

ICCCAD Youth Fellowship Field Visit 2025 Report



July 15–19, 2025



Cox's Bazar District,
Bangladesh

Organized by:

International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD), IUB

Supported by:

Embassy of Sweden, Dhaka



ABOUT THE REPORT

This report summarizes the sessions, activities, and key learnings from the 'ICCCAD Youth Fellowship Field Visit 2025', organized as part of the 'Capacity Strengthening of Multi-Actors to Limit Climate Change Impacts and Enhance Resilience (CAP-RES)' project, which is implemented by the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD), Independent University (IUB).

Disclaimer

The opinions expressed in the report are derived from the responses of the participants and facilitators, which do not necessarily reflect the views of ICCCAD.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Day 1

Background	04
Objectives	05
Transformative Learning: Insights from the Field Visit:	06
Summary of Activities:	08
Arrival and Orientation	09

Day 2 Sessions & Field Visit

Session 1: Opening Remarks and Project Insights	09
Session 2:Tackling Plastic Pollution through the BRAC PLEASE Project	12
Field Visit: : BRAC PLEASE Project Interventions	13
Learnings from Day 2	16

Day 3 Field Visit

Field Visit: Field Engagement at Nazirartek (Shutki Polli)	17
Field Visit: Khurushkul Ashrayan Project	20
Key Learnings from Day 3 Field Visits	21

Day 4 Sessions

Dialogue with Local Youth Climate Activists	22
Learning-Sharing Workshop	23
Team Presentations and Feedback	24
Post-Evaluation Session	26
Key Learnings from Day 4	27
Conclusion	27



BACKGROUND:

The ICCCAD Youth Fellowship is a flagship initiative under the project “Capacity Strengthening of Multi-Actors to Limit Climate Change Impacts and Enhance Resilience (CAP-RES),” implemented by the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) in partnership with Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB), and supported by the Embassy of Sweden in Dhaka. The fellowship empowers young people across Bangladesh by equipping them with practical skills, field-based knowledge, and leadership capacity to engage in meaningful climate action.

The 2025 cohort includes thirty youth fellows, selected through a competitive and inclusive process. Their journey began with a five-day Residential Workshop, held from February 22 to 26, 2025, at the CCDB Climate Centre in Gazipur. During the residential, fellows explored key topics in climate science, adaptation strategies, leadership, and policy processes. It also created space for collaboration, peer learning, and the development of initial ideas for community engagement.

The next major milestone in the fellowship was the Field Visit to Cox’s Bazar, held from July 15 to 19, 2025. This visit was designed to bridge the gap between theory and practice, allowing fellows to engage directly with climate-affected communities, observe locally led adaptation in action, and reflect on climate challenges from a grounded, real-world perspective.

Cox’s Bazar is widely known for its scenic coastline, but behind that beauty lies a harsh reality. The district faces serious climate risks, including rising sea levels, coastal erosion, plastic pollution, and extreme weather events. These conditions have disrupted livelihoods, displaced communities, and strained local resources. At the same time, the region is home to innovative, community-led adaptation efforts. Through this field visit, fellows gained firsthand insight into the lived realities of climate vulnerability and resilience, deepening their understanding of inclusive, community-driven responses to the climate crisis.

OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of the field visit were to:

- ✦ **Provide ICCCAD youth fellows with a better understanding of climate change and its impacts on southwestern Bangladesh.**
- ✦ **Engage youth in identifying key climate challenges and exploring solutions from the perspectives of local communities, with the aim of inspiring climate action.**
- ✦ **Familiarize fellows with standard procedures for conducting field studies, including effective engagement with vulnerable communities.**

This visit aimed to enhance the fellows' practical knowledge and strengthen their capacity to link theory with real-world experiences in climate change and development.



TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING: INSIGHTS FROM THE FIELD VISIT:

The field visit served as a transformative learning experience for the ICCCAD Youth Fellows, offering a rare opportunity to move beyond theoretical discussions and engage directly with climate-affected communities. Immersed in real-world contexts, fellows observed local coping mechanisms, explored the advantages and limitations of innovative waste management tools such as floating barriers, and practiced culturally sensitive approaches to community engagement. Through active participation in Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), interaction with women-led recycling initiatives, and hands-on exposure to incentive-based plastic collection models, fellows not only deepened their understanding of climate vulnerability but also developed practical skills to design and advocate for community-centered solutions. The outcome of this learning journey was clearly demonstrated in both their reflective group presentations during learning workshop and the significant improvements captured in pre- and post-visit assessments.

Key learning :

Creative facilitation tools such as structured openings, storytelling, and group activities can help build trust and encourage participation in community engagement.

Incentive-based approaches, like the plastic exchange booth, can motivate residents to collect plastic waste while supporting low-income households.

