

RAJSHAHI DIVISIONAL PLATFORM LAUNCH OF LOCALLY LED ADAPTATION

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BRAC Learning Centre, Rajshahi



NATIONAL CONTEXT

Bangladesh, a country in South Asia, is recognized globally as a pioneer in climate change adaptation and resilience measures.

However, the drastic changes in climatic conditions, diversified geographic features and associated socio-economic stressors hinder the resilience process, placing the country in 9th position on the World Risk Index 2024.



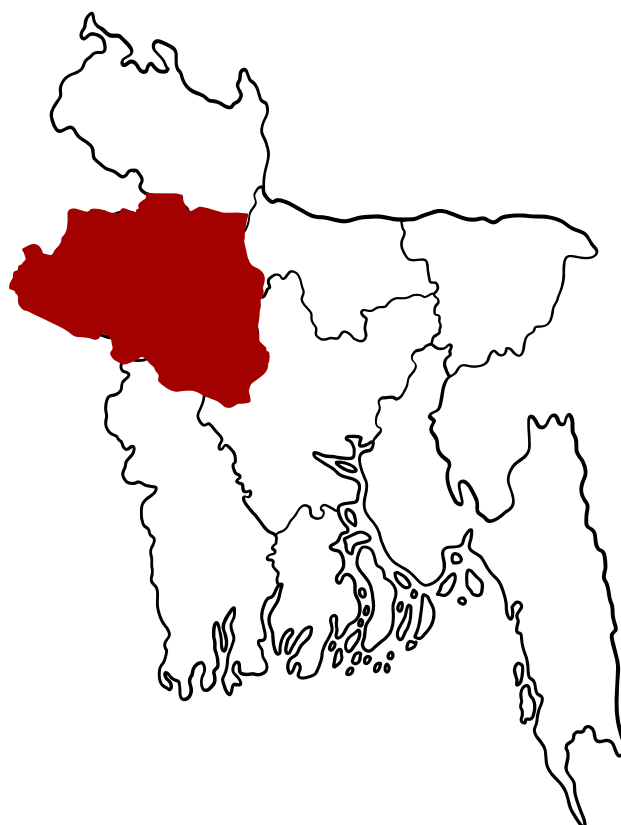
CLIMATIC IMPACT IN RAJSHAHI

Rajshahi Division is located in the northwestern part of Bangladesh, comprising 8 districts, 70 upazilas, and 1,092 unions. Geographically, it is characterized by flat landscapes with fertile plains, making it ideal for agriculture. As per the National Adaptation Plan (2030-2050), the greater Rajshahi Division consists of Rivers, floodplains, and erosion-prone areas (FPE), drought-prone and Barind areas (DBA), and the Chalan Beel low-lying area in the northwestern region (CBL).

In addition, Rajshahi is highly susceptible to various climatic and hydrological hazards, including erratic rainfall, extreme heatwaves, and cold wave conditions. Being situated in the flood prone areas most of the districts of Rajshahi are extremely vulnerable to high flood risk and riverbank erosion. In contrary, some areas of Rajshahi witnesses a decreasing rainfall pattern, and increasing relative humidity leading to droughts.

Cold waves are also becoming more prevalent in Rajshahi, with the annual frequency of days having a minimum temperature below 10°C increasing by 0.035 days/year.

Such natural adversities impacts the local livelihoods, and associated sectors (agriculture, fisheries, health, education, environment etc.). This often leads to a massive outbound migration.



LOCALLY LED ADAPTATION (LLA)

Local communities residing in climate-vulnerable areas often have minimal access to resources and technical skills to adapt to the impacts of climate change. However, their decades of local knowledge and experience in leveraging local resources are noteworthy when adapting to changing situations.

The Locally Led Adaptation (LLA) approach promises to engage local stakeholders as decision makers, focusing on sustainable and efficient adaptation interventions.

Additionally, the eight principles of LLA foster ownership, transparency, accountability in finance, and effective decision-making among all stakeholders.



