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# LIVELIHOODS IMPROVEMENT OF URBAN POOR COMMUNITIES PROJECT (LIUPCP)

NATIONAL URBAN POVERTY REDUCTION PROGRAMME (NUPRP)

## ANNUAL REPORT 2020



**Helal Uddin Ahmed**  
Senior Secretary  
Local Government Division (LGD)  
Ministry of Local Government,  
Rural Development & Cooperatives  
Government of the People's  
Republic of Bangladesh

## MESSAGE

As Bangladesh undergoes rapid urbanisation, the Government, through its 8th Five Year Plan, is working on making the process inclusive and sustainable, by ensuring cities and local governance mechanisms are well equipped to respond to the needs of its growing urban, climate vulnerable population.

The Livelihoods Improvement of the Urban Poor (LIUPC) Project is an important initiative of the Local Government Division (LGD), under the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Cooperatives. As listed in the Government of Bangladesh's national strategy document, we maintain a strong commitment towards the urban poor population across the nation, with a key objective of ensuring sustainable improvements in their livelihoods and living conditions. The LIUPC is proving itself as an effective tool and platform in supporting the Government achieve this common goal, whilst contributing towards improving the lives of up to 4 million urban poor, across 20 City Corporations and Paurashavas, in a multifaceted manner. Since its inception in August 2018, the project has continued to achieve key milestones which in 2020, included the establishment and strengthening of existing local service delivery mechanisms, enhanced linkages to the communities, and the capacity development of concerned local officials working at the local level.

2020 has been an extremely challenging year following the global public health crisis caused by the COVID-19 virus, that continues to affect Bangladesh till date. However, although the pandemic may have affected implementation of regular programme activities, the LIUPC Project certainly excelled in playing a key role in responding to this unprecedented crisis, by initiating a large scale, multi-pronged, nationwide response which reached out to the vulnerable populations across 20 towns and cities in a targeted way. As a member of the COVID-19 Task-force created by the Local Government, LIUPC was also able to coordinate the interventions with a range of stakeholders working in the city to maximise the available resources and avoid duplication. I would like to extend by warmest thanks to all stakeholders including the community front-liners involved in this successful and rapid response effort.

Looking forward, I am certain that the key foundations which have been laid by the Project this year following its initiations at 20 City Corporations and Paurashavas across Bangladesh, will bear tremendous fruit next year. I would like to express my appreciation to the National Project Director, the Honourable Mayors and other officials of the City Corporations and Paurashavas, for their dedication in improving the livelihoods and living conditions of the urban poor communities.

I would like to thank UNDP Bangladesh and their entire LIUPC team for their continuous hard work, and the UK Government, represented through the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) in Bangladesh, who continue to be generous and trusted partners in supporting our poverty reduction efforts and ensuring that our country's economic success is an equitable and sustainable one.

Hearty congratulations to the UNDP's LIUPC Project for publishing an outstanding Annual Report for 2020.



**Judith Herbertson**  
Development Director  
Foreign, Commonwealth and  
Development Office  
British High Commission, Dhaka

## MESSAGE

Bangladesh has made tremendous progress in recent years on poverty eradication and on the human development front including on 'leaving no one behind'. Rapid urbanization is a reality for Bangladesh as 50% of the total population is expected to live in urban areas by 2050. Although poverty has reduced significantly in rural areas, urban poverty reduction has stagnated recently, as revealed by national data. That means the existing mechanisms to address urban poverty are not yet sufficient. For the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) we want to see inclusive and green growth that ensures no-one is left behind in the cities and towns. And we want an inclusive approach, with local government, citizens' platforms, and local businesses and private sector partners capable and incentivised to identify context-specific solutions to end poverty, address vulnerabilities due to climate change and other shocks, and enhance resilience.

We are therefore very pleased to be the major funder of the Livelihood Improvement of the Urban Poor Communities (LIUPC) project alongside contributions from the Ministry of Local Government and UNDP Bangladesh. LIUPC aims to improve the livelihoods and living conditions of 4 million slum dwellers through inclusive and climate resilient urban development in 20 cities across Bangladesh. Through technical and financial assistance for physical and social improvements in urban slums, the programme provides climate resilient infrastructure solutions, empowers local communities, builds effective local authorities, and supports pro-poor national policy.

The onset of COVID-19 in March 2020 presented an extremely challenging situation for the already vulnerable urban poor population. LIUPC's own socio-economic assessment of the Covid-19 impact has revealed that the number of poor people has tripled in the 20 working cities, having increased from 2 million in 2019 to almost 6.5 million now. Thus, more than 4 million people have emerged as 'new poor' due to the pandemic in LIUPC target areas.

I am very pleased that FCDO was able to provide an additional £3m funding to support the Government's national response to the pandemic. The project delivered it in the most rapid manner, reaching out to communities with hygiene kits, food, and cash support to the vulnerable families. FCDO were also able to allocate additional funding to address the acute nutrition demands. I would like to congratulate the LIUPC team on using their extensive grassroots network, which helped to ensure such a rapid response.

Despite the restrictions posed by the pandemic, the project has proven itself to be robust, with an ability to adapt to evolving scenarios and maintain sustained delivery through its network of community organisations, committed field staff, and relationships with local stakeholders.

Many congratulations to the LIUPC team for an excellent 2020 Annual Report.

*Judith Herbertson*

# FOREWORD BY UNDP RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE IN BANGLADESH

The year 2020 was an exceptional one in the history of UNDP's urban engagement in Bangladesh with support from the Governments of Bangladesh and the United Kingdom. The Livelihoods Improvement of the Urban Poor Communities (LIUPC) project not only remained fully operational on the ground despite the rather challenging conditions of the COVID-19 outbreak but was also able to quickly and effectively respond and reach out to hundreds of thousands of slum dwellers and help them weather the crisis. In doing so, it created a global record of being UNDP's fastest COVID-19 response in urban settings.



This 3rd generation project began operating in 2018 to improve the livelihoods and well-being of millions of urban poor people across the country and ensure their inclusion in Bangladesh's overall economic success story. The LIUPC Project has since remained committed to operationalising partnerships across communities, Government, civil society, and the private sector to reduce poverty in the ever-changing urban landscape of the country.

The LIUPC Project has been able to demonstrate its resilience as a team as well as a nationwide platform for driving sustainable, inclusive and multidimensional urban poverty alleviation. By design, the Project contributes to improving the livelihoods and living standards of the urban poor, particularly young girls and women, by facilitating community empowerment, livelihoods restoration, and better urban local service deliveries that are approached critically through the lens of climate resilience. The LIUPC also offers itself as an active platform in bringing together an array of national networks and policymakers under one umbrella, for policy engagement and urban system reforms, particularly on urban social protection and inclusive municipal governance. Additionally, the Project's efforts in constructing climate-resilient infrastructure and affordable low-cost housing are changing the urban landscape for the poor in a sustainable manner.

On a wider scale, much of the progress made in uplifting the lives of the urban poor in preceding years have now been halted, or even reversed, pushing millions of people into extreme poverty. A resulting "new-poor" has also presented an additional set of challenges to the Government, against a backdrop of serious economic impacts on Bangladesh's formal and informal sectors. However, in addition to providing support to better cope with immediate shocks, the

LIUPC is also continually adapting to better address emerging needs of the urban poor in the longer term, to build forward better.

All of our skills are being tested as the world charts a course through the COVID-19 pandemic, and we remain committed to working with our partners to achieve holistic solutions for the urban poor, by tackling the effects of the pandemic, and restoring sustainable living, in our collective journey of achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

I want to extend my deepest appreciation to the UK's FCDO for their generous financial support and congratulate the LGD and the 20 towns and cities with LIUPC presence for their achievements this year. I would also like to thank the entire project team, including all the front-liners and community-based volunteers, for their tireless work, especially whilst conducting a hugely impactful COVID-19 response. Most importantly, I would like to acknowledge members of the urban poor communities who continue to offer us their knowledge, trust, leadership skills, and passion.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to be 'Sudipto Mukerjee'. The signature is fluid and stylized, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**Sudipto Mukerjee**

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# PROJECT

## BACKGROUND & INFORMATION

Bangladesh has been undergoing rapid urbanisation which has greatly helped accelerate social and economic advancements within the country, now considered as one of the fastest-growing global economies. Whilst notable achievements have been made in strengthening urban governance and management over the last decade, a large number of the urban poor are eager to be part of this success story. Therefore, as Bangladesh grows closer to achieving its goal of attaining middle-income status, it is becoming increasingly urgent to bring the important urban-poverty agenda to centre-stage.