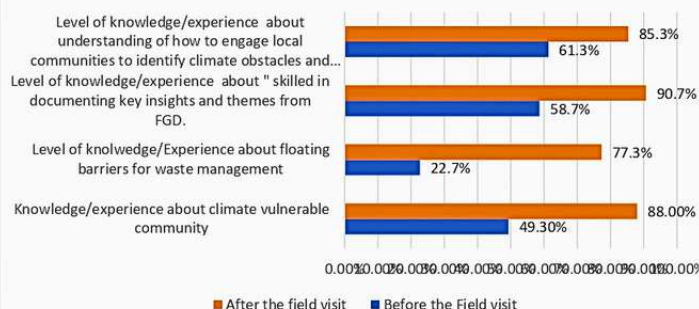
Women in recycling work strengthen the waste management process and create livelihood opportunities.

Fellows reflected that successful resettlement requires more than infrastructure. Livelihood restoration, social integration, and cultural familiarity are essential for long-term resilience.

Fellows observed how climate-induced displacement, health risks, and precarious livelihoods are deeply interconnected in informal settlements.

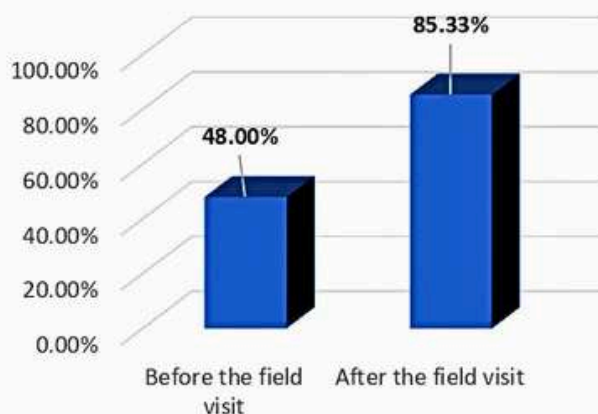
Fellows learned how to apply ethical and culturally sensitive facilitation techniques during FGDs, including the importance of role assignment and adapting approaches based on gender dynamics.

Field Visit Boosts Knowledge of Fellows



The field visit resulted in a significant improvement in overall knowledge, with the average score rising by 37.3 percentage points, from 48.0% to 85.3%.

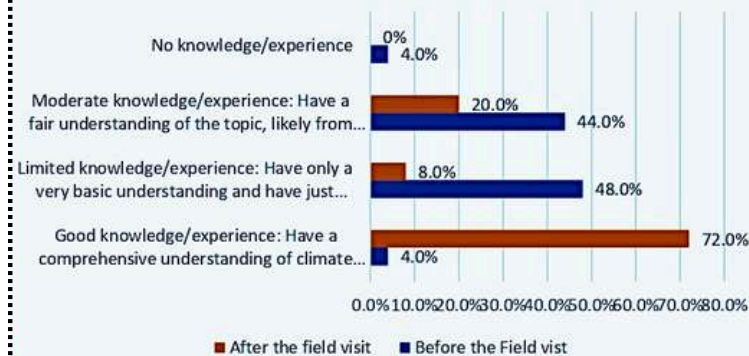
Overall averages across all areas regarding improvement of knowledge before and after the field visit



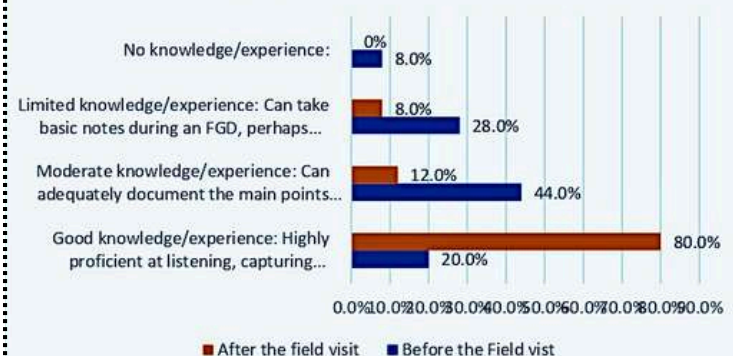
Areas of knowledge gained by Youth Fellows during field visit

The field visit resulted in a 37.33% improvement in overall knowledge, as demonstrated by the comparison of knowledge levels before and after the visit. This gain was observed across four key areas: understanding climate vulnerable communities, floating barriers for waste management, documenting key insights from FGDs, and engaging local communities. For details, please see the graph that shows each areas of knowledge improvement comparing before and after the field visit.

