

REPORT

ATER *Hackathon*

Report



Strategy Planning Workshop on Ensuring Right to Drinking Water in Coastal Bangladesh

June 7th-8th, 2022
CSS Ava Centre, Khulna

Supported by: ActionAid Bangladesh

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1. BACKGROUND

Bangladesh has a long (710 km) coastline in the Bay of Bengal and 76 Upazilas of 19 coastal districts are likely to be affected by rise of sea level. Consequently, around 15 million people drink saline water. In addition, millions of people are unable to collect potable water due to the lack of available safe sources in the coastal area. The lives and livelihoods of the population are affected due to water salinity, arsenic, water logging, pollution, risks from climate change, and so on. As people are not getting any pure water, they are left with no option but to be dependent on saline and shallow arsenic water which is severely detrimental to health. Such an absence of water can give rise to major disasters in the region.

Ensuring access to safe drinking water will ensure sustainable human health and socio-economic development of coastal communities. Therefore, it is urgent to sensitize the local policymakers, representatives and government officials, initiate mass campaigns and swift action to create public opinion on this crisis should be the prime priority.

The two-day strategy workshop 'WaterHackathon 2022' with an objective to create an alliance between the organizations working with drinking water issues in the coastal Bangladesh was held at CSS Ava Centre, Khulna from 7th-8th of June, 2022. A total of 27 Participants from 16 organizations participated in this workshop.

The purpose of the workshop was to share existing knowledges of the participants on coastal water issues, ongoing movement and initiatives to solve drinking water crisis and planning development to accelerate collective action on the mentioned issue.

Interactive workshop method was chosen to run the workshop. The facilitators are from within the participants themselves who lead different sessions and discussions on the workshop. The participants were actively engaged in the discussions and all the session were open for feedback, queries and suggestions. The discussions were supported through PowerPoint presentations by the facilitators.



