

A COAST Foundation publication 2026

EMPOWERING COASTAL PEOPLE

THROUGH COMMUNITY-DRIVEN
CLIMATE RESILIENCE
PRACTICES AND ADVOCACY





Charfesson, Bhola, Bangladesh. May 13, 2026
Photo: Din M Shibly/COAST Foundation

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Major impacts

- **465** climate-vulnerable coastal women improved household economic stability through locally led climate-adaptive income-generating techniques.
- **70%** overall increase in household income compared to baseline
- **65%** of households now earn USD 50–55/month
- **21%** of households earn USD 56–60 /month
- **14%** of households earn USD 61–65 /month
- **6,831** vulnerable people strengthened their knowledge of climate adaptation and disaster preparedness.
- **384** school dropout coastal adolescent girls transformed their livelihoods through climate-smart agriculture, livestock rearing, and tailoring.
- **26,514** community people were empowered through community awareness sessions and improved knowledge on health, hygiene, child marriage prevention & GBV.
- **6** ponds have been re-excavated and connected to a rainwater harvesting (RWH) system to improve freshwater availability to the coastal communities.
- **1,145** households have ensured access to safe drinking water.
- **256** trained members, including local journalists and students, have been developed locally through the establishment of a youth-led Climate Displacement Monitoring Committee.
- **27,124** climate-vulnerable people are the direct beneficiaries of this project.
- **1,63,443** climate-vulnerable people are the indirect beneficiaries of this project.

The River Tentulia, Patuakhali. May 13, 2026
Photo: Din M Shibly/COAST Foundation

Evaluation Report
**Empowering Coastal Communities:
Addressing Climate Change and
Resilience Project**

EMPOWERING COASTAL PEOPLE

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CLIMATE RESILIENCE
PRACTICES AND ADVOCACY



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Cover: The River Agunmukha, Panpattai, Galachipa, Patuakhali. May 11, 2026
Photo: Din M Shibly/COAST Foundation



Acronyms					
ADP	:	Annual Development Program	FGD	:	Focus Group Discussion
BDT	:	Bangladeshi Taka	GBV	:	Gender-based Violence
CAIGT	:	Climate Adaptive Income Generating Technologies	IGA	:	Income-Generating Activity
CJRF	:	Climate Justice Resilience Fund	KII	:	Key Informant Interviews
DRR	:	Disaster Risk Reduction	MEAL	:	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning

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Acronyms		
NAP	:	National Adaptation Plan
NSMDCID	:	National Strategy on the Management of Disaster and Climate-Induced Internal Displacement
OECD-DAC	:	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Assistance Committee
PPMM	:	Project Progress Monitoring Meeting
PSEA	:	Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
RWH	:	Rain Water Harvesting
UNO	:	Upazila (Sub-district) Nirbahi Officer

SECTION 1

Executive Summary

The “Empowering Coastal Communities: Addressing Climate Change and Resilience” project, implemented by COAST Foundation with support from the Climate Justice Resilience Fund (CJRF) from January 2024 to June 2026, aimed to strengthen climate resilience and reduce socio-economic inequalities among 27,124 vulnerable coastal people across 13 upazilas (sub-districts) in 9 climate-vulnerable districts of Bangladesh. The evaluation, conducted through qualitative methods involving 89 stakeholders (74% women), assessed project performance against the OECD-DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness, impact, efficiency, and sustainability.

The evaluation found the project to be highly relevant, as it aligns closely with Bangladesh’s national climate adaptation and development policy frameworks and addresses the needs of some of the country’s most vulnerable populations, including women, adolescent girls, fisher-folk, persons with disabilities, and climate-displaced communities. By focusing on remote coastal areas severely affected by salinity intrusion, cyclones, and river erosion, the project responded directly to frontline climate risks while promoting locally led and community-driven

solutions. The project effectively combined climate adaptation, livelihood resilience, gender equality, community participation, and policy advocacy through an integrated, inclusive, and people-centered approach.

Overall, the project was assessed as considerably effective, achieving substantial progress across all five intended outcomes. Climate Adaptive Income Generating Techniques (CAIGTs), particularly scaffold-based goat rearing and sack gardening, significantly improved household resilience and income security. A total of 465 climate-vulnerable coastal women enhanced their household economic resilience and reduced recurring income losses through the adoption of locally managed CAIGTs. At project inception, 88% of participating households earned less than USD 30 (BDT 3,570) per month, while the remaining 12% earned below USD 35 (BDT 4,165). By the time of the assessment, household incomes had increased substantially, with 65% earning USD 50–55 per month, 21% earning USD 56–60, and 14% earning USD 61–65, representing an approximate 70% increase in income and significantly strengthening economic stability, adaptive capacity, and resilience to climate-related shocks.

In addition, 6,831 vulnerable people strengthened their knowledge of climate adaptation and disaster preparedness through extensive community-level orientation sessions, enhancing both pre- and post-disaster risk management capacity. Safe drinking water access was improved through six community ponds integrated with rainwater harvesting systems, providing a locally appropriate, low-cost, and climate-resilient solution to salinity-affected coastal areas.

The project achieved moderate success in strengthening gender equity within COAST Foundation through gender-sensitive recruitment, implementation of Gender and PSEA policies, and institutional reforms, although gender imbalance remains in overall staffing and within specific programs.

OVERALL, THE PROJECT WAS ASSESSED AS CONSIDERABLY EFFECTIVE, ACHIEVING SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS ACROSS ALL FIVE INTENDED OUTCOMES. CLIMATE ADAPTIVE INCOME GENERATING TECHNIQUES (CAIGTs), PARTICULARLY SCAFFOLD-BASED GOAT REARING AND SACK GARDENING, SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED HOUSEHOLD RESILIENCE AND INCOME SECURITY.

*The River Agunmukha, Panpattai, Galachipa, Patuakhali. May 11, 2026
Photo: Din M Shibly/COAST Foundation*



Participatory Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) systems were strengthened through regular beneficiary feedback mechanisms, community consultations, and the development of a web-based platform, resulting in increased transparency and greater community influence over project design and implementation decisions.

One of the project's most significant achievements was the strengthening of Radio Meghna as a platform for community resilience, social accountability, and girls' empowerment. Through this platform, adolescent girls emerged as community leaders and advocates against child marriage and gender-based violence, while also contributing to climate awareness and local governance processes. A total of 384 school-dropout adolescent girls were economically empowered through diversified climate-resilient livelihoods, with all participants establishing income sources—75% earning USD 20–25 per month—thereby enhancing their financial independence, self-reliance, and social status.

Knowledge and awareness on health, sanitation, climate risks, and prevention of gender-based violence increased among 26,514 people in highly climate-vulnerable communities, contributing to positive behavioral change and strengthening social protection mechanisms. The community radio model also successfully amplified marginalized voices while adapting to changing media consumption patterns through digital content production and social media engagement, thereby extending its reach and relevance.

Advocacy and campaign initiatives generated substantial policy influence and improvements in service delivery. Through community-led advocacy, more than 11,437 previously excluded fishers were officially registered and gained access to government food assistance programs, while 27,105 fishing families benefited from timely support prior to fishing ban periods. Youth-led monitoring committees for climate-displaced communities contributed to improved access to healthcare, safe drinking water, and social support services, as well as infrastructure development, benefiting thousands of vulnerable households. These initiatives strengthened community agency, accountability, and citizen engagement with government institutions.

The project generated significant economic, social, institutional, and environmental impacts. Women's economic resilience improved through diversified livelihoods, particularly climate-adaptive goat rearing.

Adolescent girls gained confidence, leadership skills, and recognition as agents of social change. Climate awareness increased substantially across communities, and community-driven practices demonstrated strong potential for replication and scaling. Importantly, the project contributed to strengthening accountability and responsiveness of government institutions by improving inclusion in

THE PROJECT GENERATED SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, INSTITUTIONAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS. WOMEN'S ECONOMIC RESILIENCE IMPROVED THROUGH DIVERSIFIED LIVELIHOODS, PARTICULARLY CLIMATE-ADAPTIVE GOAT REARING.

Goat Rearing:
Shahinur Begum, Basbareia, Doshmina,
Patuakhali. May 12, 2026
Photo: Din M Shibly/COAST Foundation



social protection systems and facilitating access to essential public services for marginalized coastal populations.

The project demonstrated high efficiency, achieving 93.6% target completion and 94% budget utilization. A substantial proportion of resources were allocated to program implementation, while administrative costs remained comparatively low, indicating strong value for money and efficient resource use.

Sustainability is assessed as moderately high. Key practices likely to continue beyond the project include climate adaptation knowledge, scaffold-based goat rearing, saline-tolerant agriculture, community-based accountability mechanisms, and the continued leadership role of adolescent girls. Strengthened partnerships with local government institutions, increased community ownership, and institutional learning within COAST Foundation further support the sustainability of project outcomes.

The evaluation also highlights important lessons, including the critical role of community mobilization in



A SUBSTANTIAL PROPORTION OF RESOURCES WERE ALLOCATED TO PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION, WHILE ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS REMAINED COMPARATIVELY LOW, INDICATING STRONG VALUE FOR MONEY AND EFFICIENT RESOURCE USE.

driving policy influence, the importance of household economic capacity in sustaining livelihood interventions, persistent market access challenges in coastal areas, and gaps in data and institutional response related to climate-induced displacement.

The evaluation recommends strengthening future interventions through rigorous baseline assessments, deeper analysis of structural drivers such as river erosion and waterlogging, greater investment in climate-adaptive agriculture, scaling up nature-based solutions, increased direct support for vulnerable communities, and institutionalization of community accountability platforms. It also emphasizes the need for stronger gender-transformative approaches, expanded digital communication strategies, enhanced collaboration with government and research institutions, and sustained policy advocacy on climate displacement and fisher-folk rights. A continued focus on community-led, evidence-based, and rights-driven approaches will be essential to achieving long-term climate resilience and social justice in coastal Bangladesh.

One of the project's most significant achievements was the strengthening of Radio Meghna as a platform for community resilience, social accountability, and girls' empowerment. Through this platform, adolescent girls emerged as community leaders and advocates against child marriage and gender-based violence, while also contributing to climate awareness and local governance processes. A total of 384 school-dropout adolescent girls were economically empowered through diversified climate-resilient livelihoods, with all participants establishing income sources—75% earning USD 20–25 per month—thereby enhancing their financial independence, self-reliance, and social status.

Rahima Akter (6), Panpattai, Galachipa, Patuakhali. May 11, 2026
Photo: Din M Shibly/COAST Foundation

SECTION 2

Introduction

The “Empowering Coastal Communities: Addressing Climate Change and Resilience” project, implemented by COAST Foundation with support from the Climate Justice Resilience Fund (CJRF) from January 2024 to June 2026, aimed to strengthen climate resilience and reduce socio-economic inequalities among 27,124 vulnerable coastal people across 13 upazilas (sub-districts) in 9 climate-vulnerable districts of Bangladesh. The evaluation, conducted through qualitative methods involving 89 stakeholders (74% women), assessed project performance against the OECD-DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness, impact, efficiency, and sustainability.