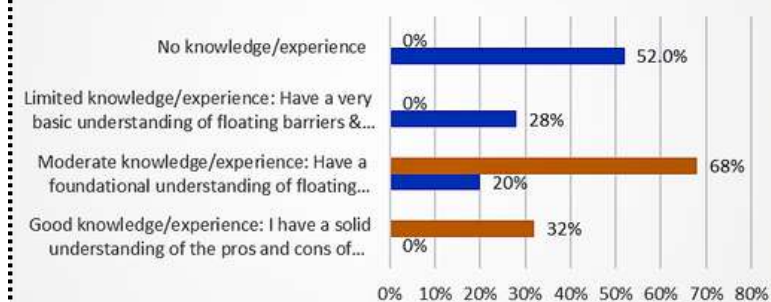
Knowledge/experience about "Climate Vulnerable community" level before and after field visit



Level of knowledge/experience about "skilled in documenting key insights and themes from FGD."



Level of knowledge/experience about floating barriers for waste management



Level of knowledge before the field visit "about understanding of how to engage local communities to identify climate obstacles and solutions."



[1] Foot Note: During the field visit knowledge assessment was carried out through survey questionnaire among the youth fellows. Each respondent carried out self-assessment based on the explanation of each scale of the questionnaire. Scoring System: Each knowledge level on the questionnaire was assigned a numerical score: "No Experience/Knowledge" (0), "Limited knowledge-1", "Moderate Knowledge-2" & "Good Knowledge" (3). Calculation: The results were analyzed by calculating a weighted average score for each question. For example, a score of 0.68 points out of 3 was calculated using the formula: $(0\% \times 3) + (20\% \times 2) + (28\% \times 1) + (52\% \times 0) = 0.68$. The overall average score was calculated and then converted to a percentage. The score before the field visit was 1.44 points (48.0%), and it increased to 2.56 points (85.3%) after the visit. This represents a gain of 37.3 percentage points



SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES:

The five-day field visit to Cox's Bazar provided youth fellows with an immersive learning experience designed to bridge theoretical knowledge with real-world climate challenges. Each day focused on specific activities and objectives, contributing to a broader understanding of climate vulnerability, community resilience, and locally led adaptation.

DAY	SUMMARY
DAY 1 JULY 15, 2025	Fellows arrived in Cox's Bazar, attended an orientation session, and discussed field visit objectives, expectations, and learning goals.
DAY 2 JULY 16, 2025	Fellows visited BRAC PLEASE Project sites in Rumailiar Chara, Tekpara, and Mithaichhari, observing local waste management, plastic recycling, and pollution control initiatives.
DAY 3 JULY 17, 2025	Field engagement with vulnerable communities in Nazirartek and Khurushkul through FGDs and KIIs revealed the complex impacts of climate change on displacement, health, and livelihoods.
DAY 4 JULY 18, 2025	Fellows participated in a dialogue with local youth activists, joined a learning-sharing workshop to reflect on key takeaways, and visited the Inani Sea Beach as part of the closing experience.
DAY 5 JULY 19, 2025	Fellows departed from Cox's Bazar after breakfast, marking the conclusion of the field visit.

Youth fellows arrived in Cox's Bazar and checked in at Windy Terrace Hotel July 15, 2025, marking the beginning of the field visit. The day included an informal orientation session facilitated by the ICCCAD Youth Team. Fellows were welcomed and provided an overview of the visit schedule, key locations, and general guidelines for the days ahead.

The session served as an opportunity for the fellows to settle in, understand the purpose of the visit, and prepare for field engagement in a relaxed and open setting. Basic safety and logistical information were also shared to ensure a smooth start to the visit.

DAY 2

OPENING REMARKS, SESSIONS, AND BRAC PLEASE PROJECT VISITS



JULY 16,
2025



WINDY TERRACE HOTEL, MITHAICHHARI,
TEKPARA, RUMAILIAR CHARA, COX'S BAZAR

OPENING REMARKS AND PROJECT INSIGHTS

The day began at Windy Terrace Hotel with welcome remarks from **Sumaiya Binte Selim**, Youth Focal for the CAP-RES Project at ICCCAD. She greeted the fellows and guests from BRAC and emphasized the importance of youth in sharing climate knowledge and experience.

"YOU'RE HERE FROM ACROSS BANGLADESH TO LEARN, CONNECT, AND CARRY THESE STORIES BACK TO YOUR COMMUNITIES," SHE SAID.



Following this, **Mahfuzur Rahman**, Project Manager, Urban Development Programme at BRAC, shared insights from the PLEASE Project (Plastic Free Rivers and Seas for South Asia). He described how the project addresses plastic pollution in Cox's Bazar, especially in areas impacted by tourism. He spoke about BRAC's collaboration with local authorities, establishing recycling facilities, and training female recyclers.



