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**Dhaka  
Earthquake &  
Emergency  
Preparedness -  
Enhancing  
Resilience**



 International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies



Humanitarian Aid  
and Civil Protection



 ACTION  
AGAINST  
HUNGER

 ACTION  
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# When Covid took the depth away.

**Evaluation of the project:**

**Dhaka Earthquake and Emergency Preparedness - Enhancing Resilience**

## KEY FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

**This evaluation finds that the DEEPER project achieved advances towards greater preparedness among the target communities in Dhaka's south. In the face of the prevailing Covid-19 pandemic, however, DEEPER struggled to achieve the systems strengthening that it had aimed for.**

**The report highlights several aspects that can be sustained and mainstreamed with follow-up action, such as the integrated deployment of urban volunteers. It commends the professional distribution of cash grants that gave hope when many had none.**

**'When Covid took the depth away' features numerous lessons on future urban programming and for the context of shocks affecting not only the population, but also the project itself.**

The Dhaka Earthquake and Emergency Preparedness - Enhancing Resilience (DEEPER) project was launched in June 2019 and implemented by a consortium of German Red Cross (GRC), Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS), Christian Aid (CA), Action Contre La Faim (ACF), British Red Cross (BRC), and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). The EUR 1.22 million project was funded by the European Commission Directorate-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Civil Protection (ECHO) and aimed to increase the level of preparedness to respond to major earthquakes and other emergencies and enhance the resilience of target wards in southern Dhaka, and to thereby contribute to reduced propensity and scale of secondary earthquake and emergency impact.

In light of the challenges induced by the pandemic, the project was extended from 20 to 28 months and modified to address urgent needs in its target areas.

The **evaluation** is based on a mixed-method approach that included surveys among households and volunteers, focus group discussions in selected wards, key informant interviews with partners and stakeholders, staff reflection sessions and an extensive document review. Field research was conducted in October 2021 and led by M. Imran Uddin. Remote support was provided by Patrick Bolte, who also led the analytical process.

### Relevance & coherence

DEEPER's objectives and activities were well-aligned with key strategies and policies - notably the Disaster Management Act (2012), the National Plan for Disaster Management (NPD, 2016-2020), the Standing Order on Disasters (2019), and the Urban Volunteer Management Guidelines (2019). Investing in earthquake and emergency preparedness was highly relevant given prevailing risk patterns. The project also pursued many activities in a participatory fashion - the urban risk assessment (URA) process shall be highlighted in this regard. However, the Covid restrictions meant that there were limits to the level of frequent and direct engagement.

The changes pursued and agreed upon by ECHO following two modification requests were extremely relevant and addressed acute needs of Covid-affected households. New activities included cash grants (Result 5), and mental health support (under result 3), among others.

As the project now featured a strong response component, the coherence of the original project logic was compromised, as critical elements to systems strengthening were removed (e.g., support to a regular training and volunteer management regime).

### Efficiency

Considering the enormous challenges posed by Covid-19 restrictions as well as start-up delays, the DEEPER team was put in a hard place to maintain operations and to deliver both on the original objectives as well as the new relief activities. While aiming to do both, some oversights occurred that included the establishment of a robust monitoring system and the missed revision of targets. While there was some level of integration between partner-based activities (e.g., the link between URA and contingency plans and the new ALARM app), other opportunities (such as the link between volunteer training under result 1 and WDMC consolidation under result 2) were not fully tapped.

### Effectiveness & impact

DEEPER made many advances towards greater preparedness in terms of providing instruments and

tools. These include the ALARM and PREPARE apps, the URAs and contingency plans, as well as other protocols and insights for mass casualty management and private sector engagement. Several studies and reports were produced, and efforts on raising awareness and preparedness through webinars, a TV talk show and other publications are recognised. The project also gave hope to 1,550 Covid-affected households when there was none, and triggered similar support interventions that reached an additional 12,640 households.

However, the impact towards raised earthquake and emergency preparedness is limited thus far. Household preparedness remains low (an index on applied measures stands at 0.135 (0.00 min/1.00 max). Very few people were aware of the new and commendable PREPARE app. Systems are not yet strengthened to the level the project had aimed for.

