



# Professionalising Disaster Management in Bangladesh

## Context

It was recognised in 2010 that institutional gaps existed in disaster management training and education in Bangladesh. The Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR) through the Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (CDMP) commissioned a baseline assessment to determine the state of education and training institutions' ability to deliver disaster management training and undertake research. The report concluded that overall capacity was low, with:

- an 'overcrowded' academic curriculum
- low expertise among staffs
- weak institutional commitments
- minimal external stakeholder relationships
- and low financial viability.

Having identified the existing gaps, MoDMR commenced working with educational institutions to strengthen their ability to deliver DM education and undertake research. A comprehensive plan was developed with the intention to work with primary schools through to tertiary education institutions, incorporating public training institutions.



A partnership was established with the Ministry of Education to facilitate relationships with the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB), the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, and the Bangladesh Bureau of Education Information and Statistics, to ensure the proposed activities were well coordinated, effective and sustainable.

MoDMR’s support in professionalization has two main aims

1. to generate skilled DM professionals who are informed about DRR and the complex nature of climate change adaptation
2. to refresh existing DM professionals’ capacity with new knowledge, tools and techniques used in the field of disaster management.

### Developing Disaster Management professionals in Bangladesh

CDMP has worked with 17 Universities and 11 training institutes in Bangladesh to ensure the development of strong, well-managed, professional institutions that can support the government and other parties to define effective disaster management approaches, guide the development of necessary regulatory and institutional frameworks, and assist in the design of appropriate programmes for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. The universities now run Certificate Courses, Bachelors, Masters, Post Graduate Diplomas and higher level research activities such as PhD and MPhil degrees on disaster management related fields. Since the start of MoDMR supported programmes, partner universities have trained close to 1800 disaster management professionals across all course levels, of which 52.7% received direct financial support from CDMP. Among those who received support, 25.42% were female, the majority of which 87.1% came from non-government backgrounds, with the remaining from different government service sectors.

