

BRIEF

DISASTER RESILIENT HOUSING COMPLEX, GOPALGONJ

Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme Phase II



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

CONTEXT

Gopalganj is located in the south western part of Bangladesh and is highly vulnerable to flood, cyclone and river erosion. It is one of the severely affected districts by the category-5 hurricane Sidr in 2007. Adding to these poor housing conditions built in hazardous locations, without basic services, inadequate infrastructure, high population density and overcrowding, and limited security of tenure made the residents more vulnerable to different natural and manmade hazards.

On October 22, 2009, about 346 households in the slum areas of Gopalganj were evicted for implementing a government infrastructure project from South Moulovi Para and Bank Para within Gopalganj Municipality. This resulted in people losing physical assets worth about BDT 17 million equivalent to more than a year's gross income of the households, social networks and access to works and services, and they were forced to live in makeshift houses scattered all over the town and are exposed to various hazards. These communities were under the coverage of Urban Partnerships for Poverty Reduction Project (UPPR).

Later on, the evicted community along with stakeholders identified 4.16 acre low-lying vacant land at Madartola, under government ownership, about a kilometre away from the town centre for resettlement. As a result of continuous advocacy, the Government through the Ministry of Land allotted it on 99-years lease to the Gopalganj Municipality in June 2010 for constructing a resettlement habitat for the evicted slum population.

On December 9, 2012, CDMP, UPPR and Gopalganj Municipality (GPJ- Municipality) signed a tripartite MoU towards ensuring the sustainable resettlement and rehabilitation of the evicted slum dwellers in a disaster resilient housing complex (DRHS) through participatory approach.

RATIONALE

Bangladesh is undergoing rapid, largely unplanned urbanization and environmental degradation. One of the key underlying

driving force of this urbanisation is the availability of different income generating opportunities are only in urban settings. Insufficient/inefficient policy implementation and legislation, weak governance, and inadequate institutional capacity also spurred the migration. Urban slum settlements tend to be located in low-lying, flood-prone, poorly-drained areas, having limited formal waste disposal and minimal access to safe water and sanitation. These areas are heavily crowded with 4-5 people living in a house of 100 sq feet. These slum dwellers are extremely vulnerable to disasters since they live in congested and poorly built houses without emergency services.

Considering the vulnerability conditions of the evicted slum dwellers in Gopalganj, CDMP came forward with a comprehensive urban risk reduction approach through piloting a disaster resilient housing complex for 260 evicted households (in two phases) in association with UPPR and GPJ-Municipality. Pro-poor urban DRR and Poverty Reduction is intended towards achieving sustainable development that has a positive impact on poverty as well as disaster risk reduction.

PROJECT BENEFITS

The partnership is to provide multi-fold benefits to the evicted people, some are direct some are indirect, some are immediate and some are long term, some are visible and some are invisible. Some of the key benefits are as follows:

Improved disaster resilient housing: Each household will receive a living space of 341 sq ft area this includes 2 rooms, 1 veranda, a kitchen, a latrine cum bathroom, access to electricity and access to shared tube well for safe water. There is a plan to upgrade the water system through overhead water tank as well other common facilities. Better living doesn't only offers safety and security rather it drives individual to instigate further to have a better improved life.

The site for the DRHC originally was in low lying areas which were raised above the historical flood level in the region (3.80 m) to address flood hazards. Use of frame structure construction is also made the DRHC cyclone and tornado resilient. The land use planning and housing designs adheres to the principles of disaster risk reduction.



PROJECTED DELIVERABLES AT THE COMPLETION OF DRHC PROJECT

- **Household level:**
 - Living space of 341 sq ft, with a front veranda (5ft X 18.5ft) and a rear veranda (4ft X 18.5 ft) to be used as kitchen and latrine cum bathroom.
 - A tube-well to be shared among 10 households as water option. Plan has taken for overhead tank installation.
 - Supply of electricity.
- **For common use:**
 - Footpath width of 5ft.
 - Drainage system and septic tank for sewage disposal.
 - Religious centre – a mosque, a mandir.
 - A primary school with a playing ground.
 - A Community center and green areas.
 - 12 ft access road from Dhaka-Khulna highway.

