These challenges, combined with their financial struggles, make everyday life an ongoing battle. Despite everything, Hashi hasn't given up on her hopes for her children's future. She dreams of being able to send them to school, believing that education will provide them with opportunities she and her husband never had. **"If they can get an education, they can have a better life,"** she says, holding on to the possibility that, despite their current hardships, her children's future could be brighter.

Jesmin in Dhaka

Jesmin, a mother of three, once lived a stable life in her village by the river. But everything changed when the riverbank erosion took away her home. **"I lost my home,"** she recalled, still shaken by the memory of watching everything she had built disappear into the water.

Now, Jesmin lives in a slum in Duaripara, where life is far from easy. The makeshift shelter she shares with her children and parents offers little protection from the harsh weather. **"It's either too hot or too wet here,"** she explained, referring to the constant struggle of living in a slum where the weather adds to her burdens. The roof leaks when it rains, and the heat makes it unbearable during the dry season.. Her



Photo- Hajibari Colony

parents, who also lost everything in the erosion, rely on her entirely. **"They had nothing left,"** she said. Jesmin is their sole provider, working whatever jobs she can find to feed her family. The uncertainty of each day weighs heavily on her, as does the pressure to protect her children and parents from the challenges they face. All she dreams of is a small piece of land where they can have a stable home.

“**“A home and a land,”**

she said quietly. That's all she asks for a safe place where her children can grow up without the fear of losing everything again. Despite the struggle in Duaripara, that hope keeps her going.

”

Kalachad Prem

Kalachad Prem, 25, lives in Dhaka with his family of six. Originally from Netrokona, a small town in northern Bangladesh, his journey to the bustling city wasn't a choice, but a necessity.

Kalachad's life was forever changed when a powerful storm took away his home back in Netrokona. With no land or assets left, and the prospect of rebuilding seeming impossible, he made the difficult decision to move his family to Dhaka. ***"Life was already hard back home, but after the storm, it became unbearable,"*** he says.

In Dhaka, life wasn't easy either, but it was better than struggling in a town with no opportunities. He found work that allowed him to send his children to school and support his family. ***"I earn enough to get by,"*** he says, ***"which is more than I had before."***

Even so, the challenges of living in the city weigh heavily on Kalachad. The extreme heat, which seems to get worse each year, has affected his family's health. Both of his sons contracted dengue, and the medical expenses nearly crippled him.

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"When the government sent aid to Netrokona after the storm, I was already in Dhaka trying to make a living. Others received help, but I didn't."

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If things had been different if the storm had never taken his home Kalachad knows he would still be in Netrokona, living with his parents in the house he grew up in. But life, as he's learned, doesn't always go as planned.

Now, he focuses on what he has. ***"I don't have big dreams. I just want to provide for my family, and that's enough for me."*** Life in Dhaka may be challenging, but for Kalachad, it's a place where he can keep his family safe, and that, more than anything, is what matters most.

"I spent over 1 lakh 20 thousand Taka on their treatment," he recalls, ***"but thanks to Allah, they recovered."*** Despite these struggles, Kalachad has never received any form of help neither from the government nor any organizations.

Surviving in Dhaka

The interviewee, now 65 years old, originally comes from Patuakhali. Life in the village was extremely difficult, with floods causing the river to erode their land and take away their home. The devastating floods left them homeless, and they lost everything, including a large amount of land to the Payra River. Life in Patuakhali was marked by extreme poverty, where they often had nothing to eat for days, surviving on bananas, vegetables, and whatever little food they could find. Unable to sustain themselves, they moved to Dhaka around 30 years ago, seeking a better life. Initially, the interviewee worked in six households, earning just 5 taka per

job. Life was tough, and they struggled to make ends meet. Now, the interviewee lives with their family in Dhaka, but life remains a challenge. They face regular water logging, where water rises to their knees during storms, forcing them to sit on their beds to avoid the water. Heat waves have made life harder, especially without proper ventilation or a fan. Despite these challenges, they feel that the work environment in Dhaka is good, and people treat them well.

Although they lost their home and land to the river, they long for a time when they can return to their village, even if it means living with less. The dream of a more secure, peaceful life remains strong, where they can provide a better future for their children and live with dignity.