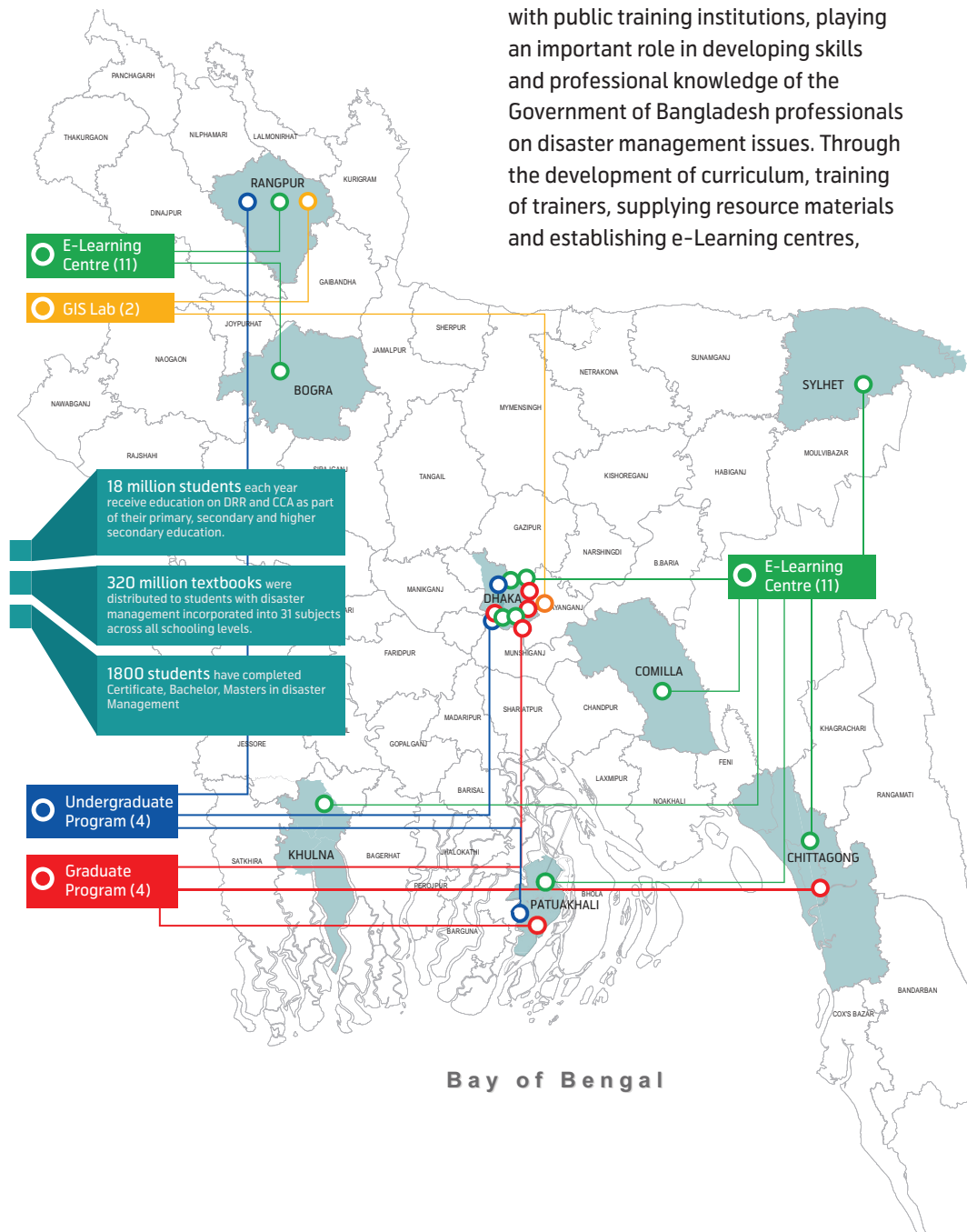
### Snapshot

A wide range of interventions have been implemented by CDMP in partnership with education and training institutions such as NCTB at primary, secondary and higher secondary levels, universities for tertiary education and government training institutions at national level. Major focuses have included • improvements in the academic curriculum • support for improved teaching and learning facilities (e.g. spatial analysis laboratory establishment) • support with access to physical resources

and knowledge materials • financial support for the students (especially those from government agencies) with regards to tuition fees and research grants • assistance for holding conferences, seminar and workshops in the academic departments

In parallel, CDMP created some standalone facilities aiming to help all institutions including • development of E-Learning facilities on Disaster Management • creating online platforms for sharing and disseminating DM knowledge products (e-library) for students and teachers.

CDMP maintained strong partnerships with public training institutions, playing an important role in developing skills and professional knowledge of the Government of Bangladesh professionals on disaster management issues. Through the development of curriculum, training of trainers, supplying resource materials and establishing e-Learning centres,



CDMP has enabled training institutes to now conduct their own training programmes on disaster management. So far over 924 individuals have undertaken training with one of the partner institutions, of which 229 were Government of Bangladesh officials and an additional 695 from outside of Government. Almost as many individuals have participated in training without CDMP support, demonstrating the broader sustainability of the intervention and the demand for highly trained, well skilled disaster management professionals.

### New Disaster Management Departments and Institutes Established

A key achievement in integrating disaster management in education is the establishment of new disaster management departments at multiple institutions including: Dhaka University, Begum Rokeya University Rangpur, Patuakhali Science and Technology University, and Bangladesh University of Professionals. The Institute of Disaster Management and Vulnerability Studies (IDMVS) established in Dhaka University has received attention from professionals and government officials and mobilized resources from different sources. IDMVS has produced 790 graduates to date with only 44% (350) supported by CDMP. The high rate of non-supported enrolments is a positive signal for future sustainability of the institution.

The 28 academic and training institutions now delivering disaster management education, have formed the Bangladesh Disaster Management Education Research and Training



(BDMERT) Network. The BDMERT Network acts as a national Think Tank for Bangladesh in the field of DM, amplifying the impact of their resources and increasing their support to government and other parties.

### Digital Knowledge Products (E-Library) and DM learning through E-Platforms

Ensuring the supply of knowledge and learning products is a pre-requisite for good training and education. In this respect, a web based facility was established to act as a national repository for all DRR and CCA knowledge products from all stakeholders, providing centralised access for educators, researchers and policy makers. So far more than 350 knowledge products have been produced and shared on different thematic areas, focusing primarily on local level disaster impacts and risk assessments, risk reduction action plans and adaptation planning, and national level knowledge products.

[www.dmic.org.bd/e-library](http://www.dmic.org.bd/e-library)

In order to provide an open learning environment, CDMP developed an e-Learning course on Disaster



Management. The platform assists professionals in geographically diverse locations to learn disaster management principles. The course is regularly updated, reflecting emerging trends and research and keeping it relevant. The course is offered in both Bangla and English. There are also 11 physical learning centres located across Bangladesh, ensuring accessibility for those without internet connections.

