

SYLHET DIVISIONAL PLATFORM LAUNCH OF LOCALLY LED ADAPTATION

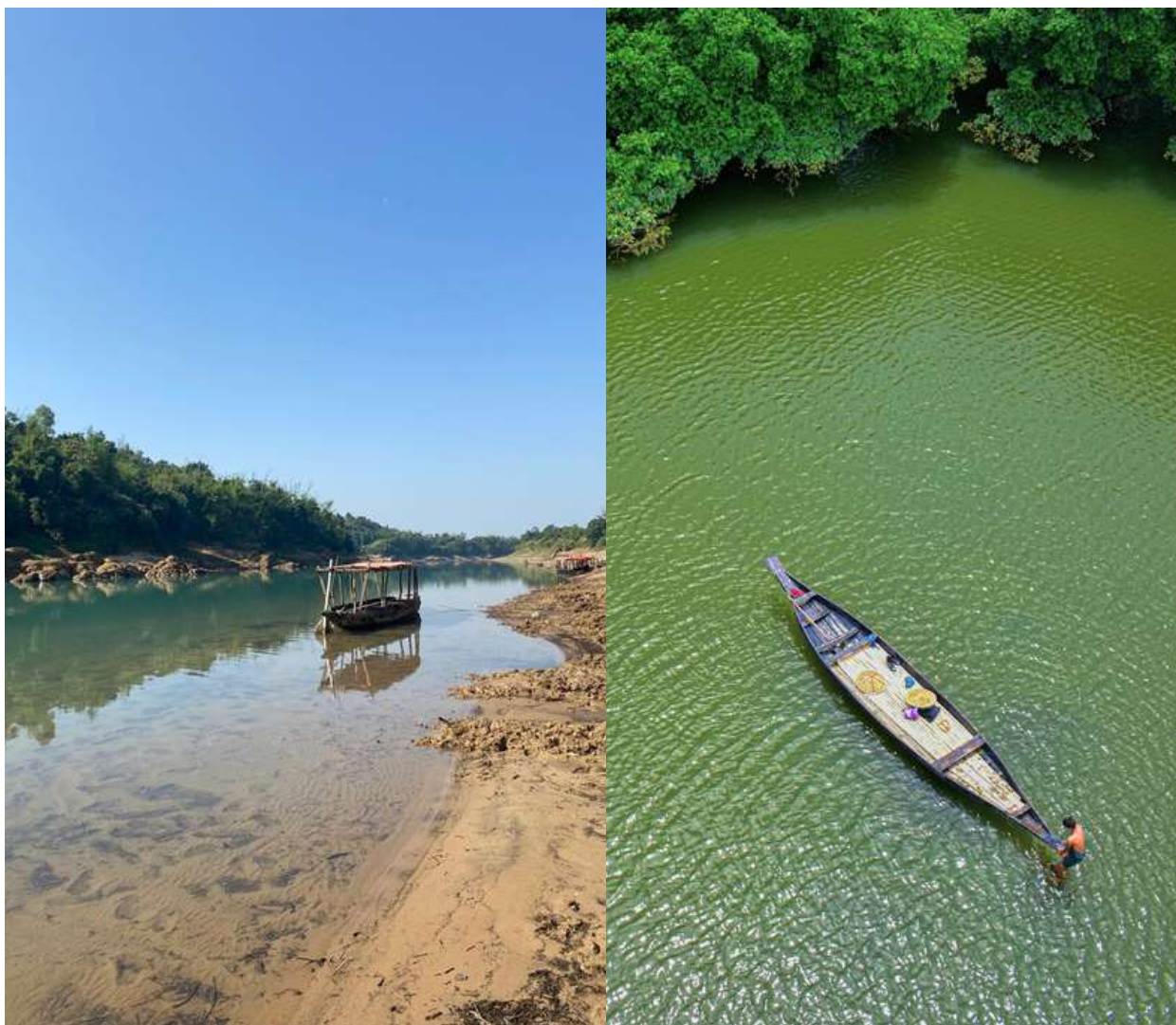
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BRAC Learning Centre, Khadimnagar, Sylhet