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My ultimate wish is to see my family escape poverty and settle in a place where they can lead a comfortable life.

”

However, their daily life is still a constant struggle, with food insecurity being a major concern. They try to protect their limited belongings during waterlogging and endure sleepless nights when water enters their home. Yet they remain resilient in the face of these hardships. Looking ahead, the interviewee dreams of a better life for their family. They hope to live in a good place, in a decent environment, far from the challenges of slum life.

Background

Bangladesh is facing a growing crisis of internal displacement as climate change intensifies. Communities especially those near rivers, coastal zones, and flood-prone areas are being forced from their homes due to:

- Extreme weather such as storms and flooding
- River erosion destroying land and property

Our research highlights the lives of climate migrants in Dhaka's most vulnerable slums, amplifying their voices and urging for urgent policy action.

Life in Dhaka's Slums

In Dhaka, displaced individuals face physical destruction from extreme weather and the emotional strain of rebuilding their lives in an overcrowded, under resourced city. Research in Dhalibari Colony, Duaripara Colony, Hajiroad, Jhilpara, and Pora Colony revealed:

- Overcrowding and poor sanitation
- Scarce clean water, secure shelter, and medical care
- Daily survival struggles made worse by constant uncertainty

For many, survival is a dream of a permanent home, steady income, and a chance for their children to break free from poverty.

Gaps in Support

Interviewees expressed deep frustration at:

Inadequate housing
Limited access to healthcare
No long term government planning

While local communities try to support one another, the larger systemic issues remain unsolved.

Addressing the Gaps

To address both immediate and long-term needs of displaced people, policy changes must focus on:

Upgrading infrastructure
Ensuring clean water and basic services
Creating a sustainable framework for climate migration response

These are not just narratives of struggle; they are calls to action.

Expert Insights: Voices on Climate Displacement

Nayoka Martinez-Bäckström

First Secretary & Deputy Head of Development Cooperation, Embassy of Sweden in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

In Bangladesh, the stark realities of climate displacement are becoming increasingly vivid. Nayoka Martinez-Bäckström talked about how climate displacement is happening so vividly here in Bangladesh, and that vulnerabilities of Bangladesh will only escalate if we don't make some structural changes to address this, right? And she talked about the fact that we can do things like bits and pieces, like doing activities in the slum areas that are absorbing these displaced people. But that's not enough. Vulnerable populations are being forced from their homes, with the brunt of this migration falling upon urban slums in Dhaka, Chittagong, and a few other major cities. These cities, already grappling with their own challenges, are absorbing displaced communities, creating a fragile equilibrium that teeters on the brink of collapse. Yet, addressing this crisis requires more than scattered activities or patchwork solutions in the slum areas. While such initiatives may alleviate immediate suffering, they fall short of offering long-term sustainability. She highlighted that Every profession can contribute to climate solutions, as climate change is an existential issue for Bangladesh and many other countries.



They need the means to sustain themselves, and this is where whatever profession you choose, you know you will be able to contribute to a climate change solution. It doesn't matter whether you choose to be an artist or you choose to be a what an IT, professional, anything, there is some relevance to, you know, a climate solution, because this is an existential issue for Bangladesh and for many countries, even where I come from.

When interacting with displaced individuals in slums, interviews often reveal a sense of passiveness, a helplessness born of loss. Having lost everything, their final refuge is the slum, a place of often harsher conditions. This is where advocacy and communication become crucial. Young people can encourage displaced populations to recognize their agency and to take steps toward improving their circumstances. She put emphasis on the

fact that governments must be held accountable. Through informed advocacy, young people can push decision-makers to prioritise investments and policies that address these pressing challenges. The space for youth engagement with policymakers has grown significantly in recent years, creating opportunities for meaningful contributions. The road ahead is daunting. The interplay of various disasters, economic instability, and climate-induced displacement presents a labyrinth of challenges. But with the right data, planning, and commitment, solutions are within reach. Young people, with their energy, education, and advocacy, stand at the forefront of this effort, poised to make a difference.