LOCALLY LED ADAPTATION (LLA) IN BANGLADESH

Given Bangladesh's vulnerability to climate change, particularly in areas prone to flooding, cyclones, and riverbank erosion, LLA emphasizes community-driven solutions to build resilience.

Bangladesh's national policies recognize the vital importance of community-based and locally led adaptation (LLA). While interventions led by local NGOs and other relevant organizations have shown effectiveness and gained local acceptance in promoting CBA and LLA, significant gaps remain in implementing LLA nationally. Key challenges include a lack of coordination between government ministries, insufficient understanding of LLA at the local government level, limited capacity for monitoring, limited financial and technical resources, and inadequate inclusion of local communities in planning and decision-making processes.

Therefore, to scale up LLA effectively, the three action areas can be prioritized: emphasizing building local leadership and resilience, emphasizing building local government capacity, and supporting monitoring, evaluation, and learning.

Learning from and collaborating with local partners, as well as meaningful engagement with local communities, are essential for an effective implementation of adaptation interventions and achieving the national adaptation goals.



IMPORTANCE OF DIVISIONAL PLATFORM LAUNCH ON LOCALLY LED ADAPTATION

In May 2022, ICCCAD held a National Platform on Locally Led Adaptation (NPLLA) to disseminate knowledge, implement research ideas, and conduct capacity-building training on LLA. To empower the local actors at the divisional level, ICCCAD also launched the Divisional Platforms on LLA (DPLLA) in 2023 to bridge the knowledge gaps on climate change adaptation among different stakeholders and create a strong network amongst the local organizations across the country. Six DPLLA have been launched to date in Khulna, Chattogram, Sylhet, Mymensingh, Rangpur, and now in Rajshahi Division.





OBJECTIVES OF DPLLA

- **Communicating National Messages to the Local Level:** Facilitating the transmission of global messages on climate change adaptation and LLA from the national level to the local level and simultaneously ensuring that the voices and experiences of local actors are heard and considered in global LLA discussions.
- **Promotion of Good LLA Practices:** Highlighting successful LLA practices in Bangladesh serves as an example of how LLA should look in reality.
- **Enhancing Capacity-Building Efforts:** Focusing on enhancing local communities' technical and leadership capacities/capabilities by empowering them with climate change adaptation knowledge, research ideas and advocating their active roles in shaping and implementing adaptation initiatives.
- **Collaboration:** Providing a space for collaboration among various stakeholders to promote LLA advocacy, research, knowledge management, capacity building, and co-production of knowledge related to climate change adaptation and LLA.

LAUNCH OF THE RAJSHAHI DIVISIONAL PLATFORM ON LOCALLY LED ADAPTATION

The Rajshahi Divisional Platform on Locally Led Adaptation (DPLLA) was launched on 11 February 2025, at the BRAC Learning Centre in Rajshahi. The launch event was attended by thirty representatives from various local NGOs, grassroots organizations, universities, and civil society groups from Rajshahi, Natore, Naogaon, Chapainawabganj, Pabna, Sirajganj, Bogura, and Joypurhat districts. Ms. Samiha Saleha, Research Associate at ICCCAD, moderated the session, and welcomed the attendees expressing her gratitude. After her remarks, the participants introduced themselves briefly.



Mr. Savio Rousseau Rozario, Program Coordinator, Locally Led Adaptation (LLA) Program at ICCCAD, delivered the opening remarks and discussed the challenging prospect of climate change in Bangladesh. Furthermore, he introduced the concept of LLA, sharing the vision of the late Professor, Dr. Saleemul Huq, and his pioneering leadership in promoting LLA at both national and global levels.

Mr. Rozario also discussed ICCCAD's vision behind establishing LLA platforms in all eight divisions of Bangladesh. He elaborated on the eight core principles of LLA, illustrating them with examples from various adaptation projects.

Mr. Rawnak Jahan Ranon, Research Officer at ICCCAD, presented an overview of what LLA means in the context of Bangladesh. His presentation highlighted the country's key climate and environment policies, the policies acknowledging the critical role of communities in climate action, and some existing case studies on LLA in Bangladesh, which adheres to several principles of LLA.