Although urbanisation has proven to be a strong catalyst for national economic growth and a reduction in poverty rates, the prevalence of urban poverty in Bangladesh remains very high. As natural disasters, climate change and economic transformation continues to push millions of people towards cities, there has been spatial relocation of poverty from the rural to urban areas. As a result, unplanned and unmanaged urbanisation has emerged as a principal threat to Bangladesh's future development progress. Therefore, as Bangladesh continues to achieve impressive economic growth, it also needs to effectively manage critical issues concerning urban poor livelihoods and well-being, to promote and ensure equitable and holistic human development carried out in a participatory and inclusive manner, whilst also focussing on creating a climate resilient environment.

Poverty continues to remain a major issue in urban Bangladesh, and this has also led to challenges to food security, with only eleven per cent of urban households enrolled in safety net programmes in comparison to one third in rural areas. These trends are also restricting the country's progress on ensuring a decent standard of living for all: conditions in urban slums are moving towards crisis levels, as urban migrants are exposed to new multidimensional poverty challenges, including meeting nutrition needs, finding decent work and accessing basic services. These underlying disadvantages have not only been exacerbated by the effects of climate change, particularly in coastal areas, but also by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. These factors have emphasised the importance of more pre-emptive measures in our development efforts, to sustainably build resilience and address the underlying causes of vulnerability, whilst supporting the government to reinforce the national policy and programmes.

Against this backdrop, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Bangladesh launched this comprehensive five-year national programme (2018-2023) to reduce urban poverty, in partnership with the Local Government Division (LGD), Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Cooperatives (MLGRD&C), the Government of Bangladesh, and the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO).

The **Livelihoods Improvement of Urban Poor Communities Project (LIUPCP)** is Bangladesh's leading urban poverty reduction programme which contributes to a balanced, sustainable growth, by addressing urban poverty issues in a multi-pronged approach. The programme supports the Government of Bangladesh to improve the livelihoods and living conditions of up to four million poor people living in low-income settlements in urban areas, and contribute to ten SDGs in the process. This is being tackled not just through direct interventions such as building climate resilient infrastructures and providing financial support to the urban poor but also by empowering such communities and building capacity of local urban governments to be able to independently undertake initiatives to reduce urban poverty.



**4 Million**  
Urban Poor



**804,000**  
Households



**45,500**  
Primary groups



**4,136**  
Community  
Development  
Committees



**375**  
Community  
Development  
Committees Cluster



**20**  
Town  
Federation



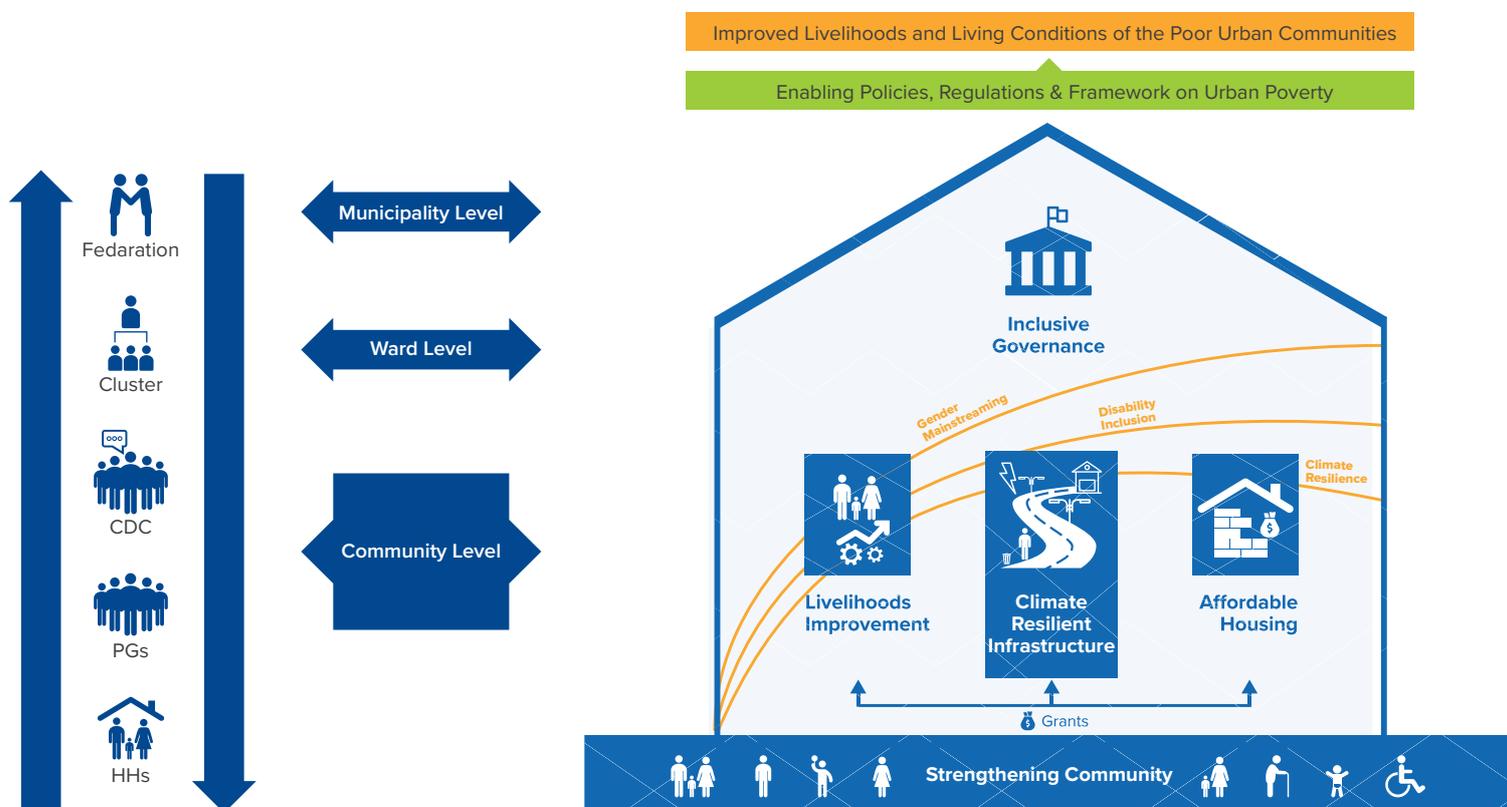
Across  
**20**  
Towns

In this regard, LIUPCP is utilising its platform to work closely with an extensive network of stakeholders at the national and local levels, to create an environment conducive to holistic urban poverty reduction policies and action plans. The inclusion of the urban poor in this decision-making process ensures a more widespread and sustainable impact on the livelihoods and well-being of the urban poor.

LIUPCP is being implemented across 20 Cities/Towns in Bangladesh and focuses on the most marginalised and vulnerable populations and in particular, women and girls, people with disabilities and elderly. The delivery results in 2020 have demonstrated high performance towards our intended goals, despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 virus. However, this pandemic has also gravely impacted our overall efforts on poverty reduction in urban low-income settlements, resulting in large numbers of beneficiaries being trapped in an even deeper state of poverty. Further, the COVID-19 pandemic has given rise to a ‘new-poor’ – a group who were just above the poverty line before the pandemic, who have now fallen beneath the poverty line. Therefore, although the findings illustrated in this report indicates encouraging progress, the years ahead and especially 2021, will be crucial to strike a balance between higher-than-usual demands originating from the cities and the scarce resources to provide solutions.

The new challenges of the current context have further energised the programme drivers to work together to craft an implementation strategy with nuanced ways, to achieve a positive impact through innovation, collaboration and synergy.

**The programme aims to contribute towards a more effective and inclusive urbanisation process by working at the community, municipal and national levels. It addresses complex and interconnected issues under five broad goals:**



The five interrelated components of LIUPCP will directly contribute to achieving the following Sustainable Development Goals:



The LIUPCP will also further contribute to achieving **more than 50 of the SDG target indicators** through improvements in the livelihoods and living conditions of urban poor people.

