

Humanitarian Assistance to Flash Flood Affected Families in Rangamati ALERT B045 Bangladesh

Report of Humanitarian Accountability & Community Engagement (HACE)

Introduction/ Background:

Continuous heavy rainfall from 3rd August 2023 resulted in flash floods and landslides in Rangamati. A few wards at Rangamati Municipality were affected, Bilaichari upazila especially Farua Union was severely affected by the flash floods. As per District Administration and projections by different sources, there were more than 3509 HHs who became vulnerable due to sudden landslides in Rangamati Municipality. On the other hand, about 1196 HHs of Farua Union and 329 HHs of Bilaichari Sadar were severely affected due to flash floods. The district administration took immediate steps as immediate response such as opening a control room, forming of quick response team, and emergency medical team, rapid road maintenance and removal of road obstruction/heavy blockage (tree, mud, stones etc.), power service team, rescue team during the heavy rainfall.



Figure 1 Picture of Flash Flood_Farua Union_PC: Mrinal Kanti Tanchangya



Figure 2- Picture of Flash Flood_Farua Union_PC: Mrinal Kanti Tanchangya

Need Assessment Teams were formed in different unions to know the damages and losses incurred due to flash floods and landslides. At the same time, ASHIKA communicated and coordinated with local government administrations, and different donor agencies for humanitarian assistance to the affected people/victims of the flash floods and landslides. In response to this, the Start Fund Network Bangladesh raised Alert-B045. Being members of SFNB, Caritas Bangladesh partnering ASHIKA submitted a project proposal for emergency response. Based on the need assessment data, ASHIKA was awarded funds for Rangamati districts. Thus, ASHIKA Development Associates implemented the humanitarian emergency response program through close coordination with local Government administration; Social, Religious, Community, Traditional, and Political leaders.

As part of response process ASHIKA prepared a primary list for Rangamati Pourashava, Bilaichari Sadar and Farua Union separately through community consultation meetings with support by local government office and community leaders by 21 August 2023. About 273 HHs from Municipality (against 100 target BNFs); 334 HHs from Bilaichari Sadar (against 200 target BNFs) and 461 HHs from Farua Union (against 400 Target BNFs) were included in the primary affected list. Then a total of 3

teams of ASHIKA conducted door-to-door survey through which they collected data using the Kobo Collect app and Android-supported devices.

Finally, a total of 700 HHs were selected based on vulnerability and impact scores and distributed Multi-Purpose Cash Grants (MPCGs) to 700 HHs.

Distribution of Multi-Purpose Cash Grant (UMPCG), Non-food Item (NFI), Hygiene Kits and Shelter kits:

ASHIKA distributed Multi-Purpose Cash Grants (MPCG) Hygiene Kits and Shelter kits among 700 affected HHs in Rangamati District as per the list presented below:

Sl	Upazila	Union/Pourashava	MPCG (HHs)	Wash Kits (HHs)	Shelter Kits (HHs)
1.	Rangamati Sadar	Rangamati Pourashava	100 (M-36, F-64)	100(M-36, F-64)	10 (M-2, F-8)
2.	Belaichari	Belaichari Sadar	200 (M-120, F-80)	200 (M-120, F-80)	18 (M-8, F-10)
3.	Belaichari	Farua	400 (M-256, F-144)	400 (M-256, F-144)	252

- A total of 590 HHS were found affected by Flash Floods and 110 HHs were found affected by landslides.
- A total of 6 PWD HHs (M-5, F-1) Received Emergency Support.
- Each family received BDT 5,500. (Five thousand five hundred taka)
- Each Hygiene Kit package includes 8 items such as: 1 Plastic Bucket with a lid of 20 Lt, 1 Plastic Mug, 4 pics bathing soap, 4 pics laundry soap, ORS 12 pcs, Jerri can 2 pcs of 5 Lt, 4 pcs of reusable sanitary napkin, 1 pc nail cutter.
- Each Shelter kit package contained 2 items namely Tarpaulin of 12*15 ft, Rope 80 ft.



