



CAPABILITY STATEMENT

Inclusive access to water ©Helvetas/K.M.Asad

OUR ENGAGEMENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE

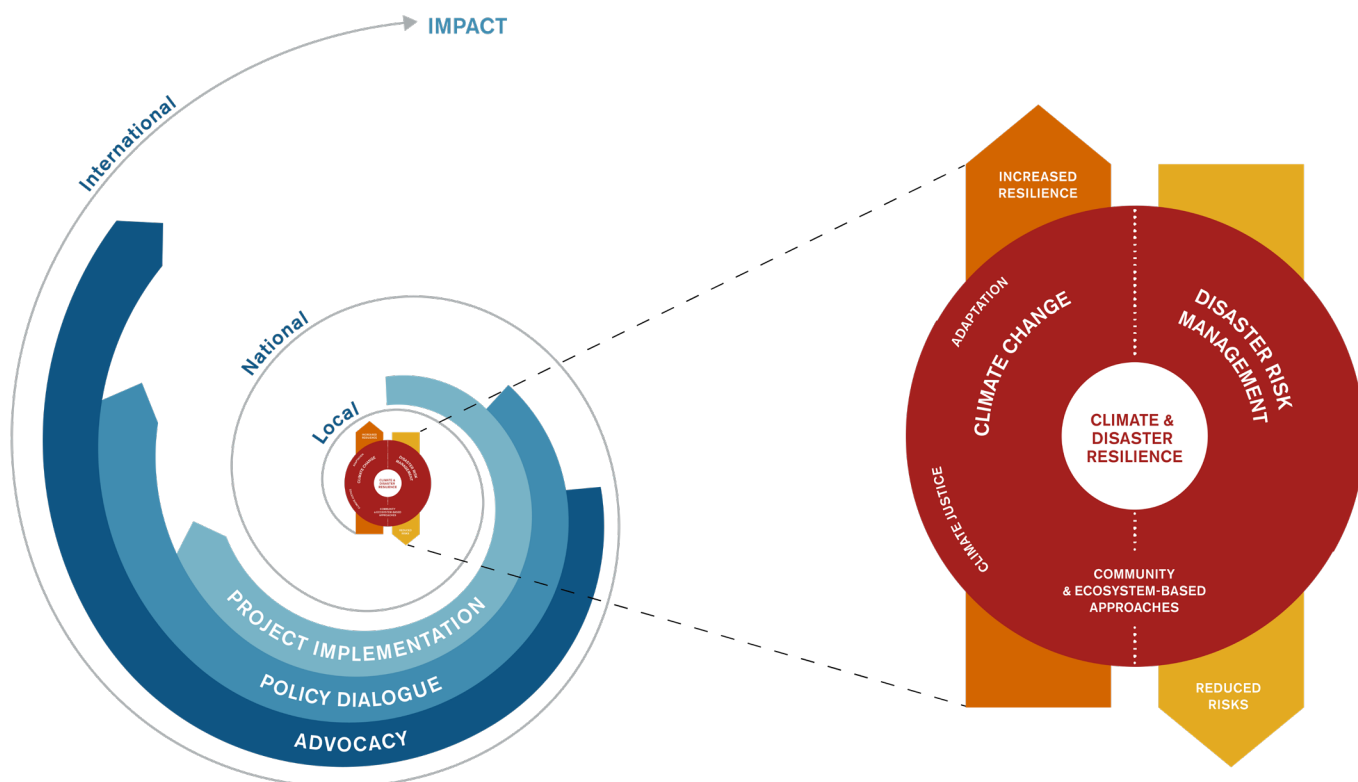
Bangladesh is one of the most climate-vulnerable countries in the world. Many communities in different hotspots are highly exposed to growing risks and have an inadequate capacity to adapt to the changes. The increasing number of climate-related disasters represents a significant threat to water, food, and livelihood systems, and jeopardizes access to fundamental rights and basic services for millions. In the next 30 years more than 13 million people could be displaced due to climate change impacts.

The poorest are the most vulnerable to climate impacts and must be supported to simultaneously adapt to climate change and reduce the exposures of their lives and livelihoods to a changing climate and other

systemic risks. Thus, it is crucial to assist them through context-specific, gender and climate-responsive plans, effective implementation of adaptation actions, adequate resource mobilization, capacity building, and inclusive policy processes.

Helvetas Bangladesh has been working **since 2003** on **building the resilience of climate-vulnerable communities** by enabling people to gain and ensure access to water, sanitation, hygiene, food, and natural resources. In partnership with civil society, networks, public institutions, and the private sector, we promote **systemic technical and financial solutions** to improve living conditions and climate resilience in the climate hotspots in the country.