Through its work, the LIUPCP contributes to the SDG's call to

“**LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND**”

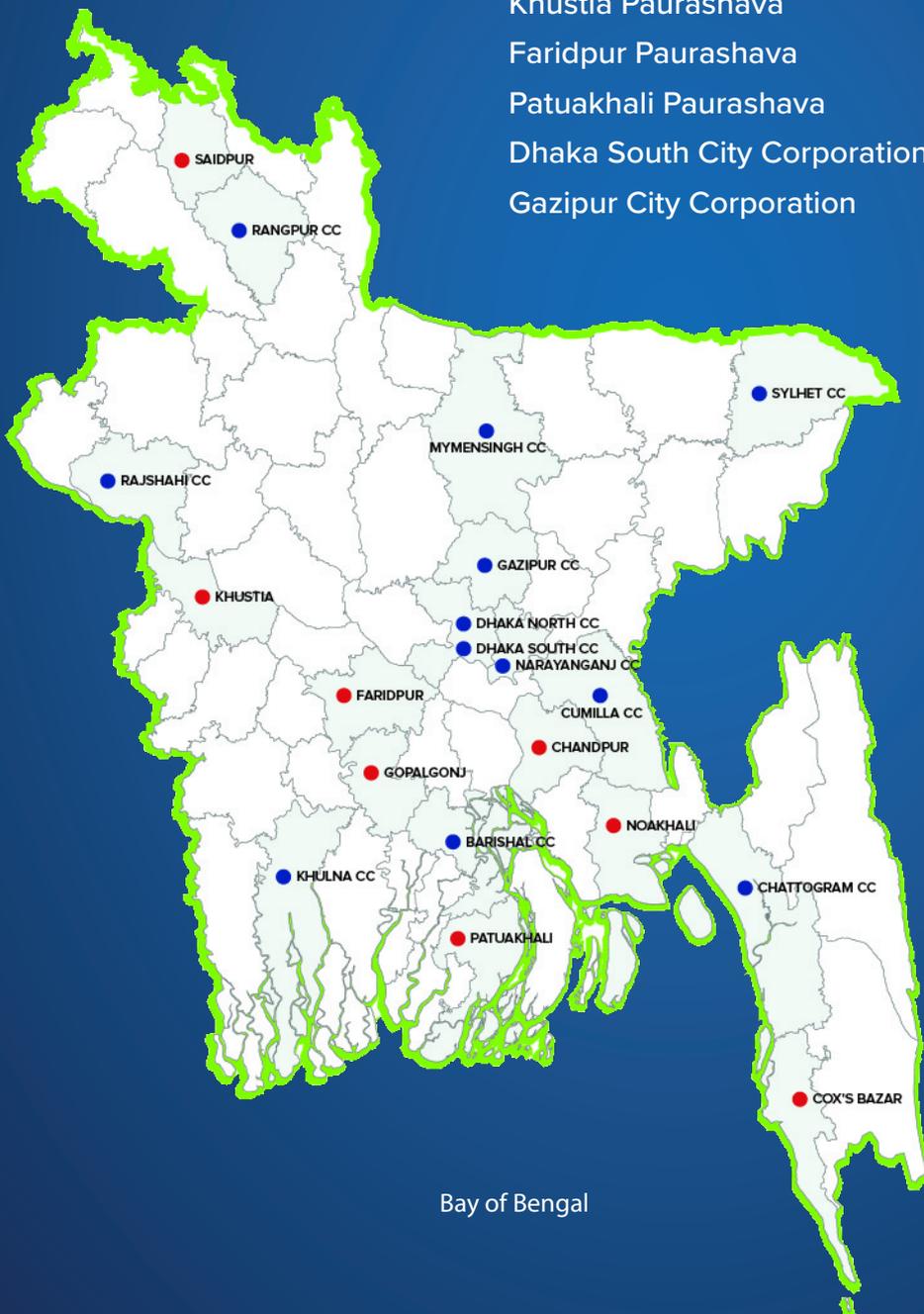


# LIUPCP TOWNS & CITIES



Dhaka North City Corporation  
Narayanganj City Corporation  
Chattogram City Corporation  
Khulna City Corporation  
Sylhet City Corporation  
Mymensingh City Corporation  
Chandpur Paurashava  
Khustia Paurashava  
Faridpur Paurashava  
Patuakhali Paurashava  
Dhaka South City Corporation  
Gazipur City Corporation

Rajshahi City Corporation  
Rangpur City Corporation  
Barishal City Corporation  
Cumilla City Corporation  
Noakhali Paurashava  
Saidpur Paurashava  
Cox's Bazar Paurashava  
Gopalganj Paurashava



# LIUPCP'S TARGETING STRATEGIES

Since its inception, the project has used scientific targeting strategies right from the selection of cities to the individual beneficiary selection. When selecting cities, all city corporations and A-class municipalities were analysed based on their total population and their urban poor population. Further assessments were conducted following field visits for data collection. After the completion of this comprehensive process, which involved a robust and scientific approach for due diligence, a total of 20 cities were selected for project implementation.

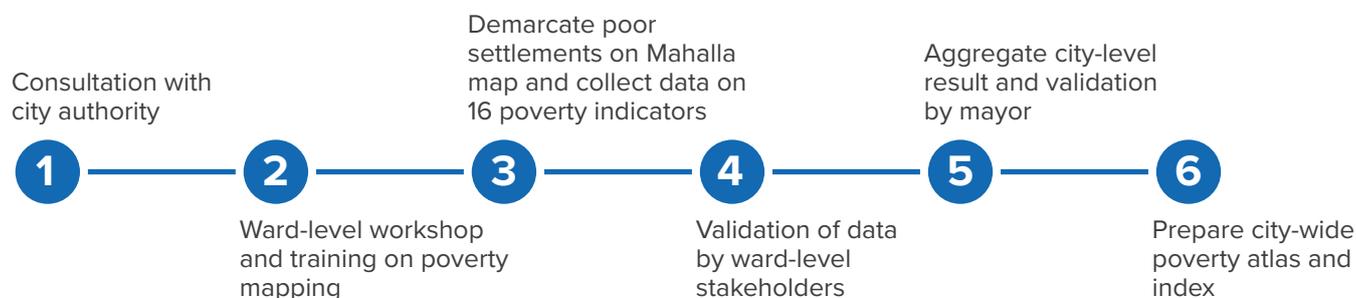
## LIUPCP's Targeting Strategies



- |          |  |  |
|----------|--|--|
| <b>1</b> | • Selection of Cities And Towns<br>• City Index  | • Poverty, Climate Change and Governance       |
| <b>2</b> | • City Wide Poverty Mapping<br>• 16 Development Indicators   | • Poor Settlement Index                        |
| <b>3</b> | • Community Action Planning<br>• Register Household Members  | • Household profile based on 10 MPI indicators |
| <b>4</b> | • Verified list of eligible beneficiaries<br>• Verified list of eligible schemes for interventions |  |

Once the project is initiated in a city, a **Participatory Poverty Mapping** exercise is conducted, following which all the urban poor settlements in each ward of the city are identified in a community-led approach. The resulting maps and database are validated by the local stakeholders and endorsed by the Ward Councillors and Mayor. This exercise also ensures that the city authorities officially recognise the urban poor settlements. The poverty mapping exercise encompasses 16 poverty indicators, reflecting the Settlement Living Index illustrated below, in addition to the standard demographic data.

## City-wide Participatory Poverty Mapping



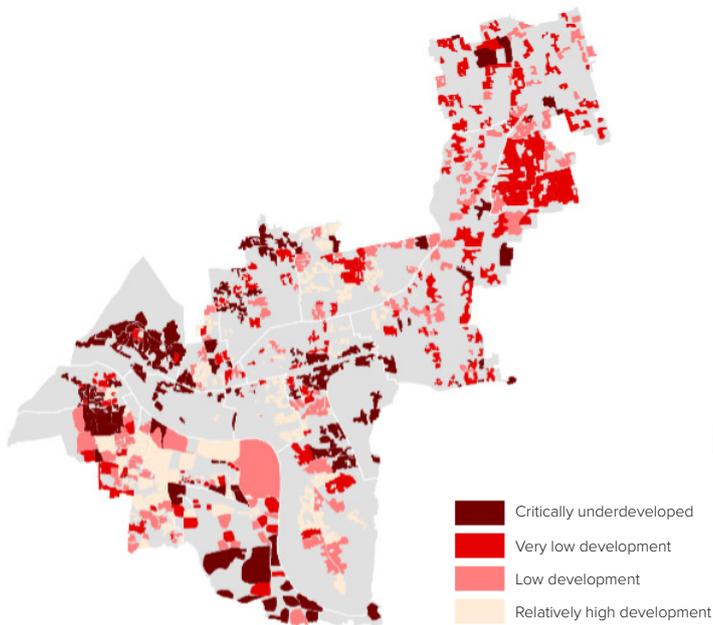
### Settlement Living Index | 16 Indicators

- |                |                   |                   |                  |
|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| • Access Roads | • Water Supply    | • Employment      | • Housing        |
| • Drains       | • Sanitation      | • Income          | • Evictions      |
| • Electricity  | • Street Lighting | • Social Problems | • Land Occupancy |
| • Solid Waste  | • Education       | • Land Tenure     | • Land Ownership |

