

# ICCCAD Youth Fellowship Alumni Report 2024

## Personal Information

1. **Name:** Saila Sobnom Richi
2. **Fellowship Batch (Year):** 2024
3. **Contact Information:**
  - **Phone Number:** 01709070165
  - **Email ID:** moumitajahansuchi@gmail.com
  - **Current Location (Upazila and district):** Puran Dhaka, Dhaka
4. **Current Occupation/Role:** Student

## Fellowship Experience

1. **Briefly describe the most valuable lessons or skills you learned during the fellowship.**

During the ICCCAD fellowship, I gained invaluable insights into the intersection of climate change and migration. The opportunity to work on my project, *Influencer*, which focuses on climate migrant communities, sharpened my skills in research, project development, and advocacy. I learned the importance of building partnerships and engaging stakeholders to create impactful solutions for vulnerable populations. The fellowship also enhanced my understanding of climate policy and advocacy through direct participation in COP29 as an ICCCAD delegate. This experience deepened my ability to communicate complex climate issues on a global platform and strengthened my leadership skills. Overall, the fellowship provided critical tools for driving innovative solutions and advancing the rights of climate migrants.

2. **Which sessions or activities during the fellowship were most impactful for you? Why?**

The residential training, policy dialogue, and field visit to Kuakata were the most impactful experiences during the ICCCAD fellowship. The residential training equipped me with the technical skills and knowledge needed to understand climate change and migration dynamics, providing a solid foundation for my project. The policy dialogue allowed me to engage with experts, deepening my understanding of the intersection between climate change and migration on a global scale. It also helped me refine my advocacy strategies. The field visit to the southern area, Kuakata was particularly transformative, as it provided a first-hand look at the challenges faced by climate vulnerable public. Engaging with the local communities gave me valuable insights into their lived experiences, which were crucial in shaping my project, *Influencer*. These activities combined theory and practice, enabling me to approach my work with a more comprehensive, nuanced perspective.

## Implementation of Learning

1. **\*\*\*How have you applied the knowledge or skills gained from the fellowship in your personal or professional life? Examples of specific actions, or initiatives you have led or contributed to advocacy, awareness, event, workshop, project etc.).**

The knowledge and skills gained from the ICCCAD fellowship have significantly shaped my work as a youth climate advocate. For instance, I applied the research and advocacy tools learned during the fellowship to actively contribute to projects like *Eco Men* and *Just Transition* by YouthNet for Climate Justice, where I collaborate with diverse youth leaders to address climate action and ensure gender inclusivity in climate policies.

Through my fellowship experience, I have also developed a more nuanced approach to engaging communities affected by climate change. This has been particularly useful in my ongoing project, *Influencer*, which focuses on raising awareness about the struggles of climate migrants. I have led community-based workshops, where I share insights from my field visit in Kuakata, empowering locals to advocate for their rights.

Additionally, I have been involved in hosting and speaking at various events, such as COP29, where I utilized the skills from the fellowship to effectively communicate the urgency of climate action, particularly for vulnerable groups like migrants. By applying these skills in advocacy, workshops, and community engagement, I continue to foster awareness and drive positive change for climate justice in Bangladesh and beyond.

2. **Any notable achievements, success stories, or testimonials from the above-mentioned activity-1 you have worked?**

The knowledge and skills gained from the ICCCAD fellowship have had a profound impact on my work as a youth climate advocate. I applied the research and advocacy tools from the fellowship to contribute to projects like *Eco Men* and *Just Transition* by YouthNet for Climate Justice, where I collaborate with youth leaders to promote climate action and gender inclusivity. Through my fellowship, I developed a deeper understanding of engaging with climate-affected communities, which has been instrumental in my ongoing project, *Influencer*, focused on raising awareness about climate migrants.

A notable success story following the fellowship was when I was invited to speak at the International Volunteers Day celebration, organized by VSO Bangladesh. Representing the youth volunteer group of Bangladesh, I shared my experiences as a climate activist and volunteer for the past five years. I was honored to sit alongside Dr. Mahbuba Ma'am, the co-founder of IDMVS at the University of Dhaka, as I addressed 500 volunteers. This experience, where I was able to inspire others with my journey, remains a cherished moment and a testament to the impact of the fellowship on my personal and professional growth.