OUR APPROACHES



With a **Human Rights-Based Approach** as the core of our intervention, we act at the local level supporting vulnerable communities, civil society, and local private sectors to address climate risks. We are committed to the principles of Locally Led Adaptation and convinced that “the most affected should be the most engaged”. This means that people affected by climate change are involved in key decision-making processes. We invest in **building local capacities** and institutions to ensure that they understand climate risks and uncertainties, generate solutions, and can manage adaptation initiatives over the long term. We support affected people to **have a voice**, and through individual and collective action to promote and demand climate justice. For this, we engage in multi-stakeholder decision and policy-making processes at the local, national, and international levels. Gender and social equity is a transversal issue that we mainstream in all our work. We engage with the **private sector** as a system actor, encouraging ecologically and socially sustainable business practices that are climate resilient.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

We support local partners to develop climate-resilient solutions and foster multi-stakeholder partnerships ensuring that women are empowered to claim their rights. **Women and youth** are not only at the center of our projects but are also decision-makers who lead and define project priorities. We build their **individual and collective capacities** through training, orientation, skill development, and coaching. We support disaster risk management at the community and institutional levels reducing risks in schools and other public facilities. We collaborate across sectors, initiatives, and levels to ensure that different actions and funding sources (humanitarian assistance, development, disaster risk reduction, green recovery funds) support one another.

POLICY DIALOGUE

We support women and youth groups to engage in constructive policy dialogue from the local to the national levels. The Mothers' Parliament is one such initiative that successfully advocates for gender-responsive budgeting for infrastructure, services and for enhanced climate resilience. We research and pilot **innovative adaptation solutions** in partnership with line departments and ministries. Building on the evidence from our interventions, we advocate that the government develops and implements projects that respond to the needs of the most climate-vulnerable populations and ecosystems. We prepare policy briefs through an inclusive process and **facilitate policy dialogues** with several departments, ministries, and networks at the national level. We combine local, indigenous, and scientific knowledge to better inform adaptation decisions.

ADVOCACY

We advocate for climate-resilient development at multiple levels. We are a member of the Climate Action Network, strengthening its South Asia coalition. We use platforms such as Gobeshona and Community-Based Adaptation - CBA to advocate for community-led adaptation actions. Helvetas contributes to **global scientific assessments** such as the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, where we contribute as Lead Author, and informs global discussions with local insights and know-how at forums such as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and Conference of Parties, where we participate in official government delegations and at civil society platforms. Through these interlinked actions, we ensure that local realities and our local actions inform global processes and negotiations and benefit from global know-how and developments.

OUR FOCUS AREAS



Adapting agricultural practices ©Helvetas/Dipali Biswas (Shushilan)

Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management

Resilient livelihoods

We support communities through capacity transfer and the adoption of climate smart agriculture technologies and practices in crops, fisheries, livestock, and poultry. Producer groups are encouraged to form cooperatives to gain better access to credit from micro-finance organizations, banks, and youth development departments. We engage with the private sector by strengthening the role of local service providers in assisting producer groups and we facilitate the connection between local farmers and different line departments for input and technical support and capacity building.

Climate-induced migration

To address the complexity of climate-induced migration we work with communities, local governments, and intermediaries, both at the place of origin and at the final destination of the migration flow. In particular we:

- build awareness on migration risks and opportunities with a special focus on migrants' rights;
- promote the establishment of information hubs on the migration process at Union level;
- support the development of alternative livelihood skills for potential migrants;
- promote safe migration advocating for recognition and actions to address climate-induced migration.

DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT

Recognizing that effective disaster risk management must be based on sound risk analysis that informs the risk reduction action plans, Helvetas supports communities in **assessing climate-related risks and action planning**, ensuring the involvement of the most affected people. We work to strengthen the capacities of local authorities to develop risk-informed local development plans, and re/activate disaster management committees at ward and Union level. We assist communities to actively reduce disaster risks by (re)habilitating key infrastructures, making shelters more accessible for people with disabilities, and applying **nature-based solutions**.

Climate Justice and Governance

Loss and damage

We support frontline communities experiencing severe adverse impacts of climate change such as loss of land,

livelihoods, assets, or forced displacement. We assist them in planned and informed migration, reskilling for alternative livelihoods, and rebuilding livelihoods and infrastructure. We also generate evidence on loss and damage for advocacy and for climate finance.

Climate finance

Our work on climate finance is based on principles of fairness, responsibility, and justice. At the local level, we facilitate gender and climate-responsive action planning and ensure financial allocations benefit the most affected people. At the national level we advocate that government departments develop and implement projects that respond to the needs of the most vulnerable populations and ecosystems. At the global level, we advocate for enhanced climate finance and mechanisms that reach the neediest, partnering with public and private actors to make this possible.

Climate governance

Recognizing that the climate crisis we face today is a failure of global governance, our actions are aimed at creating a space for those most vulnerable to be at decision-making bodies and platforms at different levels. This is based on the principle of "nothing about us, without us." We support rights holders to gain confidence and have the evidence to effectively claim their rights and build capacities of duty bearers to deliver on their commitments. We strengthen accountability mechanisms, both upwards and downwards.



