



Humanitarian Assistance for MOCHA Cyclone Affected People in Teknaf Upazila, Cox's Bazar





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Acknowledgement

PHALS (Program for Helpless And Lagged Society), established in 1992, visioning a country without poverty and discrimination in which every person can exercise her/his rights to a life with dignity and proper livelihood through comprehensive sustainable development for improving the lives of underprivileged groups, including people with disabilities and marginalized communities. Since the inception, PHALS has expanded its work complementing and contributing to the national response in these areas which are under government focus.

PHALS with the support of Malteser International implemented ToGETHER 1.0 project in Cox's Bazar district from April 2021 to March 2024. Under the project, Humanitarian Operation and Innovation Facility (HOIFA) is one of the major interventions aimed to provide emergency support to the affected population in Cox's Bazar. Through the initiative, PHALS supported 350 families with household utensils, disaster protection kits to 154 families and cash support to 170 families including increasing community awareness through various activities and conducted workshops on disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change.

This booklet/document highlights the challenges and successes of the project, emphasizing community engagement and its positive impact. It serves as a resource of reference to learn and create meaningful changes.

PHALS deeply appreciate everyone who brought their passion, commitment, and innovation to make this publication in a reality, particularly, German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO), Malteser International (MI), Local government, relevant stakeholder, community and HOIFA project team members for their invaluable support. We strongly believe, the knowledge and experiences PHALS gained from the HOIFA implementation will confident us to move forward with extended support for the vulnerable community in near future.

Executive Summary

PHALS has strong footprint and experiences in Cox's Bazar with development and humanitarian response. The Mocha Cyclone hit on 14 May 2023 causing a series of casualties especially in Saint Martin and Sabarang Union under Teknaf Upazila in Cox's Bazar district. There were reportedly affected above 2000 families' houses, latrines, household utensil, fowls, cattle, crops with damaged and lost. PHALS work mainly to empower the affected underprivilege and marginalized communities involving in various committees as well as providing capacity enhancing initiatives. Under the ToGETHER 1.0 project there's a component "Humanitarian Operation and Innovation Facility (HOIFA) which is basically for response in any humanitarian crises. PHALS has responded humanitarian assistance to the cyclone MOCHA affected communities in Saint Martin and Teknaf Upazila, Cox's Bazar, under HOIFA component. The major interventions of the project were unconditional cash support, DRR Protection Kits and Household Utensils distribution including mass awareness to the community through DRR and climate change anticipation, drawing, essay writing, hazard mapping workshop and bill board setup on DRR and Climate Change, in the affected areas. PHALS conducted the post distribution monitoring to know the distribution effectiveness and efficiency in Sahpureer Dweep under Sabarang Union and Saint Martin Island, Teknaf, Cox's Bazar.

Acronyms

CCA – Climate Change Adaptation

CEA- Community Engagement & Accountability

CSC-Country Steering Committee

DiDRR – Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction

DRR – Disaster Risk Reduction

GFFO – German Federal Foreign Office

GoB – Government of Bangladesh

HOIFA – Humanitarian Operation and Innovation Facility

MI – Malteser International

P-FIM – People First Impact Method

PDM – Post Distribution Monitoring

PHALS – Program for Helpless And Lagged Society

ToGETHER – Toward Greater Effectiveness and Timeliness in Humanitarian Emergency Response

Geographical Coverage



A Community at the Frontline of Coastal Challenges

Teknaf Upazila has 66,597 households and a population of 333,865 as of the 2022 census. Teknaf faces a poverty rate of 40-50%, highlighting the region's economic challenges. The area's proximity to the Bay of Bengal makes it highly vulnerable to natural disasters like cyclones, tidal surges, and coastal erosion, with climate change worsening these threats through rising salinity, unpredictable weather, and frequent flooding.

Sabrang Union

Sabrang Union, a coastal region of Teknaf, has 7,500 households and a population of 46,512 spread over 19.22 square kilometres. The community is heavily reliant on fishing, which is increasingly threatened by the effects of climate change. Despite efforts to adapt, the challenges remain significant due to the region's exposure to natural hazards. From local sources it is known that around 250HH were affected in Sabarang Union by the MOCHA cyclone.

