

# A MID-YEAR REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES

(JANUARY-JULY 2021)

**Climate Resilience Collective (CRC)** is a Multi partner initiative piloting in Sub Arctic-Yukon Region of Canada (North) and the Bay of Bengal in Bangladesh (South). CRC initiative is focused to promote and build leadership and capacity of local youth to take collective climate action while promoting north-south cross-learning and knowledge exchange.

## The Bay of Bengal Pilot being implemented by ICCCAD

**YCL:** [Youth Climate Lab\(YCL\)](#) is a Canada-based, global non-profit organization that accelerates youth-led climate policy, projects, and businesses.

**ICCCAD:** [International Centre for Climate Change and Development \(ICCCAD\)](#) is a think tank based in Bangladesh, it is a leading research and capacity building organization working on climate change, environment, and development.

**Duration of the BoB Pilot Program:** Sept 2020- till Dec 2021

**Funded by** [Climate Justice Resilience Fund \(CJRF\)](#)

## THE OBJECTIVE OF THE COLLECTIVE:

- To build leadership and capacity for the youth to take collective action.
- Fostering synergies between North and South.
- Identify and fill gaps related to financing and collaboration

## OVERALL OBJECTIVE OF THE PILOT:

The CRC aims to amplify voices and solutions from the frontlines by:

- Building leadership and capacity for youth to take collective action through policy and advocacy.
- Fostering synergies between North and South on climate justice, climate finance; and,
- Identifying and filling gaps related to financing and collaboration.

## HOW ICCCAD IS SUPPORTING THE CRC INCAPACITATING LOCAL YOUTHS:

The CRC has been working with 10 local youth associates from the Bay of Bengal to build on the resources; knowledge; support; and pathways needed to foster meaningful and lasting community engagement during COVID-19, and across cultures, regions, and issues. Each of these 10 associates comes from a climate-vulnerable area of Bangladesh starting from:

- Rangpur (Drought prone region)
- Sylhet (Flood prone region)
- Khulna (Coastal Flood and Cyclone prone region, and
- Chittagong (Landslide susceptible region with prolonged heavy rain)

## LOCAL PROJECT MOBILIZATION AND MENTORING:

Using the knowledge gained from the training interventions (mentioned in the following table 1), the 10 associates were equipped with knowledge and resources to carry out their individual local projects in alignment with their communities existing climate problems.

TABLE 1 TRAINING ACTIVITIES AND MODULES

Activities (Webinar) / Modules	Objectives / Discussion Points	Outcomes from the Activity	Skills Developed
Introduction	Understanding Climate change policy, important to the program. Introduction to the Program. Outcomes of the Program. Setting Personal Goals.	Mind Map produced on what they want to accomplish with their mind map.	Idea Generation and Thinking Capacity
What is Policy (in our lives, in our communities, in the world)?	Introduction to Policy. Connecting personal experiences to policy. Leadership in the community.	Making a commentary writeup Present Context about Climate Change and Youth Policy.	To create opportunities for young people to understand and influence climate policy.
Sharing Adaptation Stories	Introduction to Adaptation. Definitions. Connecting personal experiences to adaptation challenges in communities. Leadership in the community.	Share Associates Own Community Climate Change Adaptation Story through Photo Story.	Provide access to information. Equip young people to understand how climate change affects their natural resources livelihood and cultural traditions.
Climate Change and Young People and the Connections between Policy and Responses	Introduction to the key climate policies, including the five-year plan, Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100, Sustainable Development Goal progress report 2020, and National Youth Policy.  Why do we need these policies? How the policies have included or failed to include young people, account for gender diversity, and vulnerable communities.	Sharing own community experience on the gaps between the young thinkers and climate change policymakers through Story Telling.	Equipping young leaders with policy resources.
Identifying Climate Change Problems & Discussing Solutions	What is a major climate change risk in your community? How can we solve it? Who do we involve in the process? What can you do -pitch ideas?	Understanding research ideas based on a current problem faced in their community. And Discuss solutions, identify problems, and investigate stakeholders	How young people are considered in policy responses on climate change. Bridge the gap between the young thinkers and climate change policymakers. Mapping stakeholders.
Finding Solutions	How can you address climate risks in your community? Preparing for your project. Following your project and outreach strategy.	Developing and finalizing their local project based on the existing assets and stakeholders in their community.	Identify local needs for collaborative individual climate justice projects. Design thinking and project development soft and technical skills. Supporting community-driven climate-resilient development solutions.