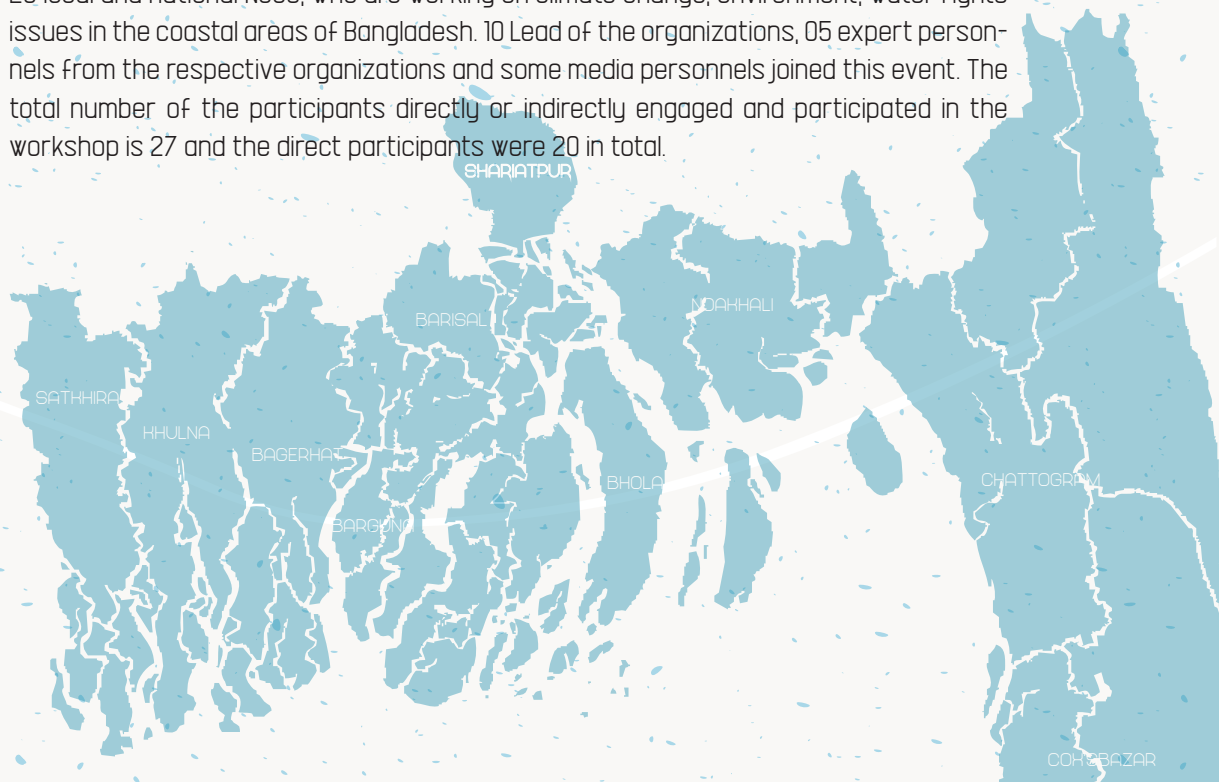
2. OBJECTIVE

The objectives of the two-day workshop were as follow:

- ▶ Share the existing knowledge on the water crisis in Coastal Bangladesh.
- ▶ Enhancement of the common understanding of the water crisis.
- ▶ Demand water rights for the respected communities.
- ▶ Planning and creating a social movement to build a combined effort improving access to drinking water for all by conserving the environmental ecosystem in the coastal areas of Bangladesh.

3. PARTICIPANTS' PROFILE

20 local and national NGOs, who are working on climate change, environment, water rights issues in the coastal areas of Bangladesh. 10 Lead of the organizations, 05 expert persons from the respective organizations and some media personnels joined this event. The total number of the participants directly or indirectly engaged and participated in the workshop is 27 and the direct participants were 20 in total.





4. PROCEEDINGS

SESSION 01: WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION [WHO WE ARE, WHY WATERHACKATHON]

The workshop began with a brief introduction of Participatory Research & Action Network- PRAAN and ActionAid Bangladesh. PRAAN Chief Executive Nurul Alam Masud facilitated this introductory session. Suwendu Bishwas from AAB shared the objectives of the training. ATM Zakir

Hossain, from Jagrata Juba Sangha (JJS) warmly welcomed the participants, thanked them for their time to come and join the workshop. Moving on, an overall picture of the water crisis in coastal Bangladesh and the urgency of the issue was shared by Gouranga Nandy in his inaugural note. The norms and other logistic details were shared by Umme Salma, Programme Coordinator of PRAAN.



SESSION 02: STORY OF WATER & LIFE IN THE COASTAL BANGLADESH: EVIDENCE FROM THE GROUND

This session was facilitated by LEDARS Executive Director Mr. Mohon Kumar Mondol. Through his session, the participants were introduced to the burning crisis of freshwater in coastal Bangladesh. The discussion revolves around the reasons behind the crisis. Impact of the climate change, destruction of freshwater sources due to rising the sea-level and natural disasters, unplanned shrimp farming, excessive extraction of groundwater, arsenic and iron pollution, unplanned development project, lack of water preservation and management, lack of

initiatives, and water wastage was mentioned as active reasons of the suffering of the coastal communities. The specific reasons and crises were presented separately based on the south-west, southeast, and mid-coastal zones. Several stories and incidents were also presented from the ground which occurred because of the water crisis.

He shared the story of sufferings of Ms. Tumpa Khatun, a pregnant woman who has to walk almost 3 kilometers from home to collect drinking water for her family of seven members. She herself takes a little water sometimes when the stored water runs out and thus, she's suffering from several health issues. Another story was of Ms. Shahanara Begum who is suffering from backpain and leg pain caused by carrying water and walking long distances every day. She has to spend a remarkable amount of time in a day just for collecting water. Ms. Jinnatun Begum had to face a major operation of her ovary, which was caused by use of saline water. Now She is facing domestic violence due to this. A terrific incident of sexual assault happened with Ms. Taslima Khatun while she went for collecting water to help her mother in domestic chores. There are thousands more like these, he said.