Saint Martin Island

Saint Martin Island, a union of Teknaf covering just 2.949 square kilometres, is home to 4,531 people. As Bangladesh's only coral island, it is one of the key tourist destination but faces severe environmental threats like rising sea levels, coral reef degradation, and water scarcity. The island's isolation complicates disaster management and climate adaptation efforts. According to the local administration, UNO Office, Teknaf sources, in Saint Martin island, the affected houses by MOCHA cyclone is 153 but local sources says- its figure is around 200 above.

Following Cyclone Mocha PHALS and Malteser International worked together to help address these issues. Provided humanitarian assistance to affected communities in both Sabrang and Saint Martin's Island, aiming to enhance disaster preparedness and support climate adaptation efforts.

Household Utensils Distribution

Sponsored by
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

Organized by
NCHADS
Program for Women and Children

Introduction



Introduction

Cyclone "Mocha" has been classified as a very severe cyclonic storm. According to the Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD), the storm initially developed into a deep depression before intensifying into Cyclone Mocha on May 11th, as noted in BMD bulletin number 1. Following a meeting the Secretary of the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR), on May 13th, BMD issued a "great danger" signal 10 for the coastal district of Cox's Bazar.

May 14, 2023, Cyclone Mocha struck Cox's Bazar , particularly at Saint Martin and Sabrang Union in Teknaf Upazila, Cox's Bazar and damaged over 2,000 homes, latrines, household utensils, livestock, crops and etc. PHALS, focused on empowering marginalized communities, responded by providing humanitarian aid under the HOIFA component of the ToGETHER (Towards Greater Effectiveness and Timeliness in Humanitarian Emergency Response) project funded by Malteser International. HOIFA project started on October 2023 and continue till February 2024. The major objective of the project was to provide support to recover MOCHA cyclone affected community. PHALS provided Unconditional Cash support, DRR protection kits and household utensils to the most affected population. PHALS organized sensitization workshop, meeting, training and community consultation on Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) through various IEC/BCC materials. To raise awareness on Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) for students PHALS also organized awareness session, drawing, essay and speech competition in Saint Martin Island and Sabrang union as if the young generation and their contribution can go long for future aspects.

After project implementation PHALS conducted post distribution monitoring (PDM) to ensure transparency, accountability, understand the effectiveness and efficiency of the distribution. It also help to know community people's satisfaction level of what PHALS distributed.



Response Strategy

Response Strategy

Assist the affected population and prevention of human suffering





Problem, Needs and Gap Analysis

Problem, Needs and Gap Analysis

The HOIFA project firstly design to provide sanitary latrine materials for 100 beneficiaries in Saint Martin and Sabrang (Sahpureer Dweep) Union whose houses were affected by mocha cyclone. A comprehensive need assessment was conducted among 829 beneficiaries where it is found that the sanitary latrines were needed. After re-checking the final 100 beneficiary list, it was found that 70% of the beneficiaries have received latrine materials support from other service provider. To prevent overlapping and prioritize the recommendations from the Local Authority UNO of Teknaf, the issue was discussed and approved in the Country Steering Committee (CSC) meeting. It was decided to provide unconditional cash support to the affected beneficiaries instead of sanitary latrine materials. As per project proposal there were 120 families for cash support allocated and after amendment there were given cash support among 170 families.



Community Engagement, Participation and Inclusion

Community Engagement, Participation and Inclusion



Recognizing the unique needs of each community and prioritizing outreach to the most vulnerable individuals is crucial during disasters. To promote local ownership and empower communities, the integration of Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) is essential for effective implementation. By incorporating CEA, targeted communities actively contributed their input and guide the direction of the response efforts. PHALS in its all arena of implementation always emphasized the community participation, engagement and inclusion to encourage decision-making, promote ownership and ensure minimum quality of standard.

To foster this, several measures were implemented: ensure feedback and complaint boxes with mobile numbers and email address, registers, safeguarding, accountability and clear displays of project details and budget. Furthermore, the CFRM number was printed in cyclone preparedness information packet card which was distributed among the project participants and others. The complaint and feedback mechanism was activated to receive complaint or feedback if any raised in the working area. These steps were taken to ensure transparency and active involvement of the community, the People First Impact Method (P-FIM) was used during this process to ensure significant community involvement, allowing local voice to raise their priorities and needs.

Assessment conducted with the engagement of local community leaders, UP representatives and UNO. The final beneficiary list was endorsed by the UNO of Teknaf Upazila. This inclusive approach featured 12 goal-free discussion with various community groups, including fishermen, small traders, agricultural workers, persons with disabilities and local officials such as the Union Parishad Chairman and ward members.