The evaluation found the project to be highly relevant, as it aligns closely with Bangladesh’s national climate adaptation and development policy frameworks and addresses the needs of some of the country’s most vulnerable populations, including

women, adolescent girls, fisher-folk, persons with disabilities, and climate-displaced communities. By focusing on remote coastal areas severely affected by salinity intrusion, cyclones, and river erosion, the project responded directly to frontline climate risks while promoting locally led and community-driven solutions. The project effectively combined climate adaptation, livelihood resilience, gender equality, community participation, and policy advocacy through an integrated, inclusive, and people-centered approach.

Overall, the project was assessed as considerably effective, achieving substantial progress across all five intended outcomes. Climate Adaptive Income Generating Techniques (CAIGTs), particularly scaffold-based goat rearing and sack gardening, significantly improved household resilience and income security. A total of 465 climate-vulnerable coastal women enhanced their household economic

The project effectively combined climate adaptation, livelihood resilience, gender equality, community participation, and policy advocacy through an integrated, inclusive, and people-centered approach.



As part of the evaluation process, an interview was conducted with Mr. Md. Ziaur Rahman, Upazila Project Implementation Officer under the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief. The interview took place at the Office of the Upazila Project Implementation Officer, Bhola Sadar Upazila, Bhola District.

Photo: COAST Foundation Archive/2026

SECTION 3

Assessment of Project Interventions and Overall Performance

3.1 RELEVANCE

The project is strongly aligned with the national needs, priorities, and policy frameworks of Bangladesh. Its objectives are consistent with key national strategies, including the 8th Five Year Plan (2020–2025), Perspective Plan (2021–2041), National Strategy on the Management of Disaster and Climate-Induced Internal Displacement (NSMDCID) 2021, and the National Adaptation Plan (2023–2050). These policy documents emphasize addressing climate change impacts and strengthening adaptation and resilience through community empowerment. The project’s strategy and interventions are also aligned with the COAST Strategic Plan 2023–2027.

The focus on intervention areas—particularly the coastal zone of Bangladesh—is highly relevant in the context of climate change. This region represents a front-line hotspot experiencing severe impacts such as sea-level rise, increased frequency and intensity of cyclones, salinity intrusion into agricultural land, and riverbank erosion. These challenges pose significant threats to local livelihoods, food security, and ecosystems.¹

The project is particularly relevant because it operates in some of the country’s most remote and climate-vulnerable areas while prioritizing support, capacity building, and empowerment of marginalized sections of society. These include adolescent girls, youth, poor women, and persons with disabilities, who are disproportionately affected by climate change. By placing their experiences, knowledge, and choices at the center of decision-making, the project promotes Climate Adaptive Income Generating Techniques (CAIGTs) that are locally appropriate and sustainable, rather than relying solely on external expertise. In doing so, it strengthens community ownership and ensures that those most affected by climate change have a meaningful role in shaping the climate action.

Furthermore, the community radio supported under the project is highly relevant for amplifying the voices of marginalized, remote coastal communities in their own local dialects. This includes coastal fisher-folk, peasants, women, and adolescent girls whose voices often go unheard. It also serves to connect these

¹ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2590061722000485>



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Dhalchar, Charfesson, Bhola, Bangladesh.
Photo: Din M Shibly/COAST Foundation/2015



Dhalchar, Charfesson, Bhola, Bangladesh.
Photo: Din M Shibly/COAST Foundation/2014

communities with essential government services—particularly in Social Safety Net, infrastructure including housing under sustainable rehabilitation, health and safe water services, agriculture, and fisheries. In turn, this empowers local coastal populations and strengthens participation and accountability mechanisms.

Livelihood patterns in coastal Bangladesh vary across regions. In the southwest, shrimp aquaculture dominates the economy, with agriculture playing a secondary role. In Bhola district, agriculture is the primary livelihood, while in Cox's Bazar (southeast), marine fishing is predominant. Across these sectors, women are mainly engaged in post-harvest activities, often with limited recognition and economic return.

The agrarian structure of Bangladesh is characterized by small landholdings and widespread

sharecropping or leasing arrangements. Agriculture faces multiple challenges, including limited investment, high production costs, inadequate market access, and distress selling. Climate change has further intensified these problems through irregular and heavy rainfall, waterlogging, and increasing salinity in coastal areas. Waterlogging, caused both by erratic rainfall and dysfunctional sluice gates, has emerged as a critical problem for farmers.

Fishing communities are among the most vulnerable groups in coastal areas. Many live along embankments and face declining fish catches alongside increasingly hazardous sea conditions. These challenges are compounded by the traditional exploitative “Dadon”² system—an informal credit mechanism in which fishers receive advance payments from moneylenders or Mahajans

²Dadon is an informal, non-institutional loan system that acts as a vital, yet exploitative, source of working capital. It is essentially an advance payment or “debt-based” system where local moneylenders or wholesalers (known as Mahajans or Aratdars) provide cash to fishers to finance fishing operations (nets, boats, repairs) or household subsistence during lean seasons. This system creates a “vicious cycle” of debt for millions of coastal fishers, binding them to specific moneylenders under strict terms of forced sales 15%-20% lower than the market price.

Radio Meghna, Charfesson, Bhola, Bangladesh. May 13, 2026
Photo: Din M Shibly/COAST Foundation



(intermediaries) under conditions that bind them to sell their catch at below-market prices, perpetuating cycles of debt and dependency.

River erosion is a major driver of displacement in coastal Bangladesh, forcing large numbers of people to relocate each year. Although official data are limited, many displaced households—particularly fisher communities—relocate within high-risk coastal zones, while others migrate to nearby towns or major cities such as Dhaka and Chattogram. Government rehabilitation efforts, such as cluster village programs, are often insufficient or ineffective, further exacerbating displacement.

Fishing communities are among the most vulnerable groups in coastal areas. Many live along embankments and face declining fish catches alongside increasingly hazardous sea conditions.

Women bear a disproportionate burden of these challenges. Frequent displacement—sometimes every two to three years—results in repeated losses of homes, land, and assets. It also disrupts social networks and increases exposure to gender-based violence (GBV), sexual harassment, early marriage, and abandonment, particularly in contexts of acute financial stress.

Overall, the project demonstrates a strong focus on reaching the most vulnerable populations in coastal Bangladesh. Further strengthening the sequencing and logical flow of interventions—especially in clearly linking core problems with the anticipated outputs and outcomes—would enhance the overall relevance of the project design.

3.2 EFFECTIVENESS

The effectiveness of the project was assessed based on its achievement of the intended outcomes and target indicators outlined in the project. The assessment indicates that the project was considerably effective, as all five project outcomes were substantially achieved. These outcomes are described below.

Illegal fishing nets and traps are being widely used across the rivers, canals, and estuaries connected to the Bay of Bengal, posing a serious threat to aquatic biodiversity and fish resources. These destructive fishing practices are accelerating the decline of native fish species and disrupting the ecological balance of coastal ecosystems. To address this challenge, COAST Foundation is conducting awareness campaigns and community engagement activities among fishing communities, encouraging sustainable fishing practices and the abandonment of illegal nets and traps. Banshbaria Launch Ghat, Patuakhali.

Photo: Md. Shahin, Fishers' Group Member



3.2.1. Enhancement of economic security and resilience of climate-vulnerable families

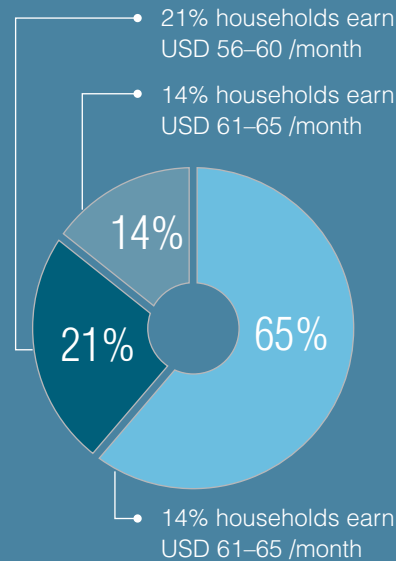
Considering the high levels of climate exposure, poverty, and vulnerability in the project areas, the project introduced Climate Adaptive Income Generating Techniques (CAIGTs) for extremely poor women, including sack gardening and scaffold-based goat rearing. These interventions have proven effective in enhancing the economic security and resilience of climate-vulnerable households. Evidence from participatory action, reflection, and learning processes indicates that these techniques are practical, affordable, and replicable, offering opportunities for year-round income generation. Field observations further suggest that scaffold-based goat rearing is comparatively more effective due to its higher profitability and stronger contribution to household resilience.

According to project documentation, 465 climate-vulnerable coastal women successfully reduced recurring income losses and strengthened household economic stability through the adoption of locally led CAIGTs. Project baseline data show that initially 88% of the households had an average monthly income below USD 30 (BDT 3,570), while 12% earned below USD 35 (BDT 4,165). At present, 65% of the households earn USD 50–55 per month, 21% earn USD 56–60, and 14% earn USD 61–65, reflecting an overall income increase of 70% compared to the baseline. In addition, the project provided capacity-building support on climate-resilient livelihoods and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), primarily through community-based sessions, including participation of mostly women (about 80%) and also persons with disabilities in 2025. Through 253 community-level orientation sessions, 6,831 climate-vulnerable coastal people significantly strengthened their knowledge and awareness on climate adaptation and comprehensive disaster preparedness, including both pre- and post-disaster response measures. This initiative strengthened community resilience toward risk mitigation. ➤

CLIMATE ADAPTIVE LIVELIHOODS FOR COASTAL WOMEN

465 climate-vulnerable coastal women improved household economic stability through locally led Climate Adaptive Income Generating Techniques (CAIGTs)

 70% overall increase in household income compared to baseline



STRONG KNOWLEDGE ON CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

6,831 vulnerable people strengthened their knowledge of climate adaptation and disaster preparedness.

 6,831 People Reached



Rokshana Begum, Basbareia, Doshmina, Patuakhali. May 12, 2026
Photo: Din M Shibly/COAST Foundation

Beating Salinity and Waterlogging: Rokshana's Journey to Climate-Resilient Farming

In the climate-vulnerable coastal area of Dashmina Upazila, Patuakhali district, Rokshana Begum has become a strong example of locally led climate adaptation through sack vegetable cultivation. Inspired by the project's orientation and technical support, she started growing bottle gourd and yard-long beans in five sacks on unused land beside her home in February 2025. Following early success, she expanded to 15 sacks and now cultivates bitter gourd, ridge gourd, yard-long beans, and sweet pumpkin. This climate-resilient farming method helped her overcome the challenges of saline soil and prolonged waterlogging while ensuring year-round vegetable supply for her family. Alongside improving household nutrition and reducing market dependency, Rokshana earned nearly BDT 2,500 from selling surplus vegetables within the first three months of the year and expects to earn up to BDT 10,000 by year-end. Her experience demonstrates how locally led adaptation practices can strengthen food security, improve nutrition, and create resilient income opportunities for coastal women facing climate change impacts.

This climate-resilient farming method helped her overcome the challenges of saline soil and prolonged waterlogging while ensuring year-round vegetable supply for her family.



➤ During field visits, discussions and site observations were conducted with four CAIGT practitioners—two engaged in sack gardening and two in scaffold-based goat rearing—in Bhola and Patuakhali districts. These cases demonstrated positive and resilient livelihood outcomes.