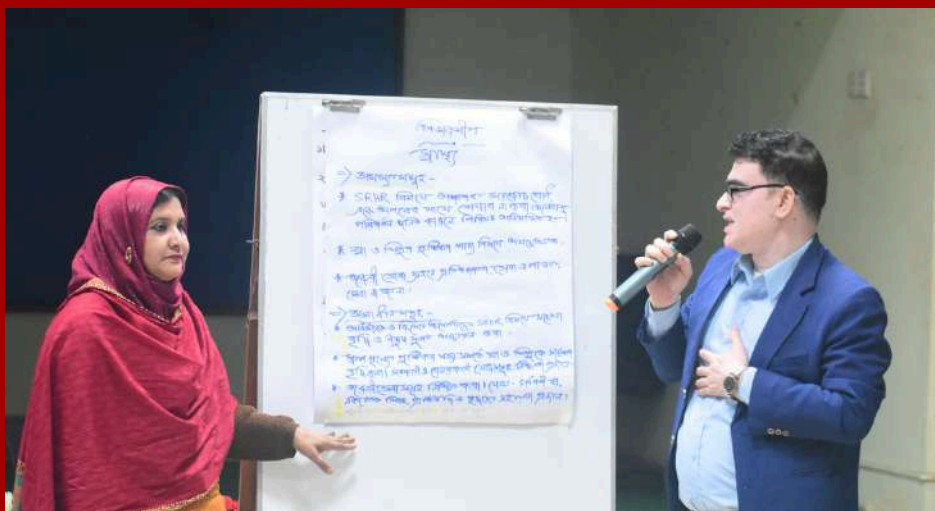
OPINIONS FROM THE PARTICIPANTS

- Severe heatwaves in summer can lead to droughts in several districts, damaging crops and drying up essential water sources, which results in water, sanitation and hygiene challenges.
- Erratic rainfall and flooding during the monsoon season negatively affect agricultural productivity and farmers' livelihoods, leading to income loss and mental distress.
- Limited capacities and poor technological understanding hinder effective disaster risk reduction.
- Riverbank erosion not only impacts communities but also causes environmental degradation by altering the flow of rivers and threatening various species of flora and fauna.
- Extreme heatwaves often cause significant health problems, particularly among teenagers and the elderly.

DISCUSSION ON LOCAL LEADERSHIP AND GROUP ACTIVITY

The group activity started with an introductory question aimed at exploring participants' perceptions of leadership. Participants described leadership as the capacity to inspire and guide others toward achieving shared goals inclusively. They also highlighted that effective leadership involves not only directing others but also nurturing, listening to, and supporting individuals through challenges while promoting creativity and enhancing operational efficiency.

Leadership was further characterized as a critical element in project management, with participants noting that it ensures a clear vision, encourages community engagement, and addresses key challenges with strategic foresight. A good leader, they observed, plays a vital role in motivating team members, managing resources wisely, and fostering informed decision-making processes.





In discussing barriers to effective project implementation, participants identified several challenges, including political interference, organizational biasness, community-driven conflicts, and lack of coordination amongst the development stakeholders. It was collectively agreed that these challenges could be mitigated through the presence of strong leadership embedded at all levels of a project, thereby ensuring its success and sustainability.

Building on the shared understanding of good leadership, participants moved into a practical exercise focused on applying leadership principles to real-world challenges. They were divided into six groups, each tasked with developing strategic solutions to address specific challenges existing in agriculture, health, education, livelihood, disaster risk reduction, and biodiversity sector under a drought-prone scenario. The exercise emphasized the application of effective leadership in managing projects by encouraging each group to propose interventions that reflect inclusivity, collaboration, and community engagement.

