

Oxfam in Bangladesh

- Bangladesh's 600km coastline is one of the most disaster-prone regions in the world.
- Around 45% of the labour force are engaged in agriculture.*



How Oxfam is helping

In Bangladesh, Oxfam campaigns for sustainable rural livelihoods, runs humanitarian responses, works on economic empowerment, climate adaptation, livelihoods, leadership, rights and services for marginalised people, and supports indigenous peoples' development.

In numbers**...

400,000
total people helped



Hasina Begum looks after her cow in Char Atra, a rural island in southern Bangladesh

Sustainable rural livelihoods

The Campaign for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods (CSRL) is one of the most vibrant and influential campaigns in Bangladesh, focusing on agriculture, climate change and trade. We try to ensure sustainable rural livelihoods by reducing the rural poverty and vulnerability caused by socio-economic and physical factors. Around 250 member organisations and 11 campaign groups work together, linking campaign activities with existing grassroots, local and national level movements and establishing links between existing Oxfam affiliate programmes. CSRL also actively engages with relevant ministries of the government, political parties, the private sector and media in Bangladesh.

Climate change

We are campaigning for a national climate change plan to ensure a fair climate regime. We empower communities to raise their voices for fair adaptation policies, compensation and responses. We also advocate for climate refugees to be given preferential status when migrating to developed countries.

Right: Women take place in a climate change rally in Dhaka.



Photo: Caroline Gluck



Photo: Dan Chung

Foyzonn Essa gathers chillies in Char Atra. Oxfam provides support to small-scale farmers.

Agriculture

We are advocating for a “Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Programme” (CARP), a set of policy recommendations for the agriculture sector of the country, developed alongside small and marginalised farmers.



Photo: Jane Beesley

A staff boat travels to reach communities cut off by flooding.

Humanitarian

Oxfam has responded to every major humanitarian crisis in Bangladesh. We help create a resilient community to anticipate and combat the risks of disasters, and support climate change adaptation through economic empowerment, securing sustainable livelihoods for both women and men.

Trade

We promote a pro-poor agenda in macro-economic policies while negotiating trade agreements. We also work to provide support on trade issues to the Government, trade bodies and other stakeholders, and to ensure enhanced opportunities for women in formal and informal sectors to gain decent work and economic leadership in connection with international trade. We're also working to safeguard micro, small and medium-sized national entrepreneurs in agribusiness through effective macro-economic policies.

Emergency Food Security and Livelihoods Project in Cyclone Aila hit area

Two years after Cyclone Aila hit southwest Bangladesh (on 25 May 2009), thousands of people living in the coastal belt of Khulna and Satkhira district had only just returned to their homes. This was due to delayed reconstruction of damaged embankments, parts of which were broken during cyclone Aila.

As people returned home they needed emergency food and livelihood support. Oxfam led a consortium of international NGOs in implementing an £8.5m project, funded by the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO), in the sub-districts

of Koyra, Dacope, Assasuni and Shyamnagar of Khulna and the Satkhira district.

Through this project we are engaging people in cash-for-work activities for 30 days, creating community infrastructure and assets including ponds for safe drinking water, roads, and canals. We have also provided cash grants to people, and provided them with cash for training to help increase their resilience to future disasters by raising their understanding of disaster risk reduction, water sanitation and hygiene, nutrition and child care.



Photo: Moneer ul Islam

A young boy drinks clean water from a tap provided as part of Oxfam's Cyclone Aila response



Photo: Dan Chung

Women take part in an Oxfam project to help raise the ground beneath flood-prone homes in Char Atra.

Risk reduction

In order to fulfil our commitment of building a disaster-resilient community in Bangladesh, Oxfam has teamed up with other NGOs (ActionAid, Concern Worldwide, Concern Universal, Islamic Relief and Plan Bangladesh) under the "National Alliance for Risk Reduction Initiatives" (NARRI) Consortium. With financial assistance from ECHO, the NARRI consortium is working closely with the local communities and local and national Government officials, in order to enhance vulnerable communities' preparedness and ability to respond, and to strengthen institutional arrangements at government and non-government level.

Indigenous Peoples' development

The 46 identified indigenous communities of Bangladesh are among the most deprived groups in many aspects of economic, social, cultural and political rights. From 2001, Oxfam and four local partners in northwest Bangladesh have aimed to popularise the issue of "adibashi" (indigenous) people in the development field. We work to get the attention of national level civil society, policy makers and other stakeholders regarding the constitutional recognition as

adibashi. In 2007 the project was scaled up with the support of DANIDA and expanded to northeast Bangladesh. In the last 10 years this initiative has allowed hundreds of community-based adibashi leaders and organisations to evolve and raise their voice to protect the rights of adibashi people.

Supporting marginalised people to claim rights & services

The Non-State Actors (NSA) Project focuses on providing support to marginalised communities to claim rights and access services. The programme operates through five partner agencies in seven districts, and in 153 unions or municipal wards, and has been funded by the European Union.

Resilience through Economic Empowerment, Climate Adaptation, Livelihood and Leadership (REE-CALL)

Through the REE-CALL project we seek to build resilient communities that can anticipate and combat the risks of disasters, and adapt to climate change through economic empowerment, securing sustainable livelihoods for women and men and developing leadership in disaster-prone Northern

char, Haor, and Southern Coastal communities. Given the challenges of climate change and the growing vulnerability to disasters, we aim to develop programmes that address the right to participation and leadership, economic empowerment and disaster resilience within an accountable

governance framework, all while addressing the gross inequalities for discriminated-against, marginalised and excluded groups. REE-CALL is divided into two regions: north, which includes Char and Haor areas, and south, which includes coastal regions of Bangladesh.