PARTNERSHIP

CDMP II to support

- the GPJ- Municipality for construction of 260 household units through Project Implementation Committee (PIC) and Community Housing Development Fund (CHDF);
- the resettlement site, landscape, and housing designs to be disaster resilient particularly to flood and to a certain degree of cyclone.
- the water options which may include one or combination of tube wells, electricity by REB.
- the overall technical and monitoring support for implementation of this project.

UPPR to support

- the land filling of the site above the historic flood level, obtain a clearance certificate for the same from local WDB and DoE.
- the formation and capacity enhancement of 7 members PIC, Municipality to oversee the day to day implementation of the project.
- strengthening the capacity of CHDF and provide technical support to the Gopalganj Municipality, PIC for implementation of the project.
- to facilitate formation of 7 members Project Advisory Committee (PAC).

Gopalganj Municipality to support The

- to transfer 4.16 acres of land for 99 years lease to the CHDF/households.
- UPPR in holding PIC and PAC meeting regularly;
- by deploying a full time assistant engineer (civil) to support monitoring and quality assurance of the implementation.

Community level disaster management: Through a participatory process community identified the possible hazards, risks and risk reduction options. In a validation meeting along with UDMC members and an action plan for mitigating possible risks has also been prepared. The project participants will be trained on disaster preparedness and mitigation.

Women empowerment: Women are the best disaster managers. Considering the role they play in preparedness, response and recovery in any disaster they are highly valued for the project. It is planned that the houses will be leased to the women representative of the households. There are 4 women members are included in the 7 members PIC to take leadership role in the implementation of the DRHC.

Reducing internal migration: If not intervened with the DRCH, the evicted communities who were living in various slum areas in Gopalganj Municipalities will eventually turn into bigger urban centres making their own life miserable along with burdening the existing capacity if the host urban settings. There are about 70% of slum dwellers in Dhaka migrated due to some environmental shocks, about 500,000 people migrate every year which is very high and making the Dhaka extremely vulnerable to disasters. DRHC is a local solution to reduce displacement and migration.

Promoting education: Education is one of the driving forces to build a disaster resilient nation. Keeping this on mind DRHC is planned to have a primary school along with a playground for children. Beneficiaries will have access to education grants for their children.

Water and sanitation: There will be a tube well for every ten houses to have access to arsenic free safe water. There is also a plan for expansion to overhead water tanks. Each household will have a separate toilet cum bathroom facilities. Earlier in the slums there is one toilets shared among 10/20 families with little or no proper access to safe water, indeed this DRHC is the best they could think of in terms of urban services.

Livelihood options: UPPR provides livelihood training, small grants for agriculture, education grants, small loans as start-up money for income generating options.

Sustainable development: DRCH addressed the issues of energy efficiency, water and sanitation, land-use, basic municipal services, and disaster and climate resilient.

the first batch in the 3rd quarter of 2013. The total project will be completed by the end of 2014.

Various Committees

PIC sits weekly for sharing progress and taking decision for smooth operation of the project. The CDCs and Clusters following democratic and consultative process established a CHDF with 9 members Executive Committee (EC) and 5 members Project Advisory Committee (PAC). EC is headed by a community leader elected by the general members for 2 years. The EC is responsible for leading and implementing the activities of CHDF. PAC is headed by the Mayor and the other 4 members (representatives from DC, LGED, UPPR and a Community Leader). The role of PAC is to watch and monitor and the activities of CHDF.

Operational framework

The project is managed by a PIC constituted by CHDF community leaders, Municipality, LGED and CDMP technical staff and Support Staffs in various fields. All such have been selected and recruited properly looking at their particular academic attainments and aptitudes.



WAY FORWARD

Development of organized and formal urban poor especially evicted families, marginalized groups, linked with existing community development platforms namely CHDF and CBOs/VDCs will provide an institutional mechanism for mobilizing support, resources and services from actors/providers and community support structures.

Capacity development, as well as learning, sharing and reflection components will empower the beneficiaries to engage in discussion with social actors to continue development activities beyond the project. Community leaders will work as promoter of any activities and economic opportunities creation within communities. Partnership agreements will be developed between project beneficiaries, target groups and key public and private stakeholders in the field of sustainable development initiatives.

PROJECT COMPONENTS

Phases of implementation

In two phases the DRHC will be implemented, in the first batch there will be 100 units of houses completed by end of 2013. The second batches of 160 units are initiated after 60% completion of



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