Figure 3- Distribution of Cash Grants, Wash & Shelter Kits at Rangamati Municipality_PC: Riya Khisa



Figure 4 Distribution of Cash Grants, Wash & Shelter Kits at Farua Union_PC: Dondo Tanchagya

- The first distribution event started on 05.09.2023 at Belaichari Sadar premises of Bilaichari Upazila. Mr. Md. Sefat Uddin, UNO of Bilaichari Upazila; Mr. Biroton Tanchagya, Upazila Chairman, Mr. Sushil Kanti Dewan, Chairman of Bilaichari Sadar Union; Respective Ward Members of 2, 3, 5, 8 and 9 ward, and PIC members were present among the guests of the

distribution event. 1 BNF was absent on the day of the distribution event. Considering the context and situation this BNF collected his support from ASHIKA Head Office on 14 September, 2023. It is noted that instead of the original BNF, his wife received the support.

- The second and third distribution took place on 07.09.23 respectively at Farua Union Parishad and ASHIKA Office premises.
- At Farua Union ASHIKA distributed emergency support in two batches respectively on 7 September and 8 September, 2023. Md. Sefat Uddin, UNO Bilaichari; Mr. Birottom Tanchangya, Uz Chairman, Bilaichari; Mr. Biddyalal Tanchangya, UP Chairman Farua were also present as a guest at the event. Respectively, the 2nd batch distribution took place on 8 September, 2023. However, 1 male participant was absent at the distribution spot on the second day. So Farua team visited his house to give the relief goods but he was away from home. Thus on 12.09.2023, he collected the relief goods from ASHIKA Head Office.
- The second distribution took place on 07.09.2023 at Rangamati municipality. Md Ferdous Islam, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC)-Revenue of Rangamati District Administration; Mr Robi Mohon Chakma, 6 No Ward Commissioner; Md. Shakawat Hosain Rubel, president press club, and md Mazharul Islam, Team leader of Caritas Chittagong were present on that day.



Figure 5- Pic: A BNF after Receiving Cash Grants, Wash & Shelter Kits at Bilaichari_PC: Rintu Chakma



Figure 6- On the way back to home from the distribution spot_Farua Union_PC: Rintu Chakma

Distribution Point:

Considering the safety and security of beneficiaries, volunteers, and staff members; for easy access and communication the following spots were selected for emergency support distribution:

1. Bilaichari Union Parishad, Belaichari Sadar Union
2. Farua Union Parishad, Farua Union
3. ASHIKA Office premises, Rangamati Pourashava



Figure 7-During distribution ceremony at Rangamati Pourashava_PC: Riya Khisa

Distribution process:

Before ahead of the distribution, Alert B-045 Team prepared the distribution venue as per plan to comply SOP. The Team focused on safety and service issues. Each venue was decorated and created spaces for the following services:

Special Care Corner: ASHIKA Team created this space to ensure special services for PWD. So far, 6 PWD BNFs received these services during the events.

Breast Feeding Corner: ASHIKA Team always kept a space for the lactating mothers. Here the mothers who received support got a safe and secure space for Breast Feeding.

Safe Drinking Water Corner: Each venue was decorated with a Safe Drinking Water Corner to supply safe drinking water for the BNFs.

First Aid Service Corner: Each venue was decorated with a First Aid Service Corner to ensure quick medical help for the BNFs.

Information Desk: Each venue was decorated with a Information Desk to ensure quick information service for the BNFs.

Photo Session Corner: There was a photo session corner in each distribution center to collect picture of BNF with the goods they received.

Exit Interview Corner: There was space of Exit Interview Corner for each distribution venue to justify BNF satisfaction level.



Figure 8- Pic: complain corner at Rangamati Pourashava



Figure 9- Special Care Corner at Farua Union_PC: Rintu Chakma

The final selected beneficiaries were provided Job card/Token Card/beneficiary cards with informed time, date, and spot well ahead before every event of distribution. During distribution two queues were maintained respectively for male and female BNF. All the BNFs collected the emergency support material maintaining queues. Thus, the distribution event was done smoothly. It was highly appreciated by the beneficiaries as they received the cash within a short period without any harassment. Each venue reserved toilet facilities for male and female separately. Pregnant and lactating women, old aged persons also persons with disabilities were given special care and priority during distribution. Distribution was completed in a safe and secure manner within the daylight.