BACKGROUND

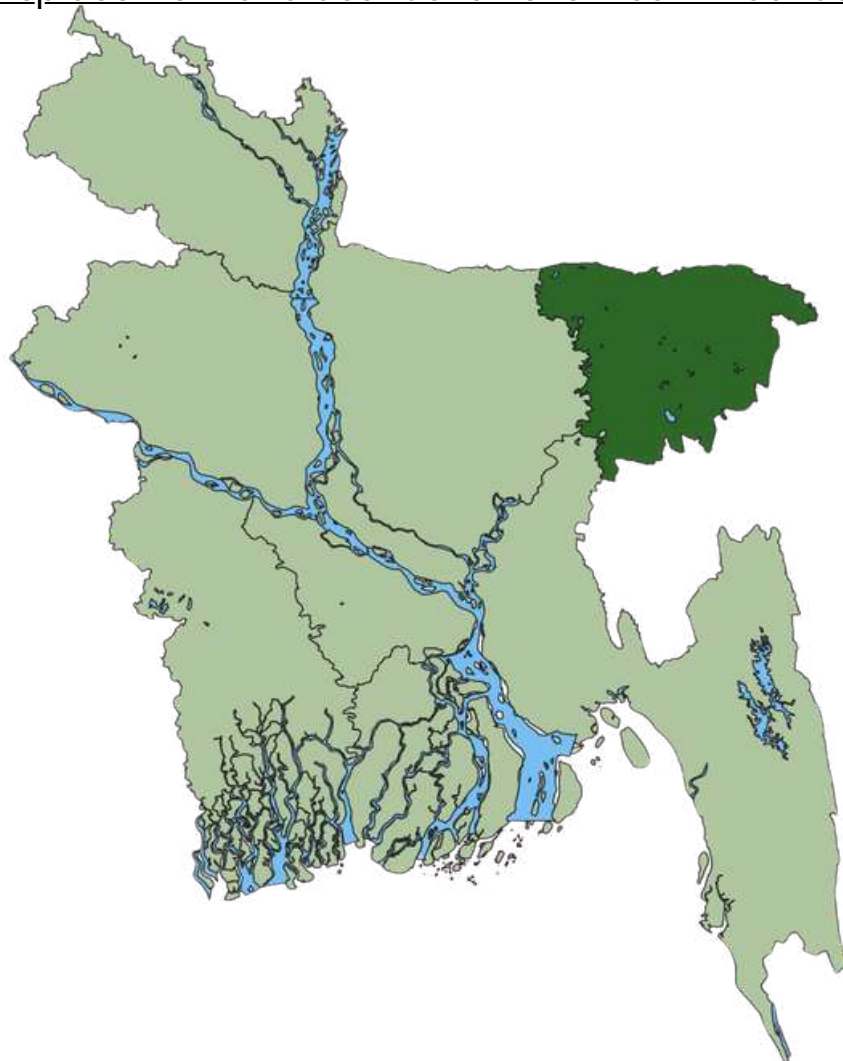
In 2020, Bangladesh was ranked globally as the 7th most vulnerable nation to climate change. The geographical location of the country is one of the major reasons of such vulnerability. The north-eastern region, Sylhet is severely prone to flash floods and riverine flooding which have significant impacts on the division's environment, economy and social wellbeing. According to the National Adaptation Plan, the broader Sylhet region can be segregated into two types of climatic stressors: a) river, floodplains and erosion prone areas (FPE) and b) haor and flash flood areas (HFF).



CLIMATIC IMPACTS

Due to extensive rainfall in the upstream, the transboundary rivers carry bulk amount of water through the Meghna river system in the downstream region. The excessive water inundates the low-lying flood plains and the haors which hampers the lives and livelihoods of communities residing in those areas. Specially, the farming communities who relies on Boro rice crop cultivation- are most affected due to the sudden (i.e., flash flood) and longitudinal (i.e., riverine flood) flooding.

Additionally, riverbank erosion leads to displacement within the local communities. Recently, the impacts of climate change are becoming quite evident in the region. A drastic rise in both the frequency and intensity of precipitation rate has been observed, leading to massive flood risks, displacement and destruction of critical infrastructure.



LOCALLY LED ADAPTATION

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



PRINCIPLES OF LLA

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



1
**Devolving decision making
to the lowest appropriate
level**



2
**Addressing structural
inequalities**



3
**Providing patient and
predictable funding**



4
**Investing in local
capabilities to leave an
institutional legacy**



5
**Building a robust
understanding of climate
risk and uncertainty**



6
**Flexible programming and
learning**



7
**Ensuring transparency and
accountability**



8
**Collaborative action and
investment**

LLA IN BANGLADESH

Bangladesh, a country known both for its vulnerability to climate change impact and innovative leadership in adapting to climate change's impacts should emphasize the attributes of locally led adaptation (LLA). To support the activities in tackling climate change impact, several policies had been formulated from 2005 to 2021 such as NAPA, BCCSAP, NDC, Bangladesh Delta Plan, the Five-Year Plans, NAP, SDGs, National Plan for Disaster Management, Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan, etc.

Alongside the policies, some groundbreaking LLA embedded initiatives are also undertaken at the community level. For instance, UNDP's Local Government's Initiative on Climate Change' (LoGIC) project promoted transparency and accountability in the disbursement and mobilization of the fund at the local level by involving the local community (mainly women and youth) and the local government authorities. The project also ensures social cohesion, inclusion and valuation of local knowledge. As a recognition, the project was awarded the 'Global Champion of Adaptation 2023' by the Global Center on Adaptation.