In Patuakhali, direct support for sack gardening (including sacks, seeds, and seedlings) was provided to 48 vulnerable women. Among them, 36 households (75%) demonstrated high effectiveness in producing vegetables year-round, while the remaining households showed moderate success. Variations in outcomes were influenced by factors such as household ➤➤

In Patuakhali, direct support for sack gardening (including sacks, seeds, and seedlings) was provided to 48 vulnerable women. Among them, 36 households (75%) demonstrated high effectiveness in producing vegetables year-round, while the remaining households showed moderate success.



Ali Akbar Dail, Kutubdia, Cox's Bazar.
Photo: Ziaul Karim Chowdhury/COAST Foundation



Marina Begum, Ratandi Taltoli, Galachipa, Patuakhali
Photo: Din M Shibby/COAST Foundation

Considering the high levels of climate exposure, poverty, and vulnerability in the project areas, the project introduced Climate Adaptive Income Generating Techniques (CAIGTs) for extremely poor women, including sack gardening and scaffold-based goat rearing.

In Kutubdia, one of Bangladesh's most climate-vulnerable coastal regions, a Nature-based Solution (NbS) approach was implemented to address the severe shortage of safe drinking water. Six community ponds were re-excavated and integrated with Rainwater Harvesting (RWH) systems, providing a low-cost, climate-resilient, and sustainable freshwater source for 1,145 climate-affected households. The ponds were rehabilitated to improve rainwater retention and groundwater recharge, while embankments were raised to prevent saline water intrusion during tidal surges and extreme weather events. To strengthen ecosystem resilience, vegetables, fruit trees, and grasses were planted along pond embankments, contributing to nutrition, livelihoods, biodiversity conservation, and erosion control. Community-based Pond management committees were also formed to ensure long-term maintenance and collective ownership. This initiative demonstrates how nature-based solutions can enhance water security, climate resilience, and sustainable community development in coastal Bangladesh.

» economic capacity, one-time input support, availability of suitable land, access to water sources, and the level of interest and commitment of participants. Two women from vulnerable (climate displaced) fishing communities reported earning about BDT 6,800 (USD 56) and BDT 5,300 (USD 44), respectively, from the sale of surplus vegetables within a short period of yearly season (3-4 months), beyond household consumption and distribution to relatives and neighbors. Adding these the total earning will be more, against an initial input support of BDT 4,000 (USD 33). This income could reach around USD 360, depending on the status of the household, according to the field-level project staff. This indicates a direct contribution to livelihood security and resilience, and both expressed willingness to continue sack gardening.

Scaffold-based goat rearing was found to be highly effective, reducing mortality risk by up to 95%. However, the extent to which beneficiaries could maximize the benefits varied, largely depending on household economic capacity. While the system has the potential to accommodate up to 10 goats per structure, two observed households were rearing 9 and 7 goats, respectively. These participants reported annual earnings exceeding BDT 45,000 (USD 375) from goat sales; this vary depending on household economic condition reaches annual earnings of BDT 55,000 (USD 458) from goat sales, according to field-level project staff. The approach is also considered relatively low-maintenance, as goats can graze on naturally available grasses near embankment areas, further contributing to its profitability and sustainability.

Furthermore, the project effectively addressed one of the most critical challenges facing coastal communities in Bangladesh: the acute shortage of safe drinking water. Nearly 30 million people across 19 coastal districts experience severe drinking water insecurity, largely driven by climate-induced salinity intrusion, elevated arsenic contamination, and inadequate or degraded water infrastructure. Rising sea levels continue to contaminate both surface and groundwater sources, forcing women and girls to travel long distances daily to collect potable water, while only a small proportion of the population has access to safely managed drinking water services. In response to this pressing need, the project supported the excavation of six community ponds integrated with rainwater harvesting (RWH) systems. This intervention proved highly effective, as pond excavation combined with RWH represents a traditional, locally accepted, climate-resilient, and



The overall female-to-male staff ratio currently stands at 34:66. Within development projects, women constitute 52% of staff, while in the microfinance program, the female-male ratio is 27:73. Interviews revealed that COAST is committed to ensure gender equality in the organization.

3.2.2 Strengthening gender equity with the organization’s facilities, staff and management

According to project documents and interview of the project staff, COAST has taken a range of initiatives to achieve its organizational commitment to gender equality and inclusive participation, demonstrating a moderate effectiveness in achieving this outcome. The overall female-to-male staff ratio currently stands at 34:66. Within development projects, women constitute 52% of staff, while in the microfinance program, the female-male ratio is 27:73. Interviews revealed that COAST is committed to ensure gender equality in the organization. To ensure a safe and enabling environment, the organization has implemented a comprehensive Gender and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Policy. This has strengthened institutional accountability, enhanced women’s confidence, reduced safeguarding risks, and enabled safer and more active participation of women across programs. In addition, several institutional measures have further strengthened gender equity; these are Local Work Placement, Gender-Sensitive Recruitment, 100% Staff orientation on PSEA Policy, and Staff Engagement and Feedback Mechanisms.

Despite these achievements, some gaps remain, particularly in the overall staff ratio and within the microfinance program, where female representation is comparatively lower. Continued investment in retention, leadership development, and gender-transformative organizational practices will be needed in achieving organizational target in gender parity and ensuring long-term institutional change.

CLIMATE-RESILIENT WATER SECURITY THROUGH NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

-  Six ponds have been re-excavated and connected to a rainwater harvesting (RWH) system to improve freshwater availability.
-  Safe drinking water access has been ensured for 1,145 households.
-  The interventions provide protection against tidal surges and increasing salinity intrusion.
-  Nutritional needs are supported through the cultivation of vegetables and fruits along embankments.
-  Long-term sustainability is maintained through community-led management systems.

nature-based solution to the drinking water crisis in coastal Bangladesh, where groundwater sources are heavily affected by salinity and arsenic contamination. The intervention provides a proven, low-cost, and sustainable alternative to dependence on expensive commercial water supplies, thereby increasing the availability of safe drinking water for vulnerable communities. As a result, the initiative has contributed positively to improving community health, well-being, and resilience.

Moreover, the development and dissemination of communication materials (leaflet) in simple Bengali language on how to maintain the pond further

enhanced the effectiveness of the intervention by increasing community awareness, accessibility of information, and local engagement with safe water management practices.

With project support, COAST Foundation has strengthened the capacity of frontline staff to promote Climate Adaptive Income Generating Techniques (CAIGTs) for climate-resilient livelihoods in vulnerable coastal communities of Bangladesh. Through phased training, staff are now equipped to support women and marginalized households in CAIGT activities such as integrated farming, sack vegetable cultivation, poultry rearing, goat rearing by scaffolding, and mini hatchery operations. This has enhanced sustainable livelihoods, self-reliance, and community resilience to climate change impacts.



Pekua Branch, COAST Foundation, Cox’s Bazar. Photo: Razib Ghosh/ COAST Foundation

3.2.3. Shifting Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) systems to better include and respond to community members

The objective - “Shifting Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) systems to better include and respond to community members”—is assessed as moderately effective. Evidence indicates meaningful progress in enhancing beneficiary participation and initiating institutional changes; however, the depth of transformative impact across the organization remains in progress.

Findings from interviews and project documentation show that COAST has pursued this shift through two primary approaches:

- (i) Through community voice and their participation:
 - (a) regular beneficiary feedback meetings held bi-monthly under the MEAL system with the community,
 - (b) beyond regular bi-monthly meetings, there are also options for strengthening accountability mechanisms and feedback collection from the community in courtyard meetings, orientations and training. Those are also presented in the monthly Project Progress Monitoring Meeting (PPMM), where all the senior members, including the Executive Director, participate and assist to take decision, and
 - (c) Project Desktop Newsletter is also shared on social media, and hard copies are distributed among government officials and relevant stakeholders to disseminate information for greater transparency.

- (ii) the development of a web-based MEAL platform aimed at strengthening real-time monitoring and responsiveness. The bi-monthly feedback meetings have created a structured space where project activities and processes are shared, strengths and weaknesses are discussed, and beneficiary feedback and suggestions are systematically collected. This mechanism has contributed positively to participatory decision-making, improved implementation quality, and greater transparency in resource use.

Under the project, the CAIGT community group has been formed and they took part in the meeting comprising 25-30 persons, including (climate vulnerable communities) social elites, women and project beneficiaries. Notably, beneficiaries have influenced key project decisions, including the selection of inputs (e.g., seeds) and the number of recipients for Climate Adaptive Income Generating Techniques (CAIGTs). As a result of beneficiary input, the number of supported households increased from 87 to 163, reflecting a tangible shift toward community-responsive programming.

The web-based MEAL system, while a promising step toward institutionalizing real-time monitoring and accountability, is still under development. Its effectiveness in driving deeper, organization-wide, transformative change will depend on its operationalization, user uptake, and integration into decision-making processes. Overall, while participatory practices have strengthened, further consolidation is required to achieve sustained and systemic transformation.



Aslampur, Charfasson, Bhola. April 23, 2026
Photo: COAST Foundation Archive

3.2.4. Strengthening community radio stations as change agents for girls’ rights and community resilience

The role of community radio in amplifying the voices of marginalized coastal communities in Bangladesh is assessed as highly effective. The approach is empowering, as adolescent girls actively produce and broadcast content that reflects the lived realities of fisherfolk, farmers, women, and other vulnerable groups. Through this process, young female activists not only articulate community concerns but also link these issues with local government institutions, thereby contributing to enhanced participation, accountability, and local governance in remote islands and chars (Case Story). The initiative has also created inclusive cultural spaces by encouraging local artists and musicians to showcase their talents.

The community radio is serving as a multimedia platform, particularly for adolescent girls in coastal communities. It provides access to information, learning opportunities, and a space for communication and engagement on issues related to health, education, life skills, rights, and social awareness. Through this platform, adolescent girls can share their perspectives, participate in

Feedback from FGDs indicates that the English language program is especially valued by listeners. However, several operational challenges persist. Club leaders report difficulties in sustaining member engagement, particularly among school dropouts and academically marginalized adolescents, reflecting broader barriers to accessing quality education in remote char areas. Technical constraints, including limited transmission capacity, further restrict outreach. Additionally, inadequate access to listening devices means that many community members cannot regularly engage with broadcasts, as shared radios are often insufficient.

discussions, and access relevant knowledge in an inclusive and accessible manner.

A dedicated mobile app is available for the community radio Meghna, allowing listeners to access its programmes online from any location with an internet connection. Through the app, users can conveniently listen to a wide range of programmes on health, education, livelihoods, disaster preparedness, rights, and other awareness-related topics using their smartphones. This has improved access to community radio content beyond the reach of conventional broadcasting and enabled a broader audience to benefit from its information and educational programmes.