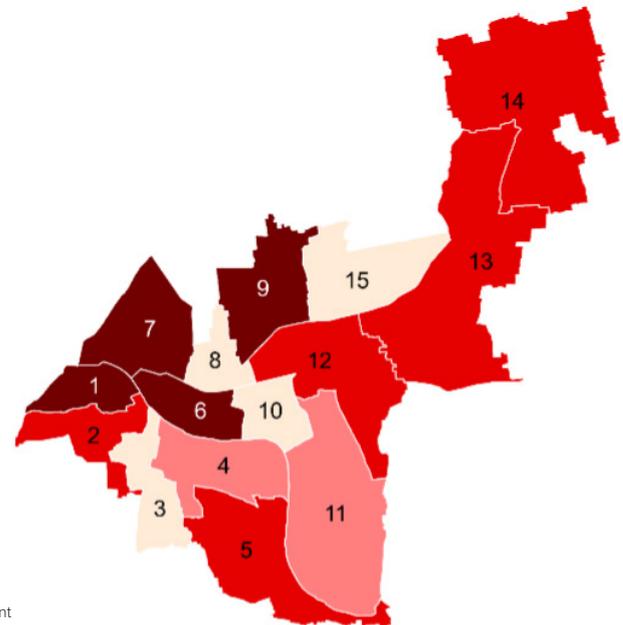
Following the finalisation of the poverty mapping exercise, the poverty indicators of the city are determined through a workshop, in which the city prioritisations are determined in a bespoke manner, with the local context in mind. A poverty score of each urban poor settlement is then recalculated to determine a Ward Poverty Index. This is a weighted, aggregate poverty score of all poor settlements within a Ward, which are then categorised into four scales: Q1-Critically underdeveloped, Q2-Very Low Development, Q3-Low Development, and Q4-Relatively Highly Development. The Ward Poverty Index has enabled both the project and city authorities to make rational investment in line with the requirements of the Wards, and also to use it as an advocacy tool for poverty reduction.

## Poverty Map and Ward Index Map of Chandpur Municipality

**Urban Poor Settlements**



**Ward Poverty Index**





**2.3 Million**  
urban poor mobilised  
in 19 Cities



**1523**  
Community Action  
Plans developed



**285,731**  
Savings and Credit  
Group members  
under 19,099 SCGs



**72%** of community  
organisations (CDCs) perform  
effectively to raise the collective  
voice of the poor



**1343**  
Community Action Plans  
implemented



**\$4.76 Million**  
in savings made by  
beneficiaries



**\$3.75 Million**  
loan disbursed among  
group members

# Key Achievements 2020



**65,471**  
urban poor benefitted from  
direct Socio-Economic Fund  
(SEF) support



**98.2%**  
of Education grantees  
out of 16,042 beneficiaries  
have completed their  
academic year



**89.2%**  
of Business grantees out of  
22,558 beneficiaries are  
running businesses



**66.1%**  
of Apprenticeship grantees  
out of 10,275 beneficiaries  
completed their course



**16,596**  
of Pregnant and Lactating  
Mothers & **17,846** Children  
(7-24 months) received  
nutrition cash grant



**94,920**  
urban poor now have  
access to safe drinking  
water



**175,265**  
urban poor now have  
access to sanitation



**369,000**  
urban poor benefitted from  
Settlement Improvement  
Fund (SIF) and Climate  
Resilient Municipal  
Infrastructure Fund (CRMIF)



**6 Climate Resilient  
Municipal  
Infrastructure Fund**  
initiatives implemented in  
Chandpur, Khulna, Chattogram and  
Cox's Bazar for RCC Road, Drain,  
Embankments

# INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE

The LIUPCP offers technical support to urban local governments and urban poor community organisations to help ensure planning decisions are made in a more inclusive and evidence-based manner, whilst also enhancing relations with various stakeholders concerning local governance. The project supports a balanced, sustainable, and pro-poor urban development across 20 towns/cities, and has engaged closely with the respective local governments, in promoting more effective and inclusive urbanisation across three levels of intervention: the community, city and town, and national levels.

In a bid to support the local government allocate appropriate resources to the urban poor settlements, a detailed participatory poverty mapping exercise was conducted in 534 Wards of 20 Cities, involving extensive dialogue between members of the community, civil society organisations as well as the local government. Crucially, the results of this exercise helped support the local government in highlighting pressing needs including for greater planning and coordination around factors promoting climate resilience.



## Urban Poor Settlements Mapping

in 534 Wards  
in 20 cities



## Climate Change Vulnerability Assessments

completed in  
12 Cities



## Urban Poverty Profile

has been  
developed for 17  
cities



## City Poverty Reduction Strategy

in 14 cities



## Institutional and Financial Capacity Assessments

in 11 cities

Although it was identified that the local governments needed to show more dynamism around climate resilient development in general, our findings from 2020 encouragingly revealed that around 15 Towns/Cities had allocated more funds for such climate-resilient urban development, as well as other poverty reduction measures in 18 Towns/Cities. It was also reassuring to find that over 75% of the community members (Primary Groups) reflected upon the Community Action Plans (CAP) as being representative of community needs. In this regard, the LIUPCP has been an effective catalyst in breaking down the silos by mobilising the local government to establish and make important committees and task-forces functional, and promote decentralised governance. This also includes the project's support in activating a Disaster Management Committee (DMC) at 10 Towns/Cities, alongside the activation of a further three committees in line with the local government acts including; Standing Committee on Women and Children, Standing Committee on Disaster Management, and Standing Committee on Poverty Reduction and Slum Development, across 14 local Governments. In addition, LIUPCP is also supporting 8 Town Level Coordination Committees and Ward Committees to promote bottoms-up and pro-poor planning in a well coordinated manner.



Investing in building national capacities through strengthening municipal governance has been an effective and economical strategy that will also prove to be sustainable in the long term. During COVID-19 response, the LIUPCP was instrumental in supporting the Urban Local Government to plan and deliver vital basic services to the urban poor rapidly through an inclusive approach to mitigate local challenges. Thus, the project worked with the various Task Force Committees including for COVID-19, to make the response more harmonised, coherent, and efficient to maximise the use of resources for the urban poor.

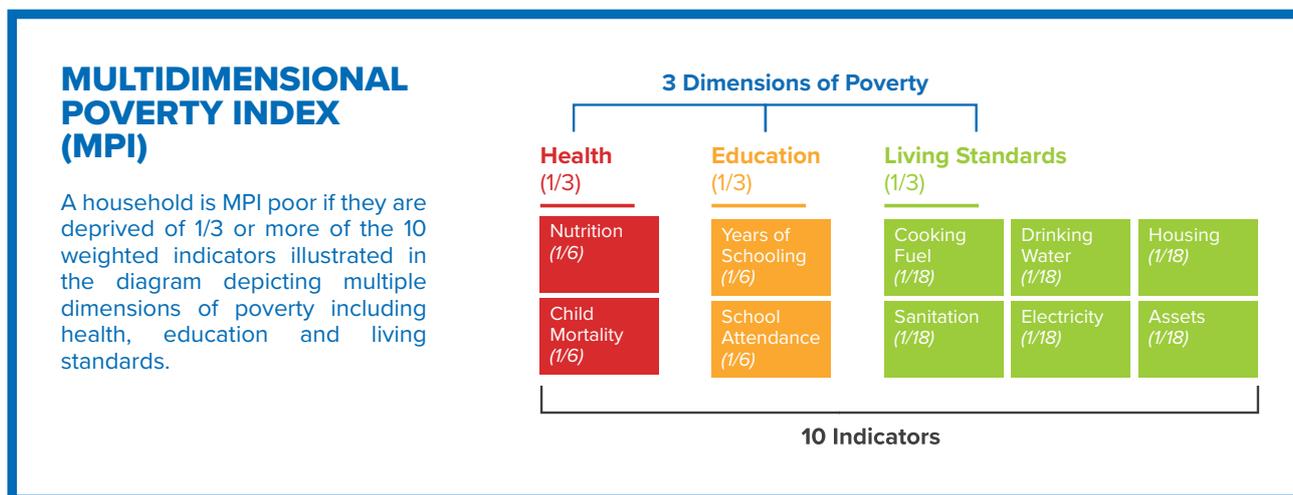
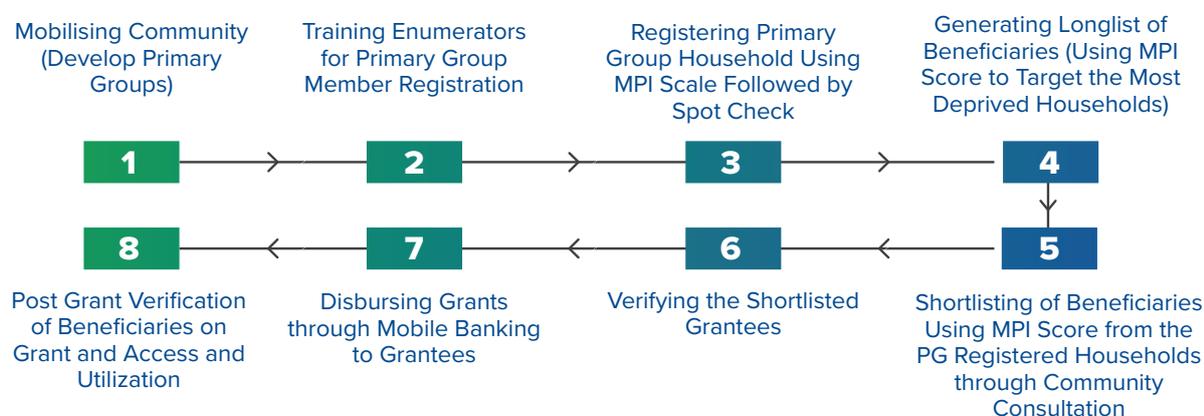
Photo 1: UNDP's Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Asia and Pacific, Kanni Wignaraja, UNDP Bangladesh Resident Representative Sudipto Mukerjee, and LIUPCP senior staff members visiting Korail slum community in Dhaka, February 2020.