DISCUSSION ON LOCAL LEADERSHIP AND GROUP ACTIVITY

To deepen the learning experience and ground the activity in current adaptation discourse, participants were further instructed to align their proposed solutions with the eight principles of LLA. The following table summarizes the thematic focus, potential intervention, and corresponding principles of LLA integrated into each group's proposed solutions:

Table 1: Thematic Interventions and LLA Alignment

Thematic Area	Intervention	Aligned LLA Principles
Agriculture	Tackling irrigation challenges in drought-affected agricultural zones	1, 4, 6, 8
Biodiversity	Addressing the impacts of drought on local biodiversity	1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8
Education	Reducing school dropout rates among children in drought-prone regions	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8
Health	Promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in the context of climate change	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7
Livelihood	Supporting climate-resilient crop production through innovation in drought-prone areas	2, 5, 6, 7, 8
WASH	Improving sanitation facilities for displaced populations in Char areas	1, 4, 7, 8

Furthermore, this activity aimed to demonstrate how leadership, when practiced inclusively and strategically, can drive adaptive, community-driven solutions in the face of climate-induced challenges.

WAY FORWARD

Dr. Laura Kuhl, Professor and visiting researcher from Northeastern University, USA, provided an overview of the global context of LLA, highlighting the emphasis on decentralizing adaptation efforts and placing local communities at the center of decision-making during adaptation planning and implementation.

Dr. Laura also talked about the climate finance regime in the adaptation arena, including LLA-related financing mechanisms, and current challenges in ensuring equitable and accessible climate funding. She also underscored the global momentum towards implementing LLA in practice.



As concluding remarks, Prof. Hafizur Rahman, PhD, Independent University of Bangladesh (IUB) and Focal of ICCCAD-IUB expressed his deep gratitude towards the participants and provided different academic perspective on climate change. He emphasized the significance of the DPLLA platform in fostering collaborative efforts to address climate change challenges. He also highlighted the potential role of ICCCAD and IUB in advancing LLA initiatives, particularly through technical and knowledge-based support.

Furthermore, he stressed the importance of local NGOs' efforts in translating LLA theory into practice, underscoring the need to strengthen their initiatives on the ground.



SECTORAL AFFILIATIONS OF PARTICIPANTS

The participants from Rajshai DPLLA launch event came across different sectors including: grassroots, local, national, and international NGOs, as well as academicians and youth volunteers.

Table 1 depicts the working areas that the participating organizations of DPLLA are involved in.

Table 2: Organization's sectoral engagement

Organization Name	Organizational Focus	Key climatic and environmental challenges mentioned
ASHRAI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Climate change · Drip irrigation Safe water consumption and proper sanitation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Drought · Soil erosion · Soil degradation · Water scarcity
ASSEDO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Agriculture · Environment · Climate change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Drought-prone area · Brick kiln · Riverbank Erosion · Use of an excessive amount of fertilizer in agriculture
Association for Socio-economic Advancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Education · Health · Human Rights · Climate change · Disaster resilience · Emergency response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Riverbank erosion · Flash Flood · Unplanned River Digging
BARCIK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Ecological education and climate justice · Agro-ecology and food sovereignty · Gender Justice · Urban transformation and resilience · People-led Development (PLD) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Severe water scarcity and vulnerability · Drought · Heat wave · Heavy rainfall and low rainfall
BELA (Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Legal aid for managing environmental issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Groundwater extraction · River erosion · Heavy rainfall · Drought and Dry spells.
BURO Bangladesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Climate change · Financial support to the local farmer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Extreme heat wave and cold wave · Environmental disaster · Pollution
CCBVO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Food Security · Climate Change Adaptation · Rights of the indigenous people · Promoting Science Education in schools · Legal Support · Rights to information · Citizen Rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Drought · Extreme heat · Severe water crisis · Agricultural production cost raising · Increase in Insects

