

# BANGLADESH IMPACT REPORT



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# BANGLADESH

**Bangladesh is one of the world's most densely populated countries, with over 165 million living in a land mass of less than 150,000 square kilometres. .**

As many as 700 rivers cross the country, making it the world's largest delta, one of the most fertile regions, and one of the most climate change-vulnerable countries globally. In particular, Bangladesh's 600km coastline is one of the most disaster-prone regions in the world.<sup>1</sup>

Accessing high-quality education and protection is a significant challenge for school-age children. 6.7 million children are currently out of school, and 13 per cent of children are involved in child labour in Bangladesh. Only 64 per cent of children in Bangladesh go on to complete secondary education, and less than a third of children aged 3-5 are on track to meet literacy and numeracy goals. Only 43 per cent of 10-year-old students in Bangladesh were proficient in reading before the COVID-19 pandemic, and only 25 per cent

of secondary school graduates attained basic competencies.<sup>2</sup> A challenge for Bangladesh is to address the growing number of children living on the streets. A joint study (2021) by the Consortium for Street Children, the Commonwealth Foundation and our in-country partner found that 98.5 per cent of street children are deprived of education and work an average of 10 hours a day, while 35 per cent of them are involved in begging.

In 2023, we completed a wide variety of projects, with a particular focus on education and addressing climate-related shocks. Our work is contextualised to the needs of those we serve, based on rigorous needs assessments, and developed with the input of the communities we serve throughout the process.

<sup>1</sup> Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, 2015

<sup>2</sup> Education | UNICEF



# READ FOUNDATION BANGLADESH



• We supported **651 Rohingya refugees** with education, livelihood training and essential non-food items.



• We have **helped 3,220 students** through our climate-focused projects.



• We have provided a safe space to rest and learn for **400 street children**.



# DROP-IN CENTRE



• **400 children** have enrolled at the Drop-In Centre.



• **357 students** are taking part in our multi-grade education classes.



• **320 children** received medical services a total of 831 times.

## There are a reported 350,000 children living on the streets in Dhaka, at risk of abuse, exploitation, and harm.

READ Foundation has supported a Drop-in Centre (DiC) and Night Shelter in Dhaka<sup>3</sup> since 2019, providing 400 children a year with food, counselling, and a safe space to learn and grow. We also provide girls with somewhere safe to sleep to help them off the streets, further counselling and food, support and vocational training.

Through the centre, we provide life skills and vocational training, a government-accredited curriculum, medical appointments and other support where needed. The curriculum taught at the centre is tailored to the needs of the learners to achieve the national primary School leaving certificate. Programme graduates are

‘mainstreamed’ into the formal education system wherever possible. Adult literacy courses are also taught to promote disaster preparedness in flood-, cyclone- or earthquake-prone areas.

In 2023, we provided education, food, and healthcare for up to 400 street children and a safe space for girls to sleep at night. So far, 357 students have enrolled in the education classes and been provided with books and school equipment; 10 girls are enrolled at the Night Shelter; 30,000 meals have been provided at the DiC and Night Shelter, and 16 field-level awareness-raising sessions have been delivered to street and working children, their family members, parents and employers covering issues of child protection, child development and child rights.

<sup>3</sup> Bangladesh | Oxfam International



# CASE STUDY

**Barnali's\* parents sent her to live with her grandmother in Dhaka as her father could not afford to support the family.**

To make enough money to live, Barnali sold flowers on the street and helped her grandmother out as a housemaid. Barnali met one of the Drop-in Centre (DiC) teachers one day when she was coming back from work with her grandmother, and as soon as the teacher told them about the DiC in more detail, Barnali knew she had to go.

At the DiC, she receives nutritious meals, quality education, access to a saving scheme and life skill lessons. Barnali wants to become a doctor and sees her time at the DiC as the first step to achieving this goal. She feels the DiC is guiding her 'down the right path' to a 'beautiful life'.

\*Name changed for confidentiality

# SCHOOL ON A BOAT



• We have established 10 land-based classrooms and **4 floating classrooms.**



• **420 children** are enrolled in our non-formal education programme.



