



Save the Children



# POSITION PAPER ON URBAN RESILIENCE

**Humanitarian Sector, Bangladesh**  
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# INTRODUCTION

## Bangladesh's Urban Situation

Bangladesh, a predominantly rural country, is undergoing a transformation toward urbanisation at a remarkable pace. Its urban population has grown at a yearly average rate of 6% since independence, at a time when national population growth was 2.2%. Population density is approximately 8867 persons per square kilometre. Around 3.5 million people in Bangladesh live in urban areas, out of which 21% live below the poverty line<sup>1</sup> and 60% live in slums. More than half of the urban population live in the four largest cities of the country, including the capital, Dhaka, resulting in immense pressure in terms of ensuring adequate supply of basic utilities, a satisfactory standard of living and education for the next generation.

### What's the problem?

With its rapid urbanisation has also come drastic increase vulnerability and potential for disaster in the country's urban areas. Children will bear a disproportionate share of the impacts – both immediate and long-term – as they are the most susceptible to urban risk and disaster and the effects of climate change, particularly those living in marginal environments and situations of poverty. All of the below are exacerbated by climate change, lack of good governance, strained resources, poor education and poor awareness.

### Major Urban Hazards – Manmade and Natural – and Subsequent Risks and Impacts Include:

**Urban Fire:** Slum fires are able to spread quickly in densely packed, low quality informal settlements. They are mainly caused by faulty electrical cabling and arson, and are often caused by those who wish to use the areas for future development.

**Earthquakes:** Dhaka is located close to a major fault line and is poorly prepared for a significant earthquake, has insufficient fire engines and significant sub-standard construction that does not meet building codes.

**Poor Infrastructure and Compliance:** Building code compliance and construction standards are considerably poor and the risk of building or structure collapse (especially due to earthquake tremors) remain high. For example, the Rana Plaza building collapse in 2013 killed approximately 2,000 garment employees, and compliance initiatives from both government and garment factory owners were increased after this prominent incident. Infrastructure is also at a low standard and subsequent disruptions to trade, transport, commerce and communication during and after disasters are common.

**Water, Sanitation, Drainage and Solid Waste:** Water supply, sanitation facilities and drainage suffer severe pressure in urban areas, especially for low-income communities in slum settlements, due to poor infrastructure, waste management, poor hygiene practise and awareness, and the effects of climate change. Vector-borne diseases are also prevalent as a result.

**Urban Flooding and Waterlogging:** Flooding and waterlogging are major issues facing metropolitan cities like Dhaka. Increased rainfall is more than the capacity of the existing drainage systems. Areas can be waterlogged for several weeks where water levels reach four to six feet above normal levels. Dhaka, home to around 14 million people, has practically zero capacity to cope with moderate to heavy rain, causing significant disruptions to trade, transport, commerce and communication. Situations are considerably worse during the monsoon season and major cyclones.

**Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) and Child Labour:** In Bangladesh, harassment and eave-teasing are a significant problem. In urban areas, the increasing use of social media and mobile phones – including in slum

**RESILIENCE:** The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions.

Comment: Resilience means the ability to “resile from” or “spring back from” a shock. The resilience of a community in respect to potential hazard events is determined by the degree to which the community has the necessary resources and is capable of organizing itself both prior to and during times of need.

– UNISDR Terminology, 30 August 2007

<sup>1</sup> Center for Policy Dialogue, 2001

communities – among youth in particular, has contributed further to this issue. Disasters tend to increase the risk of SGBV and new forms of SGBV can emerge in their aftermath.

Although large disasters such as cyclones receive more attention, ‘mini disasters’ i.e. smaller everyday impacts such as on sanitation, health facilities or SGBV, are in the long term and collectively just as significant, but given less of a spotlight. It is also important to note that urban risk and disaster also has a negative impact on business continuity in industries such as the garment sector, who themselves contribute to climate change and are the primary employers of the urban labour force, most of whom live in slum communities.

### **Disaster Impacts:**

**Loss of Possessions and Damage to Assets:** During and after disasters, communities suffer from the loss of shelter and significant loss of food and non-food items. In addition, production in the numerous garment factories is considerably hindered due to factory damage, which in turn affects workers and their livelihoods.