During the program intervention, even during the humanitarian kinds support/assistance distribution, UP Chairman, UP members, school teachers, GoB Officials were invited. Every month there were conducted monthly follow up meeting through online. Whenever there was any meeting in UNO office, the representative of the project/Project Officer was attended and shared the update information.

Priority in beneficiary selection is given based on factors like land ownership, economic and vulnerability status, female-headed households, disability, income levels and elderly family members.



Implementation

Implementation

The project was covered the Mocha cyclone affected population in Saint Martin and Sabrang Union under Teknaf Upazila, Cox's Bazar. PHALS has responded humanitarian assistance to the affected community under HOIFA component of ToGETHER 1.0 project. The major interventions of the project were unconditional cash support, DRR Protection Kits and Household Utensils distribution among the affected communities as well as to increase mass community awareness through different sessions on DRR and Climate Change Adaptation, Drawing, Essay Writing, Speech Competition, Hazard mapping workshop with fishermen and bill board setup in the affected areas. To know the distribution effectiveness and efficiency, there has been conducted post distribution monitoring in the distributed areas viz. Sahpureer Dweep under Sabrang Union and Saint Martin Island, Teknaf, Cox's Bazar.





The below information shows the project outcomes:



170 household members including Male **60** and female **110** in Sabrang and Saint Martin union of Teknaf Upazila received unconditional cash support for multi-purpose uses.



A total of **350** households, comprising **166** male and **184** female, in both Sabrang and Saint Martin Unions of Teknaf Upazila received household utensils to support minimal recovery from losses.



60 adolescents including **26** boys and **34** girls participated in Drawing, Essay and Speech Competition on the topic of Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation.



A total of **200** students including **100** male and **100** female received **8** awareness training on Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation.

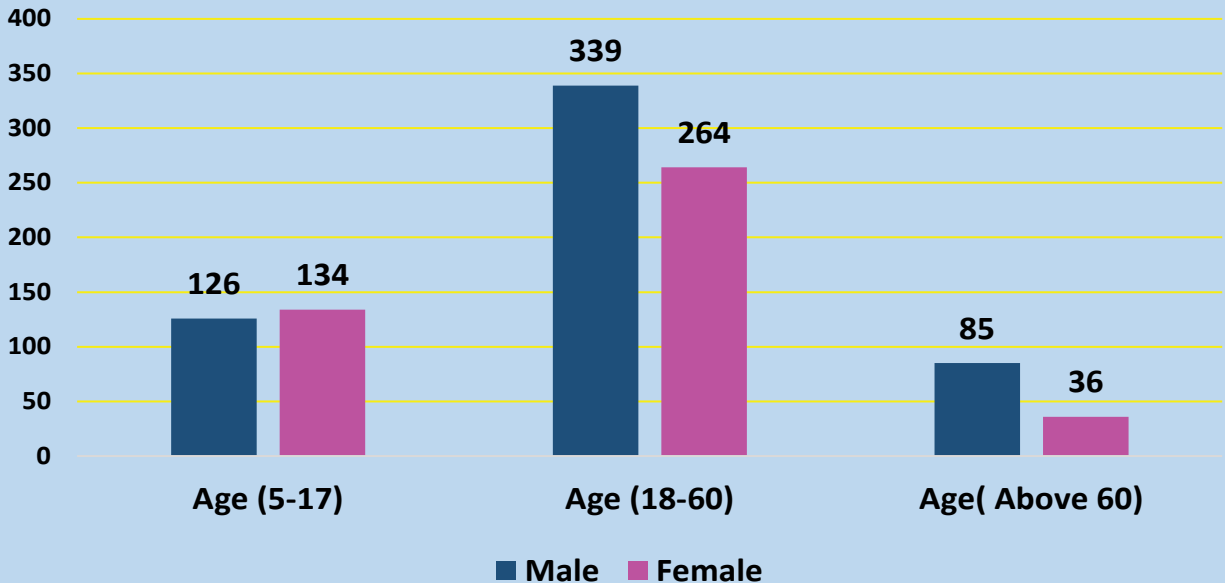


DRR Protection Kits distributed among the **154** project participants including **148** male and **6** female.



50 Fishermen participated in the Anticipatory Hazard Mapping Workshop.

Age Category of Project Participants



The Bar chart illustrates the age distribution of male and female participants in a project, divided into three age categories: 5-17 years, 18-60 years, and above 60 years. Age Group 5-17: Male-126, Female-134. Age Group 18-60: Male-339, Female-264 and Age Group Above 60: Male-85, Female-36.