**Beyond conducting the Module Webinars calls with the Associates, we carried out the following:**

- ⇒ Drop-in Calls to assist with problems or to provide information and guidance on any important issue
- ⇒ Monthly Program Evaluation for the associates as well as RCC
- ⇒ North-South Cohort Meetup on May 17 where the associates virtually met and ex-changed their journey so far and what motivates them for working with CRC
- ⇒ Provide one on one mentoring to develop local project Plan
- ⇒ Support Associates in their interventions and take action

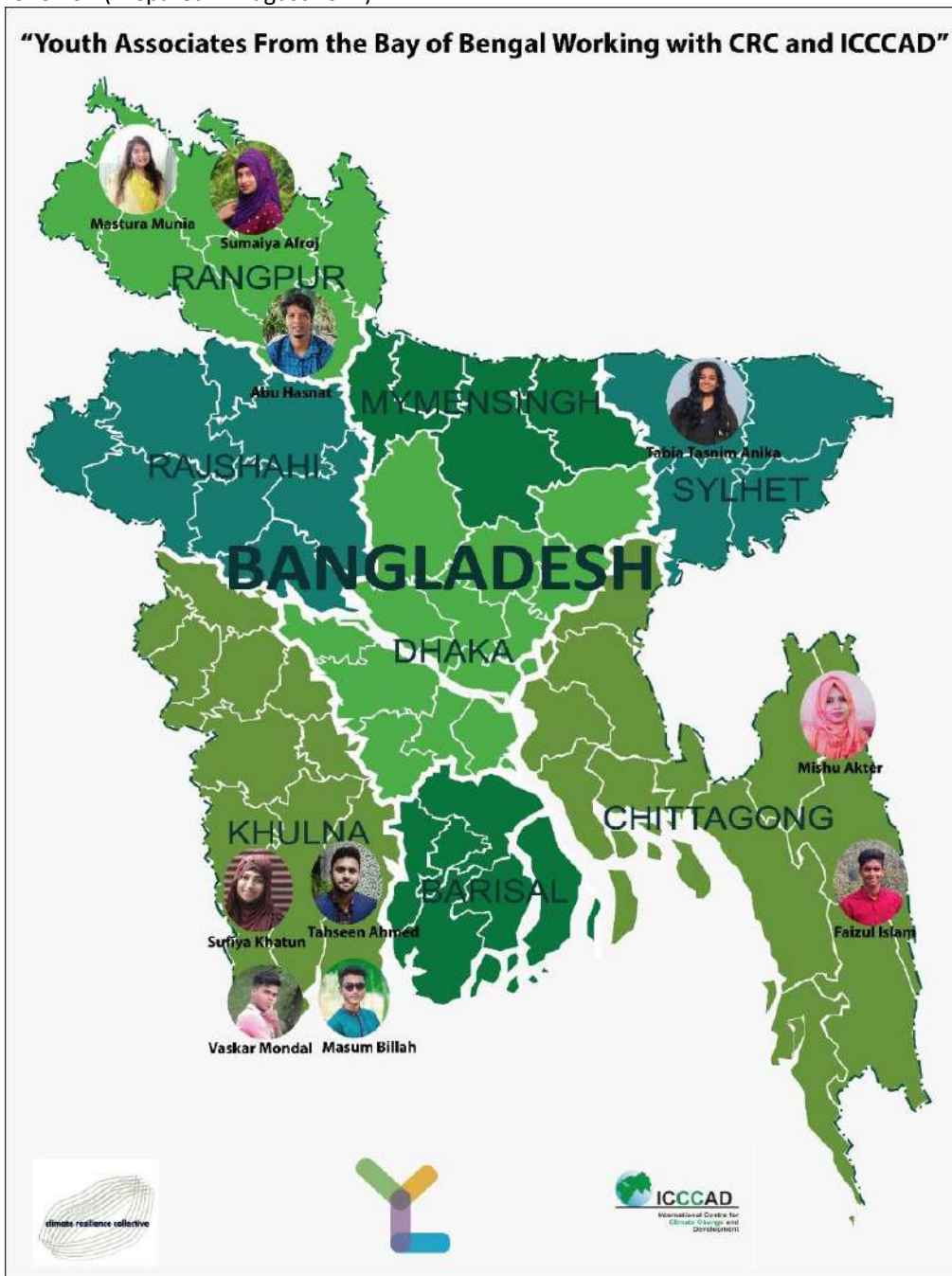


Figure 1 Map of Bangladesh showing CRC BoB Pilot Associates Location

## REFLECTION OF THE ASSOCIATES

*How has the Collective changed the way you think about climate action within your community?*