Detailed discussion was held and queries of the participants were answered at the end of the session.

SESSION 03: DISCOVERING THE NEXUS BETWEEN WATER & CLIMATE CHANGE

The interlinks between water and climate change were explained by Suwendu Bishwas focusing on the several impacts of climate change on water, and the way it impacts water. An overview of the issue of why the water crisis is a climate crisis was given and the participants were oriented on the question. The facilitator also shared some videos on the issue.

SESSION 04: FAMILIARITY WITH WATER MOVEMENTS

In this session, the participants were introduced to the history of ongoing water crisis-related movements in Bangladesh. Mr. Gourango Nandy elaborated on the sources available for freshwater, government initiatives, campaigns, movements, initiatives, and the reason behind the crisis elaborated in detail and this was followed by a detailed discussion. The movement for drinking water in coastal Bangladesh is somehow limited in actions like the human chain, seminars, and meetings, he said. The movements for waterlogging repulsion are rather incredible compared to these.



The NGOs worked and are working on water crises of which the actions are divided into small projects and short-term activities.

Besides this, the community people think that this crisis will be solved by the NGOs as they initiated several projects. This is high time to make the community own this issue of their selves and act accordingly. Pond-centric solutions can be effective in resolving the water crisis in coastal Bangladesh, he said. And this issue must be incorporated into the political agenda.

SESSION 05: WATER RIGHTS: POLICY & PROTECTION

Knowledge of national and international water-related policy and protection is crucial to designing an effective campaign strategy hence the participants were briefed on the water rights-related



declarations, laws, and policies. A discussion was carried out by Mr. Hasan Mehedi, Chief Executive of CLEAN in this session.

The discussion of water rights was not popular before 1978, he said. He referred to Article 25 of the UN Declaration on Human Rights and International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR) which mention an adequate standard of living, but no direct remarks about water. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) directly refers to the necessity to ensure water and sanitation for all in goal no. 06. Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 includes ensuring long-term water and food security in its mission and goal no. 02 and 06 directly refer to the right to water security and the use of water resources.

The Coastal Zone Policy of Bangladesh includes infrastructural establishment for water storage and utilization, rainwater harvesting, conservation of ponds & water tanks, and management of groundwater. The National Water Policy too is committed to facilitating the availability of safe and affordable drinking water supply, improving

efficiency for resource utilization, etc. At the end of the session, the participants contributed their thoughts and comments on the policy and protections presented.

SESSION 06: GROUPWORK: MAPPING WATER HAZARDS AND ASSESS THE RISKS

This session included group work and discussion where the participants were divided into three groups based on the coastal region they are related to. They were instructed to map the water hazards in their regions and relevant risks. Mr. Hasan Mehedi facilitated the session. The hazards the groups found are more or less common.

The day was called off with the group presentations.

THE COMMON ISSUES FOUND



CLIMATE CHANGE



DESTRUCTION OF SAFE WATER SOURCES



UNPLANNED USE OF GROUNDWATER RESOURCES



CONTAMINATION OF NATURAL WATER RESOURCES



OVERUSE AND WASTE OF WATER



RAPID URBANIZATION



LACK OF ENGAGEMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT



LACK OF COORDINATION BETWEEN SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS



4. PROCEEDINGS

The day 02 of the WaterHackathon was dedicated to design campaign and advocacy opportunities, according to the objective of the workshop.

SESSION 01: SCOPING OPPORTUNITIES: CAMPAIGN & ADVOCACY

The participants were divided into three groups – SouthEast Coastal Zone, Mid Coastal Zone, and Southwest Coastal Zone. A common Google doc link was shared with the participants to enter the activities and strategies they want to follow to create a collaborative campaign for water rights in Coastal Bangladesh. Mr. Nurul Alam Masud facilitated the group work and group presentations.