Organization Name	Organizational Focus	Key climatic and environmental challenges mentioned
Department of Agronomy & Agricultural Extension Rajshahi University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Education Research Activities on different heritage such as Muslin fabrics, Potato seedling, tissue culture leading to new variety of crops based on local climate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Severe water pollution · Declining rainfall due to climate change · Increasing droughts and heatwaves.
Eco Social Development Organization (ESDO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · SDG 16 goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Low education rate · Poverty
Fellow of UNICEF (Contractual)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Programmes related to Women, Children, Youth, Climate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Unawareness of climate change · No strategic plan on saving electricity and sustainable management
Gram Unnayan Karma (GUK)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Finance · Education · Healthcare · Food & nutrition · Various socio-economic development programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Air pollution · Local deforestation · Hot weather
ICCCAD Youth Fellow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Climate change and development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Drought
Joypurhat Rural Development Movement (JRDM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Comprehensive development of the geographical area · Alleviating poverty · Non-profit and non-financial programs on primary healthcare, education, health awareness, and sanitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Severe drought · Low rainfall · High temperature · Limited soil moisture storage
Lal Sabuj Society- LSS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Climate action · Mental health · Skill development · Youth empowerment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Drought · Increasing temperature · Decreasing groundwater

Organization Name	Organizational Focus	Key climatic and environmental challenges mentioned
Light House	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Health · Justice · Governance · Climate Resilience · Gender Equality · Technological empowerment · Civic engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Air Pollution · Soil Pollution · Drought · Waste management
Model Youth COP X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Youth activism in climate change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Drought events · Sudden floods · Riverbank erosion
Mollika Mohila Unnayan Sangstha (MMUS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Awareness raising among local people during river erosion and flood · Awareness about rehabilitation · Create employment opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Riverbank Erosion, · Flood · Drought · Violence against women · Reduced agricultural rights due to farmers not having access to their lands
National Development Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Disaster and climate change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Sound pollution · Air pollution · Riverbank erosion · Drought · Water pollution
Population Science & Human Resource Development, Rajshahi University (RU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Human health and diseases · Environmental pollution and climate change · Human Development · Population health and nutrition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Heat wave · Erratic weather · Water pollution, · Waste management, · Drought
Poverty Development Project PDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Reduction in use of pesticides · Reduction in use of chemical fertilizers · Encouraging use of organic fertilizers · Providing agricultural loans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Excessive use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers

Organization Name	Organizational Focus	Key climatic and environmental challenges mentioned
Rajshahi University of Engineering & Technology (RUET)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Research on Impacts of climate change · Applied science (e.g. physics, chemistry, humanities) · Architectural and landscape-related Issues · Climate change and development · Drought management · Agricultural productivity · Traffic management · Urban and Regional Planning (URP) · Machine Learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Scarcity of water · Urban heat island effect · Various type of pollution (e.g. air, water, noise) · Excessive Urban Heat Island Effect · Drought causing loss of agricultural production · Flooding
RULFAO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Ethnic community · Women's rights and their development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Drought, · Water Scarcity · Pollution
Sachetan Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Poverty alleviation · Prevention of gender-based violence · Youth empowerment · Good governance · Health and sanitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Deforestation · Air pollution · Water pollution · Plastic waste pollution · Riverbank erosion · Uncontrolled usage of fuel in brick kilns · Declining soil fertility
Samata Nari Kallyan Sangstha (SNKS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Social development among local people · Environmental development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Drought · Riverbank erosion
Shastho Shikkha Seba Foundation (SSSF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Healthcare · Awareness raising on climate change adaptation · skill developing training amongst school dropout students. · Awareness on sexual reproductive health rights · Nutritional awareness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Knowledge gap on climate change Lack of co-operation amongst the local leaders. · Insufficiency of long-term financial grant support.

Organization Name	Organizational Focus	Key climatic and environmental challenges mentioned
Society for action research and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Poverty Alleviation · Socio economic development · Health awareness · Nutrition programme · Child Marriage prevention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Drought, · Lack of rainfall, · Ground water depletion
Uttara Development Program Society (UDPS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Agricultural development · Livelihood development · Enterprise development · Climate & environmental development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Drought (Maximum times during summer) · Higher usage of chemical fertilizer and pesticides · Soil and air pollution · Lack of waste management
Wave Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Agrifood system · Climate justice · Renewable energy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Deforestation · Deteriorating water quality · Drought



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