OBJECTIVES OF LOCALLY LED ADAPTATION PLATFORM

To unfold the concept of Locally Led Adaptation (LLA), the International Center for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) believes that it is essential to actively support the leadership, inclusivity, and agency of local actors throughout the various stages of designing and implementing adaptation interventions. Since, 2022, ICCCAD has been working with like-minded national-level stakeholders and global community of practitioners to understand what locally led adaptation means for Bangladesh, and successfully launched 1 national platform in Bangladesh and 3 divisional platforms in Khulna, Chattogram and recently in Sylhet.

The objectives of this platform include:

- **Communicating Local Messages:** Facilitating the transmission of local messages from the community level to the national level, ensuring that the voices and experiences of local actors are heard and considered in broader discussions.
- **Promoting of Good Practices:** Highlighting successful LLA practices in Bangladesh, serving as examples for effective and sustainable adaptation strategies.
- **Enhancing Capacity-Building Efforts:** Focusing on enhancing the technical and leadership capacities/capabilities of local communities, empowering them to take a more active role in shaping and implementing adaptation initiatives.
- **Collaboration:** Providing a space for collaboration among various stakeholders, such as NGOs, INGOs, private sectors, CSOs, and individuals to plan the next steps in LLA advocacy, research, knowledge management, capacity building, co-production of knowledge, and implementation of adaptation measures.

SYLHET DIVISIONAL LAUNCH OF LLA PLATFORM

The Sylhet Divisional Platform Launch on Locally led Adaptation took place on the 18th of February, 2024. Representatives from various local NGOs, grassroots organizations, universities and civil society organizations participated from four districts of Sylhet.

The event was moderated by Ms. Afsara Binte Mirza, Research Officer at ICCCAD. The event began with opening remarks from Professor Mizan R Khan, Senior Advisor at ICCCAD. He discussed the evolution of the concept of locally-led adaptation (LLA), and shared the difference between LLA and community-based adaptation. Professor Khan also highlighted ICCCAD's role in launching LLA platforms in Dhaka, Chittagong and Khulna. He shared the occurrences of maladaptation happen due to overlooking the lived realities of local communities in the face of climate change. Hence, LLA can be an instrumental tool to tackle maladaptation instances.



A short brief was given by Mr. Juel Mahmud, Program Coordinator of Climate Change and Displacement Programme on ICCCAD's organizational history, current programmes and work on climate change in Bangladesh and globally. He also remembered the pioneering leadership of late Dr. Saleemul Huq in establishing the concept of locally led adaptation both nationally and globally.

A presentation on ICCCAD's LLA Programme and LLA's 8 Principles was delivered by Mr. Savio Rousseau Rozario, Program Coordinator of LLA at ICCCAD. Mr. Rawnak Jahan Ranon, Research Officer and Ms. Fariha Jahin Biva, Research Associate at ICCCAD shared what LLA means for Bangladesh. During the last two hours of the session, each participant of the event introduced themselves and their organizations and shared their gusto to join and work collaboratively on the LLA platform.















OPEN DISCUSSION





In Sylhet division, there are numerous local efforts undertaken in reducing the disaster risks and adapting to impacts of climate change in the Haor, tea garden and lowland areas- by the local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), grassroots organizations, youth-led organizations, school and universities. The table below showcases their diverse work and expertise in different sectors aimed to reduce poverty; enhance economic, educational and social development, tackle climate change impacts, etc.

Sectors	Current Streams of Works	Organizations and Institutions
 <p>Community Engagement and Capacity-Building</p>	They conduct training for vulnerable women on livelihood options; receive allocated rice/wheat by the women from local union parishad chairman and deposit their savings properly to the bank account maintained by the authority	<u>Shimantik</u>
	Trains local communities on income generating activities	<u>Progoti Samas Unnayan Songstha, Zam Zam Bangladesh</u>
	Conduct training sessions with youth groups, support capacity building activities, has a skill development platform for youth	<u>RWDO</u>
 <p>Policy Advocacy</p>	Supports policy advocacy for climate change impacts faced by local communities	ASED Hobiganj, Multi-purpose socioeconomic development association (MESDA), <u>Islamic Relief Bangladesh</u>
 <p>Food Security and Agriculture</p>	Recently, they started promoting sack gardening and vermicompost for assuring food security in rural communities	<u>VARD</u>
	Seed disbursement; Crops diversification, household entrepreneurship, contingency plan for agricultural productivity	UPAMA
	Irregular or erratic flooding is affecting agricultural practices in an unsustainable manner, hence they are working with rural communities to improve farming practices	PADMA
	Conducts regular consultation with local farmers; has established a farmer field laboratory in Sylhet (growing garlic, oranges, etc.); introduction of new crops	Islamic Relief