A comprehensive training session was conducted for the organization’s project staff to enhance the Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) system, ensuring greater inclusion of community members and improved responsiveness to their needs, with about 27 participants from 13 projects of the organization. The training focused on making the MEAL approach more participatory, accountable, and community-driven. The event was held at the COAST Charfasson Center, Bhola from 24 to 26 December 2024



Photo: COAST Foundation Archive/2024

EMPOWERED COMMUNITIES THROUGH AWARENESS SESSIONS

26,514 community people empowered through community awareness sessions

- Improved knowledge on health, hygiene, child marriage prevention & GBV
- Strengthened social protection practices
- Encouraged positive behavioral change
- Catalyzed a grassroots social movement in climate-vulnerable areas

Field observations indicate that the community radio station “Meghna,” supported under the project, plays a vibrant role as a platform for public dialogue, information dissemination, and community engagement, largely operated and managed by local girls. Programing formats such as magazines and phone-in (“phoney-in”) sessions are particularly popular among coastal populations, especially adolescent girls, for expressing their needs, concerns, and opinions. The station broadcasts eight hours daily (8:00 AM–12:00 PM and 4:00 PM–8:00 PM), extending to 24-hour coverage during disasters and emergencies. Regular programing includes English language learning, entertainment, music, news, and interactive information-sharing, with a strong emphasis on local priorities and gender-sensitive perspectives.

The radio platform has further strengthened community engagement through the establishment of listener clubs comprising 15 adolescent girls, as well as adolescent learning centers in remote coastal chars. Project-supported capacity-building initiatives have equipped these groups with life skills, knowledge on income-generating activities (IGAs), and awareness of climate change impacts.

Training has also focused on critical social issues, including the prevention of child marriage and dowry, elimination of gender-based violence (GBV), and

promotion of health and hygiene practices through courtyard meetings and structured sessions. Through 982 community-level orientation sessions, 26,514 people residing in some of the most climate-vulnerable areas gained knowledge and awareness on health and sanitation, prevention of child marriage, and violence against women. The initiative significantly strengthened community resilience, enhanced social protection mechanisms, and encouraged positive behavioral and social norms change. By mobilizing community participation and collective responsibility, it contributed to the emergence of a sustained social movement addressing vulnerability, inequality, and protection risks at the local level.

Findings from focus group discussions (FGDs) and interviews suggest that participating girls are increasingly applying climate-adaptive practices—such as vegetable gardening, fruit cultivation, and rearing poultry, ducks, and goats—contributing both to household consumption and supplementary income. Moreover, many are actively challenging patriarchal norms, addressing GBV, and intervening to prevent child marriage, often at personal risk. Overall, the radio platform—particularly through its clubs and leadership structures—has been effective in building self-confidence, leadership capacity, and positioning girls as community change agents and advocates for girls’ rights.

According to project documents, 384 school-dropout coastal adolescent girls were economically empowered through diversified climate-resilient income-generating activities, including climate-adaptive vegetable farming, poultry and duck rearing, fruit gardening, livestock, tailoring, and other small enterprises. As a result, all participants established regular income opportunities, with 75% earning between USD 20–25 per month, 17% earning USD 26–30, and 8% earning above USD 30, contributing to improved financial resilience, self-reliance, and livelihood security.

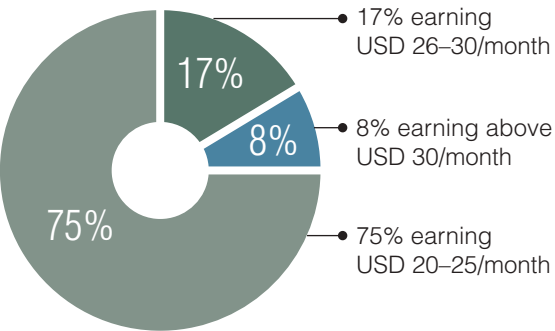
Feedback from FGDs indicates that the English language program is especially valued by listeners. However, several operational challenges persist. Club leaders report difficulties in sustaining member engagement, particularly among school dropouts and academically marginalized adolescents, reflecting broader barriers to accessing quality education in remote char areas. Technical

constraints, including limited transmission capacity, further restrict outreach. Additionally, inadequate access to listening devices means that many community members cannot regularly engage with broadcasts, as shared radios are often insufficient.

Despite its demonstrated effectiveness, the transformative potential of community radio faces emerging limitations. With the rapid expansion of digital and social media platforms such as Facebook and YouTube, traditional radio is gradually losing popularity, particularly among younger audiences. In response, the initiative has begun integrating digital strategies to enhance reach and relevance. Adolescent broadcasters are now producing short video content on critical and emerging issues using accessible technologies and sharing these via the social media platforms of Radio Meghna. These videos, often featuring field visits, interviews with affected farmers and fisherfolk, and discussions with local government officials (e.g., medical officers, agricultural officers, and UNOs), have proven highly effective in engaging wider audiences. By combining radio broadcasting with visually compelling digital content, the platform is adapting to changing media consumption patterns while maintaining its community-centered, participatory ethos.

LIVELIHOODS TRANSFORMATION FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS

384 School dropout coastal adolescent girls transformed their livelihoods through climate-smart agriculture, livestock rearing, tailoring.



Case Story

Empowering Coastal Women Through Community Radio



Umme Nishi, 27, was born and raised in Kulsumbagh, a coastal area of Bhola district. The daughter of a small farmer and a homemaker, she completed a Master’s degree in History from Bhola Government College. In Bangladesh’s coastal belt, deeply rooted patriarchal norms—reinforced by environmental vulnerability and socio-economic hardship—often create additional barriers to women’s participation in public life.

When Radio Meghna was inaugurated in 2015, Nusrat often passed the station with friends and noticed young women actively working there under the banner “Upakuler Kanthashar – Ebar Apnar Katha Balun” (Voice of the Coast – It’s Your Turn to Speak Now). Initially unfamiliar with community radio, she later approached the station and, despite all positions being filled, persisted in seeking an opportunity. She was eventually accepted as a volunteer.

Over the following year, she received training in community mobilisation, interviewing, audio production, video development, and on-air presentation. Although she began with limited technical skills, her confidence and media competence gradually grew through hands-on experience and regular listening to radio programs at home. Hearing women speak publicly on air—an uncommon experience in her community—was both motivating and transformative.

At first, community reaction was marked by suspicion, especially as women’s participation in public spaces was uncommon in the conservative area. However, Radio Meghna played a critical role during cyclones and emergencies, broadcasting round-the-clock warnings



Umme Nishi, Radio Meghna, Charfesson, Bhola
Photo: Din M Shibly/COAST Foundation

and safety information when electricity and internet services were unavailable. These efforts earned community trust and recognition, with growing acceptance of women's leadership. Parents began encouraging their daughters to participate, marking a significant shift in social attitudes.

Through radio programs and listeners' clubs, Umme Nishi and her peers now actively address gender-based violence and child marriage, helping raise awareness of women's rights. Her role has also led to increased engagement with local government officials, who now recognise and value her contributions.

Today, Umme Nishi is financially self-reliant, supporting her education and personal needs. She notes significant improvements in her communication skills, leadership, and self-confidence compared with her peers—changes she attributes to her experience with Radio Meghna.

3.2.5 CAMPAIGN AND ADVOCACY WITH NETWORK PARTNERS

1

Direct Beneficiaries:
354,730+ climate-affected people directly benefited through improved access to government services and social protection.

2

Indirect Beneficiaries:
10+ million people reached through media campaigns, increasing awareness of climate risks, adaptation, and policy issues.

Effective campaign and advocacy initiatives were undertaken by COAST Foundation in collaboration with its network partners under the project. These initiatives strategically targeted critical issues affecting coastal fisher-folk communities and displaced families, with a focus on influencing policy and practice related to national disaster management frameworks. The interventions contributed to improving the livelihoods, safety, and overall well-being of these vulnerable populations.

According to project records, these continuous advocacy and lobbying efforts directly benefited more than **354,730** climate-affected people by facilitating access to government services and social protection programmes. Key achievements included climate-resilient embankments benefiting **250,000** people; timely food assistance for **38,542** people;

safe healthcare for **5,356** people; safe drinking water for **5,439** people; winter clothing for **3,721** people; skills development training for **256** people; rehabilitation support for **6,587** climate-displaced people; and improved road infrastructure benefiting **7,500** people.

Advocacy messages were also disseminated through local and national media, reaching an estimated audience of over **10** million people across Bangladesh and raising public awareness of climate risks, adaptation, and related policy issues. This extensive outreach contributed to increased public awareness and a stronger understanding of climate change risks, adaptation priorities, and related policy issues among vulnerable communities, citizens, policymakers, media representatives, and other key stakeholders. While these audiences were not direct project beneficiaries, they benefited indirectly through improved access to information and greater awareness of climate-related challenges and policy responses.

The advocacy focused on increasing climate finance, strengthening social protection, improving the livelihoods of marginalized fishing communities, supporting the rehabilitation of climate-displaced populations, and promoting climate-resilient coastal infrastructure. These efforts also strengthened national dialogue and stakeholder engagement on the rights, protection, and inclusion of climate-vulnerable communities, particularly women, adolescent girls, marginalized fishers, and climate-displaced people.

Campaign and Advocacy for marginal Coastal Fisher-Folk Communities

Coastal fisher-folk communities are highly vulnerable to climate-induced disasters due to their direct dependence on marine ecosystems, limited adaptive capacity, and high exposure to extreme weather events. They face immediate and recurring threats from cyclones, sea-level rise, and coastal flooding, which damage infrastructure, destroy productive assets, and severely disrupt livelihoods.

Although there is no single, comprehensive policy specifically dedicated to addressing the vulnerabilities of coastal fisher-folk communities, their needs are partially addressed through a combination of broader fisheries policies, social safety net programs, and national climate action plans in

Bangladesh. However, evidence indicates the absence of a cohesive, standalone policy framework tailored to this group. As a result, many interventions remain fragmented, short-term, and largely top-down in design, limiting their effectiveness in addressing the structural vulnerabilities faced by these communities.

The campaign and advocacy efforts targeting coastal fisher-folk communities can be assessed as highly effective. This effectiveness is reflected in the accurate identification and framing of key issues, the adoption of a people-centered (community-led) approach, and meaningful engagement with stakeholders at micro, meso, and national levels.

Key issues addressed for sea-going fishers included occupational safety and hazards, formal recognition and identification of fisher-folk, and access to food assistance through government social safety net programs during fishing ban periods under relevant marine fisheries laws.

Effective campaign and advocacy initiatives were undertaken by COAST Foundation in collaboration with its network partners under the project.

A seminar was held demanding an increase in climate financing in the proposed national budget from 0.76% to at least 3% of GDP, the formulation of a dedicated adaptation plan for coastal water management, and greater investment in climate-resilient infrastructure. Speakers emphasized that addressing climate change risks requires priority budget allocations for the development and rehabilitation of embankments, sluice gates, drainage systems, polders, rainwater harvesting facilities, canals, and other water bodies, as well as ensuring access to safe drinking water. They also stressed the need for stricter regulation of deep tube-well installation to protect groundwater resources and highlighted the importance of promoting alternative and sustainable sources of safe water.

CIRDAP Auditorium, Dhaka. 28 May 2025
Photo: COAST Foundation Archive



Despite the presence of legal frameworks such as the Marine Fisheries Act 2020 and the Protection and Conservation of Fish (Amendment) Bill 2026, the sector continues to face significant safety and security challenges. An estimated 80% of fishers lack adequate safety equipment, while nearly half have no access to early warning systems at sea. Climate change has further exacerbated these vulnerabilities. Field observations indicate an increasing trend of loss of life and assets (boats and nets), driven by more frequent storms and tidal surges. At the same time, rising numbers of fishers and declining fish catch have increased dependency on informal credit systems (dadon), further deepening poverty within fishing communities.