Nayoka Martinez emphasised that the future of Bangladesh depends on finding sustainable ways to manage climate displacement. After the whole conversation, Nayoka really acknowledged the unique role of influencers, who typically promote products or lifestyles, but in this case, youths are advocating for disaster risk management in relation to climate change. She commended the team influencers for choosing a significant issue for Bangladesh, emphasising the importance of long-term actions, accurate data, and effective decision-making tools for resource allocation in disaster risk reduction. Then she concludes by congratulating the team influencers for their amazing work.

Sohanur Rahman

Executive Coordinator, YouthNet Global

The climate crisis is no longer a forecast for Bangladesh; it has become a daily reality. Record-breaking floods in regions like Feni, Noakhali, and Cumilla, recurring floods in Kurigram and Sylhet, and recent heat waves, hailstorms, and droughts clearly demonstrate the increasing frequency and intensity of disasters driven by climate change. Sohanur Rahman highlights the devastating human toll of this crisis:



As a result, people are losing lives, livelihoods, and homes. Many are forced to migrate to secondary cities like Khulna, Barisal, and eventually Chattogram or Dhaka for shelter. However, life in urban slums, such as Korail in Dhaka, offers very poor living conditions, especially for women and adolescents, who often face severe protection challenges.

This migration crisis calls for urgent action, with Rahman emphasizing the need to transform urban areas into climate resilient hubs. He explains,

"This situation calls for transforming our cities into climate-resilient hubs for climate migrants. But first, we need accurate statistics data on how many people are being displaced due to climate change in a given city. Additionally, essential services like access to clean water, healthcare, and social safety nets must be ensured for these climate-displaced individuals."

Rahman also underscores the importance of amplifying human stories behind climate displacement to influence policymakers:

Dr. Mahbuba Nasreen

Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Bangladesh Open University.

Co-founder, Institute of Disaster Management and Vulnerability Studies, University of Dhaka.

At the heart of her reflections, Dr. Mahbuba Nasreen emphasized the critical role of youth-driven initiatives like INFLUENCERS in addressing the dual crises of climate change and climate migration. Highlighting the importance of this work, she stated,

"If the young people working in this project can come forward, they will not only challenge the impacts of climate change but also redefine solutions using their indigenous knowledge."

"We need initiatives that amplify the human stories behind this crisis, bringing them to the attention of policymakers to influence effective action."

The gravity of the situation is evident in projections:

"Reports suggest that by 2050, over 18% of Bangladesh's land will be underwater, displacing millions, particularly in regions like Barisal and Khulna, as per IPCC estimates."

Sohanur Rahman concludes with a call for immediate action at both national and international levels, stressing that the time to address climate migration and its consequences is now.



Dr. Nasreen's words brought focus to the lived experiences of climate migrants, who often endure the harshest consequences of environmental change. She underlined that these are not just abstract issues but deeply personal stories of displacement and resilience.

"People are using the environment to their advantage, which is why these disasters happen,"

She said, linking human actions to the increasing challenges faced by vulnerable communities.

The INFLUENCERS project, she noted, stands out because it amplifies these voices, creating space for young leaders to integrate their understanding into practical solutions. ***“Through this project, the policies that need to be integrated will emerge,”*** she shared, underscoring her belief in the potential highlight not only the challenges of climate adaptation but also the possibilities of hope and progress. By empowering young people to lead and by focusing on the stories of climate migrants, INFLUENCERS is paving the way for meaningful change. Dr. Nasreen’s belief in this mission is a powerful reminder of what collective effort can achieve.

Dr. Mohammed Moniruzzaman Khan

Associate Professor & Director, Institute of Disaster Management and Vulnerability Studies, University of Dhaka.

Thousands of climate migrants in Bangladesh struggle daily with challenges ranging from the loss of livelihoods to the harsh realities of urban life, including unemployment, exploitation, and social exclusion. In an exclusive interview, the Director of the Institute of Disaster Management and Vulnerabilities Study shared his insights on tackling these pressing issues through inclusive policies, multi-stakeholder collaboration, and the empowerment of marginalized communities.

The Director commended efforts to bring attention to these often overlooked groups

“When young people take the lead, they bring forward solutions that truly make a difference.”

Dr. Nasreen also addressed the pressing need for systemic change, emphasizing that climate action cannot succeed without bridging gaps between research, policymaking, and grassroots efforts. She described how many researchers’ findings remain disconnected from policy agendas:

“Those of us who do research often see that it is self-made. It does not always reach the politicians.”

