

FINAL PROJECT REPORT

Co-designing a Community-driven Inclusive and Sustainable Disaster Risk Governance Framework

Submission Date: June 2026

Implemented by: Institute of Disaster Management and Vulnerability Studies
(IDMVS), University of Dhaka

Project Duration: July 2025 – June 2026

Country: Bangladesh

This project was implemented as part of a larger project named Strengthening Inclusive Disaster Risk Governance for Climate Resilience in Asia (SIDRRA), co-implemented by a consortium led by the International Rescue Committee (IRC), the Asian Disaster Reduction and Response Network (ADRRN), and Duryog Nivaran.



Strengthening Inclusive Disaster Risk Governance for Climate Resilience in Asia (SIDRRA)



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**Strengthening Inclusive Disaster Risk Governance for Climate
Resilience in Asia SIDRRA
Project Partner's Subgrant Project Final Report (June 2026)**

Report NO: June/26

1. Executive Summary	Every year, governments, donors, and development networks invest substantial financial resources in disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA) projects across Bangladesh and wider South Asia. While these initiatives build community preparedness structures, train volunteers, and set up early warning paths, project success has historically been evaluated exclusively during the active, funded lifecycle. To address this structural blind spot, this 12-month project successfully transitioned from baseline planning and qualitative assessment into practical tool design, multi-tiered community validation, and final institutional handover. Driven by IDMVS in partnership with AFAD, CDD, and Friendship, the project team conducted a rigorous retention analysis of four completed DRR projects in the highly flood-exposed char and riverine areas of Kurigram to identify what actually endures after external funding ceases. Retention is shaped less by the technical quality of project delivery and more by governance conditions: community ownership, integration with local government, resource continuity, inclusion, accountability, and knowledge retention. The central message is direct. Sustainability is a governance issue, not solely a project management issue. Treating it as such, assessing retention systematically rather than assuming it, and planning for it from the design stage, is the necessary next step for resilience programming in Bangladesh and across South Asia. A core milestone was achieved through the operationalization of the Community Tracker Piloting Groups (CTPG) in hard-to-reach areas like Char Jatrapur and Char Ghughumari. The CTPG networks successfully shifted local residents from passive aid beneficiaries into autonomous "Data Stewards" who co-designed and validated localized indicators. The ultimate evidence verified that long-term outcome retention is shaped fundamentally by governance dimensions, specifically community ownership, institutional alignment, funding continuity, equity-based inclusion, accountability tracks, and embedded knowledge retention. The project concluded perfectly on schedule on June 15, 2026, with the publication of a regional Policy Brief, a standardized User Manual, and the formal handover of printed tracker scorecards to district administrative bodies, cementing sustainability as a standard requirement for disaster risk governance.
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Sub-grant Project Name:	Institute of Disaster Management and Vulnerability Studies (IDMVS), University of Dhaka.
Reporting Period:	15 July, 2025 – 15 June, 2026
Project Location:	Kurigram, Bangladesh
Name of Reporting Person:	Md. Sayedur Rahman
Date of Report submission:	30 th June, 2026
2. Progress Against Workplan & Key Outcomes:	The project was successfully completed within the planned 12-month timeline, delivering a validated 30-indicator DRM Project Retention Tracker, policy brief and retention analysis report. Fieldwork across Kurigram's remote char areas, supported by AFAD, CDD, and Friendship, strengthened local ownership through Community Tracker Piloting Groups (CTPGs) and inclusive stakeholder engagement. Key findings highlighted that sustainable resilience depends on community ownership, asset-based support, and locally managed governance rather than short-term cash assistance. Despite logistical, political, and data-access challenges, proactive planning, decentralized partnerships, and early material deployment ensured successful implementation and institutional dissemination.
2.1 Key Activities & Progress (A summary of the main tasks completed)	Planning, Inception, and Desk Synthesis: • Institutional Alignment & Orientations: Established the unified project team and executed joint inception meetings with CDD, AFAD and Friendship to define implementation blueprints and stakeholder engagement tracks. • Multi-NGO Consultation Platform: Organized a multi-stakeholder workshop in Kurigram involving 13 separate national and local NGOs/CBOs to capture qualitative operational experiences regarding post-project sustainability. • Rigorous Project Desk Review: Completed a comprehensive desk review profiling ten historical initiatives and selecting five core case studies for deep-dive retention analysis: the BMZ-PT project by AFAD, the Persons with Disabilities Preparedness project by CDD, Community initiative for disaster risk reduction and building resilience through CIDRR by Friendship.



Field Data Collection & Group Mobilization

- **Grassroots Field Integration:** Launched field data gathering campaigns across remote Char islands, specifically within Char Jatrapur and Char Ghughumari, Saheber Alga Union.
- **Operationalizing CTPG Networks:** Established two specialized local Community Tracker Piloting Groups to transition residents into data owners.
- **Governance Analysis & Diagnostic KIIs:** Conducted Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with the District Relief and Rehabilitation Officer (DRRO), local Project Implementation Officers (PIO), and women's and youth support groups. Concurrently, external M&E expert Awfa Islam carried out a field quality review.