Photo 2: Honorable Minister of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives, Md Tajul Islam, speaking at the National Policy Dialogue, organised by LIUPCP in Dhaka.



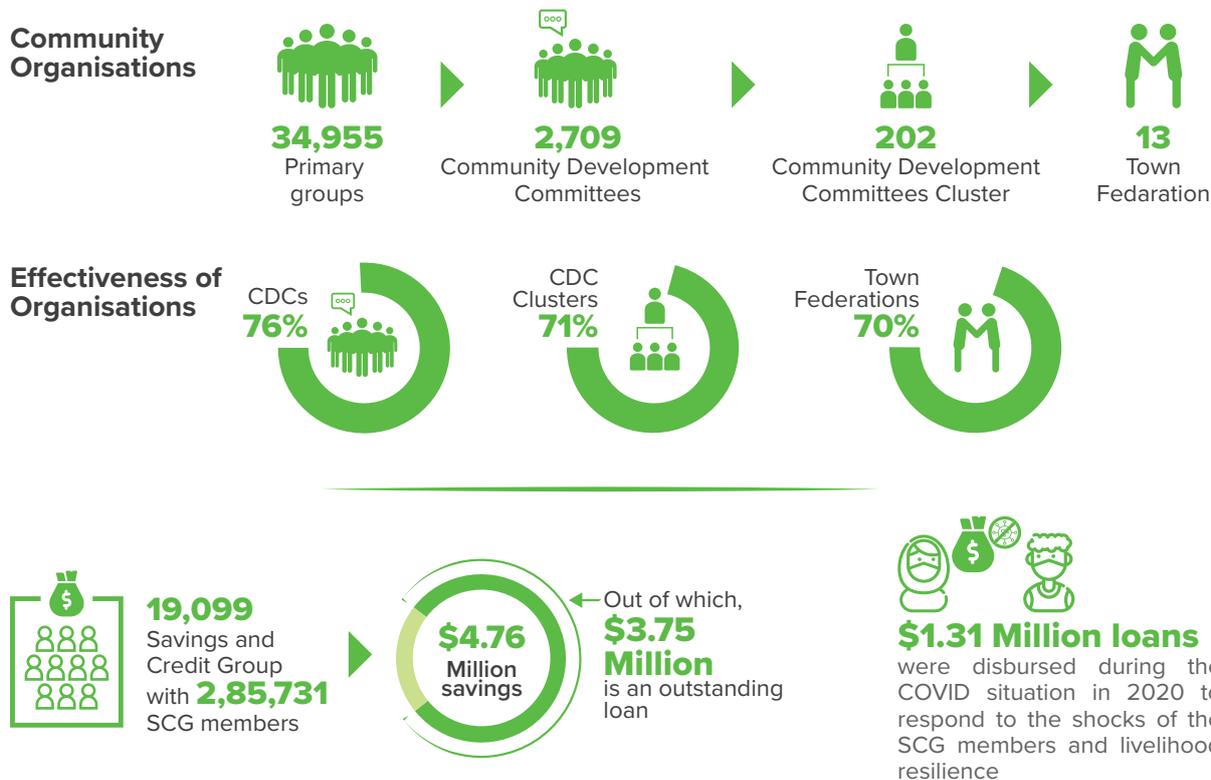
# STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY ORGANISATION

The LIUPCP mobilises the urban poor communities to understand the issues that perpetuates urban poverty, and uses this platform to voice their demands and by holding respective local governments accountable. The project believes that better organisation and proactiveness at the community level can help address their basic needs and facilitate a self-led change. Over 505,000 community household members have been registered in 19 Cities via the project’s online database. The project uses the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) to measure the level and degree of deprivation amongst the urban poor to identify the most vulnerable and marginalised. Upon being registered as a beneficiary, an array of relevant information of the poor households are collected against MPI indicators, along with other socio-economic indicators, to identify the most vulnerable families who will receive a direct conditional cash support.



The project has facilitated the development of various community structures as a fundamental mechanism to encourage a bottom-up, community-led approach to urban poverty reduction and development. A local Community Development Committee (CDC) prepares Community Action Plans (CAP) by prioritising the improvements of community infrastructure, keeping in mind climate resilience factors, and the need to address socio-economic challenges in line with the local requirements. As a result, the voices of the urban poor communities are better heard when advocating for the improvement of their livelihoods and living conditions. In order to ensure sustainability and institutional development of the community organisations, the project promoted accountability and transparency and facilitated the bi-annual elections across 19 cities.

Moreover, extensive training exercises have been facilitated to improve the capacity of the communities to participate in an array of decentralised governance structures. Many have also been able to generate their own funds and have forged partnership with a wider network of development agencies, which has further strengthened the sustainability of this initiative. Being at the frontline, the community based organisations played a significant role with the backdrop of myriad challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and also demonstrated their robust nature and capacity to mobilise resources and manpower at the local level. This in turn helped achieve a well-coordinated and effective response activities, in coordination with the Local Government and development agencies.



In continuation of this community-led approach to urban poverty reduction and development, the LIUPCP has also provided technical support in establishing a community banking initiative, providing assistance in conducting savings and credit activities. The Savings and Credit group members have utilised 88% of loans, equivalent to USD 3.75 Million for income-generating activities, 8% for housing and 4% for emergency purposes. During first COVID-19 pandemic wave, a total of USD 1.31 million loans were disbursed in 2020 in response to the shocks experienced by SCG members and to promote livelihood resilience. In order to enhance transparency and accountability of savings and credit status, a total of 1597 financial audits were completed, in addition to the development of a specialist online accounting software designed to manage the savings and credit fund. Whilst the effectiveness of it has been successfully piloted in select areas of Chandpur, Cox’s Bazar, Saidpur and Faridpur, the project intends to scale up this effort across more project sites by 2021, which will enable members of the community to maintain their accounts and ensure stronger accountability, and also enable the LIUPCP management to receive real time information for greater transparency and risk management measures. In addition, training guidelines and modules have also been developed as an investment in the community-based organisations, as their capacity development will further enhance the sustainability of the entire initiative of strengthening community organisations in the longer term.

***“We run a paper bag-making business and we needed some money to expand. We have minimal access to loans from banks and NGOs, but we were able to take out this loan from the Community Development Committee very easily.”***

Rozi Begum, 30, a member of the Rajshahi City Corporation, is one of the LIUPCP’s 148 loan recipients, through the Community Development Committees. She borrowed BDT 70,000 in July 2019 and has been repaying the loan on schedule.



# LIVELIHOODS IMPROVEMENT

The livelihood component of the LIUPC project incorporates several important and overarching aspects closely interlinked with each other including, nutrition, education and business and skills development. The project provides support to urban poor communities by offering grants to improve skills, establish enterprises, fulfil their educational potential, improve nutrition, and increase their understanding of dowry and early marriage issues. These supporting interventions have been strategised as a comprehensive approach in helping improve the economic and social well-being of the poor and vulnerable.

In 2020, the project has contributed significantly to the well-being of the urban poor, by targeting the marginalised groups, women and girls, through various socio-economic activities. These multi-pronged approaches to enhance livelihood include: apprenticeship trainings for job placements and income generating activities, investment in education, preventing violence against women and girls, stopping early and forced marriage and improving the nutrition of pregnant and lactating mothers and young children. A Socio-Economic Impact Assessment of COVID-19 was conducted to understand the effects on the poor urban communities across 19 cities and towns. The findings have helped reinvigorate the immediate needs in the context of the ongoing pandemic, as well as highlighted emerging needs including that of a 'new-poor' category.