**Damage to Infrastructure:** Significant damage to essential infrastructure is expected after disasters in developing countries such as Bangladesh. Reconstruction and recovery of infrastructure is a delayed process due to poor governance and communication. Disruptions to trade, transport, commerce and communication is therefore prolonged and contributes further to economic loss. Furthermore, utilities and amenities are considerably affected, particularly for slum communities.

**Impact on Children and School Closure:** Schools are impacted severely before, during and after disasters. Children, as a result, miss essential days of school as institutions are forced to close from the start of cyclone warnings until situations improve, and journeys to and from school become virtually impossible. In Bangladesh’s urban areas, this is most common due to the effects of waterlogging and inundation in low-lying areas. Moreover, children are the most vulnerable to factors associated with sanitation, poor drainage and improper waste disposal. They are particularly susceptible to disease, prevalence of which is exacerbated after events of flooding. In regard to SGBV, there is widespread occurrence of it with urban schoolchildren and the impact of which commonly results in long-term psychological trauma and stress, severely affecting their childhood development.

**Impact on Women:** For biological, physiological and socioeconomic reasons and power inequalities, women tend to be more vulnerable than men to the effects of urban disaster and risk due to the fact that they have limited access to DRR knowledge compared to men. Young mothers and brides, pregnant, older and disabled women are particularly vulnerable. Since women are also the primary caregivers of children and their vulnerability also affects the vulnerability of the children. Women tend to have higher mortality rates and it has also been found that women and girls are less likely to have the ability to swim compared to men and boys. In addition, SGBV is typically more prevalent against women and young girls, but is still a major issue that needs to be tackled.

**Impact on Extreme Poor and Minorities:** Among those that are most marginalised are low-income poverty stricken communities who reside in slums, the disabled, ethnic minorities and the elderly. They are considerably more vulnerable to urban risk and disaster due to their condition and position in their communities. The extreme poor are in general likely to be illiterate, which means they are less likely to have access to written information sources. In urban areas, day labourers, landless communities and Biharis<sup>2</sup> are the most vulnerable. Moreover, those residing in slums face frequent eviction without proper resettlement plans and harassment by law enforcement agencies.

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<sup>2</sup> Ethnic Pakistanis from Bihar, India, who were left stranded on the wrong side of the border after independence from Pakistan. They are discriminated against for underlying social and political reasons.



# INTERVENTIONS

Urban DRR has a relatively low profile in Bangladesh. Given the current and potential risk and great loss of life posed by urban disasters, especially in terms of earthquakes (as construction commonly does not follow building codes), there is significant room for improvement and need for urban DRR, however they are still not being considered as a high priority by stakeholders. Although many governmental, national and international organisations are working to address these needs, there is still demand to support urban communities to have access to basic amenities and help them build their capacity and resilience to hazards. Resilience has become a focal goal of many cities, particularly in the face of climate change. Fostering resilience amongst environmental, socioeconomic and political uncertainty and risk is a challenge in Bangladesh, to say the least.

Various urban DRR actors in Bangladesh have been actively working to address the above hazards, however, their capacity and action has been more effective in rural areas rather than in complex urban contexts. The major challenges in implementing urban resilience programmes are: complex relations and linkages between city governance, line department and service providers; rapid growth and dynamic composition of urban population; and unplanned urbanisation. In addition, unsynchronised approaches and lack of proper coordination among urban actors/stakeholders, which is not always acknowledged by them, is a serious issue. Thirdly, local urban authorities suffer from inadequate responsibility and autonomy and financial capacity.