• **14 teachers** have been hired and trained from within the community.

**Climate change is severely impacting the lives of people living in northeast Bangladesh, worsening the already prevalent flooding in the area.**

Floods make travel almost impossible and displace many households, meaning children cannot enrol in School and those that have are more likely to drop out. READ Foundation provides non-formal education to 420 children through land- and water-based classrooms. Our Schools on Boats act as a bus service, picking up students along the route before converting to 2 classrooms per boat alongside ten land-based classrooms in hard-to-reach areas. Using a government-accredited syllabus, teaching follows the national curriculum, enabling students to graduate into formal education.

In 2023, its inaugural year, the School on a Boat project will establish 14 classrooms in flood-prone areas, ten land-based classrooms, and four boat-based classrooms that will also serve as school buses in times of severe flooding. Four hundred twenty students have enrolled in the classrooms after an assessment to ensure that the teaching is appropriate to their level. Fourteen teachers have been hired and trained with the input of the local community leaders, and 12 Centre Management Committees have been established and trained to provide community oversight of the project.





# CLIMATE EDUCATION



• **Two schools** have developed and established school safety and climate risk reduction plans.



• **1,000 children** have increased knowledge on the effects of climate change and appropriate mitigation strategies.



• **In 2024, a further 1,800 students** will be taught to become agents of change.

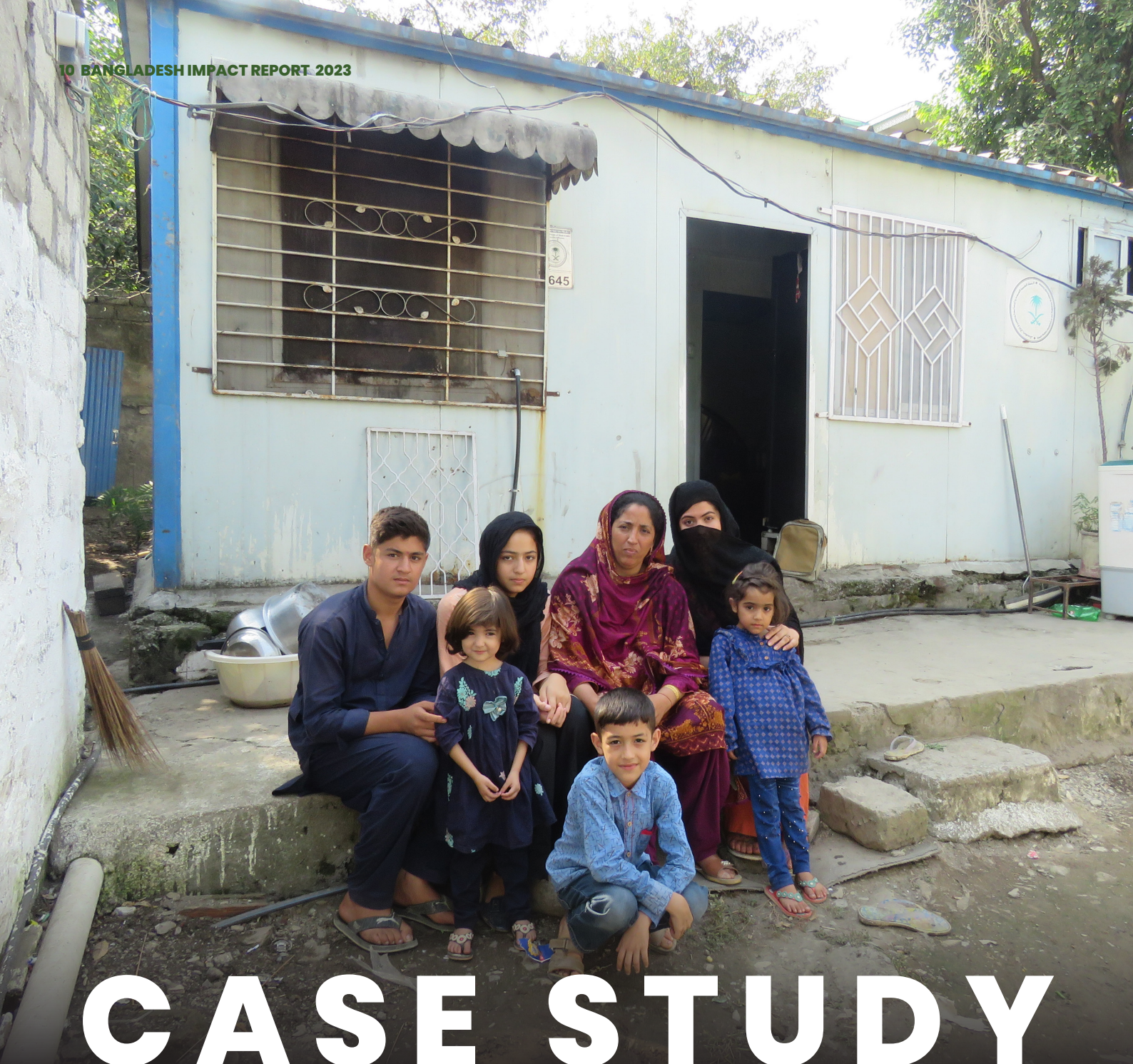
**Our climate education project is designed to ensure students are climate resilient, teaching them to adapt to future climate shocks and sharing that knowledge with their classmates and communities.**