Currently, there are no comprehensive government programs addressing these systemic challenges, apart from food assistance during fishing ban periods. However, this support is often undermined by inequitable distribution, delays, malpractice in registration, and exclusion errors in beneficiary lists.➤

Members of small-scale fisher groups regularly visit fishing wharves to conduct community awareness activities and wharf-to-wharf surveys, identifying unregistered fishers, gaps in social protection, and trawlers lacking essential sea safety equipment while collecting community-level data to improve safety and service access. Bashbaria Fishing Ghat, Doshmina, Patuakhali

Kedirhat Mash (Fishers) Ghat, Dosmina, Patuakhali. Photo: Atikur Rahman/COAST Foundation



Marginal sea-going fisher groups identify unregistered active fishers excluded from government social safety net services and submit verified lists to the Upazila Fisheries Department to support official registration and improve access to government assistance. Upazila Fisheries Department, Galachipa, Patuakhali.

Galachipa Fisheries Office, Galachipa, Patuakhali Photo: Atikur Rahman/COAST Foundation



Series of seminars has been held as part of advocacy at the sub-district level to increase access of marginal fishing communities to government social protection programs and ensure maritime safety measures. The seminar was attended by Upazila Executive Officers, Upazila Fisheries Officers, representatives of marginal fishing communities, and various stakeholders.



➤ To address these challenges, COAST Foundation implemented a series of community-driven interventions. These included raising awareness on safety and security issues, and forming fisher committees at the Union Parishad (UP) level, each comprising seven members, including four women. These committees held regular monthly meetings and played a central role in local advocacy efforts. With their facilitation, a rapid appraisal was conducted on the availability of safety equipment across 7,354 boats and trawlers. This finding was submitted to the local administration. These findings were also used to engage in dialogue and advocacy with boat owners and relevant authorities.

To tackle malpractice in registration and exclusion from food assistance programs, the Fisher committees, supported by the COAST Foundation, conducted sustained advocacy and campaign

activities. With approval from the Upazila Fisheries Office, a survey was carried out using official government formats to identify excluded fishers. As a result, an alternative database of more than 11,437 previously unregistered fishers was developed. Several multi-stakeholder seminars were organized at the sub-district level, where the findings and recommendations were shared with the Fisheries Department. As a result of these efforts, over 11,437 fishermen were officially registered and received food assistance.

This represents a significant transformative change, not only in terms of increased access to entitlements but also in strengthening community confidence and agency. For many, this was the first time they successfully influenced government processes through collective action.



To address delays in food assistance distribution, fisher committees organized a human chain at the sub-district level, facilitated by COAST Foundation. This advocacy action influenced local authorities to ensure the timely delivery of support. Notably, for the first time, fishers received food assistance before the enforcement of the fishing ban. According to project records, 27,105 fisher families benefited from timely food support.

Dasmina, Patuakhali. Photo: COAST Foundation Archive



Campaign for Promoting the Rights of Climate-Displaced Communities

Riverbank erosion remains a primary driver of displacement in Bangladesh, affecting about 1 million people each year, with coastal fisher-folk communities among the most severely impacted. While the northwestern region is particularly vulnerable, the coastal southeast also faces acute and recurrent erosion, especially in island areas such as Sandwip and Kutubdia. In response, the government has implemented cluster village (rehabilitation) schemes to resettle displaced families. However, these initiatives are often constrained by inadequate site selection, poor infrastructure, corruption and nepotism, and a lack of viable livelihood transition opportunities. As a result, many resettled families are unable to sustain themselves and are compelled to migrate to urban slums or return to disaster-prone areas along embankments, perpetuating cycles of vulnerability and displacement.

During field visits for the study to a cluster village in Bhola Sador Upazila, it was observed that nearly half the beneficiaries were no longer living in their allocated shelter houses, primarily due to severe water-logging. Some beneficiaries had reportedly transferred their allotted houses to other landless poor households—an illegal practice—at an average transaction value of about BDT 65,000.

The campaign and advocacy initiatives aimed at promoting the rights of climate-displaced communities can be assessed as considerably effective. This effectiveness is reflected in the increased recognition of the rights and service needs of displaced populations, particularly those residing in cluster villages, through strengthened engagement and coordination with relevant government officials and institutions.

The youth-led climate-displaced monitoring committee was established to facilitate lobbying and advocacy with the relevant authorities, and capacity-building support was provided to strengthen its functionality and advocacy skills. According to project documents, 256 trained local committee members actively monitored and oversaw rehabilitation efforts, comprising local journalists and students. Findings from the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) indicate that committee members have been regularly monitoring the conditions of the cluster villages and maintaining continuous communication

YOUTH-LED CLIMATE DISPLACEMENT MONITORING COMMITTEE LOCALLY

A total of 256 trained members, including local journalists and students, have developed through the establishment youth-led Climate Displacement Committee locally

Strengthened through capacity-building on advocacy & monitoring

Actively overseeing rehabilitation efforts in cluster villages

Maintaining continuous engagement with government authorities

Driving local-level advocacy and accountability

The youth-led climate-displaced monitoring committee was established to facilitate lobbying and advocacy with the relevant authorities, and capacity-building support was provided to strengthen its functionality and advocacy skills.

and advocacy efforts with relevant government offices, resulting in: 5,356 families accessing essential healthcare, 3,221 families receiving critical winter support, and 5,439 families gaining sustainable access to safe drinking water. These interventions have improved living conditions, enhanced equitable access to basic services, and strengthened accountability and transparency in rehabilitation programs.

In addition, a round-table discussion was organized at the sub-district level involving key stakeholders, where findings and recommendations were formally submitted to the administration concerned. These advocacy efforts contributed to improved access to healthcare services, essential winter support, and safe drinking water for displaced communities.



Veduria Union, Bhola Sador Upazilla, Bhola. Photo: COAST Foundation Archive

Field observations further revealed that sustained lobbying and advocacy efforts resulted in the construction of a connecting road, which has significantly benefited the local population, more than 7500 community people, including the cluster village residents and surrounding community members.

The issue of water-logging, along with its causes, contributing factors, and impacts, has received limited attention within climate change policy discourse, particularly in relation to cluster villages. Furthermore, river erosion, as a critical driver of displacement, needs to be addressed through a holistic and rights-based approach prioritizing the meaningful engagement of displaced communities and promoting people-centered advocacy.



Speakers at seminars in Bhola Sador called for sustainable, livelihood-based rehabilitation of climate-displaced communities. They highlighted that current short-term, relief-focused relocation practices are inadequate and often lead to repeated displacement in disaster-prone areas. The speakers urged integrated local initiatives to ensure basic rights, strengthen local government capacity, and create sustainable employment opportunities for displaced families.

Bhola Sador Upazilla conference room, Bhola. December 2025 Photo: Razib Chandra Ghosh/ COAST Foundation

Developed Youth Activists As Effective Change Agents on Social and Environmental Issues

Youth Network members, including Youth Action for Development, were sensitized through training and engaged in awareness and advocacy on earthquake preparedness, plastic reduction, waste management, climate resilience, gender issues, and cyberbullying. They conducted sessions in schools and communities, increasing public awareness and preparedness.

As a result, schools introduced earthquake drills, and communities showed improved practices such as reduced plastic use, adoption of reusable bags, eco-friendly shop practdices, and better waste management. Social media campaigns further expanded outreach and encouraged victims of cyberbullying and gender-based violence to speak up and seek support. Overall, the initiative strengthened youth leadership, promoted positive behavioral change, and enhanced community participation and social responsibility.



Empowered through training and capacity-building initiatives, Youth Network members conducted awareness campaigns in schools, colleges, and communities on disaster preparedness, environmental protection, gender equality, and cyber safety. Their efforts enhanced knowledge, resilience, and positive behavioral change among students and local communities.
Hazariganz, Dhaka
Photo: COAST Foundation Archive

SECTION 4
Impacts

The project has demonstrated positive impact in achieving its intended objectives and benefiting the target groups, particularly in enhancing the economic resilience of the most vulnerable communities. The project's impact can also be assessed through the scalability and replicability of its interventions,

many of which have shown strong potential for wider adoption and long-term sustainability.

The project has demonstrated progress in some areas. These include support for the economic resilience of vulnerable communities, increased engagement of adolescent girls through community radio platforms, and efforts to strengthen the accountability of government service delivery institutions.

The project's outcomes also indicate the potential for selected interventions to be adapted and expanded in other contexts. Several approaches have shown promise for replication and sustainability, subject to continued stakeholder engagement, institutional support, and resource availability.

Hasina Begum's family, Basbareia, Doshmina, Patuakhali.
Photo: Din M Shibly/COAST Foundation



ECONOMIC IMPACTS

Increased economic security with resilience

The poor coastal families experience recurring income shocks, food insecurity, indebtedness, and limited opportunities for alternative employment, especially during disaster periods and seasonal lean months. Women and adolescent girls in these communities are often disproportionately affected due to limited access to resources, livelihood opportunities, and social protection services. Through promoting simple and low-cost CGAITS in most climatic vulnerable areas, which increased economic security with resilience of the women. It has been observed that among the CGAITS, goat rearing through scaffold method has proven more profitable with less risk, as it reduces the death risk by 95%. Goat rearing have long been a traditional livelihood activity in rural Bangladesh, with women playing a central role. But the traditional methods of rearing goats are susceptible to the adverse effect of flood, water-logging, heat and cold waves.

To address the problem, the project has promoted adopting scaffold method to safeguard from the adverse effect of diseases like pneumonia. Evidence shows that women, particularly from most vulnerable fisher-folk communities, were prioritized to receive the support under the project. They also received training from government livestock offices facilitated by COAST Foundation under the project. Moreover, the vaccination camp with the facilitation of adolescent learning centers has contributed to the mitigation of disease outbreak and enhanced resilience. Evidence shows that this secured income protects them during emergencies and crises.

The case of Ripa Begum (Case 2) reflects the broader realities of climate vulnerability and livelihood insecurity faced by millions of people living in the coastal areas of Bangladesh. Within this context, the project has played an important role in strengthening the adaptive capacity and economic resilience of vulnerable coastal households through promoting climate-resilient and diversified livelihood options. As the project has stressed gender equality, this have contributed women empowerment by contributing household income, which enhance their social inclusion and participation in family decision making.

Ripa Begum, Char Madraz Union, Charfession, Bhola.
Photo: COAST Foundation Archive



Case Story

Goat Rearing: Through the Scaffold Method Improves Economic Security and Resilience

Ripa Begum, 19, has been living with her husband in a slum-like settlement along the embankment in Char Madraz Union under Charfession, Bhola district. Their household consists of five members, including her father-in-law, mother-in-law, and her infant child. Her husband is a fisherman who jointly owns a fishing boat and net with two other fishermen. Fishing is the family's primary source of income, and they have no alternative livelihood options. Despite the high risks and vulnerabilities associated with fishing, the catch is often uncertain and insufficient, and they sometimes incur losses. The family faces severe hardship during the annual fishing ban period and during extreme weather events, which affect their income for three to four months each year. During these periods, her husband works as a day laborer, earning around BDT 500 per day, although work is not available regularly throughout the month.