Advocating for climate resilient infrastructures ©Helvetas/K.M.Asad

Inclusive Water Access

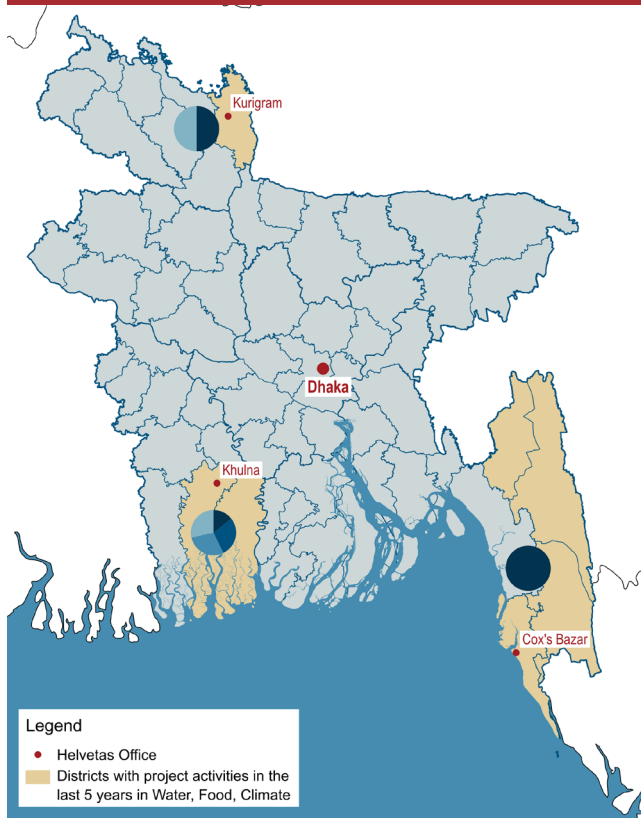
Inclusive WASH

Helvetas works with communities and local authorities to increase access to climate-resilient and inclusive water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH). At the community level we encourage local enterprises to offer adaptation technologies, such as solar-powered pond sand filters, ensuring a service and creating employment opportunities, especially for women. We work with government departments to research and pilot new technologies responding to the changing climate context.

Water resource management

We support communities to improve their access to public funds for WASH investments and for these investments to be climate-resilient. We also strengthen the capacities of local community-based organizations to ensure the human right to water and that public water resources are accessible to all, confronting elite capture.

OUR EXPERIENCE



Adaptation

Key Results

- More than **78,000** people have been supported to carry out various activities such as cultivating saline tolerant seeds, plinth raising, pond protection, preserving rain-water, and storing cattle feed to improve their capacities to adapt to climate change
- More than **1,200** local service providers and private sector partners have been engaged in climate actions
- Over **15,500** women and youth have made informed migration decisions

Key Insights

- Involving private sector partners opens new avenues to finding sustainable and systemic solutions to local climate challenges
- Climate induced migration entails both risks and opportunities. Local governments must acknowledge the scale of the phenomenon and advocate for relevant policy frameworks

Climate Justice and Governance

Key Results

- **9 CSOs** have ensured resource mobilization by submitting **2,472 petitions** to local governments and line departments between 2020 and 2022
- Over the last 4 fiscal years, **14 Unions** in 3 sub-districts increased their annual WASH budget up to **42%** thanks to community mobilization and advocacy

Key Insights

- Strengthening local actors to advocate for climate action yields significant results even in a difficult context
- Local experiences to address loss and damages underpin advocacy for climate justice at international level

Inclusive Water Access

Key Results

- More than **126,000** people from **26,000** households have increased access to resilient water supplies by constructing and rehabilitating water facilities
- **26,000** people have increased access to improved sanitation through newly constructed and rehabilitated sanitation facilities

Key Insights

- It is crucial to plan and realise WASH facilities to be resilient to long-term climate impacts
- Control over water resources is a contentious matter. A thorough understanding of the local power and economic dynamics is key to develop an effective advocacy strategy for inclusive water access that takes into account the risks of elite capturing



Community road rehabilitation ©Helvetas/Franca Roiatti

Disaster Risk Management

Key Results

- **17 Unions** have incorporated climate change resilience planning, accommodating **552** schemes from Risk Reduction Action Plan (RRAP), reaching more than **260,000** people
- More than **2500** people participated in cash for work activities such as road repair, drainage cleaning, embankments.
- **200** households participated in reducing environmental degradation through nature-based solutions (e.g bamboo plantation)
- **1500** students participated in multi-hazard preparedness awareness sessions

Key Insights

- DRM activities should be implemented through holistic approaches linking emergency interventions with development initiatives
- DRM capacities of communities are more effectively strengthened through learning by doing approaches