Challenges, Way forward & Learnings

Challenges & Way forward

The project implementation area Shahpureer Dweep (Sabrang) & Saint Martin Island, is extreme remote with limited access and transportation facilities. The availability of reliable transport and communication is scarce, making logistics challenging. Additionally, as the island is a popular tourist place, accommodation costs are significantly high. To address these challenges, PHALS engaged local manpower and volunteers to manage most of the activities. The organization also maintained close monitoring through remote communication and digital platform to ensure a steady flow of information.

Learnings

Successful School Program for Raising Awareness on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA)

A key learning from PHALS initiative was the successful school-based program that increased awareness on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA). The program effectively sensitized students, parents, and teachers through interactive sessions, empowering children to share knowledge with their families and communities. Teachers also increased their knowledge to integrate DRR and CCA into the curriculum, promoting long-term resilience across generations.

Involving Local Authorities Ensure Accountability & Transparency

Engaging local Union Parishad representatives and Local Authority officials in project implementation life cycle is crucial for ensuring accountability to the affected communities. Their involvement enhances transparency, promotes

community trust and ensures that the needs of the community are effectively addressed throughout the project.

Goal-Free Discussions through P-FIM Foster Deeper Insights and Community Ownership

At the beginning of the project, the use of Goal-Free Discussions facilitated through People First Impact Method (P-FIM) proved an effective tool in participating to the local communities to face the challenges in a organized manner. This open and flexible dialogue method allowed community members to freely express their concerns and experiences without the pressure of predefined agendas. Through multiple, informal discussions, community participants were able to share a more comprehensive understanding of the problems they encountered, revealing underlying issues that may have otherwise been overlooked.

The P-FIM emphasised the importance of creating open spaces for dialogue, where communities can lead conversations, contributing to more impactful and community-driven outcomes.

Rapid Response to Disaster-Affected Communities

Ensuring rapid and efficient responses to disaster-affected communities is crucial for minimizing loses and meeting emergency needs. Quick action not only addresses immediate relief but also strengthens trust and resilience within the community, setting the foundation for effective recovery and long-term support.



Stories of Mocha Survivals

Stories of Mocha Survivals

Senu Ara's Struggle and Recovery After Cyclone Mocha

Senu Ara (45), a resident of Kunapara in Ward 8 of Sabrang, Teknaf, Cox's Bazar, lives with her husband and four daughters. The family, consisting of six members, faces financial hardships, as her husband works as a day labourer, and she is a housewife. Their home, made of tin and tarpaulin, reflects their lower-income status.

On May 14, 2023, Cyclone Mocha struck the Teknaf area, causing widespread destruction. Senu Ara's house was severely damaged, and they lost their domestic animals in the disaster. Faced with this destruction, through HOIFA initiatives, PHALS stepped in to provide relief. Senu Ara's family received a cash grant of 10,000 BDT, which brought immediate relief during their difficult time.

"With the money, I was able to fix our home and ensure food for my family. It brought us hope in a very difficult time. I am extremely thankful for this support. "

With the money, Senu Ara repaired her damaged house, bought ducks to minimize their losses of livestock, and purchased food for her family. She expressed deep gratitude for the timely support, sharing that the aid had made her feel hopeful and secure once again.

This support was crucial in helping Senu Ara's family rebuild their lives after the disaster.



Sokhina Khatun's Resilience in the Repercussion of Cyclone Mocha

Sokhina Khatun (42), a resident of Kunapara, Shapori Island, located in Teknaf Upazila of Cox's Bazar district, faced severe hardship when Cyclone Mocha hit on May 14, 2023. Shapori Island, situated at the mouth of the Naf River along the Bangladesh-Myanmar border, bore the brunt of the cyclone's destructive force. Many homes were damaged, and livestock was lost, leaving families struggling to recover.

Sokhina's home was severely affected. A large tree fell on her kitchen, destroying the roof and all of her household utensils.



Left with nothing to cook with or use for daily living, she found herself in a desperate situation.

Through the HOIFA project, PHALS conducted a needs assessment and identified Sokhina's crisis. Responding quickly, PHALS provided essential household items, including a trunk, steel rice plates, plastic bowls, a jug, rice pots, curry pots, a mug, a pitcher, and a lock with a key.