The entries were as below:

	South-east Part	Mid Part	Southwest Part
Proposed Strategy & Activity Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functional & Strengthening WATSAN committees • International water day celebration • Developing ICT materials & design media campaigns based on the local crisis • Analysis of local problems • Sharing meetings on water rights at District & sub-district levels. • Cultural program to raise community awareness • Public hearing at the Sub-district level • Advocacy meeting with policy makers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form divisional & district platform Coordination meeting with all parties at the district level Community Mobilization Team Formation Media mobilization Online campaign, influencer engagement Media visit with CSO (In affected area) Dialogue with local MPs/ District water management committee/ Minister of Water resource Divisional conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitization of policy actors including different political parties' leaders • Mass campaign [Memorandum, local level dialogue, human chain, meeting and Research and information gathering] • Media campaign • Youth platform on district and upazila level and Capacity building and engagement of youth • Inter civil society network communication and capacity building • Identify influential action and engage with campaign

Proposed strategy and activities were mainly focused on media mobilization, virtual campaigns, developing community-led action groups, enhancing engagement of local political leaders and sensitization of policy actors.

- Acknowledge the Rights to Water
- Sensitize Policy makers
- Ensure participation of citizens in government water management committee
- Evidence generation of Water Right Violation
- Popularize Water rights issues in public domain
- Increased Community people engagement
- Sensitizing Policy actors
- A vibrant water rights campaign in the coast
- A strong civil society network

SESSION 02: YOUTH FOR WATER & CLIMATE

This session began with a presentation on youth engagement and initiatives in water rights and climate in Bangladesh. Sohanur Rahman, facilitator of the session presented some remarkable youth activities focusing on water rights in Bangladesh. The probable strategies he mentioned to engage youth in water rights in future initiatives focus on initiating youth-led campaigns and projects, youth capacity building, etc. Opportunities of fellowship for youth on water rights and rewards for community-based solutions can be created to inspire more youth and their communities as well. This is high time we support and facilitate a youth-led network on water rights, he added.

SESSION 03: GROUPWORK: RESOURCE MAPPING

This session was dedicated to resource mapping to accelerate the collective campaign for desired outcomes. A google doc link was shared within the groups to note their inputs on Institutions and Knowledge Management & Info which will be useful to initiate an effective campaign.

1. INSTITUTIONS

- Farmers organization
- Citizen's Platform/Forum
- Fisherfolks Organization
- Water Rights Committee [Paani Committee]
- Coastal DPO Alliance
- Cox'sbazar CSO-NGO Forum [CCNF]
- CAB Youth Group
- EquityBD
- BAPA
- Satkhira Nagorik Committee
- Climate Advocacy Forum
- Youth for SDG 6
- KHANI- Food Security Network Bangladesh
- Like-minded NGOs working with water rights

2. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT & INFO

- Universities located in Coastal Districts
- Water Museum
- Community Radio
- Climate and Adaptation Information Management Centre
- Local Press

SESSION 04: BATTLE PLAN: STRATEGY & ACTION

In this session, the participants were requested to put their opinion on the branding of the campaign. Beside this, they proposed several criteria's to be considered for any other organizations who have not participated this event.

The criteria were:

- Organizations working with water rights
- Having Campaign experience and capacity
- Like minded organizations who want to initiate right to water related activities
- For individuals- someone influential having good intention & good experience in working with water rights

SESSION 05: BRANDING

In this session, the participants proposed some tagline, slogan and common call for this water movement campaign. The proposed lines were:

- ▶ পানি আমার অধিকার [Water is my Right]
- ▶ সবার জন্য নিরাপদ পানি [Safe Water for All]
- ▶ আমার পানি- আমার অধিকার [My Water- My Right]
- ▶ নিরাপদ পানি সবার অধিকার [Safe water in Right for all]
- ▶ সকলের জন্য পানি [Water for All]
- ▶ জীবনের জন্য পানি [Water for Life]
- ▶ নিরাপদ পানি আমার অধিকার [Safe Water is My Right]
- ▶ পানি ও জীবন [Water & Life]

SIGNING OUT

The very ending session was conducted by Mr. Nurul Alam Masud and Mr. Hasan Mehedi. In the closing discussion, some policies and regulations were primarily taken for future activities under this campaign.