**Md. Tahseen Ahmed:** *“this process, thus far, has equipped me with the skills and knowledge that I feel are needed to be a climate leader in my community. I got to develop quite a few sets of skills from this Collective so far, for example: creating vision maps, creating and presenting short PowerPoint presentations, creating photo stories, developing project proposal papers, creating timelines for different tasks of the projects in a Gantt chart format, developing questionnaires for Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), utilizing appropriate referencing techniques, developing project report papers, developing newspaper articles, and more. I feel that the learnings of this fellowship have accelerated my on-field interaction and communication skills with people from different demographics as my local project under the Collective requires me to interview people from different walks of life.”*



Mid-Year Report on CRC BoB (Prepared in August 2021)

**Fizul Islam:** *“I have gathered much theoretical and practical knowledge from this pilot project that can apply in my community as a climate leader. Additionally, I have involved some young people who got many ideas on how to protect climate change and they have committed to enroll in various climate resilience activities in future. From the open discussion session of the workshop, many problems and new activities are found which can be added in next workshops. Participants are interested to know more about national and international policies and activities, communication systems, and information dissemination on climate change issues. Many participants have shared their past experiences and learning on climate change activities.”*



Figure 2 Engrossed in discussion at a workshop conducted by Misu under her local project, to identify the problems caused by landslides in the local community through workshops. Courtesy Mishu Akter

**Masum Billah:** *“I understand my community better now, and the learnings from the CRC has helped me understand climate change better. For example, in my community, there is a problem of drinking water due to increasing salinity. Most of my community suffers from health risks due to lack of potable water. Especially adults, children, pregnant mothers have more problems. I am trying my best to solve these problems as a YCL associate and as a local youth volunteer. In collaboration with our organization (Sundarbans Students Solidarity Team) we are trying to make them aware about the climate change issues and sensitize them. In this way, I am trying to give accurate information to my community. As a youth leader, I am trying my best for my community by cooperating and giving proper advice.”*



Figure 3 Local youths helping with drinking water distribution at southern part of Bangladesh after Cyclone Amphan. Courtesy of Masum Billah

**Mastura Munia Farjana:** *“I have started to think differently towards my communities’ climatic issues rather than before. Videos, papers, and information shared as resources in our modules were impactful, I started to think about climate change more intensely. Current scenarios and conditions of my community have been reflected on those materials. I got a clear idea about vulnerable climate condition, its consequences and how it is affecting our environment, our community. Before knowing these issues, I had an interest in climate change. But the collective program has converted those thought into a new dimension. I have started to think more about how I can contribute positively and how my actions can make my community more capable to get resilient towards the impact of climate change.”*



Figure 4: Many Locals of Dakshin Bedkasi areas have lost their house, affecting their life and livelihood after Cyclone Yaas hit the area, photo taken on 7th June, 2021. Courtesy Sufiya Khatun



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**Sufiya Khatun:** *“this fellowship has helped me understand climate change better and possible adaptation measures to tackle the situation and grow leadership skills. As my study area belongs to the southern region which is very close to Sundarbans and a very vulnerable area, so adaptation and mitigation measures are the best way to adjust to this situation. The community in my study area follows many adaptive ways to save the largest mangrove forest Sundarbans which is a natural shield to reduce the intensity of natural disasters originated from the Bay of Bengal. As a youth leader, I want to understand climate change adaptation and mitigation for my people, so that I can help my community in an effective way.”*



### *What inspired you to design this project?*

**Tabia Tasnim Anika:** *“80% of Haors are situated in Sylhet division. Haors are shallow bowl-shaped depression and surrounded by Indian hill range. Every year, haors receive a huge amount of water coming directly from the upstream and flash flood hits the area. For every year’s flash flood, many crop lands and households go underwater. As I have been living in Sylhet for many years, I have observed the situation very closely. I have always wanted to do something for my community by helping these affected populations cope with the impacts of climate change. Under Climate Resilience Collective, I am presently working with my community in Haor region. My main target community are the women and children of Haor region who suffer the most.”*



Figure 5 Photo from one of Haor area(study site), where two local girls are showing one of the tube wells at the edge of the village. Courtesy: Tabia Tasnim Anika