Complaint Feedback Mechanism Process:

From the date of miking and publication/displayed of primary BNF list complaints boxes were hung in every affected place for more than 24 hours. A total of 24 BNF dropped off their concern in Rangamati pourashava. ASHIKA team considered the concerns and included in the primary beneficiary list during the survey period.

During distribution, feedback boxes with the mobile phone number (hotline) were set in the common places for getting suggestions/feedback/complaints from affected people and other stakeholders.



Figure 10-Complain Box Opening_PC: Jhumalia Chakma

The Collected data/information was properly analyzed to make the response more appropriate and effective to the affected people as well as to the other complainers. So far no complaint issues arose during the distribution period. The affected people of the flash flood and landslide incident area were highly supportive, cooperative, and, proactive. From the planning stage to the implementation, monitoring, the BNF participated willingly with the volunteers, staff members, and visitors of funding and implementing organizations of the project. They have provided actual and correct information to the local administration about the huge loss and damage to vulnerable people. They were disciplined and followed the directions as per criteria and guidelines provided by Start Fund Bangladesh and CB.

Conducting Exit Interview: ASHIKA has conducted Distribution Exit Interviews during distribution to identify the level of satisfaction with the items, distribution place, safety and security, and any feedback for future response. During the distribution of the Unconditional Multi-Purpose Cash Grant (UMPCG) and Non-food Item Hygiene Kit Distribution & Shelter kits, we conducted Exit interviews with 40 people from the municipality, 83 people from Bilaichari Sadar and 160 people from Farua Union. They have been conducted To get real-time feedback from the Beneficiaries regarding the effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance of the project's activities. ASHIKA team briefed the reason for giving cash before all its distributions. It helped the community to plan and utilize the given cash properly.



Figure 11- Exit Interview during distribution at

Conducting Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM):

Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) was one of the planned steps for effective implementation and sustainability of the Project. For this purpose, ASHIKA formed a Post Distribution Monitoring Team consisting of 14 staff members and developed a detailed plan for PDM. The purpose of PDM was to collect information and verify the satisfaction of the concerns of the affected people by the flash flood and

landslides affected families and to monitor and ensure their needs are met by using cash grants given to them. To assess the outputs and outcomes of the project after 10 days of relief distribution, PDM team conducted post-distribution monitoring (PDM) sessions from 16.09.23 to 19.09.23 on a random basis. From Municipality 40; Bilaichri Sadar 94; & Farua 177 a total of 311 HHs/beneficiaries were selected through a random sampling basis and collected information by conducting individual interviews using the digital app Kobo named “Commcare” apps.



Figure 12- Post Distribution Monitoring by HACE Officer & Team Leader at Farua Union_PC: Dondo Tanchangya

Inclusive and participatory response:

It was very difficult to ensure everyone was an affected beneficiary because most of the HHs were

affected by Flash Floods. To ensure the inclusion of genuinely affected vulnerable people, the staff members of the project reached out to them with the help of local community leaders, local social leaders, local elite persons, school teachers, religious leaders, and beneficiaries. The local working NGOs workers, relevant Local Govt-DRR, PIO Officers were also involved and very active in conducting the selection process. In this course of the participatory response, it was easier to select affected beneficiaries and as a result, the people of all sectors including the affected community were satisfied and the situation was quite peaceful.

Coordinated response Team:

From the very beginning of the project, ASHIKA Development Associates Alert B045 Team maintained a close coordination to the respective stakeholders of the project. We always received support from Caritas Bangladesh and Startfund Network Bangladesh. The following some of activities that indicates a smooth collaboration with different stakeholders:

Coordination with Caritas Bangladesh and Startfund Network Bangladesh:

1. Mr. Fakrul Islam, Startfund Bnagladesh directly join with ASHIKA Team virtually during orientation of the project. He briefed the Team about the compliance of SOP during implementation of the project. He also suggested to keep close collaboration with respective Govt. Institutions and local leaders and communities. A team of Startfund Bnagladesh directly visited ASHIKA and project sites on 22-23 August, 2023. They talked with the respective affected communities and briefed the process of involvement of communities with the project. They also guided ASHIKA over phone and email when necessary.
2. Caritas Bangladesh Team visited ASHIKA Office and project sites several times. They visited ASHIKA for the following purposes:

SL	Date/s of the visit	Purpose of the visit	Place of the visit
1	19 August, 2023	Orientation on Kovocollect Tools	ASHIKA Head Office
2.	19 August, 2023	Orientation on SOP and Policy of Cariritas	ASHIKA Head Office
3.	28 August- 01 September, 2023	Sites visit and Community	ASHIKA Head Office

		Consultation	and Belaichari Sadar Union
4.	11 September, 2023	Orientation on PDM (Kovocollect Tools)	ASHIKA Head Office
5	7 September, 2023	Observation of Distribution	Rangamati Poursava
6.	18 September, 2023	To check the finance and accounts	ASHIKA Head Office
7.	23 September, 2023	Lesson learned workshop	ASHIKA Head Office

Caritas Bangladesh also guided ASHIKA throughout the project period over phone and email when it was required. Caritas Bangladesh team also were engaged to make the final list of BNFs and Job Cards for the selected beneficiaries.

Coordination with Govt. Intuitions and Local Leaders:

ASHIKA Alert B045 Team kept a close coordination with the respective Govt. Institutions and local leaders by whom AHSIKA implemented the project smoothly. The following activities were accomplished to engage respective Govt. Institutions and local leaders during implementation of the project:

Sl	Activities	Date/Venue	Purpose	Stakeholders
1.	Project Inception Meeting	21 August, 2023 Rangamati Sadar Upazila	Project information dissemination	Respective UNO, Chairman, Mayor, Ward commissioners, Communities
2.	Project Inception Meeting	21 August, 2023 Belaichari Sadar Upazila	Project information dissemination	Respective UNO, Chairman, Respective UP Chairman, Ward commissioners, Communities

Coordination with Respective Communities:

As the project is Community Led Project, ASHIKA Alert B045 Team always had a close communication the respective communities and local leaders. To ensure community participation the following project activities were done through engagement of local communities and leaders:

Sl	Activities	Date/Venue	Purpose	Stakeholders
1.	PIC Formation	21 August, 2023 Rangamati Sadar Upazila	To develop MAP of affected areas and affected communities	Mayor, Ward commissioners, affected communities
2.	PIC Formation	21 August, 2023 Belaichari Sadar Union	To develop MAP of affected areas and affected communities	Respective UP Chairman, Ward members, Communities
3.	PIC Formation	22 August, 2023 Belaichari Farua Union	To develop MAP of affected areas and affected communities	Respective UP Chairman, Ward members, Communities

Apart from the above activities, communities were engaged during door-to-door survey, support distribution and PDM. The coordinated response team worked closely with 3 unions to continue to manage the project activity and increase the coordination power within Local Gov, Stakeholder, and communities within the total journey of the period. There was very well internal and external coordination from the planning stage to the implementation, monitoring, and learning stages of the project. One Coordination team at the Project level played an excellent role in maintaining coordination and collaboration with Local Govt. administration departments and leading NGO with Caritas Bangladesh. The coordinating efforts have made successful, effective, and peaceful implementation of the project.

Community-led approach:

ASHIKA used a community-led approach for selecting beneficiaries. As for example-

- Project Implementation Committee was formed at community level to select affected area and communities following specific guidelines of the project.
- Drafting probable beneficiary list according to the criteria by a community gathering in cluster/paras,
- Door-to-door HHs survey was done at community level.
- Primary list hanging in the public place by announce miking,
- Taking community feedback through the complaint feedback box, Hotline numbers and mobile phone and responded to the complaints and documented,
- A Project Implementation Committee (PIC) which played a vital role in all steps for the successful implementation of the project. The committee took the leading role in the beneficiary selection process, verification of beneficiaries, addressing of complaints, and distribution of cash while the project's staff members provided technical support.



