



Lessons Learned

The CBM Crisis Modifier Activation in Bangladesh Floods, 2022

Photo: CBM / Gonzalo Bell

Acknowledgements

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Acronyms

CBM: Christoffel-Blindenmission Christian Blind Mission e.V.
CDD: Centre for Disability in Development
DiDRR: Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction
FFWC: Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre
GBV: Gender-Based Violence
GUK: Gana Unnayan Kendra
NAWG: Need Assessment Working Group
OPD: Organisation of Persons with Disabilities
PDM: Post Distribution Monitoring
HCTT: Humanitarian Coordination Task Team

Cover Photo: @CBM/ Gonzalo Bell - Public water transportation during flood times in Gaibandha Region.

Project Intervention



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
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The CBM approach on Crisis Modifier

A crisis modifier is a tool that enables early action and rapid response to humanitarian needs occurring in project areas. It is mostly meant for small-case humanitarian situations but can of course also come into action as the starting point for a larger response. Crisis modifier plays a vital role in utilizing existing development project funds by repurposing some of the minor activities during any disaster. In that regard, a crisis modifier contributes to the internal humanitarian funding mechanism as part of disaster risk reduction intervention as well as a long-term, development-oriented project.

The goal of a crisis modifier is to address the immediate need of the affected population by allowing implementing partners to act promptly and at the same time protect development gains resulting from development programs. As part of its extending Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (DiDRR) initiatives, CBM piloted a standard crisis modifier tool in 2021 which was accompanied by training to staff from CBM Country Offices. In 2022, a couple of CBM Country Offices and partners have started to incorporate the CBM crisis modifier model in the planning of new projects, but no larger crisis modifier activation has taken place yet.

In case of Bangladesh, there has been an ongoing discussion on how a crisis modifier could be included in the existing project when the 2022 flooding happened. Thus, the below described crisis modifier does not fully follow the “standard model” that CBM has developed but can be seen as an ad-hoc development and implementation of a crisis modifier.

CBM’s Disability-Inclusive DRR Programme in Bangladesh

To support the inclusion and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in disaster risk reduction and generate an example of a sustainable community-based inclusive development, CBM in partnership with one national NGO - the Centre for Disability in Development (CDD) – and one local NGO from Gaibandha region - Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK) - initiated a disability-inclusive DRR (DiDRR) project in rural communities of Gaibandha (Northern Bangladesh) in 2009. This initiative was later expanded through three additional implementation phases, which continued until 2021/22.

The Bangladesh Floods 2022

In May 2022, heavy rains started in the north-eastern region of Bangladesh. In the beginning, it was predicted as an early arrival of the monsoon reported by FFWC but quickly the cumulative rain exceeded the 122 years record which caused enormous flooding. The flood affected the lives and livelihoods in nine districts of the northern part of Bangladesh and a total of 7.2 million people were affected. To support government with relief activities to the flood-affected population, local/national NGOs, INGOs, UN agencies and the Bangladesh Red Crescent launched a humanitarian response to the affected community.

The decision to trigger the Crisis Modifier activation

Since no formal crisis modifier model had been developed prior to the flood situation, there was also no pre-defined trigger that would automatically activate the crisis modifier.

On June 19th, CBM Bangladesh Country Office started to share information on the flood situation prevailing at that time mainly in the northeast of the country. Gaibandha region was not yet affected at this point, but water level began to rise in the area and a worsening situation was predicted. Through a closer monitoring of the flood situation in Gaibandha and analysis of situation reports of Need Assessment Working Group (NAWG) following the FFWC forecast in Bangladesh, it was predicted that flooding will also affect the project location (in Gaibandha) under the DiDRR project of CBM.

Therefore, the crisis modifier was activated. The formal approval for the activation was done on June 26th (so one week after the discussion started). In the meantime, a first concept for the crisis modifier was already developed by CDD and GUK and ready to be rolled-out upon approval.

Defining Crisis Modifier activation: Needs Assessment

Following the formal decision to activate the crisis modifier, further situation analysis of rainfall and water level between June 26th and 30th confirmed that the project location Gaibandha would be affected by flooding.

To understand the specific needs of the affected population, information was collected through field visits, community consultations and data analysis reports of the Need Assessment Working Group (NAWG). The national level analysis by Humanitarian Coordination Task Team (HCTT) revealed that the primary need of the flood affected people were food, drinking water, cash support, and makeshift shelter. Since local markets in the project area were mostly functional it allowed considering multi-purpose cash transfer programming. To ensure the protection of women with and without disabilities, the project also decided to provide a dignity kit package as suggested by the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) cluster.

Budget

Following a careful analysis of the available budget in comparison to the needs of the affected population in the project area, it was agreed that a total of BDT 1,456,747 (approx. 15,000 Euro) could be allocated towards the crisis modifier. Those funds were partially savings from previously implemented activities. Thus, it was ensured that most of the initially planned activities under the long-term intervention would not be affected by larger budget cuts and could be implemented as planned.

Activities

1. Based on the available budget and following the recommendations from the national Cash Working Group, it was calculated that around 204 families could be supported with a **one-time cash transfer** (BDT 4,500 per household/ approx. 40 Euro). As per the previous analysis by CBM, it was also observed that persons with disabilities require an additional amount of

cash for different purposes such as medication, assistive device repairs, transportation etc. To address the additional need of persons with disabilities, CBM also considered providing top up amount of 1,000 BDT to the 27 households of persons with disabilities among the project participants.