Through classroom educational activities, climate-resilient infrastructure improvements and awareness-building sessions, students are taught to become more adaptable and resilient in the face of climate change.

In 2023, 32 students across two schools were provided with training on vulnerability and risk assessment, supported in producing a risk

reduction action plan and a school safety plan. They attended conferences with key local actors in climate change policy. These students then returned to their schools to deliver 20 sessions to their classmates, ensuring that youths are key agents in the fight against the climate crisis.

Phase two has begun, which will see these students take their training to two more schools to empower the community further. There will be further adaptations to school infrastructure to improve climate resilience. This includes a solar system for power, safe drinking water points, links with the city waste teams for recycling and a school garden.



# CASE STUDY

**Mujib\* lives with his parents and sister in a village in Faridpur. They used to live in Digrichar, where they had a house and farmland, but due to repeated floods and river erosion, they lost their house, land, and assets.**

They now live in a small tin shed, and their father makes a living as a tea seller. Without knowing it, Mujib and his family were climate refugees, and they continue to be impacted by the climate crisis as their new home is also prone to flooding, meaning Mujib often has to miss school.

Since attending the READ Foundation's climate education workshops, Mujib has realised the impact climate change has had on him and his family. He is now trying to make people aware of the real impact of climate change by sharing his personal experiences and encouraging his classmates to protect the environment actively.

\*Name changed for confidentiality

# ROHINGYA ORPHAN SUPPORT



- We provided **200 orphans** with educational supplies and clothes.



- We provided livelihood **training for 151** men and women.



- **500 families** were provided with cooking utensils and gas cylinders.

Since August 2017, violence in Myanmar's Rakhine State has driven an estimated 860,000 Rohingyas across the border to Teknaf and Ukhiya Sub-Districts of Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.

Since they arrived in Bangladesh, the Rohingya refugees have lived in 34 camps across Cox's Bazar District. Despite international efforts, the living conditions in the camps remain dire, with inadequate water and sanitation being of particular concern. To address the issues, the government of Bangladesh developed alternative

refugee accommodation on Bhashan Char, a sand-bar island in the Bay of Bengal.

READ Foundation has been working in Bhashan Char, providing educational support to orphans and livelihood training to the community. Throughout this project, 200 orphans were provided with educational materials and clothes, and 151 men and women were provided livelihood training in homestead vegetable farming, poultry farming, plumbing and water point management or electronics maintenance, particularly solar power. Five hundred families were also supplied with gas cooking cylinders and household utensils to meet their basic needs.

# BANGLADESH PHOTOS







## GET IN TOUCH

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