Figure 13-Door to Door survey_PC: Rintu Chakma



Figure 14- Community Consultation & PIC meeting at Belaichari Union_PC: Rintu Chakma

Deployment of staff and volunteers:

A total of 18 staff have been deployed from its existing development projects running volunteers. In this regard, ASHIKA has applied its Emergency Human Resource Policy. 3 volunteers instant ready for further replacement in case of drop out. This approach was very effective as the staff members had excellent interaction, coordination, and cooperation with local communities and they understood everything about the communities. As a result, it was possible to implement the project timely and efficient.

Survey and Collection of Information Using Digital Kobo Apps:

Digital Kobo apps were used for the survey and collection of information for priority-based genuine beneficiary selection. The information was collected with the individual beneficiary's photograph. This process was very effective and helpful in collecting actual information, avoiding duplication, distributing relief goods to the genuine beneficiary, and maintaining impartiality and transparency. The process was appreciated by all levels of stakeholders including beneficiaries.

Beneficiary Selection:

Common standardized criteria for beneficiary selection such as land-slides, flood-affected most vulnerable families living in the area, could not manage their shelter. Women-headed households like adolescent girls, divorcees, widows, abandoned women, pregnant and lactating women, physically challenged, elderly, and low-income HHs have been selected as beneficiaries.

Context-Specific Common Method for Beneficiary Selection:

The community-led approach such as venerability identification, community gathering and consultation on the primary list of beneficiaries, making necessary corrections, door to door survey,

use of a common survey format, displaying the draft list of beneficiaries in public places by announcing by miking, receiving, and addressing feedback and complaints, approval of local government on the final list of beneficiaries, providing a beneficiary card for grant collection, etc. It was found that very effective for selecting the right beneficiaries within a short time through coordination and collaboration way. It increases the satisfaction level of beneficiaries and other stakeholders in the works. It ensures the transference and accountability of beneficiary selection methods.

Improved Coordination & Communication:

Communication and coordination in emergency response programs is a prime power. A total of 10 PIC coordination meetings with the local government representatives and stakeholders were made. In the meeting methodology of the coordination and cooperation was shared and decided for better coordination and cooperation.

The following recommendations should be considered in responding to this type of crisis in this area:

- Give importance during the estimate of beneficiary numbers based on the context of individual incident
- To avoid overlapping must ensure all those vulnerable populations who have not received any relief from other organizations but are genuinely affected.
- Develop a project covering all genuinely affected vulnerable families to avoid dissatisfaction from dropping out a genuine beneficiary, public, community's negative sentiment
- Involve more volunteers (male & female) from the community
- Community Volunteers need to be recruited for proper implementation of the project activities i.e. beneficiary selection following a community-led approach, door-to-door survey, beneficiaries' card distribution and cash grant.
- The humanitarian actors should establish a minimum standard of support according to the specific context for meeting the crisis so that people can live with dignity.
- The humanitarian actors should make a joint response to increasing the satisfaction level of beneficiaries and other stakeholders.

- The funding agencies should have some flexibility to accommodate the changes to ensure timely quality responses.
- Start the program based on the needs of the beneficiaries as well as the need to conduct real-time evaluation so that the actual gaps can be identified for better corrective measures.

Achievement of this project:

The most significant achievement of the project that contributed to the affected people-

- More affected people/HHs covered under the survey who were not included on the primary list.
- Cordial support and efforts from Local Govt./NGOs and community people
- Timely deployment of skilled staff
- Project implementation transparency has been appreciated by all stakeholders.
- Good team bonding
- Timely conducted the survey, selected beneficiaries, and distributed relief in the CHT context.
- All activities implemented timely and effectively

- No negative comments received on cash grant, hygiene kits and shelter kits (quantity and quality)
- Ensuring good and proper storehouse selection and security measures.
- Distribution completed according to standard and the proper instruction.