Receiving these items allowed Sokhina to regain some stability in her life. She expressed her deep gratitude, saying,

"I am very happy to receive these new household utensils. After the cyclone, we lost everything of my kitchen and we almost lost hope.

PHALS brought a ray of hope in the midst of adversity."

This timely assistance helped Sokhina Khatun minimize her losses and start rebuilding her life after the devastation caused by Cyclone Mocha.

Kamal Hossain's Journey to Recovery After Cyclone Mocha



Kamal Hossain (38) from Dokkhin Para, Ward 9, Sent Martine, once earned his living as a fisherman. However, an unfortunate accident left him with severe injuries to his leg and hand, making it impossible for him to continue working. With five family members depending on him and his wife finding only occasional work in hotels during tourist season, Kamal's life took a difficult turn.

When Cyclone Mocha hit on May 14, 2023, Kamal and his family were took shelter in a local cyclone center as their home suffered significant damage. Already living in hardship, the storm further compounded their struggles.

PHALS, through the HOIFA project, conducted a needs assessment and recognized Kamal's difficulty. They provided him with a cash grant of 10,000 BDT, which allowed him to repair his home and rebuild what was lost in the storm. Kamal expressed his gratitude, saying,

"This support came when we had nowhere to turn. Thanks to PHALS, I could repair my home and provide some security for my family in this difficult time."

Through PHALS' timely intervention, Kamal Hossain found the strength to rebuild and restore hope for a brighter future.

"Empowering Fishermen: PHALS Provides Lifesaving Support to Abdur Rohim and His Community"



Abdur Rohim, a resident of Ward 5 in Saint Martin's Island, has spent most of his life working as a fisherman. For many years, he went into the sea to catch fish, despite the high risks involved in his occupation. Fishing in the deep sea is fraught with dangers, and Abdur Rohim has faced numerous challenges, particularly due to the lack of proper safety equipment. Without essential equipment to protect him, his life was constantly at risk.

Abdur Rohim could not afford the necessary safety equipment, such as life jackets or protective clothing. This lack of basic safety resources made his livelihood increasingly dangerous.

Recognizing the urgent need for intervention, PHALS, under its HOIFA project, took the initiative to conduct a thorough needs assessment in Saint Martin's Island. The assessment focused on understanding the specific risks faced by local fishermen and identifying their most demanding needs.

In response, PHALS distributed hazard kits to the fishermen, which included life jackets, raincoats, and torches—essential tools to enhance their safety at sea.

Upon receiving the hazard kit, Abdur Rohim expressed deep gratitude. He shared that, despite years of working as a fisherman, he had never received any safety equipment before.

"I've been fishing in the sea for a long time, but I never had the proper safety equipment to protect myself. No other NGO or organization has provided us with safety kits, but PHALS has stepped in to ensure our safety and security. I am extremely happy and thankful to PHALS for this support."

This initiative by PHALS has not only provided Abdur Rohim and other fishermen with the necessary tools to protect their lives but has also brought peace of mind to their families, knowing that they are now initial equipped to face the dangers of the sea.



Sustainability Strategy

Sustainability Strategy

The sustainability strategy of this project lies in its comprehensive approach to both immediate relief and long-term resilience-building within the cyclone-affected communities. By conducting sessions on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA), along with interactive activities such as drawing, essay writing, and speech competitions, the project adopts ongoing education. These initiatives ensure that individuals, especially younger generations are prepared with the knowledge to respond to future disasters. Hazard mapping workshops involving fishermen community and setting up billboards in affected areas promotes continuous awareness. This empowers the community to actively participate in identifying and mitigating risks, ensuring their preparedness for future events.

Regular monitoring and feedback from the affected areas ensure the interventions are effective and provide an opportunity to adjust and improve future responses. This promotes accountability and fine-tunes the support mechanisms for long-term impact.

Essential materials support such as DRR protection kits and household utensils creates a foundation of preparedness, helping households recover quickly from disasters while minimizing future vulnerability.

By focusing on both immediate relief and long-term resilience, the project establishes a foundation for sustained community empowerment and preparedness against future disasters.



Conclusion

Conclusion

The project successfully addressed the needs of communities affected by Cyclone Mocha in Saint Martin and Sabrang Union, Teknaf, through humanitarian assistance provided by PHALS under the HOIFA component of the ToGETHER project. Such kind of support like HOIFA is very much effective to provide support to the affected community at the earliest which help to minimize the risk and rebuilt the confidence of the community.



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