**Education:** The education grantees include 10,906 boys and girls and 5,136 adolescent girls who are not only able to pursue education to improve their future prospects, but the initiative also significantly reduces their dropout rates. Further, aside from the academic stipends for children, on a more practical level, the livelihood component also considers social interventions as an important step to address early marriage, dowry, domestic violence.

**Business & Apprenticeship Grants:** During 2020, 8,501 new female grantees received business start-up grants, to be able to run small businesses across the 19 towns and cities. Amongst these, 30% were single women-headed households, 1% were disabled, 2% had a disabled member within the household, and 3% were from minority groups. The skills-based apprenticeship trainings have enabled members of the communities to educate and equip themselves with the appropriate knowledge, to start a business or take up employment to support their livelihoods. The 5,719 boys and girls who have been selected for apprenticeship grants are expected to complete their vocational training by 2021.



**98.2%**  
**of Education grantees**  
out of 16,042 have completed academic year successfully



**89.2%**  
**of Business grantees**  
out of 22,558 Business grants are successfully running small businesses



**66.1%**  
**of Apprenticeship grantees**  
out of 10,275 Apprenticeship grants completed training for skill development in 19 Cities/Towns



**16,596**  
Pregnant & Lactating Mothers and Children received food basket under the Nutrition Grants

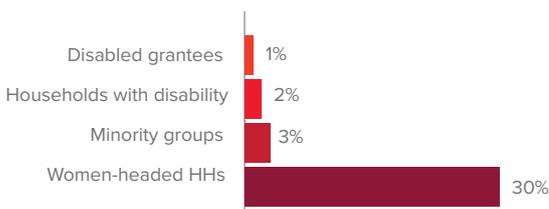


**162**  
Safe Community committee (SCC) formed

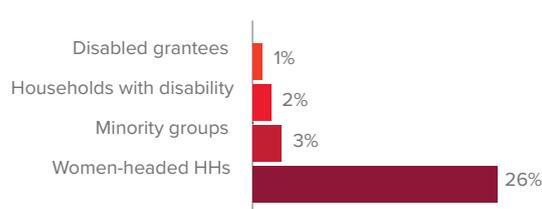


**79**  
Gender Based Violence (GBV) cases reported and referred in 2020

% of Vulnerable Poor receiving Business Grants

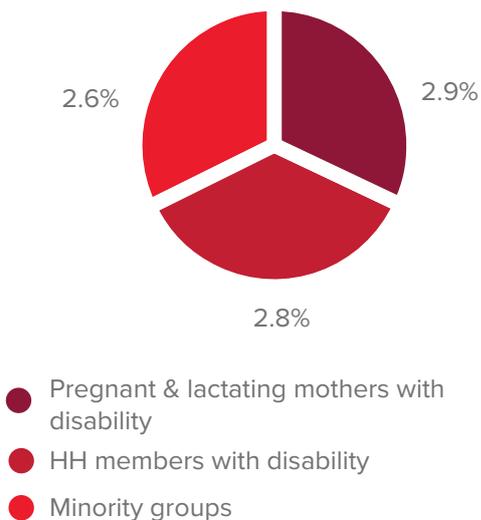


% of Vulnerable Poor receiving Apprenticeship Grants



**Nutrition:** Pregnant and lactating mothers and their children up to the age of two receive nutrition cash grant support. The LIUPCP also ensured an enhancement of their knowledge on best nutrition practices for their young infants, including on safe food and hygiene practices through a large scale, individual nutrition counselling programme. These teachings were also reiterated during nutrition education sessions. As a result, the enhanced nutrition awareness, along with the nutrition cash grant support in 2020, has resulted in an increased food intake with healthier diets, especially of protein, and an overall better maternal and infant health which will have a lasting impact. Alongside innovative social campaign ing efforts, LIUPCP has also played a key role in establishing 13 City level Multi sectoral Nutrition Coordination Committees, which subsequently have led to the development of a city level Multi Sectoral Nutrition Action Plan, approved by the Local Government. These platforms which are provided by LIUPCP continues to play an integral part in contributing towards the advancements of nutritional governance in a very pragmatic way. The notion of proper nutrition has also been highlighted as an important element which deserves to be recognised as a key component in other interventions also.

**% of Vulnerable Poor receiving Nutrition Grants**



### A Group of Upcoming Women Entrepreneurs in the Low-Income Communities of Mymensingh

Momtaz, Runa, Nurjahan, Lucky, Dolly, Masuma, and Nargis all received LIUPCP grants of BDT 7,000 each, which the group of women used to collaborate and open their own clothing and cosmetics store in Mymensingh. On top of the LIUPCP grants, they were further supported with a BDT 30,000 loan from the local CDC federation president Shamima Chowdhury. With a profit of approximately BDT 50,000 per month, the mothers can cover their shop’s rent, personal expenses, as well as their children’s medical and education fees.



Photo 1: Khadija Rahman, a Socio Economic and Nutrition Facilitator counsels a pregnant woman, Shohagi Akter Keyamoni, about the importance of proper nutrition during pregnancy, at Natun Gymkhana, Narayanganj.

Photo 2: Women from the urban slum communities benefitting from the project's apprenticeship skills training in IT literacy.



# AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR URBAN POOR COMMUNITIES

The approach to tackling land tenure security cannot be prescribed as it varies between each location and are conditioned by the local context. Under this component, the project has worked towards improving land tenure security of the vulnerable urban poor people across the towns and cities, and has enabled them to access the housing finance support mechanism to improve their homes and communities to become more climate resilient. In this regard, this component has considered an array of complex processes including assessments over suitability of available land, markets and pattern of ownership and the stability of slum communities. Moreover, each participating LIUPCP town and city has also paid special attention whilst looking at the development of settlements with a climate resilience lens, which includes the consideration of factors such as vulnerability of locations, and the incorporation of adaptive measures during construction and improvements to mitigate any potential challenges.

As a unique asset to the project, LIUPCP facilitates a secured tenureship lasting 99 years to each housing unit owner, with condition that they may not rent, sell or transfer the unit. This provision provides the selected homeowner with the security that they will not be evicted for the duration of the tenureship and even become legal owners of the property in the municipality in Government's prescribed format. Moreover, in order to promote sustainability and feasibility of the housing complex, an association will be formed by the homeowners for operation and maintenance and will be collectively financed with a small monthly contribution from all unit owners. The associated beneficiary selection is a complex and unique process, considered as an important part of the affordable housing scheme which includes a detailed criteria to reach out to the most vulnerable, including the disabled, climate refugees, widows, the elderly, amongst others.



**2 Community Housing Development fund** registered in **Narayanganj and Rajshahi** as legal entities



**Vacant Land Mapping** completed in **Chandpur and Narayanganj**



**336** low-cost climate-resilient housing units constructed in **Gopalganj**

**307**

Households in **Rajshahi**

**62**  
Households in **Chattogram**

**35**  
Households in **Narayanganj**



**404**

Households using loans to make their homes climate-resilient

The LIUPCP offers a seed capital through a community financing mechanism called a Community Housing Development Fund (CHDF) to improve housing of the urban poor with adaptive climate resilient features. The fund, along with a low cost and affordable housing initiative are two major components which have been developed with the internal technical capacity of the LIUPC Project. Almost all the borrowers from the fund are either constructing new houses or upgrading existing houses with proper structure, in order to make it more resilient to harsher weather. Similarly, the fund has also enabled beneficiaries to take additional financial commitments to ensure the prevention of longer term climate induced challenges. These includes: construction of the plinth level higher than the highest flood line, along with stronger side walls and overhead roof structure as a protective measure during cyclones and floods. During 2020, the design of 336 units of low-cost climate-resilient housing in Gopalganj were completed by young, award winning architects, whose work is currently being implemented. Low cost housing activities have also been initiated in Kushtia and Chandpur. The designs have incorporated the cultural context of the communities, whilst also keeping in mind important factors such as the use of cost-effective materials, climate-resilient designs as well as structures friendly to the disabled.

### Providing climate-resilient housing to 336 urban poor in Gopalganj

Partnering with Gopalganj Municipality, LIUPCP is now stepping forward to ensure climate-resilient housing for the extremely poor living in urban slums. Despite having a rich historical background and political prominence, Gopalganj Municipality lacks the facilities required for a first-class municipality, such as a well-planned housing for the dwellers, proper drainage system, roads, sanitary system, and recreational facilities. Out of these slum dwellers, 336 households are now very close to having their own home in a 3.19 acre of land donated by the Municipality, worth around BDT 30 crore. This will facilitate not only long-term tenure security but also provide an improved and sustainable living standard. On 12 November 2020, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between the LIUPCP and Gopalganj Municipality to initiate this project. The first photo shows the land donated by the Municipality, while the second image depicts the proposed building site.