However, she expressed optimism that projects like INFLUENCERS could transform this dynamic by ensuring that the voices of those most affected are heard and acted upon. Her reflections



stating: ***“Thank you for shedding light on the struggles of those we often ignore the residents of slum areas or marginalized groups who migrate due to climate change.”*** He emphasized that although the reasons for displacement differ rising sea levels in the south, river erosion in the north the challenges migrants face in cities like Dhaka are universally dire.

Despite the existence of frameworks such as the Standing Order on Disaster (SOD), the Director noted that practical implementation remains a significant challenge. *“Policies are well structured, but the real challenge lies in execution. Often, the people for whom these policies are designed remain excluded from decision making.”* He stressed that marginalized groups are frequently overlooked due to a lack of societal and institutional sensitization, calling for greater awareness and empathy. ***“Ignoring these communities stems from a lack of sensitization among policymakers and society at large. We must first address this lack of awareness to create effective solutions.”***

The Director advocated for including climate migrants at every stage of planning and implementation to ensure policies genuinely address their vulnerabilities. “We must listen to the people for whom these programs are designed. Their voices must shape our policies to ensure that their vulnerabilities are genuinely addressed.” This inclusion, he explained, would not only enhance policy effectiveness but also foster trust and cooperation within affected communities.

Collaboration, he argued, is pivotal to addressing these challenges. He called for engaging diverse stakeholders, including educational institutions, media, policymakers, and communities, to amplify the voices of marginalized groups. “The more stakeholders we involve teachers, students, media, policymakers the more effective our efforts will be. Collaboration is key to raising awareness and addressing systemic issues.”

Highlighting the critical role of media, the Director pointed out its power to raise awareness and create platforms for dialogue. *“Media both traditional and social has the power to reach wider audiences. By documenting and sharing the experiences of climate migrants, the media can drive meaningful conversations and mobilize action.”* He urged for greater use of media to shine a spotlight on the struggles and resilience of climate migrants, encouraging public and policy-level engagement.

Youth empowerment was another central theme in the Director’s remarks. He drew on recent examples of youth-led movements in Bangladesh to demonstrate their transformative potential in addressing systemic challenges.

“No global issue has been solved without the involvement of youth. They must lead efforts in adaptation, mitigation, response, and recovery.”

He emphasized the importance of creating platforms for young people to participate in policy making, recognizing them as the driving force behind a resilient future. In his concluding remarks, the Director expressed optimism for a more inclusive future, where marginalized communities are at the forefront of climate policies. ***“To address the challenges of climate induced migration, we must adopt an inclusive approach that values the perspectives of those most affected. This is the only way to create sustainable solutions.”*** He called for a united effort to close societal gaps, empower youth, and ensure policies reflect the real needs of vulnerable communities.

Farah Anzum

Strategic Communications Associate, Bangladesh, Global Strategic Communications Council (GSCC).

Climate change proceeds to be one of the most catastrophic challenges of this era, disproportionately affecting the least developed nations such as Bangladesh. As global temperatures climb and environmental risks increase, millions of lives are being disrupted. A climate specialist, Farah Anzum highlights this urgent matter, unveiling the significant human toll of internal displacement driven by climate change.

She shares, ***“According to a study back in 2022, almost 7.1 million people have been displaced due to these climatic risks. It is expected to double by 2050.”***

This concerning figure emphasizes the critical need to treat climate displacement as a global emergency. These displaced individuals are compelled to abandon their homes, means of subsistence, and livestock, resulting in a cascading effect of loss and uncertainty.

“These youths are going to the real ground level and trying to take information and real stories of these people, and try to change the policy level to take good actions for them in the future,” She noted.



The migration crisis not only robs individuals of their possessions but also severs their cultural ties and family relationships, hardships and elevates their voices.

“

They are leaving their own home, losing their livelihood opportunities, and when they are moving to a new place, they also lose all the cultural connections they had with their own families,”

”

Despite the overwhelming challenges, initiatives like “Influencers” are stepping in to make a difference. The expert claims that by encouraging young people to gather first-hand stories from displaced people, this effort illuminates their

Sumaiya Binte Selim Sudha

***Coordinator for Gender and Youth Programme,
Researcher at International Centre for Climate
Change and Development (ICCCAD)***

In an engaging discussion, Sumaiya Binte Selim Sudha shared her perspectives on the challenges and opportunities surrounding climate induced migration in Bangladesh. Reflecting on her research, she revealed that many people are migrating to vulnerable nearby areas, such as Mongla Municipality, rather than unfamiliar big cities like Dhaka or Khulna.