## Role of the Government

In terms of national policy and priorities, the following currently exist in Bangladesh, as of 2017:

- Standing Order on Disasters (SOD)
- Disaster Management Act (2012)
- Disaster Management Policy (2015)
- Disaster Management Rules (2015)

There have been proven successes in government interventions in the last decade in relation to disaster management. For example, loss of life from disaster has dramatically reduced, however, loss and damage to assets is still prevalent. There is also ineffective implementation of national level disaster procedures and policies. For example, the Standing Order for Disasters (SODs) – which provides information on how every government official and elected representative respond to disasters – are not understood well enough or properly implemented at the field level and knowledge of international strategies and agreements on disasters are also largely unknown outside the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR). The policy level interventions of urban physical and development planning are mainly derived by the highest policy level plans and documentations such as the Five Year Plan for the government. The key organisation for the development of this plan and the Annual Development Plan is the Planning Commission, which is divided into several divisions of focus and funds are allocated on a sector priority basis. The Planning Commission does not have any division to directly address either the emerging urban issues or mainstreaming disaster management within the national development planning (the 6<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan, there are some specific considerations on disaster management and urban issues, but it lacks specific guidelines for urban areas – this pattern is repeated across other urban ministries). While there are some urban sector policies existing, not all are pro-urban poor and resilience related. In addition, the Urban Development Policy is still in its draft stage. Moreover, there is inadequate coordination between government agencies responding to disasters leading to duplication of provision, ownership contention between agencies and areas left without assistance. There is also lack of planning for disasters outside of the MoDMR and many departments do not have their own disaster management plans, putting their own interventions at unnecessary risk.

## Save the Children's Position on Urban Resilience

Save the Children International (SCI) is an organisation centred around child rights and concentrates on integrating disaster risk reduction into its development programmes and initiating activities that increase disaster resilience through child and youth participation. Through our projects we have the capacity to link communities – children, youth and women in particular – with the government, and amplify their voices. In the new Child Safeguarding Policy (CSP) 2016-18, the major change that will bring broader and exhaustive disaster risk reduction and climate change

adaptation initiatives, is integrating these initiatives under all five thematic areas – resilience in livelihood, education, protection and health & nutrition.

The Humanitarian sector works closely with the development sector, government agencies, academia, city corporations, media, the private sector, INGOs and local partners to enhance capacity and advocate for these urban resilience initiatives to be sustainable. Projects under the Humanitarian sector specifically address concerns around capacity and resilience, striving to encapsulate them in multi-level initiatives, with tailored approaches/methodologies and tools for an urban context. Furthermore, a key component in these projects is advocating for change in the urban governance system and an increase of their sensitivity towards the importance of hazards and risks in urban development. Firstly, the *Proyash* project, which works specifically in urban areas, where major interventions include the Education Safe from Disaster strategy and strengthening urban risk management. Secondly, the Integrated Child-Centred Climate Changed Adaptation project, which works in both rural and urban areas, where major interventions are to increase the adaptive capacity of children, caregivers and communities through the Climate Vulnerability Capacity Assessment process; capacity and ability building of local government systems and CSOs to support communities in response to the impacts of climate change at the local level; and strengthening climate resilient development approaches at the community, union, zonal, district and national levels through advocacy. Lastly, Emergency Response, which deals with immediate humanitarian needs.

In terms of the organisation's national-level networking and sharing initiatives, it is active on various platforms. Save the Children International is the member of ARCAB (Action Research for Climate Adaptation in Bangladesh) and plays a vital role with members to work on important research-based climate adaptation techniques. SCI is also a member of a forum that hosts sessions at the International Community Based Adaptation Conference (CBA) and is a member of the Urban INGO forum, which hosts sessions on urban resilience issues along with advocating for youth participation in initiatives linked with Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA). Similarly, SCI is a member of the Bangladesh Urban Forum, which also focuses on urban issues. Moreover, SCI is the member of *SHONGOJ* (Bangladesh Platform on Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities – CDAC), which is also working on standard disaster messages and early warning systems.

### Fire & Earthquake Preparedness

One of the principal initiatives under the Humanitarian sector is earthquake preparedness, which has become increasingly important in Bangladesh in the last year due to the frequency of tremors. Earthquake preparedness and awareness is still low among duty bearers and communities in urban settings, and Bangladesh also does not have a specific framework for the protection of the affected population post earthquake. Moreover, fire incidences are commonplace and knowledge of the hazard is still very poor.