Although the family possesses a fisherman card, they have reportedly not received any government assistance over the last 12 years due to malpractices in the distribution process. The family has been rearing goats for many years. Ripa received training from COAST Foundation on goat rearing using the scaffold method and also received support to construct a scaffold goat shelter, which significantly reduces the risk of goat mortality during flooding and adverse weather conditions. According to Ripa, the method is simple and easily replicable, and several neighboring households have already adopted it. At present, the family owns six goats. Goat rearing has become a highly profitable and reliable source of financial security for the household. Recently, the family sold three goats for BDT 22,000 to cover the medical expenses of her mother-in-law. The income from goat rearing has strengthened the family's economic resilience, as the goats can be sold quickly during emergencies and periods of financial crisis.

SOCIAL IMPACTS

Enhancing participation and engagement of adolescent girls through community radio platforms

Coastal communities in Bangladesh are not only highly vulnerable to climate change impacts, but are also affected by deep-rooted patriarchal norms, gender discrimination, gender-based violence (GBV), and high incidences of child marriage. In remote coastal char areas, adolescent girls face restrictions on movement, limited participation in decision-making, early marriage, and reduced access to education, and leadership opportunities. Climate-induced poverty, displacement, and livelihood insecurity further intensify these social vulnerabilities, often making girls and women the primary victims of social injustice and harmful coping practices such as child marriage. Within this challenging socio-cultural context, the project interventions through Radio Meghna created an important platform for adolescent girls to develop leadership, confidence, and social awareness.

Evidence shows that through the project interventions, the adolescent girls moved beyond the traditional socially prescribed role of adolescent girls and emerged as a community-level change agent (Case 3). The case illustrates a meaningful shift in community perception regarding adolescent girls' participation and leadership. Families that were previously hesitant now allow their daughters to join the Listeners' Club and participate in social activities outside the home. Nusrat herself (Case 3) gained trust, acceptance, and recognition as a young community leader advocating for social justice and girls' empowerment.

This experience strongly demonstrates the project's intended outcome of empowering adolescent girls as "change agents" capable of challenging harmful social norms, resisting child marriage and GBV, and promoting community resilience in climate-vulnerable coastal areas. It also demonstrates how community radio platforms can function as effective tools for social mobilization, leadership development, and transformation of patriarchal attitudes in marginalized coastal communities of Bangladesh.

Case Story
Contributing to Positive Social Change



Nusrat Tasbin, Team Leader of Radio Meghna Listeners Club, Aslampur Union, Charfession, Bhola.
Photo: COAST Foundation Archive

Nusrat Tasbin, a 19-year-old undergraduate student of Political Science, serves as the Team Leader of the Radio Meghna Listeners Club in Aslampur Union, Charfession, Bhola. The daughter of a retired army officer and a homemaker, she has been involved in adolescent clubs since her early teens, where her interest in volunteerism and leadership gradually developed. She is also active as a volunteer with several socio-cultural organizations. Recognising her engagement in community activities, a senior representative from Radio Meghna encouraged Nusrat to form a Listeners Club in her area. The club currently has 15 members, though it remains open to new participants. Through regular engagement with Radio Meghna and participation in Life Skills training, Nusrat strengthened her leadership capacity and confidence. With support from the Radio Meghna team, she has helped prevent 15 child marriages in her community, including cases involving club members. "Being able to contribute to positive social change gives me immense satisfaction," she said. Initially, organising meetings at her home was challenging due to resistance from some community members, particularly as her house is located near a madrasa and child marriage had local support. However, sustained awareness sessions and community sensitization gradually shifted attitudes. Today, the community recognises the club's positive role. Parents are more willing to allow their daughters to join and to travel with Nusrat to Charfession for program activities and events.

Increased climate awareness of the community, especially adolescent girls

The evaluation study demonstrates that the project has significantly increased climate awareness among communities in the coastal intervention areas, particularly among adolescent girls. Through community radio programs, adolescent learning centers, and community-level training and awareness sessions, community members, especially women and adolescent girls, have developed a better understanding of climate change, its impacts, and the importance of adaptation and resilience practices.

The study also found that adolescent girls, who traditionally have limited access to information and public engagement opportunities in coastal areas, became more aware, confident, and vocal regarding climate risks and community resilience issues through their participation in project activities.

During the field visits, it was evident that many participants were able to clearly explain climate change-related challenges affecting their communities, including salinity intrusion, cyclones, tidal surges, waterlogging, and livelihood insecurity. The study also found that adolescent girls, who traditionally have limited access to information and

Radio Meghna, Charfession, Bhola.
Photo: Din M Shibly/COAST Foundation Archive/2024



Ratandi Taltoli Adolescent Learning Center, Galachipa, Patuakhali
Photo: Din M Shibly/COAST Foundation Archive/2026

public engagement opportunities in coastal areas, became more aware, confident, and vocal regarding climate risks and community resilience issues through their participation in project activities.



INSTITUTIONAL IMPACTS

Strengthened accountability of government service delivery institutions

The remoteness of coastal char areas (sandbars and islands) creates a distinct and far more severe governance, infrastructural, and institutional crisis compared to mainland areas. This disparity is driven by geographical isolation, recurrent climate-induced disasters, socio-economic marginalization, and weak state presence, all of which contribute to high institutional fragility. As a result, public services remain limited, accountability mechanisms are weak, and governance systems are often fragmented, creating a “survival of the fittest” environment for vulnerable communities.

First, the project supported the registration and inclusion of genuine marginal fishermen who had previously been excluded from government lists due to corruption, political influence, and malpractice

Consequently, formal local government institutions, such as Union Parishads (UPs), are often less functional and less accessible in these remote coastal regions. Social and physical infrastructures therefore remain fragile, forcing communities to rely heavily on traditional and informal coping

mechanisms to navigate everyday challenges and climate-related risks. The situation further deteriorated following the political transition and regime change on 5 August 2024, during which the total absence or inactivity of many Union Parishads intensified institutional gaps and reduced access to public services in many coastal areas.

Within this challenging context, the project interventions generated significant impacts in three important areas. First, the project supported the registration and inclusion of genuine marginal fishermen who had previously been excluded from government lists due to corruption, political influence, and malpractice. Second, the project facilitated food assistance for fishermen prior to the government fishing ban period, which was considered highly unusual and timely support for vulnerable fishing communities. Third, the project linked climate-displaced households with relevant government offices and facilitated access to emergency relief and support services.

These interventions contributed to strengthening community participation, improving access to government services, and enhancing the accountability and responsiveness of public institutions toward marginalized coastal communities.

Basbareia Union Parishad, Basbareia, Doshmina, Patuakhali.
Photo: COAST Foundation Archive



SECTION 5

Efficiency

Efficiency was assessed to understand the quality and effectiveness of project expenditure based on the level of target completion and achievement, budget absorption rate, quality of expenditure in terms of allocation across project components, and the proportion of direct support provided to project beneficiaries.

According to project financial documents, the overall implementation efficiency was strongly high, with a target completion rate of 93.60%, demonstrating strong operational effectiveness and result-oriented delivery. This performance is further reinforced by a robust budget absorption (burn rate) of 94%, indicating highly efficient utilization of available financial resources with minimal underspending or implementation delay.

In terms of cost allocation, the expenditure structure reflects a strategic prioritization of programmatic

investments. According to the COAST Foundation, a substantial 44.2% of total expenditure was directly allocated to program implementation, underscoring a strong focus on field-level implementation. This includes promoting Climate Adaptive Income Generating Techniques (CAIGTs), adolescent development initiatives, community radio programming, MEAL system strengthening, advocacy, and networking costs.

Additionally, 14.97% of total expenditure was allocated to sub-grants, reflecting effective partnership-based delivery mechanisms and decentralized implementation strategies. Operational sustainability is further evidenced by a balanced allocation of 24.84% toward personnel, management, and coordination costs, ensuring adequate human resource and managerial capacity to support program execution. Importantly, the indirect cost (administration and overhead) remains relatively low at 9.60%, highlighting a lean administrative structure and cost-efficient operational model, with a greater proportion of resources directed toward frontline program delivery and community impact (Figure 1).

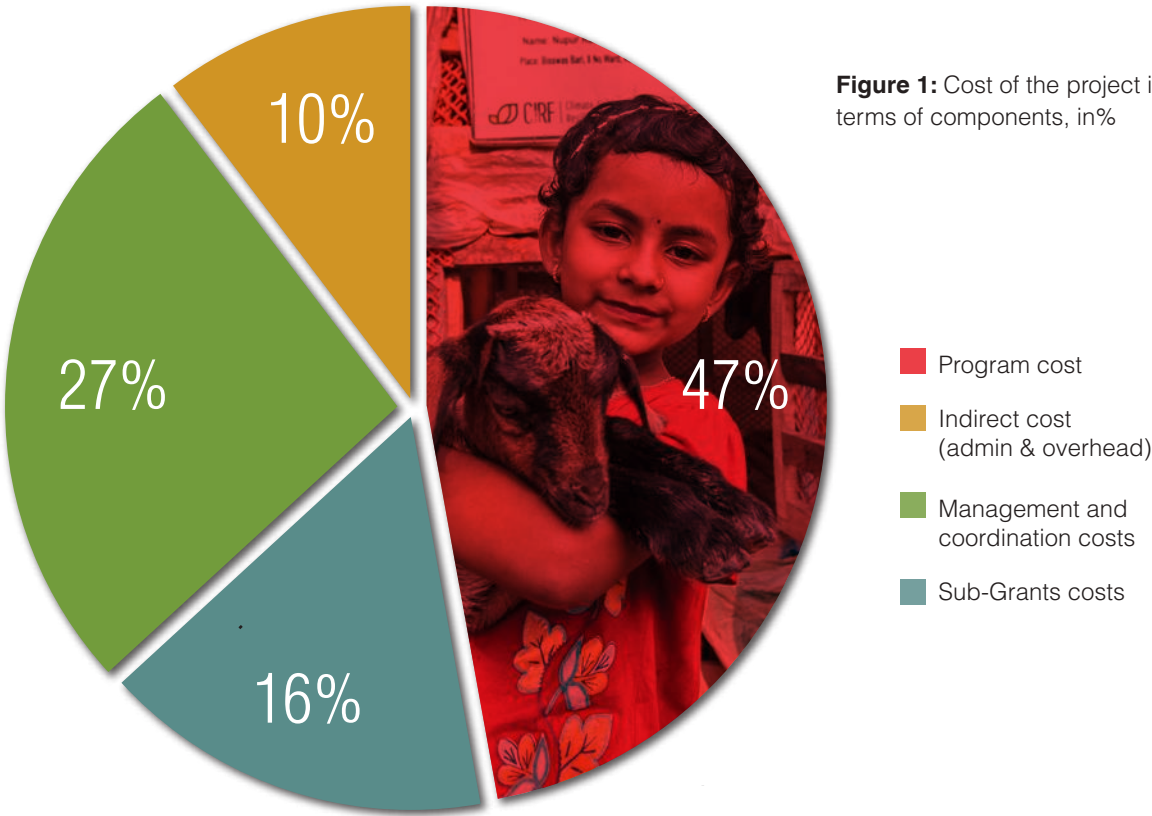


Figure 1: Cost of the project in terms of components, in%

SECTION 6

Sustainability

The sustainability of the project was assessed based on behavioral and practice-level changes within the community and among beneficiaries—changes expected to persist after the project’s exit, along with the continued delivery of project-driven co-benefits. Considering these factors, the project’s sustainability is rated as moderately high.