“For many, these big cities are not only unknown but also present significant survival challenges due to the harsh living conditions,” she explained.

She highlighted the importance of secondary cities like Mongla, which are perceived as more familiar and accessible by displaced individuals. “When people see Mongla as part of their own area, the migration process becomes much easier,” she noted. Many migrants from nearby villages are already finding livelihood opportunities in these smaller cities, reinforcing the need to prioritize their development.

Sumaiya emphasized the potential of secondary cities to balance the pressures on major urban centers.

“If we can make these cities more livable and migrant friendly, we can achieve a balance between cities and municipalities,” she suggested.



She stressed the need for solution-based approaches that take into account the social, mental, and economic pressures faced by migrants, while integrating their voices into decision-making processes.

“If we don’t adapt solutions to local needs and perspectives, they risk becoming unsustainable in the long run,”

With ongoing collaborations with the government, Sumaiya expressed optimism about scaling up these efforts. ***“We’re hopeful that Bangladesh can emerge as a role model, offering solutions that other countries can follow,”*** she said confidently.

Her vision revolves around making secondary cities hubs for climate migrants, ensuring sustainability and inclusivity while addressing the broader impacts of climate change.

Adaptation and Mitigation Strategies

In slums like Duaripara, Jhilpara, and Kalyanpur, people forced from their homes by floods and erosion struggle to survive. These overcrowded settlements were never meant to be permanent, yet they've become home for thousands. Every day is a fight—for shelter, work, water, and dignity

Adaptation Strategies: Surviving in the City

Safe and Secure Housing

Most houses here are made of tin, plastic, and scraps. Rain leaks through the roofs, floods rise through the floors, and strong winds can tear everything apart. Every monsoon feels like starting over. People need stable, flood resistant housing not just empty promises. Resettlement must be real, and cities must include climate migrants in their planning, not push them further into slums. Improving housing conditions enhances resilience against climate impacts. In Ahmedabad, India, a "cool roofs" initiative involved painting roofs with reflective white coatings to reduce indoor temperatures. This project led to cooler homes, improved sleep quality, and reduced electricity bills for residents.

Livelihoods That Can Withstand Uncertainty

Livelihoods here are unstable. One day there's work, the next there isn't. Some clean houses, some pull rickshaws, some sell tea but none of it guarantees survival. Those who once farmed or fished find their

skills useless in the city. Training programs and small business support can help them rebuild. Wages must be fair, jobs secure. No one should wake up wondering if they'll eat that day. Stable livelihoods reduce vulnerability to climate shocks. In Mombasa, Kenya, the Participatory Slum Upgrading Program involved residents in planning and implementing improvements, including vocational training and small business support. This approach enhanced economic opportunities and resilience among slum dwellers.

Access to WASH Services

Drinking water smells of bleach. Taps don't always work. People pay high prices for water that gives them rashes and stomach infections. Toilets overflow, and filth runs through the streets after every rain. Proper WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) infrastructure isn't a luxury—it's a right. Slum communities need functional water pipelines, drainage systems, and public sanitation to stop preventable diseases

from spreading. Proper WASH infrastructure is essential for health and resilience. The Kampung Admiralty project in Singapore integrated sustainable water management systems, including rainwater harvesting, to conserve water and promote environmental sustainability in urban housing developments.

Disaster Preparedness and Climate Adaptation

Heatwaves turn tin homes into ovens. Floods trap people in waist-high water. When sickness comes, hospitals are far, and medicines are expensive. There's no warning before disaster strikes, just survival, however possible. Slums need emergency response systems, cooling centers, and safe shelters. Migrants should be part of disaster planning because they're the ones who suffer most. Proactive planning reduces the impact of climate-related disasters. Copenhagen, Denmark, implemented a "climate street" that absorbs rainwater through permeable surfaces, reducing flood risks during heavy rainfall events.