<http://elearning.cdmp.org.bd/>

### DRR and CCA in school curriculums

A pioneering partnership between the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) and CDMP has enabled 18 million students each year to now receive education on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation as part of their primary, secondary and higher secondary education. To date over 320 million textbooks were distributed to students with disaster management incorporated into 31 subjects across all schooling levels. Textbooks have been revised since their first editions with an updated version being distributed from 1 January 2015. NCTB is also facilitating the writing of supplementary learning materials (e.g. stories, poems, novels focusing on disaster issues) which aim to be published and distributed in June, 2015.

### Research Grants and Information Exchange

The Government of Bangladesh attaches great importance to the development of research capacities within academic institutions and researchers, enabling them to participate in risk assessment

### Case Study

Md. Afjal Hossain was one of the first students to graduate with a Bachelor of Disaster Management in Bangladesh when he completed his course through the Patuakhali Science and Technology University. During his four and a half year degree, Afjal studied disaster management and risk reduction from theoretical and practical perspectives, gaining valuable knowledge and skills. Speaking of his experience, he said that he “highly appreciated both the technical and financial support provided by CDMP” and that the skills he learned would “assist him pursue a career in disaster management”. In fact Afjal has already been asked to stay on at Patuakhali University and teach as a guest lecturer.



exercises, building concepts and methods and better targeting and programme planning. The Global Assessment Report 2013 (GAR13) indicates that risk assessment remains at the heart of risk management and related planning. Effective risk assessments can only occur when academic and research agencies have the required capacity. Against this backdrop, CDMP supported numerous PhD candidates and Master of Philosophy researchers through research grants to conduct research across broad thematic areas including:

- i. Assessing and reassessing risks of disasters including climate change

related uncertainties (hazards, vulnerabilities, exposure, capacity gaps)

- ii. Evaluating disaster risk reduction policies and practices,
- iii. Improving the concept of resilience in the contexts of disaster management and climate change,
- iv. Vulnerability reduction through resilient/adaptive livelihoods processes,
- v. Better protection of vulnerable populations and vulnerable livelihood groups, and
- (vi) Community based DRR & CCA practices.

In addition to funding direct research, workshops, symposiums and conferences were organised to bring together national and international disaster management professionals to discuss trends and core disaster management challenges experienced in Bangladesh.

The research and workshops both informs the national planning process through policy and programme design, but also increases the researchers own theoretical and technical skills, enabling them to contribute to strengthening the national capacity in areas of disaster management.

## The Point of Convergence: Professionalising Disaster Management in Bangladesh

### 1. Institutionalization and capacity building

- New DM education and training institutions developed
- Partnerships covered wide geographical range
- Curriculum standardization done
- Resource materials provided
- Physical resources and equipment support (GIS, RS lab establishment)
- Arranged Training of Trainers for faculty development

### 2. Mainstreaming

- Established new DM departments, institutes
- Public training institutes adopted DRR, CCA course
- NCTB incorporated DRR, CCA issues in school curriculums and DSHE facilitate DM training to school teachers

### 3. Preparedness

- Training of GoB officials and also non-GoB officials
- Children got better DM knowledge

### 4. Information generation and management

- Establishment of web based e-Learning and digital library
- Establishment of district resource centers and e-Learning Centers
- Support Colloquiums and Dialogue (through workshops, seminars and conferences)

### 5. Partnership development

- BDMERT establishment
- Support for High Quality Research and Critical Knowledge Generation

### The point of convergence Professionalizing Disaster Management in Bangladesh

- Incremental growth in human resource (DM professionals) development ensured; who are familiar with DRR and CCA.
- Risk assessment capacity enhanced, the results are now applied to in better targeting problems
- Institutional capacity increased to undertake critical appraisal of disaster impacts
- Skilled DM professionals, increased risk assessment capacity, efficient information management collectively contributes in improving the systems and processes for more effective disaster management.

Institutionalization, capacity building, mainstreaming, information management, and partnership development were core principles for ensuring the long term sustainability of the MoDMR's education interventions. Embedding activities within existing institutional and budget frameworks assisted the mainstreaming process, with close to 50% of students

enrolling in courses without any support from CDMP. Testament to the success of this integration has been the steady increase in current enrolment numbers compared with previous years, the independent collaboration of institutions on workshops and symposiums and the regular access of the E-Library and E-Learning platforms.

## Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (CDMP II)

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