**3. What challenges, if any, have you faced while implementing your learning? How did you overcome them?**

While implementing my project *Influencer*, I faced several challenges, particularly related to working with migrant communities living in the slums of Dhaka. The age and communication barriers within the youth group I was working with posed difficulties, as there were differences in experiences and ways of engaging with the communities. Additionally, the six-month project timeline was restrictive, making it difficult to address all the issues and deliverables comprehensively.

To overcome these challenges, I worked closely with my team, ensuring regular communication and collaboration. We focused on the core objectives and prioritized tasks, which helped streamline our efforts. I also made a conscious effort to build trust within the migrant communities by being present, listening to their concerns, and tailoring our approach to meet their needs. Through coordination, adaptability, and persistence, we were able to navigate these challenges and make meaningful progress with the project.

**Impact of your work**

**1. Approximately how many people have directly benefited from your actions inspired by the fellowship during 2024? (e.g., awareness campaigns, capacity building, advocacy, etc.)**

Event/Activities	Location (district)	Number of people reached		Total	Means of verification (Upload Social media link, video link, link of Pictures, publication link, FGD notes, attendance, any other relevant documents etc.)
		Women	Men		
Field Visit	Kuakata	20	10	30	
Project Influencer	Slums of Dhaka	50	30	80	
Cop29	Ajarbaijan	30+	20+	50+	
Capacity Building Training	Dhaka (online)	40	30	70	
<b>Total</b>		<b>140</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>230</b>	

## Visual Documents



## Climate activism, 2024



## Facilitating workshops



**Being the youth rep. at the Global Hunger Index report launching event by Concern worldwide while sharing my project experiences**



My project documentary launching at Share Hub, ICCAD, COP29



Saila Sobnom Richi went to COP 29 this year for the first time.

My activism at cop29 acknowledged by The Business Standard



## Highlighting the impact and advocacy of young Bangladeshi women leaders at COP29 as they fight for climate justice on the global stage.

ALLIN MOHANA BISWAS

The voices of young women from Bangladesh resonated powerfully at the 2024 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29), bringing stories of resilience, advocacy, and determination to the global stage. Representing diverse communities and experiences, Saira Sobnom Richi, Farzana Farak Jhumu, and Fariha Aumi embodied the spirit of youth leadership in addressing climate justice.

### Saira Sobnom Richi, ICCCAD Delegate

Saira Sobnom Richi, an undergraduate student from the Institute of Disaster Management and Vulnerability Studies at Dhaka University, began her journey in climate activism with a deep connection to her community in Barishal where she was born and



brought up. Her path to climate leadership started with YouthNet for Climate Justice, where she became a Youth Climate Ambassador and Media and Movement Coordinator, advocating for gender and climate justice for over four years. Reflecting on her work, Saira shared, "I have seen how

vulnerable our people are to climate change. If we don't act now, our future is at stake."

At COP29, Saira brought stories of vulnerable Bangladeshi communities to the global stage, highlighting the urgent need for climate finance and addressing the realities faced by people displaced internally due to climate impacts.

Speaking at the "Youth Gathering" event hosted by the Government of Bangladesh, Saira posed a critical question: "Are youth voices genuinely being empowered, or are they merely tokenised?" Her words resonated with many young attendees grappling with similar doubts.

Representing Bangladesh at COP29 came with its own challenges. Saira candidly reflected on her reliance on a foreign international non-governmental organisation (INGO) badge and funding from another country's embassy to attend, questioning the authenticity of national support for youth empowerment. Despite the hurdles, Saira remained undeterred, participating in movements such as demanding climate finance at the COP29 Action Zone. She also launched her documentary, *INFLUENCERS - The Path Led by Knowledge*, at the Share Hub Pavilion, showcasing the power of youth led initiatives.

Saira expressed her frustration at the insufficient allocation of USD three hundred billion instead of the required USD one trillion for climate finance. Yet, she maintained her optimism, emphasising the need for the youth to be included in decision-making processes and not just as symbolic representatives. Reflecting on her first COP experience, Saira said, "This is just the beginning for me. I will continue fighting for my country to have a stronger voice on the global stage."

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By Daily Star



At International Volunteer Day celebration by VSO being a youth representative





Fellowship certificate and Innovative fund winning awards by ICCAD



During the project field visit at slum areas



Showcasing our project INFLUENCER documentation on UN Day event at University of Dhaka



Sharing the COP learning with other fellows at the post cop event by Actionaid and Brighters