

Substantial Indigenous knowledge makes community resilience.

Knowledge is life – Commemorating IDRR Day 2015

Geographically Sirajgonj District is located in the north of Bangladesh, prone to flooding and river erosion. A huge population living in the isolated char that remain under the constant threat of annual flooding. DIPECHO programme, a disaster preparedness initiative supported by European Commissions Humanitarian & Civil Protection Office has supported these communities to mobile and share the indigenous knowledge to combat these eventualities through a series of programmes.

Concern Worldwide along with its local partner Gono Kalyan Sangthsa has been running a series of these DIPECHO programmes in these char islands and created an opportunity to enhance the resilience of these communities using their indigenous knowledge and scientific ideas.

“Local inhabitants of char lands can foresee the flooding while looking at the movements of the clouds. As the clouds begin hovering they put a jute stick in the nearby river to measure the water level. Thus, they plan their movements accordingly” said a Union Disaster Management Member in belkuchi Upzilla of the Sirajgong District. To build on this concept, water gauges were installed by Concern Worldwide as per the demand of the local community. Before the installation, indigenous practices were collected and discussed within the monthly meeting and shared among all the community to have better use of these water gauges. The material used in these water gauges were locally procured and suggested by local community. This created a great deal of acceptance to the programme among the locals.

Women play a vital role at the family level disaster risk reduction activities using indigenous practices. Since these lands are highly vulnerable to flooding, livestock face a big brunt, for their survival especially chicken and ducks during the floods, women preserve handful of rice every day to stockpile for the emergency purposes. Kohinoor Begum, Paikpara, Kaliahoripur, Sadar Upazila, Sirajganj, lives in a flood affected village, every year any moderate flood submerge their homestead she says “85 families are living in this village, all are stocking handful rice every day and portable oven to be able to use in the disaster situations. These ideas were further encouraged by the Concern team during the regular monthly meetings”.

Communities can become resilient by utilizing their indigenous knowledge and local resources, but only if such ideas are encouraged and harnessed. On one side it is the utilization of indigenous knowledge in scientific way, and on another side it can help to mobilize the community to create their own future using their own local resources

In the previous DIPECHO cycle in Belukha Sadar union of the Sirajgong District a bamboo bridge, with the assistance of Concern Worldwide, was built. Bamboo trees are considered strong and are locally available. The logs from the tree are used to construct small bridges and canopy’s which can withstand wind and can firmly hold the soil. This has really helped a huge population to connect with the main land in these chars. Reveals the UDMC Chairman of the Belkuchi Union.

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Concern worldwide is an international humanitarian organisation dedicated to tackling poverty and suffering in the world poorest countries’. Under disaster preparedness & DRR project Concern worldwide is part of NARRI consortium - National Alliance for Risk Reduction & Response Initiative (NARRI) Country’s largest Consortium, a recipient of UN Sasaka award 2013.