SCI, in partnership with the FSCD, conduct mock drills, training and mass awareness at the urban community level for earthquake and fire preparedness. The government has outlined chapters for earthquake preparedness, which includes national contingency plans, under the Disaster Management Policy 2015. These contingency plans are not yet well communicated. SCI advocates for the development of contingency plans by private sector companies, schools and hospitals, and proposes to advocate for the consideration of urban risks, especially earthquakes, to be integrated into the drafted Urban Development Policy. SCI also proposes to facilitate City Corporations and WDMCs to develop and review their contingency plans, and to advocate to the Ministry of Housing and Public Works to minimise the gaps in urban planning and implementation to reduce the increasing risk of earthquakes. In addition SCI intends to develop a comprehensive awareness programme for the implementation of the revised Bangladesh National Building Code (BNBC), involving stakeholders beyond the Housing and Building Research Institute (HBRI) such as the MoDMR, Ministry of Public Work, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), the media and other relevant stakeholders.



### Garment Industry Interventions

Those in the garment industry are major actors of risk reduction. As an initiative of the Proyash project, Save the Children, in collaboration with the Fire Service & Civil Defence, conduct training and simulation workshops with compliance teams of various garments companies, dealing with safety and security of staff. The aim of training is to increase the capacity of the compliance team and in turn the workers, making them more resilient against risks in the workplace and thus decreasing vulnerability. Mock drills for earthquake and fire preparedness are also conducted after the completion of training.

### Child Protection

Save the Children asserts that *violence against children is no longer tolerated* as one of its focal missions to ensure child protection by 2030. The Proyash project has also been addressing sexual and gender-based violence, whereby the target is to reduce child marriage, physical punishment in school, sexual harassment, child sexual abuse and harassment via mobile phones and social media.

Project interventions intend to:

- Sensitize (increasing knowledge, awareness and capacity) caregivers, community people, children, youth and stakeholders to prevent, reduce and stop violence against children
- Strengthen community mechanisms to prevent and reduce social risks for children
- Introduce government initiatives for children, caregivers, community people and stakeholders to keep them safe
- Involve and advocate with the government and CSOs to stop violence against children and women
- Involve and encourage children and youth to keep themselves safe from violence

### Urban Community Volunteers

In the context of poor governance, community volunteers are seen as a great necessity in Bangladesh, since the government cannot combat the issues of urban risk alone. *Proyash* has the objective to strengthen existing risk reduction practises in urban settings by building the capacity and skill set of youth through the Urban Community Volunteer Programme, namely by:

- Identifying and engaging young people in volunteering; to work as an extended force of local government authorities
- Educating youth on disaster risk reduction and motivating them to act as ‘first responders to disasters’
- Building youth’s capacity on ‘firefighting, search and rescue and first aid’ with the support from FSCD
- Holding government officials accountable to disaster risk management

As of 2016, 300 volunteers are already registered with Fire Service and Civil Defence with the support of Save the Children. These volunteers are based in two districts in Dhaka and Narayanganj, and are affiliated with three local fire stations. Further, Save the Children and its implementing partner SEEP (Social Economic Enhancement Programme) are trying to bridge the gap between these volunteers and local government authorities – mainly city corporations – so that they can be used to raise awareness on appropriate waste disposal, maintaining building codes, planting trees, disseminating warning messages etc. all year around.



## Alignment of Urban Resilience Initiatives with Save the Children's Theory of Change



### Innovation

SCI projects in the Humanitarian sector place emphasis on areas of innovation and uniqueness in its disaster risk initiatives in urban settings, which create social value, zeroing in on the following innovative activities:

- Work with the corporate sector and hospitals

Inclusion of the private sector in the policy regime and framework is vital (as stated in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, 4<sup>th</sup> Priority *Build Back Better*) as they play a key role in urban development and in reducing disaster risk. Humanitarian projects continue to advocate for the involvement of the private sector using government public-private partnership (PPP) policies, which stimulate skills, knowledge and assets to be shared between the public and private sectors. Communities in their working area benefit and so do the private sector businesses. It has been found that coordination with the corporate sector – garment industry in particular – needs to be more efficient in current and future projects. Garments owners themselves voiced their opinions on this shortcoming. In order to accomplish this, SCI understands that, regular collaboration and engagement between institutions and the garment sector should be paramount in project events, meetings and sharing workshops, as well as inclusion in urban planning development. Relevant government agencies will be requested to provide relevant corporate companies with timely information and administrative and logistic support, especially during emergency response. In addition, a similar approach will be made towards health service providers (both private and public) i.e. selected hospitals, so that their capacity to provide and prepare will be enhanced – during emergencies in particular – and SCI will also be advocating for structural assessment of hospitals to ensure structural safety.

- Working to activate Ward Disaster Management Committees (WDMCs)

Dedicated bodies have a much stronger capacity to leverage decisions in governments. They often also have dedicated funding mechanisms, increasing their implementation capacity<sup>3</sup>. As the City Corporation already has in place an active committee for disaster management, the same will be required at the ward level in order to have a better capacity to leverage decisions. SCI endeavours to facilitate wards to activate their WDMCs, enable them to create and conduct Urban Community Risk Assessments (UCRAs), Contingency Plans, Risk Reduction Action Plans (RRAPs) and mobilise resources accordingly. Moreover, there are interventions to make elected representatives of the ward council aware of the role of a Ward Disaster Management Committee and ensure the necessary official/legal documents are provided

<sup>3</sup> Regional Lessons Learned Workshop Consolidated Report – DIPECHO 7<sup>th</sup> AP – South Asia, July 2014: p7



to them in order for them to be accountable. In doing so, office bearers will be more inclined to endorse activities targeted in their ward. SCI also prioritises WDMC members to be trained in earthquake and fire emergency response, and in risk assessments action planning and contingency planning through a harmonised training module. SCI endeavour to have such activities endorsed by the MoDMR. Thus, capacity to address urban disaster and risk and emergency response will increase at a more local level. The Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief is currently revising the Standing Order on Disaster, which will resolve the issue of including ward level roles and responsibilities. SCI has been advocating to the government during this revision, as it is a good mechanism to generate grounds for later advocacy to develop or improve guidelines involving ward level actions.

- Community and school based disaster risk preparedness and management with system-strengthening policy advocacy

SCI understands that where sensitisation of governments is high, policy is better developed and there is more clarity, resulting in higher urban resilience<sup>4</sup>. SCI projects undertake system-strengthening policy advocacy towards its community and school based disaster preparedness initiatives in order to achieve institutionalisation. SCI intends to secure the institutionalisation and long-term commitment of SBDP (School Based Disaster Preparedness) with education authorities through substantial advocacy, sensitisation and with high levels of coordination among partners<sup>5</sup>. Through this process of advocacy, SCI would build the capacity of government stakeholders, education authorities in particular, and sensitise them on the importance of school based disaster preparedness in order for it to be better integrated into policy and subsequently mainstream education. In addition, SCI proposes to review the SBDP approach within the context of urban areas and adapt/add tools as required so that the approach is a better fit for purpose in urban areas of Bangladesh.

In terms of innovative community based disaster preparedness, SCI intends to scale up the existing Urban Community Volunteer Programme – which creates trained volunteers in the targeted wards in collaboration with the FSCD, to increase their DRR and emergency response capacity and ensures their linkage with the WDMCs – by advocating to institutionalise a volunteer management system/database by authorities in order to capture outflow and inflow and create policy guidelines for this to become a concrete initiative.

It is also worth mentioning that governments have priorities while filling policy gaps. SCI places importance on the awareness of government cycles and times project interventions with their priorities for optimum policy influence.

SCI also proposes to advocate structural assessment in schools (in accordance with Pillar 1 of the Comprehensive School Safety Framework – Safe School Facilities) and has a priority to generate understanding on the structural safety of the involved stakeholders i.e. education authorities, school facilities department, Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) and Department of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE), with support from BUET.