Highlighting the health risks of plastic pollution, he noted, "Microplastics are in marine life, even in breast milk," and acknowledged the difficulty of shifting public habits, stating, "Changing human behavior takes time," despite ongoing efforts like installing bins and conducting awareness sessions in schools and markets.

He emphasized that meaningful change takes time and stressed the importance of adopting a "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" approach.

Maria Aktar, Project Manager for the CAP-RES Project at ICCCAD, also addressed the fellows, noting that 30 participants were selected from over 1,400 applicants. She underscored the central role of youth in the fellowship, saying, "The first actor in 'multi-actor' is the youth." She encouraged fellows to take ownership of their work and to document their experiences creatively through stories, videos, toolkits, and research. She shared her aspiration to continue and expand the fellowship, emphasizing that its impact would grow through the fellows' ongoing engagement towards meaningful climate action.



SESSION 1:

CREATIVE FACILITATION WITH THE COMMUNITY

After the opening remarks, the fellows participated in an engaging session on creative facilitation, led by **Fahim Hossain**, Founder & Chairperson of Green Lead. The session followed a three-stage pattern of opening, core, and closing, offering fellows practical techniques to engage communities in relatable, inclusive, and empowering ways. In the opening, fellows took part in the Passion Game, where each introduced themselves by sharing “I am this,” “I come from there,” and “I am passionate about this,” taking a step forward with each statement. Passions ranged from climate action, youth leadership, and gender equality to innovation, healthcare, and caring for stray animals. This activity helped break the ice, created a sense of connection, and highlighted the diversity of perspectives within the group.

The core part of the session focused on how to start meaningful conversations in the field. Fellows suggested drawing from personal stories, asking open-ended questions, and discussing shared hopes for the future. One participant noted that “it’s a challenge to be unique with your words on the spot sometimes,” reflecting the importance of both preparation and adaptability in facilitation. This discussion led to the One Word Story exercise, where participants collaboratively built a narrative based on their shared experience at the Gazipur residential. The activity highlighted how active listening, adaptability, and shared input can shape a common outcome, much like collaborative problem-solving with communities.



The closing encouraged fellows to bring energy and authenticity to their facilitation, with Fahim noting that “physically moving while engaging with people integrates energy.” He left the group with a motivating message: “Appreciate yourself. You’re a leader in your place and have the ability to make changes. The goal should be

passing these learnings.” Fellows left with a clearer sense of how to structure openings to build comfort, use relatable storytelling to connect with people’s lived experiences, and employ collaborative exercises to strengthen group trust.

SESSION 2:

TACKLING PLASTIC POLLUTION THROUGH THE BRAC PLEASE PROJECT

Fellows were introduced to the BRAC PLEASE Project (Plastic Free Rivers and Seas for South Asia), which addresses plastic pollution in Cox's Bazar through community engagement, behavior change, and systematic recycling. The BRAC team outlined the broader context of the Triple Planetary Crisis, noting that microplastics are now present in human blood and brain cells and are linked to declining ecological functions such as photosynthesis. Globally, over 1,000 rivers are polluted with plastic, with Baghkhali and Matamuhuri among the worst affected in Bangladesh.

An awareness video illustrated the impacts of plastic waste, especially along the coast. The team described interventions including the floating barrier at Rumailiar Chara to trap waste before it reaches the sea, the Plastic Barter Campaign, where households exchange plastic for essential goods, and household-level waste segregation. These measures have increased segregation by 20% and reduced open dumping from 28% to 5%.

Plastic collected through the project is sorted and either sent to landfills or recycled into new products by women entrepreneurs, promoting the 3R principles while creating livelihood opportunities. Fellows learned how engaging women strengthens both the recycling system and economic empowerment.

During the discussion, many questions came from the floor. **Malik Al Hasan**, a CAP-RES Research intern, asked,



“If we keep producing plastic constantly, won't this be a never-ending cycle?”

The BRAC team responded that they focus on reusing existing plastic, and while bioplastics are promising, cost and usability remain barriers. Among the fellows, **Nigar Sultana** asked, “Has the

project measured behavioural changes among residents?” **Asif S. Naveed**, Deputy Manager, Plastic Recycling, Urban Development Programme, BRAC replied that no formal surveys had been conducted, but noticeable shifts in behavior had been observed.

BEHAVIOR CHANGE TAKES TIME. TO SEE REAL IMPACT, WE NEED CLEAR INDICATORS, REGULAR TRACKING, AND APPROPRIATE ENGAGEMENT AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL.

Md. Nobiul Islam, M&E Manager, CAP-RES Project

Challenges remain, including the lack of large-scale recycling facilities and the widespread use of single-use plastics. **Mahinur Saif** from the project reflected, “Even when we go to drink tea, most of us end up using small single-use plastic cups.” **Rukhsar Sultana** from the same team added, “There may not be a complete alternative to plastic yet, but we can learn to manage it more responsibly. Proper disposal after use can help us keep a balance between its benefits and its impact.”