Field-Based Validation & Tool Co-Design

- **Draft Instrument Triangulation:** Presented the draft tracker tool to local NGO networks in Kurigram Sadar to evaluate its user feasibility when funds stop.
- **Grassroots Validation Workshops:** Deployed the draft framework directly to the CTPG networks in remote chars to check for clarity, ease of use, and local language accessibility.

Final Handover, Dissemination, and Project Close-Out

- **Tracker Finalization:** Refined all metrics into 30 clear, and scale-based indicators distributed across six balanced components.
- **Close-out Workshops & Training:** Run closing orientations with partner field networks to integrate the tracker framework into their active regional programs.
- **Official Administrative Handover:** Executed institutional handovers and briefings with the District Administration, including the District Commissioner (DC), DRRO, PIO, and Upazila Nirbahi Officers (UNOs) to incorporate indicators into public development budgets.
- **CTPG Graduation & Exit:** Transitioned the local data teams into completely autonomous units capable of capturing asset, fund, and volunteer data without external prompting.



2.2. Progress Against Agreed Timeline	The project strictly adhered to its 12-month workplan with highly buffered adjustments, closing operations precisely on June 15, 2026: • Months 1–4 (Completed): Finalized inception planning, organized stakeholder consultation workshop and mapped 5 past projects, drafted the initial assessment tool. • Months 5–7 (Completed): Executed frontline qualitative field data collection, ran exhaustive FGDs and KIIs with local officers, and completed primary data transcribing. • Months 8–11 (Completed): Tested the draft metrics through field-level verification in remote Chars and cross-case synthesis matrices with core partners. • Month 12 (Completed): Successfully achieved final printing, institutional handover of data files, dissemination symposiums, and independent CTPG graduation.
2.3 Project Result/Output	• The Finalized DRM Project Retention Tracker Manual (v1.0): A highly functional field guide utilizing a 30-indicator system scored across a 1-to-5 scale to mathematically gauge post-NGO asset functionality. • The Final Policy Brief Document: An official publication titled <i>"When a DRR/CCA Project Ends, Does Resilience Remain?"</i> designed to reframe long-term resource tracking across South Asian basins. • The Final Retention Analysis Matrix & Report: A multi-case diagnostic text profiling enablers and barriers across four major regional cases. • The Unequal Component Weighting Model: A calibrated mathematical scoring formula derived from empirical data and stakeholder validation workshop revisions: Final Retention Score: $= (C1 \times 0.25) + (C2 \times 0.20) + (C3 \times 0.20) + (C4 \times 0.15) + (C5 \times 0.10) + (C6 \times 0.10)$ where C1 = Ownership, C2 = Alignment, C3 = Funding, C4 = Inclusion, C5 = Knowledge, and C6 = Accountability. • Autonomous Data Steward Networks: Active, community-managed monitoring infrastructure trained to maintain records independently.



	• Documented Community Resilience Blueprints: Verified field designs for alternative survival assets, including floating toilets, hanging gardens, raised plinth houses, and local community Emergency Funds.
2.4 Key Observations	• The Reality of the "NGO Vacuum": Remote regions like Char Jatrapur face extreme transport isolation due to a lack of passable roads and a scarcity of boats during monsoon overflows. This structural isolation creates an "NGO vacuum" where very few institutions operate outside of targeted health interventions by CDD, emphasizing the need to build tracking capacities locally. • Asset Support vs. Volatile Cash Streams: Multi-quarter monitoring confirmed that immediate cash aid functions like "water in the sand". Long-term self-reliance is achieved when projects switch to skills-based and tangible asset transfers (such as sheep, goats, vermicomposting, or sewing assets). • The Fragility of Unfunded UDMCs: While Union Disaster Management Committees hold legal mandates, they often exist only on paper once an external program closes because they lack independent budgets, formal resources, or continuous operational guidance. • Lived Realities of Local Ownership: In Char Ghughumari, the community independently repaired a critical market access road destroyed by rainfall without any external financial or administrative aid, illustrating that local ownership directly sparks disaster responsiveness. • The Logic of Score Divergence: When an NGO technical score and a community's lived score differ by 2 or more points, it reveals a "Perception Gap". This gap often occurs because formal documents exist in office folders but are inaccessible or unknown to the actual grassroots users.
2.5 Additional Project-Relevant Work	No additional activities outside the agreed workplan were undertaken. However, the collaborative multi-stakeholder workshops successfully stimulated informal peer-to-peer networking among participating national and local agencies, creating better resource-sharing channels across Kurigram.
3. Challenges, Risk Management, and Lessons Learned	Challenges & Institutional Blockages • Geographical and Logistical Barriers: Extreme physical isolation (e.g., Char Ghughumari is a 3-hour river journey from the