A notable achievement in terms of sustainability is that the Upazila Women’s Affairs Department has taken responsibility for overseeing the adolescent centers, ensuring their continued support and operation.

Several key practices and behavioral changes are likely to continue after the project ends:

- Knowledge and practices related to climate change and resilience, as delivered by the project.
- Behavioral changes stemming from project interventions.
- The practice of goat rearing using the scaffold method, under the CGAITS component.
- The use of saline-tolerant seeds.

The trust, credibility, and constructive relationships established with government officials at the sub-district level through the project’s advocacy initiatives are also likely to contribute to the sustainability of the project outcomes. The COAST Foundation will also sustain its accumulated experiences, learning, and knowledge generated from project implementation, as well as the organizational transformation of its Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) system.

Furthermore, the transformation and empowerment of adolescent girls as change agents within the community, particularly their leadership capacity to combat gender-based violence (GBV) and stop child marriage, will endure beyond the project’s exit. Additionally, the climate change and resilience knowledge disseminated throughout the community will also be sustained.



SECTION 7

Key Learning

The adoption and sustainability of Climate Adaptive Income Generating Technologies (CAIGT) largely depend on the economic condition of households, as well as the entrepreneurial mindset and capacity of community members.
Strong field-level community mobilization significantly increases the likelihood of influencing policy and practice at the local level.
Local government and administrative institutions do not always adequately recognize the severity of climate change impacts and salinity intrusion. Among the relevant agencies, the response of the Bangladesh Water Development Board has been particularly limited.
Local government and administrative authorities often tend to underreport or overlook the issue of child marriage, limiting effective prevention and response measures.
Market access remains a major challenge, particularly for char dwellers, who frequently face difficulties in transporting and selling their agricultural products.
There is a significant lack of reliable data on climate-induced displacement at the local government and administrative levels, which constrains effective planning and policy responses.
Existing government development planning processes lack adequate mechanisms to systematically incorporate local problems and community priorities into the formulation of development projects under the Annual Development Program (ADP).

*Khadija (12), Ratandi Taltoli Adolescent Learning Center, Galachipa, Patuakhali. May 12, 2026.
Photo: Din M Shibly/COAST Foundation*

SECTION 8

The way forward

Based on the findings of the evaluation, the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen future climate resilience, livelihood security, and social justice interventions in the coastal areas of Bangladesh.

1. Conduct Comprehensive Baseline Assessments with Strong Gender and Livelihood Analysis

Future projects should begin with rigorous baseline assessments that comprehensively analyze coastal livelihood systems, climate vulnerabilities, gender relations, and patterns of socio-economic exclusion. Such assessments should go beyond surface-level needs identification and include detailed analysis of:

- Livelihood patterns of farmers, fisher-folk, sharecroppers, char dwellers, and climate-displaced populations;
- Gendered dimensions of climate vulnerability, including unpaid care work, mobility restrictions, GBV, child marriage, and women's access to resources and decision-making;
- The political economy of coastal poverty, including landlessness, indebtedness, market exclusion, and exploitative systems such as “Dadon”;
- Climate-induced displacement trends, migration dynamics, and settlement patterns; and
- Local institutional and governance weaknesses affecting service delivery and adaptation capacity. Such baseline studies should inform the project theory of change, intervention sequencing, targeting strategies, and sustainability planning.

2. Clearly Analyze the Root Causes of River Erosion and Waterlogging in Future Project Design

River erosion and waterlogging emerged as two of the most critical structural drivers of poverty, displacement, and livelihood insecurity in coastal

Bangladesh. Future projects should therefore incorporate a more comprehensive analysis of the root causes and political-economic dimensions of these challenges during the design phase. Particular attention should be given to:

- Siltation of rivers and canals;
- Dysfunctional or poorly maintained sluice gates and drainage systems;
- Embankment fragility and unplanned infrastructure development;
- Encroachment and loss of natural water flow systems;
- Climate-induced sea-level rise, tidal surges, and erratic rainfall patterns; and
- Weak coordination and accountability among relevant institutions, particularly the Bangladesh Water Development Board and local government bodies.

Future interventions should adopt a holistic and ecosystem-based approach that combines climate adaptation, water management, livelihood protection, and rights-based advocacy for affected communities.

3. Strengthen and Expand Climate-Adaptive Agriculture for Coastal Farmers

Future projects should place greater emphasis on climate-adaptive agriculture and directly engage coastal farmers as a priority target group alongside women and fisherfolk communities. Agriculture remains one of the principal livelihood systems in many coastal districts; however, farmers face severe challenges due to salinity intrusion, waterlogging, erratic rainfall, high production costs, limited irrigation and drainage systems, weak market access, and distress selling.

Although women play an important role in post-harvest activities and homestead-based production, their participation in mainstream agriculture remains constrained due to limited land ownership, restricted mobility, unequal access to productive resources, and entrenched patriarchal norms. Therefore, future interventions should adopt a balanced and inclusive approach that:

- Supports both male and female farmers in climate-adaptive agricultural practices;
- Promotes saline-tolerant crops, floating agriculture, sack gardening, sorjan cultivation, and integrated farming systems;
- Expands access to quality seeds, irrigation, extension services, and local demonstration plots;

- Encourages women's participation in homestead agriculture, post-harvest processing, seed preservation, and climate-resilient agri-enterprises;
- Strengthens farmers' producer groups and market linkages; and
- Integrates agricultural adaptation with household-level resilience and food security strategies.

Such an approach would generate broader and more sustainable livelihood impacts across coastal communities while also promoting gender-sensitive climate adaptation.

4. Promote and Scale Up Proven Nature-Based Solutions

The evaluation demonstrates that locally-led and nature-based adaptation practices are both effective and sustainable in coastal contexts. Future projects should therefore prioritize and scale up proven nature-based solutions, particularly:

- Community pond excavation integrated with rainwater harvesting systems for safe drinking water;
- Plantation of bamboo, local trees, and vegetative barriers along embankments and erosion-prone areas to strengthen natural protection systems;
- Canal re-excavation and restoration of natural drainage systems to reduce waterlogging;
- Saline-tolerant agriculture and floating/sack gardening practices; and
- Community-based mangrove and coastal vegetation restoration where appropriate.

These interventions should be integrated with local knowledge systems and community participation to ensure ownership, environmental sustainability, and long-term resilience.

5. Increase Direct Investment in Community-Level Climate Adaptation

Although the project demonstrated strong achievement against targets, the proportion of direct program and input support remained comparatively low. Future projects should increase the allocation for direct community-level adaptation and livelihood support, particularly for vulnerable women, adolescent girls, farmers, fisherfolk households, and climate-displaced communities.

Greater investment should be made in:

- Climate Adaptive Income Generating Techniques (CAIGTs);

- Climate-adaptive agriculture; Safe drinking water solutions;
- Livelihood diversification; Disaster-resilient productive assets; and
- Community-managed resilience infrastructure.

This would improve cost-effectiveness, increase visible impact at the community level, and strengthen long-term adaptive capacity.

6. Expand and Institutionalize Participatory Coastal Budget Analysis

Future interventions should promote participatory coastal budget analysis at both local and national levels by incorporating macro-micro relationships in climate governance and public finance. This process should examine how national climate budgets, Annual Development Programs (ADPs), and local government allocations respond to the actual needs and priorities of vulnerable coastal populations. Such initiatives should:

- Build the capacity of community groups, youth platforms, fisher committees, farmers' groups, women's organizations, and civil society networks to analyze public budgets;
- Track allocations and expenditures related to climate adaptation, embankment protection, agriculture, water management, rehabilitation, and social protection;
- Identify gaps between national policy commitments and local-level implementation realities; and
- Promote evidence-based advocacy for equitable and accountable climate financing.

This would strengthen democratic participation, improve accountability of public institutions, and ensure that coastal communities have greater influence over development planning and resource allocation.

7. Strengthen Community-Based Accountability and Advocacy Platforms

The project demonstrated significant success in strengthening community participation and accountability through fisher committees, displaced persons' monitoring groups, adolescent clubs, and participatory MEAL mechanisms. These community-led structures should be further strengthened and institutionalized through sustained capacity building on rights, advocacy, leadership,

climate justice, and local governance. Greater emphasis should also be placed on:

- Building alliances with journalists, researchers, lawyers, and civil society organizations;
- Strengthening engagement with Union Parishad and Upazila administrations;
- Enhancing women's leadership and participation in local decision-making; and
- Expanding people-centered advocacy on displacement, fisheries rights, agricultural adaptation, and water governance.

8. Strengthen Community Radio and Digital Communication Strategies

Community radio has proven highly effective in amplifying marginalized voices and empowering adolescent girls as change agents. However, changing media consumption patterns require stronger digital integration. Future projects should therefore combine community radio with digital communication and social media platforms, including Facebook, YouTube, podcasts, and short-form video content.

Additional investment is also needed in:

- Technical infrastructure and transmission capacity;
- Access to radios and digital devices in remote areas;
- Climate communication and citizen journalism training for adolescents and youth; and
- Production of locally relevant content in coastal dialects and languages.

9. Strengthen Gender-Transformative Approaches

Future interventions should adopt a more explicit gender-transformative framework that addresses the structural drivers of women's vulnerability and exclusion in coastal areas. This should include:

- Strengthening women's economic empowerment and ownership of productive assets;
- Addressing GBV, child marriage, and mobility restrictions;
- Increasing women's participation in community institutions and climate governance;
- Supporting adolescent girls' leadership, education, and digital inclusion;
- Imparting training on gender and development and rights-based approach; and
- Engaging men and community elites in

- transforming patriarchal attitudes and harmful social norms.

10. Strengthen Policy Advocacy on Climate Displacement and Fisher-Folk Rights

Future advocacy initiatives should continue prioritizing the rights of climate-displaced communities and coastal fisher-folk populations through a long-term and evidence-based approach. The 2027 review of Bangladesh's National Adaptation Plan (NAP) presents an important opportunity to incorporate these issues into national policy frameworks.

Advocacy priorities should include:

- Budgetary allocation and investment aligning with displacement disaster policies;
- Rights-based rehabilitation and cluster village development;
- Climate-resilient infrastructure and drainage systems;
- Transparent and accountable fisher registration processes;
- Occupational safety and insurance protection for sea-going fishers;
- Equitable social protection and food assistance systems; and
- Greater investment in adaptation and resilience for remote coastal chars and islands.

11. Strengthen Collaboration with Government Institutions and Research Bodies

Future projects should strengthen strategic collaboration with relevant government departments, universities, and research institutions to improve evidence generation, policy influence, and sustainability.

Partnerships should particularly focus on:

- Climate and displacement data systems;
- Waterlogging and river erosion research;
- Nature-based adaptation technologies;
- Climate-adaptive agriculture and coastal livelihoods;
- Community-centered climate governance; and
- Integration of successful project models into government systems and local development planning processes.