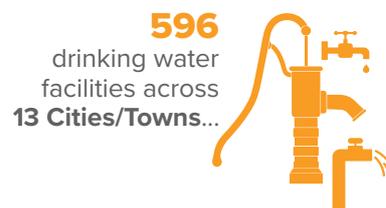
# CLIMATE RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE

Cities in Bangladesh are increasingly being characterised by a lack of economic dynamism, deficiencies in proper infrastructure and basic services, inadequacies around land administration and growing slum areas. The byproducts of unplanned, rapid urbanisation notably include a lack of essential services such as water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and other non-WASH related services, congestion, pollution and environmental degradation. Moreover, the effects of climate change are amplifying the complexity of challenges in urban Bangladesh. In this regard, the volume of rural to urban migration of climate refugees, in addition to economic migrants, and the resulting challenges are only expected to intensify in the years to come.

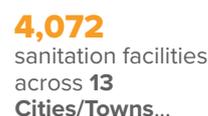
Many of the adverse effects of climate change, such as sea level rise, stronger monsoons, increase in cyclone intensity, draughts, saltwater intrusion, amongst other challenges, pose a direct and even greater threat to the livelihood of the urban poor communities in Bangladesh. The basic infrastructures prevalent in most low-income settlements are especially at risk of destruction as a result of the evolving impacts of climate change.

LIUPCP's climate resilient infrastructure initiative provides a grant provision facility to help mitigate these climate induced challenges in low-income settlements, and includes two key mechanisms: The Settlement Improvement Fund (SIF) and the Climate Resilient Municipal Infrastructure Fund (CRMIF). Whilst the SIF is intended for smaller sized infrastructure development, the latter entails small to medium scale interventions. The designs and implementation of infrastructure development projects under this initiative are influenced by the principles of climate resilience and gender and disability awareness. An environmental screening is also followed for CRMIF schemes, with a "do no harm" principle to ensure environmental safeguarding. Crucially, the LIUPCP is also engaging the local engineering departments of the cities when planning and developing the infrastructures, by involving them in operation and maintenance to ensure sustainability of the scheme. In addition, the CRMIF schemes requires a matching fund from the towns and cities, which in turn creates a strong sense of ownership with the local government.

During 2020, the project addressed key WASH issues, as well as non-WASH related requirements of the urban poor communities. The water related interventions included a safely managed approach in providing regular access to drinking water in the communities, reducing travel and queuing time, coupled with a regular operational and maintenance strategy. The designs and implementation of the interventions, included deep tube wells and submersible pumps, along with a water pipeline network, which was coordinated with the Department of Public Health and Engineering, in order to obtain ground water table information. This in turn informed the appropriate selection of interventions. To mitigate challenges in coastal towns and cities, which suffer from salt intrusion of local aquifers, the LIUPC Project is piloting an innovative rainwater harvesting system at the community and household levels, and is also exploring plans to pilot a reverse osmosis technology, to help reduce the problem of high saline contents. Moreover, the Project is also piloting a low-cost arsenic and iron removal plant technology to make water safe for consumption. Aside from the instillation of safe water technologies, the LIUPCP is also increasing awareness on safe water chain management, to educate the communities on contamination risks and best practices.



...has enabled around  
**94,920**  
people to access  
**safely managed water**



...has enabled around  
**146,000**  
people to access **safe,**  
**hygienic sanitation**

Urban poor community members in Narayanganj are benefiting from their newly installed overhead water storage tank, as well as a network of distribution piping and water collection points. This is ensuring safe and easy access to drinking water.



LIUPCP is also continuously addressing the ever-challenging issue of sanitation in the urban slums, by constructing single and twin pit latrines, community latrines, septic tanks along with faecal waste management measures. To promote hygiene, the instillation of the pit latrines has been done in a technical manner and at a measured distance away from the ground water level, to minimise contamination of any drinking water sources nearby. The project is also piloting a decentralised wastewater treatment plant technology to treat and decontaminate wastewater before it mixes with a nearby water body.

Handwashing facilities were also installed at community latrine sites, along with lighting and locks, especially for the safety of women and girls. The project also continues to raise awareness on the importance of regular and proper handwashing, especially after using latrines and before preparing food. The community have benefited from shared hand washing stations installed by the project at various sites, as well as from a local, cheap, yet effective ‘tippy-tap’ handwash solution at the individual house level.

## Climate Resilient Municipal Infrastructure Fund (CRMIF)

2 contracts have been implemented in Chandpur and Khulna and a further 4 CRMIF schemes have been approved for Khulna, Chandpur, Cox’s Bazar & Chattogram.

### Chandpur CRMIF project includes

**277 Meter**  
RCC road

**368 Meter**  
RCC drain

### Khulna CRMIF project includes

**306 Meter**  
RCC road

**160 Meter**  
RCC drain

**02**  
Cross-drain

**308M**  
Tree plantation

Moreover, the infrastructure development activities in this component also include non-WASH related interventions such as drainage, pathways, stairways for hilly areas, community resource centres, solar street lights, as well as garbage bins for solid waste management. The principle aim of these interventions is to improve the wellbeing of the urban poor communities whereby underlying problems have not only hampered their quality of lives, but are being further exacerbated by the effects of climate change including flooding, cyclones and landslides. As a result, the design and construction has been implemented in ways to ensure outcomes that are climate-resilient, gender-responsive, and disabled friendly. This has not only included basic design adaptations, but also the use of climate resilient materials during construction, coupled with a higher calibre of workmanship.



### 89,139 people

across 13 Cities/Towns benefited from different climate resilient infrastructure like **footpaths, drains, staircases, streetlight, dust bins, bathrooms, guide walls, community resource centres.**

**109.38 KM**  
Footpath

**41 KM**  
Drain with slab covering

**363**  
Latrines with water options

**04**  
Staircases to access hilly communities

**39**  
Solar Streetlights

**02**  
Community Resource Centres

**28**  
Dustbins

With the support of the LIUPCP's Settlements Improvement Fund (SIF), the CDC in Patgudam Duldul Camp, Mymensingh could fund the construction of a footpath which will prevent waterlogging during heavy rains and floods, and ensure safe access for its urban poor community members.



Installation of a drainage system in Chandpur Municipality, supported by the CRMIF.



# COVID-19 RESPONSE

## ACTIVITIES 2020

The onset of COVID-19 in March 2020 presented an extremely challenging situation for the already vulnerable urban poor population. Whilst the pandemic greatly hampered the delivery of regular activities, it did, however, offer a significant opportunity for the LIUPCP to support the Government of Bangladesh's national response towards the pandemic, and showcase the project's robust network engaged in the communities with a wide reach for greater effectiveness.

Unlike in the rural areas, the urban poor communities live in overcrowded slums within very close proximity of one another, with minimal and disproportionately shared access to basic facilities. The needs of these vulnerable communities are often not incorporated in disaster and epidemic preparedness plans, so the emergency support implemented by the LIUPCP, which fully utilised an additional £3m of emergency funding from the FCDO within three months, provided the urban poor with access to essential water, sanitation and hygiene materials, as well as livelihoods support. The Project utilised its digital database to collect data remotely through mobile applications

and monitor the ongoing response activities on the ground. The interventions not only helped prevent an uncontrollable outbreak in these communities, but also helped cushion a large economic blow, which would undoubtedly have had a long term impact on the socio-economic well-being of the urban poor.

In order to understand the short, medium and longer-term impacts of COVID-19 on the urban poor communities, a detailed Socio-Economic Assessment was carried out across the LIUPCP sites. Crucially, this exercise helped capture emerging priorities of the urban poor, along with the new poor, which in turn has enabled LIUPCP to inform reprogramming of activities and strategies, in coordination with the Urban Local Government.

Looking ahead, the project maintains a clear strategic focus on the need to build resilience of the urban poor to future crises and shocks, strengthen livelihoods and well-being, and contribute effectively to reduce inequalities and eradicate poverty.