JULY 16, 2025

FIELD VISIT:

BRAC PLEASE PROJECT INTERVENTIONS



MITHAICHHARI, TEKPARA,
RUMAILIAR CHARA,
COX'S BAZAR

Following the BRAC PLEASE Project briefing session, fellows visited three intervention sites, guided by BRAC staff, to observe how community-driven solutions are addressing plastic pollution in Cox's Bazar.

MITHAICHHARI PLASTIC RECYCLING FACILITY

The first stop was the Mithaichhari Plastic Recycling Facility, where fellows observed how plastic waste collected from nearby communities is transformed into valuable products. Guided in two groups by Md. Asif S. Naveed, Deputy Manager of Plastic Recycling for the BRAC PLEASE Project, followed each stage of the process from waste collection to product creation.

Plastics are first sorted, cleaned, and shredded into flakes, then washed and sieved to remove impurities. Wastewater from this stage is treated in an Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP) that uses sedimentation, oil and grease removal, aeration, filtration, and sludge treatment, allowing 70 percent of the water to be reused. The cleaned flakes are melted into pellets through extrusion and heat-pressing, which are then turned into products such as plastic lumber, sheets, and pallets. The facility can process around 200 kg of waste each day, generating about 10 kg of residual solid waste from contaminants and unusable materials.

Fellows examined key machinery, including the crusher, sifter, heater, extruder, water-based cooler, sheet presser, and pellet breaker. Crushers and shredders are enclosed to reduce noise and prevent microplastic dispersion. Although the machines were temporarily off due to load-shedding, this provided an opportunity for close inspection and detailed discussion with the staff.

Beyond the technical processes, the facility plays a role in community development. It employs 10 local workers, offers training in machine operation, safety, and environmental safeguards, and conducts awareness sessions to promote sustainable waste practices and address misconceptions about recycling. Women are actively involved in sorting and handling plastics, combining environmental benefits with livelihood opportunities.



From this visit, fellows gained practical insight into how a circular economy model can be applied at the community level. They recognized the importance of environmental safeguards like water treatment, saw how technical operations can be linked with social inclusion, and understood that scaling such facilities sustainably requires careful planning, skills development, and active community engagement.

TEKPARA PLASTIC EXCHANGE BOOTH

After visiting Mithaichhari, fellows were guided to Tekpara, where they visited a plastic exchange booth set up under the BRAC PLEASE Project. At this booth, residents bring clean plastic waste and receive essential goods such as rice, lentils, or sugar in return. The booth operates from a simple, open-fronted structure where sacks of sorted plastic are stored, and a weighing scale is used to measure contributions.



Fellows observed the exchange process and asked about community participation and how the quality of plastic waste is managed. Asif S. Naveed, who led the visit, explained that only clean, dry plastic is accepted. Items such as muddy plastic, PET bottles, diapers, and polythene sheets are not accepted due to processing challenges. However, single-use items like plastic straws and snack wrappers are allowed.

Residents receive essential goods based on the weight of plastic submitted. For example, 250 grams of plastic can be exchanged for 500 grams of rice, 250 grams of sugar, or 250 grams of chickpeas. The plastic collected at the booth was already sorted, possibly by community volunteers or assigned staff under the project, ensuring only appropriate materials enter the recycling system.

Fellows also observed a designated dustbin for plastic waste placed near the booth. This bin is used by community members to deposit plastic items, which are then sorted and sent for recycling. While there is no formal household-level segregation system, this bin serves as a practical step toward encouraging responsible disposal at the community level.

This visit gave fellows insight into how simple, incentive-based approaches can encourage waste collection, support low-income households, and contribute to improved plastic management at the community level.

RUMAILIAR CHARA FLOATING BARRIER SYSTEM

As the final stop of the day, fellows visited Rumailiar Chara to observe a floating barrier system installed under the BRAC PLEASE Project. Positioned across a canal that connects to the Bakkhali River and eventually the Bay of Bengal, the barrier is designed to intercept floating plastic and other waste before it reaches the sea.

The system consists of floating barrel-like structures with metal grills suspended vertically beneath the surface to a depth of about one foot. As water flows downstream during rainfall or tidal movement, the barrier traps floating debris while allowing water to pass through. Collected waste is periodically removed by community volunteers and city corporation cleaners, then sorted for recycling or safe disposal.



Guided by Asif S. Naveed and local BRAC staff, fellows learned how this low-cost, passive collection method links with broader waste management efforts. Plastic collected from the barrier can be sent to nearby facilities such as the plastic exchange booth, feeding into a local circular waste system. The barrier is maintained by the BRAC Urban Development Programme under the PLEASE Project, ensuring operational continuity and integration with other interventions.

