

MYMENSINGH DIVISIONAL PLATFORM LAUNCH OF LOCALLY LED ADAPTATION

10 July 2024

BRAC Learning Centre, Mymensingh



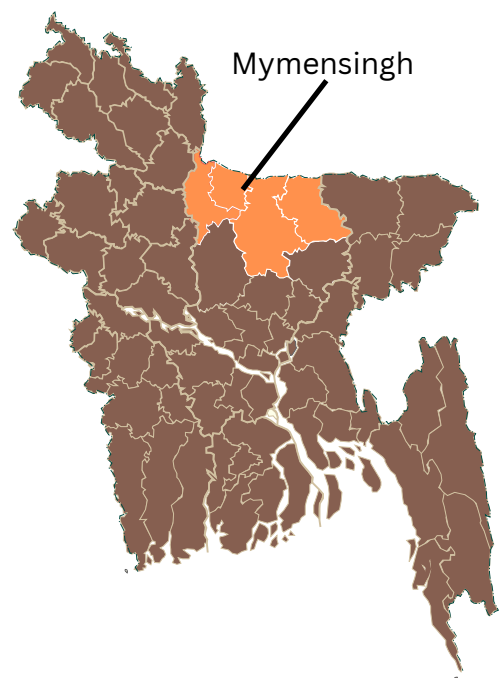
BACKGROUND

Bangladesh is recognized as a global leader in adaptation and resilience. Despite Bangladesh's significant progress in adapting to climate change, its geography and low-lying topography make it particularly vulnerable to climate change. The country faced 185 extreme weather events, including cyclones, heatwaves, flooding and droughts between 2000 and 2019, showing an alarming rate of increasing vulnerability under future climate scenarios.

In 2005, Bangladesh was one of the first least-developed countries to develop a national programme of action and has now become recognised as a global leader in adaptation and resilience. Government policy and local initiatives have averted the worst effects and saved millions of lives; the death toll from cyclones alone has fallen from up to 500,000 during Cyclone Bhola in 1970 to 35 during Cyclone Sitrang in 2022.

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS IN MYMENSINGH

Mymensingh is located in the north-central region part of Bangladesh, and consists of four districts, Mymensingh, Netrokona, Sherpur and Jamalpur. It is a diverse landscape with several underlying natural hazards. According to the National Adaptation Plan (NAP), the greater Mymensingh region is divided into two climatic stressors: (a) river, floodplains, and erosion-prone areas, and (b) char and islands; where riverine flooding and flash floods have significant impacts on the environment, economy, and social well-being.



Due to extensive upstream rainfall, the transboundary rivers carry the bulk amount of water through the Brahmaputra River system in the downstream region of Mymensingh. As a result, floods, flash floods and riverbank erosion are affecting the lives and livelihoods of the communities- living in these areas, for consecutive years now.

LOCALLY LED ADAPTATION

Local people and communities directly impacted by climate change are often the most proactive and creative in devising solutions to adapt. However, their effectiveness is hindered by limited access to resources, technology, capacity-building opportunities, and funding. Locally led adaptation (LLA) emphasizes consulting and involving local stakeholders, such as community-based organizations, businesses, citizens, governments, and institutions at the lowest administrative level, as decision-makers in climate adaptation interventions. This approach recognizes the importance of empowering and including those directly affected by climate change in the decision-making process for effective and sustainable adaptation solutions.

PRINCIPLES OF LOCALLY LED ADAPTATION

Eight principles for locally-led adaptation have been developed to help ensure that local communities are empowered to lead sustainable and effective adaptation to climate change at the local level.



1
Devolving decision making to the lowest appropriate level



2
Addressing structural inequalities



3
Providing patient and predictable funding



4
Investing in local capabilities to leave an institutional legacy



5
Building a robust understanding of climate risk and uncertainty



6
Flexible programming and learning



7
Ensuring transparency and accountability



8
Collaborative action and investment

PROSPECTS OF LOCALLY LED ADAPTATION IN BANGLADESH

In Bangladesh, national policies pave the way for scaling up locally led adaptation (LLA) to climate change. However, government must ensure that there is better coordination between responsible ministries and that local governments have a comprehensive understanding of LLA. Over the last two decades, the government's focus on national climate change adaptation policies has gradually shifted from 'community engagement' to 'enhancing community resilience and promoting local leadership.'