### Sustainability

Perhaps unsurprisingly given the described restrictions, the sustainability of project outcomes is found to be rather limited. All activities were restrained in terms of the depth that would have been needed to systematically strengthen systems.

Having that said, many features (such as the two apps) hold considerable promise if followed up. The report provides ratings for all key outcomes and suggests options for consolidation.

### Recommendations

The evaluation report makes eleven recommendations, presented along the lines of three main topics. See the full reasoning in chapter 9 (p.26).

#### A. IMPROVING CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Similar future projects would benefit from a more robust context analysis to better understand local opportunities and links to existing and up-coming frameworks. Considering the often unavoidable gap between project design and effective start, more implementation guidance to the incoming

project team would be beneficial. Consortia should furthermore strive for more integrated processes and structures and ensure effective and efficient monitoring and reporting systems.

- A.1** Conduct a systematic context analysis at the outset of the project.
- A.2** Ensure that all team members fully understand the logic of the project design.
- A.3** Integrate the project implementation and systems among consortium members.
- A.4** Ensure adequate monitoring capacity to pursue adaptive management.

#### B. CONSOLIDATING PROJECT OUTCOMES

DEEPER achieved many promising and innovative results that, in light of the restrictions that challenged much of the implementation, are left in a fragile state (see sustainability). A sober and realistic process is needed to salvage these results and render them more embedded in existing resources and frameworks.

- B.1** Develop a consolidation strategy based on a realistic assessment of prospects.
- B.2** Consider offering an induction package as well as coaching to new WDMC members.
- B.3** Explore means to retain the pool of urban volunteers through enhanced engagement.
- B.4** Explore ways to consolidate the ownership and utilisation of ALARM and PREPARE apps.

#### C. STRATEGISING TO STRENGTHEN SYSTEMS

Thinking further ahead and on a scope beyond DEEPER's target wards, the challenge of strengthening systems for earthquake and emergency preparedness remains. Donors and partners are encouraged to explore entry points for key issues that are already highlighted in strategies and plans but that remain insufficiently funded.

- C.1** Systematically analyse entry points and channels for systems strengthening.
- C.2** Pursue high-level discussions to leverage funding and commitments in preparedness.
- C.3** Sketch out concrete opportunities to support future systems strengthening.

## Abbreviations

ACF	Action Contre LaFaim
BDRCS	Bangladesh Red Crescent Society
BFSCD	Bangladesh Fire Service and Civil Defence
BRC	British Red Cross
BURP	Bangladesh Urban Resilience Project
CA	Christian Aid
CBDP	Community-Based Disaster Preparedness
CCC	Command and Control Centre
CRAPS	Community Risk Awareness & Preparedness Score
CSS	Comprehensive School Safety
DEEPER	Dhaka Earthquake and Emergency Preparedness - Enhancing Resilience
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
DSCC	Dhaka South City Corporation
ECHO	European Commission Directorate-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Civil Protection
EPCG	ECHO Partner Coordination Group
EPS	Earthquake Preparedness Score
EUR	Euro
FA	First Aid
FGD	Focus group discussion
GRC	German Red Cross
HH	Household
IEC	Information, communication, education
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
KAP	Knowledge, attitude, practice
KII	Key informant interview
KRI	Key result indicator
MCM	Mass casualty management
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
NPDM	National Plan for Disaster Management
NGO	Non-government Organisation
PDM	Post distribution monitoring
RCY	Red Crescent Youth
RRAP	Risk reduction action plan
SLIP	School-level implementation plan
SOD	Standing Order on Disasters
SURP	Strengthening Urban Resilience Project
ToR	Terms of reference
UCG	Unconditional cash grant
URA	Urban risk assessment
VES	Volunteer Engagement Score
WDMC	Ward Disaster Management Committee

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**When Covid took the depth away. Evaluation of the project “Dhaka Earthquake and Emergency Preparedness - Enhancing Resilience (DEEPER)”**

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