Access to Education and Skill Development

In slums like Duaripara, Jhilpara, and Kalyanpur, education is often out of reach. Schools are too far, too expensive, or too rigid for children whose families move frequently. Many drop out to work, while others never enroll at all. For parents struggling to afford food, school fees feel like a luxury. Education shouldn't be a privilege. Free community schools, flexible learning centers, and vocational training can help children and young adults gain

the skills they need for stable jobs. Scholarships and support programs must reach climate migrants, ensuring that displacement doesn't mean the end of learning. Without education, the next generation will remain trapped in the same cycle of poverty, struggling just to survive. Education and skills training empower individuals to adapt to new urban environments. The Participatory Slum Upgrading Program in Mombasa, Kenya, also focused on providing access to education and skill development, enhancing the adaptive capacity of residents.



Photo- Hajibari Colony

Mitigation Strategies: Stopping This From Happening Again

Preventing Further Climate Displacement

Every new arrival in the slum is proof that people are still losing their homes. It won't stop until the land they once lived on is protected. That means stronger embankments, better flood control, and sustainable farming. If people had a way to stay, they wouldn't be forced to leave. Addressing root causes of displacement reduces migration pressures. China's "Sponge City" initiative aims to improve urban water management by using green infrastructure to absorb and reuse rainwater, thereby reducing flooding and related displacement.

Making Cities More Livable for the Displaced

These cities weren't built for them, but they're here now. Pushing them into slums isn't a solution. They need affordable, planned housing with roads, electricity, and healthcare not just endless makeshift shelters. At the same time, cities must go green solar energy for cheap electricity, green spaces to reduce heat, proper waste management. Slums shouldn't bear the worst of climate change. Inclusive urban planning enhances the quality of life for all residents. The "Sponge City" initiative in China not only addresses flood risks but also improves urban livability by integrating green spaces and sustainable infrastructure, benefiting all city residents, including displaced populations.

Securing Rural Livelihoods Before Migration Becomes Necessary

When farms dry up or floods destroy crops, families have no choice but to move. That cycle can be broken with targeted rural investment. In India's Andhra Pradesh, the "Zero Budget Natural Farming" program trains farmers in low cost, drought resilient agriculture using native seeds, compost, and water-saving techniques. The result: higher yields and fewer farmers abandoning their land. Similarly, micro-irrigation projects like drip systems powered by solar pumps make farming viable even in semi-arid regions. Governments must fund these proven methods to keep rural economies alive and migration avoidable.



Photo- Duaripara Colony

Policy Influence and Advocacy

Disaster management (DM) in Bangladesh has undergone substantial transformation over the years, yet it continues to face obstacles that limit its ability to fully address the country's exposure to both natural and human-induced hazards. Historically, the focus was on reactive measures like post-disaster relief and rehabilitation. However, in response to major disasters such as the 1988 floods and the 1991 cyclone, there was a shift toward disaster risk reduction (DRR) and resilience building. These events highlighted the necessity for a more comprehensive DM framework, leading to the creation of both national and international charters aimed at transitioning from relief-based to preventive disaster management approaches.

The establishment of the Disaster Management Bureau (DMB) and the introduction of the Standing Orders on Disaster (SOD) marked significant steps toward a structured DM system. Over time, this system has been bolstered by key policies such as the Disaster Management Act (2012), National Plan for Disaster Management (NPDM), and sector specific strategies like the Flood Management Plan and Cyclone Management Plan, forming the foundation of Bangladesh's disaster management infrastructure. Bangladesh's regulatory framework for disaster management is now well defined. The SOD

provides comprehensive guidelines for stakeholders at every level national, regional, and local outlining clear roles for disaster management committees (DMCs) to coordinate efforts between government organizations (GOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The shift toward preventive measures has produced notable results. For example, the death toll from cyclones has been significantly reduced, from over 138,000 in 1991 to fewer than 200 during Cyclones Sidr (2007) and Aila (2009). This reduction can be credited to improved early warning systems, greater public awareness, and the construction of cyclone shelters.

Gender issues, initially neglected, have now been incorporated into Bangladesh's DM policies. The revised SOD (2019) and other frameworks have addressed the specific vulnerabilities of women and children, highlighting the importance of gender inclusive DRR practices.