Glossary

Sustainability: The continuation of the project beyond its completion through the sustained application of knowledge, positive behavioral changes, climate-resilient practices, community leadership, strengthened local institutions, community ownership, and partnerships, ensuring long-term resilience and improved well-being of coastal communities.

Capacity Building: Continuous interventions of the project for strengthening the knowledge, skills, and confidence of community members—especially women and adolescent girls through training, awareness, and support, enabling them to adopt climate-resilient practices, improve livelihoods, participate in decision-making, and respond effectively to social and climate challenges.

Behavioral Change: Positive and sustained changes in knowledge, attitudes, practices, behaviors of individuals and communities resulting from project interventions, including the adoption of climate-resilient livelihood practices, improved health, hygiene and disaster preparedness behaviors, increased participation in community decision-making and advocacy, prevention of child marriage and gender-based violence, promotion of gender equality, greater leadership and social responsibility among women, and adolescent girls.

Change Agent: A trained community member, particularly climate-vulnerable adolescent girls, who applies project knowledge and skills to raise awareness, promote positive behavioral and social change, advocate for rights and gender equality, encourage climate resilience, and mobilize communities to address local climate and social challenges.

Girls' Empowerment: The process of enabling adolescent girls to build confidence, leadership, life skills, knowledge, and economic resilience through project interventions, so they can participate in decision-making, advocate for their rights, prevent child marriage and gender-based violence, adopt climate-resilient livelihoods, and become active change agents contributing to their families and communities.

Community radio: This is a non-profit radio service owned and operated by a local community. It is designed to serve the interests, needs, and voices of that specific area—especially rural or marginalized groups. It broadcasts local news, education, awareness messages, culture, and development information in the local language, helping people stay informed and participate in community issues and drive positive behavioral and social change.

Sack Gardening: A climate-adaptive farming practice promoted through project interventions that enables vulnerable households to grow vegetables in sacks in areas affected by salinity, waterlogging, and limited cultivable land, improving household food security, nutrition, and income while strengthening resilience to climate change.

Scaffold-based Goat Rearing: A climate-adaptive livestock practice promoted through project interventions in which goats are raised on elevated scaffold structures to reduce mortality and losses caused by floods, waterlogging, and climate-related diseases, while improving household income, livelihood resilience, and economic security.

Cluster Village: A government-supported rehabilitation settlement where climate-displaced and landless families are resettled and supported to access safe housing, basic services, social protection, and sustainable livelihood opportunities, with project interventions strengthening access to healthcare, safe drinking water, infrastructure, and community advocacy for improved living conditions.

Livelihood Diversification: The promotion and adoption of multiple climate-resilient income-generating opportunities, such as scaffold-based goat rearing, sack gardening, poultry and duck rearing, fruit cultivation, tailoring, and other small enterprises, to reduce dependence on a single livelihood source, increase household income, strengthen economic resilience, and enhance communities' capacity to cope with climate-related shocks and stresses.

Stakeholder: An individual, group, community, institution, or organization that is involved in,

influences, or is affected by the project, including project participants, community members, government agencies, civil society organizations, implementing partners, and other relevant actors who contribute to or benefit from project interventions and outcomes.

People-centered Development: A development approach that places people's needs, rights, priorities, and active participation at the center of planning, implementation, monitoring, and decision-making, empowering communities to lead development processes, influence policies, and promote inclusive, sustainable, and climate-resilient development.

Target Group: The individuals, households, and communities that the project is designed to support and benefit through its interventions, particularly climate-vulnerable coastal communities, including women, adolescent girls, youth, small-scale fisher-folk, climate-displaced families, and other marginalized groups, to improve their resilience and livelihoods.

Feedback Mechanism: A structured process through which project participants, community members, and other stakeholders provide feedback, suggestions, complaints, or concerns about project activities and services, enabling timely response, accountability, adaptive management, and continuous improvement of project implementation and outcomes.

Life Skills: Practical knowledge, personal, and social skills developed through project interventions that enable individuals, particularly adolescent girls and youth, to make informed decisions, solve problems, communicate effectively, build self-confidence and leadership, protect their rights, and cope with everyday social and climate-related challenges.

Social Inclusion: A process of ensuring that all people—especially marginalized or vulnerable groups such as women, persons with disabilities, fisher-folk, and others—have equal opportunities to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from a project or development activities.

Scalability: The ability of successful project approaches—such as climate-resilient livelihoods, community radio, and advocacy initiatives—to be

expanded, replicated, or adapted in other coastal communities that face similar climate-related challenges, so that their positive impact can reach a wider population.

Climate-induced Displacement: The forced movement of families or communities from their homes due to climate-related hazards such as river erosion, waterlogging, salinity intrusion, storms, or flooding, leading to loss of shelter and livelihood and creating urgent needs for safe relocation, rehabilitation, and access to basic services.

Gender-based Violence (GBV): A major social challenge addressed by the project through awareness, leadership development, community radio, and advocacy to create safer and more equal communities.

Project Direct Beneficiary: A Project Direct Beneficiary refers to a household that has directly benefited from the project's various interventions. This includes households that have received direct support from the project, as well as those that have accessed government services and social protection benefits with the facilitation or support of the project.

Project Indirect Beneficiary: A Project Indirect Beneficiary refers to an individual who did not receive direct assistance from the project but benefited indirectly from its interventions. This includes family members of direct beneficiaries and those receiving food assistance from the government, housing facilities, blankets in the winter season, medicines, access to fresh water from a pond, etc.

Indirect Beneficiaries of Advocacy and Campaigns: People who benefited indirectly from the project's advocacy and campaign initiatives through social mobilization activities such as human chains, seminars, and awareness campaigns. Communities also benefited from advocacy outcomes, including embankment and road construction, improved sea safety measures by the Fisheries Department, and awareness messages disseminated through local and national media, community radio, and other communication platforms. In addition, the project increased public awareness on preventing violence against women, child marriage, and environmental protection are counted as indirect beneficiaries.

Small Rooms, Big Dreams

Adolescent girls reclaiming their future in coastal Bangladesh

Kamona Akter (15)

Dream: She wants to be a Banker

Rural poverty in Bangladesh is deeply rooted, shaped by geography as much as history. The country's landscape, formed by the sediments of nearly 1,500 rivers, is constantly shifting, binding land, water, and livelihood into a fragile and dynamic relationship. For generations, communities in this delta have lived in close harmony with nature, developing intimate knowledge of its rhythms and adapting to its changes.

That balance, however, has been profoundly disrupted. Centuries of industrialisation in wealthier nations have contributed to a global climate crisis that Bangladesh now faces on its frontlines. Where environmental change once drove migration and adaptation, today it is eroding livelihoods and dismantling ways of life.

Unlike more prosperous countries, Bangladesh has limited capacity to buffer its population from these shocks. Climate impacts—floods, salinity intrusion, cyclones—are intensifying rural poverty, pushing vulnerable households deeper into precarity. Women and children, who make up the majority of the population, bear a disproportionate burden of these pressures.





Faria Akter Moni (12)
Dream: She wants to join Bangladesh Army



Sanjida (16)
Dream: She wants to be a Nurse



Nadira Akter (16)
Dream: She wants to be a primary school teacher



Sumaiya Akter (14)
Dream: She wants to be a teacher

Against this backdrop, a small learning centre on the banks of the Tentulia River holds quiet but powerful significance. The Adolescent Learning Center (Kishori Shiksha Kendra) in Dashmina Sadar Upazila, Patuakhali, supports 30 adolescent girls with life skills that are difficult to quantify but transformative in practice.

Established under the CCR project and implemented by COAST Foundation with support from CJRF, the centre extends far beyond a conventional programme activity. It creates a space where girls can build confidence, strengthen agency, and begin to imagine futures that reach beyond immediate constraints. Its value lies not only in its outcomes, but

in its presence—and in its potential to be sustained and scaled.

Bangladesh contributes only a small share to global emissions, yet remains among the countries most exposed to climate risk. Addressing this imbalance will require sustained international cooperation through technology, knowledge exchange, and financing. As this project draws to a close, six girls from the centre spoke about their aspirations. Each expressed a determination to contribute to their country's future. Their dreams are captured in their portraits. Within just 150 square feet, this centre is helping turn those aspirations into possibility.



Sara Moni (15)
Dream: She wants to join Bangladesh Army

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Photo and text:
Din Muhammad Shibly

Tuned in, turned around

Radio Meghna and the Girls of Charfesson

Among Bangladesh's coastal districts, Bhola is one of the most vulnerable. Cyclones, tidal surges, Meghna river erosion, salinity intrusion, and rapid displacement are not distant threats here -- they are lived realities. The residents of Charfesson, the southernmost upazila of the district, bear the full force of these compounding crises. Women, adolescents, and children are hit hardest, their suffering deepened by entrenched poverty and high rates of school dropout.

COAST Foundation's community radio station, Radio Meghna, has been working in this region since its founding, using information and dialogue to reach people that formal systems often miss. Through its listeners' clubs, Radio Meghna identifies community problems at the grassroots level and works to shift attitudes and open new possibilities. Two stories from Charfesson's listeners' clubs illustrate what that can mean in a young girl's life.

Zuena's story: fighting for the right to study

Zuena Akter, 13, is a member of the Golap (Rose) Listeners Club in Aslampur village. Her father, Morshed Mia, works as a daily wage labourer; her mother, Laiju, manages the household. The family of six includes four sisters, the youngest of whom has a disability and cannot breastfeed, requiring costly formula milk each week. Stretched beyond his means, Morshed Mia made the decision many fathers in Charfesson make: he arranged for Zuena to be married.

Zuena, a bright Class 8 student, was devastated. She wept, and then she reached out to her listeners' club. Club leader Nusrat listened and acted. She visited Zuena's home with several club members, and Radio Meghna staff organised a courtyard meeting with the

family. Together, they helped Zuena's parents understand the value of keeping their daughter in school. The family changed course.

Today, Zuena studies, works as a seamstress, and gives private tutoring, contributing to both her own education and her family's income. Her dream is to become a doctor, specialising in the care of children with disabilities — children like her younger sister.

Maisha's story: finding her voice

Maria Akhter Maisha, also in Class 8, is a member of the Padmo Listeners Club in Aslampur Union. Maisha has a speech impairment. For years, the fear of being laughed at kept her from participating in school, avoiding events, and withdrawing from the world around her. Despite her abilities, she had stopped believing in herself.

The leader of the Padmo Club brought Maisha in. Gradually, through the warmth of the group and gentle encouragement, Maisha began to open up, joining conversations, attending school regularly, and taking part in activities she had long avoided. Her confidence grew alongside her engagement. Today, Maisha attends school every day, participates in events, and is performing well academically. She excels in dance and sports. Like Zuena, her dream is to become a doctor.

These are not exceptional girls who succeeded despite their circumstances. They are girls who were given a space — and people who believed in them — at the moment it mattered most. Radio Meghna's listeners' clubs provided exactly that. The question is how many more girls like Zuena and Maisha are still waiting.

Photo and text:
Din Muhammad Shibly



Maria Akhter Maisha, Aslampur, Charfesson, Bhola.
Photo: Din M Shibly/COAST Foundation

Asiampur, Charfesson, Bhola, May 13, 2026
Photo: Dtn M Shibly/COAST Foundation

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