OBJECTIVES OF THE DIVISIONAL PLATFORM

To unfold the locally led adaptation (LLA) concept, ICCCAD believes that it is essential to actively support local actors' leadership, inclusivity, and agency throughout the various stages of designing and implementing adaptation interventions.

Since 2022, ICCCAD has been working with like-minded national level stakeholders and a global community of practitioners to understand what locally led adaptation means for Bangladesh and successfully launched the national platform in Dhaka and four divisional platforms in Khulna, Chattogram, Sylhet and recently in Mymensingh. The objective of establishing the divisional platforms includes:



Communicating Local Messages to National Level

Facilitating the transmission of local messages from the community level to the national level and ensuring that the voices and experiences of local actors are heard and considered in broader policy and development discussions.



Promoting of Good Practices

Recognizing and highlighting successful LLA practices in Bangladesh, serving as examples for effective and sustainable adaptation strategies.



Enhancing Local Actor's Capacity

Focusing on enhancing the technical and leadership capacities of local communities, and empowering them to take a proactive role in shaping and implementing adaptation initiatives.



Collaboration and Networking

Providing a space for collaboration among various stakeholders that aims to strategize and plan the next steps in LLA advocacy, research, knowledge management, capacity building, co-production of knowledge, and implementation of adaptation measures.

LAUNCH OF MYMENSINGH DIVISIONAL PLATFORM ON LOCALLY LED ADAPTATION

The Mymensingh Divisional Platform Launch on Locally Led Adaptation took place on the 10th of July 2024. Representatives from various local NGOs, grassroots organizations, universities, and civil society organizations participated from Mymensingh, Jamalpur, Sherpur and Netrokona. Ms. Afsara Binte Mirza, Senior Research Officer at ICCCAD, moderated the event. The event began with opening remarks from Mr. Saqib Huq, Managing Director, ICCCAD. He welcomed the participants and expressed his gratitude for joining the event. He discussed the course of LLA's inception to practice and remembered Dr. Saleemul Huq's vision of how the platforms can create new opportunities for local resilience against climate change.

After the remarks from Mr. Saqib Huq, the Managing Director, Mr. Savio Rousseau Rozario, Programme Coordinator, Locally Led Adaptation (LLA) of ICCCAD, presented for the guests highlighting ICCCAD's vision and its role in launching the LLA platforms in Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Sylhet and in Mymensingh. The presentation stressed ICCCAD's organizational history, current programmes, and work on climate change in Bangladesh and globally. He also remembered the pioneering leadership of the late Dr. Saleemul Huq in establishing the concept of locally-led adaptation both nationally and globally.



A presentation on ICCCAD's LLA Programme and the eight Principles of LLA was delivered by Ms. Afsara Binte Mirza, Research Officer, at ICCCAD. Later, Mr. Rawnak Jahan Ranon, Research Officer, and Ms. Fariha Jahin Biva, Research Associate at ICCCAD shared case studies on what actually 'LLA means for Bangladesh'.

At the end of the presentation, Mr. Rawnak Jahan Ranon showcased a video documentary which captured the devastating impacts of flash floods (in Mymensingh region) on his area's agricultural productivity and livelihoods. The video documentation was applauded highly among the audience as they could relate to the local context. By the end of this session, each participant of the event introduced themselves and their organizations and shared their motivations to join and work collaboratively on the LLA platform.



OPEN DISCUSSION

In Mymensingh division, there are numerous local efforts undertaken in reducing the disaster risks and adapting to the impacts of climate change in Char islands and in the low-lying areas - by the local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), grassroots organizations, youth-led organizations, academic institutions, and the government.

For a clear and systematic understanding, the participants were grouped. They were requested to share their perception about leadership, and why they think leadership is important in any project. Lastly, they all participated in a group activity where each group had to devise an LLA project based on a disaster or climate risk they wanted to address for any locality in Mymensingh.

Organization	Working Areas of the organization	Identified Climate and Environmental Challenges of the area
<p>Shashi Foundation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resource Development • Informal education • Industrial waste and air pollution mitigation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industrial waste • Industrial air pollution
<p>CARITAS Bangladesh Mymensingh Region</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social welfare and vulnerable community development • Education and child development • Nutrition and health education • Disaster management • Development of indigenous communities • Ecosystem conservation and food security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flood • Flash flood • Deforestation • Waste management • Illegal sand mining and extraction of natural resources • River bank erosion • Migration • Drought

