

# Flash Flood 2022 in Bangladesh

## Habitat's Early Recovery Efforts and Scope for Wider Support

### Flash Flood 2022 in Bangladesh, Key Figures:

- 9 Districts impacted
- 7.2 million persons affected
- 106,727 water points damaged
- 663,534 cattle affected
- 283,355 sanitation facilities damaged
- 254,251 Hectares of damaged croplands
- 17,000 metric tons of fish washed away
- 481,827 people evacuated/temporary displaced
- 1605 shelter centers opened
- 106,000 ponds inundated
- 16,84,607 households waterlogged
- 135,770 houses damaged partially or fully

Source: Flash Flood Humanitarian Response Plan 2022, Gap Analysis Northeast Flash Flood 2022 Response, NAWG



Bangladesh was hit with one of the worst floods in years, with millions in the northeastern part of the country left homeless and stranded. An estimated 7.2 million people had been affected due to deteriorating flood and heavy downpour in nine districts of Sylhet, Sunamganj, Moulvibazar, Habiganj, Kishorganj, Netrakona, Brahmanbaria, Mymensing and Sherpur. Sylhet, being a low-lying region, is particularly vulnerable to floods and has been affected by major flood events in the past.

In this regard, with the support of Habitat for Humanity International and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), Habitat for Humanity Bangladesh (HFHB) along with its local partner HEED Bangladesh, implemented a project named “Northeastern Bangladesh Flood Response Project - 2022” to provide the essential household materials and house-building tools to the worst affected population in six unions of Companiganj and Biswanath Upazila of Sylhet District.

Climate change has been identified as a significant factor contributing to the recurrent floods in the Sylhet division and adjacent Indian areas in recent years. According to Anjal Prakash, the Research Director at the Indian School of Business, a warmer climate has altered weather patterns in the Himalayan regions, resulting in an increase in rainfall in surrounding areas.

AKM Saiful Islam, a Professor of Flood Management at the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), further highlighted the impact of changing weather conditions in South Asia. He stated that the extreme weather events that have been observed recently in this region greatly contribute to the early onset of monsoons and the frequent flash floods in Bangladesh.



***“Never have I seen a flood like this in my life. We spent two days on the rooftop without any food or drink.”***

Johur Ali, Companiganj Upazila, Sylhet District.

105-year-old Johur Ali sold the cows in his possession to build his house which was ravaged by the devastating flood. Although the support provided to him helped him recover from the initial shock, millions in Sylhet like Johur Ali still need support to rebuild their shelter.



***“My family uses the materials we have received. No one has supported us like you [Habitat Bangladesh]. If only someone could help us with the house repair.”***

Mohammad Abul Awat, Companiganj Upazila, Sylhet District.

74 years old Mohammad Abul Awat lost his goats due to the flood and could not recover from the loss. The only support he has received has been from Habitat Bangladesh. He receives a meagre \$5 every month as ‘old age allowance’ which can’t ensure an entire day’s meal for his family of 8, let alone contribute to his house’s repair cost.



***“We couldn’t do anything as our utensils washed away. All we received were dry food from the neighbors and the support Habitat has provided. The blanket has been of immense help for us this winter.”***

Ayesha Begum, Companiganj Upazila, Sylhet District.

40 years old Ayesha Begum is a widow with 3 children. She works as a helping hand in her neighborhood given the limited work opportunities in her area. As she and her children spent days locked in their house, the flood swept away most of the household utensils before their eyes.



Ayesha struggles to make ends meet and rely on her daily wages. Most of her income are spent to put food on the table and send her children to school. However, when we asked Ayesha as to how we can support her further, all she could think of was having her house repaired.



**Interior of Mumina's house**



**Exterior of Hamida's house**



**Exterior of Anowara's house**

This isn’t only the case with Ayesha. For Arjina, Hasena, Hamida, Mumina, Anowara and many others in the community, shelter and WASH still remain a pressing issue. The lack of access to clean water, proper sanitation facilities and good hygiene practices continue to pose serious health and social consequences in rural Sylhet.

***“The support provided to the people of this area has been incomparable. The household materials have turned out to be very useful. There is still dire need of new shelters and repair of the existing houses in East Islampur.”***

Alamgir Alam, the Upazila Chairman of East Islampur, Sylhet District.



Each humanitarian aid kit consisted of 22 essential households and house-repair items like tarpaulin, plastic mat, kitchen utensils, mosquito net, blankets, bedsheets, hygiene packages, etc.

As for Minara Begum, 32, living in Amtoli, Biswanath in Sylhet, the situation is even worse. She lives with her physically challenged mother Meherunnesa who is entitled to roughly \$15 of ‘old age allowances’ every 6 months. Minara, like everyone else around her, never has seen a flood like that of 2022 in her entire life.

Minara emphasized on how proper shelter and access to safe water is a necessity in her community. Most of the houses in her area are substandard whose residents have to collect water from different collection points situated afar. Moreover, the sanitation facilities there are inadequate, with multiple families having to share a single bathroom or toilet.

Although the support provided to Minara helped her overcome the initial distress caused by the flood, there is still room for improvement in terms of shelter and hygiene facilities in her community.



***“No one has ever supported us like this. We use every item we have found in the [humanitarian aid] kit.”***

*Minara Begum, Amtoli, Biswanath Upazila, Sylhet District*

***“The response support from Habitat Bangladesh has been exemplary. The goods provided to the affected families have been useful which helped them recover from the loss due to the flood.”***

Nusrat Jahan, Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO), Biswanath Upazila, Sylhet District.

As part of the Northeastern Bangladesh Flood Response Project – 2022, a total of 8,470 families were supported in six unions of Companiganj and Biswanath in Sylhet between October and November 2022.

This initiative will bear witness to the resilience and determination of the people of Sylhet who took charge of their lives as various government and non-government agencies joined forces to work tirelessly to support communities in peril.

## **Habitat for Humanity Bangladesh**

Habitat for Humanity Bangladesh (HFHB) is an ecumenical organization that began its operation in 1999 under the thematic areas Housing, Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Disaster Risk Reduction and Response (DR3), Urban Development and Volunteer Mobilization. Currently operating in Dhaka, Cox's Bazar, Kurigram, Khulna and Satkhira, HFHB envisions a world where everyone has a decent place to live and is working towards ensuring adequate housing for all.

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