From this visit, fellows saw how a simple yet well-planned structure can significantly reduce the flow of plastic into rivers and marine environments, protecting aquatic ecosystems and reducing ocean pollution. They recognized the value of community participation in maintaining environmental solutions and understood how upstream interventions like the floating barrier complement downstream measures such as plastic recycling at Mithaichhari, creating an integrated waste management approach. The experience demonstrated how BRAC combines innovation, community involvement, and policy alignment to address environmental challenges, offering a model that can be replicated in other vulnerable regions.



LEARNINGS FROM DAY 2

- ✦ Creative facilitation tools such as structured openings, storytelling, and group activities can help build trust and encourage participation in community engagement.
- ✦ The PLEASE Project from BRAC demonstrates how combining awareness, behavior change, and recycling infrastructure can reduce plastic waste in coastal communities.
- ✦ Including women in recycling work strengthens the waste management process and creates livelihood opportunities.
- ✦ Incentive-based approaches, like the plastic exchange booth, can motivate residents to collect plastic waste while supporting low-income households.
- ✦ Recycling facilities such as Mithaichhari demonstrate how a circular economy can work locally when technical processes are paired with environmental safeguards and community jobs.
- ✦ Low-cost interventions like the Rumailiar Chara floating barrier can stop plastic waste before it reaches rivers and seas, supporting wider waste management systems.

DAY 3

COMMUNITY IMMERSION, FGDS, CASE STUDY COLLECTION, AND CLIMATE-RESILIENT HOUSING VISIT



JULY 17,
2025



NAZIRARTEK SHUTKI POLLI, MAGIC BOARD
SCHOOL, KHURUSHKUL ASHRAYAN
PROJECT, COX'S BAZAR

FIELD VISIT:

FIELD ENGAGEMENT AT NAZIRARTEK (SHUTKI POLLI)

On the morning of day 3, fellows visited Nazirartek, a coastal settlement in Ward No. 1 of Cox's Bazar Municipality, known locally as Shutki Polli for its large-scale dry fish processing activities. The community is densely populated and highly climate-vulnerable, with many residents displaced from other coastal regions due to rising sea levels and environmental hazards.

The visit began at the Magic Board School, a grassroots educational initiative founded by local youth Jimran Mohammad Saiak. The school provides basic education to children in an area where access to formal schooling is limited. Fellows interacted with students and learned how youth-led efforts are helping fill critical gaps in education and community support.



Following this, Md. Nobiul Islam, M&E Manager of the CAP-RES Project, conducted a refresher session on Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). He revisited key points about facilitation, ethical engagement, and group roles such as note-taking, observation, and recording. This session prepared fellows for their upcoming fieldwork with the community.



Fellows had been divided into 4 groups in advance, each placed under the observation of two ICCCAD staff members to ensure smooth coordination. Each group conducted a demo FGD with community members. Roles were assigned within each group, and fellows approached the conversations with care and cultural sensitivity. The FGDs captured the communities' perspectives on health, education, livelihoods, and gender-related challenges in the context of climate change. During discussions involving gender-sensitive topics, male fellows stepped aside to allow female fellows to engage directly with women in the community.





After completing the FGDs, fellows explored the Shutki Polli area, observing living and working conditions and speaking informally with residents to better understand their everyday challenges. Fellows gathered case studies during this time and documented stories of displacement, health risks, and livelihood struggles linked to climate vulnerability. All information, photos, and videos were collected with documented consent, in line with ethical guidelines.

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This field engagement helped fellows practice inclusive facilitation, active listening, and ethical engagement, while deepening their understanding of how climate impacts intersect with displacement, health, and livelihoods in informal coastal settlements.

FIELD VISIT:

VISIT TO KHURUSHKUL ASHRAYAN PROJECT

Later that day, the fellows visited the final site on their itinerary, the Khurushkul Ashrayan Project, a large-scale climate-resilient housing initiative located on the outskirts of Cox's Bazar town. The project aims to relocate and rehabilitate families displaced by climate-induced hazards such as sea-level rise, river erosion, and tidal surges. With over 85 multi-storey buildings already constructed, the complex offers housing to thousands of previously vulnerable households, providing basic services like electricity, sanitation, and more.



During their visit, fellows explored the housing site and engaged directly with residents through informal conversations and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). As part of case study documentation, written consent was collected to ensure ethical engagement and respectful storytelling.



While the scale and ambition of the project were evident, fellows noted that the realities on the ground were more complex. Many residents expressed gratitude for the safety and permanence of their new homes, but also shared challenges in adjusting to the environment. Several families who previously relied on fishing, farming, or day labor now face difficulty earning a living, as the lack of nearby employment opportunities, poor access to transport, and disconnection from traditional workspaces, such as "fishery ghats or agricultural fields, have disrupted their income and daily routines.