- Endorsing Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in Education and Education in Emergencies to the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) and rolling out of the Framework with Directorate of Primary Education (DPE)

By advocating the above in order to enhance urban resilience, SCI will ensure that the Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in Education and Education in Emergencies (EiE) is acknowledged by these education directorates, and will build their capacity to enforce the implementation of policy and guidelines<sup>6</sup>, resulting in increased capacity of government officials, teachers, students and School Management Committees. In the last two DiPECHO cycles, SCI contributed to operationalise Pillar 2 – School Disaster Management and Pillar 3 – Risk Reduction and Resilience Education of the Comprehensive School Safety Framework (CSSF) in the Bangladeshi education system. There has been significant progress made so far with these approaches, since the Emergency Response Guidelines now include the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), awareness messages, drill guidelines and core/master trainers for both primary and secondary schools. However, primary and secondary school level trainings are not conducted, therefore SCI will facilitate training of school level stakeholders (School Management Committees, students, teachers etc.) that will be conducted by the DPE. Moreover, SCI facilitated the DPE to incorporate risk reduction and EiE in to the School Level Improvement Plan (SLIP) and hopes to improve the local emergency response systems through this development. However, it has been found that there is a lack of understanding of the tools used to implement SLIP, therefore, SCI

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.7

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p.8

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p.13. Report claims that in many cases, governments do not have the capacity to enforce the implementation of policy, guidelines and standard operating procedures.

intends to support the DPE to conduct refresher trainings and improve facilitation of SLIP preparation, and to also revise existing planning tools at primary and secondary level to promote risk informed planning.

- Working with various government stakeholders and CSOs to form a national-level coordination mechanism

The roles and responsibilities of the national to local level stakeholders are well articulated in the policy documents (Standing Order on Disaster 2010), but the benefits of coordination and collaboration are not reaching out effectively to recipient stakeholders. Furthermore, majority of these departments/institutions/agencies/organisations stated that they were not well aware of their roles and responsibilities or who is mandated for what action. In order to have government stakeholders and CSOs form an effective coordination mechanism, SCI aims to create better coordination and understanding of roles and responsibilities, increased accountability/transparency, and advocate for establishment of proper functional and harmonised relationships among agencies, government institutions and urban stakeholders. SCI's work centres on the notion that for administrative systems, clarity in processes, responsibilities and authority levels are imperative to increase civil servants' proactive behaviour and effectiveness<sup>7</sup>. In addition, it is understood that in order to improve the quality of outputs from government officials, appropriate time must be given to allow them to develop the necessary skills and knowledge of the disaster management structure. Furthermore, as a potential way forward, SCI ventures to support the government to establish analysis tools that can inform the decision-making processes<sup>8</sup>. It would improve the decision-making processes, feeding into the policy framework and giving the government a sense of ownership.

## Results at Scale

SCI projects support effective implementation of best practises, programmes and policies for children, which are scalable and sustainable, and contribute to the longevity of the results. These projects are designed and implemented with high potential for upscaling in mind. Moreover, they intend to build upon the knowledge and lessons from activities tailored to build urban resilience, in order to ensure long-term sustainability, better quality programming and more effective implementation. In terms of government interventions and interdependency, in-depth understanding of government structures is an essential requirement under SCI when determining advocacy and capacity building initiatives towards government authorities, in order to achieve sustainable collaborative change with other stakeholders<sup>9</sup>. The Humanitarian sector continues to work in disaster preparedness and risk reduction in urban areas on a wider scale and in a more coordinated, holistic and effective way, with the understanding of the complexity of urban systems. Systematic, well-integrated and effective knowledge-based information systems are a key aspect of projects, and SCI believes that while man-made or natural disasters cannot be entirely prevented, they can be better managed through proper early warning systems, preparedness planning and delivery methodologies – proper knowledge management is a prerequisite for this. In order to accomplish this sustained effective knowledge management for better quality programming, the Humanitarian sector is constantly looking for ways to improve this system of identifying, collecting, storing and sharing critical information.