2. To address the specific needs of women and girls (with and without disabilities) It was also decided to provide a **dignity and hygiene kit**¹ to selected women, adolescent girls and transgender. A total of 40 households were targeted for this activity.
3. As a third pillar of the response, CDD and GUK were aiming to support safe evacuation of flood affected peoples by deploying its multipurpose accessible **rescue boat** to flood affected areas.

Timeframe

Initially, the intervention was planned for a timeframe of around 1,5 to 2 months (July to August). The actual implementation period was around three months (including the completion of the Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) survey).

Implementation Model

It was agreed with CDD and GUK to carry out the implementation in collaboration with two Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) which had been established under the existing DiDRR Project. The effective and meaningful participation of OPDs was ensured in every stage of the response.

¹ Each kit included the following with a total price of around 25 USD per kit: cotton saree, reusable menstrual cloth, female underwear, towel, bathing soap, laundry soap, rubber sandal, toothpaste, toothbrush, mosquito net, facemask, torchlight, knitting bag, plastic bucket, illustrative postcard with GBV + COVID19 + dengue prevention and response info.



Nazmul, a young man with disability and cashier of an apex body of persons with disabilities of Sreepur Union under Sundarganj Sub-district of Gaibandha, Bangladesh is collecting data in KoBo platform using his smartphone.



Implementation of the Crisis Modifier

Selection of project participants

To identify the project participants for the response,

- A primary list of 300 most vulnerable flood affected families collected from Sreepur and Haripur Unions through OPDs and engagement with local government was developed.
- 10 volunteers from the two unions were trained including persons with disabilities on CBM's Inclusive Targeting Criteria and the Washington Group Short Set of Questions from July 19th until July 21st and did field test. One volunteer was dismissed so that finally nine volunteers were available for a detailed selection process.
- A joint team of OPDs, CDD & GUK travelled to Sreepur on July 21st to observe the volunteer's data collection.
- Data entry and analysis of the 300 families was done through KoBo toolbox. On July 28th, the results were published on the Union Parishad's notice board to allow for feedback.
- A final list of 204 households (Sreepur: 84 Haripur: 118) was validated by the Union Parishad's chairmen and signed accordingly.

Provision of Cash

- CBM, CDD and GUK selected bKash (a private financial service provider) for the cash transfer support based on the quality of their offer and their good coverage also in rural areas.
- Project participants were informed about the bKash financial transaction, and it was checked if all targeted households were properly registered. To avoid any error with the transaction, bKash number and national ID mobile number were matched.
- Electronic money transfers were completed by mid of August 2022.

Dignity Kits Distribution

- A list of 40 households (20 from Sreepur & 20 from Haripur) was prepared and finalized. Procurement was done through an active engagement of OPD leaders from Gaibandha local market.
- A group of OPD leaders met with relevant local decision makers on July 31st to attend the Dignity Kit distribution event.

Rescue Boat

An existing (accessible) rescue boat under ownership of CDD with a capacity for more than 40 persons was deployed to the region and on standby to support evacuation process. Fortunately, there was no need to activate the boat.

Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM)

The full monitoring of the crisis modifier activation and response was completed with the active engagement of OPDs. They have been involved in the data collection for the primary list for distribution from the beginning. The project team also conducted post distribution monitoring (PDM). OPD members were part of this monitoring to ensure accessibility and inclusion in the monitoring process. PDM has been completed for 20% of the total project participants. Based on the field data it is found that after receiving cash assistance, expenditure for buying food items took maximum portion of the expenses. Also, they have spent their money to buy soap & healthy items.

Some responders reported that they must spend the received money on treatment purpose. PDM also shows that all information about cash distribution was clear to the project participants and that they were informed of the process of short listing. The bKash agent shop coverage was good and as a result people could easily withdraw money. Most of the respondents stated that the medium for cash withdraws was accessible. The PDM report also shows that no manipulation of the use of the funds received by the family members of the project participants was reported. 97.56% of the respondents reported that their household members didn't face any challenges while redeeming or buying food or non-food items using e-Cash or mobile cash in the shop.



Photo: CBM/ Gonzalo Bell



On embankment/ dam at kapashia, Horipur of Gaibandha district.





Lessons Learned

- In Bangladesh, CBM did not have the possibility for a systematic preparation of a crisis modifier and the concept was developed ad hoc. The quick decision-making process and positive results of the implementation show that the crisis modifier concept does not necessarily require a systematic and long-term planning but can also work ad hoc when all partners have already a basic understanding of the concept.
- The ad hoc development of the crisis modifier was also strongly supported by the fact that CDD and GUK could build on the existing structures in the affected communities that had been built up and capacitated during the past years. It can be assumed that the crisis modifier would have not worked in such a smooth way if the project in the region had only started recently.
- It is important to avoid overcomplexity and to ensure that activities are adjusted to the available budget: e.g., the initial questionnaire for the targeting exercise was quite large and would have absorbed much time for the implementation while there was only approx. 15,000 Euro available for relief activities. Thus, the workload and resources that are invested in the assessment, targeting and monitoring must be in a good balance with the concrete support provided to the project participants.
- It is important to develop a realistic implementation plan that takes into consideration the realities in the affected regions but also organisational capacities at the time given. For the crisis modifier in Bangladesh, initially a duration of two months was planned but, in the end, it took around three months upon completion of the PDM. The reasons for the delay were partly linked to organisational systems and structures which had not been properly considered during the initial planning (e.g., public holidays and annual leave of key staff).



Photo: CBM/ Gonzalo Bell

Image: Flood affected women gathered at Badsha Miah's home yard to be listed for relief and rehabilitation facilities offered by international development partner and organized by GUK. CBM has been supporting CDD-GUK since 2013 to strengthen community resilience and the local government capacity for inclusion of Disability in DRR.



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