Despite these advancements, several challenges hinder the effectiveness of Bangladesh's disaster management policies. At the local level, disaster committees (DMCs) and officials, such as

the District Relief and Rehabilitation often lack the capacity to fulfill their extensive responsibilities. This issue is compounded by limited technical expertise and weak monitoring mechanisms. Financial constraints also remain a significant hurdle, with local committees struggling to secure the necessary funds. Additionally, the unclear resource allocation process and heavy reliance on donor agencies contribute to inefficiencies and delays in disaster response.

The disaster management system in Bangladesh is also hampered by bureaucratic complexities, with overlapping responsibilities among ministries and agencies creating delays in decision-making and resource mobilization. Furthermore, while policies encourage community involvement, actual participation particularly from marginalized groups remains low. The centralized decision making process often excludes vulnerable populations from playing an active role in disaster preparedness and recovery.

In summary, while Bangladesh has made significant strides in disaster management, particularly in reducing casualties and adopting a more holistic approach, challenges related to implementation, financial resources, and community engagement persist. To build a more resilient disaster management system, Bangladesh must focus on strengthening local capacities, streamlining bureaucratic processes, and ensuring financial transparency.

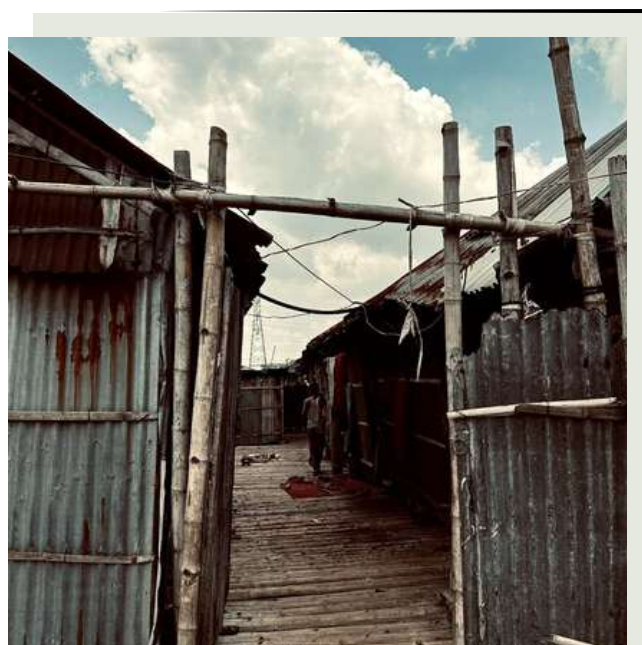


Photo- Hajibari Colony

An Open Letter To The Policy Makers

Dear esteemed policy makers,

I am reaching out with a sense of urgency and hope, representing the collective voice of concerned citizens of Bangladesh who are deeply invested in the future welfare of our nation and its people. The emerging crisis of climate migration calls for our immediate and comprehensive attention. Bangladesh is currently facing pressing challenges related to climate change, including rising sea levels, increased frequency of cyclones, river erosion, and salinity intrusion. These critical environmental issues are having a profound impact on our communities, often necessitating relocations for safety and sustainability. Projections suggest that by 2050, as many as 13 million individuals in Bangladesh may be affected by climate related migratory patterns.

As climate migrants increasingly move to urban centers such as Dhaka and Chattogram, this shift places substantial strain on already limited resources and infrastructure. These individuals often encounter significant hardships, including inadequate housing, limited access to clean water, healthcare, education, and restricted job opportunities. This situation transcends environmental concerns alone; it constitutes a humanitarian crisis that deserves our prompt attention and action as a responsible nation.

In light of these pressing issues, I respectfully urge you to consider the following recommendations:

1. **Develop Comprehensive Climate Migration Policies:** Establish a national framework that addresses the multifaceted challenges faced by climate migrants. This framework should encompass effective mechanisms for relocation, resettlement, and social integration, fostering a cohesive national response.
2. **Strengthen Disaster Risk Reduction Programs:** Allocate resources toward climate resilient infrastructure, early warning systems, and sustainable livelihood initiatives in vulnerable areas to effectively mitigate the factors contributing to forced migration.
3. **Create Safe and Sustainable Urban Settlements:** Proactively plan for the development of affordable housing, sanitation, and healthcare facilities in urban areas, ensuring that climate migrants are welcomed and supported with dignity and security.