	mainland) severely constrained data collection timelines and framework close-out distributions. • Data Transparency Gaps: Accessing clear baseline metrics was consistently delayed by slow government bureaucratic processes and the confidentiality protocols of adjacent NGOs. • Fluid Political Context: Operational transitions and the temporary absence of elected local government bodies extended the necessary advocacy timelines required to secure formal agreements with Union Parishads. • Timeline Compression: Aligning the schedules of diverse stakeholders (District Commissioner, NGO executives, and char group leaders) within the final weeks required intense logistical management. Risk Management Strategies • Decentralized Multi-Partner Triangulation: The project utilized the combined local footprints of AFAD, CDD, and Friendship to cross-check data and maintain communication across sub-districts despite administrative delays. • Proactive Material Deployment: Finalized and printed all standardized tracker materials and guidelines ahead of schedule, successfully distributing scorecards to isolated Chars before early monsoon downpours disrupted transport routes. Lessons Learned for Long-Term Sustainability • Simplicity Drives Longevity: For community-level Data Stewards to maintain a tracking system without NGO support, tools must completely reject dense jargon and use simple, scale-based or binary indicators. • Resourced Inclusion over Surface Roster Checklists: Authentic equity for marginalized individuals requires dedicated technical disability expertise and targeted funding during early design phases rather than surface-level quota checklists. • Shifting from Outputs to Outcome Retention: Standard M&E tracking focuses purely on immediate outputs (e.g., numbers of training events held). Sustained disaster resilience requires tracking long-term outcome retention (such as asset survival and committee functionality over multiple hazard cycles).
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4. Communications, Stakeholder Engagement and Networking Highlights	• Integrated Multi-Agency Hubs: Collaborative workshops successfully transformed a fragmented group of local actors into an informal regional network, bringing together entities like BRAC, RDRS, Islamic Relief, Humanity & Inclusion, and Solidarity to minimize duplicate committee structures in identical communities. • High-Level Administrative Symposia: Briefed district leaders (DC, Additional District Commissioner, UNOs, DRRO) through structured dissemination workshops to link the tracker tool with local development budgets. • Reframing Data Ownership: Communication with grassroots cells successfully shifted the narrative from treating local populations as passive research subjects to respecting them as the long-term stewards of their own data.
4.1 Voices from the Field	The following sentiments reflect the "lived experience" and direct feedback gathered during the consultation sessions in Char Jatrapur and Kurigram Sadar: On Transforming Aid (Empowerment): • <i>"We expect to shift the paradigm from passive aid reception to active data ownership... Residents will no longer wait for external experts to tell them they are vulnerable; they will have the evidence themselves."</i> • <i>Context:</i> This reflects the goal of the CTPG to turn residents into "Data Stewards". On Livelihood Needs (Asset Transfer): • <i>"The community rejected generic aid in favor of asset transfers (cattle, goats) and skill development (machinery operation, sewing) that generate recurring income."</i> • <i>Context:</i> Community consensus on the need for assets rather than temporary relief. On Local Solutions (Financial Resilience): • <i>"There is a proposal to install a weekly 'Savings Box' system to build resilience and provide emergency loans."</i> • <i>Context:</i> A community-led innovation identified as a key "Retention Indicator" for the tool. On Governance Reality (Policy Integration):



	• <i>"Project sustainability is significantly higher when initiatives are integrated into ministry-level policy rather than remaining standalone NGO initiatives."</i> • <i>Context:</i> Insight from the DRRO regarding the failure of short-term NGO projects. On Infrastructure (Isolation): • <i>"Lack of roads and scarcity of boats during floods isolate the community from markets."</i> • <i>Context:</i> The primary physical barrier identified during the transect walk. "For years, whenever a disaster project ended, the files and the data left the village inside the laptops of the NGO officers. We were left in the dark, waiting for the next organization to come and measure our poverty. Now, with this printed tracker in our hands, we are the keepers of our own records. We don't need an outsider to travel from the city to tell us if our emergency funds or disaster plans are working; we can see it clearly on our own papers. We have finally stopped being just a collection of names in an NGO file, and we have become the masters of our own data. - "Char Community Leader, Final Dissemination Phase
5. Financial Summary & Future Plans	Detailed financial data have been submitted separately using the Financial Reporting Template
6. Appendices: Supporting Documentation	The attendance sheet and photos of our activities have been submitted.

Pictures/MOVs (with description)



Figure: Strategic consultations with AFAD refined the research tools to ensure the integration of inclusive disaster governance principles. Simultaneously, the Community Tracker Piloting Group (CTPG) was mobilized to empower locals as active "Data Stewards" who co-design the retention



Figure: Participatory consultations in the remote Jatrapur Char captured the "lived experience" of residents in hard-to-reach areas. This engagement validated critical retention drivers, revealing a severe "NGO vacuum" and a strong community preference for asset-based resilience over generic aid.



Figure: The transportation system to Jatrapur is quite challenging. From the mainland, one has to travel a long distance by horse cart to reach the riverbank. From there, it takes about one and a half hours by boat to reach Jatrapur Union. This remoteness significantly increases their vulnerability during disasters.



Figure: Final Dissemination Workshop on Community-Driven Inclusive Retention Tracker for Sustainable Disaster Risk Governance.