Fellows also observed that, despite being structurally sound, the apartment units often lacked features that support comfortable and culturally familiar living. Poor ventilation, lack of communal spaces, and rigid layouts have made adaptation difficult for many, particularly for larger families or those used to more open, shared environments. Certain residents had been relocated not only due to climate impacts but also as a result of infrastructure development projects.

The visit prompted fellows to reflect on what holistic resettlement should truly entail. Beyond providing shelter, it must also include livelihood restoration, social cohesion, and cultural continuity to support climate-affected communities effectively.

“BEHAVIORAL ORIENTATION AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION SUPPORT ARE ESSENTIAL TO ENSURE SUCCESSFUL RESETTLEMENT. RELOCATION WITHOUT ATTENTION TO CULTURAL NORMS, LIVELIHOODS, AND COMMUNITY DYNAMICS OFTEN LEADS TO UNDERUTILIZATION OF THE VERY AMENITIES MEANT TO SUPPORT RECOVERY.”

Md. Nobiul Islam, M&E
Manager, CAP-RES Project



KEY LEARNINGS FROM DAY 3 FIELD VISITS

- ✦ Youth-led initiatives like the Magic Board School are helping address critical education gaps in marginalized areas with limited access to formal schooling.
- ✦ Fellows learned how to apply ethical and culturally sensitive facilitation techniques during FGDs, including the importance of role assignment and adapting approaches based on gender dynamics.
- ✦ In Shutki Polli, fellows observed how climate-induced displacement, health risks, and precarious livelihoods are deeply interconnected in informal settlements.
- ✦ The Khurushkul Ashrayan Project demonstrated that while large-scale housing can provide physical safety, relocation often disrupts income sources and community life.
- ✦ Fellows reflected that successful resettlement requires more than infrastructure. Livelihood restoration, social integration, and cultural familiarity are essential for long-term resilience.

DAY 4

DIALOGUE WITH YOUTH CLIMATE ACTIVISTS, LEARNING-SHARING WORKSHOP, AND POST-VISIT EVALUATION BRIEFING



JULY 18,
2025



WINDY TERRACE HOTEL, COX'S BAZAR

DIALOGUE WITH LOCAL YOUTH CLIMATE ACTIVISTS:

The morning session connected the Youth Fellows with members of YouthNet Global, a platform of young climate leaders that also operates through local networks. For this session, fellows met YouthNet's Cox's Bazar network, whose members lead or are actively involved in local organisations such as Shopno Toiri Shechashebi, Protasha Foundation, Youth Alliance for Sustainable International Development (YASID), Youth Organization for Social Development, Youth Cooperative Civil Society, and Cox's Bazar Scouts.



Each shared how their work contributes to climate resilience in different ways. Some focus on environmental education in schools and communities, tree plantation drives in Rohingya camps, and awareness campaigns on plastic waste and microplastics. Others lead initiatives on sustainable livelihoods, such as training fisherwomen to produce chemical-free dry fish, promoting nutrition and hygiene awareness, and organizing rural waste management projects to reduce dumping. There were also peacebuilding efforts using music for mental health, research on the experiences of climate-affected migrants, and emergency preparedness training for cyclone-prone communities.

After hearing from the activists about their initiatives, the session moved into a more interactive phase. Fellows formed four teams, each paired with at least one YouthNet activist, to continue the conversation in smaller groups. These discussions gave fellows the chance to explore specific projects in more detail, ask follow-up questions, and draw comparisons with their field visit observations from the BRAC PLEASE Project sites, Nazirartek, and Khurushkul. This setup encouraged deeper exchanges on community-led solutions, operational challenges, and the realities of grassroots climate advocacy.

LEARNING-SHARING WORKSHOP:

After the dialogue session with the YouthNet members, the fellows participated in a Learning-Sharing Workshop facilitated by Dr. Md. Hafizur Rahman, Professor and Head of the Department of Environmental Science and Management (DESM), Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB), and IUB-ICCCAD Focal, along with Md. Nobilul Islam, Monitoring and Evaluation Manager (M&E) for the CAP-RES Project at ICCCAD.



The aim was to consolidate field visit learnings and transform them into actionable solutions. Fellows were divided into 4 teams, each tasked with reviewing their observations from the past three days and proposing solutions to specific challenges they had encountered. The topics included:

- **Plastic recycling processes observed at Mithaichhari**
- **The floating waste barrier at Rumailiar Chara**
- **FGD and case study findings on climate-vulnerable migrant communities**
- **Insights from the dialogue with local youth climate activists**

Each team spent an hour discussing problems, brainstorming innovative and realistic solutions, and identifying the resources needed to implement them. They then prioritized 2 to 3 solutions per challenge and proposed clear action points.