Organization	Working Areas of the organization	Identified Climate and Environmental Challenges of the area
Sabuj Bangla Grameen Unnayan Songstha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment, education and health • Poverty eradication • Sanitation • Climate adaptation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sand mining • Deforestation • Illegal hill cutting • Air pollution
Adarsha Palli Unnayan Sangstha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services for flood affected people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change
SERAA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human resources development • Environment • Health and sanitation • Education (NFPE, Pre primary, formal and special education) • TVET • Livelihood development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of solid waste management • Use of chemical fertilizer
Development Pioneer Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree plantation • Early childhood education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of environmental awareness
Bangladesh agriculture development corporation (BADC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreasing depth and flow of Brahmaputra river • Unplanned industrialization • Ground water depletion

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BAU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thunderstorm
BAU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture (Crop, livestock, fisheries, farm merchandise, marketing, food security). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thunderstorm • Flood
Pathfinder International	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of enforcement of environmental law
Seba Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Health • Development of people with disabilities • Women and Child Rights • Environment Protection • Tree forestation • Courtyard session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent disaster • River bank erosion
RISH (Integrated Society for Rays of Hope)	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flood • Heavy rain
JNDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eco-friendly integrated agriculture and job creation for poor people and divorced women through exportable handicraft activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excessive pesticide use • Environmental pollution • Land grabbing

EXISTING LOCAL CHALLENGE HIGHLIGHTED

- The low-lying areas of the Mymensingh region faces frequent inundation during monsoon season, with sudden flash floods impacting agricultural practices and the livelihoods of the smallholder farmers. This leads to income loss and causes mental dissatisfaction amongst the farmers.
- Illegal sand mining by the riverbanks is causing environmental degradation by changing the pattern of riverbeds, and threatening several species of flora and fauna.
- Rapid urbanization and industrialization in the region are also contributing to several environmental pollution due to lack of proper waste management awareness, regulation, and practices.
- The local NGOs and grassroots organization faces difficulties in accessing adequate climate finance for adaptation interventions at the local level. Lack of capacity-building opportunities on climate risks and uncertainties hinders coordination amongst the local actors (such as governments, INGOs, NGOs and private sector).



WAY FORWARD HIGHLIGHTED AT THE EVENT

- Accessing and utilizing long-term finance for adaptation interventions; context-specific capacity-building provisions for the local institutions to conduct evidence-based and action research; and improved coordination amongst the key stakeholders such as the local government bodies and local NGOs- were some crucial enablers mentioned during the event.
- It is important to construct lightning shelters due to rising frequency of thunderstorm lightning for the farmers working at rice paddy fields to prevent sudden death (especially during monsoon season).
- Establishing locally viable underground irrigation canals and reservoir can help to reduce pressure on the groundwater.
- Installing solar-based irrigation facilities can be cost effective for smallholder farmers. Additionally, constructing biogas plants can help to prevent use of firewood for cooking and reduce environmental impact and improve women and girls' health.



Participants brainstormed the term 'leadership' and what qualities a leader should possess in groups. They came up with locally relevant definitions. The groups were also given climate vulnerable scenarios and asked to design solutions focusing on the 8 principles of locally led adaptation.

According to the participants, local government bodies, local leaders, and practitioners were the three most important stakeholders for implementing and incorporating the 8 locally led adaptation principles into any climate change related interventions/project/plans.



LOCAL ACTORS AT THE EVENT

SL	Name	Organization
1	Md Riad Sorker	RISH
2	Ashadul Haque	BADC
3	Badhon Chiran	Caritas Bangladesh
4	Md Suman Ali	Pathfinder International
5	SM Mazibur Rahman	SERAA
6	Muhammed Ali Khasru	JNDP
7	Sirajul Islam Kiron	Shashi Foundation
8	Kh Abdul Alim	Sabuj Bangla
9	Md Abdul hai	APUS
10	Khadija Afroja	BADC
11	Dr Shonia Shoheli	BAU
12	Dr Md Abdul Monjur Khan	BAU
13	Md Homaiun Kabir	DPS
14	Md Yousuf Akanda Mojibur	Seba Foundation

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Read More

Contact



[National Consultation on Locally Led Adaptation: May, 2022](#)



[1st Meeting of the National Platform on Locally Led Adaptation: September 2022](#)



[Khulna Divisional Platform on LLA: February, 2023](#)



[2nd meeting of the National Platform on Locally Led Adaptation: August 2023](#)



[Chattogram Divisional Platform on Locally Led Adaptation: September 2023](#)



[Sylhet Divisional Platform on Locally Led Adaptation: September 2023](#)

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