## Being the Voice

Children are at the centre of the work SCI does, and so we emphasise the engagement of children and inclusion of their perspectives in all activities, ensuring that their voices are heard in every step of the process. Doing so helps to address the specific vulnerabilities faced by these children and their capacities better understood and utilised. Empowerment of women is also within the core of project initiatives, where the role of women and young girls is given importance in urban disaster risk reduction planning, and opportunities are created to engage them in their community and with other stakeholders. This also includes national-level advocacy actions to influence policy and bring children and women's voices to a larger arena, highlighting the need for their engagement in urban disaster risk reduction.

In the current climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction projects being implemented in the Humanitarian sector, youth have been demonstrating strong potentials as agents for change through project interventions. These projects include *Proyash* – an urban risk reduction project – and the Integrated Child-Centered Climate Change Adaptation (ICCCA) Project, both which have benefited from increased child and youth participation. Furthermore, community people have appreciated the systematic analysis of community risks and resources presented by the youth. These projects – as well as emergency response initiatives – are tailored around the concept that children can act as

<sup>7</sup> Regional Lessons Learned Workshop of the 7<sup>th</sup> DIPECHO AP – South Asia, July 2014: p11

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p12. The report highlights this as a potential way forward from lessons learned on de-prioritisation of long-term DRR by government and political leaders.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p11.



identifiers, analysers and planners of risk reduction, and can bring innovative approaches to raise awareness for a more resilient community.

## Building Partnerships

Save the Children will undertake these project initiatives collaboratively and in partnership with a number of multilevel stakeholders. Children and women are the key partners – they work to understand their own vulnerabilities and capacities and help to determine the right course of action. A notable limitation with community member participation – the most vulnerable in particular – is that they often do not view their participation in committees and planning processes to be a primary concern<sup>10</sup>. Ergo, it is a lower priority for them, especially given that they have poor representation across government and CSOs, and little accountability is shown from the government. This, along with lack of awareness regarding their rights, community members are disenfranchised and disinclined to participate. A healthy relationship between population and government is required to ensure that the *accountability continuum* works, where government services that delivered are tailored to community needs and exclusion is reduced to a minimum<sup>11</sup>. To curb this barrier to community engagement, SCI endeavours to build stronger relationships between government/CSO stakeholders and communities. This involves advocating for government accountability and raising awareness on disaster risk reduction amongst community members – women and children in particular, as they have proven to be effective agents for change through SCI activities.

Local implementing partners, government, civil society organisations, the media, other INGOs, private sector companies and health institutions are partners in sharing knowledge, helping to influence change and building capacity and urban resilience. SCI has a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Fire Service and Civil Defence (FSCD), Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC), Department of Disaster Management (DDM), and a working relationship with the Ministry of Environment and Forest, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, and the Science Faculty of Dhaka University. SCI also has partnerships with 57 local partners and many of them have experience working in the corporate sector, urban contexts and climate change.

The media environment in Bangladesh is particularly conducive and if executed well, can be very effective in raising awareness and addressing issues on urban DRR. A crucial part of SCI's intervention is to engage with media platforms in order to do just this, and to have communities be aware of the existing mechanisms to help them plan and prepare for disaster. The Humanitarian sector recognises that media can provide excellent value for money and be a useful tool, hence has developed a *Journalists Fellowship Programme*, which partners with various media outlets to spread awareness on DRR issues in collaboration with SCI, awarding fellowships to selected journalists for a period of one year. Such an initiative also helps to enhance knowledge on DRR among young media professionals and encourages them to report on it.

As the co-lead of the Education cluster, SCI has a coordination role among the NGOs dealing with education DRR/CCA and response, and can utilise the cluster mechanisms to ensure national level activities, such as endorsement and roll out of the Framework for DRR in Education and EiE to the DPE, are disseminated to other relevant agencies.

Partnership with the FSCD is a crucial component to Humanitarian urban DRR initiatives. They provide key technical support in project activities relating to simulated disaster training for urban community volunteers, schools, garment factories etc. Since capacity building skills are a relatively alien concept to government officials<sup>12</sup>, involvement from dedicated training institutes such as the FSCD has proven to be very successful in increasing urban resilience.

<sup>10</sup> Regional Lessons Learnt Workshop of the 7th DIPECHO AP - South Asia, July 2014: p9

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p10

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p13