Ali Islam Mridha Aashique from SDS, Shariatpur, and Bahnishikha Chowdhury from Khulna University shared their feelings about this WaterHackathon at the end.

The **WATERHACKATHON 2022** was called off by Mr. Nurul Alam Masud thanking and congratulating the participants for joining this event.





5. CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

- ▶ This Campaign will be branding itself as WaterMove Campaign
- ▶ WaterMove Campaign will be a flexible network. Besides organizations, the individuals who work with youth, and women issues can be engaged in this campaign.
- ▶ This campaign aims at ensuring the water rights for all in the coastal Bangladesh.
- ▶ WaterMove will work through Evidence Generation, Campaign, Advocacy, & Knowledge Sharing.
- ▶ This campaign will work ensuring access to common resources of the coastal communities.
- ▶ This campaign will take stand against those IFI's who have initiatives in commercialization and privatization of public water.
- ▶ Participatory Research & Action Network- PRAAN will host the secretariat of the campaign.
- ▶ Participatory management will be followed in campaign implementation; the responsibilities will be distributed on a rotation basis.
- ▶ The organizations working with water-related issues will/can be included/involved/collaborated in the WaterMove Campaign.
- ▶ Young people will be considered as the key actor in the planning and implementation of campaign activities.
- ▶ WaterMove will be continued as a collaborative campaign primarily. It will be formed as an alliance once run actively and successfully with consistency.

6. ACTION AGENDA

- 🔧 Development of POLICY BRIEF/CAMPAIGN PAPER
- 🔧 Conduction of MEDIA CAMPAIGN
- 🔧 Facilitation of Community-based YOUTH-LED MOBILIZATION
- 🔧 Development of PROJECT FACT SHEET Bangladesh: Rural Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for Human Capital
- 🔧 Observance of BANGLADESH WATER WEEK
- 🔧 Development of a KNOWLEDGE REPOSITORY
- 🔧 Facilitation of DISTRICT WATER COMMITTEE



7. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Name	Organization
Ali Islam Mridha Aashique	SDS, Shariatpur
Aminuzzaman Milon	Bandhan, Noakhali
ATM Zakir Hossain	Jagrata Juba Sangha (JJS),
Bahnishikha Chowdhury	35 mm - the KU movie Club, KU
Fahad Rabid	UNDP, Bhola
Gouranga Nandy	Center for Environment and Participatory Research (CEPR)
Hasan Mehedi	CLEAN, Khulna
Liton Chowdhury	Songshoptaque
Md. Abul Hasan	COAST Foundation
Md. Hasan Shahriar	Jago Nari, Barguna
Md. Rayhan Hosain	Bangladesh Watch Group on External Debt
Mohon Kumar Mondal	LEDARS, Satkhira
Nurul Alam Masud	Participatory Research & Action Network- PRAAN
Prince Mahbub	CLEAN, Khulna
S. M. Sahazada	Prantojon, Barishal
Sheikh Nazmul Huda	Jagrata Juba Sangha (JJS), Koyra Office
Shekhar Banarjee	Badhon, Bagerhat
Shezina Khan Sukonya	Bangladesh Watch Group on External Debt
Sm Nazer Hossain	ISDE Bd
Sohanur Rahman	Youthnet for Climate Justice
Umme Salma	Participatory Research & Action Network- PRAAN





8. PHOTO GALLERY





Participatory Research & Action Network- PRAAN

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