4. Promote Livelihood Programs in Rural Areas: Implement initiatives that provide alternative livelihood opportunities in vulnerable regions, empowering individuals to remain within their communities whenever feasible.
5. Engage International Support: Advocate for global climate financing and foster collaboration with international organizations to collectively address this pressing crisis. It is vital to recognize that climate migration is a shared global responsibility, and Bangladesh should not bear this burden alone.
6. Raise Public Awareness: Encourage education and awareness within communities about climate resilience and adaptation strategies, empowering individuals to proactively mitigate the risks associated with climate change.

Time is of the essence. If we do not take decisive action now, I fear the crisis will only escalate, exacerbating poverty, inequality, and social unrest within our communities. Nevertheless, I firmly believe that with visionary and timely measures, Bangladesh can emerge as a global leader in addressing climate migration. We have the opportunity to exemplify to the world that even the most vulnerable nations can meet this challenge through innovation, compassion, and a united determination. I have faith in your wisdom and unwavering dedication to safeguarding the rights and dignity of every Bangladeshi citizen. Together, let us commit to decisive action for a sustainable and equitable future for all.

With sincere hope and determination,

Team INFLUENCERS

Call for Action: Be the Change

This magazine is more than just stories and insights; it's a testament to the resilience, creativity, and determination of those fighting on the frontlines of climate change. Through the voices of youth, the lived experiences of climate migrants, and the ideas shared here, we aim to inspire action and ignite hope for a better future.

But the journey doesn't end with these pages it begins here. As readers, you have the power to amplify these stories, support impactful projects like INFLUENCERS, and take meaningful steps toward addressing the climate crisis.

Now is the time to act. Advocate for those displaced by climate change. Educate others on the importance of sustainable practices. Collaborate to create inclusive solutions that leave no one behind.

Change starts with you. Let this magazine serve as a reminder that every effort counts, and together, we can build a world where everyone thrives despite the challenges. The future is in our hands let's shape it with purpose and passion.

Acknowledgment

The creation of this magazine has been a collaborative effort, fueled by the resilience, stories, and shared vision of countless individuals and communities. We extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who made this publication possible.

Credits

This magazine is brought to you by Team INFLUENCERS, with the unwavering support of International Center for Climate Change And Development (ICCCAD), Institute of Disaster Management and Vulnerability Studies (IDMVS), and YouthNet Global. Our heartfelt thanks go to the executive team, contributors, volunteers, and partners whose hard work and dedication brought this vision to life.

Special Thanks

We extend a special note of gratitude to Nayoka Martinez-Bäckström, Dr. Mahbuba Nasreen, Dr. Mohammed Monirujjaman Khan, Sohanur Rahman, Farah Anzum, and Sumaiya Binte Selim Sudha for their invaluable guidance and insights. Our heartfelt thanks also go to Md. Tahseen Ahmed (Youth Fellow Assistant, CAP-RES Project (International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD))) and Farhana Akhter (Youth Fellow Assistant, (International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD))), whose thoughtful advice and care in editing helped shape this publication into what it is. We are especially thankful to the communities of Dhali Bari, Farmgate; Duaripara Colony, Mirpur; Hajiroad, Jhilpara Colony, Mirpur; and Pora Colony, Kallyanpur, who opened their doors to us. Your strength, stories, and perspectives are the heart of this magazine, shedding light on the realities faced by climate migrants and the resilience they exhibit every day.

Partnerships and Collaborations

This magazine would not have been possible without the support of our key partners organizations, media outlets, and stakeholders who share our mission of empowering youth and addressing the challenges of climate change. Your contributions have amplified our impact and helped us reach wider audiences.

Opportunities

The work we have begun is far from over. We invite individuals, organizations, and changemakers to join us in our journey. Whether through partnerships, shared initiatives, or contributions to future editions, your involvement can make a profound difference.

This magazine stands as a testament to the power of youth leadership, community resilience, and the strength of collective action. Together, let us continue to amplify voices, inspire meaningful change, and create a future where no one is left behind. Thank you for being part of this mission.

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The Path Led by Knowledge