“

**The challenges of our time, including the current pandemic, go beyond borders. COVID-19 has made the flag of multilateralism high. I also pay tribute to all frontline UN staff and agencies for their tireless efforts and dedication.**

- Sheikh Hasina, Honourable Prime Minister, People's Republic of Bangladesh

“

**Reaching the urban poor and vulnerable very rapidly is always challenging in a global crisis such as COVID-19. I am very pleased that FCDO, in partnership with the Government of Bangladesh and UNDP, was able to respond so quickly.**

- Judith Herbertson, Development Director, FCDO, Bangladesh

“

**Regrettably, the pandemic has struck the already vulnerable urban poor population the hardest. In collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh and the FCDO, we were able to support the urban poor in following the public order - which is to stay home and prevent the virus from spreading - while also delivering crucial food assistance to the poor households who have faced tremendous socio-economic challenges during the pandemic.**

- Sudipto Mukerjee, Resident Representative, UNDP Bangladesh

## COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE



### COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH



**Around 3 Million** urban poor across 19 cities reached through awareness campaigns



### STRENGTHENING COORDINATION FUNCTION



**439** Covid-19 Response Task Forces established by the urban Local Government



### CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT OF HEALTH OFFICIALS



**385** health personnel accessed **Training on Covid-19 Management**



### FOOD ASSISTANCE FOR URBAN POOR



**77,560** households received **Food Assistance**. Among them:



**605** **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** distributed among health officials and workers



**69,660** households received **BDT 1,500** through **Digital Cash Transfer**



**7,900** households in Dhaka received **Food Baskets**



### HANDWASHING FACILITIES & HYGIENIC PACKAGE



**3256** **Common Handwashing Stations** installed



**62,423** **Hygiene Kits** distributed



**519,045** Households received **Soaps**



**2341** **Tippy Taps** installed by the households



**42,265** **Masks** distributed

Project frontliners providing a demonstration of effective handwashing techniques to community members, after distributing hygiene kits and food assistance.



Community members with disability were prioritised to receive COVID-19 relief by the LIUPCP.



# CROSS-CUTTING PRIORITIES

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## Disability

The LIUPC Project has mobilised persons with disabilities (PWDs) at intervention sites across the towns and cities, providing them with necessary support and opportunities to act as active change agents. This includes the encouragement and guidance for PWDs to adopt leadership roles at community level organisations, and participate in the formulation of community action plans. The project prioritises PWDs and their family members when applying for low cost housing, grants and loan supports. In addition, LIUPCP promotes disable friendly designs to cater for special requirements and supports the implementation of adaptive measures during construction, to ensure smoother access and maneuverability.

The project platform is also well utilised to forge effective collaborations between the PWDs and community development committees and relevant organs of the local government, to ensure their involvement during decision making processes. These lobbying efforts will help ensure that regulations and policy planning at the community level become more inclusive, and allow for a larger budget to be allocated by the local government to cater for the needs of the PWDs.

## Gender

**Safeguarding:** Gender equality and empowerment is central to LIUPCP for both beneficiaries and staff members, and has been effectively mainstreamed across the programme. The project maintains a zero-tolerance policy towards harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination, exploitation, and abuse of authority. A project-specific safeguarding policy and a reporting strategy guides all stakeholders involved and the establishment of a Gender Focal Person (GFP) at the city level and a Safe Community Committee at the community level have ensured an accelerated process of launching a safeguarding reporting mechanism.

**Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and Early Forced Marriage (EFM):** The LIUPCP is committed to preventing VAWG and EFM in the communities. Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, 62 additional Safe Community Committees (SCC) were established in 2020, in addition to the 100 pre-existing ones. The Gender Focal Person at the city level continue to encourage these committees to motivate women and girls through awareness raising campaigns, facilitated appropriate referrals, and advocate with local government to resolve any gender-based violence (GBV) issues in the communities. During the campaigning, special emphasis was given to target the predominantly male duty bearers of local offices to ensure better access to service, in addition to men and boys in the communities, with the aim of bringing behavioural change from within. The project's effective reporting mechanism at the community level has led to 79 cases of GBV being referred to local police, Ward Councillor for local arbitration and hospitals for primary treatments.

## Fraud & Corruption

The LIUPCP supports the programme in promoting a culture of zero-tolerance to corruption, as well as healthy measures in ensuring accountability and transparency during the implementation of project activities. The project also maintains a **dedicated telephone hotline and a dedicated email** to report any concerns over safeguarding in confidence. This helps identify any wrongdoings as well as improve control systems. Some of the measures taken to ensure this includes audits and physical verification exercises, fact-finding missions, awareness raising and capacity building initiatives.



**Around 99%** leadership positions held by women at Town Federation, Community Housing Development Fund (CHDF) Committees and CDC/CDC Clusters



**Almost 100%** of women beneficiaries received SEF grants for business development



**Apprenticeship Grants distribution**



**Education Grants distribution**



**Micro and Small Enterprise Fund (MSEF)** established for urban poor women to recover from COVID-19 shock



**162 Safe Community Committees (SCCS)** formed to address safeguarding and **79 GBV cases** addressed at the local level



**Disability data shared** for further screening and to be incorporated in the national disability database in 5 project towns



**1,197** households with PWDs have received SEF grants supports in 19 Cities



**536 Pregnant and Lactating Mothers** with disabilities are receiving monthly food basket through nutrition grants along with basic health and nutrition services



Assistance devices e.g., wheelchairs and hearing aids, provided to **42 PWDs** by mobilising the city authority and local stakeholders



**16 frontline workers** with disability recruited in different towns



Established a hotline number **16256** and dedicated email **complain@liupc.org** for fraud and corruption reporting.

## LESSONS LEARNED

- ▶ The LIUPCP has mobilised an extensive community organisation network to uplift the livelihood and living condition of the urban poor. This platform has been instrumental during COVID-19 emergency response and other disaster relief efforts conducted by the local government, and wider development agencies. This has also supported the Government to work more comprehensively in a coherent manner to avoid duplication of support and ensure more urban poor beneficiaries are being reached.
- ▶ COVID-19 has adversely impacted the urban poor and their livelihoods, pushing them into extreme poverty. Unfortunately, the pandemic has also led to the emergence of a ‘new poor’ category. However, many of the urban poor population yet to benefit from the Government’s social protection support mechanisms. LIUPCP needs to further advocate with national and local Governments to respond to the basic needs and increase budget allocation for the urban poor under its social safety net programmes to reduce urban poverty in the current context.
- ▶ The direct cash support provided through socio-economic grants helped the urban poor improve their livelihood and health, as well as cope with shocks. The nutrition related education, along with the provision of food baskets helped mothers improve their knowledge on nutritious food consumption and safe hygiene practices, thereby creating a multiplier effect in improving child health. LIUPCP also needs to undertake more intensive, innovative and coherent livelihoods interventions to create synergy and bring about systematic and sustainable changes in urban poor communities.
- ▶ Uniformed intervention and prefixed design cannot always address local demand and serve the needs of the urban poor community. Adaptive measures with context-specific, gender and disable-friendly infrastructure, and use of locally available materials with a “do no harm” approach, have greatly contributed in ensuring that no one in the urban poor communities are left behind, thereby contributing towards a sustainable development.
- ▶ LIUPCP has focused on broader investment in climate-resilient infrastructure development, supporting a more comprehensive adaptive approach in ensuring climate resilient livelihoods. This model can be scaled-up for other vulnerable urban poor communities and disaster preparedness across the country.
- ▶ The urban local governments have a low appetite for pro-poor and inclusive urban development due to lack of fund, knowledge and information, and skilled human resources. To overcome these challenges, the local governments need to pay more attention on increasing revenue generation, integrating plans formulated by the community into their urban planning process, and policy-advocacy for pro-poor and inclusive urban development.
- ▶ Effective coordination with local governments have ensured that the projects climate resilient infrastructure activities are incorporated in the plan of the local governments, which has not only ensured the sustainability of the project activities concerning future operation and maintenance, but it has also established a practical model to consider climate resilience when carrying out infrastructure developments.
- ▶ The implementation of climate-resilient low-cost housing has shown that financing is not the most critical challenge for developing housing. Rather, land availability, site selection, cultural context, policy and leadership play a vital role in the process of developing appropriate housing for the urban poor communities.
- ▶ An online information management database developed by LIUPCP is used to record real time data from the field, allowing for close monitoring of project activities. The system registers poor households through a web based mobile application, and has been instrumental in providing disaggregated data for identifying the poorest who are most vulnerable and marginalised, based on the Multidimensional Poverty Index. The data has been utilised by the local government and development partners, for example during COVID-19 response, and will continue to be useful in future also.

# FINANCIALS:

## REGULAR PROGRAMMING & COVID-19 RESPONSE



**Total Annual Expenditure 2020**

**16, 736, 231 US\$**

Components	Expenditure (US\$)	%
Improved coordination, planning and management	861, 780	5%
Enhanced organization, capability, and effective voice of poor urban communities	1, 674, 277	10%
Improved well-being and security of the urban poor particularly for women	4, 626, 520	28%
More secure land tenure and housing	279, 166	2%
More and better climate resilient and community-based infrastructure	3, 958, 687	24%
Project Management	1, 746, 143	10%
<b>COVID-19 Response</b>	3, 589, 659	21%

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