Sectors	Current Streams of Works	Organizations and Institutions
 Nature Conservation	Promote nature conservation efforts amongst the local communities	<u>Caritas</u>
	Has set up youth-based clubs to promote the conservation of bird species	MESDA
 Inclusion	Promote the practice of Uthan Boythok where vulnerable communities can raise their challenges in front of the rest of the community members and local government bodies	Progoti Samas Unnayan Songstha
	Working with fisherman to support and train them on food security; fishermen committee establishment; advocacy for easing access to waterbody of the fisherman	Sylhet Development Society, SDP Habiganj, Multi-purpose socioeconomic development association (MESDA)
	Focuses on child protection and tackling gender-based violence	RWDO
 Disaster Risk Reduction	Have set up a disaster management committee of 25 women leaders who acts as a key actor during climatic hazards	VARD
	They focus their work on disaster risk reduction in the climate vulnerable hotspots of Sylhet	<u>Caritas</u>
 Water Security	Water related infrastructure improvement, and providing water accessibility for women in remote areas of Sreemongol, Sylhet	NIBIR Development Society

Sectors	Current Streams of Works	Organizations and Institutions
 <p>Livelihood Opportunities</p>	Working with farmers in Haor region by improving their livelihoods and economic empowerment. 90% of people residing in Haor areas are dependent on agriculture. ASED disburses high yielding and variety of seeds to farmers to protect their economic situation	ASED Hpbiganj
	Provides goats and ducks rearing training and helps to create market linkages	RWDO
	Gives alternative livelihood options through conducting needs-based alternative livelihood survey	Multi-purpose socioeconomic development association (MESDA)
	Encourages sustainable usage of products by promoting the production of jute bags made by women tea workers	WAFFH
 <p>Waste Management</p>	They are trying to minimize plastic usage through proper campaigning and innovating management ways	Sylhet Development Society
	Working with fisherman to support and train them on food security; fishermen committee establishment; advocacy for easing access to waterbody of the fisherman	<u>Sylhet Development Society</u> , SDP Habiganj, Multi-purpose socioeconomic development association (MESDA)
Youth-led organization conducting waste management for saving key rivers from getting polluted	<u>AID Sylhet</u>	
 <p>Research</p>	Researching on agroforestry, food security, aligning with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	<u>Sylhet Agricultural University</u>

Sectors	Current Streams of Works	Organizations and Institutions
 <p>Education and Awareness</p>	<p>Focus on providing non-formal primary education for vulnerable and underprivileged children; established Shimantik International School for Nursery to Grade 5; Strengthening operation of board exams; technical education, diploma and has 12 schools and training centres in Sylhet, 6 in Barisal</p>	<p>Shimantik</p>
	<p>Supports children’s education in remote areas and slums of Sylhet</p>	<p>Progoti Samas Unnayan Songstha, Zam Zam Bangladesh</p>
	<p>The organization has a specific youth group with whom they work on campaigning about climate change issues. They also have homeschooling provision for vulnerable communities.</p>	<p>VARD</p>
 <p>Health and Well-Being</p>	<p>One of the first NGOs in Sylhet to operate nursing schools for ensuring good quality healthcare; and working with women on menstrual health and hygiene management</p>	<p>Shimantik</p>
	<p>Supports slum children with health and hygiene facilities</p>	<p>Zam Zam Bangladesh</p>



SOME CHALLENGES HIGHLIGHTED AT THE EVENT

- In the Haor districts of the Sylhet Division, there is an increase of thunderstorms
- Irrigation water scarcity
- Sudden and irregular flooding is impacting agricultural practices and livelihoods of the farmers in Sylhet region
- Lack of capacity-building provisions/platforms for local civil society organizations and NGOs to support their documentation (such as report writing, storytelling, articles, etc.) mechanisms of adaptation interventions related to climate change
- Increased dependency on the donors for implementing local innovative solutions for climate actions



WAY FORWARD DISCUSSED AT THE EVENT

- Principle one of locally led adaptation can be an overarching goal to focus on at local levels
- ICCCAD can guide local organizations (LLA divisional platform members) to apply for Global Center on Adaptation's Local Adaptation Champions Award
- Increase efforts to conserve nature
- More comprehensive research needs to be conducted on locally led adaptation tools and methodologies to promote cross learning
- It is critical to solve the polythene pollution problem through local leadership
- Livelihood support should be given to union, upazilla and district levels
- Capacity Building of youth on LLA is needed
- A databank of agriculture related information on agriculture is needed at the upazilla level for better climate action
- ICCCAD can help to strengthen documentation of stories on climate change adaptation happening through local leadership



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



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



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



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



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

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