TEAM PRESENTATIONS AND FEEDBACK:



Team 1 focused on the plastic recycling process, highlighting load-shedding disruptions, limited machinery capacity, and the need for broader community awareness. Their proposed actions included installing backup solar power, expanding machinery, and scaling awareness sessions beyond current catchment areas. Feedback from facilitators encouraged them to consider long-term maintenance and financial sustainability for any upgrades.



Team 2 examined the floating barrier system, noting challenges with waste overflow during heavy rains and irregular volunteer engagement. They suggested adding secondary collection points upstream and creating a structured volunteer rotation with city corporation support. Facilitators advised testing small-scale pilots before scaling. **24**



Team 3 addressed findings from FGDs with climate-vulnerable migrants, raising concerns over limited healthcare access, menstrual hygiene management issues, and restricted mobility for women during disasters. Their action plan included community health camps, low-cost sanitary pad production, and safe access points to cyclone shelters. Feedback emphasized linking these solutions to existing government and NGO programs to ensure continuity.



Team 4 built on insights from the YouthNet dialogue, identifying gaps in funding, coordination, and technical capacity for youth-led climate action. They proposed forming a youth resource-sharing network, joint advocacy campaigns, and periodic skill-building workshops. Facilitators recommended starting with a small, well-defined collaboration to demonstrate impact before seeking large-scale partnerships.

The presentations were followed by Q&A sessions, where other fellows challenged assumptions, suggested alternatives, and drew connections between the different thematic areas. **Hafizur Rahman** closed the workshop by stressing the importance of lifelong learning, reflective practice, and realistic planning,

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“SOLUTIONS MUST BE ROOTED IN COMMUNITY REALITIES, OTHERWISE THEY REMAIN IDEAS ON PAPER.”

”

POST-EVALUATION SESSION

The day concluded with a post-evaluation session facilitated by Md. Hafizur Rahman and Md. Nobiul Islam. Fellows were guided through an online form designed to capture their reflections on the field visit. The facilitators explained each section, encouraged specific answers, and stressed that honest feedback would help improve future fellowship activities.

Hafizur Rahman encouraged fellows to see the process as part of their growth, noting,

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"REFLECTION CONNECTS WHAT YOU
EXPERIENCED WITH WHAT YOU CAN
DO NEXT."

”

On the other hand, Nobiul Islam highlighted the importance of constructive feedback, reminding participants that their input would help strengthen future programs. As they filled out the form, fellows revisited key moments from the week. Many highlighted the Mithaichhari plastic recycling facility as a practical example of turning waste into resources, and the floating barrier at Rumailiar Chara as a simple, community-led solution to plastic pollution. Others noted that the Nazirartek FGDs were the most emotionally resonant, offering insights into the lived realities of women, youth, and displaced families. The dialogue with YouthNet activists was also frequently mentioned as a source of inspiration, with fellows appreciating the range of grassroots initiatives and the chance to discuss them in smaller, focused groups.

Before closing, the facilitators reminded fellows of their post-visit assignment: to prepare and submit within one week a creative output capturing their field visit learning. This could be a case study, photo story, painting, article, or other format that documents their insights and experiences. The aim was to ensure that reflections from the visit translated into outputs that could be shared with wider audiences, further amplifying the voices and lessons encountered during the fieldwork.



KEY LEARNINGS FROM DAY 4

- ✦ Grassroots youth leaders are often the driving force behind climate action in their communities.
- ✦ Technical solutions work best when paired with social and cultural understanding.
- ✦ Talking directly with peers doing similar work helps uncover both shared struggles and creative approaches.
- ✦ Strong community relationships are just as important as resources for making change last.
- ✦ Taking time to reflect and exchange feedback makes future work more focused and effective.
- ✦ Working together across different networks can open new doors for impact.

CONCLUSION

The ICCCAD Youth Fellowship 2025 field visit to Cox's Bazar bridged learning with lived experience. Over five days, fellows explored plastic recycling and waste interception models under the BRAC PLEASE Project, engaged with coastal fishing communities in Nazirartek, documented stories of climate displacement, and examined large-scale resettlement at Khurushkul Ashrayan Project. They exchanged ideas with local youth leaders from YouthNet Global and worked in teams to analyze field observations, propose solutions, and prioritize actions. Beyond technical insights, the visit reinforced the value of empathy, community trust, and inclusive participation in climate action. Fellows returned with not only a stronger grasp of grassroots adaptation strategies but also a clearer sense of the challenges and trade-offs that shape resilience-building in vulnerable regions.