**Misu Akter:** *“The people in my community have no idea about climate change and they are going about development in the hill tracts in an unplanned manner, disturbing the natural balance. As a result, the adverse effects of climate change are appearing. The creation is a different kind of disaster that everyone is suffering. Such a terrible disaster caused the mountain to collapse. Many lives are lost every year as a result of these landslides. To prevent landslides, I am working to increase awareness and adaptability in my community. I am conducting awareness programs in local communities and trying to gather various information about landslides there. I hope this will reduce the risk of landslides. Because usually, people have no idea about the consequences of cutting downhills/trees or what the future might be like.”*



Figure 6 Workshop held on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021 to raise awareness on How to prevent landslides and ways to solve problems. Courtesy: Misu Akter

**Abu Hasnat:** *“The amount of trees in our area are decreasing because of the Brick Kiln. There is also a high rate of air pollution. I have noticed that most of the workers of the Brick Kiln are suffering from asthma and different types of skin diseases. All these factors inspired me to design this project.”*

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**Vaskar Mondol:** *“Through my local project, I will bring forth the depiction of the life journey of the coastal residents of the Durgabati area of Satkhira facing the effects of climate change. Which will help to tell the story of various natural disasters that have happened again and again in our lives. Since the inhabitants of this region have to face various natural calamities again and again in order to live in the coastal region. Sometimes we face river erosion and sometimes natural disasters like cyclone and tidal surge. As a result, the effect of salinity is much higher. Therefore, the main goal of designing my project was to increase the food sector by reducing the impact of salinity here. Through this project, the lessons learned from my FGD, and Case study will teach the locals here to adopt appropriate strategies to boost the food access. Through which I got enough inspiration to create the main theme of my project in the right way.”*



Figure 7: After Cyclone Yaas, local youths self-organized to repair the embankment and resettled their home with their own initiative in the coastal region. Courtesy Vaskar Mondol

**Sumaiya Afroj:** *“I was inspired for my local project because I live in the northern part of Bangladesh, and we all know that in the dry season the people who live in the northern area face a lot of troubles lacking water. Drought is a common disaster in Bangladesh, climate change is the main cause of it. In this time of lack of water, the agriculture sector seems to be damaged and that is why the people of those areas face poverty and lack of food. I think if I find an alternative way to grow more crops in a few waters, then the poor people do not face the lack of food and remove poverty. So that inspired me to design this project.”*

## RECOMMENDATION AND LEARNINGS TO TAKE FORWARD

ICCAD, and YCL have been collaboratively working on the CRC pilot since September 2020 to build a network with youth climate leaders. The focus of the pilot has been on Capacity Building on; Climate Change; Adaptation; Policy; Advocacy; and Environmental justice. The essence of our design has been to promote leadership and with the goal to use local community youths in an effective agent of change. In a short time (seven months) through the virtual events, one on one mentoring call we have equipped 10 associates from Bangladesh with knowledge and resources to carry out their respective local project, where they are trying to execute- How to implement a local project in their community, raise awareness and enhance their community climate resilience.

**Going Virtual:** With the pandemic we had to switch most of our interventions to virtual medium usually via emails, Microsoft teams, Zoom Meetings, WhatsApp group, google Jamboard and telephone calls. With more in person facilitation and training these trainings and knowledge sharing conducted via modules could have been more beneficial especially for Module 4 through 5. While internet connectivity was a big barrier as our associates fanned out across different regions of the country and not all regions have good internet reception, But in the contrast what we realized is that by going completely virtual we were able to build connections between 10 individuals across the country, where each brought in their own sets of experiences and learnings on the table.

Moreover, with the internet support youth associates could access this programming (hosted by on the policy hub) regardless of their geography. Additionally recording each webinar and making them accessible to the associates to revisit and recap have been very fruitfull to ensure accessibility especially for those with poor reception and drop out problems.

**Promoting Bilingual Conversations:** By translating most of our modules and training resources to Bangla, and by going bilingual in the mode of communication, the program was inclusive and made the youths comfortable with the process. By default, this process has enabled the associates to participate in the program and feel supported.

To make the process more tangible and to replicate it with cross learning features, the next interventions should have the scope to have Youth Associates Join a Network or Platform where the first batch of associates turn into mentors for the next, this will allow exchange of valuable insights and knowledge while creating a mentorship platform for individuals and climate leaders.