Key Notes of distribution exit interview:

The most significant findings addressed during the project implementation period-

- Most of the affected people are still living in their own damaged houses.
- People were satisfied with the selection through a community-led approach
- Actual vulnerable HHs were selected through community gatherings and using digital Kobo apps.
- The cash grant is more effective than food item support
- A total of 700 affected HHs got the support out of 1065. So most of the affected people weren't able to be covered as affected categories.
- Unconditional cash grants met their basic needs.
- The House-building materials (Tin) were able to meet the needs of SK-selected people.

Challenges faced:

- Trace out most affected HHs as a beneficiary from the scattered areas
- Some of actual affected people were not included in the primary list.
- Managing non-affected and influential people
- Work in a more remote area, without mobile network and electricity.
- A few numbers of verbal complaints were placed and resolved with immediate feedback.
- Inadequate communication, no local transport in the waterway.
- Addressing/minimizing pressure from the influential
- Avoiding duplication and non-affected outsiders
- Communication or understanding barrier

Overall Lesson learned:

- Community participation is important for the peaceful and effective implementation of the project
- GO/NGO partnership and joint efforts can make the project more resourceful, effective and successful in the implementation
- Good teamwork, coordination, and cooperation between GO/NGO can overcome any challenge
- The steps from the primary selection to the final selection process were very instructive.
- The involvement of community volunteers is very effective in collecting more accurate information and selecting genuine beneficiaries and situation/crowd management
- Door-to-door survey is essential for fair beneficiaries' selection.
- Beneficiaries were found satisfied as they received standard cash and kinds.
- Collection of information using Kobo apps with photographs was very useful and effective for identifying the most vulnerable beneficiaries,
- Time management, avoiding duplication and distribution of assistance among the genuine beneficiary in a good manner.
- Good communication and immediate response through complaints feedback mechanism can minimize and reduce conflict, misunderstanding, dissatisfaction, and unexpected situation



Figure 15- Lesson Learned Sharing Workshop_PC: Akash Chakma



Figure 16-Lesson Learned Sharing Workshop, Group work_PC: Jhumalia Chakma

- Experienced staff is important for time-bound emergency response work.
- Transparency and accountability of operation also influenced the beneficiaries to tell the truth. Hence, duplicated members willingly came forward and canceled their names to avoid duplication.
- Better understanding, co-relation, mutual trust, and support between the consortium members also made the intervention highly effective and successful.
- Learned how to make sound decisions quickly while working on emergency response projects. In one word, self-confidence has been created.

Recommendation:

- Sanitary cloth should be changed instead of sanitary pad.
- Providing medical facilities (Medical team) for the affected families in addition to health care or wash kits.
- Govt. officials (PIO) should be included in the PIC to develop the affected area map (AAP).
- Invest in training programs and capacity initiatives for emergency response team of the respective organization, volunteers and individual staff members. Provide them with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively handle different emergency situations.
- Acknowledge the emotional toll of individuals and communities during occurrences. Provide psychological support services to both victims and responders, and ensure that they have access to counselling and mental health services.
- A long-term recovery initiative can enhance their resilience response capacities and overall effectiveness in mitigating the impact and providing critical support to affected communities.
- Ensure adequate post disaster support by prioritizing measures such as temporary shelters, healthcare camps, clean water, food supplies. Swift and well-coordinated recovery efforts will help restore normalcy and resilience.
- Conduct regular drills and exercise to test the preparedness and effectiveness of emergency response plans in hilly areas. This will help to identify gaps, update strategies, and build a culture of preparedness among all stakeholders.
- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the specific hilly area to understand the local topography, accessibility and potential hazards. This will help tailor emergency support initiatives to meet the area's specific needs.

Conclusion:

The affected people who received the support become able to meet their basic needs as well as initiate their previous livelihoods with new hopes and dreams. The vulnerable people become dignified and able to start their new journey towards development. It was highly appraisable that the dedication of the staff and volunteers could not be measured, their attitude was to 'feel the feelings of the victims' which gave them unlimited energy, stewardship, and inspiration to serve the victims which was the prime energy center to make the project successful. All stakeholders including beneficiaries and community people appreciated the response initiative as a success and thanked ASHIKA and donors. Yet some vulnerable families are waiting with tears in their eyes and shouting to the noble humanitarian organizations and donors to stand beside them with possible assistance.

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